

## The Relationship between Internal Marketing and Employee Organizational Withdrawal Behaviors: Empirical Evidence from Sports Organizations

### İçsel Pazarlama ve Çalıřanların Örgütsel Geri Çekilme Davranıřları Arasındaki İliřki: Spor Organizasyonlarından Ampirik Kanıtlar

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#### Abstract

Internal marketing and organizational withdrawal are among the issues that have attracted the attention of researchers recently. These issues have been handled in research in various sectors due to their potential to affect the motivation and performance of employees. This study aimed to explore the relationship between internal marketing and organizational withdrawal in the context of sports organizations. The data was obtained from employees of public organizations providing sports and physical activity services in the west of Turkey. One hundred thirty-one employees in these organizations participated in the study voluntarily. To collect data two separate scales were used in the study. The IM-11 scale developed by Yıldız and Kara (2017) was used to measure internal marketing, and the scales developed by Hanisch and Hulin (1990; 1991) were used to measure work withdrawal and job withdrawal. The effect of internal marketing on organizational withdrawal (work withdrawal and job withdrawal) was hypothesized in the study. Hierarchical regression analysis was used to determine the effects of internal marketing on work withdrawal and job withdrawal. The results showed that internal marketing had significant and negative effects on work withdrawal and job withdrawal. These results indicated that internal marketing was an effective strategy that could prevent organizational withdrawal behaviors of employees.

**Keywords:** Internal marketing, organizational withdrawal, employee, sport organizations

#### Öz

İçsel pazarlama ve örgütsel geri çekilme son zamanlarda arařtırmacıların dikkatini çeken konular arasında yer almaktadır. Çalıřanların motivasyonu ve performansını etkileme potansiyeli nedeniyle bu konular çeřitli sektörlerde yapılan arařtırmalarda ele alınmıřtır. Bu çalıřmada, içsel pazarlama ve örgütsel geri çekilme arasındaki iliřkinin spor örgütleri bağlamında incelenmesi amaçlanmıřtır. Veriler Türkiye'nin batısında bulunan iki büyükşehirdeki spor hizmeti veren kamu kurumlarından elde edilmiřtir. Bu kurumlarda

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görev yapan 131 çalışan çalışmaya gönüllü olarak katılmışlardır. Veri toplamak amacıyla bu çalışmada iki ayrı ölçek kullanılmıştır. İçsel pazarlamayı ölçmek için Yıldız ve Kara (2017) tarafından geliştirilen IM-11 ölçeği, örgütsel geri çekilmeyi ölçmek için Hanisch ve Hulin (1990; 1991) tarafından geliştirilen ölçek kullanılmıştır. Çalışmada içsel pazarlamanın örgütsel geri çekilme üzerindeki etkisi hipotez edilmiştir. İçsel pazarlamanın örgütsel geri çekilme üzerindeki etkisini belirlemek için hiyerarşik regresyon analizi kullanılmıştır. Analiz sonuçları, içsel pazarlamanın örgütsel geri çekilme üzerinde anlamlı ve negatif etkisi olduğunu göstermiştir. Bu sonuçlar içsel pazarlamanın çalışanların örgütsel geri çekilme davranışlarını engelleyebilecek etkili bir strateji olabileceğini ortaya koymuştur.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** İçsel pazarlama, örgütsel geri çekilme, çalışanlar, spor örgütleri

## INTRODUCTION

Sports organizations are one of the important economic units of the service sector, which provides services for the physical and mental health of individuals on the one hand and makes performance sports possible on the other by using their facilities and human resources. Recently, the interest of individuals in activities that provide health and performance, leagues, and championships has made sports more attractive (Ko et al., 2021). Therefore, this interest has led to the proliferation and diversification of organizations in the sports sector in terms of both participation and watching, resulting in an intensification of competition. The literature suggests that organizations that are successful in the competition will continue to exist, while those that are unsuccessful will withdraw from the market (Grönroos, 1990). Therefore, organizations in the sports sector are also faced with the necessity of developing more effective marketing strategies in order to maintain their existence (Yildiz et al., 2023). One of the most important elements in marketing strategies is to ensure the satisfaction of the employees and especially the retention of successful employees by the organization (Chang & Chang, 2008). On the other hand, preventing the factors that will make the employees unhappy and reduce their satisfaction is among the important strategies (Lee et al., 2011). In this context, our study deals with internal marketing and organizational withdrawal behaviors of employees in sports organizations, which have recently attracted more attention of researchers.

Internal marketing is an approach that enables employees to contribute more to the success of the organization by presenting the value that an organization gives to its external customers to its employees. Organizational withdrawal, on the other hand, is a concept that expresses the employee's avoidance of the duties he should fulfill in the organization. When both issues are evaluated, it can be said that internal marketing is an instrument that contributes to the extra role behavior of employees (Yildiz, 2016) and organizational success (Varey, 1995), while organizational withdrawal is an issue that prevents organizational success (Falkenburg & Schyns, 2007).

Employees, especially in organizations in the service sector, are among the most important determinants of service quality (Malhotra & Mukkerjee, 2004). In the literature on service quality, there is evidence for a link between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction (Piriathanalai & Muenjohn, 2012; Yee et al., 2009). Joseph (1996) argues that employees' work attitudes and behaviors affect service quality and customer satisfaction, while Berry (1995) argues that in order to increase external customer satisfaction, first of all, employee satisfaction should be provided.

These perspectives raise the importance of instruments that will ensure employee satisfaction. The literature emphasizes that the internal marketing approach is an effective instrument in ensuring employee satisfaction (Pantouvakis, 2012) and preventing unhappiness (Cooper & Cronin, 2000).

Studies examining the relationship between internal marketing and organizational withdrawal issues are very limited in the literature. Therefore, in order to explore further information on the relationship between the two issues, this study aimed to examine the effect of internal marketing on organizational withdrawal by focusing on the employees of sports organizations. For this purpose, organizational withdrawal was hypothesized by considering two categories as work withdrawal and job withdrawal. In this context, this article was organized into four parts. First of all, literature information on internal marketing and organizational withdrawal behavior was given, then the hypotheses and method of the study were presented in the outline. Afterward, the findings of the study were presented and finally, the contributions of the study were presented.

## **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

### **Internal Marketing**

In the past, organizations focused on satisfying external customers in their success strategies, but later on, employees of the organization were added to these strategies (Berry, Hensel & Burke, 1976). Thus, a distinction was made between external and internal marketing strategies in marketing (Berry, 1981). The target of external marketing is customers who buy products from the organization (external customers), while the target of internal marketing is employees who contribute to the service production process (internal customers) (Koc, 2006; Tansuhaj et al., 1988).

Internal marketing is accepted as a tool to meet the expectations and needs of the employees so that the organization can achieve its goals (Joseph, 1996). In the literature, internal marketing is accepted as an organizational philosophy adopted to create value in the internal market (for employee satisfaction) of the organization that wants to achieve its external marketing goals (customer satisfaction) (Lings & Greenley, 2010). In this approach, employees in an organization are seen as customers and they constitute the internal market of the organization (Gounaris, 2006; Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000). The reason for this is that employee satisfaction plays an important role in the formation of external customer satisfaction (George, 1977).

Internal marketing focuses on factors that provide employee satisfaction in order to ensure that marketing techniques developed for external marketing are applied to employees (Lings, 2004). Internal marketing practices are divided into various stages by Rafiq and Ahmed (2000). First, the expectations and needs of the employees are focused on, and then it is emphasized that the strategies that will ensure the motivation and satisfaction of the employees should be implemented. Therefore, the employee, whose expectations and needs are satisfied, will focus more on the external customers

and ensure their satisfaction, so that the business will reach a high-quality level in the products it offers.

Research shows that there is no standardized way to define and conceptualize internal marketing (Qiu et al., 2022) and also that there is no complete consensus on what the attributes are. There are some efforts in the literature on what the attributes of internal marketing consist of. Foreman and Money (1995) discussed internal marketing with its vision, reward, and development dimensions. The authors argue that if these three dimensions are met, the satisfaction and motivation of the employees will be ensured. The most recent study to determine the attributes of internal marketing was carried out by Yildiz and Kara (2017). The authors do not consider the vision, reward, and development dimensions of Foreman and Money (1995) sufficient and focus on other features (for example, strengthens employees, appropriate workload and support, career advancement opportunities, equality and fairness, etc.) that will meet the needs and expectations of employees. Yildiz and Kara (2017) argue that the eleven features they reveal in their studies will provide motivation and satisfaction of the employees, and this will increase the quality of the service provided.

Internal marketing strategies are very valuable for organizations because employees have a significant impact on the success of organizations. In summary, internal marketing enables employees to focus more on external customers, increases communication within the organization, encourages participation, invests in employee training and development, and aims to increase the success of the organization.

### **Organizational Withdrawal**

The concept of withdrawal, first introduced by Hill and Trist (1953), focused on the negative effects of employee delay and absenteeism on productivity and performance. In this framework, withdrawal behavior is defined as the avoidance of employees from being in the work environment and contributing to work production. These behaviors are the reflection of dissatisfaction resulting from negative situations such as not meeting expectations in the organization, unfair practices, disagreements among employees, etc. Behaviors such as being physically present in the organization but producing less work, coming to work late, making excuses to stay away from work, etc. are included in withdrawal behaviors. In short, the employee who exhibits withdrawal behavior does not directly harm the organization but avoids contributing to the production process of the organization when he is in the business environment or by not being in the business environment. In summary, organizational withdrawal behavior emerges as a reaction to the reasons that cause employees to feel bad.

Hanisch and Hulin (1990) considered organizational withdrawal into two categories: work withdrawal and job withdrawal. Work withdrawal is defined as a set of behaviors that include delay, absenteeism, and negative work behaviors in order to avoid the duties undertaken by the employee while maintaining the organizational membership. Making excuses for being late or absent from work, frequent breaks, slowness in doing work, etc. can be given as an example. Organizations do not

monitor or record them in the initial phase. However, after such negative behaviors exceed a certain threshold, various organizational problems may arise. Job withdrawal, on the other hand, is defined as the behaviors exhibited by employees in an effort to distance themselves from the organization and includes behaviors such as leaving the job and retiring. Job withdrawal is not dismissal or forcing an employee to retire, but the act of resigning or retiring at their own discretion. Both categories are considered as negative factors that hinder organizational success in the field of organizational behavior (Nauman et al., 2021).

### **The Relationship Between Internal Marketing and Organizational Withdrawal**

The relationship between internal marketing and organizational withdrawal can be explained by economic exchange and social exchange theory. There are both exchanges in business life, and one or both of them can be used to explain the exchange between two parties, such as “organization-employee, manager-subordinate.” While economic exchange emphasizes the financial and more tangible aspects of the exchange relationship, social exchange emphasizes the socio-emotional aspects (Shore et al., 2006).

In the theory of economic exchange, the nature and benefits of exchange based on certain transactions are clear and measurable. There is a requirement between the parties for the exchange and the exchange relationship is not based on voluntariness. The formal economic exchange takes place within the framework of certain rules and agreements. There is a guarantee of what will be received in return for what is given. In case of any dispute, third parties may step in for resolution (Yıldız, 2017). According to the economic exchange theory, individuals tend to evaluate their own interests before engaging in any activity/behavior, as they are rational and self-interested beings (Zhang et al., 2009). Therefore, exchange occurs when an individual believes that an action will bring him more than it costs (Constant et al., 1994). An example is that an employee who believes that he or she is given a sufficient and satisfactory salary by the organization continues to work in the organization (Wijaya & Rezeki, 2020). In social exchange, social relations are based on reciprocal norms. Gouldner (1960) argues that the benefit of one party to the other will create a sense of obligation in the other party. According to this approach, which he refers to as the reciprocity norm, individuals show positive behavior towards those who benefit them, at least they do not harm them. According to Blau (1964), who used the name of social exchange for the first time, when individuals receive favor from others, they are under the obligation of the good they will return in the future. The individual who does good does not know when and how it will happen, but he expects that this favor will return in the future (Wayne et al., 1997:82). Unlike an economic exchange, there is no guarantee of the return of this favor. In both types of exchange, individuals tend to prefer the one that provides more benefit and less cost among the alternatives through rational choice. If the reward from the relationship is less beneficial and more costly, then the person will end the relationship. This type of relationship will be sustainable, as the equality of benefits and costs will satisfy the parties. Since the behaviors in the exchange are basically motivated by the expectation of reciprocity and reward, the employees in the organization generally determine the behavior by making cost-benefit calculations. In other

words, employees will want to get some returns and rewards (benefits) in return for some positive behaviors (costs) such as physical and mental effort (Yıldız, 2017). At this point, internal marketing and organizational withdrawal can be approached from this perspective. In fact, internal marketing reflects the opportunities offered by the organization to the employees, and organizational withdrawal reflects the reactions of the employees towards the organization. Therefore, it is thought that internal marketing, which is an instrument that provides various returns and rewards for employees, may prevent the formation of organizational withdrawal behavior in response to this. From this point of view, the following hypotheses have been developed in order to determine the cause-and-effect relationships between internal marketing and organizational withdrawal variables:

H<sub>1</sub>. Internal marketing has a significant and negative effect on work withdrawal.

H<sub>2</sub>. Internal marketing has a significant and negative effect on job withdrawal.

## METHOD

### Research Model

The conceptual model of this study conducted to explore the effects of internal marketing on organizational withdrawal in the sport organizations is illustrated in Figure 1. This model indicates internal marketing as the independent variable while organizational withdrawal (work withdrawal and job withdrawal) as the dependent variables.

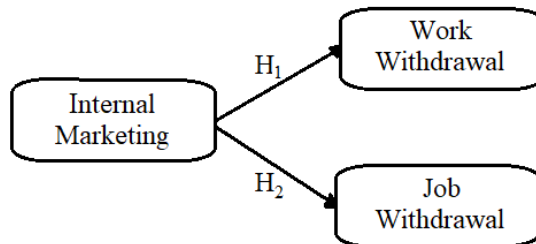


Figure 1. The effect of internal marketing on organizational withdrawal

### Measurement Instruments

*Internal marketing.* The IM-11 Scale developed by Yildiz and Kara (2017) was used to measure the internal marketing practices of sports organizations. This measurement instrument was originally developed for the field of education, but since it was found to be valid and reliable on the sample in the field of sports, it was preferred as a measurement instrument in this study (Yildiz, 2021; Yildiz et al, 2023). This scale is unidimensional and consists of 11 items. The participants responded to each statement using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree). Statement

examples include: “This organization provides attractive physical conditions (office, tools, and equipment) to its employees.” and “This organization provides rewards to high performing employees.” High values indicated a high internal marketing practices.

*Organizational withdrawal.* Two scales, work withdrawal and job withdrawal, developed by Hanisch and Hulin (1990; 1991) were used in this study. The Work withdrawal scale consisted of 12 items assessing how often the employee avoided their duties in the past year and focused on issues such as being late, absenteeism, and negative behaviors. The participants responded to each statement using an 8-point Likert-type scale (1=never, 8=more than once per week). Statement examples include: “Being late for work.” and “Ignoring those tasks that will not help your performance review or pay raise.” Higher values indicated that the employee was increasingly avoiding work. Job withdrawal scale consists of 3 items. The participants responded to each statement using a 5-point Likert-type scale. Statement examples include: “How likely is it that you will quit your job in the next several months?” (1=very unlikely, 5=very likely) and “All things considered, how desirable is it for you to quit your job?” (1=very desirable, 5=very undesirable).

In the adaptation of both original scales into Turkish, the back translation method was used (Brislin, 1970). This method is highly recommended and widely applied for translation in intercultural studies. Using this method, each scale was first translated from English to Turkish by expert translators and then evaluated by cross-checking by field experts. After the necessary corrections/adjustments were made, the prepared questionnaire was applied to the study participants.

### **The Sample Size and Procedure**

The data used in this study were obtained from employees of public organizations providing sports and physical activity services in western Turkey. These organizations provide services to individuals, groups, people, and other sports organizations (sports clubs, sports federations etc.) in terms of facilities, human resources, and programs. First, an explanatory message stating the purpose of the research was sent to the electronic communication tools of the employees. Then, employees who accepted voluntary participation in the study were asked to fill out the questionnaire electronically. It was determined that the number of completed questionnaires was 131.

## **ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

### **Demographic Properties**

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the participants. Most respondents are male (67.9%), married (80.2%), from 31 to 45 years (80.9%), and have an undergraduate degree (73.3%). Those with a working period of 10 years or less constitute the majority. In addition, 38.2% of the participants are in permanent status and 61.8% are in fixed-term contracted status.

**Table 1.** Sample characteristics

Variables	Categories	F	%
<b>Gender</b>	Male	89	67.9
	Female	42	32.1
<b>Marital status</b>	Married	105	80.2
	Single	26	19.8
<b>Age</b>	Less than 30 years	12	9.2
	31 to 45 years	106	80.9
	More than 46 years	13	9.9
<b>Education</b>	Lycee	4	3.1
	Undergraduate	96	73.3
	Graduate	31	23.7
<b>Tenure</b>	Less than 5 years	44	33.6
	6 to 10 years	47	35.9
	11 to 15 years	30	22.9
	16 to 20 years	6	4.6
	More than 21 years	4	3.1
<b>Employment status</b>	Permanent staff	50	38.2
	Fixed-term contract	81	61.8

### Test for Validity and Reliability

Confirmatory factor analysis was used in order to confirm the structure of the scales. Strong model fit indices were found in the confirmatory factor analysis applied to the internal marketing scale (CFI=0.984; AGFI=0.928; GFI=0.941; RMSEA=0.036). Similarly, good levels of model fit indices were found as a result of the confirmatory factor analysis applied to the work withdrawal (CFI=0.972; AGFI=0.902; GFI=0.923; RMSEA=0.051). These model fit values meet the criteria suggested in the literature (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Byrne, 2001). Additionally, exploratory factor analysis was used for the validity of the job withdrawal scale. Analysis results showed that all items had high factor loadings (0.903, 0.898, 0.883) and the total variance explained was 80.077.

Reliability analysis using Cronbach alpha coefficient of the internal marketing scale indicated a high reliability score of 0.933, 0.892 for the work withdrawal scale, and 0.872 for the job withdrawal scale. These values indicate that all scales are reliable.

### Correlation Analysis

Table 2 shows the results of the correlation analysis using the mean values of the items for each scale. Since the scales had high reliabilities, averages may be used to in the analysis to represent each variable. Correlation analyzes showed that there was a significant and negative relationship between both internal marketing and work withdrawal ( $r=-0.342$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) and internal marketing and job withdrawal ( $r=-0.527$ ;  $p<0.01$ ). In the literature, information is given about low, medium, and high



correlation levels between constructs. If the correlation is between 0.1 and 0.3, it is considered a low correlation, 0.3-0.5 moderate correlation, and 0.5-0.7 high correlation (Cohen, 1988). Considering these values, there was a moderate correlation between internal marketing and work withdrawal, while there was a high correlation between internal marketing and job withdrawal.

**Table 2.** Results of correlation analysis

Variables	M	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.Gender		1							
2.Marital status		.232**	1						
3.Age		-.219*	-.359**	1					
4.Education		-.092	-.136	.201*	1				
5.Tenure		-.182*	-.341**	.494**	.191*	1			
6.Employment status		.001	-.239**	.167	-.056	.402**	1		
7.Internal marketing	3.15	-.236**	-.149	.194*	-.025	-.248**		1	
8.Work withdrawal	1.90	.009	.094	-.156	-.080	-.068	.104	-.342**	1
9.Job withdrawal	1.68	.064	.021	-.027	-.070	.110	.136	-.527**	.494**

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level. \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

### Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Tables 3 and 4 show the results of the hierarchical regression analysis performed to determine the effect of internal marketing on work withdrawal and job withdrawal. Analysis results showed a significant and negative effect of internal marketing on both work withdrawal ( $\beta=-0.471$ ;  $p<0.01$ ) and job withdrawal ( $\beta=-0.655$ ;  $p<0.01$ ). Internal marketing had a greater effect on job withdrawal than work withdrawal. Thus, it demonstrates that internal marketing is a variable that can prevent both work withdrawal and job withdrawal.

**Table 3.** The results of the hierarchical regression analysis aiming to identify the relationship between work withdrawal and independent variables

Independent Variables	Work Withdrawal					
	Step 1			Step 2		
	$\beta$	t	Sig.	$\beta$	t	Sig.
1.Gender	-.050	-.544	.587	-.162	-1.855	.066
2.Marital status	.076	.770	.443	.018	.202	.840
3.Age	-.141	-1.347	.181	.027	.262	.793
4.Education	-.029	-.317	.752	-.035	-.422	.674
5.Tenure	-.040	-.362	.718	-.313	-2.700	.008
6.Employment status	.160	1.632	.105	.247	2.690	.008
7.Internal marketing	-	-	-	-.471*	-4.925	.000
F		1.097			4.581	
R <sup>2</sup>		.050			.207	
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>		.004			.162	

Note: Standardized beta values were used, \* $p < 0.001$

**Table 4.** The results of the hierarchical regression analysis aiming to identify the relationship between job withdrawal and independent variables

Independent Variables	Job Withdrawal					
	Step 1			Step 2		
	$\beta$	t	Sig.	$\beta$	t	Sig.
1.Gender	.058	.628	.531	-.097	-1.230	.221
2.Marital status	.045	.456	.649	-.035	-.419	.676
3.Age	-.073	-.694	.489	.161	1.727	.087
4.Education	-.066	-.726	.469	-.075	-.992	.323
5.Tenure	.146	1.309	.193	-.234	-2.213	.029
6.Employment status	.096	.976	.331	.217	2.597	.011
7.Internal marketing	-	-	-	-.655*	-7.527	.000
F		.871			9.174	
R <sup>2</sup>		.040			.343	
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>		-.006			.306	

Note: Standardized beta values were used, \* $p < 0.001$

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The literature, which is quite rich in studies that deal with internal marketing and organizational withdrawal issues separately, does not include any studies that specifically examine the relationship between these two issues. Therefore, to contribute to filling this gap in the literature, this study aimed to examine the effect of internal marketing on employees' organizational withdrawal behavior (work withdrawal and job withdrawal) by focusing on sports organizations.

The analyses of our study showed that internal marketing has a significant and negative effect on both work withdrawal ( $\beta = -0.471$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) and job withdrawal ( $\beta = -0.655$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) in sports organizations. It is noteworthy that the effect of internal marketing on job withdrawal is higher. This shows that employees whose expectations are not met may have a strong intention to leave. In the literature, a study examining the relationship between internal marketing and turnover intention in the sports sector has been found. In a study conducted by Yildiz (2014) on commercial fitness center employees, a significant and negative relationship was found between internal marketing and turnover intention ( $r = -0.554$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Therefore, this result supports the result of our study. Both results show that internal marketing practices can be an effective instrument in preventing negative emotions and behaviors in employees.

The absence of any research in the literature examining the relationship between internal marketing and organizational withdrawal limits the rich discussion of the subject in our study. Nevertheless, the findings of our study will help clarify both issues. Wijaya and Rezeki (2020) argue that if employees' satisfaction with the workplace increases, they can respond to it by strengthening their efforts in the workplace. Similarly, based on the findings of our study, we argue that by meeting the expectations of employees through internal marketing practices, organizational withdrawal can be reduced by

increasing their motivation (Amangala & Wali, 2013), job satisfaction, organizational commitment (Joung et al., 2015), and organizational citizenship behavior (Duyan, 2021). Therefore, it can be said that internal marketing, which has an important effect on the formation of job satisfaction, also has the feature of preventing the formation of possible negative effects (psychological withdrawal, being late, absenteeism, and leaving the job) on employees (Beehr & Gupta, 1978). Given the nature of the sports industry, the long-term success of sports organizations will depend on their ability to manage human resources effectively and efficiently. In this context, a well-structured internal marketing practice that can significantly improve competitiveness and performance will help attract and retain qualified human resources that provide excellent service to customers (Budhwar et al., 2009; Zandiyeh et al., 2022).

Based on the results of this study, it can be suggested that sports organizations effectively implement internal marketing strategies in order to prevent organizational withdrawal (employees emotionally distant from his/her job and losing interest in work). These strategies can include many different things, such as creating an attractive work environment, presenting an effective vision, soliciting employee ideas, providing training and career development, and ensuring that they are appreciated and rewarded. These strategies can help employees feel more committed to their organization and reduce organizational withdrawal.

### **Limitations and Further Studies**

The results of this study cannot be generalized beyond the target population as it was conducted using a limited sample in a single population and in the sports industry. Therefore, further research should be conducted to test whether the results obtained in this study are consistent with other sports organizations. Because the sports sector is quite wide and there is a wide range of activities in a variety of fields (fitness centers, gyms, sports clubs, sports schools, swimming pool businesses, etc.). The heterogeneous nature of the sports industry further complicates the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, researchers using marketing management techniques should try to develop a theoretical framework for the relationship between these issues in the field of sports services and empirically test these relationships in new sports services settings.

**Conflict of interest:** There is no personal or financial conflict of interest within the scope of the study.

**Ethics committee:** Ethics Committee of Mugla Sitki Kocman University, Turkey. Date: 25.10.2023  
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