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LINKING ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT TO EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF JOB SATISFACTION IN AN AUTOMOTIVE DEALERSHIP

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ABSTRACT

Employee engagement is operationally important in automotive dealerships, where sales, workshop, and administrative employees must sustain energy, dedication, and concentration under recurring targets. This study examines whether job satisfaction mediates the relationship between perceived organizational support and employee engagement. A cross-sectional survey targeted 134 employees of PT XYZ, an automotive dealership in Banten Province, Indonesia, and produced 127 usable responses through saturated sampling. The focused model comprised 19 reflective indicators and was estimated with PLS-SEM in SmartPLS 4. Bootstrapping used 10,000 subsamples, while predictive relevance was examined through PLSpredict and CVPAT. Perceived organizational support was positively associated with job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.732$, $p < 0.001$), and job satisfaction was positively associated with employee engagement ($\beta = 0.638$, $p < 0.001$). The direct POS–engagement path was not significant ($\beta = 0.150$, $p = 0.292$), whereas the indirect association through job satisfaction was significant ($\beta = 0.467$, $p < 0.001$; 95% CI [0.302, 0.720]). This pattern indicates indirect-only mediation model, although the cross-sectional design does not establish temporal or causal mediation. The model explained 57.0% of employee engagement variance and outperformed linear and indicator-average benchmarks in CVPAT. The findings suggest that organizational support is most closely linked to engagement when employees first experience their work as satisfying. Managers should therefore evaluate support programs by their association with job satisfaction rather than by program availability alone.

Keywords: perceived organizational support; job satisfaction; employee engagement

INTRODUCTION

Automotive dealerships depend on coordinated employee performance across sales, workshop services, spare parts, customer service, and administrative functions. In this operational setting, employee engagement—reflected in employees' energy, dedication, and concentration at work—is relevant because many service and sales activities require sustained effort and interaction with customers. Previous studies have associated organizational resources and supportive work environments with stronger employee engagement (Li et al., 2022; Lee & Shin, 2023; Mori et al., 2024; Park & Kim, 2024). However, engagement should not be inferred solely from organizational

performance indicators because these outcomes may also be influenced by external and operational factors.

At PT XYZ, internal records for 2024–2025 indicated fluctuations in the achievement of new-motorcycle sales and workshop revenue targets, incomplete prospect follow-ups, and instances of late arrival. These indicators do not directly establish that the company has an employee engagement problem. Sales and service outcomes may also be affected by market demand, customer purchasing power, financing conditions, competition, unit availability, workload, and service capacity. Nevertheless, these conditions provide a relevant managerial context for examining employees' internal work experiences and the organizational factors associated with their willingness to invest sustained effort at work.

Perceived organizational support refers to employees' general belief that the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being. Based on social exchange theory, employees who receive favorable treatment from their organization are expected to reciprocate through positive attitudes and behaviors. However, the general principle of reciprocity does not fully explain whether organizational support directly generates employees' energy and dedication or whether it first influences a more proximal evaluation of their jobs. Previous studies have shown that perceived organizational support is associated with employee engagement, while also suggesting that its influence may operate through intervening psychological evaluations and work-related resources (Li et al., 2022; Lee & Shin, 2023; Mori et al., 2024; Park & Kim, 2024). Therefore, the unresolved theoretical issue is not simply whether organizational support matters, but how perceived support is translated into employee engagement.

Job satisfaction provides a theoretically plausible mechanism for explaining this process. Job satisfaction represents employees' overall evaluation of their job and work conditions, whereas employee engagement reflects a motivational state characterized by energy, dedication, and absorption. When employees perceive that the organization recognizes their contributions, considers their welfare, and provides assistance in performing their work, they are more likely to evaluate their employment experience

favorably. This positive evaluation may, in turn, increase their willingness to invest physical, cognitive, and emotional effort in their work. Accordingly, job satisfaction may function as a proximal evaluative mechanism through which perceived organizational support is associated with employee engagement (Mascarenhas et al., 2022; Siregar et al., 2024; Primayani et al., 2025). At the same time, perceived organizational support may retain a direct association with engagement when support itself provides employees with resources, recognition, and encouragement. Both the direct and indirect pathways therefore need to be examined.

Previous studies have investigated the relationships among perceived organizational support, job satisfaction, and employee engagement in various organizational settings, including Indonesia. Consequently, the limited number of studies in automotive dealerships is not, by itself, sufficient to constitute a theoretical gap. The present study instead addresses a more specific issue: whether perceived organizational support retains a unique direct association with employee engagement after job satisfaction is included, and whether the indirect association through job satisfaction is consistent with a two-stage social-exchange and job-appraisal process. The automotive dealership setting provides a focused contextual test because employees across sales, workshop, service, and administrative roles may experience organizational support and job demands differently.

Accordingly, this study examines the relationships among perceived organizational support, job satisfaction, and employee engagement among employees of an automotive dealership in Banten Province. The study makes a bounded contribution by clarifying the direct and indirect associations predicted by the proposed mechanism and by providing contextual replication in an operationally diverse dealership setting. The predictive assessment is used as supplementary model evaluation rather than claimed as a methodological innovation. From a managerial perspective, the findings may help identify organizational support and job satisfaction as conditions that should be monitored and improved, but they do not establish that a particular managerial intervention will causally increase engagement. Because the study

employs a cross-sectional design, the results are interpreted as associations that are consistent with the proposed mediation mechanism rather than definitive evidence of temporal or causal mediation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Exchange Theory and The Proposed Mediation Model

Social exchange theory views employment as an ongoing exchange of valued resources rather than merely a contractual arrangement. When employees receive favorable treatment, they may develop a sense of obligation to respond through constructive attitudes and behaviors (Blau, 1964; Ahmad et al., 2023). Perceived organizational support applies this principle to the employee–organization relationship. Through their experience of organizational policies, supervisors, rewards, working conditions, and task assistance, employees form a general belief about whether the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1986). Recent research continues to identify perceived organizational support as an important organizational resource associated with employee engagement, including under uncertain organizational conditions (Ferrón Vílchez et al., 2024).

However, social exchange theory does not require organizational support to produce employee engagement immediately. Employees may reciprocate support through several responses, including stronger commitment, citizenship behavior, lower intention to leave, or greater work involvement. Therefore, the existence of organizational support does not by itself explain why employees become more energetic, dedicated, and absorbed in their work. A psychological process is required to connect a relatively broad perception of the organization with employees' daily motivational state.

The proposed model treats this process as a two-stage exchange. In the first stage, employees interpret recognition, welfare concern, consideration of their goals, and assistance with work problems as evidence that the organization values them. These experiences influence their evaluation of whether the job provides acceptable conditions and fulfils important expectations. In the second stage, a favorable evaluation of the job increases employees' willingness to invest energy and

attention in their work. Job satisfaction therefore functions as a proximal evaluative mechanism between perceived organizational support and employee engagement. This sequential explanation strengthens the role of social exchange theory in the full model: organizational support initiates the exchange, job satisfaction reflects the employee's evaluation of that exchange, and engagement represents a possible motivational response.

Perceived Organizational Support and Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2006; Heveri et al., 2025). Vigor reflects energy and persistence, dedication represents enthusiasm, inspiration, and pride, while absorption refers to deep concentration and immersion in work. A direct relationship between perceived organizational support and engagement can be expected because recognition and task assistance provide emotional and practical resources. Employees who believe that the organization values their contribution may also feel an obligation to reciprocate by investing greater effort in their work.

Recent studies generally report a positive relationship between perceived organizational support and employee engagement (Li et al., 2022; Lee & Shin, 2023; Mori et al., 2024; Park & Kim, 2024). Nevertheless, the literature does not provide a single explanation for this relationship. Some studies represent organizational support as a direct antecedent of engagement, whereas others identify intervening mechanisms such as work–life balance and employees' focus on future opportunities (Lee & Shin, 2023; Mori et al., 2024). These explanations compete in determining whether organizational support has a unique direct relationship with engagement after a more proximal psychological mechanism is included. The present study therefore retains the direct-path hypothesis while examining whether its effect remains after job satisfaction enters the model.

H1: Perceived organizational support is positively related to employee engagement.

Perceived Organizational Support and Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction represents an employee's overall evaluation of the job and its conditions. In this study, it reflects job fit, working conditions,

fulfilment of work expectations, overall satisfaction, and the employee's evaluation of choosing the current job. Perceived organizational support is expected to improve this evaluation because recognition makes employees' contributions feel worthwhile, concern for their well-being improves the employment experience, and practical assistance reduces avoidable frustration. Studies have found positive associations between perceived organizational support and job satisfaction in different organizational settings (Mascarenhas et al., 2022; Siregar et al., 2024; Primayani et al., 2025).

An alternative explanation is that satisfaction may also be influenced by compensation, supervisory quality, career opportunities, workload, or personal expectations that are not fully represented by perceived organizational support. Thus, perceived support is not assumed to be the only determinant of satisfaction. The hypothesis instead proposes that employees who perceive stronger organizational support are more likely to evaluate their work experience favorably.

H2: Perceived organizational support is positively related to job satisfaction.

Job Satisfaction and Employee Engagement

Job satisfaction and employee engagement are related but conceptually distinct. Satisfaction concerns how positively employees evaluate their job, whereas engagement concerns the energy and psychological involvement with which they perform it. A satisfied employee is not necessarily highly engaged because satisfaction may coexist with low work demands or passive comfort. Conversely, an employee may remain engaged because of professional identity, personal goals, or challenging work even when some aspects of the job are unsatisfactory.

Despite these alternative possibilities, a favorable evaluation of the job can provide an important basis for engagement. Employees who experience suitable work, acceptable conditions, and fulfilment of important expectations have stronger reasons to persist, concentrate, and invest effort. Recent Indonesian studies report a positive association between job satisfaction and employee engagement and identify satisfaction as a potential mechanism connecting organizational conditions with engagement (Siregar et al., 2024; Primayani et al., 2025).

H3: Job satisfaction is positively related to employee engagement.

The Mediating Role Of Job Satisfaction and Research Contribution

Existing research establishes that perceived organizational support, job satisfaction, and employee engagement are related, but it does not fully resolve how these relationships should be represented in a single model. Evidence of a positive POS–engagement relationship supports a direct reciprocity explanation. In contrast, studies that identify work-related appraisals or other psychological mechanisms suggest that organizational support may be too distal to generate engagement without first changing how employees experience their work. These perspectives produce three competing empirical possibilities: a direct-only relationship, partial mediation in which both direct and indirect relationships remain, or indirect-only mediation in which the relationship is transmitted primarily through job satisfaction.

The research gap therefore does not rest solely on the limited number of studies conducted in automotive dealerships. The unresolved issue is whether perceived organizational support retains a unique direct relationship with employee engagement after job satisfaction is included and whether satisfaction carries the indirect relationship predicted by the two-stage exchange process. The original contribution of this study lies in distinguishing these competing explanations within one focused model while clearly separating job satisfaction as an evaluative state from engagement as a motivational state. The automotive dealership provides a contextual test of the model across sales, workshop, service, and administrative roles, rather than serving as the sole basis for claiming novelty.

A significant indirect relationship would be consistent with the proposition that employees first evaluate organizational support through their experience of the job before responding with stronger engagement. If the indirect relationship is significant while the direct relationship is not, the result can be classified statistically as indirect-only mediation (Sabol et al., 2026). Because the present study uses cross-sectional data, such a result would support an association consistent with the proposed mechanism but would not

establish its temporal order or causal direction.

H4: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between perceived organizational support and employee engagement.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative explanatory design using a cross-sectional survey. The company's human resource records listed 140 individuals receiving regular compensation. Six individuals serving as night security and cleaning personnel were excluded because their duties were classified as general support services and did not directly represent the operational work context examined in this study. Accordingly, the target population consisted of 134 employees engaged in motorcycle sales, workshop and parts services, administration, and customer service. A census approach was used by inviting all 134 eligible employees to participate. A total of 127 complete questionnaires were obtained and retained for analysis, representing a response rate of 94.78%. The remaining seven eligible employees did not provide usable responses.

Questionnaires were administered using printed forms and an identical Google Forms version. A respondent code was used to prevent duplicate participation, while individual identities were protected and only aggregate findings were reported. The company's name and precise location were anonymized as PT XYZ in Banten Province to maintain organizational confidentiality. Because all variables were reported by the same respondents at a single point in time, common method variance cannot be completely ruled out. The confidentiality procedures and standardized questionnaire format were intended to reduce evaluation apprehension and inconsistent administration, but the single-source design remains a limitation. Similarly, the cross-sectional design permits the estimation of contemporaneous direct and indirect associations but does not establish temporal order or causal mediation.

All constructs were specified reflectively because their indicators were treated as manifestations of the underlying employee perceptions and were expected to covary. Employee engagement was measured using nine UWES-9 items representing vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli

et al., 2006), based on the Indonesian-validated version reported by Kristiana et al. (2018). Recent psychometric evidence further supports the reliability and validity of the UWES-9 in contemporary working populations (Heveri et al., 2025). The nine items were modelled as a global employee engagement construct because the research question concerns employees' overall engagement rather than differences among its individual dimensions. The three dimensions were therefore retained as sources of content coverage rather than estimated as separate constructs. Perceived organizational support was measured using five items adapted from DeConinck et al. (2018). The contemporary relevance of perceived organizational support in explaining employee engagement is further supported by recent evidence from Ferrón Vílchez et al. (2024). This concise measure was selected to capture employees' overall evaluation of organizational recognition, concern, and assistance while limiting response burden within the multi-construct questionnaire. Job satisfaction was assessed using five items adapted from the Satisfaction with Work Scale developed by Merino et al. (2021). Recent empirical evidence also supports the contemporary relevance of job satisfaction in explaining employee engagement (Siregar et al., 2024; Primayani et al., 2025). A global satisfaction measure was appropriate because the proposed mediation mechanism concerns employees' overall evaluation of their work experience rather than satisfaction with isolated job facets. The focused model therefore comprised three reflective constructs and 19 indicators.

To reduce switching between different numerical response ranges across the multi-construct questionnaire, all measures were harmonized to a common 10-point range while retaining construct-appropriate anchors. Employee engagement items used frequency anchors ranging from 1 (never) to 10 (always), whereas perceived organizational support and job satisfaction items used agreement anchors ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree). This adaptation represents a departure from the original UWES-9 response format. Consequently, the engagement scores were used to examine relationships among the constructs and were not

interpreted against established UWES normative scores.

Before the main data collection, the adapted questionnaire was pilot tested on 31 working respondents who were independent of the main study sample. Preliminary item validity was evaluated using corrected item–total correlations, with all retained indicators exceeding the minimum criterion of 0.30. Cronbach's alpha values were 0.914 for employee engagement, 0.899 for perceived organizational support, and 0.876 for job satisfaction, indicating satisfactory internal consistency before the questionnaire was administered to the main sample. Only complete questionnaires were included in the analysis; consequently, no missing-value imputation was required.

The model was estimated using SmartPLS 4. PLS-SEM was selected because the study combined the estimation of a mediation model with an assessment of out-of-sample predictive performance, rather than solely because of the sample size. The sample size was determined by the census of the accessible operational population rather than by probability sampling or an a priori power-based selection procedure. Therefore, the findings are interpreted within the organizational setting studied and are not claimed to be statistically representative of automotive dealerships more broadly.

The reflective measurement model was assessed using outer loadings, Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, composite reliability, average variance extracted, and the heterotrait–monotrait ratio. The structural model assessment included inner variance inflation factors, path coefficients, R-squared, adjusted R-squared, and effect sizes, following current PLS-SEM guidance (Hair et al., 2022; Sarstedt et al., 2022). Hypotheses were tested using a two-tailed percentile bootstrap with 10,000 subsamples and a 5% significance level. Mediation was evaluated from the specific indirect effect and its 95% bootstrap confidence interval without requiring the direct effect to be statistically significant as a preliminary condition (Sarstedt & Moisescu, 2024; Sabol et al., 2026).

Predictive performance was assessed using PLSpredict with ten folds and ten repetitions. Q^2predict values and PLS-SEM prediction errors were compared with those produced by a linear model following current PLS-SEM predictive assessment guidance

(Hair et al., 2022). CVPAT was subsequently used to determine whether the model's cross-validated loss was lower than the indicator-average and linear-model benchmarks (Sharma et al., 2023). These procedures evaluate comparative predictive performance within the present dataset and should not be interpreted as evidence of general predictive validity across other organizations.

The dataset was originally collected as part of a broader master's thesis examining perceived organizational support, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee engagement. The present article re-estimates a focused model involving perceived organizational support, job satisfaction, and employee engagement. The dataset has not been used in another published article.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Respondent and Descriptive Profile

Of the 127 respondents, 82 were men (64.57%) and 45 were women (35.43%). Workshop and parts employees formed the largest group (53.54%), followed by motorcycle sales employees (33.07%) and operational/back-office employees (13.39%). Employees with at least ten years of service accounted for 38.58%, while 34.65% had served for up to three years. Most respondents had completed senior high school or an equivalent qualification (80.31%), and 70.08% were married. This profile represents the principal operational roles and includes both experienced and relatively new employees.

The average index was high for perceived organizational support (86.44), job satisfaction (87.01), and employee engagement (88.71). These descriptive scores indicate favorable response tendencies within the present sample, but they should not be interpreted as objective evidence of organizational effectiveness or the absence of engagement-related concerns. Because the data were self-reported and collected within a single organization, the relatively high scores may also reflect restricted variation or shared response tendencies. The comparatively lower scores for concern for employee welfare (84.88), consideration of employee goals (84.96), fulfilment of work expectations (86.38), and working conditions (86.85) are therefore treated as areas for further managerial

diagnosis rather than demonstrated organizational deficiencies.

Measurement model

Table 1. Reflective Measurement Model

Construct	n	Loading range	Cronbach's α	ρA	ρC	AVE
Employee engagement	9	0.647–0.890	0.936	0.943	0.947	0.665
Job satisfaction	5	0.757–0.919	0.915	0.922	0.937	0.749
Perceived organizational support	5	0.878–0.954	0.957	0.957	0.967	0.853

Table 1 indicates satisfactory convergent validity and internal consistency for the three constructs. All outer loadings exceeded the preferred threshold of 0.708 except EE9, which had a loading of 0.647. EE9 was retained because it represented a theoretically relevant aspect of the UWES-9 construct, while employee engagement still demonstrated adequate composite reliability (0.947) and average variance extracted (0.665). Nevertheless, its comparatively lower loading should be considered when interpreting the measurement results. For perceived organizational support, Cronbach's alpha (0.957) and composite reliability (0.967) exceeded 0.95. Although these values indicate strong internal consistency, they may also suggest substantial similarity or redundancy among the five items. The indicators were retained because they represented theoretically distinct aspects of organizational support, but future studies should reassess their wording and determine whether a more parsimonious measure would preserve sufficient content coverage. Discriminant validity was supported because the HTMT values for job satisfaction–engagement (0.795), perceived organizational support–engagement (0.639), and perceived organizational support–job satisfaction (0.778) were below 0.85.

Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

Inner VIF values were 2.152 for POS and job satisfaction as predictors of engagement and 1.000 for POS as a predictor of satisfaction. These values indicate that collinearity did not threaten the structural estimates. POS explained 53.5% of job satisfaction variance (adjusted $R^2 = 0.532$), while POS and job satisfaction jointly

explained 57.0% of engagement variance (adjusted $R^2 = 0.563$). Both values indicate moderate explanatory power. The f^2 effect was large for POS on job satisfaction (1.152) and job satisfaction on engagement (0.439), whereas the direct POS effect on engagement was small (0.024).

Table 2. Direct and Indirect Effects

Hypothesis	Path	*B*	*t*	*p*	95% CI	Decision
H1	POS → EE	0.150	1.055	0.292	–	Not supported
H2	POS → JS	0.732	10.666	<0.001	–	Supported
H3	JS → EE	0.638	5.112	<0.001	–	Supported
H4	POS → JS → EE	0.467	4.279	<0.001	[0.302, 0.720]	Supported

H1 was not supported because the direct association between perceived organizational support and employee engagement was positive but not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.150$, $p = 0.292$). This result indicates that the analysis did not detect a unique direct association after job satisfaction was included in the model; it should not be interpreted as evidence that organizational support has no relevance to engagement. H2 and H3 were supported: perceived organizational support was positively associated with job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.732$, $p < 0.001$), and job satisfaction was positively associated with employee engagement ($\beta = 0.638$, $p < 0.001$). The specific indirect association was also significant ($\beta = 0.467$, $t = 4.279$, $p < 0.001$), with a 95% bootstrap confidence interval of [0.302, 0.720].

The reported coefficients are arithmetically consistent. The indirect point estimate of 0.467 corresponds to the product of the perceived organizational support–job satisfaction coefficient and the job satisfaction–engagement coefficient (0.732×0.638), subject to rounding. The total association of 0.617 is also equal to the sum of the direct and indirect coefficients ($0.150 + 0.467$). The bootstrap confidence interval was generated from the empirical distribution of 10,000 resampled indirect estimates and is therefore not required to be symmetrical around the point estimate. The significant indirect association alongside the nonsignificant direct association is statistically consistent with an indirect-

only mediation model. However, because all variables were measured at the same point in time, this pattern does not establish the temporal sequence or causal mediation implied by the proposed model.

Predictive Assessment

Table 3. Out-of-Sample Predictive Assessment

Assessment	Result	Interpretation
Q^2predict	13 of 14 indicators > 0	Predictive relevance; EE1 was practically zero
PLS RMSE vs. LM	14 of 14 lower	PLS-SEM outperformed LM for all indicators
PLS MAE vs. LM	11 of 14 lower	Exceptions: EE5, EE6, and EE8
CVPAT vs. IA (overall)	Δ loss = −0.578; $p < 0.001$	PLS-SEM significantly better
CVPAT vs. LM (overall)	Δ loss = −0.157; $p = 0.005$	PLS-SEM significantly better

Thirteen of the fourteen endogenous indicators produced positive Q^2predict values, while the value for EE1 was displayed as −0.000 and was therefore practically zero. PLS-SEM generated lower RMSE values than the linear-model benchmark for all fourteen indicators and lower MAE values for eleven indicators. CVPAT also indicated lower cross-validated loss than the indicator-average benchmark (Δ loss = −0.578, $p < 0.001$) and the linear-model benchmark (Δ loss = −0.157, $p = 0.005$) for the overall model. These results indicate a comparative predictive advantage under the cross-validation procedure and benchmark models used in the present dataset. They should not be interpreted as evidence of general predictive validity, causal accuracy, or equivalent performance in other organizations. External validation with independent organizational samples is required before broader predictive claims can be made.

Discussion

The strong POS–satisfaction path supports the premise that employees interpret recognition, welfare concern, goal consideration, task support, and assistance as evidence that the organization values them. These experiences are associated with a more favorable overall evaluation of the job, consistent with social exchange theory and recent evidence (Mascarenhas et al., 2022; Siregar et al., 2024). The result is especially meaningful in a dealership because many obstacles are concrete and immediate: unclear prospect ownership, incomplete information, unavailable tools or parts,

coordination delays, and pressure to meet monthly targets. Support that removes such obstacles may improve the work experience before it is reflected in the intensity with which employees engage.

The positive job satisfaction–engagement relationship shows that favorable evaluation is translated into energy, enthusiasm, pride, and concentration. This result aligns with evidence from Indonesian SMEs and millennial employees (Siregar et al., 2024; Primayani et al., 2025). Satisfaction is not passive comfort in this model. It functions as an appraisal that makes continued investment in work psychologically worthwhile. Employees who see their job as suitable, experience workable conditions, and feel that important expectations are met have a stronger basis for persisting when facing rejection, technical complexity, or administrative interdependence.

The unsupported direct POS–engagement path is theoretically informative. It does not show that organizational support is irrelevant; the significant indirect path and total coefficient indicate the opposite. Instead, support is a distal organizational resource whose meaning must be evaluated at the job level. Employees may acknowledge that the company provides assistance yet remain no more energetic if the assistance does not solve their actual constraints, is inconsistently applied, or does not improve their day-to-day work. The indirect-only pattern therefore refines a simple reciprocity argument: the association between support and engagement depends on whether support is first experienced as a satisfying work condition.

The predictive evidence also has managerial value. Explanatory models can identify statistically significant paths without necessarily predicting new observations well. Here, the PLS model outperformed linear and indicator-average benchmarks, suggesting that the POS–satisfaction–engagement sequence captures a pattern that is useful beyond the fitted coefficients. Nevertheless, predictive performance does not establish temporal causality. The cross-sectional design supports a structurally coherent and predictively useful sequence, but longitudinal data are needed to demonstrate that changes in support precede changes in satisfaction and subsequent engagement.

Managerial implications

The case company should manage support as an employee-experience pathway rather than as a checklist of benefits. Five integrated domains are recommended: transparent recognition of contributions, welfare and working-condition management, alignment of development with employee goals, practical support for task completion, and an accessible mechanism for resolving work obstacles. Because welfare concern and goal consideration had the relatively lowest POS indices, they deserve early diagnostic attention, while the higher-scoring support dimensions should be maintained. The purpose is not simply to add programs but to improve employees' evaluation of their work.

Implementation should follow a plan–do–check–act cycle. During planning, managers should map the constraints and valued contributions of sales, workshop, and back-office roles. During implementation, the company can clarify targets and responsibilities, provide coaching, secure tools and data, recognize completed work, and establish response times for reported obstacles. The checking stage should measure three levels in sequence: employees' receipt and perceived usefulness of support, subsequent job satisfaction, and then engagement. Corrective action should address programs that exist administratively but are not experienced as useful, fair, accessible, or timely.

Operational indicators may be monitored as supporting evidence, including completion of prospect follow-ups, punctuality, sales activity, workshop productivity, and turnover. They should not be treated as outcomes already proven by this model, because market conditions, skills, leadership, procedures, and resource availability also affect them. This distinction prevents management from overclaiming causality while still using operational data to evaluate whether HR initiatives coincide with improved execution over time.

CONCLUSION

This study indicates that perceived organizational support is associated with employee engagement primarily through employees' evaluation of their jobs. Once job satisfaction was included in the model, perceived organizational support did not retain a significant unique relationship with engagement, whereas the indirect relationship through job satisfaction

was significant. This indirect-only pattern refines a simple reciprocity explanation by suggesting that employees may not respond to the formal existence of organizational support alone. Support becomes relevant to engagement when employees experience it as contributing to a more satisfying, workable, and worthwhile job. However, this interpretation represents a statistical pattern consistent with the proposed mechanism rather than proof of a causal process.

For managers, the findings support a diagnostic and sequential approach rather than the assumption that introducing additional support programs will automatically increase engagement. The company should first identify the practical needs and work obstacles experienced by employees, improve the usefulness, accessibility, fairness, and timeliness of its support, and then monitor whether employees' job satisfaction and engagement change over time. Support programs should therefore be evaluated through employees' actual experiences and repeated measurements, not merely through their formal availability. Any observed improvement should be treated as evidence for further managerial evaluation rather than definitive proof that the program caused stronger engagement.

The conclusions remain limited by the cross-sectional, single-company, and self-report design. The simultaneous measurement of all constructs prevents confirmation that perceived organizational support preceded job satisfaction and that satisfaction subsequently produced engagement. Reverse or reciprocal relationships and common response tendencies also remain possible. Future research should use longitudinal or experimental designs, collect supervisor or operational measures, compare employee groups, and replicate the model across dealerships and regions. These approaches would provide stronger evidence concerning the temporal order, causal direction, and broader applicability of the proposed mediation mechanism.

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