

# The Impact of Psychological Empowerment on Individual Performance in Balloon Companies: Is Justice Perception a Mediator?

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## Abstract

Today's organizations inevitably experience rapid changes at every moment. One factor that plays an important role in the success of organizations in this change is their employees. This study aims to examine the intermediary role of justice in the impact of psychological empowerment perceptions of employees working in balloon businesses belonging to the private aviation industry on individual performance. The study used a convenience sampling method, and the data were obtained from 454 employees by questionnaire. The study used the SPSS 25.0 Program and Process Macro v 4.0 application. Frequency analysis, exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and reliability analysis were conducted. In addition, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, regression, and mediating effects were analyzed using the bootstrap method developed by Hayes (2013). In addition, the Sobel test was used to examine the significance of the mediating effect. As a result of the study, the relationship between competence and interactional justice ( $r = .550$ ;  $p = .000$ ) is higher than other variables. Moreover, psychological empowerment has a significant and positive impact on individual performance (95% CI [.37; .59];  $\beta = .4553$ ;  $p = .000$ ). In addition, psychological empowerment has a significant and positive impact on the justice perception (95% CI [.31; .32];  $\beta = 0.191$ ;  $p = .000$ ). Justice perception has a significant and positive impact on individual performance (95% CI [.32; .47];  $\beta = .4052$ ;  $p = .000$ ). Finally, justice perception has a semi-intermediary impact on psychological empowerment and individual performance ( $\beta = .7892$ ) and (95% CI [.1431, .1488]).

**Keywords:** Psychological Empowerment, Justice Perception, Individual Performance, Balloon Companies.

## Introduction

The phenomenon of globalization, which gained momentum especially towards the end of the twentieth century, technological advances, environmental changes, increasing competition, increasing expectations and needs of employees, improvement in the education levels of employees, customer orientation and so on have reinforced the importance of the human factor in organizations (Saeidi et al., 2019: 1; Somuncuoğlu, 2013: 5). In this case, employee empowerment in organizations has started to play a significant role within the scope of management, psychology literature, and management practices (Conger & Kanungo, 1988: 471). Essentially, psychological empowerment, which represents the psychological side of employee empowerment, refers to the employee's perception of whether he feels empowered by the organization (Robbins & Judge, 2013: 314; as cited in Maan et al., 2020: 2). In other words, psychological empowerment can be expressed as employee perceptions regarding the practices of the organization to empower employees (Spreitzer, 1996). Psychological empowerment helps to increase the self-esteem of the organization's employees with formal and informal techniques by determining the situations that increase the weakness of the employees. It is evident that psychological empowerment increases employees' self-confidence and sense of self-efficacy in succeeding at their jobs and positively affects their belief in the power to be effective. In this direction, employees get their intended results (Ari & Ergeneli, 2003: 135). As a result, individual performance levels, defined as the behaviours and results of empowered employees regarding their ability, motivation, productivity, and efficiency to achieve specific goals, may increase (Sikyr, 2013: 43). In other words, the individual performance of psychologically empowered employees can be positively affected (Mahmoud et al., 2022; Liden et al., 2000; Seibert et al., 2004; Chen et al., 2007). In this context, if organizations can train their employees and allow them to develop, that is if they can psychologically empower them, they can increase the individual performance of their employees (Gitongu et al., 2016: 199; Mackay et al., 2004; as cited in Dakhoul, 2018: 138).

Psychologically strong feelings of employees may increase their positive perceptions and feelings towards the organization. It may reflect on employees' justice perception, one of the positive perceptions, and may

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be effective in employees' perception of the organization as fair. These positive feelings may also positively affect the individual performance of employees. In this context, a high level of individual performance of employees may have a positive impact on the success of the organization (Gitongu et al., 2016: 199).

The interactions of psychological empowerment with various variables were examined in the literature. However, there are a limited number of studies in which psychological empowerment interacted with other variables. In those studies, the relationship between psychological empowerment, justice perception, and individual performance was not together. In this sense, it is expected that this study will contribute to the literature since it is the first study in which all three variables are found together, and there is no other study on aviation organizations. In this context, the study aims to determine the intermediary role of justice perception in the effect of psychological empowerment perceptions of employees on individual performance in balloon companies in the Turkish aviation industry. Accordingly, we tried to prove inferentially how employees' perceptions of psychological empowerment affect their individual performance and how justice perception plays an intermediary role in this relationship.

First, the concepts of psychological empowerment, justice perception, and individual performance are explained in the study. Then, the inter-conceptual relationships, theories, and hypotheses are discussed. In addition, research findings are evaluated. Finally, the discussion and conclusion section is included.

### *Conceptual Framework*

#### *Psychological Empowerment*

The origins of psychological empowerment are first traced back to Conger and Kanungo's (1988) Psychological Empowerment Approach. This approach is a process in which feelings of employees about self-efficacy problems are increased by finding and eliminating the cause of weakness of employees (Conger & Kannugo, 1988: 474). Later, Thomas and Velthouse (1990) presented a new theoretical framework based on the psychological empowerment approach and developed the cognitive empowerment model related to empowerment. The Cognitive Empowerment Model explains the empowerment process with a cognitive model. This model is concerned with revealing the elements that are efficient in making the individual feel empowered. Environmental events, task evaluation, and behaviors are repetitive cycles in the model (Thomas & Velthouse 1990: 669).

Empowerment is a concept that represents the ability of an individual to achieve his goals by using the resources at his disposal and making decisions with his free will (Kanter, 2008: 172; Lee & Koh, 2001: 686). In other words, empowerment is related to the employee not needing directives from managers and having the authority to make decisions (Tomas & Velthouse, 1990: 666). In organizations, the concept of employee empowerment is a significant factor for the organization and its employees. Employee empowerment is defined as the freedom of employees in their decisions, attitudes, and behaviors and, as a result, taking the authority and responsibility related to the work (Honold, 1997: 203). In this context, employee empowerment helps employees to share the responsibilities of their superiors, keep control of the work, and take responsibility for their duties (Conger & Kanungo, 1988: 471). It is seen that employee empowerment is based on two main approaches (Dee et al., 2003: 259). The first one is structural (behavioral) empowerment, which is related to the ability of organizations to empower their employees in a behavioral dimension, while the other approach is psychological empowerment, which is related to how employees perceive the work environment and the empowerment efforts of top management and how they feel themselves in this situation (Kanter, 2008). In fact, in recent years, since the psychological structure and personal perceptions of employees are not taken into consideration within the scope of structural empowerment, the perception of psychological empowerment, which addresses the psychological side of employees, has come to the fore (Conger & Kanungo, 1988: 472). In this direction, when we look at the literature, psychological empowerment was developed in its modern meaning by Spreitzer (1995) based on Thomas and Velthouse's (1990) study after Conger and Kanungo's (1988) definition of the concept of empowerment. Psychological empowerment can be defined as employees' perceptions of their competence, authority, and level of independent decision-making regarding the work environment and the meaningfulness of their work. In other words, psychological empowerment refers to the employee's

perception of whether they feel empowered or not (Robbins & Judge, 2013: 314; as cited in Maan et al., 2020: 2). In short, psychological empowerment can be expressed as employee perceptions regarding the practices of the organization to empower employees (Spreitzer, 1996).

Psychological empowerment is a situation that makes employees think that they have control over their work (Maan et al., 2020: 3). Psychological empowerment focuses on more than the personal structure of employees. In this context, the employees believe that they can achieve goals, their perceptions about the resources and factors that prevent or increase their efforts to achieve these goals, and their efforts to achieve goals (Zimmerman, 1995: 582). Essentially, psychological empowerment enables the employee to have the belief that he can succeed in the face of difficulties, to increase his self-efficacy and self-confidence, to perform well, to develop personally, to master decision-making and solution-orientation, and to take responsibility (Littrell, 2007: 94). This theory is a set of psychological conditions that are necessary for employees to feel a sense of control over their tasks. Accordingly, psychological empowerment is the perceptions that employees have about their job roles in the organization (Spreitzer, 2008: 56). Psychological empowerment is a complex concept and can only be evaluated with the help of behavioral and interactional factors (Zimmerman, 1995: 596). In this context, psychological empowerment is divided into four sub-dimensions in the literature. These are (Spreitzer, 1995): (a) Meaning: It is the effort of the employee to draw meaning or a conclusion by comparing his personal values with the goals and objectives related to the work (Spreitzer, 2008: 57; Rani et al., 2021: 885). In other words, it is the employee's caring about the task (Maynard et al., 2012). In this sense, it means that the employee thinks that his work is meaningful and finds the purpose of the task valuable (Spreitzer, 2008: 57; Rani et al., 2021: 885). (b) Competence: It refers to the self-efficacy of the employee. In other words, an employee believes that he can do his job at the best possible level and with his abilities. Essentially, it ideally expresses employees' views on their ability to perform their work activities (Gist, 1987: 474; as cited in Spreitzer et al., 1997: 681; Rani et al., 2021: 885). In other words, it is the employee's belief in his knowledge, experience, and skills related to his job. In short, it means that the employee considers himself sufficient in his job (Rani et al., 2021: 885; Lee & Koh, 2001: 685). (c) Self-determination: It means that the employee has the authority to make decisions about the functioning of the job and can act freely. In other words, according to some authors, self-determination is the individual's perception that he has the right and control to initiate and organize actions related to his job (Spreitzer et al., 1997: 681). In short, it refers to the ability of employees to express their opinions on how to do their jobs (Spreitzer, 1995: 1443; Spreitzer, 2008: 57). (d) Impact: It is the degree to which employees see how much difference their attitudes and behaviors make or the degree of impact employees have on organizational outcomes. Impact is the employee's belief that they can influence managerial, operational, and strategic activities in the workplace. In other words, the impact is related to the employee's belief that he has influence and control over his work (Spreitzer, 1995:1443). Impact and self-determination are two concepts that are often confused. While self-determination is related to the employee's perception of control over his work, the impact is concerned with the employee's feelings over organizational outcomes (Spreitzer et al., 1997: 681).

### *Perception of Organisational Justice*

The concept of organizational justice is based on the Equity Theory developed by Adams (1965). Equity Theory refers to a situation that is egalitarian and proportional as a result of comparing the ratio between the input given for a job and the results of the outputs obtained in similar situations (Adams, 1965). In this context, equity theory has been one of the most significant theories that reveal the behavioral and cognitive reactions of employees who perceive that they are treated unfairly in the organization (Welbourne et al., 1995: 885).

Justice is about righteousness, ensuring what is fair, and looking after the rights, and it forms the basis for establishing interpersonal relations and relations with other communities in society (İçerli, 2010: 68; TDK, 2024). Justice has an important place in ensuring equality between individuals. The individual knowing that there is stability between what he gives and what he receives in every sense enables him to understand that there is equality in the system (Robbins & Judge, 2015). According to some authors, it is evident that employees care about how other employees in the organization are treated and whether they are treated equally with them (Judge & Colquitt, 2004: 395). In this respect, fair management in organizations may

reflect positively on the attitudes and behaviors of employees. Organizational justice refers to the fairness of an organization's decision on any issue, the procedures during the decision-making process, and the attitudes and behaviors toward employees (Wan, 2016: 2). In other words, this concept is related to how employees perceive the decisions and practices of the management of the organization and the employees' sense of justice. In essence, the justice perception is related to the perception of employees about whether they are treated fairly in the organization (Eskew, 1993: 185–186). Organizational justice is the perceptions of employees about whether the organization is fair or not in the process of giving duties, wages, additional wages, rewards and punishments, and similar rights to employees and making decisions about the distribution of these rights (Wan, 2016: 38). Within the scope of organizational justice, it is understood how the path is followed in remuneration, promotions, organizational policies, individual practices, distribution of tasks, rewards and punishments within the organization, and the rate of fairness (Cropanzano & Greenberg, 1997: 3). In a humanistic manner, the concept of organizational justice is a situation related to the perceptions of employees in their relationships with their colleagues and senior management in the organization (Beugre & Baron, 2001: 324).

The scope of organizational justice includes how wages, promotions, rewards, and punishments are made in the organization, how decisions regarding employees are made or how these decisions are told to employees, the impression made on employees, and thus forming employee perceptions (İçerli, 2010: 69). According to some researchers, organizational justice can positively or negatively affect employees' attitudes and behaviors in the workplace. The perception of a fair situation in the organization by employees may cause an increase in employees' feelings of commitment, job satisfaction, and belonging, and thus exhibit positive attitudes and behaviors (Judge & Colquitt, 2004: 395). The perception of organizational justice can be significant in increasing organizational success. The main purpose of organizational justice is to examine, analyze, interpret, and evaluate the effects of justice perceptions in the organization based on employees (Greenberg & Colquitt, 2005; as cited in Adamovic, 2023: 765).

Various characteristics related to employees' perceptions of organizational justice come to the fore. These are (San, 2017: 12): Personal characteristics, organizational characteristics, and non-organizational characteristics. *Personal characteristics*: It is essentially based on the view that each individual has different personality traits and that individuals' perceptions of justice will be different from each other due to the formation of personality differences (Kılıçaslan, 2010: 68). *Organisational characteristics*: Based on the view that organizational policies and practices and efficient communication and processual information system are effective in the formation of employees' perceptions of justice (Kılıçaslan, 2010: 71). *Non-organizational characteristics*: This concept is related to the existence of ethical practices and procedures in the organization and the protection of cultural values. Employees need to evaluate and perceive the behaviors of the organization and managers as fair, moral, cultural, and rational (İşcan & Naktiyok, 2004:187; as cited in San, 2017: 14).

Organizational justice is divided into three sub-dimensions in the literature. These are as follows: (Al-Shbiel et al., 2018; Hess & Ambrose, 2010); (a) Distributive Justice: The perceptions of employees regarding the fairness of the distribution of their rights (Adamovic, 2023: 766). In other words, distributive justice can be expressed as the perceptions of employees regarding the fair distribution of what they deserve as a result of their work and the objective evaluation of all employees (Moorman, 1991). Essentially, distributive justice is related to the fairness of the gains distributed (Hess & Ambrose, 2010: 2). (b) Procedural Justice: Expressed as justice factors related to the processes, procedures, methods, and mechanisms used for procedures (Folger & Cropanzano, 1998). In other words, procedural justice is related to employees' perceptions of the fairness of decision-making processes such as wages, promotions, and punishments within the organization (Rousseau et al., 2009: 306). In short, procedural justice is related to the fairness of the procedures in which decisions are made (Hess & Ambrose, 2010: 3). (c) Interactional Justice: the justice perception that employees feel towards the attitudes and behaviors towards them in the process of implementing the decisions and procedures for the organization (Adamovic, 2023: 766). In other words, this concept can be expressed as the perceptions of interpersonal behavior between employees (Moorman, 1991). In short, interactional justice is related to the fairness of the behaviors applied to employees during the implementation of procedures (Hess & Ambrose, 2010: 3).



### *Individual Performance*

The concept of individual performance is based on Blau's (1964) Social Exchange Theory. Within the scope of individual performance, the Social Exchange Theory argues that the relationships between subordinates and superiors in organizations are a kind of exchange and that expectations are mutual (Blau, 1964; Ford, 2001: 6). This theory states that when an employee feels that their expectations are met, their individual performance increases and this may contribute to the organization (Blau, 1964; Peng, 2014: 76).

Performance is related to the productivity and efficiency of the individual in achieving the expected goals and the evaluation of the resources used in achieving the goals. Performance is the name given to the quantitative or qualitative results of the attitudes, activities, behaviors, and efforts of employees while performing a job at a specific time (Uysal, 2015: 33; Schuler, 1995: 92). A high level of performance increases employees' job satisfaction and motivation (Luecke, 2015: 111). Individual performance is the behavior and the results of these behaviors in terms of the employee's ability, motivation, productivity, and efficiency to achieve specific goals (Sikyr, 2013: 43). Individual performance refers to the level of achievement of tasks related to the organization (Spears, 2000: 714). According to another definition, individual performance is the degree of success of an employee in a job or a task. In other words, individual performance refers to the fulfillment level of tasks assigned to employees (Gregoire & Spears, 2010: 726). This concept is the performance that employees should exhibit under formal job descriptions (Sikyr, 2013: 43). In this context, organizational performance depends on the individual performance of employees and is directly proportional to individual performance (Ghebregiorgis, 2018: 2). Individual performance is the result of the sum of employees' abilities, actions, and skills that increase organizational efficiency and help them achieve their goals (Ellinger et al., 2003; as cited in Dakhoul, 2018: 138). According to some authors, individual performance comprises individual characteristics of the employee, general performance, and organizational support (Gitongu et al., 2016: 199).

Some authors suggest that there are three main factors impacting individual performance. These are: (a) Individual Factors: Individuals' skills, competencies, decision-making styles, perception levels, motivation, stress levels, ability to overcome difficult situations, conflicts they experience in their inner world, responsibility levels, communication skills, beliefs and attitudes, individual characteristics, personality structure, physical characteristics, physical health, and mental health have an impact on individual performance (Morillo, 1990: 183; Güngören, 2017: 77; Gedik, 2010: 328). (b) Organizational Factors: Factors such as physical conditions of the working environment, motivation, work order, discipline, correct workload distribution, management structure, managerial support, equipment qualifications, a firm organizational culture, career opportunities, training, organizational goals, selection of the right employee for various tasks, staff empowerment and participation in decisions, factors such as organizational justice, commitment to the organization, organizational image, job satisfaction, organizational conflict, burnout, workload and difficulty level of work, relations with colleagues, mobbing, organizational stress, salary, and additional wages affect individual performance (Turhan, 2007: 31; as cited in. Gedik, 2010: 329; Güngören, 2017: 78). (c) Environmental Factors: Factors such as social characteristics and culture, social negativities, external stimuli such as events that undermine safety and security, inability to adapt to technological developments, economic factors, competition conditions, political factors, problems arising from legal legislation and regulations, environmental pressures, and change have an impact on individual performance (Gedik, 2010: 329; Güngören, 2017: 78).

Management standards used to evaluate employee performance can also increase individual performance (Gitongu et al., 2016: 199; Mackay et al., 2004; as cited in Dakhoul, 2018: 138). In addition, if employees' individual performance is high, there will be an increase in their job satisfaction with the organization and their jobs. This will increase the motivation of employees (Harter et al., 2002).

Individual performance is analyzed through two sub-dimensions in the literature. These are (Goodman & Svyantek, 1999; Borman & Motowidlo, 1993); (a) Contextual performance: It can be expressed as the attitudes and behaviors of employees that support the psychological and social context while performing activities within the formal job description (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997: 99). In other words, contextual performance refers to the activities that enable employees to successfully perform their tasks beyond their

job descriptions and voluntarily in line with their own will and by bringing together members of the organization (Sonnentag et al., 2008: 429). Contextual performance is extra-role behavior and is outside the formal reward system. However, it can be appreciated by higher units (Sonnentag et al., 2008: 428). In the exhibition of contextual performance, there are attitudes and behaviors in which employees' personality traits and good intentions are at the forefront. Essentially, contextual performance is a type of performance that supports task performance. While contextual performance is more related to employees' motivation and personality traits, task performance is related to employees' skills and competencies (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993; Sonnentag et al., 2008: 429). (b) Task performance, on the other hand, is a concept related to the success of the employee in the tasks and services that the employee has to perform as required by the job. Task performance is the type of performance in which the employee displays his skills and performance regarding the mastery and professional aspect of the job (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993; as cited in Borman & Motowidlo, 1997: 99). Task performance is job-specific and in-role behavior (Sonnentag et al., 2008: 428). Employees with a high level of task performance can undertake more responsibilities than those specified in their job descriptions. In addition, this type of performance may cause the employee to focus on the idea that he is suitable for a higher-level position in the organization. An employee's ability to perform the tasks required by his job and to achieve the goals related to his job in a timely and successful manner is an indicator that the employee's task performance is high (Gürsel, 2023: 64).

### *Inter-Conceptual Relationships, Theories and Hypotheses*

Organizations in today's business world strengthen the psychological aspect of employees to be more successful. Accordingly, employees are empowered to take priority in decision-making, have a lot of freedom in their work, and assume responsibility for the consequences of their decisions. Empowered employees are more aware of their participation in management. In this case, psychologically empowered employees perform their jobs with a higher level of performance. In other words, the individual performance levels that psychologically empowered employees should exhibit under their job descriptions may increase. In addition, there may be various mediating variables that increase the interaction between psychological empowerment and individual performance. One of these mediating variables is employees' perceptions of organizational justice, which shows how other employees in the organization are treated and whether they are treated equally (Judge & Colquitt, 2004: 395). In this direction, fair management in organizations may reflect positively on employees' attitudes and behaviours. In other words, there are various relationships between psychological empowerment, justice perception, and individual performance. Employees can only be empowered by being given a certain degree of authority, power, and responsibility (Tomas & Velthouse, 1990: 666). Empowered employees can perform better in the organization (Mahmoud et al., 2022; Liden et al., 2000; Seibert et al., 2004; Chen et al., 2007). Employees who perform well can be successful in the quantitative or qualitative results of their attitudes, activities, behaviors, and efforts while doing a job (Uysal, 2015: 33; Schuler, 1995: 92). Empowered employees may have more positive feelings and perceptions. In this context, justice perception is one of these positive perceptions (Purnama, 2020; Swalhi, 2017; Wang et al., 2010; Sökmen et al., 2013). In this sense, the individual performance of psychologically empowered employees with a positive justice perception of the organization may also increase. In this sense, as seen below, the relationships between the variables are explained through various hypotheses. In this context, the first hypothesis is as follows:

**H1:** There is a significant and positive relationship between the sub-dimensions of all variables.

Affective Events Theory can be referred to to comprehend the effect of psychological empowerment on justice perception. This theory deals with the structure, causes, and consequences of employees' emotional experiences (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996: 2). In addition, Affective Events Theory focuses on how emotions affect individuals' cognitions, attitudes, and behaviors (Alam & Singh, 2021; Kılınc, 2020: 786). This theory argues that employees' experiences affect their current attitudes and behaviors and that this situation is revealed as emotional events in their work life over time (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996: 3). Some authors have hypothesized that empowering employees can create positive emotions in them; they can have a sense of self-efficacy, which means that they can look to the future with hope and optimism and have the skills they may need (Kılınc, 2020: 787). In this direction, employees who develop a sense of self-efficacy may

have more positive feelings and perceptions toward their organization. One of these positive perceptions is the justice perception.

Tsai (2012) found a direct relationship between organizational justice and psychological empowerment in higher education institutions in the USA. In addition, Yürür and Demir (2011) found a mutual and strong relationship between the perception of organizational justice and psychological empowerment levels of employees working in the private sector in Turkey. Procedural justice, one of the sub-dimensions of justice perception, was found to affect psychological empowerment more. In addition, influence and self-determination sub-dimensions, which are sub-dimensions of psychological empowerment, were found to have a greater effect on all organizational justice dimensions than other dimensions. In this context, when employees feel free in decision-making processes and have influence over their decisions, they have positive opinions in their fairness evaluations towards higher units, what they obtain, and procedures (Yürür & Demir, 2011: 329). Mert and Kök (2017) found a strong relationship between the self-determination dimension, a sub-dimension of psychological empowerment, and the justice perception in their study on employees working in a public institution in Turkey. In this context, employees who are allowed to control, be empowered, and have self-determination in their work and who can see their work as valuable may want to feel the perception of organizational justice. In this direction, employees' justice perceptions are closely related to their ability to choose freely in the workplace (Mert & Kök, 2017: 542). However, as the authors mentioned in their studies, there is a weak relationship between the meaning dimension of empowerment and the dimensions of the concept of organizational justice. In this context, it should be the priority of managers to make the work meaningful and ensure that employees do their work by internalizing and making a high-level effort. Because if employees find their work meaningful, they will try to be more productive and efficient in the job (Mert & Kök, 2017: 543). This situation can reinforce employees' positive emotions, such as their justice perception. The second hypothesis formed in this context is as follows:

**H2:** Psychological empowerment has a positive and significant effect on justice perception.

Psychological empowerment's effect on individual performance can be explained within the framework of Social Exchange Theory. According to this theory, there is a reciprocity relationship between employees for their and the organization's benefit (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1976). The basic assumption of the theory is based on the view that the parties enter into and maintain various relationships with the expectation of being rewarded, such as honor, respect, friendship, and consideration. Interdependence is of great importance for the continuation of the social exchange relationship (Lambe et al., 2001: 2). According to this theory, imbalances in interrelation can ruin social relationships. Some authors have argued a positive relationship between employees who have the empowerment perception and their performance. According to Spreitzer (1995), employees with a better perception of empowerment perform better (Spreitzer, 1995). Employees who feel psychologically empowered can exhibit creativity at a higher level in their jobs. In addition, psychologically empowered employees' sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy may increase. In addition, it is known that empowered employees have increased self-confidence and belief in their ability to achieve and be effective in their jobs. In other words, psychologically empowered employees' emotional commitment to the organization may be positively affected (Wilkinson, 1998: 42; Ari & Ergeneli, 2003: 135). It may increase the individual performance of employees. Ultimately, if employees believe that they have an impact, can make a difference, and can influence organizational results, they may put more effort into their work, be more efficient in their tasks, and be seen as more effective in the organization (Ashforth, 1990; as cited in Spreitzer et al., 1997: 686). Thus, it may positively affect the individual performance of employees. As a result of the studies conducted by Mahmoud et al. (2022) on employees working in the private sector in Nigeria, by Liden et al. (2000) on employees and their senior managers in a private company in the USA, by Seibert et al. (2004) on employees in a private company in the USA, and by Chen et al. (2007) on employees and managers in a private company in the USA, it was found that psychological empowerment increases individual performance. According to various authors, the sub-dimensions of psychological empowerment also affect individual performance (Spreitzer et al., 1997: 683). In this context, there is a significant and positive relationship between meaning and individual performance (Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Thomas & Tymon, 1994; as cited in Spreitzer et al., 1997: 683). In this case, the level of meaning that the employee thinks about his job and task can affect individual performance positively or

negatively (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Some researchers have stated that competence, which reflects the self-efficacy of individual employees, has a positive effect on individual performance (Locke, 1991: 289; Gist & Mitchell, 1992: 183; as cited in Spreitzer et al., 1997: 683). According to some authors (1993), it has been found that employees who have more control over their jobs within the scope of self-determination show higher performance than other employees (Thomas & Tymon, 1994; Liden et al., 1993; as cited in Spreitzer et al., 1997: 685). Accordingly, the third hypothesis is formed in line with the research as follows:

**H3:** Psychological empowerment positively and significantly affects individual performance.

The effect of justice perception on individual performance is based on Adams' Equity Theory. Equity Theory is related to the idea that employees expect remuneration, reward, authorization, promotion, appreciation, job-related rights, fair treatment, and similar outputs from the organization in return for inputs such as education, experience, seniority, knowledge, effort, skill, and willingness (Lambert, 2003: 155). As a result, employees expect equal promotion for equal work, wages, promotions, leave, and other social opportunities, and the rules and their application methods should be applied equally to everyone (Adams, 1965; Lambert, 2003: 155). In the study conducted by Swalhi et al. (2017) on employees working in an organization in France, they found that justice perception has a positive effect on individual performance. Purnama et al. (2020) studied bank managers working in Indonesia and found that individual performance has a positive relationship with distributive justice, a dimension of justice perception. In addition, as a result of the study conducted by Wang et al. (2010) on employees working in China, it was found that the justice perception positively affects individual performance. As a result of the study conducted by Sökmen et al. (2013) on bank employees working in Turkey, it was found that justice perception and its sub-dimensions positively affect individual performance. Accordingly, the fourth hypothesis of the study was formed as follows:

**H4:** Justice perception positively and significantly affects individual performance.

The theoretical and literature-based implications of the first four hypotheses confirm the last hypothesis. The importance that organizations attach to their employees' psychological status, especially their psychological empowerment, can create positive effects. Psychological empowerment is the employees' perception of the level of authority, competence, and independent decision-making regarding the work environment and the meaningfulness of their work (Robbins & Judge, 2013). If organizations can psychologically empower their employees and allow them to develop, this can increase their individual performance (Gitongu et al., 2016: 199). Individual performance is one of the most important determinants of individual success. Employees who are psychologically empowered and whose individual performance increases as a result of this empowerment may have more positive feelings toward their organizations. Employees may show more tolerance for the organization's fairness in terms of whether they are maltreated or not (Eskew, 1993: 185). In this case, employees' perception of fairness may increase, and their perceptions may be more positive. Accordingly, the fifth and final hypothesis of the study is formed as follows:

**H5:** Justice perception has an intermediary role in the effect of psychological empowerment on individual performance.

In this direction, propositions can be made for the interactions between the variables to talk about the mediating effect of justice perception in the effect of psychological empowerment on individual performance. Accordingly, the bootstrap method developed by Hayes (2013) is widely used in mediating effect analysis. In the next section, these methods and findings will be analyzed in detail.

## Methodology

### *Purpose and Importance of the Study*

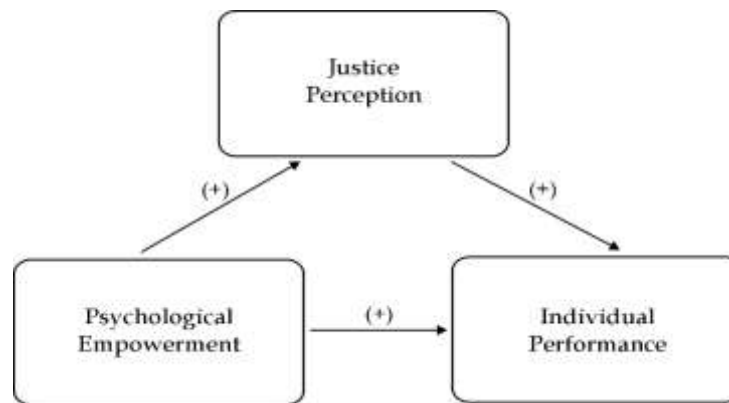
The study aims to determine the intermediary role of justice perception in the effect of psychological empowerment perceptions of employees in balloon companies in the Turkish aviation industry on



individual performance. There is no study in the literature that includes all three variables. In addition, there is no study on this subject in aviation organizations. In this sense, the research findings are expected to contribute to the literature. In addition, it will try to prove inferentially how employees' psychological empowerment perceptions affect their individual performance and how justice perception plays an intermediary role. In addition, the importance of the study comes from examining the changes in the performances and perceptions of psychologically empowered employees.

### *Model of the Study*

Figure 1 presents the conceptual model of the study, which was formed by considering the literature and hypotheses.



**Figure 1:** Conceptual Model of the Research

### *Research Sample, Method, and Data Collection Tools*

The study's target population is 950 white-collar employees working in balloon companies operating in the aviation industry in Turkey, which are included in the general list on the official website of DGCA. The study sample is 454 people working in balloon companies in Turkey. Among the questionnaires collected from 460 employees selected by this method, 454 questionnaires were included in the analyses since the data of 6 questionnaires were missing. Accordingly, the sample size of 454 employees seems acceptable with a margin of error of 5% within 95% reliability limits (Sekaran, 2003: 293-294). The convenience sampling method was selected within the study's scope, and the questionnaire technique was preferred as a data collection tool. Considering the variables in this study, the questionnaire technique is ideal for measuring the participants' thoughts and perceptions (Christensen et al., 2015: 57; as cited in Kaplan, 2018: 33). Ethics committee approval was obtained from the Scientific Ethics Committee, Deanship of the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Selçuk University, on May 21, 2024, with decision number 08/56, and permission was obtained from the relevant institution. SPSS 25 and Process Macro v.4.0 programs were used in the study.

In the study, the psychological empowerment scale developed by Spreitzer (1995) and adapted into Turkish by Somuncuoğlu (2013), consists of 4 sub-dimensions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact, and the distributive empowerment scale developed by Niehoff and Moorman (1993) and adapted into Turkish by Yıldırım (2002) were used. The Perception of Organizational Justice Scale, which consists of 3 sub-dimensions: distributive, procedural, and interactional justice, and finally the Individual Performance Scale, which consists of 2 sub-dimensions: contextual and task performance, developed by Goodman and Svyantek (1999) and adapted into Turkish by Polatçı (2011), were used. A 7-point Likert scale ranging from Never=1 to Always=7 was used in the analyses.

## Research Findings

The study used the SPSS 25.0 program and Process Macro v 4.0 application. Frequency analysis, exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and reliability analysis were conducted. In addition, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, regression, and mediating effects were analyzed using the bootstrap method developed by Hayes (2013). In addition, the Sobel test was used to examine the significance of the mediating effect (Sobel, 1982).

### Demographic Findings

Table 1 shows the demographical characteristics of the variables.

**Table 1.** Demographical Characteristics

DEMOG. CHARACTERISTICS	N	%	DEMOG. CHARACTERISTICS	N	%
GENDER			MARITAL STATUS		
Male	398	87.7	Married	269	59.3
Female	56	12.3	Single	185	40.7
AGE			EDUCATIONAL STATUS		
18-25 years old	81	17.8	High School	68	15.0
26-35 years old	134	29.5	College	178	39.2
36-45 years old	123	27.1	Bachelor's Degree	202	44.5
46-55 years old	77	17.0	Master's Degree/ PhD	6	1.3
56 years and above	39	8.6			
WORKING PERIOD IN ORG			TOTAL WORKING PERIOD		
1-5 years old	124	27.3	1-5 years old	96	21.1
6-10 years old	127	28.0	6-10 years old	110	24.2
11-15 years old	141	31.1	11-15 years old	84	18.5
16-20 years old	34	7.5	16-20 years old	77	17.0
21 years and above	28	6.2	21 years and above	87	19.2

According to Table 1, 87.7% (398) of the participants were male and 12.3% (56) were female. 59.3% (269) of the participants were married, and 40.7% (185) were single. 17.8% (81) of the participants were between 18 and 25 years old, 29.5% (134) were between 26 and 35 years old, 27.1% (123) were between 36 and 45 years, 17.0% (77) were between 46 and 55 years old, and 8.6% (39) were 56 years and over. 15.0% (68) of the participants were high school graduates, 39.2% (178) were associate's degree graduates, 44.5% (202) were bachelor's degree graduates, and 1.3% (6) were master's/Ph.D. graduates. In terms of employment period in the same organization, 27.3% (124) of the participants have been working for 1-5 years, 28.0% (127) for 6-10 years, 31.1% (141) for 11-15 years, 7.5% (34) for 16-20 years, and 6.2% (28) for 21 years or more. In terms of the total employment period of the participants, 21.1% (96) of them have been working for 1-5 years, 24.2% (110) for 6-10 years, 18.5% (84) for 11-15 years, 17.0% (77) for 16-20 years, and 19.2% (87) for 21 years or more.

### Validity and Reliability Analyses

In this section, the validity analyses of the variables were tested with exploratory (EFA) and confirmatory (CFA) factor analyses. CFA was conducted to re-test the validity results and to confirm the construct validity. Firstly, principal components and the direct noblemen method were used for exploratory factor analysis. Table 2 shows the validity data according to EFA.

**Table 2.** The Validity and Reliability Analysis for Variables

Scales	Factors	Factor Loading	Eigenvalue	Factor Explained (%)
Psychological Empowerment	Meaning	.774-.899	2.404	20.031
	Competence	.770-.879	2.383	19.844
	Self-Determ.	.876-.890	2.315	19.246
	Impact	.843-.891	2.285	19.028
Justice Perception	Distributive Perc.	.722-.794	4.068	23.937
	Procedural Perc.	.629-.770	4.484	26.383
	Interaction Perc.	.827-.897	3.493	20.561
Individual Performance	Contextual Per.	.646-.815	2.349	30.491
	Task Per.	.548-.817	2.466	28.353

Psychological Empowerment (*Ex. Tot. Var.* = %78.149;  $p=0.000$ ; KMO = 0.772; Bartlett's Sph.  $\chi^2=2764.868$ )

Justice Perception (*Ex. Tot. Var.* = %70.881;  $p=0.000$ ; KMO = 0.891; Bartlett's Sph.  $\chi^2=5698.972$ )

Individual Performance (*Ex. Tot. Var.* = %58.844;  $p=0.000$ ; KMO = 0.893; Bartlett's Sph.  $\chi^2=5669.438$ )

In Table 2, KMO and Bartlett's tests were performed to measure the acceptability of the data for factor analysis. Accordingly, the KMO value for psychological empowerment is 0.772 and Bartlett's test ( $p < .05$ ), the KMO value for justice perception is 0.891 and Bartlett's test ( $p < .05$ ), and the KMO value for individual performance is 0.893 and Bartlett's test ( $p < .05$ ), and they are significant. In this context, KMO > 0.6 and Bartlett sig < 0.05 are among the acceptable criteria (Pallant, 2020: 202). To examine the factor structures of the scales, exploratory factor analysis was performed using principal component analysis and direct oblimin methods.

As seen in Table 2, as in the original scale, the psychological empowerment scale was divided into four different dimensions, the perception of organizational justice scale into three different dimensions, and the individual performance scale into two different dimensions. In this case, it was found that the results were consistent with the sub-dimensional structures of the original scales of the variables. It was found that the factor loadings of psychological empowerment ranged between 0.770 and 0.899, the factor loadings of perception of organizational justice ranged between 0.629 and 0.897, and the factor loadings of individual performance ranged between 0.548 and 0.817. According to social sciences, a factor loading of 0.40 and above is an acceptable level (Şencan, 2005: 390). During the exploratory factor analysis, it was determined that the factor loadings of item 7 for psychological empowerment and item 4 for individual performance were overlapping, and these items decreased the reliability value of the scale. Accordingly, the regression coefficient values of these items within the scope of CFA were found to be insufficient, and they were removed from the analysis (Büyüköztürk, 2020). Exploratory factor analysis was conducted again on the remaining items. In addition, the total variance explained for psychological empowerment is 78.149%, the total variance explained for perception of organizational justice is 70.881%, and the total variance explained for individual performance is 58.844%. It is reasonable for unidimensional variables to have values above 0.30 and multidimensional variables above 0.50 for the total variance explained (Büyüköztürk et al., 2016: 112). In this case, it was observed that the variances of the dimensions were at a reasonable level. In addition, it is seen that the eigenvalues of all variables are above 1. In this case, the level of eigenvalues is at a normal level (Kaiser, 1960). As a result, it was determined that there was no common method variance problem in the study (Podsakoff et al., 2003: 889).

As a result of the EFA applied in the study, the structural validity and compatibility of the scales were controlled with CFA. Accordingly, first-level CFA was performed to confirm the four-dimensional structure of the psychological empowerment scale, the three-dimensional structure of the justice perception scale, and the two-dimensional structure of the individual performance scale, and the goodness of fit values for the variables were presented. Firstly, the first-level factor structure model for psychological empowerment is shown in Figure 2.

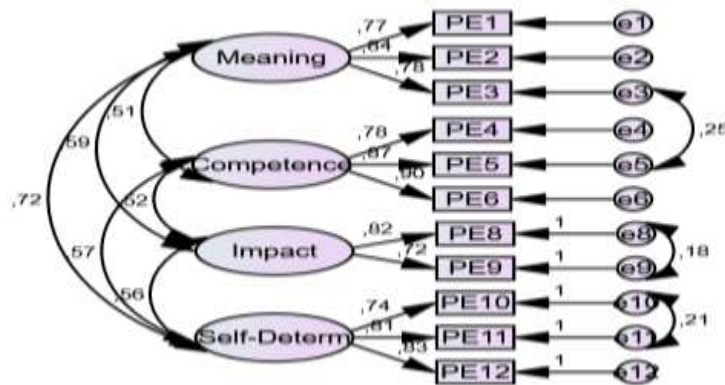


Figure 2. First-Level Factor Structure of Psychological Empowerment Scale

Since the standard regression coefficient (0.363) related to psychological empowerment in Figure 2 is very low, the expression ‘PE7’ was deleted from the scale, and confirmatory factor analysis was applied again. In the fit indices related to the psychological empowerment scale, modifications were made for PE3-PE5, PE8-PE9, and PE10-PE11 to provide a better fit for GFI and NFI, especially because it increased the Chi-square value too much.

It was observed that the factor loadings for the meaning dimension of psychological empowerment were between 0.64 and 0.78, the factor loadings for the competence dimension were between 0.78 and 0.90, the factor loadings for the self-determination dimension were between 0.74 and 0.83, and the factor loadings for the impact dimension were between 0.72 and 0.82. In this case, it can be said that the factor loadings are above 0.40 and at an acceptable level (Hair et al., 1998: 89). Figure 3 presents the first-level factor structure for justice perception.

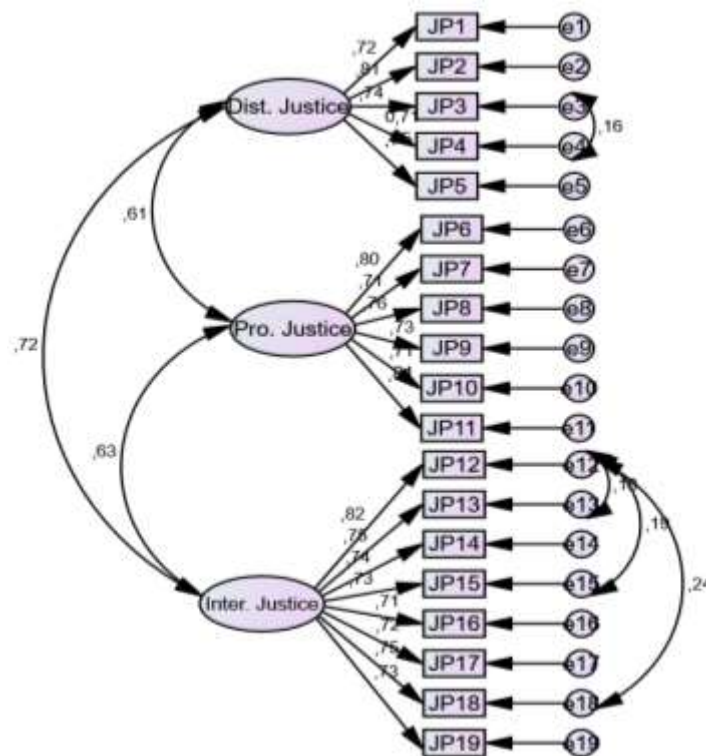


Figure 3. First-Level Factor Structure of the Justice Perception Scale



Since the standard regression coefficient (0.378) related to the justice perception in Figure 3 was low, JP20 was removed from the scale, and confirmatory factor analysis was applied again. Modifications were made for JP3 - JP4, JP12- JP13, JP12- JP15, and JP12- JP18 items to provide a better fit for CFI and NFI, especially because they increased the Chi-square value too much in the fit indices related to the justice perception scale.

It was observed that the factor loadings for the distributive justice dimension of justice perception were between 0.70 and 0.81, the factor loadings for the procedural justice dimension were between 0.71 and 0.84, and the factor loadings for the interactional justice dimension were between 0.71 and 0.82. In this case, it can be said that the factor loadings are above 0.40 and at an acceptable level (Hair et al., 1998: 89). Figure 4 presents the first-level factor structure model for individual performance.

Since the standard regression coefficient (0.381) related to individual performance in Figure 4 was low, IP4 was removed from the scale, and confirmatory factor analysis was applied again. Modifications were made for IP7-IP9, IP8-IP9, IP12-IP13, and IP16-IP17 items to provide a better fit for GFI and CFI, especially because they increased the Chi-square value too much in the fit indices related to the individual performance scale.

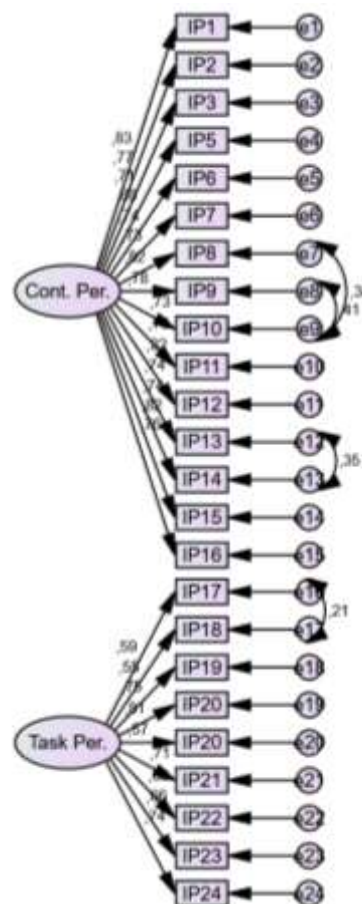


Figure 4: First-Level Factor Structure of Individual Performance Scale

It was observed that the factor loadings for the contextual performance dimension of individual performance were between 0.68 and 0.92, and the factor loadings for the task performance dimension were between 0.59 and 0.81. In this case, it can be said that the factor loadings are above 0.40 and at an acceptable level (Hair et al., 1998: 89). The fit values for all variables are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Goodness of Fit Values for Variables

Scales/Results	$\Delta X^2/df$	GFI	CFI	NFI	RMSEA
Psychological Empowerment	3.769	0.915	0.893	0.882	0.076
<b>Result</b>	<b>Acceptable Fit</b>	<b>Good Fit</b>	<b>Acceptable Fit</b>	<b>Acceptable Fit</b>	<b>Acceptable Fit</b>
Justice Perception	3.224	0.931	0.911	0.953	0.071
<b>Result</b>	<b>Acceptable Fit</b>	<b>Good Fit</b>	<b>Good Fit</b>	<b>Good Fit</b>	<b>Acceptable Fit</b>
Individual Performance	3.018	0.921	0.954	0.931	0.074
<b>Result</b>	<b>Acceptable Fit</b>	<b>Good Fit</b>	<b>Good Fit</b>	<b>Acceptable Fit</b>	<b>Acceptable Fit</b>
<b>Good Fit</b>	$0 \leq \Delta X^2/df \leq 3$	$0.90 \leq GFI \leq 1.00$	$0.90 \leq CFI \leq 1.00$	$0.95 \leq NFI \leq 1.00$	$0 < RMSEA < 0.05$
<b>Acceptable Fit</b>	$3 < \Delta X^2/df \leq 5$	$0.80 \leq GFI < 0.90$	$0.85 \leq CFI \leq 0.90$	$0.80 \leq NFI < 0.95$	$0.05 < RMSEA < 0.08$

Source: Simon et al., 2010: 239; Schumacker & Lomax, 2010

In Table 3, it is observed that psychological empowerment, perception of organizational justice, and individual performance scales meet the criteria of good fit or acceptable fit in terms of model fit index values (Meydan & Şeşen, 2011: 37). In addition, the CFA results above also confirmed that the standardized factor loadings of all scales in the observed variables have convergent validity. However, it is necessary to evaluate the convergent validity along with the construct validity. In this context, reliability, CR, and AVE values for all scales and their sub-dimensions are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Cronbach's Alpha, CR and AVE Values for Variables

Scales and Sub-Dimensions	Number of Exp.	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
<b>Psychological Empowerment</b>	11	.873	.814	.601
Meaning	3	.859	.730	.512
Competence	3	.864	.711	.526
Self-Determ.	3	.856	.781	.504
Impact	2	.838	.734	.501
<b>Justice Perception</b>	19	.881	.803	.568
Distributive Perc.	5	.873	.735	.536
Procedural Perc.	6	.783	.723	.532
Interactional Perc.	8	.835	.793	.502
<b>Individual Performance</b>	24	.855	.824	.548
Contextual Per.	15	.823	.798	.537
Task Per.	9	.847	.757	.504

As seen in Table 4, Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients exceeding 0.70 in all scales and sub-dimensions indicate that the scales are statistically reliable (Leech, 2007; Kalaycı, 2006). It is reasonable for variables to have values above 0.70 for the CR value and above 0.50 for the AVE value (Hair et al., 2014; Shrestha, 2021). In this context, it is seen that the CR and AVE values of self-determination, impact, and interaction perception values are lower than the standard values. However, divergent and convergent validity should be considered to make a clear decision about construct validity. The AVE value of a dimension greater than the square of the correlation between the largest dimensions is sufficient to ensure discriminant validity

(Fornell & Larcker, 1981). In addition, for discriminant validity, it is reasonable for the correlations between factors to be less than 0.85 (Kline, 2018; Chou et al., 2002). This condition is available for the dimensions. Accordingly, it was found convergent validity was provided for the dimensions when AVE values were greater than 0.50 and  $CR > AVE$  (Hair et al., 2010; Sharif et al., 2020). In addition, factor loadings and Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients were found to be above 0.70 and sufficient, and it was decided to keep these variables. As a result, these variables are reliable. The variables have construct validity and convergent validity.

### Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis

Table 5 shows the descriptive statistics of the variables, correlation analysis to determine the relationship between the variables, and skewness and kurtosis values.

**Table 5.** Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis

	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Psy. Empowerment (G)	5.82	.695	1											
2. Meaning	6,17	.653	.425**	1										
3. Competence	5.14	.626	.417**	.526**	1									
4. Self-Determ.	5.84	.579	.432**	.437**	.257**	1								
5. Impact	4.67	.425	.355**	.368**	.548**	.257**	1							
6. Justice Perc. (G)	4.49	.514	.436**	.246**	.368**	.363**	.532**	1						
7. Dist. Perc.	4.76	.578	.434**	.187	.122	.157	.436**	.568**	1					
8. Pro. Perc.	4.48	.583	.476**	.065	.325**	.352**	.289**	.531**	.374**	1				
9. Inter. Perc.	5.09	.547	.443**	.265**	.550**	.458**	.368**	.518**	.325**	.534**	1			
10. Individual Per. (G)	4.56	.432	.465**	.443**	.369**	.378**	.432**	.413**	.501**	.378**	.417**	1		
11. Cont. Per.	4.57	.429	.448**	.113	.376**	.512**	.501**	.422**	.294*	.538**	.376**		1	
12. Task Per.	4.83	.438	.322**	.465**	.441**	.436**	.446**	.413**	.393**	.513**	.355**			1

\*  $p < 0.05$  \*\* $p < 0.01$

Psy. Empowerment and Sub Dimensions (Min.-Max.): Skewness= -.326 ; Kurtosis= .625

Justice Perception and its Sub Dimensions (Min.-Max.): Skewness= -.436; Kurtosis= .642

Individual Per. and its Sub Dimensions (Min.-Max.): Skewness= -.653 ; Kurtosis= .538

According to Table 5, the highest mean belongs to meaning (6.17), the sub-dimension of psychological empowerment, while the lowest mean belongs to procedural perceptions (4.48), the sub-dimension of justice perception. In addition, it was determined that the skewness and kurtosis values of the scales were within  $\pm 2$  limits, and the data were normally distributed (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013: 133).

According to the correlation analysis, there are significant and positive relationships between the sub-dimensions of the variables. In this context, it was determined that there is a higher level of relationship between competence and interactional justice ( $r = .550$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ), self-determination and contextual performance ( $r = .512$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ), procedural justice and contextual performance ( $r = .538$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ) compared to other sub-dimensions. In this case, hypothesis H1 was partially supported.

#### *Findings of Regression and Mediating Effect Analyses*

In this section, regression analysis based on the bootstrap method in the Process Macro extension created by Hayes (2013) is used for regression analysis and mediating effect. In Process Macro, model 4 analysis is based on bootstrapping and 5000 resampling options for the intermediary role. In this sense, the significance level of  $p < 0.05$  and 95% confidence interval (CI) values indicate the status of the hypotheses. In this respect, the confidence interval BootLLCI and BootULCI values must contain zero values to confirm the hypotheses (Hayes, 2013: 405).

#### *Regression Analysis*

Table 6 shows the results of the regression analysis with Process Macro plug-in.

**Table 6.** Regression Analysis Results

Scales	Justice Perception				Individual Performance			
	B	S.E.	P	95% CI	B	S.E.	P	95% CI
Psychological Empowerment	.1910	.077	.000*	[.31; .32]	.4553	.0601	.000*	[.37; .59]
Justice Perception	-	-	-	-	.4052	.0379	.000*	[.32; .47]
Constant	.3499	.2364	.000*	[3.03; .3.89]	0.9315	.2318	.001*	[.47; .1.33]
R=.119 R <sup>2</sup> =.0142 F= 6.019					R= .529 R <sup>2</sup> = .280 F= 81.328			

\*  $p < 0.05$  \*\* $p < 0.01$

Table 6 shows that psychological empowerment has a significant and positive effect on justice perception (95% CI [.31;.32];  $\beta = 0.1910$ ;  $p = .000$ ). Psychological empowerment explained 14.2% of the change in justice perception ( $R^2 = 0.142$ ;  $F = 6.019$ ;  $P = .000$ ). Accordingly, hypothesis H2 is accepted. Furthermore, psychological empowerment has a significant and positive effect on individual performance (95% CI [.37;.59];  $\beta = .4553$ ;  $p = .000$ ). In addition, psychological empowerment explained 28.0% of the change in individual performance ( $R^2 = .280$ ;  $F = 81.328$ ;  $P = .000$ ). Accordingly, hypothesis H3 is accepted. Moreover, justice perception has a significant and positive effect on individual performance (95% CI [.32;.47];  $\beta = .4052$ ;  $p = .000$ ). In this case, it is observed that psychological empowerment and justice perception explain individual performance together. Accordingly, justice perception explains 28.0% of the change in individual performance ( $R^2 = .280$ ;  $F = 81.328$ ;  $P = .000$ ). As a result, hypothesis H4 is accepted. Table 7 shows the results of the mediation analysis.

**Table 7.** Mediation Analysis Results

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Mediator	B	P	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Psy. Empowerment	Individual Perf.	Justice Perc.	.7892	.000*	.0262	1431	.1488

Sobel Test: Z Scor= 4.235 ;  $P = .000$



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\*  $p < 0.05$  \*\* $p < 0.01$

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In Table 7, the results related to the bootstrap confidence interval values show the significance of the indirect effect values in the mediating effect calculation, and the Sobel test results are determined within the framework of the mediation analysis. Accordingly, the effect of the justice perception on individual performance is indirect. Therefore, justice perception has a mediating effect on psychological empowerment and individual performance ( $b = .7892$ ) and (95% BCA CI [.1431, .1488]). As a result of the bootstrap analysis, the adjusted bias and accelerated confidence interval values include zero values. The fully standardized effect size of the mediating effect is ( $K^2 = .0059$ ), which is of the mean value (Preacher & Hayes, 2008: 884; Sürücü et al., 2021: 162). In addition, the Sobel test was used to examine the significance of the mediating effect (Sobel, 1982). If the Z score in the Sobel test is greater than 1.96 and the p-value is significant, the indirect effect is positive (Frazier et al., 2004). In this context, the Sobel test z value ( $z = 4.235$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ) was significant. Accordingly, hypothesis H5 is supported.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Many processes in organizations are carried out through human resources. In this respect, it is known that employees' perceptions about the organization and organizational process and their attitudes and behaviors are important for organizations. In this case, empowering employees to achieve organizational goals and increasing their positive feelings and perceptions in the organizational process is efficient in both employee and organizational success. Especially in the aviation industry, where there is a lot of change, supporting the psychological aspect of employees plays a significant role in organizational success. In this direction, for the organization's success to be sustained, it can be ensured that the employees are empowered and their individual performances are increased. One of the factors that increase the efficiency of this situation may be employees' justice perceptions, which include their perceptions of whether the organization is fair in the process of making decisions about the distribution of rights (Wan, 2016: 38). Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to examine the intermediary role of justice in the effect of psychological empowerment perceptions of employees working in private balloon companies in Turkey on individual performance.

According to the conclusions of the study, it particularly proved the relationships between the sub-dimensions of the variables. In particular, the relationships of some sub-dimensions received higher values than the other sub-dimensional relationships. The first of these high-value relationships is the relationship between competence and interactional justice. It may be because employees have more positive thoughts towards their organizations as a consequence of their positive thoughts about their ability to perform their work activities well. In this case, a more positive perspective on perceptions of interpersonal behavior among employees may also emerge. Another conclusion is that there is a good relationship between self-determination and contextual performance. It may be because employees adopt the organization more and voluntarily perform activities outside the job description as a consequence of their perceptions of having the authority to make decisions about the functioning of the job and being able to act freely. In addition, there is a good relationship between procedural justice and contextual performance. It may be because employees perceive the procedures in which decisions are made as fair, working more for the organization, and can successfully perform tasks outside their job descriptions and in line with their wishes. In addition, psychological empowerment has a positive effect on justice perception. It may be because the employees have a positive perception of feeling empowered and performing their organizational tasks more successfully. In addition, psychological empowerment has a positive effect on individual performance. It may be because of the positive perception of organizational practices for empowering employees by employees, which increases the degree of success of employees in the work or tasks they are required to perform. Finally, justice perception had a positive effect on individual performance. It may be because employees perceive the decisions and practices of organizational management positively and increase their productivity and efficiency. In this case, the rate of employees' fulfillment of the tasks assigned to them increases.

No study in the literature examines all variables of the research simultaneously. However, some studies mention the bilateral relationships between variables. As a result of the first of these studies conducted by Tsai (2012) on 287 employees working in higher education institutions in the United States, he found a direct relationship between psychological empowerment and organizational justice. In this case, our study is similar to this study. In addition, the relationships between all variables were examined in our study. As a result of the study conducted by Yürür and Demir (2011) on 237 employees working in the private sector in Turkey, they determined that psychological empowerment increases the perception of organizational justice, and the perception of organizational justice positively affects the psychological empowerment levels of employees. However, this study observed that procedural justice affected psychological empowerment more than other sub-dimensions. In addition, impact and autonomy sub-dimensions, which are sub-dimensions of psychological empowerment, were found to have a greater effect on all organizational justice dimensions than other dimensions. The result of this study is similar to our study. However, in general, our study found psychological empowerment to affect the justice perception. In addition, the relationships between all variables were also examined in our study. Mert and Kök (2017) conducted a study on 105 employees working in a public institution in Turkey and found that psychological empowerment increases the perception of organizational justice. In particular, a strong relationship was found between the autonomy dimension, which is a sub-dimension of psychological empowerment, and the justice perception. As in this study, psychological empowerment was found to increase the justice perception in our study. However, unlike this study, in terms of sub-dimensional relationships, a good relationship was found between competence and interactional justice in our study. As a result of the studies conducted by Mahmoud et al. (2022) on 355 employees working in the private sector in Nigeria, by Liden et al. (2000) on 337 employees working in a business in the USA and their senior managers, by Seibert et al. (2004) on 375 employees working in a private company in the USA, and by Chen et al. (2007) on 538 employees and managers working in a private company in the USA, they found that psychological empowerment increases individual performance. As in the results of these studies, psychological empowerment was found to increase individual performance in our study. However, we also examined the relationships between all variables in our study. Swalhi et al. (2017) conducted a study on 343 employees working in an organization in France and found that justice perception has a positive effect on individual performance. This study is similar to our study. However, we examined the relationships between all sub-dimensions in our study. Purnama et al. (2020) conducted a study on 100 bank managers working in Indonesia and found that individual performance has a positive relationship with distributive justice, a dimension of justice perception. This study is similar to our study. However, our study found that psychological empowerment affects the perception of organizational justice in general. Wang et al. (2010) conducted a study on 793 employees working in China and found that justice perception positively affects individual performance. In line with this result, it was found that justice perception increased individual performance in our study. Sökmen et al. (2013) performed a study on 130 bank employees working in Turkey and found that justice perception and its sub-dimensions positively affect individual performance. The result of this study is similar to our study. As a result of this study, it was found that justice perception positively affects individual performance in our study. In addition, the relationships between all variables were also examined in our study.

The relationships between psychological empowerment, justice perception, and individual performance variables have been studied as bilateral relationships in some studies in the literature. However, no study examines the relationship between all three variables simultaneously. In this context, this study contributes to the literature. In addition, the fact that the study was conducted on aviation industry employees can be seen as another contribution. Moreover, it is assumed that researchers and managers will make significant inferences from the study results. However, conducting the surveys in a limited period and not reaching all employees can be considered among the study limitations. In future studies, different target populations can be used, and longitudinal studies can be conducted to analyze the change in perceptions of variables over time. In future studies, the interview technique can also be applied to reveal the underlying points of the quantitative research results in detail. At this point, future researchers may be advisable to apply qualitative survey designs in addition to quantitative research. In addition, different studies can be conducted to examine the relationship between psychological empowerment and different organizational

perceptions, such as supportive organizational climate, organizational politics, and support for innovation, in the effect of psychological empowerment on individual performance.

As a result of the study, the positive organizational outcomes of the intermediary role of the justice perception, which further increases the individual performance of psychologically empowered employees, were discussed. Through these outcomes, empowering employees is beneficial for increasing individual performance and organizational performance. In this context, this study provides a perspective for organizations to empower and support employees psychologically, and the role of justice perception in supporting this situation is emphasized. As a result, it has been proven that the performance of employees can increase when the organization creates the correct perceptions and exhibits the right attitude toward its employees.

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