

# The Mediating Role of Organizational Commitment in the Causal Relationship between Islamic Work Ethics and Psychological Empowerment with Job Performance of Employees of the Ministry of Sports and Youth

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** The purpose of this study was to investigate the mediating role of organizational commitment in the causal relationship between Islamic work ethics and psychological empowerment with job performance of employees of the Ministry of Sports and Youth.

**Methodology:** The research method is descriptive-correlational and applied in terms of purpose. The statistical population of this study was the staff of the Deputy for Management Development and Support Resources of the Ministry of Sports and Youth (290 people). According to Cochran's formula, the number of samples was 132. Data collection tools of this study were Ali and Al-Kazemi (1988) Islamic Work Ethics Questionnaire with 18 items, Spiritual and Mishra (1995) Psychological Empowerment Questionnaire with 15 items, Allen and Meyer (1990) Organizational Commitment Questionnaire with 24 items and Patterson Job Performance (1970) with 15 items. Structural equation modeling under Smart PLS3 software was used to investigate the research model and validate the hypotheses.

**Findings:** The results show that the variable of Islamic work ethic has a positive and significant effect on organizational commitment. Also, the positive and significant effect of Islamic work ethic variable on job performance and psychological empowerment on organizational commitment was confirmed. The effect of psychological empowerment on job performance was also confirmed. Regarding mediation relations, it was found that organizational commitment mediates the effect of Islamic work ethic on job performance. Also, organizational commitment plays a mediating role in the relationship between psychological empowerment and job performance.

**Conclusion:** Based on proposed model suggested that the managers of the Ministry of Sports and Youth increase the job performance of their employees by training and strengthening, Islamic work ethic and psychological empowerment.

**Keywords:** *Islamic work ethic, Job Performance, Ministry of Sport and Yout, Organizational Commitment, Psychological Empowerment.*

## 1 Introduction

Human resources are a vital factor for the growth and excellence of any organization. As today's world is one of organizations, and these organizations are managed by humans, in other words, the existence of organizations is dependent on human existence. All experts in the field of organization and management believe that human resources are the most important assets of an organization. Thus, preparing and supporting humans, as a fundamental element of an organization in such a way that they engage with organizational goals with the utmost ability, motivation, and willingness, is the focus of all organizations (Azizinejadan & Mousavi Nejadan, 2016; Yanti et al., 2024; Yazdani & Hakiminia, 2024; Zhou & Zheng, 2024; Zhu, 2024).

Organizations look for employees who can perform well in their roles because good performance increases organizational productivity, which in turn enhances the national economy. Job performance is a variable that has received considerable attention in many developed countries. Psychologists believe job performance is the product of human behaviors and argue that motivations and needs have an impact on individual performance and ultimately on economic growth and development (Abolghasemi et al., 2011; Hnaish & Khairi Ahmed, 2024; Turki, 2024). Job performance is often influenced by factors such as support, recommendations, and other side factors in which colleagues are also involved.

Empowerment is one of the important processes in human resource management that plays a central role in the development of human capital and has recently attracted the attention of sports management researchers (Saati Zarei et al., 2019). Enhancing employee empowerment in organizations requires organizational growth and productivity as well as fostering creativity and innovation. Some management scholars have described creativity and innovation as the driving forces or propelling forces of humans (Beiginia et al., 2010). Empowerment is about reinforcing individuals' beliefs and building confidence about themselves and their efforts towards the effectiveness of organizational activities. In other words, empowerment means involving employees in studies for group formation and organizational structure design (Dashgarzadeh & Saremi Rad, 2011). Empowerment is not only about increasing motivation but is a more comprehensive definition of psychological empowerment as a set of motivational cognitive domains that, in addition to self-efficacy, include three other cognitive domains: choice,

autonomy, meaningfulness, and effectiveness, ultimately focusing on cognitive processes (Conger & Kanungo, 2008; Moradi Kamreh et al., 2016).

Humanity, after going through various periods, strives to apply an ethical and rational approach in meeting its material and spiritual needs, therefore, ethics can be considered the center and core of future transformations (Shoja Khani, 2016). Ethics is defined as a collection of human inner and psychological traits that appear in behaviors stemming from human internal characteristics, and thus it is said that ethics can be defined through its effects. The persistence of a specific behavior suggests that this behavior has an internal and intrinsic root in the depth of the individual's soul, which is called nature and ethics. The scope of ethics is considered to be within the range of individual behaviors, but when individual behaviors become widespread at the societal level or within social institutions, they transform into a form of collective ethics that has its roots in the culture of the society and becomes a dominant aspect that identifies the society (Kabirian, 2024; Mohammadi Fomani et al., 2024). Today, in the analysis of organizational behaviors, addressing ethics and ethical values is one of the necessities. The external symbol of organizations is formed by their ethical behaviors, which are the result of various ethical values that have emerged and manifested in those organizations, and one of the significant issues that has led to various problems for organizations worldwide is issues arising from corruption and unethical actions in different societies (Zhang, 2024). Moreover, work ethics play a very important and effective role in the productivity of human resources. So much so that the effectiveness of human resources depends on work ethics because if all structures, material and physical facilities, legal and managerial conditions are prepared, but human resources perceive work as a painful, arduous, and futile endeavor and are averse to it, relying on such human resources, achieving productivity and organizational goals is not feasible. Research has shown that those who value Islamic ethics are satisfied with their jobs and consequently tend to have greater commitment at work (Yousef, 2011). The different ethical behaviors of individuals as organization employees can be analyzed on a linear spectrum with one end being administrative health and the other end being administrative corruption, and the level of administrative health in the organization plays a significant role in carrying out missions, implementing strategies and programs, and ultimately achieving organizational goals (Abolghasemi et al., 2011). Work discipline, affection, justice, constructive socializing, counseling, humility, loyalty, service, tolerance

are among the desirable ethical methods emphasized by Islam in organizational management, which necessitates the drafting of an ethical charter and its practical implementation in organizations. In this regard, by creating executive guarantees and institutionalizing ethical behavior in organizations, Islamic ethics and principles can be strengthened in the organization, which if realized, will lead to the growth and excellence of individuals on one hand, and reduce discrimination, injustice, dissatisfaction, and increase job performance of employees on the other hand (Bin Salahudina et al., 2015). Islamic work ethics are built from concepts such as effort, competition, clarity, behavior, and ethical responsibility (Asadi & Shirzad, 2012).

Another intangible factor affecting employees' job performance is their organizational commitment. Loyal and adaptable human resources that align with organizational goals and values are willing to perform beyond their designated duties and can play a significant role in organizational effectiveness. Those who have a high level of organizational commitment believe that their work in the organization is important, and they are likely to agree with the organization's values, seeing themselves as part of the organization. They are steadfast in performing their assigned tasks and gain significant work experiences for their own welfare and that of their organization. Organizational commitment is a strong motivational source for enhancing employees' job performance and also persuades them to continue working under difficult conditions such as job-related stress and pressure (Musabah, 2017). The greater the level of organizational commitment, the more self-regulation and self-motivation increase among employees, and accordingly, effectiveness and efficiency also increase. Employees who lack interest and commitment to their organization do not work consistently and effectively and, over the long term, can harm the organization. On the other hand, reducing costs, achieving economic progress, increasing competition, sales, and effective customer service are all positive outcomes that result from creating appropriate and healthy environments and spaces. Whether these spaces and environments are in a public or private organization, open or closed, does not matter. The main issue here is that a healthy organization creates an environment for developing capable and healthy human resources, which in turn creates an effective and efficient organization (Nasiripour et al., 2011).

Mohammadi (2018) conducted research aimed at exploring the relationship between Islamic work ethics and the role of intrinsic motivation, job satisfaction,

organizational commitment, and job performance (case study of municipalities in Eastern Gillan). The empirical results showed that the impact of Islamic work ethics on intrinsic motivation and organizational commitment was greater than its effect on job satisfaction and job performance. Furthermore, the empirical results indicated that job satisfaction and intrinsic motivation moderate the relationship between Islamic work ethics and both organizational commitment and job performance (Mohammadi, 2019).

Zarei (2018) conducted a study titled 'Examining the Mediating Role of Organizational Commitment in the Relationship between Islamic Work Ethics, Psychological Empowerment, and Employees' Job Performance in the branches of Iran Insurance Company in Shiraz.' The research hypothesis testing results showed that there was a direct and significant relationship between Islamic work ethics and psychological empowerment with organizational commitment and job performance. Also, there was a direct and significant relationship between organizational commitment and job performance. Additionally, the results demonstrated that organizational commitment strengthens the relationship between Islamic work ethics and psychological empowerment with employees' job performance (Zarei, 2018).

Tetik (2016) conducted research to examine the impact of psychological empowerment on job satisfaction and job performance of tour guides. In order to achieve this goal, a questionnaire form was used for tour guides in Turkey. The study results showed that psychological empowerment, job satisfaction, and job performance are positively related and that empowerment ability impacts the satisfaction and performance level of guides. Defining the meaningful dimension of psychological empowerment was the most effective factor in increasing job satisfaction, while the dimension of impact had a positive effect on the job performance of guides (Tetik, 2016).

In service organizations, such as sports organizations where employees have direct contact with clients, employees play a vital role in the service delivery process, and achieving a long-term vision in these organizations largely depends on their line staff. If these employees are given the opportunity to understand themselves and at the same time become familiar with the organization's vision, this understanding will impact their service behavior and lead to improved quality of services provided to customers (Fu et al., 2011). Since improving employees' performance is a comprehensive and ubiquitous issue that is raised at different

levels of the organization and in any society, the success of offices and work environments entirely depends on the efficient use of human resources based on behavioral sciences. The Ministry of Sports and Youth also need various resources to achieve its goals, undoubtedly the most important of which are its employees. As this ministry is regarded as the highest sports organization in the country that provides sports services at the provincial and district levels, the performance of its employees affects all social, cultural, and familial dimensions of individuals; in such a way that the well-being of all members of society depends on the performance of this ministry (Malai Zarandi et al., 2016). Regardless of any religion or creed, since Islamic work ethics encompass universal values, thus, the present research intends to explore whether Islamic work ethics and psychological empowerment with the mediating role of organizational commitment are related to the job performance of employees at the Ministry of Sports and Youth.

**2 Methods and Materials**

This study is applied in terms of its purpose and analytical-descriptive in terms of its strategy. It is quantitative research regarding data collection. The statistical population of this research consisted of employees from the Deputy for Management Development and Support Resources at the Ministry of Sports and Youth, totaling 290 individuals. Based on Cochran's formula, the sample size was determined to be 132 people. The method of data collection in this research was conducted in two ways: field and library-based. In this study, information related to the subject literature, theoretical foundations, background, and records of previous research on the topic was collected from library sources through the study of books, journals, articles, and theses, both domestic and international.

**Table 1**

*Test of Normality of Data*

| Variable                  | Statistic | Sig   |
|---------------------------|-----------|-------|
| Islamic Work Ethic        | 0.168     | 0.001 |
| Psychological Empowerment | 0.102     | 0.200 |
| Organizational Commitment | 0.183     | 0.000 |
| Job Performance           | 0.108     | 0.169 |

Given the results obtained, it is clear that the distribution of data for the variables "Organizational Commitment" and "Islamic Work Ethic" does not follow a normal distribution. Considering the distribution of data across the four variables

Questionnaires used included Ali and Al-Kazemi's (1988) Islamic Work Ethics with 18 items, Spreitzer and Mishra's (1995) Psychological Empowerment with 15 items, Allen and Meyer's (1990) Organizational Commitment with 24 items, and Patterson's (1970) Job Performance with 15 items, utilizing a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The face and content validity of the questionnaire items were confirmed by 8 management professors. Additionally, construct validity indices (factor loadings, average variance extracted, and the Fornell-Larcker matrix) were also used for the statistical validation of the questionnaires. To assess the reliability of the measurement tools, Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR), which are the most important and well-known indices for evaluating reliability, were utilized. The research model and the validation of relationships between variables and factors were examined using the Structural Equation Modeling approach with Partial Least Squares (PLS) method, using the Smart PLS3 software.

**3 Findings and Results**

Upon examining the demographic variables based on the information obtained from the research questionnaires, out of the 132 respondents, 45% were men and 55% were women. In terms of age, the highest frequency was in the age range of 31 to 40 years, accounting for about 53%. Regarding educational attainment, the most common degree was a master's, making up about 44% of the sample. From an organizational position standpoint, 68% of the statistical sample held specialist positions while 32% were in managerial roles.

In this study, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to examine the assumption of normality of the research data.

of the conceptual model of the research, the use of Smart-PLS software is recommended. This software has the capability to analyze data that do not follow a normal distribution.

The values obtained related to the three indices—Cronbach's alpha coefficient, Composite Reliability (CR), and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE)—for the

dimensions of the research model are presented in Table 2. As is evident, these values are at a desirable level for all dimensions.

**Table 2**

*AVE, CR and Cronbach's alpha values*

| Variable                  | CR    | AVE   | Cronbach's alpha |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|------------------|
| Islamic Work Ethic        | 0.896 | 0.596 | 0.876            |
| Psychological Empowerment | 0.890 | 0.553 | 0.868            |
| Organizational Commitment | 0.975 | 0.585 | 0.952            |
| Job Performance           | 0.905 | 0.698 | 0.885            |

In Table 3, the factor loadings for the research indicators are presented. The obtained factor loadings for indicators q55, q69, and q72 were less than 0.4, hence they have been removed from the model, while the rest of the indicators all have loadings above 0.4. It should be noted that indicators q1 to q24 pertain to the variable of Organizational

Commitment, indicators q25 to q39 are related to the variable of Job Performance, indicators q40 to q54 correspond to the variable of Psychological Empowerment, and q55 to q72 are related to the variable of Islamic Work Ethic.

**Table 3**

*Factor Loadings of Research Indicators*

| Item | Factor loading | item | Factory loading | Item | Factor loading |
|------|----------------|------|-----------------|------|----------------|
| q1   | 0.685          | q25  | 0.580           | q49  | 0.602          |
| q2   | 0.611          | q26  | 0.625           | q50  | 0.642          |
| q3   | 0.674          | q27  | 0.567           | q51  | 0.605          |
| q4   | 0.637          | q28  | 0.636           | q52  | 0.559          |
| q5   | 0.490          | q29  | 0.655           | q53  | 0.583          |
| q6   | 0.676          | q30  | 0.474           | q54  | 0.534          |
| q7   | 0.654          | q31  | 0.725           | q55  | 0.233          |
| q8   | 0.727          | q32  | 0.495           | q56  | 0.660          |
| q9   | 0.515          | q33  | 0.699           | q57  | 0.537          |
| q10  | 0.617          | q34  | 0.677           | q58  | 0.634          |
| q11  | 0.726          | q35  | 0.505           | q59  | 0.699          |
| q12  | 0.641          | q36  | 0.847           | q60  | 0.477          |
| q13  | 0.851          | q37  | 0.420           | q61  | 0.635          |
| q14  | 0.869          | q38  | 0.736           | q62  | 0.486          |
| q15  | 0.698          | q39  | 0.740           | q63  | 0.639          |
| q16  | 0.774          | q40  | 0.545           | q64  | 0.541          |
| q17  | 0.617          | q41  | 0.546           | q65  | 0.581          |
| q18  | 0.766          | q42  | 0.744           | q66  | 0.566          |
| q19  | 0.787          | q43  | 0.663           | q67  | 0.699          |
| q20  | 0.809          | q44  | 0.465           | q68  | 0.621          |
| q21  | 0.709          | q45  | 0.684           | q69  | 0.255          |
| q22  | 0.623          | q46  | 0.564           | q70  | 0.595          |
| q23  | 0.717          | q47  | 0.557           | q71  | 0.626          |
| q24  | 0.711          | q48  | 0.566           | q72  | 0.279          |

In Table 4, the Fornell-Larcker criterion is presented, and as it is evident, the Fornell-Larcker criterion has been fully achieved.

**Table 4**

*Fornell-Larcker Criterion*

| Variable                  | Job Performance | Organizational Commitment | Psychological Empowerment | Islamic Work Ethic |
|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Job Performance           | 0.835           | 0.673                     | 0.685                     | 0.701              |
| Organizational Commitment | 0               | 0.764                     | 0                         | 0.646              |
| Psychological Empowerment | 0               | 0.694                     | 0.743                     | 0.682              |
| Islamic Work Ethic        | 0               | 0                         | 0                         | 0.772              |

In this research, the value of R<sup>2</sup> obtained for the dependent variables is presented in Table 5, indicating that

this index is at a satisfactory level for the dependent variables of the model.

**Table 5**

*Coefficient of Determination (R<sup>2</sup>)*

| Variable                  | R <sup>2</sup> (Coefficient of Determination) |
|---------------------------|---|
| Organizational Commitment | 0.651   |
| Job Performance           | 0.780   |

In this model, the effect size of the independent variables on the dependent variables "Organizational Commitment"

and "Job Performance" has been calculated. The values obtained are specified in Table 6.

**Table 6**

*Effect Size (f<sup>2</sup>)*

| Path  | Effect Size (f <sup>2</sup> ) |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Islamic Work Ethic → Organizational Commitment        | 0.057                         |
| Organizational Commitment → Job Performance           | 0.095                         |
| Psychological Empowerment → Job Performance           | 0.086                         |
| Psychological Empowerment → Organizational Commitment | 0.621                         |
| Islamic Work Ethic → Job Performance                  | 0.404                         |

In this research, the Q<sup>2</sup> value obtained for the dependent variables is presented in Table 7, from which it can be

claimed that the model's predictive power is at a satisfactory level.

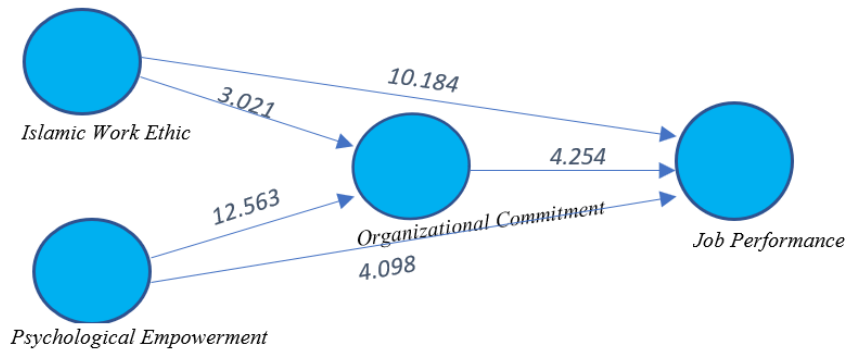
**Table 7**

*Predictive Relevance Test (Q<sup>2</sup>)*

| Variable                  | Q <sup>2</sup> (Predictive Relevance) |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Organizational Commitment | 0.294                                 |
| Job Performance           | 0.273                                 |

**Figure 1**

*Significance of T-Statistic*

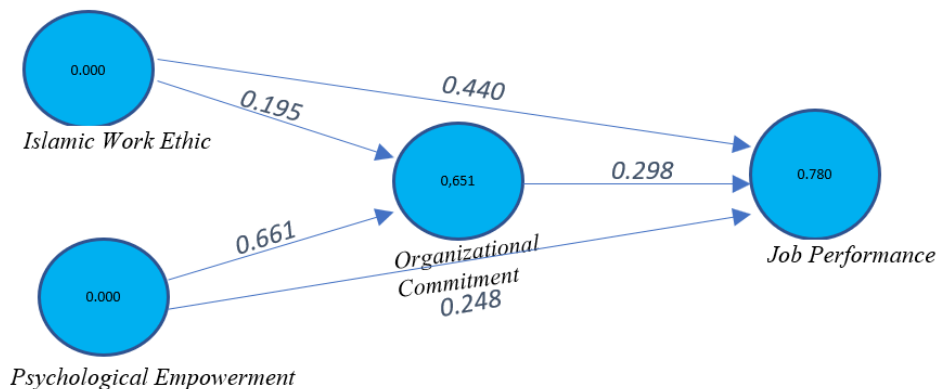


For examining the research hypotheses, two indices, the t-statistic and the path coefficient, are used. Generally, after the significance of the relationship between two variables in the model is confirmed by the t-value, the path coefficient is examined to determine the intensity of the confirmed relationship.

**Figure 2**

*Conceptual Research Model in the State of Path Coefficients*

Based on the values obtained for the t-statistic, as shown in Figure 1, only three relationships defined in the model are significant. Regarding the path coefficient value, researchers believe that a path coefficient greater than 0.1 indicates a specific level of impact in the model. In Figure 2, the research model is shown in the state of path coefficients, indicating that the path coefficients of the significant relationships are all above 0.1.



Based on the results obtained from the analysis of the research model, it was determined that the variable of Islamic Work Ethic has a significant positive impact on Organizational Commitment. Additionally, the positive and significant effect of the Islamic Work Ethic on Job Performance and the effect of Psychological Empowerment on Organizational Commitment were confirmed. Furthermore, the impact of Psychological Empowerment on Job Performance was also affirmed. Regarding mediation relationships, it was determined that Organizational Commitment mediates the impact of Islamic Work Ethic on Job Performance, and Organizational Commitment also plays a mediating role in the relationship between Psychological Empowerment and Job Performance.

It is worth mentioning that in cases involving mediation relationships, a mediation relationship is considered significant if the t-value in the relationship between the independent variable and the mediator, as well as in the relationship between the mediator and the dependent at the standard level ( $t \geq 1.96$ ), is met. Also, the Variance Accounted For (VAF) index is used to calculate the path coefficient of mediation relationships. The value of this index ranges from 0 to 1, and the closer it is to 1, the stronger the relationship is indicated.

Formula 1:

$$VAF = \frac{a * b}{(a * b) + c}$$

Path coefficient value between independent variable and mediator = a

Path coefficient value between mediator variable and dependent = b

Path coefficient value between independent variable and dependent = c

**Table 8**

*Results of Hypothesis Testing for the Conceptual Model*

|   | Hypothesis  | Path Coefficient | t-Value | Result    |
|---|---|------------------|---------|-----------|
| 1 | Islamic Work Ethic → Organizational Commitment        | 0.195            | 3.021   | Supported |
| 2 | Psychological Empowerment → Job Performance           | 0.248            | 4.098   | Supported |
| 3 | Organizational Commitment → Job Performance           | 0.287            | 3.035   | Supported |
| 4 | Islamic Work Ethic → Job Performance                  | 0.440            | 10.084  | Supported |
| 5 | Psychological Empowerment → Organizational Commitment | 0.664            | 12.563  | Supported |

#### 4 Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the mediating role of organizational commitment in the causal relationship between Islamic work ethics and psychological empowerment with job performance of employees of the Ministry of Sports and Youth. Based on the results obtained from the analysis of the research model, it was evident that there is a positive and significant relationship between the variable of Islamic Work Ethic and the Organizational Commitment of employees in the Ministry of Sports and Youth of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The t-value (3.021) is greater than 1.96, indicating significance at the 95% confidence level. Moreover, the path coefficient number (0.195) signifies that the Islamic Work Ethic variable explains 19 % of the variance in Organizational Commitment. This means that strengthening Islamic Work Ethic can lead to enhanced Organizational Commitment and vice versa. The results obtained from this hypothesis are consistent with prior research (Goli et al., 2015; Mohammadi, 2019; Zarei, 2018). In explaining this hypothesis, it can be said that the relationship between ethics and organizational commitment is an important topic in the development and progress of the knowledge of human resource management, knowledge development, and business ethics. Work ethics play a key role in the effectiveness of employees' emotional responses in the workplace. Based on Islamic perspectives, work ethics and ethical principles can be strengthened in the organization, which if realized, will lead to commitment and satisfaction in employees on the one hand, and human development, organizational growth, and societal progress on the other hand. Commitment, as a practical dimension of work ethics, has the most regulatory effect on work; therefore, it should

be carefully considered. Studies have shown that ethical values increase employees' commitment to the organization and create a strong attachment to it.

Furthermore, based on the results obtained from the analysis of the research model, it was clear that there is a positive and significant relationship between the variable of Islamic Work Ethic and the Job Performance of employees in the Ministry of Sports and Youth of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The t-value (10.084) is greater than 1.96, which indicates significance at the 95% confidence level. The path coefficient number (0.440) indicates that the Islamic Work Ethic variable explains 44% of the variance in Job Performance. This means that enhancing Islamic Work Ethic can lead to improved Job Performance and vice versa. The results obtained from this hypothesis are in harmony with prior research (Arshadi & Piriaei, 2014; Mohammadi, 2019; Zarei, 2018). In explaining this hypothesis, it can be said that work ethics in Islam refer to expectations of interpersonal relations such as exerting effort, taking responsibility, social relationships, participation, and creativity in the workplace. Every individual, by having a close relationship with God, can have attitudes and behaviors in accordance with organizational rules. Therefore, Islamic Work Ethics, by emphasizing the importance of collaboration and cooperation when facing problems and conflicts, lead to an increase in employees' job performance level; on the other hand, the relationship of Islamic Work Ethics is associated with outcomes such as job satisfaction and the absence of job turnover. Managers and colleagues' adherence to Islamic Work Ethic principles creates the perception that the organization treats them fairly, resulting in positive attitudes such as increased job satisfaction and a reduced intention to leave the job, and improved job performance among employees (Arshadi & Piriaei, 2014). The Ministry of Sports



and Youth should seriously consider the ethical aspects of its employees to increase their job performance level and strive to raise their ethical standards. Additionally, based on this finding, it can be asserted that employees who have high self-esteem, who consider ethical and cognitive issues important, who value hard work, who place great emphasis on their work duties, who avoid wasting time during work, have a higher job performance than their colleagues. Employees adorned with high work ethics are actually individuals who value their time, plan for their work, focus on the work they want to do, and avoid unnecessary and time-consuming tasks such as talking with colleagues, telephone conversations, etc., and attend to their duties during work hours, consequently, these individuals complete their work in a more timely and careful manner, and perform better.

Based on the results obtained from the analysis of the research model, it was determined that there is a significant positive relationship between the variable of psychological empowerment and organizational commitment among employees at the Ministry of Sports and Youth of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The t-value (12.563) is greater than 1.96, indicating significance at the 95% confidence level. Moreover, the path coefficient number (0.664) implies that psychological empowerment explains 66% of the variance in organizational commitment, suggesting that enhancing psychological empowerment can lead to strengthened organizational commitment, and vice versa. The findings from this hypothesis are in line with prior research (Dashgarzadeh & Saremi Rad, 2011; Hojjati et al., 2015; Najafi et al., 2011). It can be explained that empowered employees are more productive, committed, and innovative, producing higher quality products and services compared to less capable employees, making the organization more effective. An organization with a collective of committed employees can keep more customers satisfied with its products and services. Empowerment relies on management participation and a continuous flow of information. Organizations that successfully implement an empowerment program reap its benefits, which include quicker responses to customer needs, committed employees, and improved service quality.

Additionally, the research model analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between psychological empowerment and job performance among employees at the Ministry of Sports and Youth of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The t-value (4.098) is greater than 1.96, which confirms the relationship's significance at the 95% confidence level. The

path coefficient number (0.248) signifies that psychological empowerment accounts for 24% of the variance in job performance, meaning that enhancing psychological empowerment can lead to improved job performance, and vice versa. These findings are consistent with prior research (Arefin et al., 2015; Tetik, 2016; Zarei, 2018). Considering this finding, it can be said that the more empowered employees feel in their work environment, the better their job performance will be. Empowered employees experience significantly reduced role conflict and ambiguity and are more capable of controlling their environment. They also have higher job satisfaction, motivation, loyalty, and, consequently, better performance, feeling a greater sense of involvement in achieving organizational goals. In fact, psychological empowerment is an intrinsic motivational factor that reflects the active role of employees in an organization. The meaningfulness of a job leads individuals to value the goals or activities they engage in. The more job duties align with an individual's physical and psychological potential talents, the greater the enjoyment and satisfaction from performing the work (Asghari et al., 2011).

The research model analysis also identified a significant positive relationship between organizational commitment and job performance among employees at the Ministry of Sports and Youth of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The t-value (3.035) is greater than 1.96, confirming the relationship's significance at the 95% confidence level. The path coefficient number (0.287) indicates that organizational commitment explains 28% of the variance in job performance, meaning that enhancing organizational commitment can lead to improved job performance, and vice versa. These results are consistent with prior research (Hashemi Tabar, 2018; Musabah, 2017; Vahedi & Jahangir Fard, 2016; Zarei, 2018). In explaining this hypothesis, it can be said that high organizational commitment indicates employees' acceptance of organizational goals and values, and committed employees perform better within the organization. Organizations can function appropriately and fulfill their roles correctly only when they make suitable use of their human resources. The Ministry of Sports and Youth and its subordinate departments can confidently pursue their real goals with committed managers and employees and prevent the waste of material and immaterial capital resulting from a lack of commitment and loyalty among employees. Identifying factors that affect organizational commitment and increasing it among employees enhances efficiency and effectiveness of the human resource and

subsequently increases organizational productivity and performance.

Considering the results obtained, the significant t-values for this hypothesis are above 1.96, therefore, the relationships are confirmed at the 95% confidence level. Also, based on the VAF test result (0.498), approximately 49% of the influence of Islamic work ethics on the job performance of employees at the Ministry of Sports and Youth of the Islamic Republic of Iran is indirectly explained by the mediating variable of organizational commitment. The findings of this hypothesis are consistent with Zarei's research (2018) and are not in agreement with the findings of Monavarian et al.'s study (2017) (Monavarian et al., 2017; Zarei, 2018). The discrepancy in this research is likely due to differences in the populations studied in the two pieces of research. Work ethics is part of life ethics focused on work and organization, where individuals try to adhere to ethical work standards within the organization. In fact, people with work ethics feel committed to their organization and have a positive ethical attitude towards the organization and their role in its progress and improvement. On the other hand, today all employees know that organizations have no choice but to change and consider accepting change as a necessity for any organization. Employees with work ethics who see themselves committed to the legal and humanitarian standards of the organization and relationships with colleagues agree with the necessary changes for the organization and are committed to them. In fact, ethical employees of the organization feel a greater sense of commitment to their duties and to the progressive changes of the organization, and as a result, will have better job performance.

Considering the results obtained, the significant t-values for the seventh hypothesis are above 1.96, hence the relationships are confirmed at the 95% confidence level. Additionally, based on the VAF test result (0.667), approximately 66% of the influence of psychological empowerment on the job performance of employees at the Ministry of Sports and Youth of the Islamic Republic of Iran is indirectly explained by the mediating variable of organizational commitment. The findings of this hypothesis are consistent with one study (Zarei, 2018). Nowadays, the most important source of competitive advantage in organizations is committed, motivated, and conscientious employees. Unfortunately, organizations often fail to utilize their latent potential, hence empowerment is considered the most significant challenge for managers in the current era. As a result of these challenges, managers should create

conditions in organizations where each individual can become more empowered because committed and capable labor is a necessary and essential condition for effective performance in modern organizations.

Considering the findings from the data analysis and discussions in the conclusion section, managers of the Ministry of Sports and Youth are advised to foster organizational commitment among employees through a clear vision and mission statement framed within Islamic work ethics. They are also recommended to organize training courses on Islamic work ethics principles to strengthen employees' spirit of effort and perseverance and to prioritize good work and sacrifice as virtues in their work ethos. Given the impact of psychological empowerment on organizational commitment, the Ministry of Sports and Youth's managers are suggested to support training programs for employees and use the potential capacities of employees to create a healthy, energetic environment, ultimately fostering organizational commitment and managerial support for employees within the organization.

#### **Authors' Contributions**

All authors have contributed significantly to the research process and the development of the manuscript.

#### **Declaration**

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

#### **Transparency Statement**

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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#### **Declaration of Interest**

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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## Ethical Considerations

In this research, ethical standards including obtaining informed consent, ensuring privacy and confidentiality were observed.

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