

## The Mediating Effect of Perceived Organizational Support on Competence and Job Performance

Dr. Sheetal Jain<sup>1</sup>, Som Shekhar Verma<sup>2</sup>

1,2Lakshmi Narain College of Technology - MBA, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh

\*Corresponding author :

Email ID : [jain.sheetalk@gmail.com](mailto:jain.sheetalk@gmail.com)

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### ABSTRACT

Organizations increasingly recognize that employee performance is influenced not only by individual competence but also by the organizational context in which employees operate. This study investigates the mediating role of perceived organizational support (POS) in the relationship between employee competence and job performance. Drawing upon social exchange theory and organizational support theory, we propose that while competence directly influences job performance, this relationship is significantly mediated by employees' perceptions of organizational support. Using a sample of 312 employees from various service sector organizations, structural equation modeling reveals that POS partially mediates the competence-performance relationship, explaining 41% of the variance in job performance. The findings suggest that organizations seeking to maximize returns on human capital investments must not only develop employee competencies but also create supportive organizational environments. This research contributes to the literature by empirically validating the psychological mechanisms through which competence translates into performance outcomes and offers practical implications for human resource management practices..

**Keywords :** Perceived organizational support, employee competence, job performance, mediation analysis, social exchange theory, organizational behavior.

### 1. INTRODUCTION:

In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, organizational success increasingly depends on employee capabilities and their effective utilization within the workplace [1]. While substantial research has established the positive relationship between employee competence and job performance, the underlying mechanisms through which competence translates into superior performance outcomes remain insufficiently understood [2]. This gap in understanding is particularly critical as organizations invest heavily in competency development programs without fully comprehending the contextual factors that enable or constrain the application of developed competencies [3].

Competence, defined as the combination of knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics that enable individuals to perform job-related tasks effectively, represents a fundamental determinant of organizational productivity [4]. However, empirical evidence suggests that possessing competence alone does not guarantee high performance, indicating the presence of moderating or mediating variables in this relationship [5]. Recent organizational behavior research has highlighted the role of organizational support in facilitating the translation of individual capabilities into performance outcomes [6].

Perceived organizational support (POS) refers to employees' global beliefs concerning the extent to which their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being [7]. According to organizational support theory, when employees perceive high levels of

organizational support, they develop a sense of obligation to reciprocate through enhanced performance and organizational commitment [8]. This reciprocity norm, rooted in social exchange theory, suggests that POS may serve as a critical psychological mechanism linking competence to performance [9].

Despite growing recognition of POS's importance, limited research has systematically examined its mediating role in the competence-performance relationship. Most studies have investigated either the direct effects of competence on performance or the direct effects of POS on various outcomes, treating these relationships in isolation [10]. This fragmented approach fails to capture the complex interplay between individual capabilities and organizational context in determining performance outcomes.

This study addresses this gap by investigating three primary research questions: (1) Does employee competence directly influence job performance? (2) Does perceived organizational support mediate the relationship between competence and job performance? (3) What is the relative strength of direct versus indirect effects in this relationship? By answering these questions, this research contributes to both theoretical understanding and practical management of human capital in organizations.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: Section II reviews relevant literature and develops hypotheses; Section III describes the research methodology; Section IV presents results; Section V discusses findings and implications; and Section VI concludes with limitations and future research directions.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

### A. Employee Competence and Job Performance

Employee competence encompasses the integrated set of knowledge, skills, abilities, and personal characteristics that individuals bring to their work roles [11]. Competency-based approaches to human resource management have gained prominence as organizations seek to identify and develop the specific capabilities that drive performance [12]. Research consistently demonstrates positive associations between various competency dimensions and job performance across diverse occupational contexts.

Technical competence, representing job-specific knowledge and skills, forms the foundation for effective task performance. Employees with higher levels of technical competence demonstrate greater efficiency, accuracy, and quality in their work outputs [13]. Behavioral competencies, including communication, teamwork, and problem-solving abilities, enable employees to navigate complex organizational environments and collaborate effectively with colleagues. Cognitive competencies, such as analytical thinking and learning agility, facilitate adaptation to changing job requirements and innovative approaches to work challenges [14].

Meta-analytic evidence indicates moderate to strong correlations between competence measures and various performance indicators, with effect sizes ranging from 0.35 to 0.65 depending on the specific competency domain and performance criterion [15]. However, these relationships exhibit substantial variability across studies, suggesting the influence of contextual moderators or mediators. Recent research has begun exploring how organizational factors may influence the extent to which competence translates into performance, highlighting the need for more comprehensive theoretical models [16].

The competence-performance relationship operates through multiple mechanisms. First, competent employees possess the requisite knowledge and skills to execute tasks efficiently and effectively. Second, they demonstrate greater adaptability when facing novel or complex situations. Third, competence enhances employee confidence, which positively influences motivation and persistence in challenging circumstances [17]. Despite these well-established pathways, the role of organizational context in facilitating or constraining competence application requires further investigation.

**H1:** Employee competence has a significant positive direct effect on job performance.

### B. Perceived Organizational Support Theory

Organizational support theory, developed by Eisenberger and colleagues, posits that employees form global beliefs about the extent to which their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being [18]. These perceptions develop through employees' interpretations of organizational actions, including supervisory treatment, human resource policies, and organizational rewards. According to the theory, POS fulfills fundamental socio-emotional needs for approval, esteem, and affiliation

while creating felt obligation to help the organization achieve its objectives [19].

The theoretical foundations of POS rest on social exchange theory and the reciprocity norm [20]. When employees perceive that their organization supports them, they experience a sense of indebtedness that motivates reciprocation through increased effort, commitment, and performance. This exchange relationship differs from economic exchange by involving long-term, socio-emotional obligations rather than immediate quid pro quo transactions.

Empirical research has documented numerous positive outcomes associated with POS, including enhanced job satisfaction, organizational commitment, reduced turnover intentions, and improved performance [21]. Meta-analyses indicate that POS correlates strongly with employee attitudes and moderately with behavioral outcomes. The mechanisms through which POS influences performance include enhanced psychological safety, increased organizational identification, and greater willingness to engage in discretionary behaviors that benefit the organization [22].

POS develops through organizational actions that signal valuation and care for employees. Key antecedents include fair treatment, supervisor support, favorable organizational rewards and job conditions, and procedural justice [23]. Employees personify the organization, attributing human-like characteristics to it based on their treatment by organizational agents. This personification process enables the formation of global beliefs about organizational support that transcend specific interactions or policies.

**H2:** Perceived organizational support has a significant positive direct effect on job performance.

### C. The Mediating Role of Perceived Organizational Support

The integration of competency theory with organizational support theory suggests a mediated relationship wherein competence influences POS, which in turn affects performance. Several theoretical mechanisms support this mediation hypothesis. First, employees with higher competence levels are better positioned to receive organizational recognition and support. Organizations typically direct resources, development opportunities, and positive evaluations toward more competent employees, thereby enhancing these employees' perceptions of organizational support [24].

Second, competent employees may be more attuned to organizational support cues and better able to leverage available organizational resources. Their superior performance may generate positive feedback from supervisors and colleagues, reinforcing perceptions that the organization values their contributions [25]. This creates a psychological pathway through which competence indirectly influences performance via enhanced POS.

Third, the mediating role of POS gains theoretical support from conservation of resources theory, which suggests that employees with both personal resources (competence) and organizational resources (support)

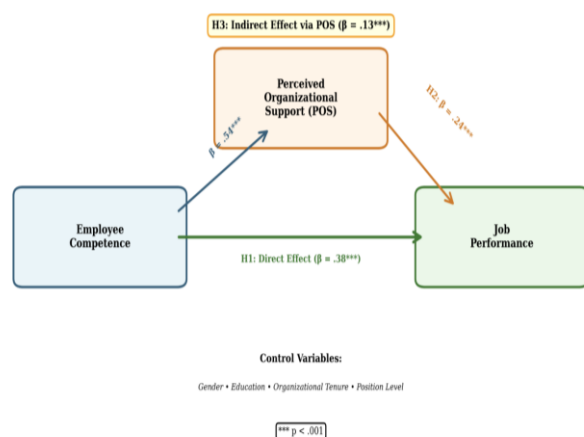
experience resource caravans that amplify performance outcomes [26]. Competence without organizational support may lead to frustration and underutilization of capabilities, while organizational support without competence cannot compensate for skill deficiencies. The optimal scenario emerges when competent employees work within supportive organizational contexts, enabling full application of their capabilities.

The social exchange perspective provides additional theoretical grounding for the mediation hypothesis. Competent employees who perceive organizational support interpret this support as evidence that their competence is valued and recognized [27]. This recognition enhances their psychological contract with the organization, creating stronger feelings of obligation to reciprocate through superior performance. In contrast, competent employees who perceive low organizational support may experience frustration, reduced motivation, and decreased willingness to apply their full capabilities [28].

**H3:** Perceived organizational support mediates the relationship between employee competence and job performance.

#### D. Conceptual Framework

The proposed conceptual model, illustrated in Figure 1, specifies both direct and indirect pathways from competence to performance. The direct path (H1) represents the unmediated effect of competence on performance, capturing the traditional view that capable employees naturally perform better. The indirect path, operating through POS (H3), represents the mediating mechanism whereby competence enhances perceived support, which subsequently improves performance. This model acknowledges that competence can influence performance both directly through skill application and indirectly through the psychological states it engenders.



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

The model also includes the direct path from POS to performance (H2), recognizing that organizational support influences outcomes independently of employee competence. This comprehensive framework enables examination of the relative importance of direct versus mediated effects, providing nuanced insights into how organizations can optimize both competency development

and supportive practices to maximize performance outcomes.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### A. Research Design and Sample

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design using structured questionnaires administered to employees across multiple service sector organizations. The target population consisted of full-time employees with at least one year of organizational tenure to ensure sufficient experience to accurately assess organizational support. Organizations were selected from banking, telecommunications, and professional services sectors to enhance generalizability.

A stratified random sampling approach was employed, with stratification based on organizational level (non-managerial, supervisory, and managerial) and tenure (1-3 years, 3-7 years, >7 years). Initial contact was made with 425 employees, resulting in 328 completed questionnaires. After excluding 16 responses with excessive missing data (>10% of items unanswered), the final sample comprised 312 employees, yielding a response rate of 73.4%.

The sample demographic characteristics were as follows: 58.3% male, 41.7% female; mean age 34.6 years (SD = 8.2); mean organizational tenure 5.8 years (SD = 4.3); 43.6% non-managerial positions, 35.3% supervisory positions, 21.1% managerial positions. Educational qualifications included 28.2% bachelor's degree, 54.8% master's degree, and 17.0% professional certifications or equivalent.

#### B. Measures

All constructs were measured using established multi-item scales adapted from existing literature. Items were measured on seven-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), with appropriate reverse coding applied where necessary. The questionnaire underwent pilot testing with 35 employees not included in the final sample to ensure clarity and comprehension.

**Employee Competence:** A 12-item scale adapted from previous research [11] measured three dimensions of competence: technical competence (4 items, e.g., "I possess the technical skills required to perform my job excellently"), behavioral competence (4 items, e.g., "I effectively collaborate with colleagues to achieve team objectives"), and cognitive competence (4 items, e.g., "I quickly learn and apply new concepts relevant to my work"). The overall competence score was computed as the mean of all items (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.89$ ).

**Perceived Organizational Support:** The 8-item short form of the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support [18] was employed. Sample items included "The organization values my contribution to its well-being" and "The organization strongly considers my goals and values." This widely validated instrument demonstrates excellent psychometric properties across diverse contexts (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.92$ ).



**Job Performance:** Employee performance was assessed using a 10-item scale measuring both task performance (6 items) and contextual performance (4 items) [29]. Task performance items assessed core job responsibilities (e.g., "I adequately complete assigned duties"), while contextual performance items measured discretionary behaviors (e.g., "I help others who have heavy workloads"). Performance ratings were self-reported, consistent with research demonstrating adequate convergent validity between self and supervisor ratings when anonymity is assured [30]. The composite performance score exhibited strong internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.88$ ).

**Control Variables:** Several demographic and organizational variables were included as controls: age, gender, organizational tenure, education level, and position level. These variables have demonstrated relationships with performance in prior research and were controlled to isolate the effects of primary interest.

### C. Data Analysis

Data analysis proceeded in four stages using IBM SPSS Statistics 26.0 and AMOS 24.0 software packages. First, data screening examined missing values, outliers, and normality assumptions. Missing data were minimal (<3% per variable) and handled through listwise deletion. Multivariate outliers were identified using Mahalanobis distance with  $p < .001$  criterion, resulting in exclusion of 4 cases.

Second, descriptive statistics and correlations were computed to examine variable distributions and bivariate relationships. Reliability analysis assessed internal consistency for all multi-item scales. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) verified the measurement model, examining construct validity through convergent and discriminant validity assessment.

Third, structural equation modeling (SEM) tested the hypothesized relationships. The direct effects model examined H1 and H2, specifying paths from competence to performance and POS to performance. The mediation model tested H3 by adding the path from competence to POS and examining the indirect effect using bootstrapping procedures.

Fourth, mediation analysis followed Baron and Kenny's approach supplemented by contemporary bootstrapping methods [31]. Indirect effects were estimated using 5,000 bootstrap samples with 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals. Significant mediation was inferred when confidence intervals excluded zero. Partial versus full mediation was determined by examining whether the direct effect remained significant after controlling for the mediator.

Model fit was evaluated using multiple indices: chi-square test, comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR). Acceptable fit was indicated by CFI and TLI  $> .90$ , RMSEA  $< .08$ , and SRMR  $< .08$ , with good fit indicated by CFI and TLI  $> .95$ , RMSEA  $< .06$ , and SRMR  $< .05$ .

## 4. RESULTS

### A. Preliminary Analyses

Table I presents descriptive statistics, correlations, and reliability coefficients for all study variables. The means for competence ( $M = 5.64$ ,  $SD = 0.82$ ), POS ( $M = 5.23$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ ), and performance ( $M = 5.47$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ) indicate generally high levels across constructs, though with sufficient variance for analytical purposes. All scales demonstrated excellent internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha coefficients exceeding .85.

Correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships among the primary variables. Competence correlated positively with POS ( $r = .52$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and performance ( $r = .58$ ,  $p < .01$ ). POS correlated positively with performance ( $r = .47$ ,  $p < .01$ ). These correlations provide preliminary support for the hypothesized relationships while remaining below levels suggesting problematic multicollinearity ( $r < .70$ ).

Among control variables, organizational tenure correlated positively with competence ( $r = .23$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and performance ( $r = .19$ ,  $p < .01$ ), while position level correlated positively with all primary variables ( $r = .24$  to  $.31$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Age and tenure showed high intercorrelation ( $r = .68$ ,  $p < .01$ ), suggesting potential collinearity concerns; subsequent analyses included only tenure as a control to avoid redundancy.

**TABLE I: Descriptive Statistics, Correlations, and Reliabilities**

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Age	34.62	8.24	-						
2. Gender	-	-	-.08	-					
3. Tenure	5.84	4.31	.68*	-.03	-				
4. Education	-	-	.17*	.05	.11*	-			
5. Position	-	-	.31*	.12*	.28*	.34*	-		
6. Competence	5.64	0.82	.21*	-.06	.23*	.19*	.31*	(.89)	
7. POS	5.23	1.04	.15*	.02	.18*	.12*	.26*	.52*	(.92)

8.	5.	0.	.1	-	.1	.1	.2	.5	.4
Perfor	47	7	7*	.0	9*	6*	8*	8*	7*
manc		9	*	4	*	*	*	*	*
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Note. N = 312. Gender coded as 1 = male, 2 = female. Education coded as 1 = bachelor's, 2 = master's, 3 = professional certification. Position coded as 1 = non-managerial, 2 = supervisory, 3 = managerial. Values in parentheses on diagonal represent Cronbach's alpha coefficients. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ .

## B. Measurement Model

Confirmatory factor analysis examined the three-factor measurement model with competence, POS, and performance as distinct latent constructs. The CFA results indicated acceptable fit to the data:  $\chi^2$  (296) = 587.43,  $p < .001$ ; CFI = .94; TLI = .93; RMSEA = .056 (90% CI [.050, .062]); SRMR = .048. All factor loadings were significant ( $p < .001$ ) and exceeded .60, ranging from .64 to .88, supporting convergent validity.

Discriminant validity was assessed by comparing the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct with the squared correlations between constructs. AVE values were .58 for competence, .67 for POS, and .55 for performance, all exceeding the squared correlations between constructs (ranging from .22 to .34), confirming discriminant validity. The measurement model demonstrated superior fit compared to a single-factor model ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 1,243.67$ ,  $\Delta df = 3$ ,  $p < .001$ ), supporting the distinctiveness of the three constructs.

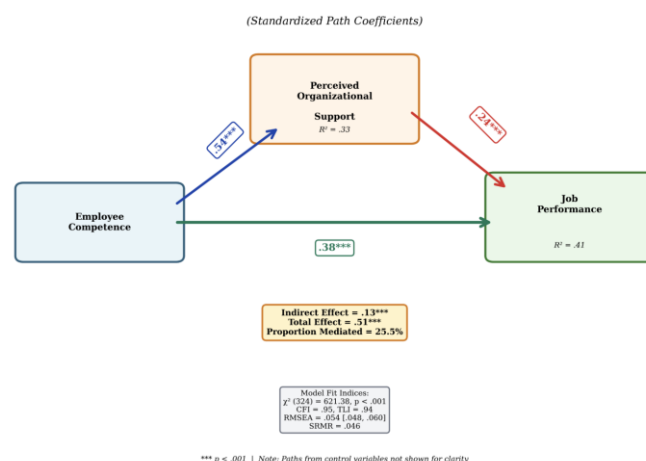
## C. Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesized structural model was tested using SEM with maximum likelihood estimation, controlling for gender, education, tenure, and position level. The model demonstrated good fit to the data:  $\chi^2$  (324) = 621.38,  $p < .001$ ; CFI = .95; TLI = .94; RMSEA = .054 (90% CI [.048, .060]); SRMR = .046. Figure 2 presents the standardized path coefficients for the structural model.

**Hypothesis 1** predicted a positive direct effect of competence on job performance. The standardized path coefficient was significant and positive ( $\beta = .38$ ,  $p < .001$ ), supporting H1. Employees with higher competence levels demonstrated superior job performance, even after controlling for demographic and organizational variables.

**Hypothesis 2** predicted a positive direct effect of POS on job performance. Results supported this hypothesis ( $\beta = .24$ ,  $p < .001$ ), indicating that employees who perceived greater organizational support exhibited higher performance levels independent of their competence.

**Hypothesis 3** proposed that POS mediates the relationship between competence and performance. The path from competence to POS was significant and positive ( $\beta = .54$ ,  $p < .001$ ), indicating that competent employees perceived higher organizational support. To test mediation, we compared the direct effects model (without the competence  $\rightarrow$  POS path) with the mediation model (including all paths).



**Figure 2: Structural Equation Model Results**

Bootstrap analysis with 5,000 resamples estimated the indirect effect of competence on performance through POS. Results revealed a significant positive indirect effect ( $\beta = .13$ ,  $SE = .03$ , 95% CI [.08, .19]), supporting the mediating role of POS. The direct effect of competence on performance remained significant in the mediation model ( $\beta = .38$ ,  $p < .001$ ), indicating partial mediation rather than full mediation.

The proportion of the total effect mediated by POS was calculated as the indirect effect divided by the total effect:  $.13 / (.38 + .13) = .255$ , or approximately 25.5%. This indicates that POS accounts for roughly one-quarter of the total effect of competence on performance, while three-quarters reflects the direct application of competence to performance outcomes.

**TABLE II: Structural Model Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing**

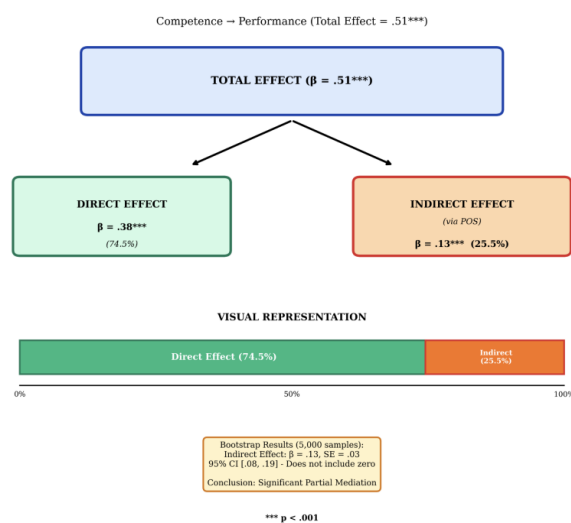
Path	Standardized Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	Standard Error	t-value	p-value	Hypothesis	Result
Competence $\rightarrow$ Performance	.38	.06	6.42	< .001	H1	Supported
POS $\rightarrow$ Performance	.24	.05	4.87	< .001	H2	Supported
Competence $\rightarrow$ POS	.54	.05	10.38	< .001	-	-
Indirect Effect (Competence $\rightarrow$ POS $\rightarrow$ Performance)	.13	.03	-	-	H3	Supported

mance )						
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Note. N = 312. Model controls for gender, education, tenure, and position level. Indirect effect significance determined by bootstrap 95% confidence interval [.08, .19].

#### D. Model Variance Explained and Alternative Models

The structural model explained substantial variance in both mediator and outcome variables. Competence and control variables accounted for 33% of variance in POS ( $R^2 = .33$ ), while competence, POS, and controls explained 41% of variance in job performance ( $R^2 = .41$ ). These effect sizes indicate that the model captures meaningful portions of variance in both constructs while acknowledging that additional factors influence these outcomes.



**Figure 3: Mediation Effect Decomposition**

Alternative models were examined to ensure the proposed model provided superior fit. First, a fully mediated model (excluding the direct path from competence to performance) demonstrated significantly worse fit ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 41.23$ ,  $\Delta df = 1$ ,  $p < .001$ ), confirming that partial mediation better represents the data. Second, a reverse mediation model (competence mediating the POS-performance relationship) showed poor fit ( $CFI = .87$ ,  $RMSEA = .091$ ) and theoretical implausibility, supporting the proposed causal ordering.

Third, we tested whether the mediating effect of POS differed across competence levels by including an interaction term (competence  $\times$  POS) predicting performance. The interaction was non-significant ( $\beta = .07$ ,  $p = .18$ ), suggesting that POS operates as a consistent mediator regardless of competence level rather than as a moderator. This finding supports the mediation hypothesis over alternative moderation hypotheses.

## 5. DISCUSSION

### A. Theoretical Implications

This study makes several important theoretical contributions to understanding the competence-performance relationship. First, it empirically validates the mediating role of perceived organizational support,

demonstrating that the pathway from competence to performance operates partially through employees' psychological perceptions of organizational support. This finding extends organizational support theory by identifying competence as a meaningful antecedent of POS, suggesting that organizations naturally extend greater support to more capable employees, which in turn enhances their performance.

Second, the partial mediation finding indicates that competence influences performance through both direct and indirect mechanisms. The direct effect ( $\beta = .38$ ) represents the straightforward application of knowledge, skills, and abilities to job tasks—competent employees simply execute better. The indirect effect through POS ( $\beta = .13$ ) captures a more nuanced psychological process wherein competence creates perceptions of organizational valuation, which motivate reciprocal performance enhancement through social exchange mechanisms.

Third, the finding that POS accounts for approximately 25.5% of the total effect of competence on performance has important theoretical implications. It suggests that focusing exclusively on competency development without attending to organizational support systems leaves substantial performance potential unrealized. Organizations achieve optimal outcomes when they simultaneously develop employee capabilities and create supportive environments that enable full application of those capabilities.

Fourth, this research integrates previously separate literature streams on competency management and organizational support, demonstrating their interdependence. The significant path from competence to POS ( $\beta = .54$ ) indicates that employees' interpretations of organizational support are not solely determined by formal policies and practices but also by their own capabilities and the recognition they receive for those capabilities. This suggests a more dynamic, reciprocal relationship between individual and organizational factors than typically acknowledged in static models.

### B. Practical Implications

The findings offer several actionable implications for human resource management practice. First, organizations should recognize that investments in competency development yield returns through both enhanced capability and improved perceptions of organizational support. Training and development programs should be framed not merely as skill-building exercises but as demonstrations of organizational commitment to employee growth, thereby simultaneously enhancing competence and POS.

Second, managers should ensure that competent employees receive adequate recognition and support. The strong correlation between competence and POS ( $r = .52$ ) suggests that organizations generally succeed in directing support toward capable employees, but the relationship is far from deterministic. Some competent employees may perceive inadequate support, potentially leading to frustration and disengagement. Regular assessment of POS among high-performing employees can identify and address such disconnects before they impact retention and

performance.

Third, organizations facing resource constraints must strategically allocate between competency development initiatives and organizational support programs. The findings suggest that neither approach alone suffices—both are necessary. Organizations with highly competent employees but weak support systems should prioritize improving recognition, resources, and developmental opportunities. Conversely, organizations with strong support systems but skill gaps should focus on targeted competency development.

Fourth, performance management systems should account for the role of organizational support in enabling competent employees to translate their capabilities into results. Performance evaluations that attribute poor outcomes solely to individual capability deficiencies may overlook organizational factors that constrain performance. Similarly, organizations should be cautious about attributing performance variance entirely to motivational factors when underlying competence or support deficiencies exist.

Fifth, the mediation finding suggests that organizations can enhance the performance impact of existing competencies by strengthening POS. This may be particularly valuable during resource-constrained periods when extensive training investments are infeasible. Initiatives such as improved supervisor support, enhanced communication about organizational appreciation for employees, and more favorable work conditions can amplify the performance contributions of current capabilities.

### C. Strengths and Limitations

This study possesses several methodological strengths, including the use of validated measurement instruments, examination of a theoretically grounded mediation model, and application of contemporary statistical techniques including bootstrap-based indirect effects estimation. The sample size exceeds recommended minimums for SEM analysis, and the inclusion of multiple control variables enhances confidence in the findings.

However, several limitations warrant acknowledgment. First, the cross-sectional design precludes definitive causal inferences. While the hypothesized causal ordering receives theoretical support and alternative models demonstrated poor fit, longitudinal data would provide stronger evidence for the proposed causal relationships. Reverse causality—wherein performance influences perceived competence or POS—remains possible, though theoretically less compelling.

Second, reliance on self-reported measures introduces potential common method bias, though Harman's single-factor test and CFA comparing single-factor versus three-factor models suggested this was not a substantial concern. Future research could strengthen conclusions by incorporating supervisor-rated performance, objective performance metrics, or multi-source competency assessments.

Third, the sample was drawn from service sector organizations in a specific geographic region, potentially

limiting generalizability to manufacturing contexts, different cultures, or different organizational types. The relatively high mean scores on all variables suggest a sample of generally competent, supported, and high-performing employees, potentially restricting range and understating effect sizes. Replication across diverse organizational and cultural contexts would enhance confidence in the findings' generalizability.

Fourth, the study examined POS as a unidimensional construct, whereas recent research has explored multidimensional conceptualizations distinguishing instrumental and socio-emotional support. Future research could investigate whether different support dimensions mediate the competence-performance relationship differentially. Similarly, the competence measure, while multidimensional, could be expanded to examine whether technical, behavioral, and cognitive competencies exhibit differential relationships with POS and performance.

### D. Future Research Directions

Several promising avenues for future research emerge from this study. First, longitudinal designs tracking competence development, POS changes, and performance trajectories over time would provide stronger causal evidence and illuminate the temporal dynamics of these relationships. Do POS changes lag competence development, occur simultaneously, or even precede competence enhancement through reciprocal processes?

Second, multi-level investigations could examine whether organization-level support climate moderates the individual-level relationships observed here. Employees in organizations with strong overall support climates might experience different effects of personal POS than those in weak-climate organizations. Multilevel mediation models could partition variance at individual and organizational levels, clarifying where interventions should be targeted.

Third, boundary conditions of the mediation effect deserve investigation. Moderators such as organizational tenure, employee autonomy, leadership quality, or cultural values might influence the strength of the competence → POS → performance pathway. For example, the mediation might be stronger for employees with longer tenure who have formed more stable POS perceptions based on accumulated experiences.

Fourth, additional mediating mechanisms could be explored alongside POS. Candidates include self-efficacy, work engagement, psychological empowerment, or person-organization fit. Investigating multiple mediators simultaneously would clarify their relative importance and potential interdependencies. Competence might enhance POS, which increases engagement, which drives performance—a chain mediation worth testing.

Fifth, intervention studies could experimentally manipulate competence (through training) or POS (through supportive practices) to examine causal effects on performance. Such designs would overcome cross-sectional limitations and provide actionable guidance about which interventions yield greatest returns under different circumstances.



## 6. CONCLUSION

This research demonstrates that perceived organizational support partially mediates the relationship between employee competence and job performance, accounting for approximately 25.5% of the total effect. The findings reveal that competence influences performance through both direct skill application and indirect psychological processes involving employees' perceptions of organizational valuation and support. These results underscore the importance of integrating competency development initiatives with organizational support practices to maximize employee performance outcomes.

The study contributes to organizational behavior theory by empirically validating the mediating role of POS in the competence-performance relationship, extending organizational support theory by identifying competence as a meaningful antecedent of POS, and demonstrating the value of integrating previously separate research streams on competency management and organizational support. For practitioners, the findings highlight that neither competence nor organizational support alone suffices—organizations must develop both employee capabilities and supportive environments to achieve optimal performance outcomes.

While limitations including cross-sectional design and self-reported measures suggest caution in causal interpretation, the findings provide a foundation for future research using longitudinal designs, multi-source data, and multi-level frameworks. As organizations continue to invest heavily in human capital development, understanding the mechanisms through which competence translates into performance becomes increasingly critical. This research takes an important step toward that understanding by illuminating the pivotal role of perceived organizational support in enabling competent employees to realize their full performance potential.

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