

THE MEDIATING ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL OWNERSHIP IN THE IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE ON QUIET QUITTING : AN APPLICATION IN THE AVIATION SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of quiet quitting has emerged in recent years, particularly in the context of the pandemic. Although the concept of "quiet quitting" is a relatively recent addition to the extant literature, it is becoming increasingly prevalent among Generation Z. Further research is required in order to enhance comprehension of the notion of quiet quitting. The objective of this study is to examine the mediating role of psychological ownership in the relationship between organizational justice and quiet quitting, drawing on social exchange theory. A survey was conducted among 218 white-collar employees of a private aviation company operating in Turkey, in order to collect the necessary data. The data obtained from the study was analyzed using Amos 24.0, SPSS 27.0, and SPSS Process Macro programs. The analyses revealed a significant relationship between organizational justice and quiet quitting, and psychological ownership mediated the relationship between organizational justice and quiet quitting. The theoretical and practical contributions of the research to the existing literature are discussed, and recommendations are made for future research, managers and organizations.

Keywords: Organizational justice, psychological ownership, quiet quitting

INTRODUCTION

With the COVID-19 pandemic, quiet quitting trends in organizations have become a significant topic of discussion. Quiet quitting is defined as employees performing only the duties outlined in their job descriptions and not taking on any additional duties (Scheyett, 2023). Individuals who do not officially resign from their jobs but fail to fully fulfill their professional responsibilities and lose organizational commitment are called silent resigners. Quiet quitting poses significant challenges for organizations because it is not immediately recognized in the workplace (Kachhap and Singh, 2024). The reasons why employees resort to quiet quitting can be addressed within the framework of social change theory. This theory is based on the premise that individuals form social relationships with other individuals, groups, or organizations based on the expectation of mutual benefit (Blau, 1964; Margaretha and

Panggabean, 2025). Reasons for quiet quitting include perceived career development opportunities (Xueyun et al., 2023), workplace ostracism (Dutta et al., 2024), organizational cynicism (Avcı, 2023), and managerial organizational support (Gabelaia and Bagociunaite, 2023). Furthermore, quiet quitting is also associated with an employee's reduced commitment to an organization and willingness to do so due to their salary increase expectations not being considered and unfavorable conditions in job characteristics (Dutta et al., 2024; Formica and Sfodera, 2022). However, studies examining the mechanism underlying the relationship between organizational justice and quiet quitting are limited (Margaretha and Panggabean, 2025; Kang et al., 2025; Deniz, 2025). Therefore, more empirical research is needed to determine the effects of quiet quitting on employees and the factors that contribute to the emergence of this concept/phenomenon. Quiet quitting has become a particularly noteworthy issue in the aviation sector due to its potential to negatively impact operational efficiency (Talukder and Prieto, 2025). This phenomenon poses certain challenges, especially in service industries such as aviation and tourism. Therefore, quiet quitting is also associated with burnout, job dissatisfaction, and discontent. The spread of quiet quitting behaviors among employees can lead to a decline in customer satisfaction and service quality. Additionally, these behaviors can also cause operational disruptions and weaken teamwork. Solving this problem may be more difficult in service sectors such as the aviation industry.

Organizational justice is defined as respecting employees' dignity, cultural values, and personality, and as non-discrimination among them (Cremer, 2005). Organizational justice is a term related to how employees perceive and distribute their achievements (Ambrose, 2002). In this respect, organizational justice is a crucial concept that shapes employees' work processes and leads to many behavioral outcomes. Organizational justice is defined as addressing individuals' perceptions of justice in the workplace (Colquitt, 2001). Organizational justice is crucial for organizations and employees. Interaction, procedural, and distributive dimensions of organizational justice (Hermanto and Srimulyani, 2022). Employees generally evaluate workplace justice processes based on four criteria: a fair wage policy, equitable decision-making processes, honorable and respectful behavior, and effective communication techniques (Colquitt, 2001). Research has emphasized the importance of justice for individuals in various organizational areas, such as compensation systems, corporate ethics programs, performance evaluations, and dismissal (Moliner et al., 2017; Cropanzano and Ambrose, 2015). Furthermore, previous research has demonstrated that organizational justice leads to positive outcomes in the workplace. For instance, Purnama et al. (2020) discovered a positive relationship between organisational justice and job performance. Furthermore, it has been determined that the perception of organizational justice reduces the turnover intention (Mengstie, 2020). In conclusion, organizational justice encompasses ensuring that workplace practices are ethical and fair and that they are encouraged. In other words, employees in a fair workplace evaluate managers' behavior as fair and

ethical. Overall, employees with a low perception of organizational justice experience lower morale and may engage in certain activities detrimental to the organization (e.g., quiet quitting).

Psychological ownership is primarily a perception of volunteerism that emerges from the individual's own recognition (Dawkins et al., 2017). As Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) define it, organisational loyalty is characterised as the sense of individual ownership towards the organisation in achieving its goals. In contrast to concepts such as commitment and satisfaction, psychological ownership is associated with the sense of ownership. Therefore, the feeling of psychological ownership is the perception that the individual has a contribution and a share in the goals set by the organization. Previous research has demonstrated that concepts such as organizational citizenship behavior (O'Driscoll et al., 2006) and organizational commitment (VandeWalle et al., 1995) are positively related to psychological ownership. Psychological ownership can lead employees to take responsibility and initiative for the organization's success. Creating an organizational culture that rewards employees' contributions can also increase employees' sense of belonging to the organization. It is desirable for organizations that employees psychologically identify with them without any legal or contractual obligation. Employees who feel a sense of justice within their organizations will begin to channel their feelings and energy toward the organization and increase their level of psychological ownership.

It is hypothesised that employees who perceive organizational justice as being high will demonstrate increased levels of psychological ownership. Furthermore, a robust sense of psychological ownership has been demonstrated to have a mitigating effect on employees' tendencies towards quiet quitting. The objective of this study is to examine the indirect effect of organizational justice on quiet quitting through psychological ownership. This study is expected to contribute to the literature. Firstly, it provides support for the findings of previous research by examining the effect of organizational justice on quiet quitting. This study contributes to the extant literature by offering an expanded examination of the relationship between organizational justice and quiet quitting, with a particular focus on the mediating role of psychological ownership.

Research Method

The analysis of research data was conducted utilising the AMOS, SPSS and SPSS Process Macro programs. First, bivariate correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationships among the scales in the study using the SPSS 27.0 analysis program. To validate the research model, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and convergent and discriminant validity tests of the scales were conducted using the AMOS 24.0 analysis package. The hypotheses of the study were tested using the SPSS Process Macro program (Preacher and Hayes, 2004).

Research Population and Sample

Employees of a private company in the aviation sector in Turkey constitute the research population. 260 surveys were distributed to participants via face-to-face and online (email and WhatsApp) surveys

created via Google Forms. The sample of the study consists of 218 white-collar aviation employees who completed the distributed survey forms completely and accurately.

Data Collection Tools

Since the research was quantitative, data was collected using a survey technique. To collect research data, scales with proven validity and reliability in our country were preferred, and no scale development work was carried out within the scope of the research. The survey form utilised for the research comprises four sections. The first part of the survey form included 4 questions to determine the demographic information of the participants. The remaining sections of the questionnaire comprise 34 statements pertaining to the variables of organizational justice, psychological ownership and quiet quitting. Each statement on the scales is rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree - 5 = strongly agree).

Organizational Justice Scale: To determine participants' perceptions of organizational justice, a scale developed by Niehoff and Moorman (1993) was used. The scale was adapted to Turkish by Gürbüz and Mert (2009). The scale consists of 20 items and three subscales: distributive, procedural, and interactional justice.

Psychological Ownership Scale: To determine participants' perceptions of psychological ownership, a scale developed by Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) was used. The scale was adapted to Turkish by Ötken (2015). The scale consists of a single dimension and seven items.

Quiet Quitting Scale: To determine participants' tendency to quiet quitting, a scale developed by Anand et al. (2023) was used. The scale was adapted to Turkish by Sürücü et al. (2024). The scale consists of a single dimension and seven items.

Research Model and Hypotheses

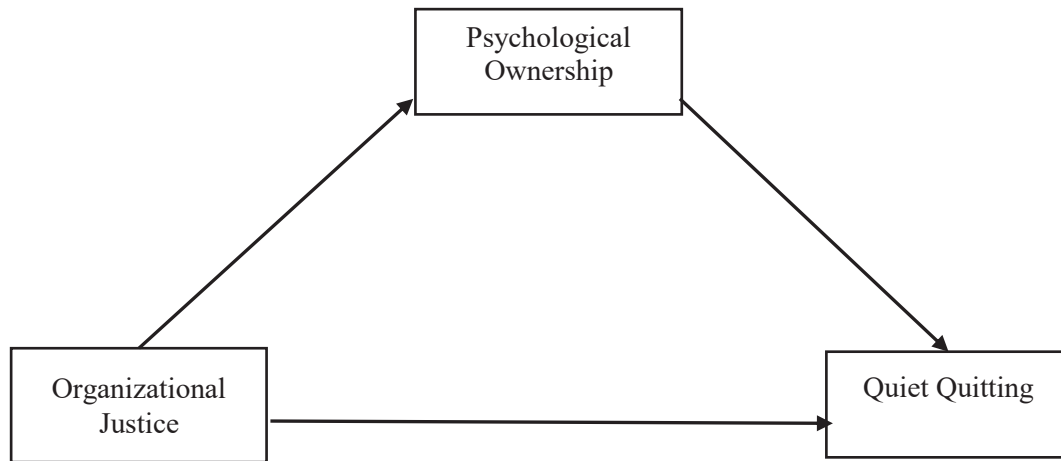
The present study developed a research model to examine the mediating role of psychological ownership in the relationship between organizational justice and quiet quitting (see Figure 1), and the following hypotheses were formulated.

H₁ = Organizational justice has a negative and significant effect on quiet quitting behavior.

H₂ = Organizational justice has a positive and significant effect on psychological ownership behavior.

H₃ = Perceived psychological ownership significantly and negatively affects quiet quitting.

H₄ = Psychological ownership mediates the effect of perceived organizational justice on the tendency toward quiet quitting.

**Figure 1.** Research Model**Findings****Findings Related to Demographic Characteristics**

Demographic findings regarding participants' gender, age, marital status, and tenure are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics

	Categories	n	%
Gender	Female	78	35
	Male	139	65
Age	22-30 years old	36	17
	31-39 years old	98	45
	40-48 years old	46	21
	49 years and older	38	17
Marital Status	Married	149	68
	Single	69	32
Tenure	2 years and under	21	10
	3-6 years	62	28

7-10 years	85	39
11 years and over	50	23
Total	218	100.0

Looking at the demographic characteristics of the total 218 aviation employees who participated in the study, it is seen that 65% of the participants are male and 35% are female. This indicates that the sample consists largely of male employees and points to a relatively high level of male employment in the aviation sector. However, it can also be said that the proportion of female employees is significant, thus ensuring a certain diversity in terms of gender distribution in the study. When examining the age distribution, the most concentrated group is in the 31-39 age range at 45%, followed by the 40-48 age range at 21%. This finding shows that the majority of participants are in age ranges where they have gained professional experience and are likely to be familiar with organizational processes. This may be important in shaping perceptions of organizational justice and levels of psychological ownership. Because middle-aged employees interact more with the organization, they may be more likely to develop commitment to the organization or quiet quitting based on their perceptions of justice. In terms of marital status, 68% of participants are married. Married employees may tend to form more stable bonds with the organization; therefore, the effect of perceptions of justice and psychological ownership on quiet quitting tendencies may be more pronounced in this group. The percentage of single employees is 32%, and it can be argued that this group may have relatively weaker organizational ties and, therefore, their quiet quitting tendencies related to their perception of fairness may take a different form. In terms of length of service, 39% of participants have worked for 7-10 years, 28% for 3-6 years, and 23% have 11 years or more of experience. This distribution shows that individuals with high organizational experience are dominant in the sample. Long-term employment may enable employees to evaluate organizational justice practices more holistically and establish a deeper psychological bond with the organization. However, it is also possible that these individuals may develop a tendency toward quiet quitting if they perceive injustice as a result of long-term observations.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The measurement model developed within the scope of the research was examined for construct validity using the AMOS program. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. CFA Results of the Measurement Model

	χ^2/df	TLI	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR
Measurement Model	2.31	0.94	0.95	0.06	0.04

N=218

The goodness-of-fit values of the measurement model in Table 2 demonstrate that the variables employed in the study (organizational justice, psychological ownership, and quiet quitting tendency) are adequately represented by the structure predicted by theory. χ^2/df value of 2.31 for the research model demonstrates that the model exhibits a satisfactory degree of compatibility with the data. According to the extant literature, a value of χ^2/df less than 3.0 is indicative of a satisfactory fit (Kline, 2016). RMSEA value of 0.06 indicates that the model displays a satisfactory degree of fit. RMSEA values lower than 0.08 have been shown to indicate a satisfactory model fit (Hu and Bentler, 1999). CFI value of 0.95 and TLI value of 0.94 demonstrate that the model displays almost perfect fit. In general, CFI and TLI values of 0.90 or above indicate a structurally sound fit for structural equation models (Byrne, 2016). SRMR value of 0.04 further demonstrates that the model exhibits a minimal discrepancy between the observed and predicted correlations. Values of SRMR less than 0.05 are indicative of a good fit, and values less than 0.08 are indicative of an acceptable fit (Hooper et al., 2008).

When these results are evaluated as a whole, it can be said that considering the three variables addressed in the study (organizational justice, psychological ownership, and quiet quitting tendency) under a single measurement model is statistically appropriate and aligns meaningfully with the data obtained. This finding demonstrates that the conceptual model's theoretical foundation is empirically supported and provides a strong basis for structural analyses to be conducted in subsequent stages of the research.

Correlation and Reliability Analyses

The results of the correlation for the three primary variables of the study (organizational justice, psychological ownership and quiet quitting) are presented in Table 3. The table also includes the standard deviation (SD), reliability (Cronbach's Alpha= α), mean (X), and the results of the correlation analysis.

Table 3. Correlation and Reliability Findings for the Scales

	$\bar{x}$	SD	OJ	PO	QQ	α
Organizational Justice (OJ)	3.72	0.62	-			0.917
Psychological Ownership (PO)	3.95	0.58	0.57**	-		0.873
Quiet Quitting (QQ)	2.43	0.71	-0.43**	-0.48**	-	0.906

N=218; ** $p < .01$; OJ= Organizational Justice, PO= Psychological Ownership; QQ= Quiet Quitting

Table 3 shows the correlation and reliability findings for all scales. First, the internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) of the variables were determined to be high ($\alpha = 0.917$ for organizational justice; $\alpha = 0.873$ for psychological ownership; $\alpha = 0.906$ for quiet quitting). Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.70 and above are generally considered acceptable (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994).

When the correlations between variables were examined, a positive and moderately significant relationship ($r = 0.57$; $p < .01$) was determined between organizational justice and psychological ownership. This result can be interpreted as indicating that aviation employees tend to have greater ownership of their organizations when their perceptions of organizational justice are high. The current research is consistent with previous literature demonstrating that organizational justice increases employees' sense of organizational identification and belonging and strengthens psychological ownership (Avey et al., 2009; Pierce et al., 2001).

Additionally, a negative and significant relationship ($r = -0.43$; $p < .01$) was found between organizational justice and the tendency of quiet quitting. This finding suggests that as employees' perceptions of organizational justice increase, factors that lead to quiet quitting, such as psychologically withdrawing from their jobs and performing duties included in the job description, may decrease. Similarly, a negative and significant relationship ($r = -0.48$; $p < .01$) was found between psychological ownership and the tendency to quiet quitting. As employees' perception of organizational ownership increases, their tendency to quiet quitting decreases. This result can be interpreted as psychological ownership increasing employee commitment and motivation, thus reducing the tendency to quiet quitting (O'Driscoll et al., 2006).

Testing the Hypotheses

After validating the measurement model and establishing meaningful relationships between correlation analyses, the research hypotheses (H_1 , H_2 , H_3 , H_4) were analyzed. Table 4 shows the regression analysis results of the research's hypothesis tests.

Table 4. Regression Analysis Results of Mediation Test

Psychological Ownership							
	β	<i>SE</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>P</i>	LLCI	ULCI	
Organizational Justice	0.56	0.05	11.20	0.000	0.312	0.668	
Quiet Quitting							
	β	<i>SE</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>P</i>	LLCI	ULCI	
Psychological Ownership	-0.36	0.09	-9.60	0.000	-0.231	-0.113	
Organizational Justice (Direct Effect)	-0.43	0.08	-8.72	0.000	-0.304	-0.162	
Organizational Justice (Total Effect)	-0.23	0.07	-3.82	0.000	-0.398	-0.096	
			β	<i>SE</i>	LLCI	ULCI	
Mediating Effect			-0.20	0.06	-0.165	-0.089	

N=218

When Table 4 is examined, it is determined that the effect of organizational justice on quiet quitting tendency is negative and significant ($\beta = -0.43$; $p < .001$). This result shows that hypothesis H₁ is supported. Again, based on the table, when the effect of organizational justice on psychological ownership is examined, it is seen that there is a significant and positive relationship ($\beta = 0.56$; $p < .001$). According to this result, hypothesis H₂ is supported. This finding shows that when aviation employees perceive organizational decisions and practices as fair, their sense of belonging and ownership towards their organization is strengthened. Indeed, previous research has revealed that perception of organizational justice increases the level of psychological ownership by strengthening the emotional and cognitive bonds of employees with the organization (Pierce et al., 2001; Avey et al., 2009). When the effect of psychological ownership on quiet quitting tendency is examined, a significant and negative relationship ($\beta = -0.36$; $p < .001$) is observed. This result supports hypothesis H₃. Employees' perception of their organizations as "an extension of themselves" reduces their tendency to psychologically withdraw from work and perform only minimal tasks. This result suggests that psychological ownership may prevent quiet quitting behaviors by increasing employee commitment (O'Driscoll et al., 2006). The direct effect of organizational justice on quiet quitting

tendency was reported to be negative and significant ($\beta = -0.43$; $p < .001$). However, when psychological ownership was included in the model, the effect of organizational justice on quiet quitting decreased but remained significant ($\beta = -0.23$; $p < .001$). This suggests a partial mediating role of psychological ownership. The indirect effect coefficient is -0.20 , and the confidence intervals (LLCI = -0.165 , ULCI = -0.089) do not include zero, indicating that the mediation effect is statistically significant (Preacher and Hayes, 2008). Therefore, H_4 is supported.

These findings are consistent with Baron and Kenny's (1986) classic mediation model approach and Hayes' (2018) bootstrap-based modern mediation analyses. The results obtained reveal that organizational justice has not only direct effects on quiet quitting but also indirect effects through psychological ownership. The findings show that organizational justice significantly influences quiet behaviors through psychological ownership. The results of the current study are also consistent with previous limited research findings (Kang et al., 2025; Deniz, 2025; Margaretha and Panggabean, 2025). Therefore, organizational justice can serve as a resource in increasing employees' job satisfaction and perceptions of psychological ownership (Al-Zu'bi, 2010; Mehmood et al., 2021). Consequently, consistent and fair organizations that care about their employees' needs can increase their psychological ownership and reduce quiet quitting behaviors.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Consequently, this study aimed to determine the impact of organizational justice on quiet quitting among aviation employees through psychological ownership. The results revealed that organizational justice has a negative and significant effect on quiet quitting behaviors. Additionally, organizational justice was found to have a significant effect on quiet quitting through psychological ownership. Therefore, it is important to consider the importance of organizational justice perception for organizations, as this perception positively influences employees' sense of ownership, which in turn strengthens employee retention within an organization.

This research contributes to the existing literature. The findings reveal a significant relationship between managers' decisions and practices regarding the organization and employees, as perceived positively by employees (organizational justice), and quiet quitting. This result is consistent with previous research findings (Deniz, 2025; Margaretha and Panggabean, 2025). This situation can be expressed as a decrease in quiet resignation as employees' perceptions of organizational justice increase. When quiet resignation exists in an organization, commitment to the workplace and employer and employees' perceptions of justice are at lower levels. Furthermore, the low perceptions of organizational justice among those who have adopted quiet quitting within the organization can create a negative environment in the workplace. Consequently, the perceptions of organizational justice among those who have not yet adopted quiet quitting may be negatively affected by these circumstances.

This study found that psychological ownership mediates the relationship between organizational justice and quiet quitting. Thus, the theoretical framework has been expanded (She et al., 2023; Seth et al., 2022) and a contribution has been made to the literature on the outcomes of organizational justice. This result has revealed the need for a more detailed examination of quiet quitting by offering a new perspective in aviation sector sources.

This study contributes not only to the literature but also to certain application areas. As a first recommendation, organizations should create a neutral workplace environment for employees. To this end, managers should advance promotion processes and rewards by transparently sharing the process with employees. By establishing bonds based on trust between employees and employers, the sense of belonging and ownership to the organization can be strengthened. This is because employers can ensure fairness in the workplace, create a peaceful environment, and prevent quiet quitting through these practices. In addition, these organizations should develop practices that allow employees to comfortably express their problems. In addition to all this, managers in this process should take care to be fair and transparent in their performance evaluation processes. In this way, employees' perceptions of organizational justice may show a positive trend. As a result, employees who perceive organizational justice will also show a downward trend in quiet quitting behavior. Finally, by implementing organizational justice in the organization, motivating employees, and increasing motivation and productivity, quiet quitting can be prevented.

Secondly, managers should give their employees the opportunity to speak and communicate with them regularly. In addition, managers should inform employees about career opportunities. In this way, managers can better observe employees' concerns and whether they are inclined to quit silently. As a result, managers will increase employee organizational commitment and create environments where they feel a sense of belonging by demonstrating supportive attitudes toward employees. Failure to communicate is one of the factors that contribute to quiet quitting. For this reason, certain measures can be taken, such as improving communication processes within organizations and encouraging solidarity among employees. These measures can positively influence employees' perceptions of psychological ownership, paving the way for them to avoid quiet quitting.

This study also has some limitations. The fact that the research data was collected from a single sector in Turkey (the aviation sector) is a limitation of the study. Therefore, the results obtained from the study cannot be generalized. Future researchers may examine the outcomes of organizational justice in different sectors. Another limitation of the study is that the research data was obtained through a cross-sectional study. Future researchers may prefer to use a longitudinal study method.

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