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# An Examination of Airlines Employees' Perceptions of Sustainability, Green Business Behaviors and Employees' Views on Corporate Reputation

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Issues like the climate change and global warming have begun to arise as a result of globalization. The operations of enterprises play a significant role in this process. Additionally, airline corporations have begun to structure their operations in this manner. The establishment and growth of ideas like sustainability and green organizational behavior have been made possible by this circumstance. "Meeting the needs of the present while not depleting the resources that future generations can meet their needs" is the definition of sustainability (Redclift, 2005). Employee attitudes on sustainability are among the most crucial elements in guaranteeing sustainability for firms. Employees' pro-environmental actions, such as their views on lowering paper use in the workplace, are crucial for a sustainable environment and trends toward improving environmental performance. For employees to be more environmentally conscious, they must engage in activities that promote the environment and think about and voice their ideas about environmental developments. Employees who exhibit pro-environmental conduct have an impact on how other employees behave within the company.

Businesses today are beginning to display pro-environmental activities not just because of legal duties but also as a mindset, even though in the 2000s they primarily concentrated on efficiency (Özkaya, 2012). Businesses must embrace a green corporate culture by being conscious of their social and environmental obligations to the communities in which they operate if they are to be long-term sustainable. Because of this, companies are now conscious of their environmental responsibilities and understand that implementing a "green organization" or "green culture" is a good way to be sustainable (Uslu & Kedikli, 2017). It is believed that as employees' interest in the environment grows within the company, so too will their willingness to engage in green organizational behaviors. This is especially true if employees feel satisfied with their work environment. This instance demonstrates that an organization's environmental consciousness alone is insufficient and that employee participation in green organizational activities is crucial.

One of a company's most valuable assets, corporate reputation has numerous advantages for enterprises. A company's reputation helps it become more known and guarantees that its target market will continue to expand. In addition, it prioritizes customers, fosters brand loyalty for its goods and services, and makes worker training easier. At this point, a well-regarded company draws in workers while also piqueing interest in the prospective workforce. Additionally, as it will guarantee the effective continuation of human resources procedures, it strengthens employees' commitment to the firm. Employees who have organizational commitment and embrace the organization work harder for the business's aims and interests, contributing to the company's overall performance.

The employee's intensive performance as a result of internalizing the organization contributes to the organization's success (Aydemir, 2008).

Company reputation, sustainability efforts and green organizational practices stand out as factors affecting employees' corporate loyalty. Luigi et al. (2010) investigated the effect of business sustainability activities on job satisfaction. According to the findings of the study, business sustainability boosts job happiness. According to Sayğan (2013), organizations that prioritize sustainability and social responsibility activities might increase employee retention and motivation (Sayğan, 2013). According to Karalı (2013), there is a strong correlation between perceived business reputation and organizational dedication. According to Karalı (2013), taking on additional responsibility leads to increased employee productivity (Karalı, 2013). Similarly, the literature has shown that employees' green organizational behaviors affect their organizational commitment as well as their identification with the organization (Cica & Karabulut, 2024).

The literature review revealed that research on sustainability perception, green organizational behavior, and company reputation is scarce. In this context, the primary goal of the study is to determine employees' impressions of sustainability efforts and green organizational behaviors. Furthermore, the study aims to examine whether employees' opinions of sustainability influence their perspectives on the organization's reputation. It is anticipated that the research findings will provide a unique value to studies on sustainability and business reputation in the aviation industry.

## Conceptual Framework

### Sustainability in Airlines

Population growth, technical advancements, and environmental issues have all evolved on a worldwide scale since the Industrial Revolution. Furthermore, population growth and technological advancements have resulted in increased production and reckless exploitation of natural resources that were once assumed to be limitless. Sustainability has gained popularity among society and enterprises due to current circumstances (Tıraş, 2012). The Brutland Report, which addressed long-standing disagreements about the definition of sustainability, defined the idea as "meeting the needs of the present while not depleting the resources available to meet the needs of future generations" (Redclift, 2005).

To be sustainable, company must collaborate with stakeholders on economic, social, and societal dimensions, as well as engage in activities that promote public peace in areas such as employee rights, environmental pollution, education, and art (Noyan, 2022). In this context, sustainability efforts are categorized as environmental, social, or economic. According to Şişman et al. (2016), the economic dimension refers to a company's ability to compete with rivals in its sector, maintain its existence, carry out its activities successfully over time, and increase its profit share above the sector average (Şişman et al., 2016). Environmental Dimension; In its most specific sense, it is considered "a state of balance, durability, and interrelatedness of activities that take care of the reproductive quality of ecosystems that provide opportunities for people to meet their needs and do not reduce biodiversity" (Morelli, 2011). Şişman et al. (2016) define the Social Dimension as a business's impact on the social systems in its environment.

According to research on sustainability, businesses' sustainability-related activities play an important role in increasing profitability, gaining investment advantages, achieving cost savings, pursuing innovation, achieving sustainable growth, gaining a competitive advantage, protecting the business's capital, and increasing its reputation (Korkmaz, 2020).

The aviation sector has become a growing and dynamic sector today under the influence of the global economy and technological changes. Despite global problems such as political instability, slowdown in global trade, infectious diseases and geopolitical conflicts experienced all over the world in recent years, as well as sectoral problems related to aviation safety and security such as unruly passengers and just culture practices, the aviation sector continues to grow (Bükeç & Çoban, 2023; Çoban, 2022). Sustainability is becoming a more relevant problem in the aviation sector. One factor contributing to this is the sector's increased growth rate. During periods of significant sector growth, environmental damage has increased in terms of noise, gas emissions, water quality, and waste (Greenall & Hooper, 2005). However, since the 1970s, the aviation industry has been a leader in sustainability. Examples include lowering aircraft engine noise levels, lowering fuel consumption rates, and implementing e-transformation in tickets and maintenance papers to save paper waste. Despite attempts, fossil fuel consumption continues to rise and CO2 emissions remain above targets (Torum & Yılmaz, 2009). One remedy suggested for this scenario is the use of SAF fuel. Sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) are chemically identical to traditional jet fuel, but are made from renewable raw materials such as vegetable waste, municipal refuse, and even cooking oil rather than fossil fuels. SAF fuels must be 80% less carbon intensive than other fuels and meet certain internationally accepted sustainability requirements. To ensure the sustainability of the fuels used, the aviation industry works with organizations like the Sustainable Aviation Fuel Users Group (SAFUG) and sustainable certification systems like the Roundtable on Sustainable Biomaterials (RSB) (Air Transport Action Group, 2020).

Airlines are implementing several efforts to attain their goal of carbon-neutral expansion. One example is that most airlines use one of their engines for taxiing. New technologies have been developed to power the aircraft with all-electric motors and external tugs while taxiing to the runway. This provides an opportunity for emission reductions. In aviation, it targets infrastructure efficiency by enhancing navigation systems and processes, to effectively guide airplanes through the sky. For this aim, airplanes use satellite-based navigation technology and procedures known as 'performance-based navigation'. This allows them to follow the intended route more accurately and efficiently. Reducing wasted travel time saves fuel, lowers CO2 emissions, and helps to reduce delays. Another step toward carbon-neutral growth is the introduction of the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA). At a conference of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in 2016, countries agreed to implement the first worldwide carbon emission system for a single industry sector. CORSIA, which requires airplane operators to track and report their emissions, will be gradually implemented beginning January 1, 2019 (Air Transport Action Group, 2020).

Airports also contribute to the development of airline infrastructure. Studies on trash, water, energy, noise, and air quality are being conducted to lessen the environmental imprint. Environmental considerations are also considered when planning and designing the airport. Airports use innovative technologies such as LED lighting, electric ground support equipment, and renewable energy sources to improve energy efficiency. Furthermore, attempts are being made to generate energy from garbage recycling and waste (Air Transport Action Group, 2020).

Although there are sustainability-related activities in airline operations, companies should also conduct research for their employees who play a part in implementing these activities. In this context, delivering employee training and encouraging employees to adopt more environmentally friendly behaviors can be used as examples of the work to be done. The notion of green organizational behavior has acquired importance in terms of ensuring the continuity of sustainability operations, and it is described more below.

**Green Organizational Behavior**

Organ (1998) defined "organizational citizenship behavior" as voluntary individual behaviors that are not immediately and clearly represented within the organization's reward system but help the organization accomplish effective and efficient operations (Tokgöz & Seymen, 2013). In other words, organizational citizenship conduct is an employee's voluntary action that goes beyond the organization's formally limited requirements and exceeds what is desired. According to these definitions, organizational citizenship conduct has three key characteristics: it is voluntary, it is not rewarded, and it allows for the proper execution of organizational operations (Güven, 2006). Businesses in the 2000s focused solely on efficiency in their actions, with no regard for the environment, owing to favorable global advances. Recently, they have been carrying out ecologically sensitive activities not just for legal responsibilities but also as a philosophy (Özkaya, 2012). In this setting, the idea of green organizational behavior has evolved. Green organizational behavior involves measurable acts and behaviors that promote environmental sustainability or reduce environmental damage (Kavaslar & Karavelioğlu, 2023).

Employee actions and attitudes are the most important factors in the implementation of green organizational behavior. In this regard, green employee behavior has arisen as a new component of green organizational citizenship behaviour. According to Ones and Dilchert's (2012) research, green employee behavior is one of the requirements of organizational citizenship behavior, which is actions that enhance environmental sustainability. According to Durgun and Sarıbay (2019), green employee conduct is a voluntary sub-dimension of green organizational citizenship behavior that benefits businesses (Durgun & Sarıbay, 2019). Pro-environmental activity is regarded as voluntary in today's businesses. According to scholars studying organizational behavior, green employee behavior is more than just voluntary. According to Wiernick et al. (2016), green employee behavior refers to the dimension of job performance dependent on the nature of employment, which might be required or voluntary. Mandatory environmental behaviors refer to the actions that individuals in the workplace take in order to fulfill their tasks, duties, and obligations.

This is a problem that involves the organization's rules and processes, as well as legal regulations. In required environmental employee behavior, the employee does actions that the employer desires and expects of him or her (Norton et al., 2015). In other words, green organizational behaviors are those that employees must display. Employees in businesses may desire to exceed the green organizational behaviors expected of them. In other words, employees may opt to engage in green organizational behaviors that align with their personal preferences. Voluntary environmental employee conduct means that the employee takes the initiative to consider the environment and demonstrate pro-environmental behavior while carrying out his or her tasks. In other words, it is motivated by the employee's willingness rather than a need. At this stage, taking initiative differentiates from required green employee conduct. Employees can demonstrate voluntary green behavior within the organization by prioritizing environmental factors, initiating environmentally friendly practices and policies, becoming an activist, and supporting their colleagues' pro-environmental behaviors (Norton et al., 2015).

Ones and Dilchert divide environmental employee behavior into five categories: working sustainably, conserving resources, influencing others, taking initiative, and avoiding harm (Norton et al., 2015). Sustainable Work refers to the environmentally friendly practices that employees in an organization engage in to lessen the environmental implications of their goods and processes at work. This allows staff to boost sustainability while also managing corporate processes more efficiently. This lesson covers resource protection, waste prevention, and natural resource conservation habits. Recycling is one of the classification's primary tasks. Influencing Others occurs when an employee encourages and informs his or her coworkers in ways that contribute positively to environmental sustainability. This classification includes employees' green organizational behavior as a result of measures implemented within the organization or rules and procedures. This behavior class includes putting the environment first in business, engaging in activities that benefit the environment, and implementing environmental protection programs. Avoiding Harm refers to employees' actions to prevent environmental damage caused by economic, industrial, and organizational activities. In other words, the goal is to avoid environmental pollution. Akın (2023) provides an example of how employees should protect the environment by avoiding pollution and exhibiting environmentally friendly actions (Akın, 2023).

To ensure long-term sustainability, firms must establish a green organizational culture. Because focusing solely on a company's financial performance is insufficient to ensure its survival and competitiveness. Businesses should also focus on all social and environmental issues within their sphere of influence and control. Today, the concept of social and environmental sustainability is becoming increasingly important, particularly for firms with a sustainability mission. As a result, they see the need to better their obligations in terms of social conscience and environmental challenges. This case demonstrates that implementing a "green organization" or "green culture" is successful in achieving sustainability. A green corporate culture results in cost savings and economic benefits, increased employee engagement and connection to the company, innovative competitiveness, increased social responsibility, and a healthy working environment (Uslu & Kedikli, 2017). Employees' motivation to exhibit green organizational behaviors is thought to increase when their interest in the environment shifts from individual to organizational tendency, and if they experience personal satisfaction or believe that the organization will reward them, their motivation to exhibit green organizational behaviors increases. At the same time, green organizational behaviors may vary depending on employee incentive. As a result, some impediments to green organizational behaviors arise from person qualities, while others stem from organizational structure. As a result, simply being environmentally conscious is insufficient. Employees in the organization should engage in green organizational practices that benefit both the organization and the environment. Employees' green organizational behaviors will not only help to green organizations, but will also contribute positively and preventively to climate change. Erbaşı and Özalp (2022) found that green practices, policies, and procedures in organizations had a significant impact on numerous variables.

There are several reasons why Green Organizational Behavior is encouraged in firms. Kavslar and Karavelioğlu (2023) cite consumer pressure, legal and environmental laws, and social responsibility as key factors in supporting green corporate actions (Kavaslar & Karavelioğlu, 2023).Employees' green activities and behaviors have an impact on their company's corporate reputation. In this context, the concept of corporate reputation is discussed below.

**Corporate Reputation**

Changes in social life and improved access to information have had a significant impact on the demands that customers now place on businesses. As a result, in industries with high levels of competitiveness, the concept of reputation has emerged as one of the most efficient ways to distinguish oneself from competitors. The concept of corporate reputation has been defined in several ways throughout the literature. According to Kadıbeşegil (2012), a business's sense of trust contributes to its overall market worth, as well as its unquantifiable values and reputation in society (Kadıbeşegil, 2012). Another concept of corporate reputation is the opinions of societies that engage with businesses (Nguyen & Leblanc, 2001). Dowling (2001) defined corporate reputation as a system built around value integrity. This definition includes all of the qualities associated with the organization, such as honesty and responsibility, that people associate with the organization. As a result, reputation encompasses long-term feelings, attitudes, and thoughts. When the definitions are studied, it becomes clear that the core concept of corporate reputation is made up of intangible values and the total of stakeholders' impressions. As a result, organizations must include stakeholders' thoughts and perspectives on the organization in all of their activities and procedures. Enterprises should make an effort to understand their stakeholders, evaluate their enterprises through the eyes of stakeholders, and, in short, be able to empathize on an institutional level. For organizations that thrive in this, reputation is critical, particularly in acquiring a competitive advantage in the field and achieving success (Dowling, 2001).

The four fundamental principles that influence an organization's reputation are culture, identity, image, and brand. Corporate culture, which consists of the mission, vision, objectives, and needs necessary for the success of the business, is a set of values, beliefs, and habits shared within the organization and influenced by the formal structure (Şimşek & Fidan, 2005). The identity of an organization can be defined as the total of its qualities, people, products-services, and symbols. At the same time, it is critical that employees are aware of the type of business they work for and express their ideas accordingly. Image is related to how stakeholders perceive the firm. In other words, it refers to the way external stakeholders perceive the business. Every firm requires a positive image in order to remain profitable (Karaköse, 2007). Finally, the concept of brand encompasses all cognitive, perceptual, and emotional components of the firm, as well as the products and services it provides. Its goal is to raise its value from the perspective of stakeholders by broadening the meaning and manifestations of the products and services offered by the company. Dayıoğlu (2011) suggests that increasing the business's reputation is beneficial.

Corporate reputation is one of the most valuable assets for firms. It generates positive benefits for businesses of all sizes. Corporate reputation influences client purchasing behavior. It raises the profile of a well-known company and broadens its target audience. Customers favor businesses that have a high reputation, are loyal to their products and services, and make it easier to hire competent staff. In addition to having a competitive advantage in the industry, it attracts the interest of new enterprises to enter the sector to form partnerships, so providing an opportunity to expand into new markets. Employees are drawn to businesses with a strong reputation. Because being a prestigious business draws talent. Employees' perceptions of being valued and respected in society are reinforced by the fact that they work in a prestigious business. Employees' high performance as a result of internalizing the business contributes to the company's success. Businesses with a good reputation have lower operational costs because they have more bargaining power in agreements with suppliers and distribution channels since people trust the company's reputation. Similarly, shares of a well-known company will be prioritized by investors since they are marketable (Aydemir, 2008).

As the globe has become more globalized, challenges such as global warming and the climate catastrophe have emerged. These issues have begun to inflict significant damage to the ecology, prompting communities to take action and protection. Business operations play an important role in this process. This circumstance has opened the path for the emergence and evolution of notions like sustainability and green organizational behavior. Airlines have also begun to structure their operations in this direction. They have begun to carry out sustainable activities, and the activities developed have an impact on the firms' corporate reputation, either increasing or decreasing. The employees' sustainability attitudes and green organizational behaviors are the most important considerations when carrying out the operations. The purpose of this study was to investigate the sustainability perspectives, green organizational behaviors, and corporate reputation opinions of ground handling staff in airline firms. The research sought to determine how an airline company manages its reputation in relation to employees' sustainability perceptions and green organizational actions. The methodology for the study is detailed in the following section.

## Methodology

### Purpose and Importance of the Research

The increase in environmental contamination caused by the reckless use of natural resources has an impact on a company's corporate reputation. At this


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point, staff sustainability views and green organizational behaviors take center stage in the implementation of firms' environmental operations. The study looked at how ground-handling staff in airline firms perceived sustainability, green organizational behaviors, and corporate reputation. The purpose of this study is to shed light on future research by examining the impact of employee attitudes toward sustainability and green organizational behavior on the success of the business in terms of both recruiting new employees and engaging in pro-environmental initiatives. The response to the determined research question attempts to underline the importance of addressing the enterprise's sustainability operations in terms of employee expectations and attitudes. This circumstance will be beneficial in future initiatives organized by airline firms to develop employees who are socially responsible and environmentally aware. Because employees' attitudes toward sustainability and green organizational behavior reflect the position and desirability of organizations to employees. For this purpose, airline company hat wish to improve their corporate reputation.

## Research Methodology

The qualitative research approach was used in this study because it allows for in-depth analysis, and the research was directed by a phenomenological research design. The phenomenology design was chosen because it is related to individuals' perceptions, interpretations, and meanings of events, and it provides a foundation for understanding how people judge the events around them (Tutar, 2023). Because of its versatility, the data were collected using a semi-structured interview technique and analyzed using the "Content Analysis Method". The Content Analysis Method uses coding to enable access to the data, the concepts that underpin it, and the relationships between these concepts. As a result, audio and video recordings were transcribed and coded, relevant codes were grouped under sub-themes and similar sub-themes were gathered under main themes and conveyed using participant results (Karataş, 2015).

## Sample

Using the purposive sample method, the study was done with employees of the country's three most well-known ground handling service companies in the airline industry in Istanbul. According to Doğanay et al. (2018), the purposeful sampling method involves selecting a sample based on the study topic and the researcher's goals. Ground services personnel, who play an important role in the aviation sector, were chosen as the sample because they are involved in many activities that support flight services such as ramp services, catering services, and passenger traffic services (Kavraz, 2023). It was difficult to locate volunteers since aircraft companies have very strong policies about sharing business information, and the consequences are severe. During the interviews, it was found that the interviews had achieved saturation when the same data began to be reached when the employees offered repetitious replies, and the interviews were terminated with ten participants. Grady (1998), for example, describes saturation as follows: "In interviews, when the participants' comments are the same and begin to be repeated, the data reaches saturation." Yağar (2023) suggests that after gathering information, the next step is to analyze it (Yağar, 2023). Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the subjects interviewed for the study.

**Table 1**
*Demographic Characteristics of Participants*

| Participant | Gender | Age | Education Status | Marital Status | Sector Experience |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Participant 1** | Male | 39 | Bachelor's Degree | **Married** | 15 years |
| **Participant 2** | Male | 25 | Bachelor's Degree | **Single** | 4 years |
| **Participant 3** | Male | 26 | Associate Degree | **Married** | 4 years |
| **Participant 4** | Male | 37 | Bachelor's Degree | **Married** | 12 years |
| **Participant 5** | Male | 46 | High Schoo | **Married** | 14 years |
| **Participant 6** | Male | 22 | Bachelor's Degree | **Single** | 1 years 3 months |
| **Participant 7** | Male | 28 | Bachelor's Degree | **Single** | 5 years |
| **Participant 8** | Female | 29 | Bachelor's Degree | **Married** | 6 years |
| **Participant 9** | Female | 24 | Associate Degree | **Single** | 1,5 years |
| **Participant 10** | Female | 30 | Bachelor's Degree | **Married** | 2 years |

The youngest participant as 22 years old, while the oldest was 46. The participants' average age was calculated to be 30.1. Three of the participants were women, and seven were men. When the participants' educational backgrounds were reviewed, it was discovered that seven of them were university graduates, two were associate degree graduates, and one was a high school graduate. The participants' marital status comprises 6 married and 4 single. It was discovered that the participant with the most sector experience among the participants has been working for 15 years, while the person with the shortest sector experience has been working for one year and three months.

The primary research topic was "What is the place of sustainability perceptions and green behaviors of airline employees in their views on corporate reputation?"

The content analysis revealed three themes: employees' opinions of sustainability, green staff practices, and perspectives on airline businesses' reputations

**Data Collection Method**

Interviews were used to gather information about participants' experiences, attitudes, ideas, goals, remarks, perceptions, and reactions linked to the research (Baltacı, 2019). The interview form was developed using relevant literature, including Erbaşı's (2019) Green Organizational Behavior Scale, Kocabıçakçıoğlu's (2023) Measurement of Corporate Reputation: A Scale Proposal for Airline Businesses, and Mucan, Kayabaşı and Madran's (2016) Sustainability Perception and Application to Company Practices. The interview form was submitted to Istanbul Gelisim University's ethics committee for permission, and the approvals and opinions of expert faculty members were acquired as a result of the online meeting on February 29, 2024. Participants were provided thorough information about the study and their rights after signing an informed consent form. Because of the intense working conditions, the interviews were conducted online and videotaped using the Zoom application. The interviews with the participants lasted an average of 53 minutes and 34 seconds. The longest interview was 84 minutes and 20 seconds, while the shortest was 32 minutes and 4 seconds.

**Validity and Reliability**

To ensure the research's validity and reliability, the technique, methods, and information on how the results were obtained were clearly and in detail explained in such a way that other researchers could evaluate the results. Codes, sub-themes, and primary themes were identified without changing the data received from the interviews while maintaining the participants' rights, and they were provided to the reader without remark. Quotations from the participants' findings were used to support the codes, sub-themes, and main themes. The findings from the content analysis were provided to the reader in a meaningful and objective manner. The study's findings were provided to the reader.

There are two types of research validity and reliability studies: internal validity and external validity. To ensure internal validity in the research, participants were sent an informed consent form, and there was extensive engagement on the subject, creating a trusting setting. This allowed the participants' responses to be more genuine. External validity was guaranteed by using purposive sampling. To assure reliability, the preferred triangulation approach was applied. Denzin (1978) created the triangulation method for qualitative studies. The triangulation approach refers to the applications made by researchers to expand the diversity of data gathered during research and provide diverse perspectives to the study (Yaşar, 2018). In this study, the Researcher Triangulation Method was utilized to analyze, code, and check interpretations made with the assistance of another researcher. Using the Triangulation Method, the sustainability documentation of the ground handling companies where the participants worked was analyzed, and interviews were conducted as needed. Finally, interviews with ground handling personnel were done utilizing the Data-driven Triangulation Method.

Miles and Huberman said that in investigations involving more than one researcher, coding reliability should be at least 70%. According to the formula P = Consensus / (Consensus + Disagreement) X 100, they determined that the reliability level should be at least 70% (Tutar, 2023). The 92% dependability level achieved in the research results demonstrates the research's validity.

## Findings and Analysis

When employees' sustainability perceptions were explored three sub-themes emerged: employees' expectations from sustainability activities, hurdles to employees' sustainability activities, and the company's environmentally friendly policies. In this context, the primary theme and sub-themes were developed in accordance with the codes provided in Table 2.


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**Table 2**
*Theme 1-Employees' Perceptions of Sustainability*

| Theme | Subtheme | Code | Code Frequency |
|---|---|---|---|
| EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTIONS OF SUSTAINABILITY | **Employees' Expectations from Sustainability Activities** | In-company training, supporting sustainability activities, employee satisfaction, next generation management, further training of employees, manager's attitude, order in the organization, improvement of working conditions | P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P10 |
| | | | P1, P2 |
| | | Strategy plan, growth, increase in the number of titles in the organization, increase in the number of departments and units | P4, P7, P8, P9 |
| | | Environmental factors, protection and transformation of environmental waste, digitalization, efficient use of natural resources, waste management, use of technology, environmentally friendly brand | |
| | **Barriers to Employees' Sustainability Activities** | Working style, lack of adequate conditions, lack of employee awareness, manager attitude, internal corruption, lack of in-house training, employee devaluation, fear of job loss, cost increase, need for change in work tools, customer satisfaction, | P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P10 |
| | | | P8, P9 |
| | | Employee priority, need for technology development, external factors, | P1, P2, P7 |
| | | No obstacles | |
| | **Environmentally Friendly Practices of the Enterprise** | I have never encountered, we have no activity, I am not aware of it, | P3, P7, P8 |
| | | Using LED lamps, utilizing solar energy, using electric vehicles, recycling, utilizing technology, digitalization | P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P8, P9, P10 |

**Theme 1-Employees' Perceptions of Sustainability**

Three topics emerged as a result of the interviews analyzing employees' opinions of sustainability. These are employees' expectations for sustainability activities, the barriers that employees see in the way of sustainable activities, and the environmentally friendly policies of businesses. These concepts are presented in the following order.

**Image 1**

*Theme 1-Employees' Perceptions of Sustainability*


**Sub-Theme 1- Employees' Expectations from Sustainability Activities**

Among the responses given by the participants regarding their expectations from sustainability activities, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, and P10 emphasized *"in-house training, support for sustainability activities, employee satisfaction, next-generation management, more employee training, manager's attitude, business order, and improvement of working conditions."*

P1 and P2 on the other side stated that they had expectations for the enterprise's strategy plan, expansion, increased number of titles, and increased number of divisions and units. P4, P7, P8, and P9 stated that their sustainability expectations include *"environmental factors, protection and transformation of environmental waste, digitalization, effective use of natural resources, waste management, use of technology, being an environmentally friendly brand".* Among the participants, P4, P10, P3, and P5 responded that in-company training and improving working conditions are top priorities for sustainability. P10 states, *"...more in-company training. More training. I mean, I believe the corporation* *should be more cautious, particularly in waste rules, and train its personnel more. In response, he noted that the presence of individuals who are unaware of sustainability in the workplace necessitates the implementation of sustainability training within the firm.”* P5 stated, *"When I discuss sustainability efforts, for example, everything must be in order. For example, better meals, better working conditions, better resting spots..."* and emphasized the organization's commitment to human resource sustainability.

P1 and P2 have economic expectations and expected sustainability practices such as strategic expansion. P1 and P2 stated that the reason for this expectation is the belief that the organization for which they work will grow through strategic planning because they regard it as prestigious, as well as the belief that sustainability will increase with an increase in qualified employees as a result of an increase in departments, units, and titles as the business grows.

Employees are more environmentally conscious, as seen by the participants' emphasis on waste management. The participants' top priorities are to increase environmental activities. P9 states, *"... Environmental influences are significant. I'm not sure whether it's about protecting the environment or recycling trash. I mean, these are significant concepts to me, and the more of them there are, the better it will be for the workplace and the employees."*

**Sub-Theme 2- Barriers to Employees' Sustainability Activities**

Employees face obstacles in sustainability activities P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, and P10.

P1, P2, and P7 answered that they saw no barriers to sustainability, however, P8 and P9 stated that *"employee priority, the need for technological development, external factors"*. P1, P2, and P7 said that they saw no barriers to sustainability.

According to P7's comment that *"...First and foremost, people are not made aware in an interesting enough way, and the assigned trainings are burdensome for people,"* it has been found that employee expectations in sustainability activities also form a barrier.

A remarkable response is regarding technology as a barrier to sustainability. P8 stated, *"It appears that we require further technological progress and a bit more time... Similarly, in airports, charging stations for electric vehicles may not have enough capacity to provide proper charging. They need to develop these so that we may transition to all electric automobiles."*

Although rare, P1 and P2 claimed that there is no barrier to sustainable activities because the company for which they work makes the required efforts and has a strong brand value. P2 stated, *"... Because the company I work for is well-established and operates globally. It is also an airline with a strong brand. Even if there is an obstacle, I believe my company can overcome it."* P2 noted that the company's reputation and verification can help to remove barriers to sustainability.

**Sub-Theme 3-Environmentally Friendly Practices of the Enterprise**

Regarding the enterprise's environmentally friendly practices, P3, P7, and P8 responded as *"I have never encountered, we do not have any activities, I am not aware"*, while P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, P8, P8, P9, and P10 responded as *"using led lamps, utilizing solar energy, using electric vehicles, recycling, utilizing technology, directing to digital"*.

P8 stated, *"I mean, of course, there are such organized boxes in every office; it is now everywhere. This is now standardized. This is not their specialty. But... I'm not sure whether there are any..."* demonstrates that the tasks involved are standard operations and that organizations require new alternatives.

The participants answered the following questions about the existence of ecologically friendly practices. P6: *"Recycling garbage properly and putting it in the trash can. I pay close attention to the office we are in. There is no bottled water. "Water bottles and glasses."*; P8: *"... We constructed a tiny box in the office and threw it right there. "We collect and combine them to make things easier for ourselves."* P10: *"...there are recyclers." They are basically everywhere throughout the airport. Heh! Plastic, plastic, paper, and so forth. "They have them."* As a consequence of the study, it was discovered that participants only evaluated environmentally beneficial methods using paper and water.

**Theme 2- Green Employee Behavior**

The theme of employees' green employee behaviors is separated into two parts: Employees' Environmental Sensitivity to Activities and Employees' Environmental Participation in Activities.

**Image 2**
*Theme 2- Green Employee Behavior*

**Table 3**

*Theme 2-Green Employee Behaviors of Employees*

| Theme | Sub-Theme | Code | Code Frequency |
|---|---|---|---|
| GREEN EMPLOYEE BEHAVIOR | **Employees' Environmental Sensitivity to Activities** | Not throwing garbage into the environment, using scrap paper, turning off unnecessary lamps, using resources effectively, reusing waste water, using water fountains, | P2, P3, P4, P8, P10 |
| | | Compliance with the rules, effort to persuade, stubbornness, | P4, P6, P7 |
| | | Obligation to be sensitive, crime, responsible, obligation, job requirement, compliance with the rules, obligation to do what is told, obligation to set an example | P1, P5, P9 |
| | **Employees' Environmental Participation in Activities** | Separating garbage, recycling, participating in environmental protection training, benefiting from technology, saving energy, sensitive approach to environmental cleaning, not using tools unnecessarily, treating papers as drafts, implementing and supporting waste management, complying with and encouraging rules to protect the environment, | P1, P4, P5, P7 |
| | | Forwarding to the higher unit, sending e-mails to the necessary authorities, participating in volunteer activities, participating in social responsibility projects, | P2, P9, P8, P10 |
| | | No activity; no rules, no activities, | P3, P6, P8 |

### Sub-Theme 1-Environmental Sensitivity of Employees to Activities

Regarding the sensitivity of employees to environmental activities, P2, P3, P4, P8, and P10 *"Not throwing garbage into the environment, using draft paper, turning off unnecessary lamps, using resources effectively, reusing wastewater, using dispensers"*, P4, P6, P7 *"complying with the rules, an effort to persuade, stubbornness"* and P1, P5, P9 gave answers such as *"obligation to be sensitive, feeling guilty, obligation, job requirement, obeying the rules, doing what is said, the obligation to set an example."*

P2 gathers garbage around him, P3 takes the initiative in the operation to decrease carbon emissions, P4 evaluates remaining papers as drafts to take notes and attempts to avoid unnecessary waste, and P8 aims to prevent waste generation by making good use of resources. The fact that it is in the plan demonstrates that employees care about the environment. Some expressions are as follows.

P2: *"Yes, when I see garbage on the ground, of course, I am someone who picks it up and throws it away."* P10 stated: *"I definitely try to utilize those waters." "I would definitely evaluate it in a different way…"* they said. P4 means: *"… Then I encourage my friends to use digital documents"* P6: *"I spite the customers by sending their landing card via SMS." "Especially for Turkish customers."* Employees' stunning answers in the form of environmental awareness reveal that they are striving to inspire their coworkers to exhibit green organizational behavior.

P5 responded that the participants' environmental consciousness is owing to corporate pressure, saying, *"Well, after all, it is because of our job."* He responded that workplace pressure causes sustainable behaviors, saying, *"We have to be like that in my job anyway."*

**Sub-Theme 2-Employee Participation in Environmental Activities**

P1, P4, P5, P7 regarding employee participation in environmental activities: *"sorting garbage, recycling, participating in training to protect the environment, using technology, saving energy, sensitive approach to environmental cleaning, not using tools unnecessarily, treating papers as drafts, waste management" implementation and support, complying with and encouraging the rules to protect the environment,"* P2, P9, P8, P10 *"forwarding to the higher unit, sending They said, "No, there are no rules."*

P5 expressed his participation in environmental efforts with the following words: *"As I previously stated, you cannot dump garbage around; if you see it, you must clean it up. If you do not take it, you will face a penalty. Sensitive people buy it anyway because, as I already stated, the atmosphere in which we operate must be exceptionally clean."*

P4 stated, *"They do garbage management. Unfortunately, as previously stated, the separation of plastic and paper produces additional paper. We consider how little paper we squander. We are attempting to urge other businesses to stop using paper; you may also approve and use these documents digitally."* He expressed his ideas on reducing paper waste. Similarly, P7 and P1 shared similar views.

Participants also take the initiative by making individual contributions to environmental activities. Participants stated that they could participate in environmental protection initiatives but on a small scale. Some participants claimed that they were unaware of any environmentally friendly actions at their workplace. When asked about their attitude in this case, P9 and P10 responded that they would take the initiative and contact the relevant authorities to request environmental rules. This condition necessitates that the corporation address the flaws in its rules and regulations in order for employees to demonstrate green organizational behavior. In reality, P9 indicated that business backing is required to organize environmentally beneficial events. The participants' statements are as follows: P9: *"So, if there are no environmentally friendly activities, I cannot do them on my own." Of course, I can't organize it, but if I believe it's critical, I can send an e-mail to human resources to get anything like this organized."*

Response from participant P3: *"There is nothing environmentally friendly in the area we work in, there really is nothing.",* As a result, it is completely wasted. Everything. So, everything from A to Z. He brought attention to the rubbish, stating, *"I don't think they care about the environment."* The participant's statement that there are no environmental activities in the business where he works does not establish an activity environment in which the employee can participate.

The sub-theme of employees' environmental participation in activities emphasizes the importance of having environmentally friendly rules and activities for airline companies to progress in sustainability, as well as the importance of employees demonstrating environmentally friendly activities within the organization. Employee efforts, no matter how large or small, have a positive impact on the environment.

**Theme 3-Employees' Perspective on the Reputation of Airline Companies**

Employees' opinion on the reputation of airline firms is divided into two sub-categories: their perspective on reputation originating from the company's products and services, and their perspective on reputation deriving from the emotional attractiveness of the business.

**Image 3**

*Theme 3-Employees' Perspective on the Reputation of Airline Companies*

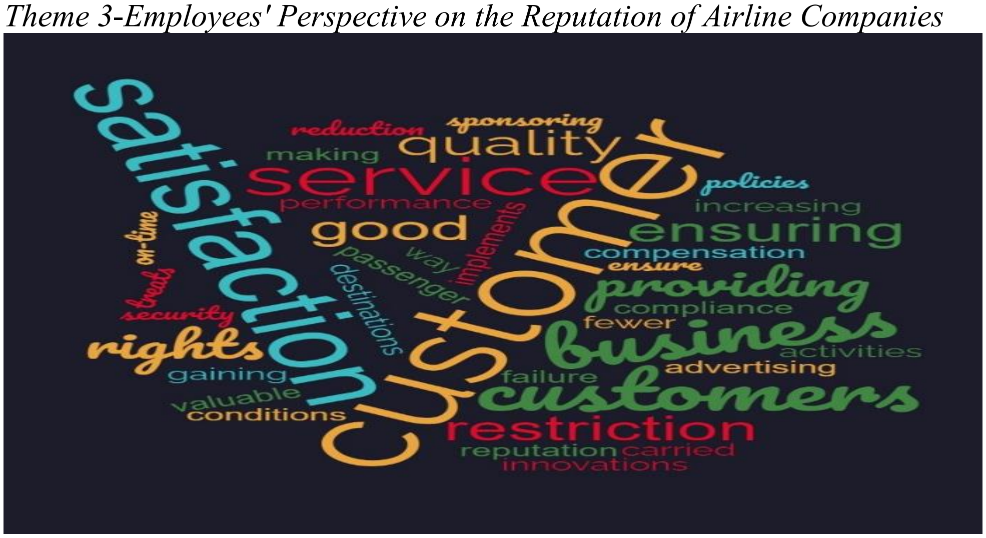

**Table 4**
*Theme 3-Employees' Perspective on the Reputation of Airline Companies*

| Theme | Subtheme | Code | Code Frequency |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Employees' Perspective on the Reputation of Airline Companies** | **Perspective on Reputation Derived from the Products and Services Offered** | Being good at security, service quality, on-time performance and customer satisfaction, restricting customer rights, ensuring customer satisfaction, offering innovations to the customer, activity and policy compliance, scarcity of destinations, making the customer valuable, the way of treating the customer. | P1, P3, P4, P5, P6, P8, P9, P10 |
| | **Perspective on Reputation Due to Emotional Appeal** | Gaining reputation, sponsorship activities, advertisements, recognition | P2, P7 |

**Sub-Theme 1- Perspective on Reputation Derived from the Products and Services Offered**

The majority of participants agreed that customer satisfaction has the greatest impact on the airline's positive or negative reputation. P10 conveyed this opinion by adding, *"So I believe it is clearly tied to the way we behave. In other words, I believe that smiling conveys interest and makes the other party feel appreciated, which is immediately assumed." stated as follows. P6 stated, "The most positive thing is…"* I believe it is due to an overemphasis on client satisfaction. He agrees with P10, stating that *"even in the lowest class, it still offers something to the customer."* P9 said *"So, as I previously stated, if we consider the airline, the worst airline, or the least desired airline, I may say customer satisfaction. I believe the shortage of locations is the basis for its unpopularity. I'd say they don't have a reputation. Or to be unheard and undiscovered."* He indicated that he believes the reputation would improve by providing new locations for clients, servicing them with a smile, and enticing customers to the business. Customer satisfaction requires that quality service be delivered to the customer, his rights be increased rather than constrained, and the business's activities comply with the policies in place.

**Sub-Theme 2- Perspective on Reputation Due to Emotional Appeal**

Although the bulk of the participants address the notion of reputation in terms of the perspective on reputation deriving from the product and service offered, P2 and P7's opinions are on the sub-theme of the business building reputation through emotional appeal. P7 stated, *"As for a good corporation, I'll use an example from an Asian country. This company's goal is not to make* *money; rather, it wants to establish a reputation. Because it is focused on developing reputation, it mostly pleases its passengers,"* while P2 claims, *"First and foremost, it has a positive reputation; it sponsors the football team, the basketball team, and promotes in sports organizations. This is Hajj and Umrah. For example, there are departing passengers. Creating specific possibilities for them. These are, of course, the factors that help the airline company succeed. This is a situation that increases reputation."* In his words, he noted that the corporation's support for sports organizations, rather than merely the aviation industry, will build admiration for the company and add to the institution's favorable reputation.

Participants believe that an airline's positive or poor reputation is primarily based on its products and services. Because the predominant opinion is that customer satisfaction is crucial in the operations carried out and that the firm should perform better in terms of acquiring new consumers and retaining existing ones. Among the findings, the fact that sponsorship and advertising activities, rather than environmental behavior, are beneficial in making the firm a respectable and admirable business may enable the employee to regard the company as reputable because of the options it provides in this direction.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Aviation activities contribute to air pollution, noise pollution, and environmental pollution. For this reason, the founding authorities implement regulatory and preventive policies and practices. Karakuş, Polat, and Karşıgil (2018) found that all stakeholders in the sector had a level of awareness regarding environmental sustainability (Karakuş, Polat, & Karşıgil, 2018). This study, which was conducted to determine the sustainability perceptions, green organizational behaviors, and opinions of the corporate reputation of ground-handling employees in airline companies, concluded that while employees are aware of sustainability, more research is needed to expand this awareness. The mention of the requirement for training in the sub-theme of employees' expectations from sustainability initiatives, which appears in the research's first topic, lends weight to this claim. Employees mostly emphasized the lack of in-house training. To accomplish sustainability, firms should give in-house training to raise employee understanding and improve their perception of sustainability.

The research findings revealed that the focused activities, particularly in the sub-theme of famous employees' environmental participation in activities, were on a modest scale. According to the findings, employees participate in environmental activities to a high degree, but more efforts could be implemented to promote sustainability in the aviation sector, such as noise pollution reduction or prevention activities and carbon emission reduction methods. There is evidence in the literature to support this viewpoint. Göçer, Macit, and Macit (2019) claimed in their study that as the aviation sector has grown, the negative effects it has on the environment have increased dramatically. The topic of noise pollution was explored, and techniques for reducing aircraft noise performance and carbon footprint levels at European airports were investigated. The International Air Transport Association (IATA) believes that global solutions are required (Göçer et al., 2019). As a result, it has concentrated on formulating environmental regulations in collaboration with industry stakeholders and governments to ensure and promote sustainable air transportation. According to the data, the most environmentally beneficial measures were related to water, trash, and energy. Noise, climate change, CO2 emissions, and so on. Businesses should conduct more environmental initiatives on these topics. Another research conclusion is that employees are sensitive to environmental activities. Employees' willingness to be environmentally conscious is advantageous to the business. However, the fact that these activities follow standardized patterns that have existed from the past to the present influences employee satisfaction.

According to the literature, Luigi et al.'s (2010) research with employees of large-scale firms assessing the effects of enterprises' sustainability initiatives on job satisfaction indicated that corporate sustainability promotes job satisfaction. According to Sayğan (2013), a company's commitment to sustainability and social responsibility encourages employees and increases retention (Sayğan, 2013). As a result, new regulations must be implemented in order to improve employee satisfaction. Because employees will not perceive that they are acting differently than other organizations with normalized activities, they will be unable to persuade themselves that they are acting in a positive manner. Again, in accordance with the data gathered from the same theme, it was determined that waste management, recycling, energy conservation through technology, and supporting environmental activities are at the forefront of airlines. Activities such as using papers as drafts or transforming them, encouraging the use of dispensers to reduce plastic use, recycling plastics, and incorporating digital methods into paperwork and documentation can be expressed as activities that are easier to implement than the policies organized by the founding authorities. As a result, firms should plan their operations and strive to be more inventive.

Businesses should develop strategies that encourage their staff to engage in environmental initiatives and set goals. The first topic focuses on impediments to employees' sustainability efforts, and the emphasis on the manager's attitude as one of these obstacles supports this viewpoint. Similar findings have been reported in the literature. Yüksel et al. (2022) found that company goals are vital for motivating employees and revealing their views and behaviors. The company's environmental aims will also have an impact on employees' environmental behavior. Another study found that employees who were satisfied with enterprises' environmentally friendly operations were positively influenced by their green organizational behavior at work (Amrutha & Geetha, 2021). According to the literature, employees' green organizational behaviors influence their organizational commitment as well as their identification with the organization (Cica & Karabulut, 2024).

The findings of the sub-theme of employees' environmental sensitivity to activities in the second theme revealed that employees were actively using dispensers instead of disposable plastic cups, taking notes on draft paper, using resources effectively, and turning off unnecessary lamps. It has been noticed that employees engage in these activities freely. Employees who willingly participate in green organizational behavior activities will be more sensitive to green organizational behavior within the institution, which will benefit both the business and society. As a result, environmental awareness among employees at all levels of the firm will no longer be necessary.

Developing high-quality products and services is crucial for organizations to remain competitive and maximize asset effectiveness (Eroğlu & Solmaz, 2012). However, sustainability initiatives are viewed as an important aspect of a company's reputation. According to research, this hypothesis is supported. According to Bauer's (1996), if a company uses environmentally friendly methods, it becomes more appealing to prospective employees, raises the purpose of employment, and increases the rate of acceptance of the company's offer (Bauer & Smith, 1996). This increases the relationship between employees and their company. Employees' sense of belonging to the organization will improve, as will their performance inside it. Karalı (2013) found a link between perceived business reputation and organizational commitment, which can lead to increased employee responsibility and efficiency (Karalı, 2013). Employees must make efforts to promote and participate in the corporate reputation. To make this effort successful, firms must convey their duties to their employees and get their support. Practices that ensure that sustainability practices are legal and examined by the state can foster an environment conducive to boosting sustainability activities and efforts in enterprises, and employees' thoughts and suggestions can be incorporated at this stage. Employees who feel valued will be motivated to participate in sustainability initiatives by sharing their ideas and comments. This will influence how employees prioritize sustainability efforts in an airline's reputation. Because, according to the research results and findings in the third theme, while employees are aware of sustainability and exhibit green organizational behavior, it has been concluded that sustainability activities are not included in this evaluation when evaluating an airline company's corporate reputation.

Based on the findings of the study, some recommendations can be made. Businesses' corporate reputation will improve in the eyes of employees if they create an atmosphere for employees to further develop their sustainability perspectives and encourage them to engage in pro-environmental actions.

Because, according to the research, if employees do not consider sustainability activities when discussing corporate reputation, their commitment to the institution suffers as well. Employee priorities in the organization alter as a result of restrictions based on their perceptions of sustainability actions and factors. Employees prefer products and services over environmental actions. Given today's growing sensitivity to sustainability and green organizational behavior, firms must innovate their activities and raise awareness inside their organizations to hire competent, sensitive people. Given that legal punishments improve sustainability practices, it may be prudent to enact legal laws that require enterprises to maintain environmental sustainability and provide education to employees on this topic. Legal regulations should make practices such as the use of clean energy, waste management, regulations to encourage water and electricity conservation, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions mandatory, to ensure that both employees and managers participate in all of these with pro-environmental behaviors and attitudes.

The aviation sector will benefit from doing research with various sample groups, such as flight crew and aircraft maintenance technicians, to determine whether there is a consensus. The research was conducted on ground-handling employees in airline companies because the managers in the study are the decision-makers in carrying out the businesses' sustainability activities, and they will handle the business from a biased perspective in order not to harm the business's reputation. At the same time, because the aviation industry has a busy work schedule, and the research was conducted online (digital) due to time and space constraints, difficulties in reaching the participants could not be avoided because some participants refused to participate and answer the interview and gave up during the interview. Furthermore, because passenger circulation is significant and the region is developed, one of the study's drawbacks is that it only addresses ground handling staff at Istanbul-based airline businesses.

In addition to this study on employees' perceptions of sustainability, research on organizational sustainability can be conducted by examining the sustainability activities carried out in organizations, as well as employees' views on green organizational behavior and corporate reputation. Thus, research can be conducted on how corporate reputation is managed in conjunction with organizational sustainability and green organizational behavior, or how organizational sustainability influences employees' presentation of green organizational behavior.

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