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The Mediation Role of Impression Management in The Effect of Job Security Perception on Task Performance: A Study on Airport Employees

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Abstract

This study aims to reveal the relationship between the job security perceptions and task performances of airport employees and whether impression management has a mediating role in this relationship. The sample of the study consists of employees working at airports in Turkey. The data of the research were collected by online survey method using convenience sampling method between 5-17 October 2022. The IBM SPSS 25 and AMOS 24 statistical programs were used to analyze the data from 278 employees using structural equation modeling methods. According to the results of the analysis, it was determined that the perception of job security had a positive effect on job performance and a negative effect on impression management tactics. According to another important result of the research, there was a negative relationship between impression management and task performance. Finally, impression management did not mediate the relationship between job security perception and task performance.

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1. Introduction

Recent developments in the global economy have included the business world in an uncertain process where competition has become more intense, costs have increased and productivity has become more important than ever. Mergers, downsizing, acquisitions, and economic crises in the business world in this uncertainty have made the threats to job security chronic. In this process, businesses' approaches to job security have been transformed, and life-long employment has been replaced by short-term or project-based working styles (Kraja, 2015, p. 19). On the other hand, in this process, not only businesses but also employees' perceptions of job security began to change, and a period full of anxiety began for employees where job security could not be felt (Fried et al., 2003, p. 787; De Witte, 2005; Probst et al., 2019, p. 306).

Today, while millions of employees feel this anxiety, the importance of job security has begun to increase, and this issue has become the focus of attention not only in the business world but also of academics from different disciplines (Ma et al., 2016, p. 123; Fried et al., 2003, p. 787). Numerous studies have been conducted examining the causes of job security or job insecurity, and its individual or organizational effects (Pilipiec, 2020; De Witte et al., 2016; Jiang & Lavaysse, 2018; Huang et al. 2012; Shoss, 2017; Huang, 2013). Performance is one of the important issues that are examined together with job security in the literature. Psychological contract theory and social change theory are the basic foundations used to explain the relationship between employees' perceptions of job security and their performance. Supporting the claims of these theories, according to the studies on this relationship, the level of perception of job security shapes performance in the workplace (Lu et al., 2017; Cheng and Chan, 2008; Huang, 2013, p. 2; Piccoli et al., 2021; Probst et al., 2019, p. 309; Piccoli et al., 2017, p. 1510).

Another important variable for employees who perceive a threat to their job security is impression management (IM). Employees' awareness of impression management strategies is also extremely important in managing this process (Huang, 2013, p. 2; Chawla, 2021; Ispas et al., 2014; Uziel, 2010; Kang et al., 2012, p. 316). According to the stress theory, employees who feel threatened with job security aim to reduce threats to job security by creating positive impressions on their performance (Folkman, et al., 1986; Putri & Purba, 2018, p. 273). Research on this subject also reveals an inverse relationship between job security and impression management (Kang, Gold, & Kim, 2012; Probst, Jiang, & Bohle, 2019).

In light of the above-mentioned theories and research, there are relationships between impression management, job security, and task performance (Agina et al., 2017, p. 221;

Chawla, 2021, p. 2). For the advancement of a field, it is important not only to say that there is a relationship but also to explain how this relationship is (Hayes, 2012, p.1). In this context, the role of impression management in the relationship between job security and job performance becomes an important research question (Probst et al., 2019, p. 307). Although there are few studies in the literature focusing on the relationships between impression management, job security, and job performance (Probst et al., 2019; Andriana & Purba, 2018; Huang, 2013, Kang et al., 2012), the relationship between these three important variables remains unclear in the aviation literature. protects. To eliminate this deficiency, it is aimed to reveal the effect of job security perceptions of airport employees on their job performance and whether there is a mediating role of impression management in this relationship if any. For this purpose, first of all, the conceptual framework related to job security, job performance, and impression management is given. Then, hypotheses between the variables were formed and tested with structural equation modeling. Finally, the findings were discussed and conclusions and recommendations were presented.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Job security perception

Job security can be defined as the protection of the employee against job loss. According to another definition, this concept is how safe and protected a person feels in the face of the fact that he unintentionally loses his job (Kraja, 2015, p. 20). While the environments in which employees feel safe about their jobs to create positive results for both the individual and the business, the opposite leads to job insecurity. In other words, job security and job insecurity perceived by individuals are closely related concepts. Perception of job insecurity refers to a situation where employees feel anxious about the continuity of their jobs, threat perception, and continuity, contrary to job security. Therefore, job security refers to a relaxing process about the future, while job insecurity refers to an anxious process about the future of work (Erlinghagen, 2008; De Witte, 2005; Purba & Muhammad, 2020).

Individuals' concerns about what they will experience in the future with their jobs or whether they will be able to maintain their positions are exacerbated in times of uncertainty when the economy is going badly. In such periods, workplaces closing and increasing mass layoffs negatively affect employees' perceptions of job security. Certain segments feel less job security and higher job insecurity outside of crisis periods. Job insecurity is higher among those working in part-time or seasonal jobs, recruits, and low-educational workers. In addition, the management style and communication style in the workplace also affect this perception (Schaufeli & VanYperen, 1992; Storseth, 2006; Kraja, 2015, p. 20).

Times when perceived job security is negative, that is, when job insecurity is felt intensely, can have individual and organizational consequences. Previous research has shown that low levels of job security (i.e., high job insecurity) harm employees' psychological well-being and work behavior (Loi, et al., 2011, p. 670). In environments where employees feel job insecurity, individual job satisfaction, organizational their commitment and organizational trust levels decrease. At the same time, in this process, while the physical and mental health of the employees is damaged, work-related low performance may also be experienced and even the intention to leave the job may occur in the employees (Clark, 2005; Sverke et al., 2002; Rosenblatt & Ruvio, 1996).

2.2. Task performance

Performance is related to the relationship between what the employee should do and what he/she does in the organizational environment. This relationship, which shows the job performance of the employee, is divided into two groups. These are task and contextual performance. Task performance is the degree to which an employee performs his or her basic duties. The effort made by the employee to complete processes related to job descriptions is the subject of task performance. These efforts refer to activities related to the basic technical processes by which the product or service is produced. The fact that employees perform the tasks expected of them by using their technical knowledge, skills, and experience is related to task performance (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997; Van Scotter & Motowidlo, 1996). In other words, in task performance, employees contribute to the technical core of the organization by performing the activities expected of them according to their job descriptions. Contextual performance is different from technical performance. Accordingly, employees voluntarily undertake responsibilities that are not required by their job descriptions, perform in extra roles, and shape the organizational and social environment (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997; Motowidlo & Van Scotter, 1994; Onur & Yürür, 2011).

The success of an organization in achieving its goals is related to the performance of its employees. Therefore, it is important to investigate which factors affect performance. Many factors affecting the performance of employees in the organization have been the subject of many studies. It has been revealed that concepts such as organizational support, organizational justice, respect for employees, transparency, rewards, clear and clear job descriptions, fair performance evaluation and promotion systems, training and motivation, and adopted common values have an impact on both the task and contextual performance of the employees (Orçanlı et al., 2019, p. 80).

2.3. Impression management

Impression management can be defined as the conscious or unconscious activities of individuals to influence others and to manage their perceptions (Leary, 2019; Jones & Pittman 1982). With these activities, individuals aim to create and manage the image they want about themselves in the eyes of others (Bozeman & Kacmar, 1997; Ralston & Kirkwood, 1999, p. 192). By managing impressions, individuals may benefit from rewards or avoid punishments at work, while seeking to be noticed by the environment, to be accepted, and to gain legitimacy and status (Elsbach & Sutton, 1992; Higgins et al., 2003). Impression management is a relationship with both social life and business life. Studies reveal that the impression method is associated with many organizational variables such as performance, job security, and leader-member interaction (Kang et al., 2012; Abbas et al., 2019; Agina et al., 2017).

There are various impression method tactics used by individuals in the impression management process. Various classifications have been made for these tactics by different researchers. (Bozeman & Kacmar, 1997; Jones and Pittman 1982; Chen, & Fang 2008). Despite this diversity, these tactics are divided into two groups and framed as assertive and defensive strategies (Crane & Crane, 2002; Tedeschi & Melburg, 1984; Schütz, 1998). Assertive strategies are about

acting proactively and asking for more about impressions. In other words, the individual makes efforts to create positive impressions about himself/herself now and in the future. The most widely accepted assertive tactics in the literature are "ingratiation", "self-promotion", "exemplification", " supplication" and "intimidation" (Bolino & Turnley, 1999; Jones & Pittman, 1982; Crane and Crane, 2002). Defensive strategies are carried out to reactively manage negative situations and the threats that arise against these situations (Accra Jaja, 2003, p. 84). In essence, the individual avoids being evaluated negatively in the face of threat, does not want his image to be damaged, and develops tactics for this (Palmer et al., 2001, p. 35). These tactics are also used by employees in the business environment for purposes such as correcting the damaged image and preventing career damage. Justifications and apologizing are the two main methods of this tactic (Gardner & Martinko, 1988, p. 327).

3. Hypothesis Development

3.1. The relationship between job security perception and task performance

Job security is a situation related to how secure employees feel about the continuity of their jobs. Since it is a subject based on perception, it carries subjectivity, so there may be differences in the perception of job security felt between people who do the same job in the same organization (Cheng & Chan, 2008; Loi, et al., 2011, p. 670). When this perception is negative, that is, when employees feel low job security, they face various negative consequences. One of these results is related to the employees' ability to fulfill their responsibilities, that is, their performance levels. According to this, the degree of fulfillment of responsibilities of employees who do not feel job security decreases and there is a decrease in their job performance. On the contrary, it can be said that employees who feel high job security will have a higher level of fulfillment of their duties, that is, their job performance. Various theories are used in the literature to explain this relationship (Demerouti et al., 2001; Hobfoll, 2001; Loi, et al., 2011, p. 670; De Cuyper et.al., 2020).

Psychological contract theory focuses on the debtor-creditor relationship in the relations between employees and employers, that is, the obligations of the parties to each other. This theory, which includes two different types of contracts, transactional (short-term, clear-frame) and relational (long-term, trust-based), is also effective in explaining the relationship between performance and job security. Accordingly, the perception of long-term job security can be considered a symbol of the relational contract (Lester et al., 2002; De Meuse et al., 2001). As trust increases, the relational contract becomes stronger and the employee's performance is shaped accordingly. Otherwise, there is a breach of contract and the employee can punish this with his/her performance (Kraimer et al., 2005, p. 390-391; Vander Elst et al., 2016; Probst et al., 2019, p. 309).

Social exchange theory also focuses on exchanges between employees and employers. Employees who create safe conditions their employers reward their employers with higher performance by being motivated (Staufenbiel & König, 2010; Ma et al., 2016, p. 124). In other words, employees increase their performance in the face of certain organizational incentives. For this reason, employers should maintain their incentives as a requirement of social change. Job security is one of these incentives (Lu et al., 2017, p. 3). Employees fulfill their duties at a higher level as a requirement of the equal exchange principle in return for job security (Lu et al., 2017, p. 8; Probst et al., 2019, p. 309; Piccoli, 2017, p. 1510). In light of all these theories, the following hypothesis was developed in this study regarding the relationship between job security perception and task performance:

H1: The perception of job security has a positive effect on job performance.

3.2. The relationship between job security perception and impression management

It is known that uncertain situations in the business world pose a threat to employees' perception of job security. In such situations, managing employees' impressions becomes a more strategic tool for job security. “Who can be fired in cases of uncertainty?” For the employee who asks the question himself, motivation is created to get away from this threat. Impression management becomes an important agenda of this motivation (Huang, 2013, p. 4; Kang et al., 2012, p. 316).

Along with the ability to monitor themselves, employees develop proactive strategies to create impressions that will increase their job security (Huang, 2013, Putri & Purba, 2018, p. 272). This goal-oriented behavior of employees can be self-focused or top management-oriented. Top management, which is the target of impression management tactics, has a direct say in deciding who stays in the organization in case of significant organizational change such as downsizing, layoffs, and restructuring. Therefore, the impression management process used to create the desired image in senior management can have critical consequences for employees. In summary, it is reasonable for employees to use impression management to avoid the perceived threat of potential job loss, and to use these tactics as a preventive measure to pursue their careers (Probst et al., 2019, p. 310; Andriana & Purba, 2018, p. 22; Purba & Muhammad, 2020, p. 82).

One of the theories explaining this relationship between job security and impression management is problem-focused coping based on Transactional Stress Theory. Here, the individual evaluates the situation he lives in and determines its importance for himself. If the importance is great, it is perceived as a threat and stress arises. When job insecurity creates a threat that needs to be dealt with, impression management is used as a tool to overcome this threat (Putri & Purba, 2018, p. 272-273; Folkman, et al., 1986). The theory of conservation of resources also supports that employees can develop proactive strategies when they perceive a threat to an important resource such as job security (Hobfoll, 2001, p. 351). Accordingly, when there is uncertainty about the job security of the employees, various impression management tactics can be applied to cope with the uncertainty (De Cuyper et al., 2014; Huang et al., 2013; Ghosh, 2017; Kang et al., 2012, p. 317). Employees turn to impression management tactics to ensure and maintain high job security. In other words, if employees have a high perception of job security, they will not develop behaviors to create impressions that will affect their supervisors or employers. Studies have also found results supporting this negative relationship between job security and impression management (Kang et al., 2012; Probst et al., 2019). Based on all these discussions, the following hypothesis was established in the research:

H2: The perception of job security has a negative effect on impression management.

3.3. The relationship between impression management and task performance

Managing impressions in the workplace is based on intentions such as being accepted by the business community, being loved, and being noticed and appreciated by managers. Various awards await the employees who gain this legitimacy by managing their impressions. One of them is to get positive results from performance evaluations (Leary, 2019; Higgins, et al., 2003; Rajasekharan, & Rajasekharan, 2020, p. 85; Kurt, 2022). Studies demonstrating that those who implement manager-leader-oriented impression management tactics receive higher grades from performance evaluations support this claim (Bolino et al., 2008; Chawla, 2021, p. 3; Wayne & Ferris, 1990).

An employee's ability to effectively manage tactics such as ingratiation, self-promotion, or exemplification, which are among the impression management tactics, is also related to his/her task performance (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Crane & Crane, 2002; Bozeman & Kacmar, 1997; Chawla, 2021, p. 2). In other words, it can be expected that the employee manages the impressions on the one hand and performs consistently with them on the other (Agina et al., 2017, p. 221). For this reason, there is a relationship between impression management behaviors and the performances of the employees. However, there are various arguments regarding the direction of this relationship.

For example, the relationship between impression management strategies and task performance is unclear in employees who naturally have high job performance and high-performance efficiency without the aim of impression management. In other words, it can be said that employees who spontaneously get high marks in performance evaluations due to their professional work and are aware of their productivity may not need to manage their impressions. In this case, it can be argued that a positive relationship may not be established between task performance and impression management. According to another basis, employees who use ingratiation tactics may feel less responsible for fulfilling their task performance in an environment where they think they are loved by senior management and teammates and therefore feel safe. As a result of being loved by everyone, they may be able to avoid responsibility, and they may show the belief that they will not face punishment or sanctions. The supplication tactic may also contribute to explaining this inverse relationship. An increase in the performance of employees who present themselves as incompetent and in need of help cannot be expected. One of the important features of this tactic is that it alleviates the workload of individuals for a certain period (Kurt, 2022, p. 3-4). In these cases, there may be a negative relationship between impression management and task performance. According to a study to support these discussions, the effect of impression management on job performance is low (Ispas et al., 2014, p. 48). According to some researchers, the positive effect of impression management on task performance depends on certain occupational groups, job types, and objective criteria. According to researchers (Uziel, 2010; Viswesvaran et al., 2001), there may be a positive relationship between IM and performance in jobs that do not require technical competence but instead require competence in interpersonal relations. Otherwise, in cases where a job requires technical skills and expertise, there is no relationship between IM behaviors and the performances of professionals who perform the job.

Considering airport employees for this research, there is important expertise due to the nature of the industry. Although interpersonal communication skills are necessary for airport employees, the airport system cannot continue uninterrupted without technical knowledge and skills in aviation. In summary, technical knowledge and skills are inevitable for these employees. Based on this discussion, the following hypothesis was established in this part of the research:

H3: Impression management has a negative effect on task performance.

3.4. The relationship between job security perception, impression management, and task performance

As researchers have sought to examine potential mediating mechanisms that explain the relationship between job insecurity and task performance, impression management has come up consistent with what is discussed here. As Hayes (2012, p.1) points out, for the advancement of a field, it is important not only to say that a relationship exists, but also to explain how this relationship came to be. In this context, the role of impression management in the relationship between job security and performance becomes an important question (Probst et al., 2019, p. 307). It is known that impression management is one of the strategies used to protect the current business (Huang et al., 2013; Kang et al., 2012). Positive perceptions of the employee's performance are also supported by impression management tactics. In other words, the employee's perception of high job security is possible when he/she fulfills his/her job performance and demonstrates that he/she fulfills this to his/her superiors with impression management strategies. It is possible to provide job security and career advancement for employees who strive to create opportunities to improve current conditions (Probst et al., 2019, p. 308; Huang, 2013; Piccoli et al., 2021). In other words, while employees show high performance for the perception of high job security, they also promote their qualifications, show that they are exemplary employees, and may strive to be loved more (De Cuyper et al., 2014; p. 2-3; Rajasekharan & Rajasekharan, 2020, p. 856).

For all these reasons, the emergence of more task performance is consistent with the increased perception of job security; In this process, impression management tactics are expected to play an active role in the relationship between job security and job performance. There are also various studies supporting this mediation relationship (Probst et al., 2019; Staufenbiel & König, 2010). In light of these discussions, the following hypothesis was formed in this study:

H4: Impression management has a mediating effect on the relationship between job security perception and job performance.

Figure 1 depicts the model created following the research hypotheses. According to the model, perception of job security is the independent variable, task performance is the dependent variable, and impression management is the mediator variable.

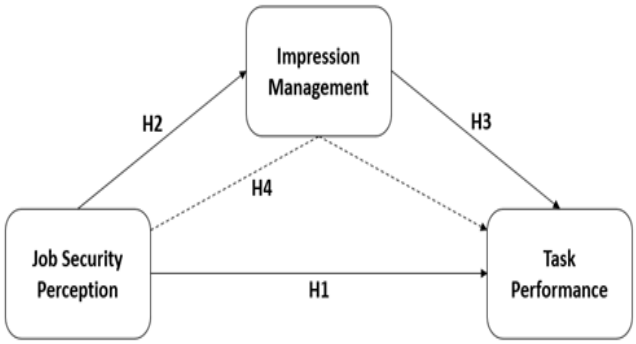

Figure 1. Research Model

4. Method

4.1. Procedures and sample

The sample of the research consists of the employees of airports operating in the aviation industry. These companies have undertaken the operation of many airports in Turkey. These are General Directorate of State Airports Authority, Istanbul Grand Airport, TAV Airport, Airport Management & Aeronautical Industries Inc. Companies have an important place in airport operations with their knowledge, highly qualified human resources, and advanced technology. The data of the research were collected with an online questionnaire prepared on Google Forms using the convenience sampling method between October 05-17, 2022. That questionnaire was sent to the individuals via LinkedIn which is a professional business network and social networking platform aimed at people in the business world to communicate and exchange information with others. In the questionnaire, the purpose of the research was explained and it was stated that it was voluntary and no personal information was requested. A total of 278 responses were returned. There were no missing data due to the online data collection.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender			Marital Status		
Female	205	77.9	Married	133	50.6
Male	57	21.7	Single	129	49.0
No Statement	1	0.4	No Statement	1	0.4
Age			Education		
18-26 years old	51	19.4	High school	21	8.0
27-34 years old	102	38.8	Associate degree	54	20.5
35-42 years old	68	25.8	Bachelor degree	138	52.5
43-49 years old	30	11.4	Post graduate degree	49	18.6
50-57 years old	9	3.4	No Statement	1	0.4
58 years old and more	1	0.4	Montly wage (Turkish Lira)		
No Statement	2	0.8	5000-10000	61	23.2
Tenure			11000-15000	90	34.2
1-5 years	169	64.2	16000-20000	4	15.2
6-10 years	46	17.5	21000-25000	17	6.5
11-15 years	17	6.5	26000-30000	6	2.3
16-20 years	17	6.5	31000 and more	31	11.8
21-25 years	8	3.0	No Statement	18	6.8
26 years and more	2	0.8			
No Statement	4	1.5			

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the participants. The majority part of the participants was female (77.9%) compared to 21.7% of male. Married participants were 50.6%, and single participants were 49.0%. In terms of tenure in the company, the majority of participants were 1-5 years (64.2%), and 6-10 years (17.5%). They have a high school degree (8%), associate degree (20.5%), bachelor's degree (42.1%), and postgraduate degree (18.6%). The monthly income of the majority of respondents was between 11000₺–15000₺ (34.2%).

4.2. Scales

The questionnaire consisted of four parts: demographic information, job security perception scale, task performance scale, and impression management scale. A 5-point (1: Strongly Disagree, 5: Strongly Agree) Likert scale was used to answer all questions. A pilot study was conducted on 76 individuals before the final data collection.

Job security perception scale (JSPS): Individuals' perception of job security was measured with the JSPS developed by Geçdoğan Yılmaz (2020). The JSPS consists of six statements (Ex.: I have sufficient job security) under one dimension. In the scale development study, exploratory factor analysis was used to determine the construct validity of the scale and the explained variance was 71.49%. Also, in that study the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was reported as 0.91. In the present study, Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of the JSPS was 0.91.

Task performance scale (TPS): The TPS developed by Goodman and Svyantek (1999) was used to measure task

performance. The scale consists of 9 statements (Ex.: I fulfill all the requirements of my job) under one dimension. The Turkish adaptation of the scale was made by Bağcı (2014). In the adaptation study, the scale was subjected to exploratory factor analysis for construct validity and it was determined that the resulting factors (factor load values between 0.570 and 0.804) matched the original structure. In the adaptation study, Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was determined as 0.88. In another study by Şahin and Kanbur (2022), the reliability coefficient was reported as 0.90. In the present study, Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of the TPS was 0.83.

Impression management scale (IMS): The IMS developed by Bolino and Turnley (1999) was used to measure the impression management variable. The Turkish adaptation of the scale was made by Basım, Tatar, and Şahin (2006). In the adaptation study, the IMS consisted of a 5-factor structure which was named supplication (Ex.: Pretend to not understand something that you do understand), self-promotion and ingratiation (Ex.: Make people aware of your accomplishments), exemplification (Ex.: Arrive at work early to look dedicated), intimidation (Ex.: Threaten a coworker), and job chauvinism (Ex.: Have showdowns with coworker or supervisors). Data were collected from two different samples and factor analysis was applied within the scope of the construct validity of the scale and it was determined that the resulting factors overlapped with the original structure. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of the entire scale was determined as 0.82 in the adaptation study. In another study where the scale was used, the general reliability coefficient was reported as 0.80. In the present study, Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of the entire IMS was 0.73

4.3. Data analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 was used to analyze descriptive statistics, reliability ratings, and correlations. AMOS Statistical Package version 24 was used to examine the hypotheses using structural equation modeling (SEM) (Arbuckle, 2016). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used in AMOS to validate the suggested measurement model with data. The model goodness of fit was evaluated based on the following values: Chi-square/degree of freedom (x2/df < 5), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA < 0.08), standardized root means square residual (SRMR < 0.08), goodness of fit index (GFI > 0.85), comparative fit index (CFI > 0.90), incremental fit index (IFI > 0.90) (Hair et al., 2014; Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003). For the convergent validity of the construct, the average variance extracted (AVE > 0.50) and composite reliability (CR > 0.70) were calculated also (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). For the mediation, a bootstrapping analysis with 500 resamples and 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals was performed (Hayes, 2009)

5. Results

5.1. Preliminary analysis

The normality of the distribution was evaluated using the skewness and kurtosis values. After the outliers were removed from the data, the skewness values (ranging from -1.256 to 0.608) and the kurtosis values (ranging from -0.155 to 1.351) were acceptable (Kline, 2016).

The JSPS, TPS, and IMS were subjected to CFA one by one, and their construct validities were verified with the collected data. In this validation process, items with factor loadings producing high modification coefficients and cross-loading tendencies were excluded from the analysis. Each factor was represented with at least three items. Factor loadings above 0.455 were acceptable because the sample size was higher than 150 respondents (Kline, 2016; Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson, 2014). Firstly, CFA was used to test the validity of the JSPS's one-factor structure. As a consequence of the analysis, it was decided to make modifications between items e4 and e5. The goodness-of-fit indices suggested that the scale was validated. Factor loadings ranged from 0.694 to 0.896. Later, the validity of the one-factor structure of the TPS was tested with CFA. As a result of the analysis, it was decided to remove one item (TP6) from the scale and to make modifications between items e1 and e2. The goodness-of-fit indices indicated that the one-factor task performance scale was validated. Factor loadings ranged from 0.455 to 0.807. Finally, the validity of the second level five-factor structure of the IMS was tested with CFA. As a result of the analysis, the second-order three-factor structure of the scale was confirmed by the data of supplication (SUP1-5), exemplification (EXE1-4), and self-promotion and ingratiation (SPI 1, 2, 4, 5, 7). The goodness-of-fit indices indicated that the second-order three-factor impression management scale was validated. Factor loadings ranged from 0.659 to 0.906. Table 2 presents the CFA results.

Table 2. CFA Results of Scales

Scales	x^2(CMIN)	df	x^2/df	RMSEA	SRMR	GFI	CFI	IFI
Job security perception	15.545	8	1.94	0.06	0.02	0.98	0.99	0.99
Task performance	33.113	19	1.74	0.05	0.04	0.97	0.98	0.98
Impression management	150.800	72	2.09	0.07	0.06	0.93	0.91	0.91

N=263, p < 0.05

Harman's single-factor test was applied to evaluate the common method variance. There was no problem with common method bias in this data since the total variance extracted by one factor is 18.630% and it was less than the recommended threshold of 50% (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics

Scales	Mean	SD	α	CR	AVE	1	2
1. Job security perception	3.88	1.01	0.909	0.91	0.63		
2. Task performance	4.61	0.42	0.826	0.86	0.44	0.145*	
3. Impression management	1.92	0.46	0.726	0.86	0.67	-0.144*	-0.159**

N=263

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 indicates the means, standard deviations, Cronbach's α, CR, AVE, and correlations of the research variables. A bivariate correlation analysis was used to analyze the relationship between the variables. As expected, job security perception was positively correlated with task performance ($r = 0.145$, $p < 0.05$). Job security perception was negatively correlated with impression management ($r = -0.144$, $p < 0.05$). Impression management also showed a negative correlation with task performance ($r = -0.159$, $p < 0.01$). The CR values ranged from 0.86 to 0.91. The AVE values ranged from 0.44 to 0.67. If AVE is less than 0.50, the convergent validity is still acceptable if CR is higher than 0.60. Therefore, these findings implied that the measurement model showed convergent validity (Lam, 2012; Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2014).

5.2. Hypotheses testing

The purpose of this study is to ascertain whether job security perception positively influences task performance (H1), whether job security perception negatively influences impression management (H2), whether impression management has a negative effect on task performance (H3), and whether impression management mediates the relationship between job security perception and task performance (H4). The structural models with the latent variable were employed to test these hypotheses.

Firstly, a structural model in which job security perception and task performance were established to examine H1. The goodness-of-fit indices indicated that the structural model fit the data well ($x2 [74, N = 263] = 136.544$, $p < 0.001$, $x2/df = 1.845$, RMSEA = 0.06, SRMR = 0.04, GFI = 0.93, CFI = 0.97, IFI = 0.97). The analysis results are shown in Table 4. According to these results, job security perception was a positive effect on task performance ($\beta = 0.17$, $p < 0.05$). Job security perception explained 3% of the variance in task performance. These results showed that H1 was supported.

Table 4. The Results of the Structural Model

Interdependent variables	Dependent variables	
	Task performance	Impression management
	β	β
Job security perception (H_1, H_2)	0.17*	-0.16*
R^2	0.03	0.03
Impression management (H_3)	-0.30**	-
R^2	0.09	-
Job security perception —> Impression management —> Task performance (H_4)		
Indirect effect, β = 0.108, 95% CI = (0.000, 0.149)		

N= 263, ** p < 0.01, * p < 0.05, Standardized beta coefficients are reported. R^2 indicates the variance described. CI: Confidence Interval. Values in parentheses are lower and upper confidence intervals. Bootstrap samples = 500.

Secondly, a structural model in which job security perception and impression management were established to examine H2. The goodness-of-fit indices indicated that the structural model fit the data well ($x2 [163, N = 263] = 291.335$, $p < 0.001$, $x2/df = 1.845$, RMSEA = 0.06, SRMR = 0.07, GFI = 0.90, CFI = 0.93, IFI = 0.94). The analysis results are shown in Table 4. According to these results, job security perception was a negative effect on impression management ($\beta = -0.16$, $p < 0.05$). Job security perception explained 3% of the variance in impression management. These results showed that H2 was supported.

Thirdly, a structural model in which impression management and task performance were established to examine H3. The goodness-of-fit indices indicated that the structural model fit the data well ($x2 [202, N = 263] = 320.881$, $p < 0.001$, $x2/df = 1.589$, RMSEA = 0.06, SRMR = 0.08, GFI = 0.90, CFI = 0.93, IFI = 0.93). The analysis results are shown in Table 4. According to these results, impression management was a negative effect on task performance ($\beta = -0.30$, $p < 0.01$). Impression management explained 9% of the variance in task performance. These results showed that H3 was supported.

A bootstrap analysis with 500 resamples was performed to determine whether impression management plays a mediating role in the effect of job security perception on task performance. According to the bootstrap analysis, the indirect effect of job security perception on task performance through impression management was not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.11$, 95% CI [0.000, 0.149], $p = 0.071$), because the confidence intervals included the value zero. These findings showed that impression management did not act as a mediator between job security perception and task performance (Table 4). In this case, Hypothesis 4 was not supported.

Figure 2 demonstrates the findings of structural path analysis. Although the coefficients among job security perception, impression management, and task performance were significant, the indirect effect of job security perception on task performance through impression management was not statistically significant.

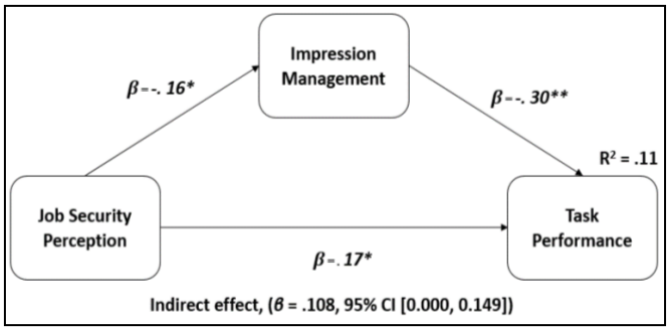

Figure 2. The Results of Structural Path Analysis

6. Discussion and Conclusion

This research aimed to examine the effect of job security perceptions of airport employees on their task performance, and whether there was a mediating role of impression management in this relationship. The hypotheses created for the research were tested. The results of the research partially supported the proposed hypotheses.

According to the structural model developed to test the first hypothesis of the study, job security perception was found to be positively related to task performance. Accordingly, individuals who perceive a high level of job security tend to fulfill their job duties at a higher level. In other words, the task performance of individuals who perceive a low level of job security will be lower than other individuals. One reason for this result may be that airport employees do not feel the stress and anxiety that arise when low job security is perceived, so they do not use impression management tactics, which is a coping method. Some studies conducted in the literature support the results of the relationship between job security perception and task performance (Lu et al., 2017; Probst et al., 2019).

The structural model's findings, which were used to test the second hypothesis, showed that job security perception negatively affects impression management. In other words, individuals who perceive job security do not exhibit behaviors aimed at influencing their supervisors' or colleagues' perceptions of themselves. When impression management is used as a coping mechanism, it is expected that there will be a positive correlation with job insecurity, so when there is high job security, employees are expected to use impression management tactics less. Some studies conducted in the literature also support the results of the relationship between job security perception and impression management (Kang et al., 2012; Probst et al., 2019).

The structural model developed to evaluate the third hypothesis of the study revealed the negative impact of impression management on task performance. Individuals who use impression management tactics such as self-promotion, ingratiation, supplication, and exemplification have a lower level of task performance. One possible explanation for the negative association is that impression management practices are not tolerated in the aviation culture in general. Because the aviation industry, where human life is very important, requires high technical skills and expertise, individuals are expected to perform their duties and responsibilities fully. Therefore, employees who perform their duties do not need to exhibit their impression management behaviors. These findings are consistent with previous research on these variables (Abbas, Raja, Anjum & Bouckenooghe, 2019; Agina, Mohammed & Omar, 2017; Viswesvaran, Ones & Hough, 2001).

Finally, a structural equation modeling was developed to test the entire research model. Contrary to expected, impression management did not play a mediating role in the effect of job security perception on task performance. It has been revealed that individuals who feel high job security do not apply the techniques of impression management in fulfilling their duties. According to this result, it can be said that the high job security perceptions of the employees in the aviation sector are positively reflected in their job performance, therefore, they do not need impression management practices to influence their superiors or colleagues.

7. Implications

When the literature is examined, there are very few studies that examine these three variables together. In the aviation literature, however, no study has been encountered that explains these relationships. The present study extends prior research on job security perception and task performance by integrating impression management as a mediator of a structural model. The results from this empirical research fill gaps in the organizational behavior, human resources, and strategic management literature by indicating the relationships among the research variables. In the study, it has been revealed that the perception of job security has a positive effect on task performance, the perception of job security has a negative effect on impression management, and impression management has a negative effect on task performance. On the other hand, it has been determined that impression management does not have a mediating role in the relationship between job security perception and task performance.

It is considered that this result between job security perception expressing a relaxing process about the future, and task performance that increases the effectiveness and efficiency of the individual and organization, make a major contribution to the literature on organizational behavior and human resource management. In addition, the negative relationship of impression management, which individuals use to influence others, with job security perception and task performance will also contribute to the relevant literature.

These results are anticipated to enhance human resources departments' efforts to improve employees' productivity and effectiveness to build a sustainable competitive advantage. Putting more emphasis on human resources management policies, which eliminate the concerns of employees about job security, contributes to the success of the organization by enhancing the task performance of individuals.

8. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

There are some limitations to this study. First, the research data was gathered from three aviation companies in Türkiye. As a result, the findings cannot be generalizable to other organizations, industries, or countries. Future research could be conducted in different companies or sectors.

Second, this study examined the relationships among job security perception, task performance, and impression management in a theoretical framework. The results mostly supported the theory and extended the results of previous research. The associations among job security perception, task performance, and impression management were significant statistically. But impression management did not act as a mediator in the relationship between job security perception

and task performance. In future studies, variables such as organizational commitment or leader-member exchange can be added to the model to better understand the relationships between these variables.

Finally, the study relied on self-reported data. Because the study is based on data from a single source, the findings may be influenced by common source variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003). To control method biases, the questionnaire instructed the respondents that there was no right or incorrect response and that their responses wouldn't be shared with anyone. The participants were instructed to give answers that as closely as possible mirrored the truth. Also, the Harman single-factor analysis revealed that no common method variance existed. Future research should be designed to be longitudinal, with data from management collected to detect causal links.

Ethical approval

In this study, ethics committee permission was obtained from Kırklareli University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee on October 4, 2022 (E-35523585-302.99-61627).

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