



# The Nexus between Organisational Identification and Employees' Behavioural Outcomes: Evidence from Ecotourism Businesses

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Abstract: This paper presents the mediating model, which covers the relationship between organisational identification and employees' behavioural outcomes in ecotourism businesses. Drawing on social identity theory, this study theorises that perceived organisational support and perceived external prestige mediate the relationship between organisational identification, service quality, and creative performance in ecotourism businesses. This study employed a survey-based methodology and a 32-item questionnaire with a sample of 270 business employees. Structural equation modelling and confirmatory factor analysis were used to test the proposed hypothesis. According to the findings, perceived organisational support and perceived external prestige mediate the relationship between organisational identification and employee outcomes. Furthermore, organisational identification positively impacts perceived organisational support, perceived organisational support positively impacts perceived external prestige, and perceived external prestige positively impacts creative performance and service quality, allowing employees to better identify with ecotourism businesses to improve performance. Identifying the importance of organisational identification and employee outcomes is critical for ecotourism businesses, from employee loyalty to the importance and relevance of perceived organisational support and perceived external prestige of employees to promote and better serve the ecotourism business.

**Keywords:** ecotourism businesses; creative performance; service quality; organisational identification; perceived organisational support; perceived external prestige

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# 1. Introduction

Ecotourism is considered one of the main alternative tourism models and is widely accepted as sustainable. It is a form of tourism that supports the conservation of natural places while promoting social welfare and economic diversification in economically marginalised communities, such as poor, indigenous, and rural regions [1]. Since the mid-1990s, ecotourism has increased in the tourism industry [2]. In 2008, ecotourism was regarded as one of the fastest-growing tourism sectors, providing 5% of the global annual growth rate, 6% of the global GDP, and 11.4% of overall consumer expenditure [3].

Focusing on employees' behavioural attitudes to increase organisational productivity and environmental flexibility for ecotourism businesses is increasingly competitive [4]. Employees' high-quality services satisfy the numerous critical demands of business services in the tourism market regarding customer happiness and loyalty, market share, financial performance, and profitability [5–7]. Moreover, a competitive tourism market must adopt initiatives to improve employees' service quality in ecotourism businesses to benefit customers and the environment. Therefore, employees must be empowered and competent and have the autonomy and resources to exhibit creative performance in their working environment. That is to state that when employees create novel, unique, relevant, and valuable products, ideas, or procedures, their creativity is enhanced [8]. Numerous studies

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have demonstrated that the conditions that foster employee self-efficacy, support, and resources result in the best levels of creative performance [9,10]. Therefore, employees' creative performance and organisational behaviour are essential for successful ecotourism.

Organisational behaviour with a strong bond to the organisation by employees and a strong psychological bond with a specific organisation would likely prompt employees' willingness to engage with work [11,12]. When employees identify with their organisation, they are more likely to support it and exhibit behaviours that benefit it. Employees' organisational identification (OID) is a cognitive construct whereby workers perceive themselves as psychologically intertwined with the fate of the companies that employ them [13]. Organisational identification occurs when an employee considers the organisation's essential and fundamental aspects of self-definition [14]. This is the same as OID, which represents "the extent to which a member defines himself or herself in terms of the same characteristics that the person believes constitute the organisation." [15] (p. 239). OID delivers personal and social meaning to employees and is beneficial to employee attitudes and behaviours [16,17], which can provide positive organisational performance in the long term. Benefits include lower employee turnover, since they typically have strong, long-term relationships with the organisation, and establishing a sense of togetherness or hospitality to demonstrate the relationship between the organisation and employees, supported by the business's motivation and effort [18]. Many developed organisations encourage OID [14]. In this context, this study aims to examine the impact of OID on service quality and creative performance in the ecotourism business. Most research on OID focuses on brands or customers/tourists [19] without adequately examining how both constructs are understood as antecedents of identification for employee effectiveness in ecotourism. A recent study adds to the existing organisational and social identification knowledge body by testing it on higher education students [20]. While independent research has established a substantial correlation between perceived organisational support (PES) and perceived external prestige (PEP), numerous researchers have yet to examine the combined impact of the two elements of organisational attachment.

According to research, PES and PEP play a role in a person's commitment to their company. These factors indicate that OID depends on employees' positive attitudes, behavioural outcomes, and overall performance [14] but only with positive perceived organisational support and perceived external prestige [20]. Empirical research has supported the moderating effects of perceived external prestige. In a study by Smidts et al., [21], perceived external prestige moderated the relationship between employee communication and OID. Furthermore, it is reported that perceived external prestige moderates the relationship between job satisfaction and organisational citizenship behaviour [11]. However, more research is needed on how perceived external prestige mediates the understanding of OID in an ecotourism context, which is an environment that mostly has local participation as employees that require creative performance and high service quality. This study's aim is fivefold. The first is to investigate the effect of OID on perceived organisational support among employees of ecotourism businesses in a small island country, namely Northern Cyprus (NC). The second aim is to test the effect of perceived organisational support on the perceived external prestige of employees in NC ecotourism businesses. The third goal is to investigate the mediating effect of perceived organisational support on OID and perceived external prestige relationships. The fourth goal is to examine the mediating effect of perceived external prestige on the relationship between perceived organisational support, service quality, and employees' creative performance. The last goal is to examine how perceived external prestige impacts employees' service quality and creative performance.

#### 2. Theoretical Review and Hypothesis Formulation

Early studies suggested that individuals categorise themselves and identify with teams to build a good self-concept [22]. Ref. [23] stated in 1989 that social membership could affect an individual's self-concept, which was further confirmed by [24] et al. (2005), who confirmed that a person's sense of belonging to a group motivates them to participate in a

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brand community. Individuals develop identities by comparison with others, and identity is about stressing points of affinity with certain groups and points of differentiation with others. This is closely linked to Social Identity Theory (SIT) and is determined by significant group categories [25]. In other words, knowing one belongs to a particular social group motivates one to place oneself into various categories such as religion, gender, ethnicity, and sexual identity [22] (p. 63). SIT is defined as "a component of an individual's self-concept derived from his knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) and the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" [23]. Thus, SIT investigates the critical relationship between individuals and the broader social system [26].

## 2.1. Organisational Identification (OID) and Perceived Organisational Support (POS)

Organisational identification is a method of measuring how much people feel like they belong to their company [27]. Organisational distinctiveness, intra-organisational competition [28], equality [29], affective commitment [30], communication climate [31], and perceived organisational culture have all been studied in the past [29]. Individuals countenance an appealing social identity and desire credibility and quality to benefit from OID. Additionally, POS is a powerful approach that is being used for promoting excellent work attitudes and outcomes and improving mental health [32]. Supporting employees socio-emotionally requires providing equipment, funds, ideas, and physical assistance [33]. Karatepe [34] states that good organisational support equips employees with resources and facilitates accomplishing work objectives. In recent studies, ref. [28,34] relate organisational identification with perceived organisational support based on social identity to improve employees' behaviours and work goals. Therefore, we proposed the following hypothesis:

**H1:** Organisational identification has a positive impact on employees' perceived organisational Support.

#### 2.2. Perceived Organisational Support and Perceived External Prestige

Increased POS promotes communication and collaboration among colleagues, which often manifests as mutual support [35]. As a result, employees engage in mutually advantageous conduct. In a setting of low perceived organisational support, achieving high-quality performance requirements without these resources is challenging, and perceived organisational support improves emotional well-being, approval, and attachment [36]. Using the reciprocity principle, workers with high perceived organisational support feel bound to react favourably to their employers via pleasant workplace attitudes and beneficial organisational behaviours [37]. Perceived external prestige refers to how an employee observes and considers an organisation's external perceptions of information exposure [38,39]. Previous empirical investigations have explored the influence of perceived external prestige on work fulfilment, emotional commitment, desire to quit, and financial success [11,40,41].

**H2:** The perceived organisational support positively impacts the perceived external prestige.

# 2.3. Perceived Organisational Support (POS) Mediates the Relationship between Organisational Identification (OID) and Perceived External Prestige (PEP)

According to [42], a variable is referred to as a mediator if it explains the association between a predictor and a criterion. In other words, mediation occurs when an independent variable influences the dependent variable primarily through the mediator's intermediary. The authors of [43] discovered in their study that perceived organisational support mediates between leader–member interaction and OID. Additionally, POS is linked to OID and modifies the influence of HR-related environments [28,33]. Apart from the social exchange and SIT, many of the findings in these studies were based on or built on previous research showing that reciprocity enhances interpersonal relationships [44]. The purpose of OID is to reduce perceived conflicts between employee priorities and organisational interests, fostering greater alignment between employee goals and corporate objectives [45]. Accordingly, OID improves employees' receptivity to organisational objectives and processes [46,47]

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based on perceived external prestige interest on organisational identity and corporate credibility, which differs from other concepts because workers create it and experience how others see their organisation. Employees and non-employees can have their opinion in perceived external prestige because the company values both perspectives. By contrast, most organisations' identity and corporate image are founded on the opinions of its employees and the general public. Despite recent studies on the relationship between perceived organisational support, organisational identification, and other organisational behaviours, studies have yet to be conducted on the mediating role of perceived organisational support in the relationship between OID and other organisational behaviours. However, few studies have examined the role of perceived organisational support in decision making, affective commitment, job satisfaction, workplace bullying, and turnover intention [48,49]. Therefore, this represents a step toward mediating perceived organisational support on organisational identification and perceived external prestige.

**H3:** The relationship between organisational identification and perceived external prestige is mediated by perceived organisational support.

2.4. The Mediating Role of Perceived External Prestige in the Relationship between Perceived Organisational Support and a. Creative Performance and b. Service Quality

The impact of PEP on work happiness, inclination to leave, and financial success have all been studied empirically [11,40,41]. The literature has reached a consensus on the multidimensional nature of service quality definitions [50–52]. In essence, two approaches dominate the literature: the approach of [51] describes the three-dimensional quality of service (technical quality, functional quality, and image quality), and [53] recognises five dimensions (tangible, efficient, sensitive, assurance, and empathy), combined with a variable called SERVQUAL. In terms of employees' creative performance, past research indicates that employees who have a deep connection to a company are more likely to have a favourable attitude toward the business and support its aims [13,28].

**H4:** Perceived external prestige mediates the relationship between perceived organisational support and creative performance.

**H5:** Perceived external prestige mediates the relationship between perceived organisational support and service quality.

## 2.5. Perceived External Prestige, Creative Performance, and Service Quality

According to SIT, individuals prefer affiliation with organisations that outperform performance their peers, resulting in increased self-esteem [22]. Membership in a prominent institution can instil pride in individuals and boost their connection and oneness with the organisation [15]. While previous research has established that both individual and situational factors, as well as their connections, are connected with creative performance [54], neither the impact of human resource practices on creative performance nor the influence of creative performance on operational outcomes has been the subject of extensive empirical research in service contexts [52,53]. Consequently, academics may be losing the chance to construct a knowledge base that may aid service organisations in building and sustaining a competitive advantage in ecotourism by assisting them in generating a strategic competence for executing their service excellence plan [55].

Quality of service is inherent in the relationship between contact employees and customers in ecotourism. In today's competitive market, employee service quality is critical to business success and survival, especially in ecotourism. Providing high-quality services by employees helps meet various important demands for business services in tourism marketing competitiveness in terms of customer satisfaction and the resulting loyalty, financial performance, and profitability [5–7]. Thus, when employees connect with

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organisations, they find them appealing or significant, and they create a more positive self-evaluation, increasing self-esteem and self-enhancement [56,57].

**H6:** Perceived external prestige impacts the creative performance of employees and (b) the service quality.

**H7:** *Perceived external prestige has an impact on the service quality of employees.* 

# 2.6. Research Methodology

The constructs in the proposed model include the items of OID, service quality, and creative performance, which many researchers have studied empirically. As a result, the suggested measurement of the constructs employed in this study is based on the existing literature, and the proposed model of measurement is shown in Figure 1.

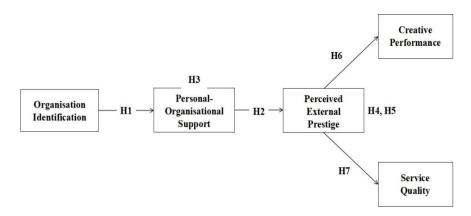


Figure 1. The proposed model.

# 3. Sampling and Data Collection

This research employed a quantitative method to understand the study's objectives better. Therefore, questionnaires translated into English and Turkish were designed based on prior studies focusing on management and employee perceptions to measure the constructs and were distributed to the study's sample population. The questionnaire items were carefully adapted and modified to fit the measurement items in the context of ecotourism. In addition, back-translation was used for all measures, validated according to the study's objective, and ascertained by professionals in this area of research. First, 30 ecotourism businesses (hotels, restaurants, recreational centres, and beach clubs) were contacted between October 2019 and January 2020. Each participant was asked to fill out a questionnaire. The questionnaires, including a cover letter, were distributed to participants based on the sector-manager or employee. They were asked to respond to the questionnaire voluntarily, and their responses were treated confidentially.

# Data Collection and Procedures

The data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire survey of various managers and employees of ecotourism businesses in Northern Cyprus. A total of 380 participants were selected for physical administration to managers or employees, and only 270 questionnaires were collected based on internal and external grounds. Accordingly, 153 respondents (56.7%) were male, and 117 (43.3%) were female. In addition, 50 respondents (18.5%) were 18–25 years old, 108 (40%) were between the age of 26 and 30, 73 respondents (27%) were between the age of 31 and 35, 29 respondents (10.7%) were between 36 and 40, and 10 (3.7%) were above 41. Most respondents (48.9%) obtained undergraduate degrees, 14.9% had a master's degree, 2.9% had a PhD, and 33.3% had a technical education. Turkey accounted for 21.8% of the respondents, while respondents from other nations (25.9%) and Northern Cyprus (52.3%) comprised the majority (Table 1).

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**Table 1.** Demographic profile of the respondents (n = 270).

Demographic Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	153	56.7
Female	117	43.3
Age		
18–25	50	18.5
26–30	108	40
31–35	73	27.0
36–40	29	10.7
Above 41	10	3.7
Level of Education		
Undergraduate	132	48.9
Masters	40	14.9
PhD	8	2.9
Technical Education	90	33.3
Nationality		
TRNC	141	52.3
Turkey	59	21.8
Others	70	25.9

The research methodology used a structured questionnaire, and the data instrument was determined using a five-point Likert scale. Organizational identification was adapted from [58]; the following is an example: "I am very interested in what others think about my organisation". Creative performance was adapted from Wang and Netemeyer [59] and Karatepe and Vatankhah [60]; a sample item is "This employee comes up with new ideas for satisfying customer needs". Service quality was adapted from Mansour [61], with an item such as "I have the customers' best interests at heart", with PES from Smidts et al. [21]; a sample item is "It is considered prestigious in the community to be a worker in this organisation". Perceived organizational support was measured by eight items from Eisenberger et al. [62]; a sample item is "The organisation cares about my well-being". The study measures the measurement and structural models to examine the relationship between constructs Anderson and Gerbing [63].

# 4. Results and Findings

# 4.1. Measurement Model

Data analysis measures the items' internal consistency and convergent validity to test the measurement model. First, a principal component and exploratory factor analysis were performed to check the extracted components and maximal variance, as shown in Table 2. The preliminary factor component accounted for 43% of the total variation. The eigenvalue component factors varied from 1.240 to 12.52, explaining 43.8 percent to 65 percent of the total variance. The common variance method did not present any significant issues in this study. Additionally, the skewness and kurtosis indices of the model implied that the data were normal. The skewness and kurtosis indices should be at most |2.3| to maintain data normalcy. Table 2 shows that the skewness and kurtosis indices were |2.3|. Thus, the respondents' findings supported an additional factor analysis. Sample adequacy was further assessed using Bartlett's sphericity test and the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) test. The results shown significant statistics of  $\chi^2$  (271) = 847.505 and the KMO measure = 0.934 > 0.500, respectively.

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**Table 2.** Exploratory factor analysis.

Construct	Measurement	Factor Loading (λ)	Skewness	Kurtosis				
	Creative Performance							
$CR = 0.879$ , $AVE = 0.518$ , $\alpha = 0.845$								
CP1		-	-0.602	-0.315				
CP2		0.854	-0.906	0.877				
CP3		0.894	-0.932	0.622				
CP4		0.651	-0.991	1.634				
CP5		0.799	-0.682	-0.184				
		POS						
	CR	$\alpha = 0.873$ , AVE = 0.520, $\alpha = 0.873$	= 0.853					
POS1		0.765	-0.579	-0.310				
POS2		0.674	-0.725	0.313				
POS3		-	-0.543	-0.210				
POS4		0.705	-0.661	0.078				
POS5		0.763	-0.517	-0.315				
POS6		0.694	-0.655	-0.0816				
		SQ						
	CR	$\alpha = 0.923$ , AVE = 0.641, $\alpha = 0.641$						
SQ1		0.810	-0.573	0.178				
SQ2		0.855	-0.713	0.245				
SQ3		0.787	-0.804	0.664				
SQ4		0.810	-0.818	0.760				
SQ5		0.736	-0.750	0.650				
PEP								
	$CR = 0.878$ , $AVE = 0.515$ , $\alpha = 0.842$							
PEP1		0.756	-0.651	-0.087				
PEP2		0.899	-0.693	-0.005				
PEP3		0.798	-0.693	-0.035				
PEP4		0.746	-0.796	-0.069				
		OI						
	$CR = 0.870$ , $AVE = 0.509$ , $\alpha = 0.872$							
OI1		0.582	-1.894	3.725				
OI2		0.999	-0.907	0.382				
OI3		0.682	-1.212	1.202				
OI4		0.862	-1.056	0.803				

Second, we evaluated the internal consistency and convergence of the measurement model. Composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), and Cronbach's alpha (a). Hair et al. [64] proposed that each concept's recommended reliability value should exceed 0.70. As a result, the study's Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.882 to 0.899. The results for each construct exceeded the 0.7 threshold value [64,65], indicating that the study's internal consistency was satisfactory. Ref. [64] indicates that a standard factor loading value of 0.4 was removed. As shown in Table 2, all the factor loading values were greater than 0.40. Additionally, [64] recommends that acceptable CR values for each construct be greater than 0.70 and acceptable AVE values greater than 0.50. Cronbach's alpha and correlation coefficient values were greater than 0.7, while the AVE value was greater than 0.5. Thus, the standard factor loading, AVE, CR, and Cronbach's alpha values met specified thresholds. The results are presented in Table 2.

We tested the discriminant validity, which measures the square root of the AVE of each construct if it is greater than the correlation between the constructs [64,66]. Accordingly, each construct's diagonal value (in bold) is higher than the correlation between the construct in the model, as shown in Table 3. Thus, the diagonal values of the square root of AVE are greater than the inter-correlations among variables. This implies that there are no cross-factor loadings among items within the constructs. Therefore, the discriminant validity satisfies the requirement, which is acceptable to the procedure of the structural model. In

addition, means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations in Table 3 show a positive correlation between the variables.

Table 3.	Correlation	matrix of	the	constructs.

Constructs	Mean	SD	SQ	OI	PEP	POS	СР
SQ	3.899	0.774	(0.801)				
OI	4.232	0.767	0.576	(0.713)			
PEP	3.797	0.887	0.746	0.448	(0.717)		
POS	3.717	0.854	0.646	0.466	0.587	(0.721)	
CP	3.925	0.730	0.652	0.547	0.609	0.566	(0.719)

#### 4.2. The Structural Model

We used confirmatory factor analysis to further test the latent constructs' validity. The overall results of the model fit of the research model are displayed in Table 4. This result suggests that the research model fits suitably.

Table 4. Model fit (confirmatory factor analysis).

Fit Index	Recommended Value	Research Model
$\chi^2/df$	≤3.00	2.475
GFI	≥0.80	0.844
NNFI	≥0.80	0.905
NFI	≥0.80	0.869
RMSEA	≤0.08	0.073
CFI	≥0.90	0.917
TLI	≥0.90	0.905
SRMR	≤0.05	0.058

Chi square/degree of freedom ( $\chi^2$ /df), goodness of fit index (GFI), Bentler–Bonett non-normed fit index (NNFI), normed fit index (NFI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), comparative fit index (CFI), and standardised root mean square residual (SRMR).

#### 4.3. Hypothesis Testing

The second phase is to ascertain a conceptual framework's model fit. As such, the study examines the effect of organisational identification on creative performance and the mediating effect of perceived external prestige and perceived organisational support in TRNC ecotourism businesses. The structural technique was examined in this study utilizing a bootstrapping procedure and bootstrap samples [67]. The hypothesis tests' results are summarised in Table 5. They include the associations, estimates of the original coefficients  $(\beta)$ , standard error (Standard Error), and significance level. Additionally, Table 5 explains the variance of the endogenous constructs as stated by [66]. As depicted in Table 5, the  $R^2$ for perceived organizational support is 22.8%, which has proven significant to OI. Similarly, perceived external prestige's predictive ability (34%) was a strong predictor of perceived organizational support variables, while service quality (62.3%) and creative performance (43.8%) were strong predictors of perceived external prestige. As indicated in Table 5, the study results indicate that organisation identification shows a positive effect on perceived organizational support to support in the ecotourism businesses H1 (SE = 0.549,  $\rho$  < 0.001); perceived organizational support shows a positive impact on perceived external prestige to support in the ecotourism businesses H2 (SE = 0.630,  $\rho$  < 0.000); perceived external prestige shows a positive effect on employee creative performance to support in the ecotourism businesses H3 (SE = 0.654;  $\rho$  < 0.000); perceived external prestige shows a positive effect on service quality to support in the ecotourism businesses H4 (SE = 0.806;  $\rho < 0.000$ ). Thus, H1, H2, H6, and H7 are empirically supported. In addition, the study measures the mediating effect of perceived organisational support and perceived external prestige on the constructs to determine the measurement's statistical relationships and path analysis. The study measured the mediation analysis test to determine the z-values and level of significance. Sustainability **2023**, 15, 8565 9 of 14

Accordingly, the absolute z-value for indirect effect must be >1.96. Therefore, the results of the indirect effect (H3) predicted that perceived organisational support would mediate the relationship between organisational identification and perceived external prestige for the support of ecotourism businesses in TRNC (SE = 0.260,  $\rho$  < 0.000); this indicates that perceived organisational support partially mediates organisation identification and perceived external prestige. The results of the indirect effect (H4) predicted that perceived external prestige would mediate the relationship between perceived organisational support and creative performance for support of ecotourism businesses in TRNC (SE = 0.385,  $\rho$  < 0.000). For H5, it is assumed that perceived external prestige would mediate the relationship between perceived organisational support and service quality. Indirect effect results show the relationship between perceived organisational support and service quality supports ecotourism businesses in TRNC ( $\beta$  = 0.290,  $\rho$  < 0.000). Perceived external prestige mediates the relationship between perceived organisational support and service quality to support ecotourism businesses in TRNC. This indicates that perceived organisational support partially mediates perceived organisational support and service quality. Therefore, the proposed model is positively significant, with a high coefficient of determination (R2). Thus, the study's proposed theoretical model shows a significant and solid contribution toward supporting ecotourism businesses.

**Table 5.** Hypothesises test results.

Hypothesis	Estimate	Std. Error	<i>p-</i> Value	Decision
H1: IO $\rightarrow$ POS	0.549	0.050	0.000	Supported
H2: $POS \rightarrow PEP$	0.630	0.043	0.000	Supported
H3: $IO \rightarrow POS \rightarrow PEP$	0.260	0.042	0.000	Supported
H4: $POS \rightarrow PEP \rightarrow CP$	0.385	0.045	0.000	Supported
H5: $POS \rightarrow PEP \rightarrow SQ$	0.290	0.045	0.000	Supported
H6: PEP $\rightarrow$ CP	0.654	0.044	0.000	Supported
H7: PEP $\rightarrow$ SQ	0.806	0.028	0.001	Supported

Supported at p < 0.05; z > 1.96.

# 5. Discussion

This study examines the effect of organisational identification on employees' creative performance and service quality, in line with the current study that proposes the effect of organisational identification on employee creative performance and service quality in ecotourism businesses in Northern Cyprus. In addition, we examined the mediating role of perceived organisational support on the perceived organisational support and creative performance and service quality to support perceived organisational support organisational support in Northern Cyprus ecotourism businesses.

First, the H1 finding suggests that organisational identification positively impacts perceived organisational support in Northern Cyprus ecotourism businesses. This finding shows that the organisational identification role is influenced by positive work attitudes, positive mental health, and employee loyalty, such as experience and performance, especially in the destination marketing business, which aligns with previous studies [34,68]. A study by [69] stated that the most important commitment to organisational identification is to improve organisational support by attracting, maintaining, and retaining employees because they deserve a supportive workplace. This supports the findings of this study that organisational identification values and nurtures employees' well-being through their contributions to the organisation. In addition, it provides assistance and support from supervisors, managers, and organisational leaders in the work environment. In this sense, the findings show that when employees perceive that the organisation is concerned about their well-being, they respond with higher engagement and commitment toward improving ecotourism businesses in Northern Cyprus.

From the result of H2, the perceived organisational support has shown a direct relationship with perceived external prestige in support of ecotourism businesses. Therefore,

these findings corroborate the importance of the study many organisations need to help improve perceived external prestige, especially employee productivity, to promote organisational growth in destination businesses. As a result, the findings show that organisations' priorities are to provide and support employees' preferences based on external prestige in which employees interpret how prestigious their organisation is in the eyes of outsiders due to the positive impact on the organisation's reputation and value as a result of increased engagement and actions that influence external stakeholders' prestige, such as service encounters, opportunities for interpersonal communication, and exposure to information and experiences in the ecotourism industry [38,39].

Moreover, finding H3 found that perceived organisational support mediates the relationship between the role of organisational identification and perceived external prestige. This implies that the perceived organisational support helps perceived external prestige toward their organisation and the role of organisational identification through the huge offers and support to the ecotourism business development. In other words, the results suggest that the more an organisation supports its overall image and reputation, the more people feel favourable about and identify with it. Therefore, the outcomes of this study contribute to and validate the empirical concept of developing ecotourism businesses as organisational development needs practices that include perceived organisational support to the image and perceived external prestige to stimulate stronger interpersonal bonds in ecotourism businesses.

In addition, H4 and H5 found that perceived external prestige mediates the relationship between the organisational antecedent perceived organisational support and employees' creative performance, perceived organisational support, and service quality. This implies that the employee's perceived external prestige toward their organisation influences the creative performance and service quality when they perceive the support and development of the ecotourism business. Therefore, the outcomes of this study contribute to and validate the empirical concept of developing ecotourism businesses. Hence, the organisation practices, especially perceived external prestige, should be included since they positively influence creative performance and service quality to support ecotourism businesses [70].

The H6 and H7 results show that perceived external prestige is directly and positively associated with employee creative performance. In line with previous studies [54,56,57], An employee's perceived external prestige is identifying support for the organisation and a powerful instrument for an employee's traits such as providing emotional support, positive self-esteem and acceptance, and practices that contribute to the business's goals. In addition, this finding shows that service quality is influenced by the perceived external prestige to support the ecotourism businesses, such as experience and performance and the destination marketing business. According to a previous study by [71], organisational commitment and its subsequent effect on the quality of services offered by employees' destination businesses provide valid evidence for extending the theory that training-related activities serve as a foundation for effective employer–employee social exchange relationships. This supports many studies that established that organisational identification supports employee service quality [5,6]. Ref. [6] stated that in the long term, many organisations, destinations, or countries will have to incorporate employee best-service methods to increase customer perceptual experience.

## 5.1. Theoretical and Managerial Implication

The theoretical implications of this study examine the factors that affect the relationship between OID and perceived organisational support, as well as its impact on perceived external prestige among employees of ecotourism businesses in Northern Cyprus. It also explores the mediating effect of perceived organisational support on the relationship between OID and perceived external prestige as well as the effect of perceived external prestige on the relationship between perceived organisational support, service quality, and employees' creative performance. By incorporating Social Identity Theory, which emphasises

significant group categories such as religion, gender, ethnicity, and sexual identity, this study aims to fill this gap in the literature and provide insights into the adoption of OID in ecotourism businesses. Moreover, this research sheds light on the significance of organisational identification in promoting employee well-being and contributing to organisational values. This study is a pioneering effort to investigate the positive impact of organisational identification on perceived organisational support in ecotourism businesses in Northern Cyprus. This demonstrates that organisational identification is influenced by positive work attitudes, mental health, and employee loyalty, which have a positive impact on the organisation's reputation and value, thereby enhancing external stakeholders' prestige. This study identifies significant relationships among the variables, highlighting how perceived organisational support enhances perceived external prestige and how organisational identification contributes to ecotourism business development by providing significant support. Additionally, this study shows that improving employees' perceived external prestige towards their organisation can positively influence their creative performance and service quality, especially when they perceive support for ecotourism business development. However, it is important to note that there are still areas that require further study. Despite this, the findings of this study offer a theoretical foundation for future research exploring new and uncharted areas.

This study offers empirical implications for managers' efforts to increase productivity in ecotourism businesses. This study shows that employees are satisfied with organisational behaviours offered by organisational identification to improve customer–employee relationships in the ecotourism business. According to the findings of this study, top management of ecotourism businesses should focus on improving employees' level of commitment by providing them with loyalty to promote organisational and destination identification, which will help strengthen employees' identification with the organisation. The greater the level of employee loyalty, the greater the compensation for employee loyalty offered by the firm to those employees [55,72]. Ecotourist managers should consider training employees for long-term organisational productivity and focus more on employee well-being than other organisational infrastructures.

Further, ecotourist managers should focus beyond employee level or personal influences on organisational behaviours. Many other factors can be extended to include employee engagement in the global management of ecotourism businesses. However, the ecotourism business has been considered a key player in influencing the increase in the development of Northern Cyprus; more should be done to comprehend the elements that influence employees' creative performance and service quality. Thus, it will foster the growth and development offered by organisational managers, which are important factors in improving the image of the ecotourism business.

#### 5.2. Limitations and Future Research

It is essential to demonstrate the significance of the limitations of these findings. First, the data used for this study were gathered from several ecotourism businesses within TRNC, limiting the generalisability of the results. Ecotourism organisations include wildlife, sustainable environment, tourism, and geo-location, which were not among the ecotourism businesses used for the study. Therefore, more ecotourism businesses should be used in future studies. Another limitation was that the study was conducted in one country; a replication or multi-cultural study in other ecotourism destinations can also be used as a future study. Second, regarding employees' creative performance, perceived organizationalorganisational support, and perceived external prestige, which directly and indirectly influences organisational identification, it is important to identify other crucial factors influencing the identification–employee behaviour model in the ecotourism business environment. Finally, future studies should include more constructs to establish a more comprehensive theoretical foundation for future research, such as employee engagement, satisfaction, and mediators that affect the organisation and destination identification outcomes in the ecotourism business.

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