ANTECEDENTS OF TEAM PERFORMANCE: EXPLORING THE MEDIATING ROLE OF TRUST IN COACH AMONG MALAYSIAN SPORTS PLAYERS

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.37178/ca-c.23.2.28

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ABSTRACT

The study's primary purpose is to examine the relationship between team tenure, team leadership, justice, coach trust, and team performance. Additionally, this research examined the mediating role of faith in coaches. A cross-sectional research design was used to keep the study's objectives in mind. Simple random sampling was used to acquire data from football and hockey players. The study's usable response rate was 70.92%. PLS-SEM was used to analyse the obtained data. The study's findings revealed the existence of a strong association between team tenure, team leadership, coach trust, and team performance. Additionally, the mediating function of faith in the relationship between tenure, leadership, and performance is endorsed. These findings are beneficial for both sports industry policymakers and academics.

Keywords: Team Performance, Team Justice, Team Tenure, trust in the coach, Malaysia

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The sports world, like the corporate world, is highly competitive. Additionally, similar to business, the sports team must focus on their performance. To enhance performance, team leaders are critical. A constant fight is required for the team to succeed. Athletes must contend with various challenges to be successful in their particular sports. The sports champions exhibit discipline and complete control to accomplish their objectives [1].

One of the critical responsibilities in the team's performance is that of a person known as the team leader. This individual possesses above-average athletic abilities and the ability to lead others to accomplish particular goals. These leaders are capable of adapting their behaviour to the circumstances. These behaviours define leaders in both business and sports. Numerous previous studies have attempted to address the issue of leadership in terms of universal leadership abilities [2].

On the other hand, one of the significant aspects determining the team's success is the coach-player interaction. One critical component that might affect a team's performance is the team's trust in the coach. The scholars define trust as one party's readiness to be vulnerable to the activities of another party in the hope that specific actions will be executed by some trustor [3]. It demonstrates the critical nature of a positive relationship between the coach and the team's players. When players accept their vulnerability and obey the coach's directions, they demonstrate trust. They are thereby taking a risk. If players are willing to trust the coach, this will benefit the organisation's performance [4].

Additionally, one of the primary causes of trust is the leader's ability. It is also critical to create trust because when a team's leader acts unfairly, the players lose faith in the leader, and their confidence is lost. Leaders are specialists in their particular fields.

These leaders establish their objectives, which they will pursue at any cost. Leaders will constantly attempt to accomplish these objectives at any cost. As a result, other team members get encouraged and driven to achieve a task. Leaders also possess professional abilities, motivating team members to work at their peak and accomplish their best. As a result, such a squad outperforms its opponents. Additionally, leaders provoke team members to overcome their weaknesses [5].

This study aims to investigate the relationship between team tenure, team leadership, justice, coach trust, and team performance among Malaysian hockey and football teams. Additionally, this study evaluated the moderating role of faith in coaches.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Team Performance

Researchers and practitioners have long recognised team performance as a critical result. According to the researchers, team performance is created by combining interpersonal teamwork with independent task execution. Regular problem-solving, continuous improvement in output quality, waste rate, and productivity must be the primary factors for evaluating team performance [6].

To foster trust among team members, effective collaboration is required. As a result, the team consistently achieves high-level goals. Thus, trust is viewed as a critical component of team functioning. As a result, trust among team members is a vital aspect in improving the team's effectiveness. On the contrary, Van Mierlo and Van Hooft [7] suggested that trust ensures an organisation's performance development. Without confidence among team members, players will be unwilling to assist one another in times of need. They will be untruthful to other team members and misleading in sharing ideas. As a result, team members' performance would suffer due to a lack of synergy [8].

On the other hand, communication is critical in team interaction development. As a result, the team's performance is contingent upon the team members' cohesion and communication. This communication is essential throughout completing a task or achieving a goal [9]. The researchers defined communication inside the team as an essential network provider for the project's implementation. There are three communication patterns that teams follow. As a result, teams must establish all possible routes of communication. On the other hand, if a team encounters an issue, it must be readjusted and finetuned [10].

Team Tenure

Scholars define team tenure as the total time a team member spends inside a team. When it comes to goal achievement, team tenure is a critical component. The researchers place a premium on team tenure to establish groups and increase their efficacy. According to scholars, a more extended team tenure results in higher team effectiveness [11].

On the other hand, researchers have discovered that team tenure affects the team's performance. In practice, decision-makers who place a premium on team effectiveness should prioritise team tenure to boost performance [12]. Scholars underlined that while various factors affecting team composition are also associated with team tenure Koopmann et al. [11], there is still a need to investigate the effect of team tenure on team performance. The impact of team tenure varies with each team, which may have a varying effect on the team's performance [11].

Team Trust

Since the previous decade, the idea of trust has received considerable attention in psychology. The concept of trust is discussed at three levels: organisational, team, and

individual. Additionally, this idea is viewed as a social and interpersonal phenomenon. Trust among groups has grown critical, and as a result, teams and organisations have gotten flatter and more team-based [13]. In terms of study, trust has been prioritised because it is necessary for achieving collective and personal goals on a group and interpersonal level. Trust among team members has a good effect on the team's behaviour. This is because such teams have a higher level of information sharing and open communication, which results in the more significant achievement of interpersonal and team goals [14].

Previous research has established that trust is a highly complicated phenomenon with numerous diverse components. The relationship and individual components are the most frequently regarded models and definitions in trust for the trustee and the trustor's relationships. Additionally, shared experience is one factor that contributes to the evolution of trust. Team members invest time in gaining experience. The trust process depicts a whole transaction between one party, referred to as the trustor, and another party, referred to as the trustee [15].

In previous research, scholars defined trust as a party's readiness to accept the vulnerability of its activities in exchange for the expectation that another party will do some crucial responsibilities for the trustors, regardless of the ability to control or monitor the party. According to the definition mentioned above, the trustees' relationship with the trust consists of both relational and individual components. Individual components indicate the trustors' capacity to trust others. It reflects that one party bestows trust in the other [16].

One of the behavioural responses associated with trust is a willingness to be vulnerable. This is because trustors have specific views about the trustee to take action. Previous research has demonstrated that belief can be quantified at the team level using collective phenomena [17]. The trustworthiness of team members can be determined based on information supplied during encounters. The individual's proclivity for trust arises from the team's monitoring and cooperative behaviour.

Additionally, it is dependent on the level of trustworthiness demonstrated toward another team member [18]. When it comes to preserving and creating confidence among team members, reciprocity is critical. On the other hand, when someone trusts another, that person takes a great deal of danger. A fundamental component of trust behaviour is establishing the foundation for reciprocity among team members [19]. Despite this, it is possible to quantify trust between individuals personally and in terms of personal beliefs, but individual demands are continual and interconnected [17].

Leaders in Sports

Sports is a significant component of human existence since it is always dominated by competition and naturally moulds and creates leaders. According to the definition, sports leadership is the method through which individual activities are affected and groups are organised to accomplish specific goals [20]. As this definition highlights several critical components of leadership, it is a useful and practical definition of leadership in sports. The attributes described in this description pertain to certain aspects of world sports, including managing a team or group, establishing interpersonal relationships, offering feedback, encouraging group members, and decision-making abilities. The leader must develop trustworthiness in their profession to influence their followers. If leaders want to accomplish this, they must adhere to basic norms and operate coherently [21].

Additionally, some conditions must be met to develop a leader. By completing these leadership qualities, leaders' actions will be well appreciated by team members, resulting in the team's goals being easily accomplished. In sports, the modern leader is an integral element of the team who serves as both a player and captain. The team captain is the squad's primary strength, and the team is highly reliant on the leader. There is a possibility of a more complex situation developing with increased and more

significant collaboration with a leader. Additionally, a competent leader adheres to the rules, ensuring that the objectives are readily completed [22].

Practically, it is critical that clear principles and values guide the tasks at hand and that employees approach and adhere to the defined and mentioned principles daily, especially in difficult situations. The congruence of actions and words is also crucial in this section. Regularly cultivating honesty and strengthening self-awareness has a beneficial effect on team reinforcement. As a result, a leader's position is enhanced by keeping a positive demeanour [23].

Several studies have demonstrated that the coach serves as the team's leader. Additionally, it is assumed that the coach specialises in particular areas of the field. Additionally, the coach has experience and skills in managing and guiding the team's players to achieve the desired outcomes [24]. As part of their regular development programme, players make tactical and technical advancements under the guidance of the coach. As the coach has spent significant time with the players, he is also aware of their limitations and talents. In the presence of this knowledge, the coach is aware of the maximum output his players are capable of producing [25].

Tenure and Trust in Coach

In previous research, scholars defined team tenure as the total time spent by team members interacting. Numerous previous studies have demonstrated a positive influence of team tenure on an organisation's performance [11]. On the other hand, a small amount of research has indicated that the influence of team tenure is not yet evident. In contrast to newly created teams, team members spend the most time developing interpersonal information that enables them to focus on their performance [26]. With time, the team members acquire a shared understanding. On the other hand, team members' shared viewpoints and knowledge exchange are also developed [27]. However, team tenure might have a detrimental effect on performance at times.

Historically, experts have noted that the accumulation of knowledge among team members has a beneficial effect on the team's performance [28]. On the other side, there is the risk of knowledge ossification among team members, negatively affecting the team's effectiveness [29]. Numerous previous research has examined the effect of team tenure and team member trust. They reported that more time spent by team members improves team trust [30]. This is because team members must feel at ease to create trust. As a result, team members must invest time to do this. Historically, team members who spend less time together have a shared sense of psychological safety, negatively influencing trust [31].

Trust in Coach and Performance

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Justice and Trust

There are numerous dimensions to organisational justice. One of the components is distributive justice, defined as the legal judgement of fairness in economic transactions. The second dimension of justice is procedural justice, which relates to procedural fairness. The third component is interactional justice, which is concerned with how various judgements are communicated. In the interaction between leaders and team members, right positively affects team members' trust [32].

Distributive justice is critical in coaching in sports since it provides a chance for training, desired goals, playing time, and chosen goals. The coaches' attention will be required [33]. On the other hand, procedural justice refers to the coach's consistency in applying criteria. Finally, amicable interaction is indicative of interactional justice. These variables affect the organisation's performance [34].

Leadership and Trust

Trust is defined as one party's readiness to rely on another. Additionally, it implies that the other party will reciprocate if one cooperates. The team's leaders must be competent enough to build the leader-follower connection. This is because team members will lose trust in leaders if they believe they are incapable of completing a task [35]. Integrity and credibility are the cornerstones of trust. The term "leadership" is described as "creating a vision for followers" and "considering each team member individually" [36].

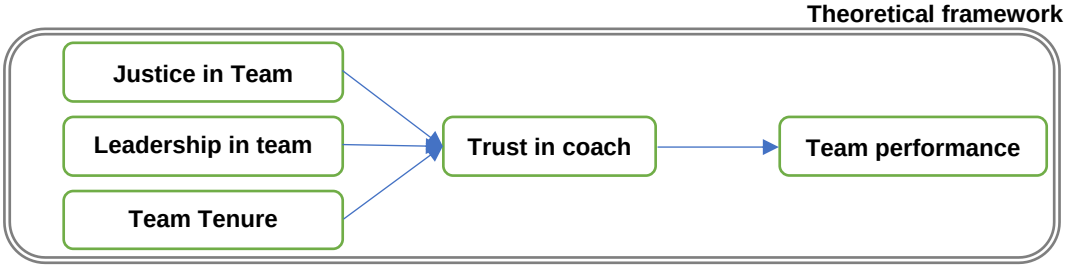
Numerous previous research supports the claim that justice is critical in developing trust among team members for the coach. The team's leadership is essential in developing confidence among the leaders. There are various explanations for the crucial significance of transformative leadership in creating the trust [37]. If the team's leader is motivated and determined to achieve specific goals, it instils confidence in the leaders. On the other hand, highly devoted and confident leaders play a critical role in developing trust between leaders and followers [38].

The following hypotheses are derived from the review as mentioned above of the literature.

H1: TJ has a positive relationship with TC.
H2: TL has a positive relationship with TC.
H3:TT have a positive relationship with TC.
H4: TC has a positive relationship with TP.
H5: TC mediates the relationship between TJ and TP.
H6: TC mediates the relationship between TT and TP.
H7: TC mediates the relationship between TL and TP.

Research Framework

FIGURE 1
Theoretical framework



The study framework presented above was built after reviewing the prior literature. Three independent variables are included in this model: team justice, leadership, and team tenure. In this study, trust in the coach serves as a mediating variable, and team performance is the dependent variable.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Three IVs are examined in this study: team leadership, team justice, and team tenure. Whereas team trust serves as the mediator in this study, and performance serves as the dependent variable. Individuals serve as the unit of analysis in this study. The study's population is made up of players from Malaysian sports teams. Such research, in which the sample is a subset of the population, should employ a survey approach. As a result, this study used a survey-based methodology. A questionnaire was utilised to obtain the data. The questionnaire was developed using the Likert 5 scale. When using this sort of questionnaire, a score of 1 indicates significant disagreement, and a score of 5 suggests strong agreement. The questionnaire's items were derived from previous research. The justice items were modified from Flavian, Guinalíu, and Jordan [39], the leadership things from Keller [40], the tenure items from Yi et al. [41], the trust items from Ho, Ang, and Straub [42], and the performance items from Keller [40] [43].

This is a cross-sectional study. The data for this investigation were gathered using a basic random sampling technique. The current research issued a questionnaire to 292 domestic and international football and hockey players. There were 207 complete questionnaires returned. Thus, the study's usable response rate was 70.92%. Following data collection, this study imported the data into SPSS to investigate missing values and guarantee normality. The SEM technique was used in this study. SMART PLS 3.3.3 was utilised to implement that method.

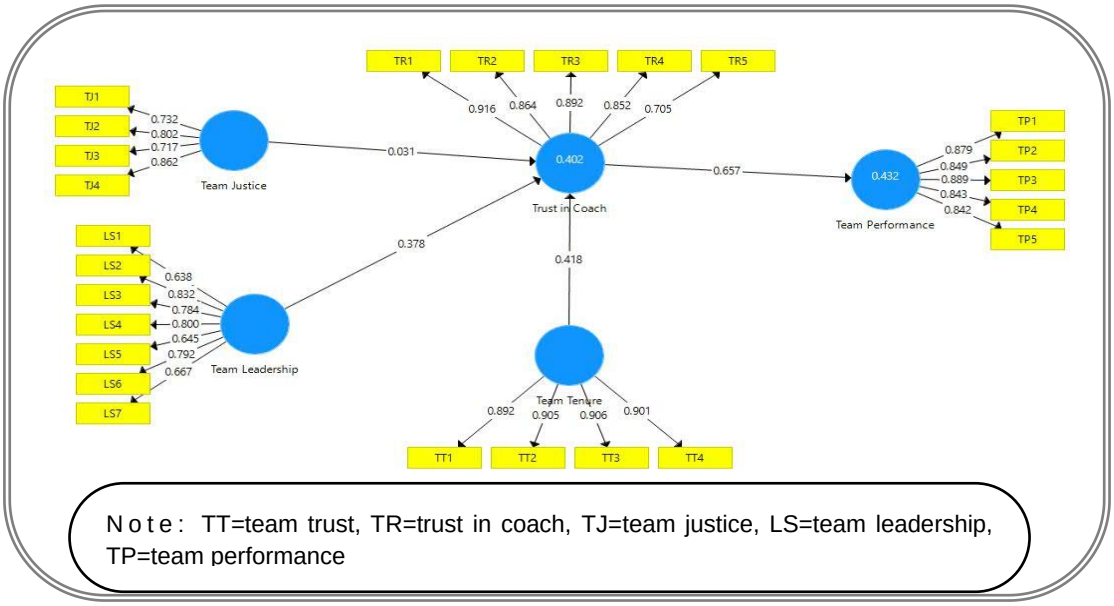
PLS-SEM was used in this work for various reasons, and there are several advantages to employing intelligent PLS. To begin, PLS-SEM is a highly complex, versatile, and robust method for model evaluation [44]. Additionally, PLS-SEM is beneficial for hypothesis testing and prediction [45]. Further, experts have argued that PLS-SEM tends to collect the most accurate values and outcomes for CFA [46]. Additionally, PLS-SEM is the most frequently employed statistical analytic technique in a variety of social science disciplines, including strategic management, operations management, family business management, management information systems, human resource management, business research, and marketing [47,48]. On the other hand, it may evaluate the relationship between variables via the internal model and determine variables' capability [49]. Additionally, experts suggested that PLS is more productive when dealing with atypical and typical data since it makes flexible assumptions about variable distribution and normalcy.

PLS-SEM estimation is performed under the assumption of normality and large sample size. Additionally, it can assess variation in comparison to the Covariance-based technique [48]. Finally, PLS-SEM enables the testing of complicated models, including those with mediation interactions [45]. Considering these recommendations, the current study utilised Smart PLS 3.3.3, which enables the determination of discriminant validity, convergent validity, and reliability via the outer model and the assessment of associations via the inner model [50].

4.0 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

According to the recommendations of Henseler, Ringle, and Sinkovics [51], this research used a two-step process for reporting and evaluating PLS-SEM data. The inner and outer models are the two steps of PLS [52].

Figure 2
Measurement Model



Note: TT=team trust, TR=trust in coach, TJ=team justice, LS=team leadership, TP=team performance

This research analysed the reliability of items using the first step, commonly known as the measurement model. This is accomplished by doing a factor loading or outer loading test on each item. The researchers proposed that each item's loading score be more than 0.70 [52]. Otherwise, any objects with a value of 0.70 or less must be eliminated. On the other side, Hair Jr et al. [53] urge that items with a factor loading of 0.40 to 0.70 be preserved. The results in Table 1 indicate that the factor loading of the variables included in this study is more significant than 0.40. As a result, each item is retained.

Table 1.
Factor Loading

	TJ	TL	TP	TT	TC
LS1		0.638			
LS2		0.832			
LS3		0.784			
LS4		0.800			
LS5		0.645			
LS6		0.792			
LS7		0.667			
TJ1	0.732				
TJ2	0.802				
TJ3	0.717				
TJ4	0.862				
TP1			0.879		
TP2			0.849		
TP3			0.889		
TP4			0.843		
TP5			0.842		
TR1					0.916
TR2					0.864
TR3					0.892
TR4					0.852
TR5					0.705
TT1				0.892	
TT2				0.905	
TT3				0.906	
TT4				0.901	

Note: TT=team trust, TR=trust in coach, TJ=team justice, LS=team leadership, TP=team performance

The next step in evaluating the measurement model is determining its internal consistency. Internal consistency dependability refers to the degree to which the study's scales are dependable. Historically, research has resorted to using composite reliability and Cronbach Alpha to assess the study's internal consistency reliability [54]. Additionally, Cronbach Alpha should be greater than 0.70.

By contrast, the range of CR is between 1 and 0. However, Henseler, Ringle, and Sinkovics [51] stipulated that the CR value must be at least 0.60. However, a number greater than 0.70 is more appropriate [55]. As a result, the figures in Table 2 indicate that CR and Cronbach Alpha are more significant than 0.70, which meets the criterion established by Joseph F Hair et al. [56].

Convergent validity analysis is the final level of analysis in the measurement model. Convergent validity is the degree to which variables can be used to represent a latent variable. Additionally, it illustrates the correlation between the same variables [51]. As a result of Henseler, Ringle, and Sinkovics [51]'s recommendations, convergent validity is tested in this study utilising AVE.

The arithmetic means of the extracted variance of the item loadings are utilised to calculate the AVE. At the same time, Henseler, Ringle, and Sinkovics [51] advocated for an AVE value greater than 0.50. The AVE values in Table 2 demonstrate that the conditions of Henseler, Ringle, and Sinkovics [51] are met, as all AVE values are more significant than 0.50.

Table 2.
Reliability

	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	(AVE)
TJ	0.803	0.861	0.609
TL	0.868	0.894	0.549
TP	0.912	0.934	0.740
TT	0.923	0.945	0.812
TC	0.901	0.928	0.721

Note: TT=team trust, TR=trust in coach, TJ=team justice, LS=team leadership, TP=team performance

Discriminant validity refers to the degree to which the study's variables vary. Additionally, scholars have referred to it as the degree of variation between constructions [57]. Thus, researchers supported Fornell and Larcker [58]'s criteria as a simple method for examining discriminant validity. Under Fornell and Larcker [58]'s criteria, discriminant validity is demonstrated when the square root of AVE at the diagonal is greater than the other values of the Henseler, Ringle, and Sinkovics [51] matrix. The table below indicates that this requirement is met.

Table 3.
Discriminant Validity [58]

	TJ	TL	TP	TT	TC
TJ	0.781				
TL	0.322	0.741			
TP	0.396	0.661	0.860		
TT	0.159	0.226	0.316	0.901	
TC	0.219	0.483	0.657	0.508	0.849

Note: TT=team trust, TR=trust in coach, TJ=team justice, LS=team leadership, TP=team

Additionally, the current study employed a different technique for determining discriminant validity. This is referred to as HTMT. Researchers asserted that Fornell and Larcker [58]'s criteria are unreliable for detecting discriminant value for various reasons. As a result, research cited an alternative to HTMT for determining discriminant validity. The HTMT scores must be less than 0.90 to meet these

conditions. This condition is also met, as indicated by the values in the table below. Thus, discriminant validity is established in this study.

Table 4.
HTMT

	TJ	TL	TP	TT	TC
TJ					
TL	**0.361**				
TP	**0.436**	**0.737**			
TT	**0.150**	**0.238**	**0.344**		
TC	**0.229**	**0.471**	**0.715**	**0.568**	

Note: TT=team trust, TR=trust in coach, TJ=team justice, LS=team leadership, TP=team performance

The examination of the structural model comes after assessing the measurement model. The bootstrapping approach examined suggested relationships based on the scholar's recommendations [59].

The study's statistical findings indicate a positive correlation between TJ and TC (Beta=0.031), but this link is not statistically significant (t-value = 0.489). As a result, the study's hypothesis H1 is unsupported. Additionally, beta=0.378 and t-value=5.649 indicate that TL and TC are strongly positively correlated, meaning H2 is supported. Subsequent findings indicate that TT and TC are entirely and significantly linked with Beta=0.418, t=4.461, corroborating H3. TC and TP exhibit a significant positive association with Beta=0.657 t=11.254 at the end of direct relationships. Thus, H4 is also supported.

Table 5.
Direct Results

HYP	Relationship	Beta	SD	T value	P Values	Decision
H1	TJ -> TC	0.031	0.062	0.489	0.313	Not Supported
H2	TL -> TC	0.378	0.067	5.649	0.000	Supported
H3	TT -> TC	0.418	0.094	4.461	0.000	Supported
H4	TC -> TP	0.657	0.058	11.254	0.000	Supported

Note: TT=team trust, TR=trust in coach, TJ=team justice, LS=team leadership, TP=team performance

Later in this study, the indirect and mediated effects of the study were studied. The table below illustrates these findings. According to these statistical findings, TC does not act as a mediator between TJ and TP, and hence H5 is not supported statistically. Later, H6 and H7 are statistically supported, as TC acts as a mediator between TT and TP and between TL and TP.

Table 6.
Indirect Results

HYP	Relationships	Beta	SD	T value	P Values	Decision
H5	**TJ -> TC -> TP**	0.020	0.041	0.485	**0.314**	**Not Supported**
H6	**TT -> TC -> TP**	0.274	0.061	4.511	**0.000**	**Supported**
H7	**TL -> TC -> TP**	0.249	0.055	4.555	**0.000**	**Supported**

Note: TT=team trust, TR=trust in coach, TJ=team justice, LS=team leadership, TP=team performance

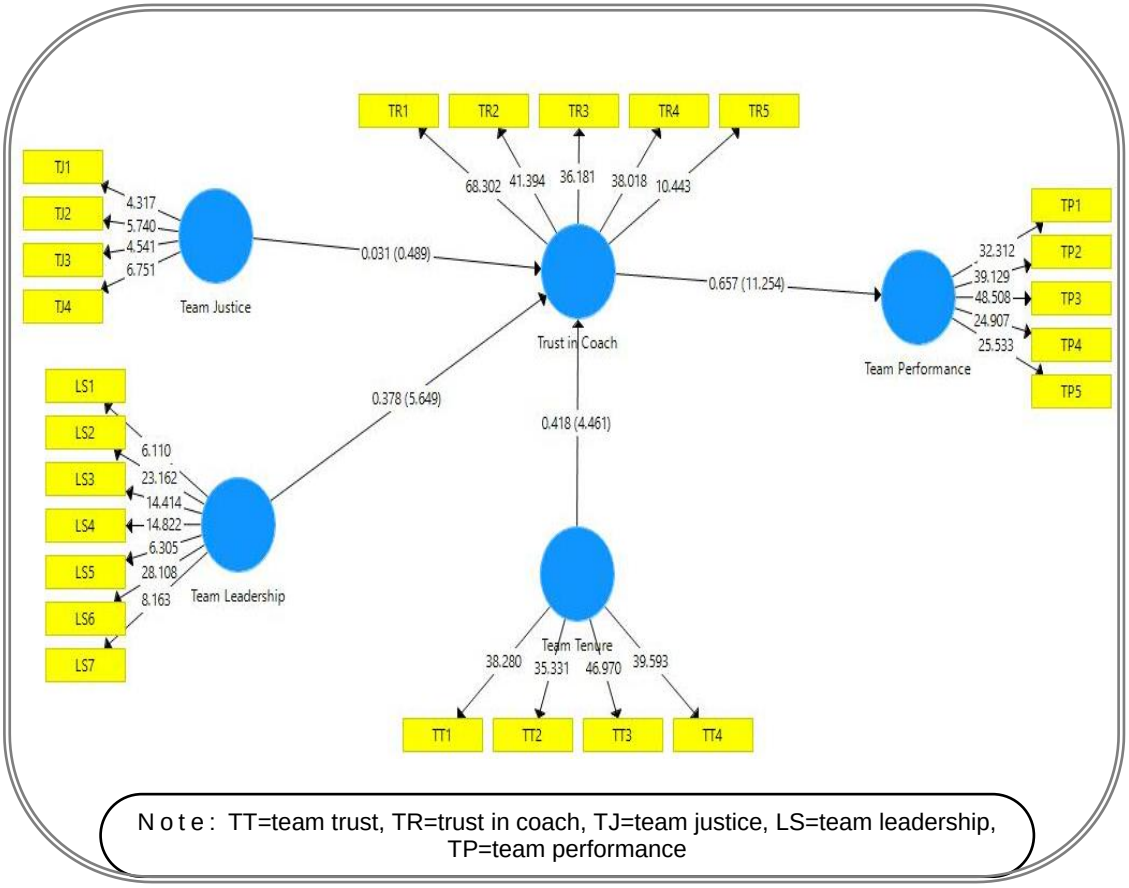
It is critical to assess the coefficient of determination, also known as R square, at a later stage of the structural model [60]. In this sense, a value of 0.27 is considered significant, 0.13 is deemed to be moderate, and 0.02 is considered weak [61]. Thus, the table below and figure 3 demonstrate that the values of R square are significant in this study.

Table 7.
R square

	R square
TP	0.432
Trust in Coach	0.402

Note: TR=trust in coach, TP=team performance

Figure 3.
Structural Model



Note: TT=team trust, TR=trust in coach, TJ=team justice, LS=team leadership, TP=team performance

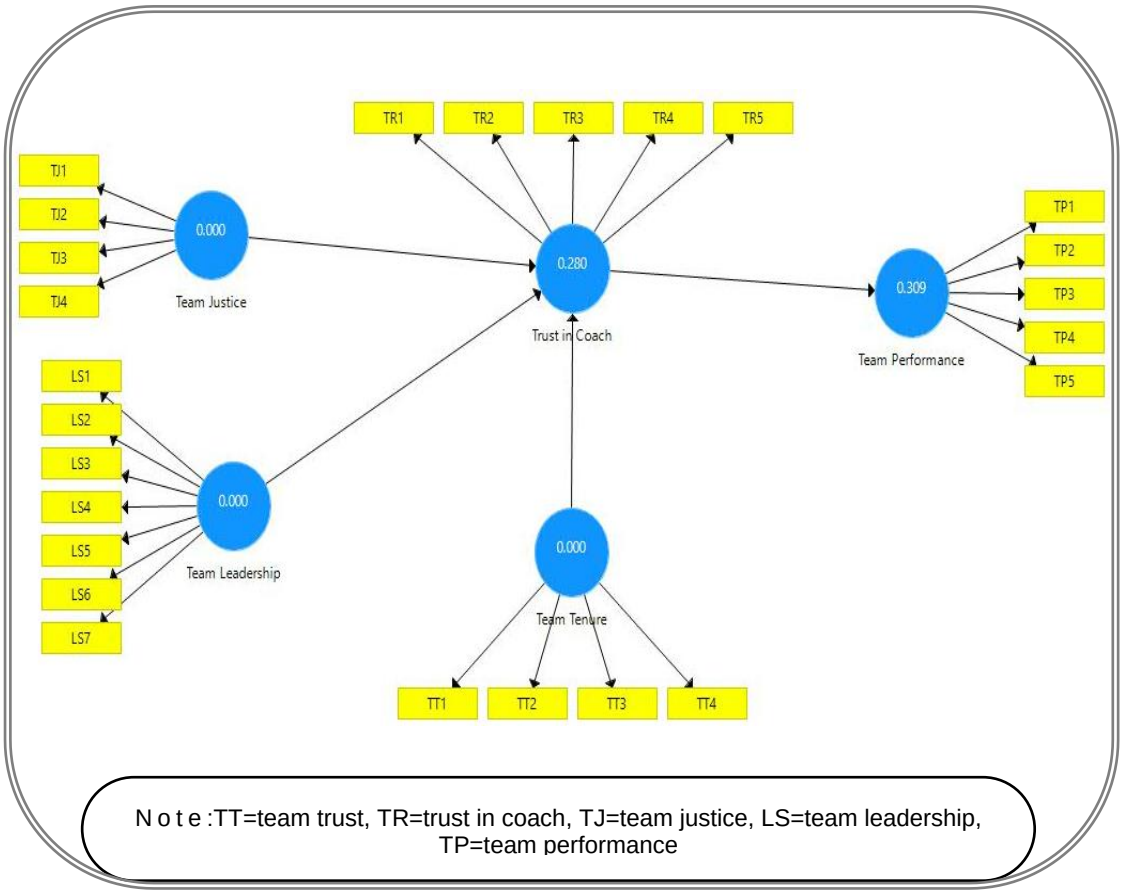
Additionally, this study examined the predictive relevance, also known as the Q square, following an analysis of the structural model. Blindfolding is used to determine predictive significance. If the value of Q square is more significant than zero, the study has predictive validity [51]. The following table and figure 4 demonstrate that this study established predictive relevance because the value of Q square is more significant than zero.

Table 8.
Q^2

	Q^2
TP	**0.309**
Trust in Coach	**0.280**

Note: TR=trust in coach, TP=team performance Note:

Figure 4.
Blindfolding



5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Sports have a significant role in our lives. In any sport, a team's performance depends entirely on its players. Numerous elements influence a player's performance, contributing to the team's total performance. As a result, this study studied the effect of many variables on the team performance of Malaysian football and hockey teams. The study's statistical findings indicate that team members must have faith in their coach or coaching staff. If players trust their coaching staff, they will communicate and work together to establish a winning plan in their respective sports. The study's findings are comparable to Lee, Min, and Lee [62].

Later, the study's findings confirmed that team players also spend more time with their teammates. They will have a higher level of communication if they spend time together. This will contribute to the coach's growth of trust. This study corroborates the findings of Seok et al. [31]. Additionally, the study's findings support the assertion that team leadership is critical in developing trust among team players and coaches. This result is likewise consistent with S. Y. Kim, Kim, and Kim [38]. Additionally, this study established the mediating function of trust in coaches in the relationship between leadership, tenure, and performance.

Additionally, this study has a few limitations. The current study collected data from Malaysian football and hockey players. Future research may also take data from existing studies. Additionally, the R square of this study is approximately 40%. This indicates that other things can affect the team's performance. Future research should discover and examine these elements as well. Finally, the conclusions of this study will aid academicians specialising in sports studies in their future research. Sports policymakers can also use these insights to help their teams perform better.

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