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ORIGINAL

THE ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL AND ETHICAL LEADERSHIP IN SPORTS INDUSTRY PERFORMANCE: THE MODERATION EFFECT OF PERCEIVED ENJOYMENT AMONG IRAQI PLAYERS

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ABSTRACT

The performance of any nation's sports sector is contingent on the players' output during the game, as measured by their response to competition, abilities, skills, and behavior toward accomplishments. Despite the sports ministry's efforts, the performance of Iraqi soccer players has dropped in recent years due to several unknown variables. This study attempts to identify the psychological issues and investigate the influence of psychological capital, ethical leadership, and perceived enjoyment that contributes to the performance of the soccer business. The study's objectives include assessing the relationship between psychological capital and how it influences players' performance, the role of coaches' ethical leadership skills in encouraging players to perform better, and the influence of perceived enjoyment on the performance of the sports industry. In addition, perceived satisfaction is a moderator between exogenous and endogenous factors. Using simple random sampling, this quantitative study collected data from soccer players in Baghdad, Iraq, and clubs to estimate the performance of the sports industry.

Using Smart-PLS 4 to analyze the obtained data, the study determined that psychological capital and perceived enjoyment influence the performance of the sports business, thereby confirming the significance of hypotheses H1 and H3. The influence of ethical leadership on the success of the sports business was determined to be insignificant. Hence hypothesis H2 is rejected. In addition, the moderation effect between the variables was clear, and hypotheses H4 and H5 were accepted. The study's conclusion proposes policies and tactics for the sports industry to perform better in competition. Limitations and future research paths are also mentioned.

KEYWORDS: Sports industry performance, Psychological Capital, Ethical leadership, Perceived Enjoyment

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Due to its influence on performance, its relationship with the profession, and its link with societies that also contribute to sports-related outputs, sports management has attracted a great deal of academic interest. The management of sports enables the development of operational designs from a variety of sports-related viewpoints and aids in the implementation of various policies and the formulation of appropriate sports-related decisions. Information generating and directing are sports management skills necessary in today's highly competitive environment (Ilkm et al., 2021; Terason et al., 2022). The manager emerges from the players, adopts the sports management profession, and employs their skills to make appropriate decisions on the performance of the sports sector. The sports activities are categorized as educational sports, accomplishment sports, and leisure sports. Educational sports are associated with educational purposes to increase the understanding and appreciation of the benefits that can be generated through games and sports to maintain the health and well-being of individuals (Chelladurai & Kim, 2022; González-Hernández et al., 2019). The objective of sports is to increase the amount of enjoyment in people's lives and improve their happiness and sense of well-being. (González-Hernández et al., 2019) The athletes seek to improve their performance at a higher level to attain the maximal output regarded as a sporting accomplishment.

The attitude of trainers affects player performance since their greatest training efforts raise the performance level of participants at the national and international levels. The coach's conduct was determined to be significant in boosting the players' performance; yet, the play is independently driven but reflects the trainer's abilities through the player's game. It has been reported that the majority of striking players in the globe are extremely loyal to their trainers since their abilities drive them to outperform their competition (Coutinho et al., 2022).

It has been claimed that the performance of Iraqi players was questioned due to a lack of improvement compared to their rivals over an extended period. The appropriate instruction of coaches plays a significant role in enhancing the performance level of players. It has been believed that suitable coaching styles improve players' performance. This belief has been supported by the Scandinavian sports industry, which provides the best

coaching services to its athletes, enhancing their performance. Employing qualified and high-performing coaches in the Iraqi sports sector should be reflected in players' performance, as excellent coaching improves players' talents and increases their productivity. Cooperation between coaches and players plays an important role in enhancing performance and fostering innovation (Jastrzbska et al., 2022; Marzouki et al., 2022).

The higher performance of Yemeni athletes compared to Iraqi athletes has underlined that Iraqi athletes are less trained. The improved performance of the Yemeni players was attributed to their coaches' input. The players were observed to be more enthusiastic and emotionally resilient due to higher motivation and a strong relationship with their coaches, which contributed to the improvement of the athletes' performance. Coaches' incorrect or unsuitable conduct also contributes to low performance and undesirable outcomes. Due to the importance of motivating players to obtain the greatest results, coaches' jobs have become increasingly significant. The Iraqi footballer was discovered to have had less training from his trainers than their counterparts, including Yemen, Japan, or any other competitor (Bishop et al., 2022; Lai et al., 2020). Players' poor performance necessitates accountability for being a low performer and failing to attain the desired results. The coaches play a significant role in the training of players, which is reflected in the game and performance. Thus there is a need to foster loyalty between players and coaches for various rewards, such as educational benefits, accomplishment benefits, and sporting successes. In addition to training their athletes to achieve high performance, coaches inspire them effectively and deploy digital equipment that enhances performance (McGuckin et al., 2022).

Based on the preceding discussion, leadership emerges as a factor that has the potential to influence the system as a whole by impacting the decision-making process and performance. Additionally, the coach's behavior and the coach's management approach, which are related to the leadership approach, stimulate performance-related outcomes. The significance of the coach's role is underscored by the fact that the fulfillment of the coach's responsibilities encourages the performance of players, which in turn influences the management style or leadership approach toward the players, which in turn affects the players' performance and the sports industry. Previous research has incorporated the moderating function of psychological control and leadership style to explain the performance phenomena. Literature from the past has elucidated the connection between the ethical concern of coaches for their accountability and the performance of Iraqi players to improve performance (Cronin et al., 2022).

Literature has concentrated on the management style, curriculum, organizational development, and strategic planning for the sorting industry to enhance the abilities and skills of potential players to satisfy the demands of sports clubs and achieve the best performance. Due to the peculiarities of the sector, sports organizations require a curriculum and management style that contribute to developing skills that suit the needs of clubs and sports centers. The sports have taken on the form of global investment projects, the success of which is contingent upon the human capital deployed and the

developmental component of performance influenced by the sports leaders to assure quality management. Investing in sports significantly enhances the competitiveness necessary for achieving one's objectives since these clubs implement the most advanced, high-performance systems for their players. Although sports clubs are expected to be handled successfully with a modern management style, administrative flaws have been identified due to low quality inhibiting Iraqi performance. Compared to other Arab regions, the Iraqi sports sector has been reported to be weaker, raising questions about the performance of Iraqi athletes (Al-Qaysi & Hussein, 2019).

According to a study, some games tend to draw players owing to a better level of enjoyment, such as playing golf or any other game associated with traditional games, keyboards, joysticks, and gamepads, since these virtual games deliver real-time fun digitally (Skalski et al., 2011). Prior research has examined a range of variables, including communication, marketing, social psychology, enjoyment perception, value creation, behavioral intention, and enjoyment perception, as predictors of the success of sports activities (Yusoff et al., 2010). The technology adoption model supports the intention to adopt and play virtual games due to perceived enjoyment and value, which contribute favorably to the attitude and behavior development of players interested in participating in games. Prior research has combined the factors of enjoyment, value, and behavioral intention for players to embrace the online version of games. This study proposes investigating the relationship between perceived enjoyment and value to identify the behavioral purpose (H.-G. Lee et al., 2013).

Individuals' strengths, abilities, and virtues are viewed as positive psychological resources; firms that successfully meet the psychological requirements of their employees establish stronger relationships with participants. Prior research has argued that psychological empowerment is an important factor that enables firms to develop psychological attachment. Psychological empowerment is the perception that an individual controls their environment and that the organization recognizes and appreciates their efforts (Cartwright & Cooper, 2014). According to the research researchers, psychological empowerment can generate favorable conditions that foster the development of psychological capital, which develops when psychological empowerment influences the environment. The literature defines psychological capital as the optimistic, resilient, hopeful, and self-confident psychological condition of an individual's development. According to the research, there is a correlation between psychological empowerment and psychological capital; the greater the psychological empowerment, the greater the psychological capital. Psychological capital is regarded as a significant positive resource that enhances positive work behavior, which influences well-being, and its effect on job satisfaction is readily apparent (Avey et al., 2010).

This research study focuses on the performance of the Iraqi sports industry as there is an urgent need for research on this phenomenon due to the number of complaints about the performance of Iraqi players. The lack of skills, abilities, coaches, facilities and management approach has led to the poor performance of Iraqi players in comparison to their counterparts from

neighboring countries. Poor performance has necessitated industry performance research to identify the reasons that impeded success. Prior research has made major contributions to assessing the sports industry at the human and organizational levels; nonetheless, there are still gaps and missing elements contributing to Iraq's sports industry performance. These neglected concerns and obstacles are regarded as the core cause of low performance based on previous research discussed earlier in this study. The researcher has not found a study that empirically examines the relationship between psychological capital and sports industry performance. However, leadership is a crucial factor that influences industry performance, as management and leadership style and approach play a significant role in industry performance.

Moreover, perceived enjoyment plays an important role in explaining industry performance. This study evaluates the moderating role of perceived enjoyment between exogenous constructs, such as psychological capital and ethical leadership, and the endogenous construct of sports industry performance. The researcher contends that perceived enjoyment strengthens the relationship between psychological capital and the performance of Iraqi athletes in the sports industry. It is believed to have significantly strengthened the relationship between ethical leadership and the performance of Iraqi athletes in the sports industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study section explains the relationships between variables, including the direct relationship between psychological capital and sports industry performance, the direct relationship between ethical leadership and sports industry performance, and the moderating relationship between perceived enjoyment and psychological capital and sports industry performance. In this section, the hypothesized relationships are discussed.

Psychological Capital and Sports Industry Performance

The positive behavior of employees whose psychological needs are addressed indicates a greater amount of psychological capital. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) says that when employees' basic needs are met, motivation, optimal development, and well-being result. It aids in developing better resilience, dedication, a higher degree of satisfaction, innovation, and an initiative-based approach to the highest level of organizational citizenship and conduct (Bogler & Somech, 2004). According to earlier research, psychological capital consists of self-efficacy resilience, hope, and optimism, which forms the relationship between empowerment and satisfaction, turnover intention, and commitment. According to psychological studies, the notion of psychological empowerment affects good conditions and the growth of psychological capital. Psychological capital is an individual's optimistic, hopeful, resilient, and self-confident mental state that contributes to their development. Prior research has shown a connection between empowerment and psychological capital, indicating that psychological empowerment generates psychological capital in individuals, reducing bad behavior and fostering positive behavioral outcomes. Psychological capital was extremely

influential in reducing turnover intent, boosting work satisfaction, and bolstering organizational commitment (Shah et al., 2019).

Since the emotions and feelings of the participants influence their attitudes and behavior, which in turn affect their life situations, industrialized nations have prioritized the development of new talents to improve performance (Coutinho et al., 2022). The phenomenon of digitization has affected the sports sector. Still, psychological capital includes self-efficacy, and it has been suggested that self-efficacy motivates athletes to perform better, which adds to the attainment of higher performance (Seligman et al., 2022). The social life of a player affects performance, so it is normal that the element of psychological capital, self-efficacy, tends to influence performance. The study conducted on American footballers found that their learning capacity affects their performance and that there is a significant relationship between the element of psychological capital and the self-efficacy that increases performance (Simons & Bird, 2022). According to another study, psychological capital influences the performance of athletes due to its significant and beneficial behavioral effects (Ramezani et al., 2022). Yet, fear of defeat is regarded as an impediment to performance (Nower et al., 2018). The dread of failing causes anxiety; if the players are not adequately prepared to perform well, the fear of losing the game may negatively impact their performance (Yang et al., 2021).

The lack of resources also negatively affects players' personalities, which is detrimental to their performance. The availability of coaches, the proper guidelines, and the learning capacity ultimately improve performance; however, the absence of these factors may lead to a decline in performance and the prevalence of sports anxiety. The player's performance is enhanced by self-control, self-efficacy, resiliency, and hope. Players can regulate fear and negative emotions and focus on their performance for national and international achievements (Coutinho et al., 2022).

The current study contends that psychological capital can potentially affect the performance of athletes; hence, the following hypothesis is created based on the literature mentioned above and the reasons.

H1: Psychological Capital Influences the Sports Industry Performance in Iraq

Ethical Leadership and Sports Industry Performance

Leadership in whatever part of life is crucial in determining the fate of a business since the appropriate leadership and managerial perspective leads to performance-related perspectives. Previously, studies have focused on the anxiety that influences performance, the motivation that was also found to be influential towards performance, the self-efficacy and encouragement that also predict performance, and the psychological empowerment that was found to contribute to a higher level of performance. Similarly, this study has incorporated an ethical leadership approach toward players that allows them to develop their personalities (Bigharaz et al., 2016). The study has emphasized the poor performance indicators of Iraqi players, namely that the performance has been stagnant and no improvement has been noticed

among Iraqi players, which may be attributable to the bad mental state, poorer self-efficacy, managerial issues, and lack of resources (Y. Lee et al., 2013). Based on empirical evidence, the current study contends that an unsuitable leadership style contributes to a range of negative outcomes among Iraqi players, resulting in low performance.

Literature has focused on inadequate managerial control and managerial and leadership skills, which result in various performance-related negatives. The management affects the players' performance, and the management's support plays a crucial part in fostering the players' confidence, self-discipline, and motivation, which helps foster the benefits and win the game (Seligman et al., 2022). Leadership is responsible for organizing the necessary resources required for players to perform better in competition; managerial failure in providing the appropriate tools and weak mental strength to compete for increased stress, fear of failure, and loss of the game, demotivating the players to perform better. It has been reported in the literature that Malaysian players were impacted by inadequate managerial control and an inappropriate leadership style, which led to defeat and diminished their desire to win the game. The management and leadership style aids in maintaining emotional control and enhancing performance during the game. Effective and proper management strategies lead to success and performance improvement (Chatpunyakul et al., 2019).

The performance of a player depends on the leader's motivation, and coaches are seen as the leaders who motivate the players with their leadership abilities to help them grow their confidence and self-efficacy so that they can perform better in any situation and reach their goals. It has been observed that the success and performance of the American football team were enhanced by the coaches' leadership qualities, which fostered a positive attitude among the players. If the coaches lacked these qualities, they would not be able to cultivate success, and the players' performances would suffer (Allahabadi et al., 2022). The coaches with the necessary leadership skills instruct their players and instill the positive attitude necessary for a higher level of performance; the ideal level of performance is only attainable with the leadership skills that foster the best results (Hamid & Assad, 2021). The players of Indonesia have encountered a circumstance in which inadequate leadership abilities have led to a shortage of resources, and coaches have failed to encourage the players to attain performance excellence. Coaches' leadership ensures that players are appropriately governed and held accountable to improve performance. The leadership provides selection based on merit and reduces the effect of bias to encourage the players to perform better, as motivation is closely tied to managerial and leadership qualities that shape the attitude and conduct of players throughout the game. Strong psychological control was discovered to be associated with team success, and leaders' responsibility is to facilitate game performance. Senior coaches must possess and apply an effective leadership plan that teaches players self-control, self-efficacy, and peak performance (Ramezani et al., 2022).

Senior coaches are responsible for implementing the right leadership

style to inspire players, ensure self-control, and enhance players' self-efficacy for optimal performance. The unique actions of the players are contingent on the coaching tactics, which also play a role in fostering a positive attitude toward the game and preventing performance-related anxiety among the players. The coach's instructions are crucial in increasing the players' performance and ensuring emotional control. The players' performance is hindered by prejudiced and unethical coaching (Allahabadi et al., 2022; Nower et al., 2018).

Based on the literature mentioned above and the study's contention that ethical leadership affects the performance of the sports sector due to its extensive influence on performance and behavior-related factors, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H2: Ethical Leadership Influences the Sports Industry Performance in Iraq

Perceived Enjoyment and Sports Industry Performance

Perceived enjoyment is the extent to which an action is fascinating, pleasurable, and delightful. It has been stated that player performance depends on mental attitude, self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resiliency and that satisfactory results depend on player motivation, leadership style, and managerial control. The Iraqi players failed to meet the required performance criteria due to several barriers, and several causes have been identified as impeding their performance (Bishop et al., 2022). This research aims to incorporate the impact of players' reported enjoyment of games in fostering beneficial performance-related outcomes. Infrequently, the relationship between enjoyment and performance has been demonstrated in the literature, demonstrating that the level of enjoyment correlates with the player's performance-related outcomes. It has been observed that players' performance is influenced by their self-control and desire to win. The impact of society and society's attitude toward the game reflects the level of enjoyment, which also encourages players to perform better and attain an ideal level of performance, which is highlighted by self-efficacy. The players' performance is crucial to determine, and the role of perceived enjoyment affects the attitude and conduct of players; past research has suggested that perceived enjoyment enhances performance (Madigan et al., 2022).

The current study claims that enjoyment tends to impact performance, i.e., the greater the enjoyment of the game, the higher the performance requirements must be attained. Thus, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H3: Perceived Enjoyment Influences the Sports Industry Performance in Iraq

Moderating Role of Perceived Enjoyment

This study section describes the role of perceived enjoyment as a moderator between external and endogenous factors. Perceived happiness, according to the study, tends to improve the association between psychological capital and sports industry performance and also influences the relationship between ethical leadership and sports industry success.

Researchers have stated that athletes must maintain the ego that enhances performance and prioritize self-control to meet performance criteria. Self-control and egos have been discovered to be useful in deciding players' performance and are regarded as a crucial aspect of game improvement. According to the literature, players with a better level of self-regulation have a greater probability of winning the game. Motivated players obtain community support owing to their enjoyment, which affects their performance outcomes. The game's pleasant surroundings, family support, and management support motivate the players to perform better; this demonstrates the level of interest in the game, and this sense of satisfaction boosts performance-related results (Zhu et al., 2022).

It has been stated that perceived enjoyment has the potential to motivate athletes to improve their performance due to its significant influence. The current study concludes that perceived enjoyment increases the connection between psychological capital, ethical leadership, and sports sector performance. This investigation developed the following hypotheses:

H4: Perceived Enjoyment Moderates the relationship between Psychological Capital and Sports Industry Performance in Iraq

H5: Perceived Enjoyment Moderates the relationship between Ethical Leadership and Sports Industry Performance in Iraq

Research Framework

This section demonstrates the framework of the study that shows the hypothesized relationship between the constructs, the direct hypothesis between psychological capital and sports industry performance in hypothesis H1, the relationship between ethical leadership of coaches and sports industry performance in hypothesis H2, the relationship between perceived enjoyment and sports industry performance in hypothesis H3, and the relationship between moderating hypotheses and sports industry performance in hypothesis H4.

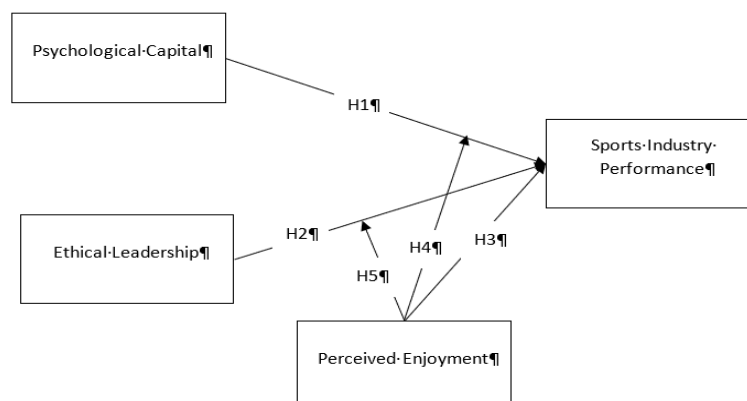


Fig 1: Research Framework

Research Methodology

This study was conducted on Iraqi national players who participate in any sport; the data were collected cross-sectionally via a

questionnaire from the sports clubs of Baghdad. Using a technique of simple random sampling, 259 usable replies were collected for data analysis.

Measurement Scales

Due to their dependability and validity, the study utilized established measuring scales from prior research. The study (Jawad, Kadhim, et al., 2022) led to the adoption of a five-item measurement scale for the performance of the sports industry. The five-item psychological capital measurement scale was adopted from the research (Jawad, Kadhim, et al., 2022). The eight-item scale for measuring ethical leadership was assumed by (Radi et al., 2022). The five-item scale for measuring perceived enjoyment was derived from the research of (Jawad, Shuit, et al., 2022). On a 5-point scale ranging from 1 to 5, each item was graded as follows: 1 for strongly disagree, 2 for disagree, 3 for neutral, 4 for agree, and 5 for strongly agree. After analyzing the acquired data on Smart-PLs for construct validity and reliability, the hypothesized link represented in Figure 1 of the research framework will be investigated.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This research stage involves the data analysis of the gathered replies; the analysis phase is divided into two sections. The first component consists of a measurement model assessment that determines the constructs' validity and reliability using the Smart-PLS algorithm. In the second phase, hypothesized associations are examined using PLS bootstrapping.

Measurement Model Assessment

This study component examines the constructs' reliability and validity, with the reliability defined by the Cronbach alpha value, the composite reliability, and the extracted average variance. Cronbach alpha and CR (composite reliability) levels for each construct must remain above 0.70 for acceptable reliability; values above 0.80 indicate good reliability, and values above 0.90 indicate outstanding reliability of the constructs (Hair Jr et al., 2014). AVE values must also remain above 0.50 for the minimum acceptable level of convergent validity of the constructs. Once construct reliability and validity have been established, the next step of the structural equation model is to examine the link. This part includes the discriminant validity as well.

Table 1 below demonstrates the values for Cronbach alpha, CR, and AVE

Table 1. Cronbach alpha, CR and AVE

Constructs	Cronbach alpha α	CR	AVE
SIP	0.792	0.712	0.523
PsyCap	0.947	0.754	0.571
ELS	0.899	0.791	0.601
PerEnj	0.895	0.771	0.619

Note: Sports Industry Performance (SIP), Psychological Capital (PsyCap), Ethical Leadership

(ELS), Perceived Enjoyment (PerEnj)

The above table shows that Cronbach alpha, CR, and values of AVE meet the criteria for reliability and convergent validity. The Cronbach alpha for all variables was found to be higher than 0.70, which shows satisfactory reliability of the constructs. Similarly, the higher CR satisfies the criteria. The values of AVE for each construct were also higher than 0.50, which satisfies the suggested criteria.

Discriminant Validity

The subsequent step is determining the discriminant validity, as depicted in Table 2 below. To establish discriminant validity according to the specified criteria, the square root of AVE must remain more than the correlation value of each construct. The intersectional value represents the square root of AVE, which must be greater than the correlation values of the same column (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 2. Discriminant Validity

	SIP	PsyCap	ELS	PerEnj
SIP	0.723			
PsyCap	0.611	0.756		
ELS	0.534	0.701	0.775	
PerEnj	0.453	0.619	0.601	0.787

Note: Sports Industry Performance (SIP), Psychological Capital (PsyCap), Ethical Leadership (ELS), Perceived Enjoyment (PerEnj)

Table 2 shows that each column's intersectional values meet the discriminant validity criteria.

Structural Equation Model (SEM)

The relevance of the hypothesized relationship between framework constructs is determined in this analysis stage. Based on the acquired data, three direct and two moderating hypotheses must be explored using the bootstrapping method of PLS. Based on the value, the t-value, and the p-value, the significance of the relationship is determined. The Beta value indicates the direction of the relationship, while the t-value indicates its significance. The cutoff point for acceptable significance with a 5% error margin in social sciences is 1.96, while the p-value must be less than 0.05 for acceptability (Hair Jr et al., 2014).

The direct hypotheses are shown in table 3 below, and the discussion will be offered subsequently.

Table 3. direct hypotheses testing

Relationships	β	t-value	p-value
PsyCap→SIP	0.405	5.904	0.000
ELS→SIP	0.029	0.364	0.716
PerEnj→SIP	0.192	2.316	0.021

Note: Sports Industry Performance (SIP), Psychological Capital (PsyCap), Ethical Leadership (ELS), Perceived Enjoyment (PerEnj)

Hypothesis H1 investigated the relationship between psychological

capital and sports industry performance, and the results indicate that the relationship is statistically significant. The significance is determined based on t-value and p-value, with t-value > 1.96 and p-value < 0.05 indicating that the relationship is statistically significant. The H1 is therefore accepted.

Hypothesis H2 examined the relationship between ethical leadership and sports industry performance. Surprisingly, the direct relationship between ethical leadership and sports industry performance was insignificant, as the t-value was less than 1.96 and the p-value was greater than 0.05. As a result, hypothesis H2 is rejected.

The direct hypothesis H3 investigated the relationship between perceived enjoyment and sports industry performance. The results indicate that perceived enjoyment significantly influences sports industry performance, with a t-value of 2.316 and a p-value of 0.021, which meets the criteria for statistical significance. The H3 is therefore accepted.

Moderating Hypotheses Testing

This section investigates the moderating role of perceived enjoyment between independent and dependent variables of the framework. Table 4 below demonstrates the results of the moderation hypotheses.

Table 4, Moderation test

Relationships	β	t-value	p-value
PsyCap*PerEnj→SIP	0.123	2.421	0.001
ELS*PerEnj→SIP	0.102	1.981	0.021

Note: Sports Industry Performance (SIP), Psychological Capital (PsyCap), Ethical Leadership (ELS), Perceived Enjoyment (PerEnj)

The above table shows the result of the moderation analysis, the two moderating hypotheses, H4 and H5, determined the moderation effect of perceived enjoyment between independent and dependent variables.

Hypothesis H4 shows the moderating effect of perceived enjoyment between psychological capital and sports industry performance. The result indicates that the t-value > 1.96 and reported as 2.421, and the p-value < 0.05, which is reported as 0.001, satisfies the significance criteria. Hence hypothesis H4 is accepted.

Hypothesis H5 investigated the moderation effect of perceived enjoyment between ethical leadership and sports industry performance. The result shows that a t-value > 1.96 is reported as 1.981, and a p-value < 0.05 and reported as 0.021, which satisfies the criteria for significance. The direct relationship between ethical leadership and sports industry performance was insignificant (see table 3), but the moderation effect signified the relationship. Hence hypothesis H5 is accepted on statistical grounds.

CONCLUSION

While it has been stated that the poor performance of Iraqi athletes has become a cause for concern, the focus of this research study was on the

factors influencing the performance of the Iraqi sports sector. Nonetheless, the sports ministry has allocated money for improved performance, but the desired outcomes have not been attained, which has generated questions about many variables and performance setbacks. The performance of players is dependent on several variables. Still, this study has highlighted the overlooked variables of psychological capital and ethical leadership to explain the phenomenon of sports industry performance. The study has also incorporated the moderating effect of perceived enjoyment. The study's findings revealed that psychological capital and ethical leadership significantly impact the sports industry's performance. Perceived enjoyment also plays a crucial role in fostering the interest, attitude, and behavior necessary for higher performance, and its moderating effect is evident. The study outcomes advised that an effective strategy for generating psychological capital among Iraqi athletes that fosters a sense of hope, resiliency, optimism, and self-efficacy to outperform rivals be developed. Although the leadership qualities of coaches play an essential role in boosting performance, the study also recommends ensuring ethical leadership that reduces bias and provides selection based on merit. Due to the small sample size, future research may analyze the skillset, coaching style, facilities, and government interest in enhancing performance.

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