


Article

Exploring the Relationships among Internal Branding, Work Engagement, and Turnover Intention in Public Sports Organizations after the Pandemic

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Abstract: Internal branding has been regarded as important for internalizing an organization's values and visions to its employees and managing human resources since before the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite changes in the working environment after the pandemic, internal branding is still ignored within public sports organizations in South Korea. Therefore, this study aims at investigating the relationship between internal branding of public sports organizations, work engagement and turnover intention of employees, and to examine the mediating effect of work engagement. This study collected data from 248 employees working for public sports organizations by using the convenience sampling method. The data was analyzed with SPSS 26.0 and AMOS 26.0. The results showed the following: (1) Organizational management culture had a significant positive effect on work engagement, but there was no significant relationship between internal communication and work engagement. (2) Organizational management culture had a negative effect on turnover intention, while internal communication had a positive effect on turnover intention. (3) Work engagement had a significant negative effect on turnover intention, and has been shown to partially mediate the relationship between organizational management culture and turnover intention. This study suggests that employees can differently perceive the effectiveness of organizational management culture and internal communication within internal branding. Therefore, public sports organizations should create an organizational culture in which employees can properly reflect and practice the values and visions of the organization in their work.

Keywords: internal branding; public sports organization; work engagement; turnover intention



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1. Introduction

Today, organizations emphasize not only focusing on customer-oriented external branding, but also internal branding (IB) that seeks to effectively communicate their strategic visions, values, culture and identity to internal employees. Basically, IB strengthens the motivation and sense of belonging of employees, ultimately helping the organization's growth [1,2]. In particular, IB is essential for service-based companies or organizations that place more importance on the favorable attitudes and behaviors of internal employees [3]. Given the recent importance of administrative services in the public sector [4], the need for effective IB is also emphasized in public sports organizations (PSOs).

In the 2020s, the role and status of Korean PSOs are growing socially due to the enactment of the Framework Act on sports, the Sports Club Act, and the legalization of local sports associations. In addition, the capacity and expertise of PSOs are required as the public's interest in human rights in sports increases, along with participation in Sport for All [5,6]. In this context, IB should be considered important for employees who must convey the values and visions pursued by each PSO to the people at the closest point through administrative services. However, Korean organizations in the public sector traditionally

tend to have a value-oriented hierarchical culture and vertical collectivism [7–9]. The nature of PSOs is not much different from that of public organizations [10]. It might not be easy to expect bottom-up communication based on the active participation of employees in this organizational culture [11]. Therefore, the establishment of an organizational management culture (OMC) and the activation of internal communication (IC) are considered important factors for effective job performance and the organizational productivity of employees in these organizations [12,13].

In fact, such IB activities could result in employees' dedication and commitment to the organization, which is related to the work engagement of employees [2,14]. Work engagement (WE) refers to the continuous experience in which employees do their best in their jobs with a positive mindset [15]. Due to the recent experience of a new working environment following the COVID-19 pandemic, organizations are paying much more attention to creating an internal environment where individuals can work hard on their WE [16]. A high level of WE enhances the quality of work for employees, and helps them feel a sense of pride for their jobs [17–19]. In other words, it would be important for PSOs to increase the work productivity of their employees through IB so that they can improve their organizational performance.

Meanwhile, WE could affect an employee's intention to turnover [20]. Turnover intention (TI) indicates a voluntary intention to give up being an employee of the organization and leave one's current job [21]. TI does not immediately lead to a certain action, but job negligence, absenteeism, and reduced morale of employees may appear over a long time [22]. TI is directly related to the organization's human resource management, which can determine organizational effectiveness [23]. As such, a strategic approach at the organizational level, such as IB, is needed to lower the TI of employees in PSOs.

Recently, a study on employees of PSOs in South Korea reported that organizational fairness and incentive have a positive effect on job satisfaction and TI [24,25]. Also, it was mentioned that organizational justice has a significant impact on the defensive and silent behavior of employees [26]. Oh [27] attempted to understand the relationship between transformational leadership, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Thus, studies dealing with overall changes in the attitude and behaviors of employees of PSOs have been steadily conducted. Nevertheless, prior studies on the importance of OMC and IC in PSOs is currently very limited. Most PSOs operate their own education and training, compensation, and communication programs for employees, but academic discussions on their effectiveness have been insufficient so far. PSOs should support the government's implementation of sports policies and strive to realize social values through sports. In this context, a study that identifies the structural relationship between WE and TI focusing on IB is regarded to be of considerable significance.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between IB of PSOs, WE and TI of employees, and to examine the mediating effect of WE. This study is expected to remind us of the importance of improving OMC and IC, and to provide empirical basic data to help induce positive work performance and behavior in employees. Lastly, this study tries to expand and apply the concept of IB to PSOs to present related theoretical and practical implications.

2. Literature Review and Research Hypothesis

2.1. IB and WE

IB is an activity that effectively delivers the brand which the organization aims for to internal employees [28]. IB is used similarly to the concept of internal marketing in that it consists of strategic internal activities to support employees within an organization. However, while internal marketing ultimately focuses more on establishing the customer-oriented thinking of its employees, IB emphasizes internalization activities, such as knowledge and value sharing, and improving organization culture. IB has emerged as a result of the perception that the power to drive change for target customers comes from employees of the organization [29]. Employees who have experienced IB are more likely to

effectively communicate the values and visions the organization seeks to its customer [4,30]. On the contrary, if employees do not understand their organizational values and visions properly, they may have difficulty performing leading tasks and providing appropriate public services.

The components of IB are presented in various ways. First, IB can consist of three elements: IC, human resource management, and leadership [29,31–33]. This seems to emphasize communication between employees, promotion, compensation, and the leadership of the boss. Also, IB can be explained in four dimensions: exchanging brand knowledge, sharing brand value, formation of brand management culture, and IC [2,4,34,35]. Exchanging brand knowledge refers to employees' understanding of the organization's vision and direction, and sharing brand value means the organization's willingness to practice the promised value it wants to convey to its customers [2]. The formation of brand management culture represents the creation of a rational organizational culture based on vision and values, and IC means the publication of internal manuals, education and training, and active communication [2]. Considering that brand management culture includes knowledge exchange, sharing value, and organizational culture formation, IB can be divided into two main categories: brand management culture (BMC) and IC [4,36]. In particular, Han [12] mentioned improving organizational culture and activating communication as the most realistic alternatives for enhancing the competitiveness and effectiveness of the organization. Also, this study attempted to focus on vision and value sharing between an organization and employees, and organizational culture among a variety of IB, considering that the subject is employees of PSOs that provide public services, not a private company seeking profits. Therefore, this study divided the IB of PSOs into OMC and IC.

IB encourages employees' commitment to achieving organizational goals and fostering a sense of ownership [34]. Sharing values through correct awareness, response, and communication of organizational culture can increase the work engagement and job satisfaction of employees [37]. Various prior studies have reported that IB or internal marketing have a significant impact on the WE or job dedication of employees [33,38,39]. For example, management support and IC in sports organizations had a positive impact on workplace attachment, and education and training for employees at Taekwondo gyms positively affected their job performance [16,40]. Based on existing theoretical and previous empirical studies, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1 (H1). *IB of PSOs has a positive effect on the employees' WE.*

H1-1. *OMC of PSOs has a positive effect on the employees' WE.*

H1-2. *IC of PSOs has a positive effect on the employees' WE.*

2.2. IB and TI

TI refers to a state of emotion in which an organization employee is dissatisfied with his or her current job and wants to leave [41]. TI is one of the representative variables that diagnose negative job attitudes of employees as an important prerequisite for turnover [42,43]. A high level of TI can lower the morale of other employees and cause difficulties in managing human resources in the organization [44,45]. In particular, TI is an action that occurs when expectations for environmental factors within an organization that employees consider important fall [46]. In this regard, research has been actively conducted in South Korea to identify the precipitative factors affecting the TI of employees of sports organizations. There is job placement [25], organizational commitment [47], organizational fairness [48], quality of working life [49], job burnout [50], emotional exhaustion [51], and organizational citizenship behavior [52].

However, the importance of organizational culture and communication in TI should not be overlooked. In fact, the working environment and organizational culture have recently emerged as significant factors in the decision of Korean employees to turnover

and resign [39]. This result can be attributed to changes in employees' perception of overall organizational culture, such as flexible awareness of work hours and spaces due to telecommuting after COVID-19 [53]. Thus, it is thought that IB, which includes efforts to improve OMC and to strengthen communication among employees, is likely to have a direct impact on TI. In fact, several studies support the idea of a significant relationship between IB and TI. For example, it was mentioned that organizational culture with active communication in sports organizations can lower the intention to turnover [54]. Also, it was reported that organizational culture accompanied by intimacy and bonds between colleagues in the organization could reduce the intention to turnover [55]. Therefore, the following research hypothesis was established based on the recent relationship between variables, and the results of previous studies.

Hypothesis 2 (H2). *IB of PSOs has a negative effect on the employees' TI.*

H2-1. *OMC of PSOs has a negative effect on the employees' TI.*

H2-2. *IC of PSOs has a negative effect on the employees' TI.*

2.3. WE and TI

WE means that employees put in a high level of energy physically, mentally, and emotionally when performing a job [56]. WE represents the positive and fulfilling mental state of each employee, which includes components, such as vitality, dedication, and commitment [57]. Specifically, vitality indicates willingness to perform the tasks assigned to you by injecting a high level of physical and mental energy, and dedication refers to feeling passion for work and having a sense of pride and challenge. Commitment means a state of mind in which an employee is immersed in work and cannot be separated from his or her own task. Schaufeli et al. [15] developed the UWES (Utrecht work engagement scale) in 2006 to measure WE by comprehensively reflecting these conceptual factors. In South Korea, based on the research of Schaufeli, Bakker, and Salanova [58], a modified measurement tool for WE has been developed and used [57] in the dimension of UICA (University Innovation Capacity Assessment). Although the measurement tool looked at WE in a single dimension, it was applied to this study because it was judged to be practically suitable for grasping WE of PSOs in consideration of the recent organizational culture and characteristics of public organizations in South Korea.

A high level of WE can drive positive work attitudes and voluntary motivation in the performance of employees in their jobs [59,60]. Also, WE plays an important role in making it appear as a continuous organizational performance [59]. In particular, WE of employees could have a decisive effect on TI [61], which can be seen through similar results in various previous studies. For example, the WE of employees in PSOs had a negative effect on TI, and job burnout of the golf course caddy had a significant effect on the intention to leave the organization and job [62,63]. In addition, the significant relationship between WE and TI can be directly and indirectly inferred in light of the negative impact of organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and job commitment in the field of sports organization on TI [47,54,64,65]. Based on these preceding studies, the following hypothesis is presented:

Hypothesis 3 (H3). *WE has a negative effect on the employees' TI.*

2.4. Mediating Effect of WE

The communication, training, and continuous support included in IB within the organization could have a significant impact on lowering TI [66]. However, these activities do not necessarily result in a decrease in the TI of employees [67], and there are differences in the impact on TI depending on the factors which make up the IB activities [39,68]. In this regard, various previous studies that set organizational effectiveness and performance as dependent variables focused on the mediating role of WE. For instance, it was reported

that the mediating effect of WE was found in the relationship between public officials' self-efficacy and organizational commitment [69]. Also, WE could partially mediate the relationship between perceived organizational support and innovative behavior [70]. Seo [71] found that WE had a partial mediating effect in the relationship between the coaching behavior of the managers in organizations and the innovative behavior of employees, and Lee, Lee and Kim [72] noted that the job resources of athlete coaches affected job satisfaction through WE.

Considering these results, IB could have a significant impact on employees' commitment, satisfaction, and dedication [33,73], and if employees have high enthusiasm for their jobs, they can feel the meaning and stability of their jobs, leading to a strengthening of organizational effectiveness. In other words, it can be inferred that WE can play a mediating role in the relationship between IB and TI of PSOs. Therefore, the following hypothesis is presented:

Hypothesis 4 (H4). *Work engagement of employees in PSOs mediates the relationship between IB and TI.*

Based on the hypotheses, the proposed model is shown in Figure 1.

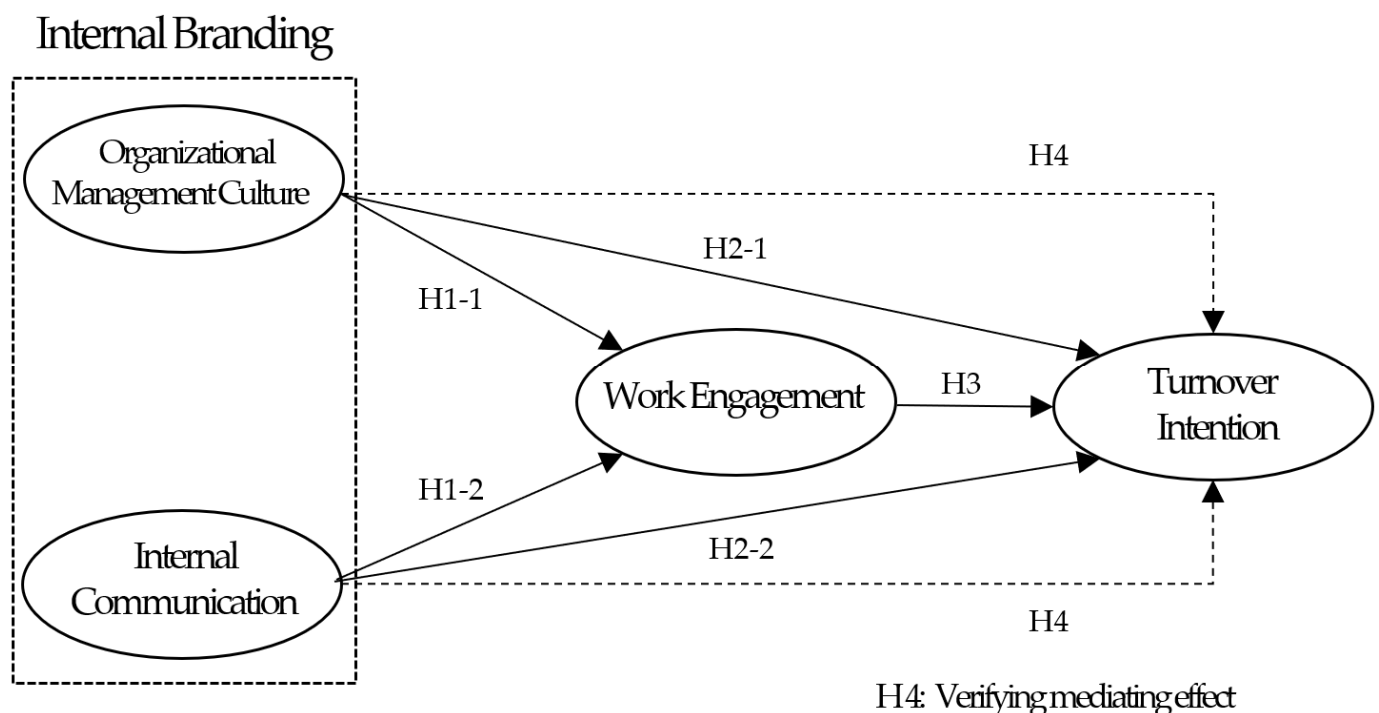


Figure 1. Proposed model.

3. Methods

3.1. Participants and Procedures

This study collected data from 305 employees working for PSOs in 2022 by using the convenience sampling method. PSOs indicate Korea Sports Promotion Foundation (KSPO), Korean Sport & Olympic Committee (KSOC), Athletic organizations, Taekwondo Promotion Foundation, Korea Paralympic Committee (KPC), KSPO & CO. (Seoul, Republic of Korea). Prior to the distribution of the questionnaire, the purpose of this study was sufficiently explained to each PSO. It was advised in advance to immediately stop the survey or replace it with an online survey, considering that the content and response of the survey could be burdensome in that it reveals the individual's perception and attitude toward the organization's IB activities.

Upon screening the responses for reliability, 57 copies were excluded such that data from only 248 employees were used for data analysis. Those that were deleted either had a missing response or had at least 9 consecutive questions responded to by the same scale rating according to the list-wise deletion method suggested by DeSimone and Harms [74]. The respondents' rating according to the list-wise deletion method suggested by DeSimone and Harms consisted of 177 males (71.4%) and 71 females. The age groups in the study were as follows: 30s (44.8%), followed by 40s (23.4%), 20s (16.5%), and 50 and over (15.3%). The specific profile of the respondents is presented in Table 1, and a table crossing gender, age, and other characteristics is shown in Appendix A Tables A1–A3.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics ($n = 248$).

Category		<i>n</i>	%
Gender	Male	177	71.4
	Female	71	28.6
Age	20s	41	16.5
	30s	111	44.8
	40s	58	23.4
	50 and over	38	15.3
Organization	Korea Sport & Olympic Committee	12	4.8
	Korea Sport Promotion Foundation	76	30.6
	KSPO & CO	38	15.3
	Athletic organization	81	32.7
	Taekwondo Promotion Foundation	24	9.7
	Korea Paralympic Committee	17	6.9
Years of employment	Less than 2 years	49	19.8
	2–less than 5 years	48	19.4
	5–less than 10 years	61	24.6
	10–less than 15 years	40	16.1
	More than 15 years	50	20.2
Position	Staff or senior staff	73	29.4
	(Assistant) Manager	119	48
	(Deputy) General manager	20	8.1
	Head of department	6	2.4
	Temporary worker	20	8.1
	Others	10	4

3.2. Measures

The instrument for measurement was a questionnaire in which all questions, except for those about demographics, were measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree). Before its distribution, a draft consisting of 26 questions was examined for content validity by an expert group formed by one professor, three researchers with a Ph.D. degree, and five employees working for PSOs. The resulting final questionnaire consisted of 31 questions, including 13 for OMC, 4 for IC, 5 for WE, and 4 for TI.

OMC and IC related questions consisted of those used by Choi [75], Barlow and Stewart [76], Ind [77], and Upshaw [78]. The questions, such as 'I know the core values and visions that my organization pursues' and 'I think my organization's internal publications are efficient for understanding its values and visions', were included. WE was adopted from Bae et al. [57]. Questions such as, 'I enjoy going to work' and 'I work passionately in my duties' were included. TI related questions consisted of those used by An and Kim [41], which included 'I feel like quitting the current organization' and 'I want to work for another organization'.

4. Results

4.1. Preliminary Data Analysis

SPSS 26.0 and AMOS 26.0 were used to conduct frequency, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), confirmatory factor, reliability, correlation, and structural equation model analyses on the collected data. The confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to verify the construct validity for all research variables. Results showed that the model had an appropriate goodness-of-fit ($\chi^2 = 292.605$, $df = 129$, $p < 0.001$; CFI = 0.946, TLI = 0.936, and RMSEA = 0.072) because it met the condition of CFI and TLI being 0.90 or higher, and RMSEA being lower than 0.10 suggested by Bagozzi and Dholakia [79] and Woo [80].

Next, standardized factor loadings, construct reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) values were calculated for convergent validity. As a result, a total of 23 questions were used in this study, excluding 5 questions from OMC, 1 question from IC and 2 questions from WE because they did not meet the value of standardized factor loading (0.50 or higher) suggested by Woo [80]. CR and AVE are distributed between 0.838~0.930, and 0.583~0.723, respectively, which meet the standard (CR = 0.70 or higher and AVE = 0.50 or higher) suggested by Bagozzi and Yi [81] and Fornell and Larcker [82]. Lastly, reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's α and McDonald's ω to ensure internal consistency of the measurement instruments. As a result of the analysis, all factors were found to be 0.80 or higher, which means that there was no problem with the reliability of each factor. The final results of confirmatory factor analysis are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. The results of confirmatory factor analysis.

Variables and Items	Estimate	SE	CR	AVE	ω	α
Organizational management culture						
I know the core values and visions of my organization compared to others	0.603					
My organization reflects the values and visions set in its work	0.741	0.168	0.930	0.628	0.924	0.921
I know my role in communicating values and visions to external stakeholders	0.707	0.155				
Most employees are interested in values and visions of my organization	0.771	0.163				
Managers seem to understand values and visions of my organization and reflect them in their work	0.770	0.175				
Organizational culture reflects values and visions pursued by my organization	0.857	0.181				
My organization employs people who meet our values and vision	0.776	0.173				
Managers help organizational employees understand and practice values and visions of the organization	0.901	0.188				
Internal communication						
I think my organization's internal publications are efficient in understanding its values and visions	0.840		0.886	0.723	0.896	0.895
My organization guides applicants to understand the value and vision of the organization through pamphlets, notices, and website information when hiring	0.845	0.061				
Education and training for internal employees of an organization helps to understand the value and vision of the organization	0.893	0.063				
Work engagement						
I enjoy going to work	0.707					
I work passionately in my duties	0.700	0.074	0.838	0.636	0.812	0.805
I think the work I do is worth contributing to the development of my organization	0.898	0.095				

Table 2. Cont.

Variables and Items	Estimate	SE	CR	AVE	ω	α
Turnover intention						
I feel like quitting the current organization	0.872					
I want to work for another organization	0.869	0.063	0.848	0.583	0.878	0.878
I have prepared to change jobs	0.759	0.074				
If I go back in time, I will not choose the current organization	0.719	0.068				
$\chi^2 = 292.605$, $df = 129$, $p < 0.001$, CFI = 0.946, TLI = 0.936, and RMSEA = 0.072						

4.2. The Result of ANOVA

Prior to structural equation model analysis, the one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the differences in the effects of demographic factors on OMC, IC, WE, and TI. In case of significant difference in the results, the Scheffe test was performed to determine the difference between groups. Also, the effect size was identified to use for comparisons of effects between groups with significant results. First, it was found that the difference between the gender/years of employment of employees and OMC, IC, WE, and TI was not statistically significant (Appendix A Tables A4 and A5). The differences between age and OMC, IC, and WE were significant, but Scheffe's post-hoc test showed that they were not significant (Appendix A Table A6).

Next, the difference between organizations were statistically significant in OMC, IC, and WE, and it was also confirmed in the post-hoc test (Table 3). In particular, it was found that employees of relatively large organizations, such as Korea Paralympic Committee and KSPO & CO, tend to perceive IB higher than those of small organizations. In the analysis of differences between each organization and WE and between organizations and OMC, the effect size between KSPO and Taekwondo Promotion Foundation was 0.084, and the size between Athletic organization, KPC and KSPO & CO was 0.131, which was found to be moderate according to the criteria suggested by Lakens [83]. The analysis of differences between each organization and IC showed that the effect size between Athletic organization, KPC, and KSPO & CO was found to be large, due to it exceeding 0.140 [83]. Additionally, a contrast analysis was conducted to verify elaborate differences between two groups based on significant differences and subsequent post-analysis results. In the analysis of differences between each organization and OMC and IC, the p-value between KPC and KSPO&CO was 0.596 and 0.877, respectively, indicating that there was no difference between the two organizations. The specific results are shown in Appendix A Tables A7 and A8.

Table 3. The results of ANOVA by organization.

Factor	Organization	M	SD	F	p	Partial η^2	Post-Hoc
Organizational management culture	Athletic organization (a)	3.24	0.76				
	Korea Sport Promotion Foundation (b)	3.48	0.81				
	Korea Paralympic Committee (c)	4.07	0.77				
	Korea Sport & Olympic Committee (d)	3.57	0.71	7.272	0.000	0.131	c, f > a
	Taekwondo Promotion Foundation (e)	3.42	0.49				
	KSPO & CO (f)	3.96	0.59				
Internal communication	Athletic organization (a)	2.88	0.91				
	Korea Sport Promotion Foundation (b)	3.52	0.92				
	Korea Paralympic Committee (c)	3.78	1.18				
	Korea Sport & Olympic Committee (d)	3.33	0.89	7.976	0.000	0.141	f, c > a
	Taekwondo Promotion Foundation (e)	3.40	0.68				
	KSPO & CO (f)	3.82	0.76				

Table 3. Cont.

Factor	Organization	M	SD	F	p	Partial η^2	Post-Hoc
Work engagement	Athletic organization (a)	3.57	0.83	4.413	0.001	0.084	e > d
	Korea Sport Promotion Foundation (b)	3.59	0.72				
	Korea Paralympic Committee (c)	3.98	0.94				
	Korea Sport & Olympic Committee (d)	3.39	0.85				
	Taekwondo Promotion Foundation (e)	4.15	0.58				
	KSPO & CO (f)	3.69	0.79				
Turnover intention	Athletic organization (a)	2.73	0.94	1.468	0.201	n/a	n/a
	Korea Sport Promotion Foundation (b)	2.66	1.01				
	Korea Paralympic Committee (c)	2.22	1.17				
	Korea Sport & Olympic Committee (d)	2.90	1.30				
	Taekwondo Promotion Foundation (e)	2.70	0.67				
	KSPO & CO (f)	2.39	0.97				

The difference between positions were statistically significant in OMC and TI, and this was also confirmed in the post-hoc test (Table 4). Part-time employees showed lower awareness of OMC and higher TI than department head. In the analysis of differences between each position and OMC, the effect size between head of department and part-time employees was 0.053, which was found to be small [83]. However, since the number of cases of part-time employees and department heads is 10 and 6, respectively, it would be unreasonable to be used importantly in the interpretation of the results of this study.

Table 4. The results of ANOVA by position.

Factor	Position	M	SD	F	p	Partial η^2	Post-Hoc
Organizational management culture	Staff or senior staff (a)	3.56	0.69	2.711	0.021	0.053	d > f
	(Assistant) Manager (b)	3.45	0.75				
	(Deputy) General manager (c)	3.55	0.71				
	Head of department (d)	4.15	0.43				
	Temporary worker (e)	3.79	0.95				
	Others (f)	2.95	1.16				
Internal communication	Staff or senior staff (a)	3.41	0.88	1.234	0.294	n/a	n/a
	(Assistant) Manager (b)	3.28	0.95				
	(Deputy) General manager (c)	3.40	1.07				
	Head of department (d)	3.83	0.59				
	Temporary worker (e)	3.63	1.15				
	Others (f)	2.93	0.98				
Work engagement	Staff or senior staff (a)	3.62	0.77	0.686	0.635	n/a	n/a
	(Assistant) Manager (b)	3.69	0.73				
	(Deputy) General manager (c)	3.80	0.87				
	Head of department (d)	4.06	0.33				
	Temporary worker (e)	3.80	0.94				
	Others (f)	3.47	1.16				
Turnover intention	Staff or senior staff (a)	2.62	0.92	1.652	0.147	n/a	n/a
	(Assistant) Manager (b)	2.67	0.92				
	(Deputy) General manager (c)	2.65	1.10				
	Head of department (d)	1.83	0.77				
	Temporary worker (e)	2.39	1.17				
	Others (f)	3.15	1.40				

4.3. The Result of Correlation Analysis

Before verifying the hypotheses formulated in this study, a correlation analysis between OMC, IC, WE, and TI was conducted (Table 5). The correlation coefficient between

each variable had a significant relationship, and no case exceeded 0.85, confirming that there was no problem with multicollinearity [84]. Discriminant validity was well established as the square root of AVE in each latent variable was larger than other correlation values among the latent construct [82].

Table 5. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis.

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Organizational management culture	3.51	0.77	0.628 (a)			
2. Internal communication	3.36	0.95	0.779 **	0.723 (a)		
3. Work engagement	3.69	0.79	0.567 **	0.444**	0.636 (a)	
4. Turnover intention	2.62	0.98	−0.470 **	−0.302 **	−0.511 **	0.583 (a)

** $p < 0.01$, (a): Average Variance Extracted.

4.4. Hypotheses Testing

The hypotheses for the structural model between OMC, IC, WE and TI were verified through structural equation modelling for which the model's goodness-of-fit index was acceptable ($\chi^2 = 292.605$, $df = 129$, $p < 0.001$; CFI = 0.946, TLI = 0.936, and RMSEA = 0.072).

As shown in Table 6 and Figure 2, analysis of the research model showed that the path coefficient of H1-1 was 0.707 ($t = 4.204$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that OMC has a significant positive effect on WE. The path coefficient of H1-2 was -0.079 ($t = -0.520$, $p = 0.603$), indicating that there was no significant relationship between IC and WE. The path coefficient of H2-1 was -0.612 ($t = -3.447$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that OMC has a significant negative effect on TI, while the path coefficient of H2-2 was 0.417 ($t = 2.705$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that IC has a significant positive effect on TI. Also, the path coefficient of H3 was -0.421 ($t = -4.552$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that WE has a significant negative effect on TI.

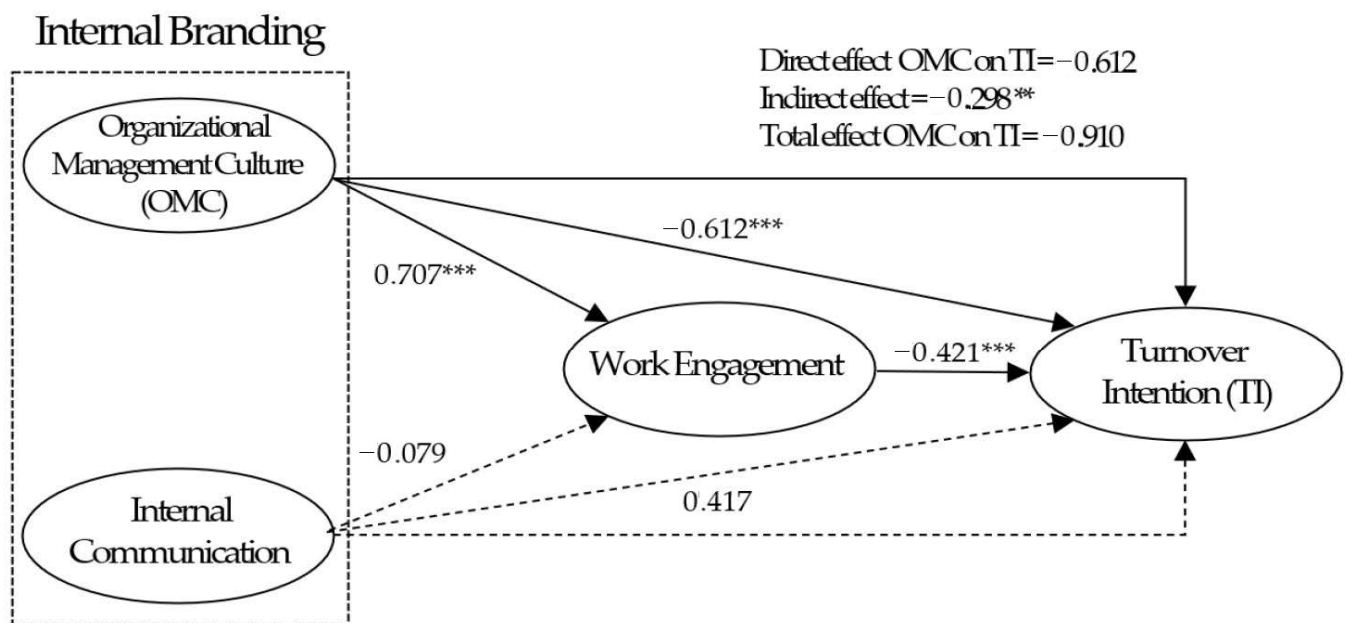
Table 6. The results of hypotheses testing.

Path	Estimate	SE	t	p	Result
H1-1. OMC \rightarrow WE	0.707	0.204	4.204	0.000	Accepted
H1-2. IC \rightarrow WE	−0.079	0.096	−0.520	0.603	Rejected
H2-1. OMC \rightarrow TI	−0.612	0.316	−3.447	0.000	Accepted
H2-2. IC \rightarrow TI	0.417	0.143	2.705	0.007	Rejected
H3. WE \rightarrow TI	−0.421	0.136	−4.552	0.000	Accepted

Note: OMC: Organization management culture; IC: Internal communication, WE: Work engagement, TI: Turnover intention.

4.5. Mediation Effect Testing

As mentioned above, OMC of PSOs had a positive effect on WE, and also WE negatively affected TI. Since these results meet the prerequisites for verifying the mediating effect presented by Holmbeck [85], the bootstrapping method suggested by Shrout and Bolger [86] was conducted to examine the mediating effect of WE. This method presents a confidence interval (CI) for the measurement of indirect effects, and if the interval does not contain zero, the indirect effect could be considered significant [85]. As shown in Table 7, H4 was statistically significant because the CI of the path does not contain zero as $\beta = -0.298$, 95% Bias—corrected CI $[-0.498, -0.139]$. Thus, WE has been shown to partially mediate the relationship between OMC and TI.



Note. Figure shows standardized beta values; *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$

Figure 2. Result for estimates of the model.

Table 7. The results of mediation testing.

Path	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect (p)	Total Effect	95% CI (Bias-Corrected Bootstrap)	
				Lower	Upper
H4. OMC \rightarrow WE \rightarrow TI	-0.612	-0.298 (0.005)	-0.910	-0.498	-0.139

Note: OMC: Organization management culture, WE: Work engagement, TI: Turnover intention.

5. Discussion

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between IB (OMC and IC) in PSOs, WE, and TI, and to examine the mediating effect of WE. Based on the results of hypothesis testing, the following discussion is described.

5.1. The Relationship between OMC and WE

It was found that OMC among IB in PSOs had a positive effect on the WE of employees. Prior studies support the result of this study by noting that a positive and supportive organizational culture promotes WE [87–89]. Also, the result of this study supports prior research that leadership activities, such as feedback from supervisors and sharing best practices, which influence organizational culture have a significant impact on employee commitment [33]. As such, if an organizational culture is created within PSO in which employees can properly understand and practice the values and visions of the organization, it means that they are willing to put energy into their jobs and show an attitude of commitment and dedication.

In this regard, Khan [56] suggested three prerequisites for the high level of WE of employees in the workplace: the psychological stability, meaning, and usefulness of employees. In other words, it is necessary to provide conditions for one's employees to perform their duties with pride in the organization. Applying these to IB, psychological stability is experienced when a positive work environment is created within the organization, and a trusting relationship between employees is formed [56]. Thus, PSOs should build organizational culture based on the vision and values of the organization and show them how to practice it consistently. In particular, if senior managers actively reflect the organization's vision

and values in their actions or work to help other employees practice, individuals will be able to voluntarily devote themselves to their jobs in a healthy work environment. In the case of usefulness, employees will naturally have faith in their appearance and competence when they have psychological stability [56].

Next, organizations should strive to ensure that their jobs are highly compatible with the values and visions pursued by the organization so that the sense of meaning of employees can be strengthened [89]. To this end, PSOs need to fully recognize not only the organization's values and visions, but also its differentiation from other organizations. In addition, the organization's values and visions should be reflected in its employees' work, and it should be ensured that they are properly communicated to external stakeholders. In particular, May, Gilson, and Harter [90] argued that meaning among three prerequisites is most closely related to WE. In summary, PSOs should strive to ensure that the vision and values of the organization are properly shared with individual employees, resulting in a high level of WE.

5.2. *The Relationship between IC and WE*

The IC of PSOs did not significantly affect the employees' WE. This result is similar to prior studies by Jeon [40], which showed that the IC of sports organizations did not have a significant effect on the job satisfaction of employees, and by Park, Choo, and Cho [91] that IC perceived by teachers in physical education in schools was not significantly related to teacher enthusiasm. However, a number of prior studies related to IB found that IC had a significant effect on employee commitment [33], commitment [29], and attitude [92], which contradicted the results of this study. Also, Burmann et al. [73] argued that IC activities have a significant impact on employee commitment more than any other factor. This means that various activities, such as job training and communication, in PSOs are not efficiently utilized to promote employees' WE. For example, employees of athletic organizations showed significantly lower perceptions of IB in this study. In other words, they tend to be less aware that their colleagues and organizations fully reflect and practice the organization's vision and values. In this regard, Yang and Jeong [93] argued that employees in large enterprises perceive innovative organizational culture, organizational communication, and education and training statistically higher than those in small and medium-sized enterprises. This can be seen as a result of a realistic situation in which small and medium-sized enterprises do not have enough human resource management capacity and are forced to stick to short-term performance [94]. As such, relatively small organizations, which account for a large proportion of PSOs in South Korea, need to make efforts to secure effectiveness by systematically implementing IB.

Moreover, the results of this study can be attributed to the changes in employees' perceptions of the organizational working condition after the COVID-19 pandemic, and the characteristics of IC itself. First, due to the pandemic in the last three years, Korean workers have experienced significant changes in the organizational culture and the working environment, such as a flexible work system and non-face-to-face education and training. In response to these changes, more than 80% of office workers said that they were satisfied in terms of work efficiency, compared to before COVID-19 [95,96]. In light of this phenomenon, employees of PSOs seem to recognize that IC conducted by the organizations do not actually help them perform their duties, because they feel relatively familiar and satisfied with the autonomous and independent tasks experienced during the pandemic.

Next, the distribution of internal publications, education, and training programs, which are mainly used for IC, are close to top-down communication. Top-down communication is the process by which an organization delivers instructions or commands to share the organization's specific goals, strategic directions, guidelines, and organizational culture [97]. This type of communication is a common form within bureaucratic organizations and can act as a significant burden and pressure on employees because of its authoritative aspects [97]. In fact, Kim [98] reported that top-down communication does not have a statistically significant effect on job attitude, in contrast to bottom-up communication. Likewise,

PSOs with bureaucratic attributes would not be an exception [99]. As such, it suggests that top-down communication of PSOs may not be an absolute means of continuously injecting energy into employees and maintaining a positive mental state.

In summary, WE is an important factor in enhancing the sense of meaning, intrinsic motivation, self-realization, and satisfaction for the job [100]. In fact, companies that generate high performance give employees much more opportunity to participate when deciding on major organizational issues and sharing ideas than companies with low performance [101]. Thus, PSOs should actively apply a bottom-up communication approach to create an atmosphere of horizontal communication and active work performance.

5.3. *The Relationship between OMC and TI*

OMC among IB in PSOs had a negative effect on TI of employees. This is in line with the result of Lee [11] that the higher the understanding of the organization's brand, the lower the intention to turnover. Also, it would be similar to the finding of a study that the clarity of goals of public organizations has a positive effect on the organizational citizenship behavior of employees [102]. In other words, the result of this study suggests that if employees are favorably aware of the OMC of PSOs, their conscious and planned willingness to leave the organization might be lowered.

TI is considered important for efficient human resource management in all types of organizations [103]. At the individual level within the organization, the clarity of goals can reduce TI, while goal ambiguity can lower organizational effectiveness [104]. In this context, PSOs should fully share the organization's direction and roadmap with their employees to help them understand their jobs. Also, senior managers can make a significant contribution to forming a desirable organizational culture if they show the behavior of an ideal leader by presenting clear goals and visions to their employees.

Furthermore, PSOs should not overlook changes in employees' perceptions of the work environment after the COVID-19 pandemic. According to a recent survey of big data platform services, organizational culture was cited as the most decisive reason for turnover and resignation of office workers [53]. Similarly, the retirement of the younger generation is increasing in public organization, due to relatively low salaries and rigid organizational culture [105]. Collins and Smith [106] argued that the organization's management information provision and communication efforts contribute to enhancing the employees' organizational understanding, building trust, and establishing reciprocal interrelationships. Therefore, PSOs should make efforts to integrate goal orientation among employees, and create shared behavioral values and norms based on communication and mutual respect.

5.4. *The Relationship between IC and TI*

The IC of PSOs has a positive effect on the TI of employees. However, these results are contrary to previous studies which show that organizational communication and career development programs of public organizations lower TI [107,108]. In addition, a number of prior studies have shown that strengthening communication and training programs at the organizational level negatively affect the intention of employees to turnover, contradicting the results of this study [109–111]. These conflicting results are considered to be related to the contents of the measurement questions of this study. Three of the four questions on IC are close to the contents of one-way communication activities (e.g., publications, website announcements, and education) that the organization conducts with its employees. This one-way communication means that it can appear as a side effect of increasing TI of employees. Thus, contrary to their original purpose, IC of PSOs act as a considerable burden on employees, which can cause negative mental conditions in their job performance.

As such, it is necessary to consider whether the result is due to the adverse effects of communication type and function. Jin and Park [112] argued that the TI of organization employees may vary depending on the type of communication. In fact, the arbitrary and controlled type of communication of senior managers can reduce job satisfaction and cause TI [113,114]. This shows that the type of communication in an organization is an

important factor in organizational effectiveness. Regarding the function of communication, IC based on conversation and listening increases employee satisfaction and lowers TI [115], but unbalanced communication based on persuasion and instruction is often used by organizations to create a business environment that is favorable to them for controlling employees [116]. From the perspective of employees, it suggests that unilateral and vertical communication within the organization can be perceived negatively as their work and behavior being controlled or restricted.

Moreover, if an organization neglects an employee's complaints related to IC, the employee might not be convinced of its authenticity, and eventually regard it as a pretentious act of the organization. Similarly, the support behavior within the organization of a boss who usually lacks trust can increase the intention of employees to turnover [117]. In this context, it can be inferred from the result of this study that the IC of PSOs was not truly accepted by employees for various reasons. It may also be the result of employees expressing temporary reluctance or a sense of burden for IC, due to increased workload and dissatisfaction with education and training after the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, this controversial result can be considered in that 60% of the subjects of this study are in their 20s and 30s in PSOs. The MZ generation, collectively referred to as those in their 20s and 30s, has a different worldview and behavior pattern from the older generation [118]. Older generations are familiar with strong responsibilities, hierarchies, and vertical organizational structures, while MZ generations tend to pursue freedom, enjoyment, and meaning [107]. Also, they value a work-life balance, and tend to reject unnecessary interference from others [119]. However, communication within organizations is bound to proceed in the way of the older generation, who still occupy the upper ranks. In this situation, experiencing uncertainty in communication and lack of information will lead to stronger TI for the MZ generation [118]. Thus, PSOs should strive to ensure that IC promotes interaction between an organization and employees, and becomes a catalyst for sharing vision and values in intergenerational understanding and cooperation.

5.5. The Relationship between WE and TI

The WE of employees has a positive effect on their intention to turnover. This is similar to the findings of Kim, Jeon, and Lee [120] that WE negatively affects TI. Also, it is in line with prior studies which show that WE and work satisfaction of employees in sports-related organizations negatively affects the intention to turnover [65,121,122]. This result implies that if employees have a highly positive passionate, and dedicated attitude toward work, their intention to leave their current job may be lowered. WE is a state in which employees continue to maintain a positive mental state, which has a significant impact on individual growth, as well as organizational performance [123]. From the perspective of IB, WE can be improved through organizational support, such as leadership and organizational culture [22]. Thus, PSOs need to make efforts to create an atmosphere in which employees can devote a high level of energy and perform their work positively.

However, regardless of the organization-level efforts, it would be necessary to recognize how valuable the employees themselves are currently carrying out their duties [124]. If employees voluntarily do their best in their duties in a positive mental state, WE will be transformed into an ideal behavior for the organization [125]. Thus, if employees of PSOs work with a sense of calling to lead the future of sports in Korea, each will be able to find extraordinary reward and meaning in their job. The organization could prevent loss through human resource leakage and strengthen organizational effectiveness.

5.6. The Mediating Role of WE

The WE of employees in PSOs was found to play a partial mediating role in the relationship between OMC and TI. This supports the results of previous studies verifying the validity of the mediating role of WE for employees of public organizations [126,127]. This suggests that when PSOs want to improve OMC, various efforts to increase WE are more effective in reducing TI. In this respect, PSOs should not only make efforts to create a

healthy OMC, but also provide conditions for employees to positively devote themselves to and focus on their work. As mentioned above, this study cited psychological stability, meaning, and usefulness as the main factors to be considered for increasing WE. This is in line with four behavioral factors, such as positive working attitude, empowerment, confidence in work, and organizational citizenship behavior, which were derived as a way to alleviate TI in a study by Hyun, Rye, and Lee [128]. Therefore, PSOs should promote effective operation of the organization by improving IB, as well as human resource management and working conditions.

6. Conclusions

The purpose of this study is to identify the impact of IB of PSOs on WE and TI, and to verify the mediating effect of WE. This study aims to present theoretical and practical implications which can contribute to improving OMC and strengthening IC by understanding the attitudes and behaviors of employees in PSOs. The main results of this study are as follows.

Firstly, OMC had a significant positive effect on WE, but there was no significant relationship between IC and WE. Secondly, while OMC had a negative effect on TI, IC had a positive effect on TI. Thirdly, WE had a significant negative effect on TI. Lastly, WE has been shown to partially mediate the relationship between OMC and TI. The most striking result of this study is that the effectiveness of IC currently carried out by PSOs is questioned. In other words, it implies that IC felt by employees does not contribute to the improvement of their work performance and organizational productivity. Thus, PSOs need to review the overall efficiency of their activities to improve the quality of IC. These efforts are expected to contribute to enhancing WE and satisfaction by helping employees clearly understand the core vision and values of PSOs. This could have a positive effect on improving the organizational culture of PSOs in South Korea that value vertical hierarchy.

6.1. Theoretical Implications

Previous studies in Korea have tended to deal with organizational culture, communication, mentoring, and leadership separately to verify the organizational effectiveness of PSOs. This study is significant in that it applied the concept of IB to PSOs and attempted to comprehensively grasp its effectiveness through two types of OMC and IC. Secondly, this study suggests that employees can differently perceive the effectiveness of OMC and IC within IB activities. In particular, it was found that IC of PSOs could even increase the intention to turnover. Therefore, the results of this study reminds us that IB of public organizations is essential for the operation of the organization, but the outcomes may not necessarily result in the direction the organization pursues. Lastly, this study confirmed the partial mediating role of WE in the relationship between OMC and TI. Organizations may have the desire for their employees to have WE which includes commitment, enthusiasm, and spontaneity. Therefore, if studies to identify factors affecting employees' WE are conducted in the future, it could be of considerable significance in terms of strengthening organizational effectiveness.

6.2. Managerial Implications

Firstly, PSOs should create an organizational culture in which employees can properly reflect and practice the values and visions of the organization in their work. To this end, it would be important to clearly figure out how much value the organization shares with its employees. For instance, PSOs should prioritize setting target values so that their employees can use the organization's values as guidelines for action. After that, organizations will have to establish a transition plan by comparing and grasping the degree difference between the target organizational culture level and the current organizational culture level. Furthermore, the top management should play a role in establishing an active organizational culture by proactively practicing the vision and value pursued by their organization. Secondly, it is necessary to examine whether the purpose of IC in PSOs

is now well communicated to employees or whether employees are dissatisfied with the activities. In other words, PSOs need to actively collect opinions from employees and listen to requirements during IC activities. Accordingly, PSOs should actively utilize bottom-up communication so that the opinions of employees can be reflected in the development and implementation of education and training programs. Also, PSOs will have to strengthen IC so that employees can concentrate on themselves in a new work environment after the pandemic. Lastly, organizations should make efforts to provide conditions for its employees to work with a sense of calling. For example, organizations should check human resource management processes to create an environment where employees can immerse themselves in their work with enthusiasm. In addition, if an organization helps increase the closeness between its employees' jobs and the organization's values and visions, and strives to create a smooth communication culture between colleagues and managers, it will eventually increase organizational efficiency.

6.3. Limitations and Future Research Directions

Firstly, since this study was conducted on only 305 employees in PSOs in Korea, it is somewhat difficult to generalize the results of this study to all employees of PSOs. In future studies, it is expected to be more meaningful if the scope and number of samples are further expanded. Secondly, this study set only IB as an independent variable to verify WE and TI of employees in PSOs. However, since various factors can affect employee's attitude and behavioral intentions, it would be necessary to apply various predictors that can affect strengthening organizational effectiveness in future studies. Lastly, employees may have different perceptions and attitudes toward IB depending on gender, age, job, position, and wage satisfaction. Thus, it would be meaningful to compare and analyze differences between groups by classifying employees based on specific demographic characteristics in future studies.

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Data Availability Statement: Data will be provided on demand.

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Appendix A

Table A1. Age * Gender * Organization Cross-Nested Table.

Organization			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
Athletic organization	Age	20s	11	8	19
		30s	28	18	46
		40s	6	2	8
		50 and more	6	1	7
	Total		51	29	80

Table A1. Cont.

Organization			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
Korea Sport Promotion Foundation	Age	20s	4	4	8
		30s	23	10	33
		40s	19	4	23
		50 and more	9	3	12
		Total	55	21	76
Korea Paralympic Committee	Age	20s	3	1	4
		30s	5	2	7
		40s	6	0	6
		Total	14	3	17
Korea Sport & Olympic Committee	Age	30s	2	6	8
		40s	4	0	4
		Total	6	6	12
Taekwondo Promotion Foundation	Age	20s	3	5	8
		30s	10	2	12
		40s	4	0	4
		50 and more	1	0	1
		Total	18	7	25
KSPO&CO	Age	20s	1	1	2
		30s	4	1	5
		40s	12	1	13
		50 and more	16	2	18
		Total	33	5	38
Total	Age	20s	22	19	41
		30s	72	39	111
		40s	51	7	58
		50 and more	32	6	38
		Total	177	71	248

Table A2. Age * Gender * Years of Employment Cross-Nested Table.

Years of Employment			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
Less than 2 years	Age	20s	15	13	28
		30s	14	5	19
		40s	0	1	1
		50 and more	0	1	1
		Total	29	20	49
2–less than 5 years	Age	20s	7	5	12
		30s	13	10	23
		40s	5	0	5
		50 and more	8	0	8
		Total	33	15	48
5–less than 10 years	Age	20s	0	1	1
		30s	32	16	48
		40s	7	0	7
		50 and more	4	1	5
		Total	43	18	61
10–less than 15 years	Age	30s	13	6	19
		40s	15	4	19
		50s	2	0	2
		Total	30	10	40

Table A2. Cont.

Years of Employment			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
More than 15 years	Age	30s	0	2	2
		40s	24	2	26
		50 and more	18	4	22
	Total	18	7	50	
Total	Age	20s	22	19	41
		30s	72	39	111
		40s	51	7	58
		50 and more	32	6	38
	Total	177	71	248	

Table A3. Age * Gender * Position Cross-Nested Table.

Position			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
Staff or senior staff	Age	20s	15	15	30
		30s	19	11	30
		40s	5	0	5
		50 and more	7	1	8
	Total	46	27	73	
(Assistant) Manager	Age	20s	3	2	5
		30s	46	23	69
		40s	28	5	33
		50 and more	9	3	12
	Total	86	33	119	
(Deputy) General manager	Age	30s	1	0	1
		40s	10	1	11
		50 and more	7	1	8
	Total	18	2	20	
Head of department	Age	40s	1	0	1
		50s	4	1	5
	Total	5	1	6	
Temporary worker	Age	20s	4	2	6
		30s	5	4	9
		40s	3	0	3
		50 and more	2	0	2
	Total	14	6	20	
Others	Age	30s	1	1	2
		40s	4	1	5
		50 and more	3	0	3
	Total	8	2	10	
Total	Age	20s	22	19	41
		30s	72	39	111
		40s	51	7	58
		50 and more	32	6	38
	Total	177	71	248	

Table A4. The Result of ANOVA by Gender.

Factor	Gender	M	SD	F	<i>p</i>
Organizational management culture	Male	3.55	0.77	1.085	0.299
	Female	3.43	0.77		
Internal communication	Male	3.40	0.95	1.079	0.300
	Female	3.25	0.97		
Work engagement	Male	3.70	0.81	0.227	0.634
	Female	3.65	0.72		
Turnover intention	Male	2.59	0.99	1.029	0.311
	Female	2.72	0.94		

Table A5. The Result of ANOVA by Years of Employment.

Factor	Years of Employment	M	SD	F	<i>p</i>
Organizational management culture	Less than 2 years	3.66	0.77	1.810	0.127
	2–less than 5 years	3.45	0.87		
	5–less than 10 years	3.34	0.72		
	10–less than 15 years	3.49	0.68		
	More than 15 years	3.67	0.79		
Internal communication	Less than 2 years	3.59	0.91	2.023	0.092
	2–less than 5 years	3.25	0.98		
	5–less than 10 years	3.21	0.88		
	10–less than 15 years	3.20	1.02		
	More than 15 years	3.55	0.96		
Work engagement	Less than 2 years	3.79	0.67	0.470	0.758
	2–less than 5 years	3.58	0.93		
	5–less than 10 years	3.70	0.72		
	10–less than 15 years	3.65	0.84		
	More than 15 years	3.70	0.79		
Turnover intention	Less than 2 years	2.38	0.93	1.231	0.298
	2–less than 5 years	2.74	1.05		
	5–less than 10 years	2.68	0.83		
	10–less than 15 years	2.58	1.01		
	More than 15 years	2.75	1.10		

Table A6. The Result of ANOVA by Age.

Factor	Age	M	SD	F	<i>p</i>	Post-Hoc
Organizational management culture	20s	3.69	0.67	4.436	0.005	n/a
	30s	3.32	0.77			
	40s	3.63	0.85			
	50s	3.72	0.65			
Internal communication	20s	3.59	0.90	3.621	0.014	n/a
	30s	3.14	0.98			
	40s	3.54	1.01			
	50s	3.45	0.69			
Work engagement	20s	3.72	0.78	2.884	0.036	n/a
	30s	3.53	0.77			
	40s	3.80	0.74			
	50s	3.90	0.82			
Turnover intention	20s	2.34	0.75	1.875	0.134	n/a
	30s	2.73	0.96			
	40s	2.71	1.05			
	50s	2.53	1.09			

Table A7. Contrast Tests between Organizations and OMC.

		Contrast		Value of Contrast	Std. Error	t	df	Sig. (2-Tailed)
OMC	Assume equal variances	dimension2	1	−0.1130	0.21259	−0.532	242	0.596
	Does not assume equal variances	dimension2	1	−0.1130	0.21009	−0.538	24.797	0.595

Table A8. Contrast Tests between Organizations and IC.

		Contrast		Value of Contrast	Std. Error	t	df	Sig. (2-Tailed)
IC	Assume equal variances	dimension2	1	0.0402	0.26054	0.154	242	0.877
	Does not assume equal variances	dimension2	1	0.0402	0.31241	0.129	22.089	0.899

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