



The Impact of Job Embeddedness on Organizational Performance of Employees in the Ministry of Sports and Youth with the Mediating Role of Organizational Justice

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of job embeddedness on the organizational performance of employees in the Ministry of Sports and Youth, considering the mediating role of organizational justice.

Methodology: The present research is a descriptive-correlational study in which data were collected through a questionnaire using a field research method. The statistical population consisted of all employees of the Ministry of Sports and Youth, totaling 900 individuals. Based on Krejcie and Morgan's table (1970), a sample of 269 employees was selected using a cluster random sampling method. Data were gathered using the Job Embeddedness Questionnaire by Crossley et al. (2007), the Organizational Performance Questionnaire by Patterson (1992), and the Organizational Justice Questionnaire by Niehoff and Moorman (1993).

Findings: The face and content validity of the questionnaires were confirmed by the research supervisor, and their reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which was calculated as 0.88 for job embeddedness, 0.75 for organizational performance, and 0.91 for organizational justice. Structural equation modeling was used for data analysis, and all calculations were performed using PLS and SPSS software. The results indicated that job embeddedness significantly affects both organizational performance and organizational justice, explaining 35.40% of the variance in organizational performance and 11.22% of the variance in organizational justice. Furthermore, organizational justice mediates the relationship between job embeddedness and the organizational performance of employees in the Ministry of Sports and Youth.

Conclusion: This study highlights the negative impact of job embeddedness on organizational performance, with organizational justice as a mediating factor. Enhancing fairness, transparency, and employee engagement can mitigate these effects and improve overall productivity.

Keywords: Job Embeddedness, Organizational Performance, Organizational Justice

1 Introduction

Job embeddedness is one of the common challenges in organizations. This phenomenon occurs when employees remain in their jobs due to various factors, including financial constraints, fear of losing benefits, or the lack of alternative job opportunities. Such a situation may create a sense of compulsion and dissatisfaction among employees. Employees' decision to stay in or leave an organization is a key variable in job-related research across all occupational domains (Ferreira et al., 2017). In today's competitive market, most organizations face significant challenges in retaining their valuable employees (Ruvimbo & Ngirande, 2022). Consequently, managers exert pressure and make efforts to retain employees in their positions or professions, a phenomenon recognized as job embeddedness (Charlier et al., 2024). Mitchell et al. (2021) introduced the term "job embeddedness" to establish a comprehensive approach to employer-employee relations, explaining the degree of employees' psychological and social embeddedness within the organization and its operational environment (Mitchell et al., 2022). Job embeddedness reflects the extent of individuals' interactions with others, teams, and groups (Mitchell et al., 2022). This concept was developed to explain the reasons behind individuals' interest in continuing in a job or voluntarily leaving it (Karatepe & Shahriari, 2021).

Job embeddedness focuses on overall connections. According to the job embeddedness theory, an individual's personal values, career goals, and future plans should align with the broader organizational culture and immediate job demands (e.g., knowledge, skills, and abilities required for the job). Additionally, individuals consider how well they fit into their surrounding society and environment. Job embeddedness assumes that better alignment increases the likelihood that an individual will feel professionally and personally connected to the organization. This theory suggests that various domains connect individuals and their families within a social, psychological, and financial network that includes friends, work and non-work groups, the community, and the physical environment in which they operate. A greater number of connections between an individual and their network increases the likelihood of job retention (Mitchell et al., 2022). Three major factors contribute to job embeddedness: (1) the extent to which an individual has strong ties to people or groups within the job and community, (2) the degree to which individuals fit with their job or community, and (3) the extent to which

individuals would have to sacrifice certain benefits if they left the organization. These factors—links, fit, and sacrifice—represent the three primary dimensions of job embeddedness (Zhang et al., 2022).

On the other hand, organizational embeddedness results from the abundance of resources, which manifest over the long term. Organizational embeddedness resources are primarily associated with the organization and workplace (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2021). These resources confine individuals to a specific job or organization. In other words, job embeddedness refers to the degree to which an employee feels connected to the organization and its members (e.g., compatibility with colleagues, positive relationships with supervisors, and attachment to projects), experiences a sense of alignment or comfort with the organization and job (e.g., suitability for the job due to the utilization of their talents and skills, cultural fit with the organization), and has a strong psychological need for security rather than sacrifice (e.g., good colleagues, engaging projects, or incentives), which are enriched by their organizational affiliation (Harris et al., 2019).

Job embeddedness can directly and indirectly influence organizational performance. Reduced employee motivation and commitment, as well as a lack of willingness to actively collaborate, are among the negative consequences of job embeddedness on organizational performance. Organizational performance is a key criterion for assessing an organization's success. Factors such as productivity, service quality, and the achievement of organizational goals are all influenced by employees' behaviors and attitudes. Therefore, understanding the factors that threaten organizational performance is of particular importance. Organizations, by virtue of having a structured framework, select their workforce based on their objectives. Employees, in turn, consider themselves obligated to fulfill the organizational responsibilities assigned to them. Thus, the job performance of employees reflects the overall performance of the organization. Consequently, the most critical and fundamental issue for any organization is the job performance of its human resources (Bohlouli Zeinab et al., 2024).

Performance is defined as the overall expected value that an organization derives from an individual's distinct behavioral components over a specified period (Motowidlo, 2023). Scholars have recently categorized job performance into two dimensions: task performance and contextual performance. Task performance relates to the responsibilities documented in employees' job descriptions

and is associated with assigned job duties. In contrast, contextual performance involves behaviors that support the sustainability of the organizational and social network and the psychological climate surrounding technical tasks (Wang et al., 2022). Another classification divides job performance into three categories: general job performance, technical job performance, and interpersonal job performance (Motowidlo, 2023). General job performance encompasses an integrated approach across all job dimensions. In contrast, technical job performance is based on the technical skills and abilities required for the job, while interpersonal job performance is assessed based on interactions and collaborative relationships with colleagues and other employees in the organization (Aslanpour et al., 2018).

In this context, organizational justice can play a crucial role as a mediating variable in mitigating the negative effects of job embeddedness. Organizational justice refers to the perceived fairness in procedures, resource distribution, and organizational interactions. A sense of justice in the workplace can directly influence employees' behaviors and attitudes. When employees perceive fairness in their treatment, they are more likely to engage in cooperative and participatory behaviors within the organization, which can enhance organizational performance. Organizational justice consists of three primary dimensions: distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice. Distributive justice pertains to the equitable allocation of resources and rewards. Procedural justice emphasizes fairness in decision-making processes, while interactional justice relates to the quality of interactions between employees and managers (Bohlouli Zeinab et al., 2024).

Distributive justice specifically refers to fair judgments regarding the distribution of outcomes. The fundamental assumption of distributive justice is that the allocation of resources significantly impacts perceptions of justice, organizational commitment, and trust. Organizational justice is a critical predictor of individual outcomes such as job satisfaction and compensation, as well as organizational outcomes like organizational commitment and subordinates' evaluations of supervisors (Badiane, 2023). Conversely, distributive injustice occurs when individuals do not receive the rewards they expect relative to others, such as new job opportunities, responsibilities, authority, rewards, and promotions (Konvsky & Cropanzo, 2018). Distributive justice reflects employees' perceptions of the fairness in resource and reward allocation. In essence, distributive justice operates on the principle of exchange, where

individuals compare what they contribute in an exchange to what they receive (Rodríguez et al., 2019).

Given the significance of organizational justice, examining its mediating role in the relationship between job embeddedness and organizational performance appears essential. This investigation can contribute to a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which these variables interact. The Ministry of Sports and Youth, as a key institution in social development, faces multiple challenges in human resource management. Identifying factors that may reduce employee motivation and job satisfaction is a priority for this ministry.

As an institution with social and cultural missions, the Ministry of Sports and Youth requires an efficient and committed workforce. This study assists managers in identifying obstacles to creating a more dynamic work environment. Given the importance of organizational justice, this research can help strengthen employees' sense of belonging and participation. Establishing a fair workplace fosters job satisfaction and reduces organizational silence. Additionally, this study can aid managers in designing training and professional development programs to prevent employee job stagnation. Such programs can enhance motivation and productivity. Ultimately, this research represents a crucial step toward improving human resource management in public organizations. Its findings can directly impact employee performance and the achievement of broader organizational goals.

Considering the above, this study aims to present a comprehensive model examining the impact of job embeddedness on organizational performance with the mediating role of organizational justice. The findings of this research can contribute to improving management policies and processes. Therefore, four hypotheses are proposed in this study:

Job embeddedness affects the organizational performance of employees in the Ministry of Sports and Youth.

Job embeddedness affects the organizational justice of employees in the Ministry of Sports and Youth.

Organizational justice affects the organizational performance of employees in the Ministry of Sports and Youth.

Organizational justice mediates the causal relationship between job embeddedness and the organizational performance of employees in the Ministry of Sports and Youth.

2 Methods and Materials

The present study is a descriptive-correlational research based on structural equation modeling and is classified as applied research in terms of its objective. The statistical population consists of all employees of the Ministry of Sports and Youth, totaling 900 individuals. Based on Krejcie and Morgan's table, 269 individuals were selected through convenience sampling and completed the research questionnaires. Considering the possibility of participant attrition, questionnaires were distributed among 320 individuals, and 269 participants who fully responded to the questionnaire items were included in the data analysis process. In addition to library studies, field methods were used for data collection in this study. Three standardized questionnaires were utilized in this research.

Job Embeddedness Questionnaire: This questionnaire was developed by Crossley et al. (2007). It consists of seven items rated on a five-point Likert scale. The questionnaire does not include subscales. It assesses the three dimensions of fit, links, and sacrifice from both the organizational and community perspectives (Charlier et al., 2024; Hemmatinejad et al., 2020).

Organizational Performance Questionnaire: This questionnaire was developed by Patterson (1992). It consists of 15 items measured on a four-point Likert scale, ranging from "rarely" to "always," with scores assigned from 0 to 3. The total score for each participant ranges from 0 to 45 (Aslanpour et al., 2018; Balouchi, 2024).

Organizational Justice Questionnaire: This questionnaire was developed by Niehoff and Moorman (1993) and consists of 20 items that measure three dimensions of organizational justice: distributive, procedural, and interactional justice. The items are rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly

disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Items 1 to 5 assess distributive justice, items 6 to 11 measure procedural justice, and items 12 to 20 evaluate interactional justice (Barati et al., 2023; Hosseini et al., 2019).

Since the questionnaires used in this study are standardized and have been repeatedly employed in various studies, they possess sufficient reliability. Additionally, in this study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to assess the reliability of the measurement instruments. Initially, the questionnaires were distributed among 50 individuals from the statistical population, and the collected data were analyzed using SPSS statistical software. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the job embeddedness, organizational performance, and organizational justice questionnaires were calculated as 0.88, 0.75, and 0.91, respectively, which are considered acceptable values.

In this study, Cronbach's alpha test was used to determine the reliability of the research instruments, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was applied to assess the normality of the data, and structural equation modeling was employed for data analysis. All computations were performed using PLS and SPSS software.

3 Findings and Results

First, the demographic characteristics of the participants are presented. A total of 54% of the participants were female, and 46% were male. Among the participants, 35 individuals were between the ages of 20 and 30, 87 were between 31 and 40, 85 were between 41 and 51, and 62 were between 51 and 60 years old. Regarding educational qualifications, 182 participants held an associate or bachelor's degree, 76 participants had a master's degree, and 11 participants had a doctoral degree.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

| Statistics/Variables | Mean | Standard Deviation | Minimum Score | Maximum Score |
|----------------------------|-------|--------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Job Embeddedness | 26.17 | 3.86 | 11 | 29 |
| Organizational Performance | 28.77 | 2.93 | 13 | 39 |
| Organizational Justice | 51.38 | 5.87 | 32 | 91 |

As shown in the table above, the overall mean scores for job embeddedness, organizational performance, and organizational justice were 26.17, 28.77, and 51.38, respectively.

To examine the normality of the data distribution, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used, and its results are presented in Table 5.

Table 2*Normality Test Results*

| Statistics/Variables | K-S Value | Significance Level | Result (Normal/Non-Normal) |
|----------------------------|-----------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Job Embeddedness | 0.089 | 0.002 | Non-Normal |
| Organizational Performance | 0.251 | 0.001 | Non-Normal |
| Organizational Justice | 0.073 | 0.001 | Non-Normal |

Table 5 presents the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. Based on the table, variables with a significance level below 0.05 are considered non-normally distributed. Therefore, the assumption of normality is not met, making it appropriate to use structural equation modeling (SEM) via Smart PLS software.

Testing Hypothesis 1: Job Embeddedness Affects the Organizational Performance of Employees in the Ministry of Sports and Youth

To test this hypothesis, structural equation modeling (SEM) with the partial least squares (PLS-SEM) approach was used.

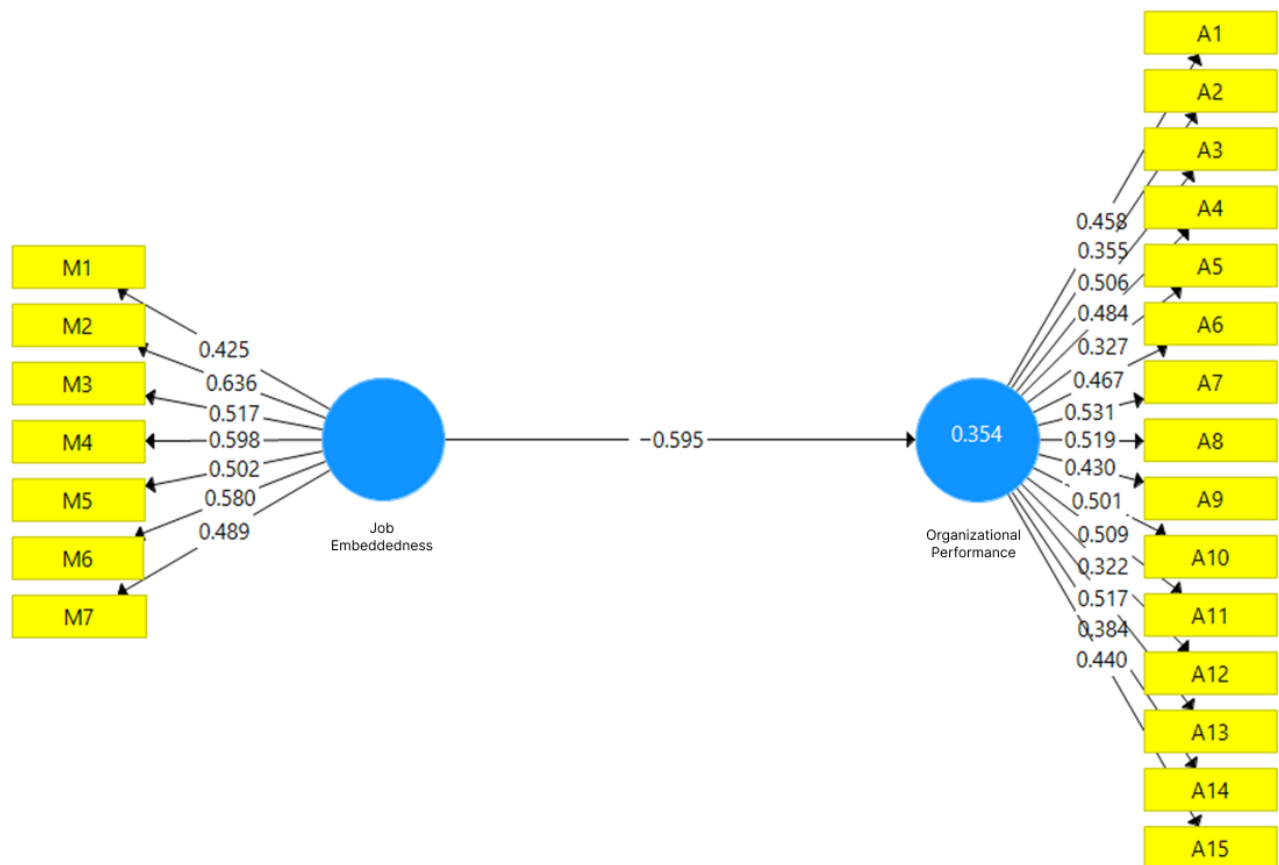
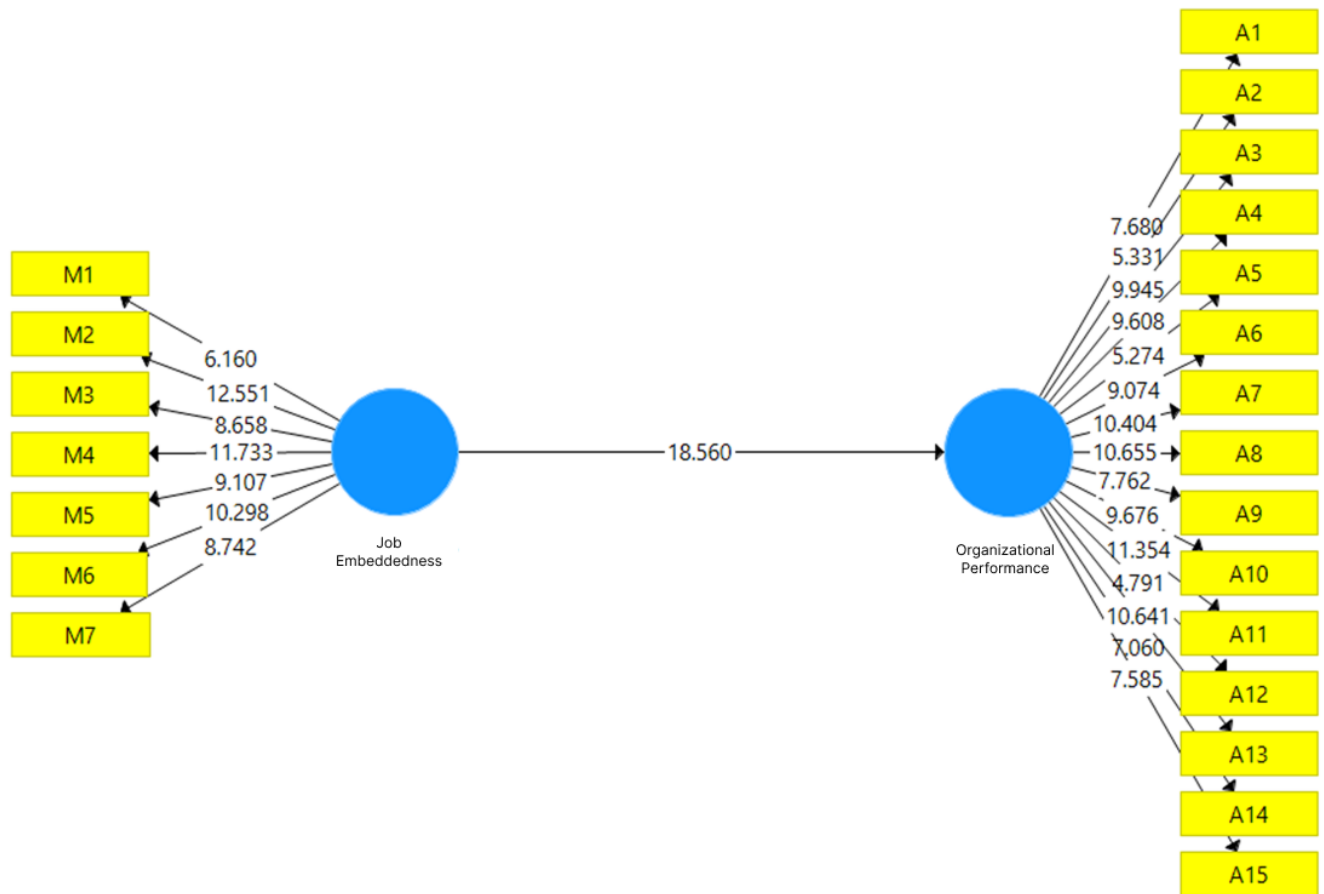
Figure 1*Standardized Coefficients for Hypothesis 1*

Figure 2

Z-Value Significance Coefficients and Explained Variance for Hypothesis 1



Next, the validity and reliability of the constructs were examined.

Table 3

Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and Convergent Validity for Hypothesis 1 Variables

| Index | Job Embeddedness | Organizational Performance | Acceptable Threshold |
|----------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Cronbach's Alpha (CA) | 0.75 | 0.81 | > 0.70 |
| Composite Reliability (CR) | 0.82 | 0.83 | > 0.70 |
| Average Variance Extracted (AVE) | 0.63 | 0.65 | > 0.50 |

The results confirm the reliability and convergent validity of the constructs.

For evaluating the structural model, path coefficients were examined.

Table 4

Path Coefficients for Hypothesis 1

| Path | Path Coefficient (β) | T-Value | Significance Level (p-value) |
|---|------------------------------|---------|------------------------------|
| Organizational Performance \rightarrow Job Embeddedness | -0.595 | 2.35 | 0.000 |

The path coefficient ($\beta = -0.595$) indicates that job embeddedness has a significant negative effect on organizational performance. The t-value of 2.35, which is

greater than 1.96, confirms the significance of this relationship, and the p-value ($0.000 < 0.05$) supports the hypothesis.

The explanatory power of the model (R^2) for Hypothesis 1 is 35.40%, meaning that 35.40% of the variance in organizational performance is explained by job embeddedness.

Testing Hypothesis 2: Job Embeddedness Affects the Organizational Justice of Employees in the Ministry of Sports and Youth

First, the standardized path coefficients and significance coefficients are presented.

Figure 3

Standardized Coefficients for Hypothesis 2

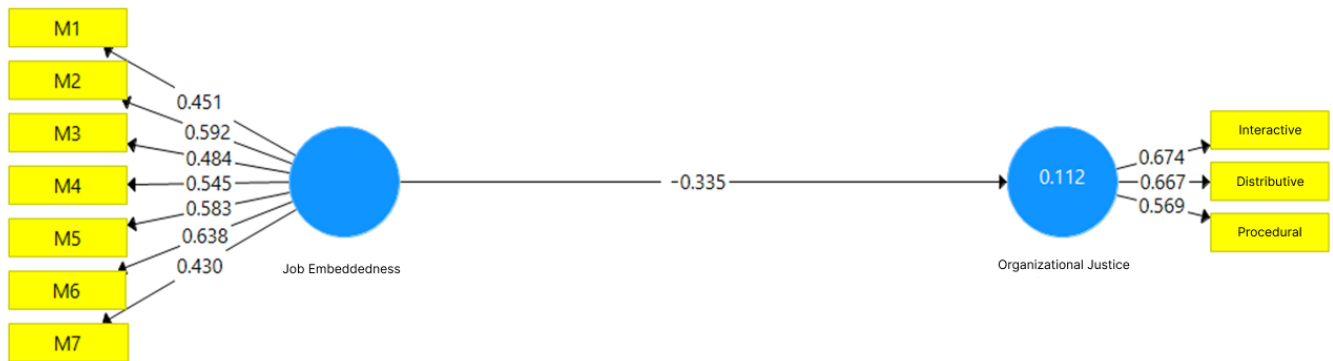


Figure 4

Z-Value Significance Coefficients and Explained Variance for Hypothesis 2

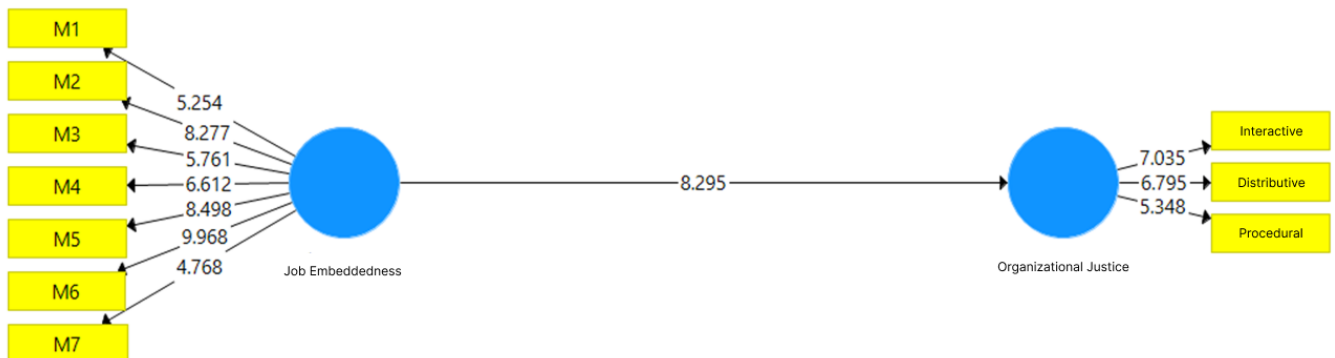


Table 5

Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and Convergent Validity for Hypothesis 2 Variables

| Index | Job Embeddedness | Organizational Justice | Acceptable Threshold |
|----------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Cronbach's Alpha (CA) | 0.75 | 0.84 | > 0.70 |
| Composite Reliability (CR) | 0.82 | 0.87 | > 0.70 |
| Average Variance Extracted (AVE) | 0.63 | 0.71 | > 0.50 |

The results confirm the reliability and convergent validity of the constructs.

Next, path coefficients for the structural model were examined.

Table 6*Path Coefficients for Hypothesis 2*

| Path | Path Coefficient (β) | T-Value | Significance Level (p-value) |
|---|------------------------------|---------|------------------------------|
| Organizational Justice \rightarrow Job Embeddedness | -0.335 | 4.76 | 0.000 |

The path coefficient ($\beta = -0.335$) indicates that job embeddedness has a significant negative effect on organizational justice. The t-value of 4.76, which is greater than 1.96, confirms the significance of this relationship, and the p-value ($0.000 < 0.05$) supports the hypothesis.

The explanatory power (R^2) for Hypothesis 2 is 11.22%, meaning that 11.22% of the variance in organizational justice is explained by job embeddedness.

Testing Hypothesis 3: Organizational Justice Affects the Organizational Performance of Employees in the Ministry of Sports and Youth

First, the standardized path coefficients and significance coefficients for Hypothesis 3 are presented.

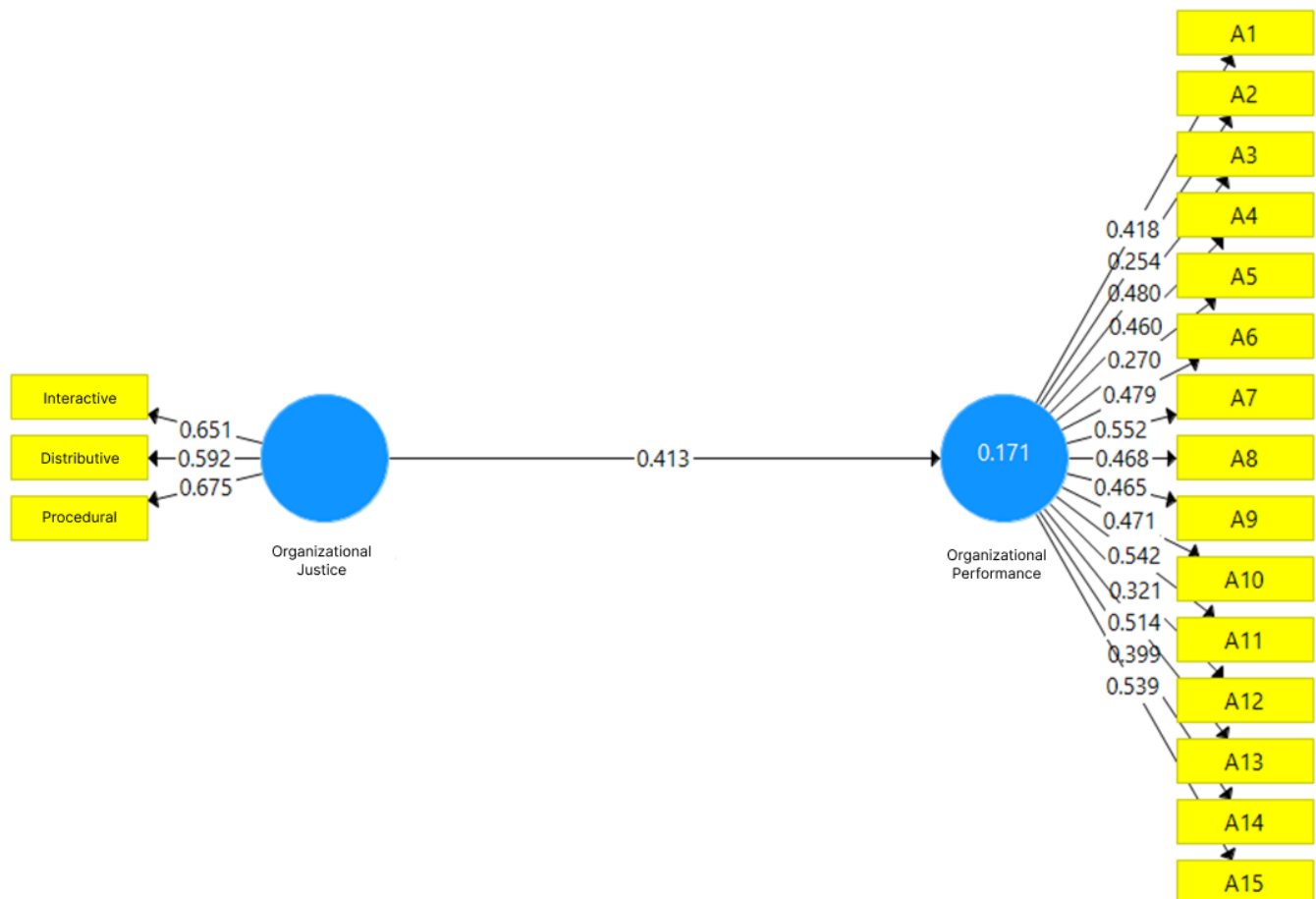
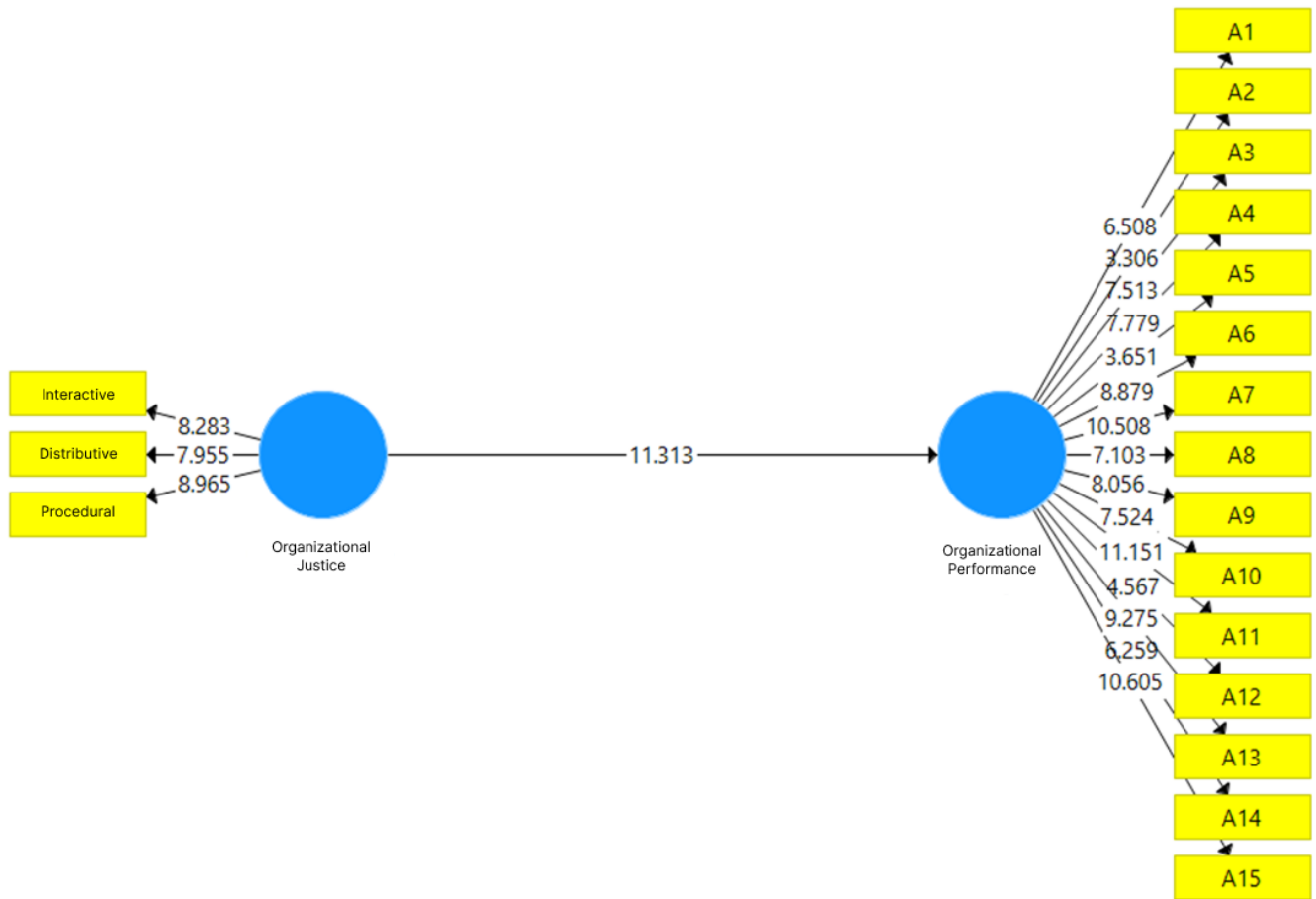
Figure 5*Standardized Coefficients for Hypothesis 3*

Figure 6

Z-Value Significance Coefficients and Explained Variance for Hypothesis 3

**Table 7**

Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and Convergent Validity for Hypothesis 3 Variables

| Index | Organizational Justice | Organizational Performance | Acceptable Threshold |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Cronbach's Alpha (CA) | 0.84 | 0.81 | > 0.70 |
| Composite Reliability (CR) | 0.87 | 0.83 | > 0.70 |
| Average Variance Extracted (AVE) | 0.71 | 0.65 | > 0.50 |

The results confirm the reliability and convergent validity of the constructs.

Next, path coefficients for the structural model were examined.

Table 8

Path Coefficients for Hypothesis 3

| Path | Path Coefficient (β) | T-Value | Significance Level (p-value) |
|---|------------------------------|---------|------------------------------|
| Organizational Performance \rightarrow Organizational Justice | 0.413 | 5.26 | 0.000 |

The path coefficient ($\beta = 0.413$) indicates that organizational justice has a significant positive effect on organizational performance. The t-value of 5.26, which is

greater than 1.96, confirms the significance of this relationship, and the p-value ($0.000 < 0.05$) supports the hypothesis.

The explanatory power (R^2) for Hypothesis 3 is 17.05%, meaning that 17.05% of the variance in organizational performance is explained by organizational justice.

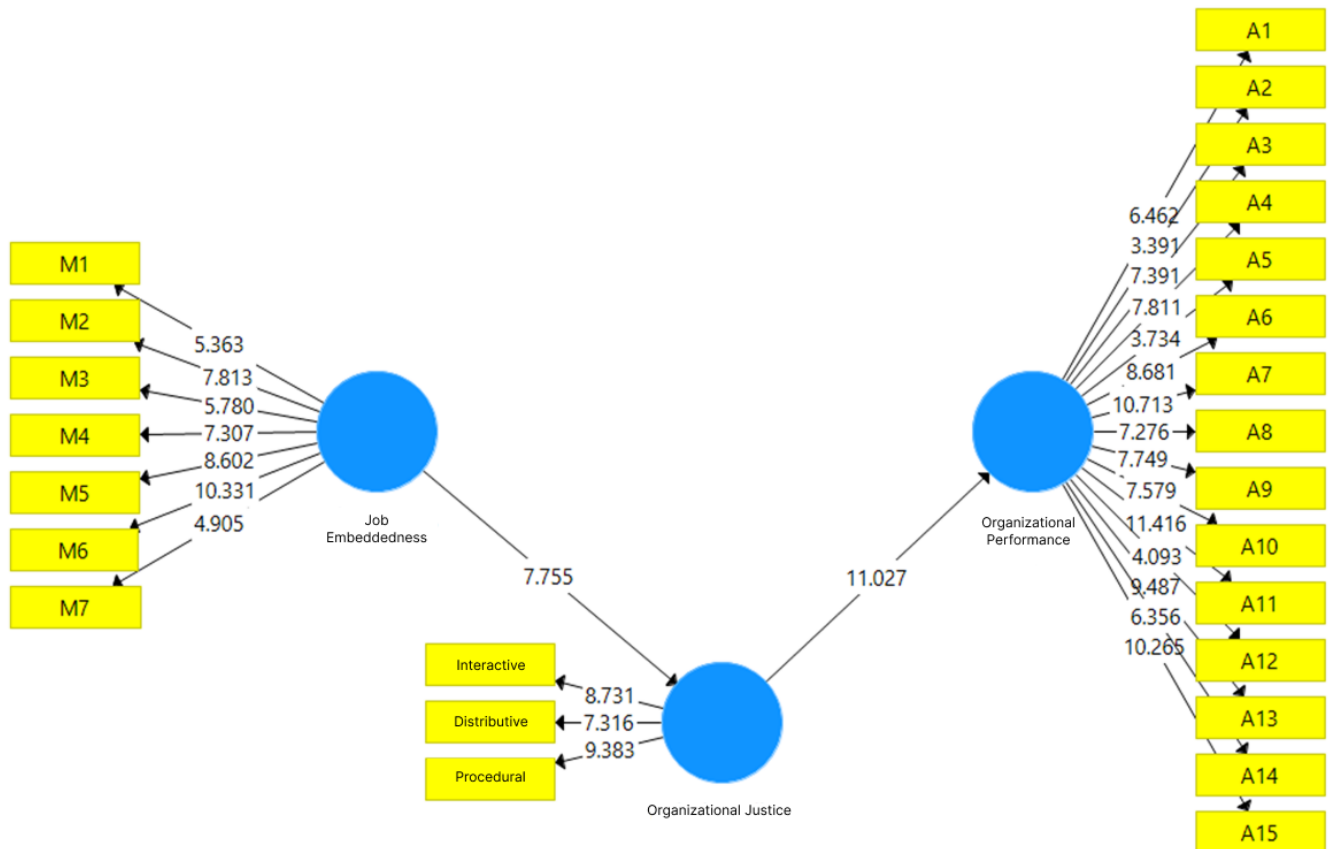
Testing Hypothesis 4: The Mediating Role of Organizational Justice in the Causal Relationship Between Job Embeddedness and Organizational

Performance of Employees in the Ministry of Sports and Youth

To test the mediating role, the Sobel test was used. Therefore, for the Sobel test, it was necessary to calculate the t-values of the structural equations.

Figure 7

Z-Value Significance Coefficients and Explained Variance for Hypothesis 4



As observed, the t-values are 7.755 and 11.027, both exceeding ± 1.96 , confirming that organizational justice mediates the relationship between job embeddedness and organizational performance among employees in the Ministry of Sports and Youth.

The table below presents the standardized direct, indirect, and total effects between the constructs in the mediating model of Hypothesis 4.

Table 9

Standardized Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects of the Main Research Variables in the Mediating Model of Hypothesis 4

| From Construct | To Construct | Direct Effect (c) (sig) | Direct Effect (c') (sig) | Indirect Effect (b) (sig) | Total Effect (sig) |
|------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Job Embeddedness | Organizational Performance | 0.145 (0.03) | 0.016 (0.005) | 0.012 (0.01) | 0.013 (0.01) |

Based on the data presented in the table, the significant direct effect between job embeddedness and organizational performance ($\beta = 0.14$) decreased and lost its significance

after adding the mediating variable (C'). Additionally, the indirect effect between these two constructs became significant ($\beta = 0.003$). Therefore, it can be concluded that

organizational justice plays a mediating role in the relationship between job embeddedness and organizational performance.

4 Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the first hypothesis indicated that job embeddedness affects the organizational performance of employees in the Ministry of Sports and Youth. These findings align with the research conducted by Ayoubi et al. (2020). Theoretically, job embeddedness can be explained as a factor that creates job dissatisfaction and weakens employee morale (Ayoubi et al., 2020). Dissatisfied employees rarely strive to improve their performance or contribute to organizational growth, directly impacting organizational performance negatively. A sense of job embeddedness increases stress and job burnout among employees. High stress levels can disrupt employees' ability to perform their tasks, ultimately affecting organizational performance. Employees who feel trapped in their jobs tend to avoid effective interactions with colleagues and managers. This reduced interaction can lead to a lack of team coordination and decreased productivity within the Ministry of Sports and Youth. Job embeddedness may also contribute to the formation of a negative organizational culture, where employees show little inclination to collaborate and engage, negatively impacting overall organizational performance (Arjomand, 2018).

Job embeddedness may lead employees to disregard organizational strategies. This disruption in planning and strategy execution negatively affects the overall performance of the Ministry of Sports and Youth. Furthermore, job embeddedness reduces employees' willingness to engage in teamwork. Employees lacking motivation to participate effectively in teams can adversely impact overall organizational performance. A sense of being trapped can erode employees' trust in management. This decline in trust reduces positive interactions between employees and managers, ultimately harming organizational performance. Job embeddedness can result in underutilization of human capital, including employees' expertise and skills, leading to a decline in the overall productivity of the Ministry of Sports and Youth. To mitigate the negative effects of job embeddedness, the Ministry of Sports and Youth should implement supportive policies. Employee support initiatives can enhance motivation and reduce the adverse effects of job embeddedness. Establishing a culture that encourages

employee participation and feedback can enhance organizational performance by fostering psychological and professional security. Regular job satisfaction assessments can help identify employees experiencing job embeddedness, guiding improvements in the Ministry's human resource policies. Given the significant impact of job embeddedness on organizational performance, the Ministry of Sports and Youth must focus on enhancing employee motivation, improving work conditions, and creating growth opportunities to mitigate negative effects and increase organizational productivity (Ayoubi et al., 2020).

The results of the second hypothesis showed that job embeddedness affects the organizational justice of employees in the Ministry of Sports and Youth. These findings are consistent with the study by Hemmatinejad et al. (2020). Theoretically, job embeddedness can weaken employees' trust in the organization. Employees who remain in the organization due to a lack of alternative job opportunities may feel that the organization is exploiting their situation, reducing their perception of justice. Job embeddedness may also reinforce feelings of discrimination among employees (Hemmatinejad et al., 2020). Employees experiencing job embeddedness often compare themselves to others and may perceive unfairness in the distribution of resources and opportunities. They are frequently dissatisfied with the organization's reward system, feeling that their efforts are undervalued, negatively affecting distributive justice. Additionally, job embeddedness can lead employees to perceive excessive control by the organization, believing that it uses its power to limit their freedom, which weakens perceptions of organizational justice. A diminished sense of justice resulting from job embeddedness can decrease organizational commitment, as employees who do not experience fairness in the organization are less motivated to cooperate and engage (Arjomand, 2018).

Managers in the Ministry of Sports and Youth can mitigate the negative effects of job embeddedness on organizational justice by implementing transparent and fair policies. Fair treatment and effective communication can enhance employees' perception of justice. Human resource policies play a critical role in reducing job embeddedness and increasing organizational justice. Programs that focus on employee empowerment and career development opportunities can improve perceptions of justice. Transparency in organizational decision-making can help reduce perceptions of injustice. The Ministry of Sports and Youth should establish clear and predictable procedures to enhance employees' sense of justice. Continuous assessment

of organizational justice can identify issues related to job embeddedness and mitigate its effects. Regular surveys and feedback sessions can effectively improve perceptions of fairness.

The results of the third hypothesis indicated that organizational justice affects the organizational performance of employees in the Ministry of Sports and Youth. These findings are consistent with the prior studies (Balouchi, 2024; Haghighi et al., 2023). Theoretically, organizational justice refers to employees' perception of fairness in the workplace. This concept includes employees' evaluations of resource distribution, organizational procedures, and interpersonal behaviors. Organizational justice is categorized into three dimensions: distributive justice (fair allocation of rewards), procedural justice (fairness in decision-making processes), and interactional justice (respectful and ethical behavior of managers toward employees). When employees perceive that rewards, salaries, and benefits are distributed fairly, they are more motivated to enhance their performance. Conversely, a lack of fairness can lead to dissatisfaction and reduced productivity. Transparent and fair decision-making processes increase employee trust and motivation for active participation in job-related tasks. Fair and respectful treatment by managers significantly increases job satisfaction, reduces conflicts, and enhances organizational commitment. Employees who perceive fairness in the workplace are more likely to remain in the organization and commit to its goals. A fair work environment boosts employee productivity, as it enhances their motivation to perform their duties at a high standard (Haghighi et al., 2023).

Ensuring justice in the workplace fosters positive interactions and creates an environment where employees feel encouraged to contribute new ideas. In sports organizations, justice improves coordination and collaboration among teams and workgroups. Employees who perceive fairness perform their duties with greater enthusiasm and energy. Managers in the Ministry of Sports and Youth play a crucial role in establishing and maintaining organizational justice, as their policies and behaviors directly influence employees' sense of fairness. Organizational justice is a key factor in enhancing employee performance in the Ministry of Sports and Youth. Ensuring fairness in decision-making, resource distribution, and interpersonal interactions increases employee motivation, commitment, and productivity, ultimately improving overall organizational performance (Gholami et al., 2024).

The results of the fourth hypothesis indicated that organizational justice mediates the causal relationship between job embeddedness and organizational performance in the Ministry of Sports and Youth.

Although no prior research has simultaneously examined the relationship between these three variables, theoretically, job embeddedness occurs when employees feel unable to leave their jobs due to various reasons, such as limited job opportunities, restricted skills, or financial dependency. This situation can lead to decreased motivation and increased dissatisfaction. Organizational performance refers to the extent to which goals are achieved, as well as productivity, efficiency, and the quality of services provided by employees. In the Ministry of Sports and Youth, organizational performance includes improving sports services, implementing development programs, and increasing public satisfaction. Job embeddedness often leads to reduced employee commitment and motivation. When employees perceive limited job options, they may disengage from their work, resulting in decreased productivity and negatively affecting organizational performance.

Organizational justice can act as a mediating factor, mitigating the negative effects of job embeddedness on organizational performance. A sense of justice in the organization helps employees maintain motivation and commitment, even under conditions of job embeddedness. Distributive justice refers to the allocation of resources, benefits, and opportunities within the organization. When employees perceive fair resource distribution, they are more likely to stay motivated and perform well, even in situations of job embeddedness (Hosseini et al., 2019).

Managers can reduce the negative impact of job embeddedness by implementing fair policies in promotions, rewards, and performance evaluations. Transparent communication and just decision-making play a crucial role in maintaining employee performance. Employees who experience fairness in the organization develop a stronger sense of belonging, which enhances motivation and improves performance. Workplace injustice can lead to negative behaviors such as reduced work quality, neglect of responsibilities, and increased absenteeism. Ensuring organizational justice can prevent such behaviors and enhance organizational performance. Organizations that uphold fairness create environments where employees feel secure and encouraged to share their ideas. This fosters creativity and innovation, ultimately improving organizational performance. Fair reward systems can sustain employee motivation even under conditions of job

embeddedness. Employees who recognize that their efforts are valued and rewarded appropriately will perform better.

One of the primary reasons for job embeddedness is the lack of career advancement opportunities. Organizations that establish clear and fair career pathways for employees can mitigate the negative effects of job embeddedness on organizational performance. Organizational justice enhances employee job satisfaction. Satisfied employees, even in the presence of job constraints, work with greater motivation and achieve higher performance. Furthermore, organizational justice can prevent the departure of highly skilled employees. Employees who perceive injustice are more likely to seek other job opportunities, whereas those who experience fairness are more likely to remain in the organization. Organizational justice serves as a significant mediator in the relationship between job embeddedness and organizational performance. When employees perceive fair treatment, they maintain their motivation for high performance, even when they lack the option to leave their jobs. Therefore, the Ministry of Sports and Youth should enhance organizational justice to counteract the negative effects of job embeddedness and create a work environment where employees remain engaged and productive (Raminmehr et al., 2022).

One of the main limitations of this study is its focus on employees of the Ministry of Sports and Youth, which restricts the generalizability of the findings to other organizations and industries. The use of self-report questionnaires may introduce response bias, as participants may provide socially desirable answers rather than reflecting their actual experiences. Additionally, the cross-sectional nature of the study prevents the establishment of causal relationships between job embeddedness, organizational justice, and organizational performance. The study also does not account for potential moderating variables such as leadership style, organizational culture, or individual personality traits, which may influence the relationships between the key variables.

Future research should explore the impact of job embeddedness on organizational performance across different industries and cultural contexts to enhance the generalizability of findings. Longitudinal studies can provide deeper insights into the causal relationships between job embeddedness, organizational justice, and performance over time. It is also recommended to incorporate qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews, to gain a more nuanced understanding of employees' perceptions and experiences. Organizations should implement policies that

promote fairness and transparency in decision-making processes to mitigate the negative effects of job embeddedness. Providing career development opportunities and fostering a supportive work environment can enhance employee engagement and reduce feelings of entrapment. Additionally, managers should be trained to recognize and address job embeddedness by improving communication and encouraging employee participation in organizational decision-making.

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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