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Not Just Leading, But Inspiring Flow: A Structural Model Linking Altruistic Leadership to Organizational Attachment

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Abstract

This study was conducted to examine the effects of altruistic leadership on employees' work-related flow experience and organizational attachment. The primary aim of the research is to assess how altruistic leadership behaviors influence employees' motivational experiences within the work environment and to explore the role of flow experience in the relationship between leadership and organizational attachment. Given the critical role of leadership and employee attachment in sustaining service quality within the tourism industry, this research holds both theoretical and practical significance for organizational behavior literature and sectoral applications. Data were collected from 374 white-collar employees working in accommodation enterprises located in the Side region of Antalya, Türkiye. Structural equation modeling was applied to analyze the proposed relationships. The findings revealed that altruistic leadership has a significant and positive effect on employees' flow experience, particularly enhancing absorption, work enjoyment, and intrinsic work motivation. However, the results did not support a significant relationship between flow experience and organizational attachment, nor did they confirm a direct effect of altruistic leadership on organizational attachment, organizational trust, or organizational identification. These findings suggest that while altruistic leadership effectively fosters employees' motivational and experiential processes at the individual level, its direct influence on organizational attachment—a more complex social construct—appears limited. However, the results did not reach statistical significance for the mediating effects, indicating that flow experience did not meaningfully transmit the influence of altruistic leadership to organizational attachment.

Key words: Altruistic Leadership, Flow Experience, Organizational Attachment, Structural Equation Modeling, Tourism Industry
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1. Introduction

The relationship between leadership approaches and organizational work processes has garnered increasing attention in organizational behavior literature in recent years. With the growing emphasis on human-centered management practices in the business world, the dynamic interplay between leadership styles, employee motivation, and organizational attachment has become a focal point of scholarly inquiry (Abdillah et al., 2020; Mallén et al., 2015). In this context, not only performance-oriented leadership models but also ethical, responsible, and supportive leadership approaches have been discussed in terms of their impact on organizational outcomes (Ajmal et al., 2024; Guinot et al., 2016).

Altruistic leadership, defined as a leadership approach that prioritizes collective benefit and employee well-being over personal gain, is characterized by empathy and a attachment to helping others (Barghouti et al., 2022; Vieweg, 2018). This leadership style plays a significant role in fostering organizational attachment, encouraging employee engagement in work processes, and cultivating a climate of organizational trust (Guinot et al., 2016; Mallén et al., 2015). Empirical findings suggest that altruistic leadership behaviors exert both direct and indirect influences on employees' motivation towards their work (Ajmal et al., 2024; Abdillah et al., 2020).

Moreover, the concept of flow—defined as the state of complete immersion and intrinsic motivation in one's work—has held a notable place in organizational behavior research (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). Studies suggest that individuals who experience flow tend to demonstrate higher performance in organizational settings (Spurlin & Csikszentmihalyi, 2017; Gardner et al., 2002). Additionally, flow is considered a crucial factor in strengthening organizational attachment and enhancing employees' sense of belonging (Csikszentmihalyi & Schneider, 2002).

Employees' organizational attachment levels are shaped not only by individual attributes but also by leadership styles and the prevailing climate of organizational trust (Dong & Zhong, 2022; Özkan et al., 2025). While the influence of leadership styles such as ethical, transformational, authentic, and responsible leadership on employee attachment has been extensively examined, studies simultaneously investigating the relationship between altruistic leadership, flow experience, and organizational attachment within a single model remain limited (Iqbal et al., 2018; Liu & Lin, 2018; Zeng & Xu, 2019). Despite growing attention to altruistic leadership, empirical studies integrating flow experience and organizational attachment within a single structural model remain scarce in the tourism industry context. This study, therefore, aims to analyze the impact of altruistic leadership behaviors on employees' flow experience at work and to examine how this relationship reflects on organizational attachment. Additionally, the study investigates whether flow experience serves as a mediating variable in

this relationship and compares the influence of intrinsic motivation—one of the core components of flow—on organizational attachment relative to other flow dimensions. The significance of this research lies in its holistic examination of these three conceptually related variables within a single model, focusing on employees in the tourism sector. The findings are expected to contribute to the theoretical discourse on leadership and organizational attachment while offering practical insights for leaders seeking to enhance leadership effectiveness in organizational contexts.

In the tourism industry, where employee motivation and retention are critical for service quality, the lack of understanding regarding how altruistic leadership influences employees' flow experience and attachment create a practical gap for managers striving to sustain workforce stability.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Altruistic Leadership and its Organizational Relevance

Altruistic leadership is increasingly recognized in the field of organizational behavior as a leadership style that prioritizes societal and organizational benefit over personal interests (Mallén et al., 2015; Abdillah et al., 2020; Guinot, Chiva & Mallén, 2016). This leadership approach is characterized by leaders adopting an empathetic, benevolent, and selfless attitude toward their employees. The adoption of altruistic leadership has been associated with positive organizational outcomes such as fostering mutual trust, upholding ethical values, and enhancing collaboration within the workplace (Vieweg, 2018; Barghouti et al., 2022). The literature further emphasizes that the individual-oriented approach of altruistic leaders not only influences personal performance but also has significant implications for organizational learning, knowledge sharing, and attachment (Ajmal, Rahat & Islam, 2024; Chiva et al., 2016).

Empirical studies have demonstrated strong links between altruistic leadership and organizational learning capacity, knowledge sharing, and trust (Abdillah et al., 2020; Mallén et al., 2016; Guinot, Chiva & Mallén, 2016). Particularly in reducing knowledge hoarding behaviors, the sincere and supportive attitudes of leaders play a critical role, indirectly impacting organizational innovation and performance (Guinot et al., 2016; Barghouti et al., 2022; Mallén et al., 2015). By prioritizing trust-based relationships, altruistic leaders enhance employees' emotional attachment to the organization, contributing to the development of sustainable working relationships (Ajmal, Rahat & Islam, 2024; Chiva et al., 2016). Similarly, literature highlights altruistic leadership as a factor that supports ethical decision-making processes and fosters a sense of organizational belonging. This sense of belonging, in turn, is associated with increased employee motivation and psychological safety (Vieweg, 2018; Abdillah et al., 2020). According to Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2012),

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individuals are intrinsically motivated when their psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are satisfied. Altruistic leaders, by displaying empathy and prioritizing employees' well-being, fulfill these needs, creating a work environment where employees can experience flow. Hence, flow experience acts as a psychological bridge linking leadership behaviors to deeper forms of organizational attachment. In line with Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), employees reciprocate altruistic and trust-based leader behaviors with psychological engagement and loyalty. Flow experience, in this context, represents the emotional and motivational response that mediates the exchange between altruistic leadership and organizational attachment. From the perspective of Psychological Ownership Theory (Pierce et al., 2001), employees who experience flow perceive a sense of personal investment and ownership in their work. This sense of ownership translates into stronger attachment to the organization, positioning flow as a psychological mechanism connecting altruistic leadership to attachment-related outcomes.

In this context, altruistic leadership is not confined to individual behaviors but emerges as an approach that shapes organizational structure and culture. It reinforces mutual trust and establishes a managerial foundation that supports both individual and societal success. Findings in the literature suggest that beyond contributing to performance-driven outcomes, this leadership style also plays a vital role in promoting organizational ethics and social responsibility (Guinot, Chiva & Mallén, 2016; Vieweg, 2018; Abdillah et al., 2020; Ajmal, Rahat & Islam, 2024).

2.2. The Concept of Flow Experience in Work Settings

The concept of flow experience in the workplace refers to moments when individuals become fully immersed in their tasks, experiencing a genuine desire to continue their activities with heightened focus and intrinsic motivation. First introduced by Csikszentmihalyi (1990), flow describes a state characterized by diminished awareness of the surroundings, altered perception of time, and profound internal satisfaction derived from the task at hand. This experience typically emerges when an individual's skills are in optimal balance with the challenges presented by a task (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014).

Flow is directly associated with the individual's sense of meaning attributed to their work and the satisfaction derived from the activity itself. In organizational settings, moments when employees are intensely focused on their duties, lose track of time, and feel a strong desire to persist in their tasks are often identified as instances of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). This state has been linked to positive outcomes such as job satisfaction and enhanced performance (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). Flow not only influences how individuals perform their work but also reshapes their relationship with their tasks. According to positive psychology perspectives, flow is regarded as a significant factor that supports psychological well-being and contributes to a meaningful life experience (Spurlin & Csikszentmihalyi, 2017). Its organizational reflections include increased

motivation, enhanced creativity, and more active participation in work processes (Hooker & Csikszentmihalyi, 2003).

Research on leadership styles has also highlighted the importance of flow. Leaders who create environments that foster flow help strengthen employee motivation and promote collaboration within teams (Davis & Csikszentmihalyi, 1977; Black, Soto & Spurlin, 2016). In this regard, flow is not only a personal psychological experience but also an influential factor in shaping organizational structures. It has been shown to impact multidimensional outcomes such as job satisfaction, leader-employee relationships, and organizational attachment (Csikszentmihalyi, Khosla & Nakamura, 2016). The ability of flow to enhance both individual and organizational success makes it a critical element in innovation processes and performance management (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). Flow deepens employees' attachment to their work, increases satisfaction derived from work processes, and contributes positively to organizational efficiency. As such, the growing interest in flow within work life highlights its value not only for individual psychology but also for organizational achievement (Csikszentmihalyi & Lefevre, 1989; Spurlin & Csikszentmihalyi, 2017).

2.3. Organizational Attachment

Organizational attachment occupies a significant place in management literature as a general expression of the psychological bond and sense of belonging that individuals develop toward the organizations they work for. This bond is not merely perceived as a formal employment relationship; rather, it reflects a meaningful alignment between employees' values and the values upheld by the organization (Lin, 2010; Lin & Liu, 2017; Koçak, 2025). Employees' organizational attachment is directly influenced by the organization's ethical standards, social responsibility practices, and leadership approaches (Dong & Zhong, 2022; Özkan et al., 2025). Particularly, research examining the relationship between leadership styles and organizational attachment indicates that responsible leadership strengthens employees' attachment to their organizations (Liu & Lin, 2018; Kim et al., 2019). Leaders who adopt fair, transparent, and development-oriented approaches foster employees' trust in the organization, which in turn is reflected in heightened attachment levels (Zeng & Xu, 2019; Engelbrecht et al., 2014).

Ethical leadership functions as a critical bridge between organizational trust and attachment. Leadership grounded in ethical values not only reinforces employees' sense of trust but also deepens their emotional attachment to the organization (Tang et al., 2015; Bachmann, 2017). In this context, ethical leaders' justice-driven approaches positively influence employees' perceptions of the organization and enhance job satisfaction (Saari et al., 2018; Besieux et al., 2015). Transformational leadership is another noteworthy factor in fostering organizational attachment. Emotional attachment is often strengthened by transformational leaders' visionary perspectives and inspirational behaviors,

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contributing to the establishment of enduring employee-organization relationships (Li et al., 2019; Iqbal et al., 2018). Furthermore, the ability of employees to align their personal values with those of the organization serves as a critical determinant for sustaining attachment over time (Sahu et al., 2018).

Authentic leadership and shared leadership approaches have also emerged as prominent themes in the organizational attachment literature. Leaders' authenticity, consistency, and the trust-based relationships they build with employees are among the key factors supporting organizational citizenship behaviors (Hooker & Csikszentmihalyi, 2003; Kim et al., 2019).

Organizational attachment is a multidimensional construction that cannot be solely explained by employees' intention to remain within the organization. Leadership styles, organizational ethics, trust, and social responsibility practices collectively form the foundational pillars of attachment. From a strategic perspective, fostering employees' emotional and psychological attachment holds critical importance for ensuring organizational sustainability and long-term success (Dong & Zhong, 2022; Özkan et al., 2025).

2.4. Theoretical Background

Leadership, motivation, and organizational attachment have been longstanding focal points within management and organizational behavior literature, explored through various theoretical lenses over the years. This study was conceptualized within the frameworks of social exchange theory, self-determination theory, and psychological ownership theory, aiming to understand the relationships among altruistic leadership, flow experience, and organizational attachment.

Social exchange theory posits that relationships between individuals and organizations are shaped by reciprocal exchanges and perceived mutual benefit. In this context, positive leader behaviors foster increased employee attachment and loyalty to the organization. Altruistic leadership, characterized by unconditional support, empathy, and prioritization of others' well-being, is seen as a leadership style that earns employees' trust and strengthens organizational attachment (Blau, 1964).
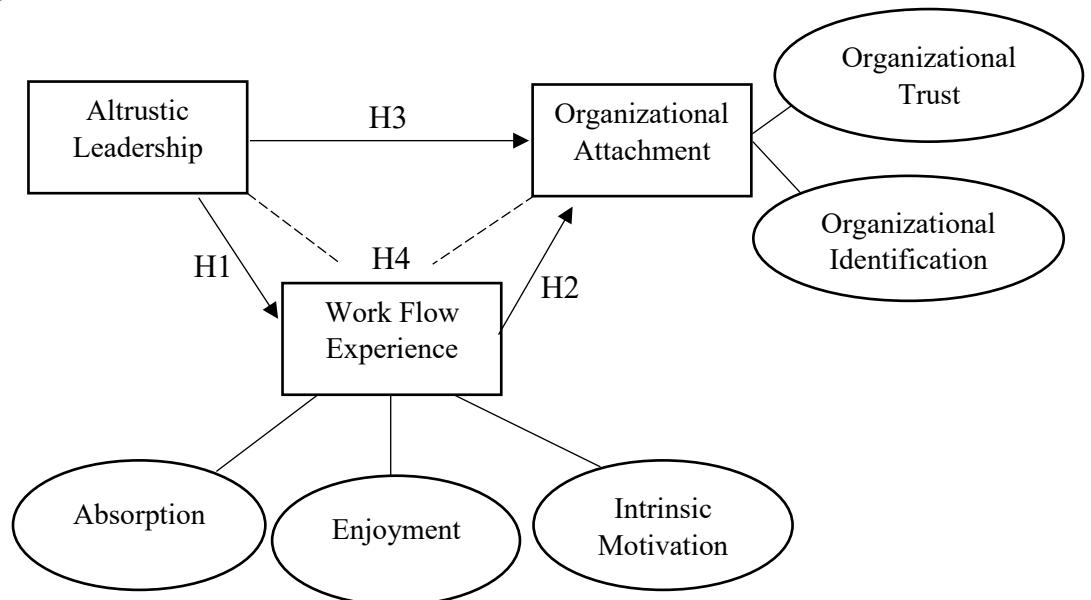
Conversely, self-determination theory offers a valuable framework for understanding individuals' motivational tendencies, emphasizing that human behavior is guided by three fundamental psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2012). Flow experience is associated with situations in which these needs are fulfilled, allowing individuals to fully immerse themselves in their tasks while experiencing heightened intrinsic motivation. Flow typically emerges when individuals perceive a high sense of competence and encounter tasks that offer a balanced challenge, becoming a key driver of work motivation.

Psychological ownership theory, on the other hand, focuses on the emotional dimension of the bond between employees and their organizations. This theory suggests that when individuals perceive themselves as integral members of a group or institution, feelings of ownership emerge, leading to behaviors such as attachment, responsibility-taking, and voluntary contributions (Pierce et al., 2001). Leadership behaviors that foster trust and offer genuine support are pivotal in strengthening these feelings of ownership.

Guided by these theoretical perspectives, the central premise of this study is that altruistic leadership behaviors positively influence employees' flow experience, which in turn has significant implications for organizational attachment. Positive managerial approaches are proposed to enhance employee engagement in work processes, support intrinsic motivation, and ultimately reinforce levels of organizational attachment.

Recent research (Ajmal et al., 2024; Michalová et al., 2024; Funk, 2024) further reinforces that altruistic and prosocial leadership styles nurture employees' psychological well-being, encourage intrinsic motivation, and reduce knowledge-hiding behaviors—conditions that foster flow and organizational identification. These findings align with the present study's theoretical proposition that flow experience mediates the impact of altruistic leadership on organizational attachment.

Figure 1. Research Model

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The following hypotheses were developed in alignment with the proposed research model, each supported by relevant literature.

H1: Altruistic leadership has a positive effect on flow experience.

Altruistic leadership, recognized for prioritizing employees' individual needs and fostering their development, is considered a leadership style that nurtures employees' engagement in their tasks and supports intrinsic motivation (Abdillah et al., 2020; Mallén et al., 2015). Supportive leader behaviors enable employees to focus more deeply on their work, facilitating the conditions necessary for experiencing flow—a state marked by full concentration and intrinsic satisfaction (Ajmal et al., 2024; Csikszentmihalyi & Lefevre, 1989). Studies suggest that leaders who demonstrate altruistic behaviors create environments conducive to flow by encouraging employees' immersion in their tasks (Guinot et al., 2016; Vieweg, 2018). Consequently, altruistic leadership is expected to have a positive impact on employees' flow experience in the workplace.

H1a: Altruistic leadership positively affects absorption.

Absorption, a key component of flow, refers to the deep concentration and total engagement individuals experience during tasks (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). Altruistic and supportive leader behaviors create a secure and empowering work environment that enables employees to focus entirely on their responsibilities (Barghouti et al., 2022; Mallén et al., 2016). Therefore, altruistic leadership is considered an important factor in promoting employees' absorption at work (Ajmal et al., 2024).

H1b: Altruistic leadership positively affects enjoyment.

Leaders adopting altruistic approaches help employees perceive the work environment as more meaningful and supportive (Guinot et al., 2015). This perception enhances enjoyment derived from tasks and contributes to positive feelings during work (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002; Feldman et al., 1995). Supportive leadership behaviors are known to foster positive emotions, thereby increasing the level of enjoyment employees experience (Gardner et al., 2002; Vieweg, 2018). Accordingly, altruistic leadership is expected to have a positive impact on employees' work enjoyment.

H1c: Altruistic leadership positively affects intrinsic motivation.

Intrinsic motivation refers to the internal drive and satisfaction individuals feel toward their work, independent of external rewards (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). Empathetic and supportive leader behaviors enhance employees' perception of the meaningfulness of their tasks, thereby strengthening intrinsic motivation (Ajmal et al., 2024; Mallén et al., 2015). Prior studies highlight that altruistic leadership boosts intrinsic motivation and fosters

proactive participation in organizational processes (Guinot et al., 2016; Barghouti et al., 2022). Therefore, altruistic leadership is proposed to have a positive effect on intrinsic motivation.

H2: Flow experience has a positive effect on organizational attachment.

Existing research emphasizes that employees who experience flow demonstrate higher engagement and develop stronger bonds with their organizations (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Csikszentmihalyi & Schneider, 2002). The heightened focus increased intrinsic motivation, and satisfaction derived from tasks during flow contribute to positive organizational feelings (Spurlin & Csikszentmihalyi, 2017). Additionally, flow supports organizational citizenship behaviors and attachment (Vieweg, 2018). Hence, it is posited that flow experience positively influences organizational attachment.

H3: Altruistic leadership has a positive effect on organizational attachment.

H3a: Altruistic leadership positively affects organizational trust.

H3b: Altruistic leadership positively affects organizational identification.

Altruistic leadership is known to enhance employees' trust and identification with their organization, fostering stronger organizational attachment (Mallén et al., 2015; Abdillah et al., 2020). Supportive leadership behaviors promote trust and motivation among employees, strengthening their bond with the organization (Guinot et al., 2016).

H4: Flow experience mediates the relationship between altruistic leadership and organizational attachment.

By enhancing flow experience, altruistic leadership indirectly influences organizational attachment (Mallén et al., 2015; Abdillah et al., 2020). This process begins with supportive leader behaviors fostering trust and motivation, which in turn facilitate flow experiences that strengthen organizational attachment (Csikszentmihalyi et al., 2016; Vieweg, 2018). Therefore, flow experience is hypothesized to mediate the relationship between altruistic leadership and organizational attachment. Therefore, this study conceptualizes flow experience as a mediating mechanism through which altruistic leadership enhances employees' attachment to their organizations. Specifically, altruistic leaders' empathy, fairness, and selfless support are expected to activate employees' intrinsic motivation and concentration (flow), which subsequently translate into stronger emotional bonds with the organization. This theoretical reasoning underpins the mediation hypothesis (H4) tested in this study.

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3. Methodology

This research was designed as a quantitative study aiming to examine the effects of altruistic leadership behaviors on employees' work-related flow experience and organizational attachment in the context of accommodation enterprises. A purposive sampling method was employed to ensure the relevance of participants to the study's objectives. Out of 450 distributed questionnaires, 374 valid responses were obtained and included in the analysis, while incomplete and erroneous data were excluded. The population of the research consists of employees working in the Turkish tourism industry, which employs approximately 1.58 million individuals according to national statistics. Within this population, the study focused on employees working in accommodation enterprises located in Antalya province, Türkiye. The sample comprised 374 participants, all of whom had been employed in their respective organizations for at least six months, ensuring sufficient familiarity with workplace leadership dynamics. Considering the size of the national tourism workforce, the obtained sample size is statistically sufficient to represent the population with a confidence level above 95% (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). Data were collected between December 2024 and February 2025 using the drop–take survey method, in which the researcher distributed the questionnaires to participants and later retrieved them after completion. This approach minimized social desirability bias and ensured voluntary participation. All respondents were white-collar employees actively involved in the tourism service process, representing various departments such as front office, guest relations, marketing, operations, and human resources.

Data was collected through a structured questionnaire composed of three validated scales. The items measuring perceptions of altruistic leadership were derived from the scale developed by Çakmak et al. (2019). The flow experience was assessed using the multidimensional scale originally developed by Bakker (2008) and adapted into Turkish by Basım et al. (2020). This 13-item instrument measures three core dimensions of flow: absorption, work enjoyment, and intrinsic motivation. Organizational attachment was evaluated through the scale developed by Wipulanusat et al. (2019), conceptualizing attachment through organizational trust and organizational identification dimensions. All scale items were rated on a five-point Likert-type scale. The study aimed to test predefined causal relationships within a large sample, a quantitative survey design was considered appropriate.

For data analysis, descriptive statistics were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 26 to assess the distributional properties of the dataset. Confirmatory factor analysis was then performed to test the construct validity of each measurement instrument and to confirm the adequacy of the measurement model. The goodness-of-fit indices were evaluated. Finally, to test the structural relationships among the constructs proposed in the research model, Structural Equation Modeling was conducted using the the AMOS software. The Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE) method was used to estimate the model parameters

4. Findings

The descriptive statistics and reliability findings regarding the scales used in this study revealed results that confirm both the integrity of the dataset and the reliability of the measurement instruments. The analysis showed no missing data among the responses of 374 participants, and all statistical evaluations were conducted using the complete dataset. Examination of the mean values indicated that the average scores for altruistic leadership, work enjoyment, and intrinsic work motivation hovered around 4.00, suggesting that participants generally held positive perceptions of leadership behaviors and their work experiences. The standard deviation values, ranging between 0.39 and 0.58, reflected relatively consistent responses among participants, while also highlighting certain variables with slightly higher variability. Higher standard deviation values for organizational trust and work enjoyment suggested greater diversity in participant opinions on these aspects. Skewness values ranged from -0.29 to -0.24, falling within acceptable limits and indicating near-normal, symmetrical distributions. Similarly, kurtosis values ranged from -0.53 to +0.04, suggesting minimal influence from outliers. These findings confirm the suitability of the data for parametric analyses and indicate that the distribution met key statistical assumptions. The reliability analyses confirmed that the scales used demonstrated high internal consistency. The altruistic leadership scale achieved a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.967, indicating excellent reliability. The flow experience scale reported a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.773, reflecting acceptable reliability, while the organizational attachment scale yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.784, also indicating a satisfactory level of internal consistency. These results confirmed that the measurement instruments employed were sufficiently reliable for analysis.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) for the altruistic leadership scale showed generally acceptable model fit indices, with a CMIN/DF ratio of 2.77, CFI and IFI values of 0.996, TLI value of 0.989 and an RMSEA of 0.069—approaching good fit thresholds. The standardized factor loadings were predominantly above 0.70, supporting the structural validity of the scale. However, Item 8 demonstrated a slightly lower loading of 0.58, suggesting a need for content reassessment of this item. For the flow experience scale, the CFA yielded acceptable fit indices, with a CMIN/DF of 3.10, CFI and IFI values around 0.935, TLI value of 0.913 and an RMSEA of 0.075—indicating marginally acceptable fit. Factor loadings were generally above 0.70. The CFA for the organizational attachment scale demonstrated excellent fit indices, with a CMIN/DF of 1.20, and CFI and IFI values of 0.995, TLI value of 0.993. The RMSEA of 0.024 further confirmed excellent model fit. Factor loadings consistently exceeded 0.70, validating the structural integrity of the organizational trust and identification dimensions. These findings highlighted the organizational attachment scale as a robust instrument in terms of both model fitness and factor structure. The measurement model demonstrated strong reliability and validity across all constructs. Composite reliability (CR) and

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average variance extracted (AVE) values exceeded the recommended cut-off thresholds (CR > 0.70; AVE > 0.50), confirming internal consistency and convergent validity (Hair et al., 2019). Specifically, the Altruistic Leadership construct showed CR = 0.966 and AVE = 0.783, the Flow Experience construct CR = 0.989 and AVE = 0.503, and the Organizational Attachment construct CR = 0.955 and AVE = 0.501. Furthermore, discriminant validity was established using the Fornell–Larcker criterion, as the square root of the AVE values for each construct exceeded the corresponding inter-construct correlations ($\sqrt{AVE} = 0.857 > r = 0.832$). Additionally, the HTMT ratios for all constructs were below the 0.85 threshold, providing further support for discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015). This result confirms that each latent variable is empirically distinct and measures a unique conceptual dimension. Finally, to address potential common method variance (CMV) bias, Harman's single-factor test was performed. The first unrotated factor accounted for less than 40% of the total variance, indicating that CMV was not a significant concern in this study.

Demographic findings for the 374 participants are summarized in Table 1. The age distribution showed a concentration of participants in the 26–35 (29.9%) and 36–45 (29.9%) age ranges, indicating a sample composed of young and middle-aged employees with industry experience. The gender distribution was balanced, with 50.3% female and 49.7% male respondents, reflecting gender diversity in the sector. Regarding marital status, 48.1% of participants were married, followed by 25.9% single. In terms of education, 31.8% held a bachelor's degree, 25.9% a master's degree, and 16.8% a doctorate, highlighting the presence of a well-educated workforce in the tourism sector. Income data showed that 48.4% of participants earned between $2001–3000 per month, followed by 19.5% in the $3001–4000 range and 16.0% in the $4001–5000 range, suggesting that most participants belonged to the middle-income group. Participants worked across various departments, including Human Resources (9.4%), Security (9.4%), Guest Relations (9.4%), and Information Technologies (9.6%), reflecting a sample representative of diverse functions within accommodation enterprises. Regarding professional experience, 34.5% had 1–3 years, 29.1% had 3–5 years, and 19.5% had over 5 years of work experience, indicating a sample composed of employees with moderate to extensive industry experience. Concerning future career plans, 32.9% intended to remain in the industry long-term, 22.2% were considering leaving the sector, and 20.1% aimed for promotion. This distribution suggests that while many employees have career aspirations within the sector, a notable portion also expressed intentions to leave. Regarding daily working hours, 53.7% of participants reported working 6–8 hours per day, and 28.6% reported working 9–10 hours, reflecting the prevalence of long working hours and high work intensity typical of the tourism industry.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics

Demographic Characteristics		n	%
Age (years)	18-25	14	3.7
	26-35	112	29.9
	36-45	112	29.9
	46-55	93	24.9
	56+	43	11.5
Gender	Female	188	50.3
	Male	186	49.7
Marital status	In a relationship	39	10.4
	Married	180	48.1
	Single	97	25.9
	Widowed	17	4.5
	Divorced	41	11.0
Educational attainment	Primary School	7	1.9
	High school	29	7.8
	Bachelor's Degree	119	31.8
	Associate degree	59	15.8
	Master's Degree	97	25.9
	Doctorate	63	16.8
Monthly income ($)	1000-1500	23	6.1
	1501-2000	37	9.9
	2001-3000	181	48.4
	3001-4000	73	19.5
	4001-5000	60	16.0
Department	Finance	28	7.5
	Food&Beverage	26	7.0
	Guest Relations	35	9.4
	Housekeeping	22	5.9
	HR	35	9.4
	IT	36	9.6
	Management	33	8.8
	Marketing	30	8.0
	Operations	30	8.0
	Reception	32	8.6
	Sales	32	8.6
	Security	35	9.4
Experience Level	6 months-1 years	63	16.8
	1-3 years	129	34.5
	3-5 years	109	29.1
	5 years +	73	19.5
Future Plan	Exploring other industries	39	10.4

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	Long-term stay	123	32.9
	Looking for promotion	75	20.1
	Plan to leave soon	83	22.2
	Undecided	54	14.4
	<6 hours	24	6.4
Daily Hours	<10 hours	42	11.2
	6-8 hours	201	53.7
	9-10 hours	107	28.6
Total		374	100.0

When evaluating the fit indices of the structural equation model presented in Table 2, it is evident that the model exhibits a high degree of fit with the data. The chi-square/degrees of freedom ratio were calculated as 1.409, remaining well below the recommended threshold of 3. This result indicates that the model demonstrates a good fit, suggesting that the hypothesized relationships among the variables are supported by empirical data.

Table 2. SEM Fit Indicies

Fit Index	Value	Recommended Cutoff	Interpretation
Chi-square (χ^2)/df	1.409	< 3	Good fit
Degrees of Freedom (df)	9	---	---
CFI	0.999	≥ 0.95	Excellent fit
TLI	0.923	≥ 0.95	Excellent fit
RFI	0.985	≥ 0.95	Excellent fit
RMSEA	0.020	≤ 0.06	Excellent fit

The model's fit indices — with a CFI of 0.999, an RFI of 0.985, and an RMSEA of 0.020 — indicate an excellent level of fit. Although the TLI value of 0.923 falls slightly below the commonly accepted threshold of 0.95 for perfect fit, it remains within an acceptable range that does not compromise the overall model fit. Particularly, the RMSEA being well below the 0.06 cut-off and the CFI approaching 1.000 confirms that the model provides strong structural validity. Overall, the structural model demonstrated a very good fit, and the results support its theoretical alignment. The consistently high values of CFI, RFI, and RMSEA suggest that the model yields reliable findings concerning structural validity. The slightly lower TLI value may indicate room for potential model refinement; however, the overall fit is considered satisfactory and robust.

Table 3. Hypothesis Results

Hypothesis	Path	Estimate (β)	Std. β	p-value	Hypothesis Support
H1	Altruistic leadership ~ Flow experience	0.469	0.218	***	Supported
H1a	Altruistic leadership ~ Absorption	0.141	0.026	***	Supported
H1b	Altruistic leadership ~ Enjoyment	0.132	0.036	***	Supported
H1c	Altruistic leadership ~ Intrinsic Motivation	0.286	0.022	***	Supported
H2	Flow experience~ Organizational attachment	0.005	-0.003	0.916	Not Supported
H3	Altruistic leadership ~ Organizational attachment	0.067	0.002	0.194	Not Supported
H3a	Altruistic leadership ~ Organizational trust	0.027	0.020	0.175	Not Supported
H3b	Altruistic leadership ~ Organizational identification	0.014	0.017	0.430	Not Supported
H4	Altruistic leadership ~ Flow experience ~Organizational attachment	0.000	0.000	---	Not Supported

As presented in Table 3, hypotheses H1 and its sub-hypotheses H1a, H1b, and H1c were found to be significantly supported. These findings indicate that altruistic leadership positively influences employees' overall flow experience, with significant positive relationships identified across all dimensions of flow. Specifically, altruistic leadership exhibited significant and positive effects on intrinsic work motivation ($\beta = 0.286$), work enjoyment ($\beta = 0.132$), and absorption ($\beta = 0.141$). Conversely, the analysis revealed that the relationship tested under H2 — the effect of flow experience on organizational attachment — was not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.005$, $p = 0.916$). This result suggests that flow

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experience does not exert a direct influence on organizational attachment within the tested model. Similarly, H3 and its sub-hypotheses H3a and H3b, which examined the effects of altruistic leadership on organizational attachment, organizational trust, and organizational identification, were also not supported. The p-values exceeding 0.05 and the low standardized path coefficients across these relationships confirmed the absence of significant effects. Finally, under hypothesis H4, the mediating role of flow experience in the relationship between altruistic leadership and organizational attachment was also not found to be significant. Overall, the findings suggest that while altruistic leadership has a strong impact on the motivational and experiential aspects of employees' work processes, this influence does not extend meaningfully to organizational attachment or its underlying structures. These results imply that altruistic leadership is more effective in shaping individual work experiences rather than exerting direct influence on emotional or cognitive organizational attachment. These findings may be attributed to contextual factors specific to the Turkish hospitality sector, where hierarchical dynamics and short-term employment patterns could have attenuated the link between leadership-driven motivation and long-term organizational attachment

5. Conclusions

The findings of this study revealed that altruistic leadership exerts a significant and positive influence on employees' work-related flow experience. In particular, meaningful relationships were observed between altruistic leadership and the sub-dimensions of flow — absorption, work enjoyment, and intrinsic motivation. These results align with the perspectives of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2012), both of which emphasize the role of leadership behaviors in fostering employees' motivational processes. Consistent with these theoretical foundations, Ajmal et al. (2024) highlighted the positive effects of altruistic leadership on employee motivation, while Abdillah et al. (2020) emphasized its supportive role in knowledge-sharing processes. Similarly, Guinot et al. (2016) underscored the contribution of altruistic leadership to promoting an organizational learning culture, and Mallén et al. (2015) demonstrated its positive impact on job satisfaction. The confirmation of altruistic leadership's significant effects on flow experience in this study resonates with these previous findings. However, the study did not find a significant effect of flow experience on organizational attachment. While this outcome supports the work of Csikszentmihalyi and Schneider (2002), which highlighted the motivational impact of flow at the individual level, it also suggests that the direct connection between flow experience and organizational outcomes may not always be as strong as anticipated. Spurlin and Csikszentmihalyi (2017) argued that although flow enhances individual productivity, this effect does not automatically translate into increased organizational attachment. Similarly, the direct effects of altruistic leadership on organizational attachment, organizational trust, and organizational identification were not supported by the model. This result contrasts with studies reporting strong associations between these variables (Guinot et al., 2016; Liu & Lin, 2018; Zeng & Xu, 2019). Considering the findings of Dong and Zhong (2022),

which emphasize the role of leadership in shaping organizational attachment, it appears that sector-specific or cultural contexts may play a decisive role in these relationships. However, the model did not provide support for the hypothesized effects of flow experience on organizational attachment, nor for the direct effects of altruistic leadership on attachment, organizational trust, and organizational identification. This pattern of findings suggests that the motivational gains generated by altruistic leaders may remain largely at the individual and experiential level and do not automatically spill over into collective, relational, and long-term organizational outcomes. Flow is, by definition, a highly personal, task-bound state that emerges when skill–challenge balance is achieved. Such a state can improve momentary productivity and enjoyment, yet it may not be sufficient to strengthen employees' durable psychological bonds with the organization, which are typically shaped by broader factors such as employment security, fair HR practices, career prospects, and relational trust with multiple organizational actors. A second explanation lies in the contextual characteristics of the Turkish tourism and accommodation sector. Employment relations in this sector are frequently influenced by seasonality, high work intensity, and hierarchical supervisory structures. Under such conditions, employees may perceive leadership support as helpful for daily work but may still refrain from converting this positive experience into stronger organizational attachment because contract duration, workload, or promotion opportunities remain uncertain. In other words, sectoral and cultural constraints may have attenuated the leadership–attachment linkage even when leadership behaviors were perceived positively. This contextual reading is in line with recent hospitality studies emphasizing that responsible or ethical leadership needs to be accompanied by organization-level enablers—transparent communication, stable contracts, and fair workload distribution—before it can translate into attachment-type outcomes. The non-significant mediating effect of flow (H4) should therefore not be interpreted as an indication that flow is irrelevant; rather, it implies that flow alone is an insufficient carrier of leadership effects toward organizational attachment. It is plausible that this transmission requires additional socio-organizational mechanisms, such as organizational trust, perceived insider status, or psychological ownership, operating either in sequence or as conditioning variables. In fact, the reviewer's suggestion to test organizational trust as a moderator rather than a mediator is theoretically meaningful: trust may strengthen or weaken the extent to which motivational states turn into attachment. Future models could therefore employ moderate-mediation or serial-mediation designs to capture the multi-layered nature of leadership influence in service organizations. From a theoretical standpoint, the current findings make two contributions. First, they reinforce the view that altruistic leadership is a valid antecedent of positive work-related experiences, even in high-pressure service environments. Second, they draw attention to a boundary condition: when the outcome variable reflects complex, socially embedded constructions such as organizational attachment, leader-driven motivational states may be necessary but not sufficient. This nuance helps to explain why some leadership studies report strong links with attachment, while others, especially those conducted in highly

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dynamic service sectors obtain weaker or non-significant paths. In summary, the findings suggest that while altruistic leadership significantly influences employees' individual motivational processes, this influence does not automatically extend to more complex social constructs such as organizational attachment.

5.1. Practical Implications

The findings of this study offer several practical implications for managerial practice. First and foremost, altruistic leadership behaviors were found to have a positive effect on employees' flow experience. This result highlights the need for organizations to encourage their leaders to adopt supportive and altruistic approaches in order to enhance employee motivation and foster intrinsic satisfaction within work processes. Abdillah et al. (2020) emphasized that altruistic leadership fosters knowledge sharing and collaborative behaviors among employees, while Ajmal et al. (2024) underscored the positive psychological outcomes that altruistic leadership generates in the workplace. In this context, leadership behaviors characterized by empathy, fairness, supportiveness, and selflessness are likely to enhance employees' enjoyment of their work and their levels of intrinsic motivation, thereby contributing positively to overall job performance. Particularly in sectors such as tourism, where customer relationships are intensive and service expectations are high, leaders' active engagement with employees and their sensitivity to employee needs may serve to strengthen both organizational attachment and job satisfaction (Özkan et al., 2025; Barghouti et al., 2022). However, the findings also indicated that altruistic leadership's direct influence on organizational attachment is limited. In light of this, strategies aimed at fostering organizational attachment should not solely focus on leadership styles but should instead adopt a multifaceted approach that encompasses the development of organizational trust, the implementation of fair human resource practices, the provision of development opportunities for employees, and the establishment of open communication channels (Dong & Zhong, 2022; Liu & Lin, 2018). Integrating leadership practices with supportive organizational culture policies may contribute to creating a sustainable environment for employee attachment, thereby enhancing both organizational loyalty and long-term engagement.

5.2. Theoretical Implications

From a theoretical standpoint, the findings of this study contribute uniquely to the literature by testing the relationships among altruistic leadership, flow experience, and organizational attachment within a single model. The most prominent result of the study is the significant and positive effect of altruistic leadership on employees' flow experience. Interpreted through the lens of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2012), this finding underscores the notion that altruistic and supportive leadership behaviors serve as crucial factors in enhancing employees' intrinsic motivation within the workplace. Ajmal et al. (2024) highlighted the role of altruistic

leadership in fostering employees' psychological resilience, while Mallén et al. (2015) pointed to its positive impact on job satisfaction. The confirmation of altruistic leadership's influence on flow experience in this study supports theoretical assumptions suggesting that such leadership styles strengthen motivational processes and contribute to a positive psychological climate at work. On the other hand, the lack of a significant direct effect of flow experience on organizational attachment suggests that the transformation of motivational processes from the individual level into organizational outcomes may not follow a straightforward or linear trajectory. This finding resonates with Csikszentmihalyi's (2002) conceptualization of flow, which emphasizes personal productivity and intrinsic enjoyment, and indicates that flow may remain confined to the realm of individual psychological experiences, with other variables potentially intervening in organizational contexts. Similarly, Spurlin and Csikszentmihalyi (2017) argued that while flow is directly linked to individual efficiency, its translation into organizational outcomes cannot be presumed. Furthermore, the nonsignificant direct effects of altruistic leadership on organizational attachment, trust, and identification suggest that although leadership behaviors may exert strong influences at the individual level, their impact may diminish within the complex network of organizational relationships. This observation aligns with Liu and Lin's (2018) and Zeng and Xu's (2019) emphasis on social capital and trust within organizational contexts, which may overshadow the direct influence of leadership. Overall, while the findings support the role of altruistic leadership in shaping individual motivational processes, they also highlight the necessity of further research into the complex and multivariate relationships that define organizational dynamics.

5.3. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Studies

Certain limitations of this study should be carefully considered when interpreting the findings and evaluating their generalizability. First, the data were collected exclusively from employees working in accommodation enterprises operating within the Antalya destination. This sectoral and regional limitation suggests that the results may be specific to this sample and that different outcomes could emerge in other sectors or geographical contexts. Future studies conducted across diverse industries, cultural settings, and broader geographical areas would be valuable for testing the external validity of the proposed model. Additionally, the data used in this study were based on self-reported measures. Given the subjective nature of constructs such as leadership perception, work experience, and organizational attachment, it is important to acknowledge the potential influence of social desirability bias inherent in self-reported data. Therefore, future research could benefit from incorporating multi-source data collection methods, including leader self-assessments, third-party observations, or multi-informant approaches, to enhance the robustness of the findings. Moreover, the study focused on selected dimensions of the variables under investigation. The flow experience was analyzed through its absorption, enjoyment, and intrinsic motivation dimensions, while

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organizational attachment was examined via trust and identification. This focus may have narrowed the theoretical contribution of the research. Future studies may consider exploring alternative dimensions of both flow experience and organizational attachment to provide a more comprehensive interpretation of the phenomena. Furthermore, examining leadership styles within cross-cultural contexts and incorporating cultural variables into the model could offer unique insights and contribute meaningfully to the existing literature on leadership and organizational behavior.

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