



## The Impact of Talent Management and Corporate Social Responsibility on Sustainable Competitive Advantage in Sports Organizations

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### ARTICLE INFO

**Article type :**  
*Original article*

**Article history:**

Received: 8 October 2024  
Received in revised form: 24  
November 2024  
Accepted: 28 November 2024  
Published online: 13  
December 2025

**Keywords:**

Talent Management,  
Social Responsibility,  
Competitive Advantage,  
Sports Organization.

### ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to investigate the impact of talent management and corporate social responsibility on the sustainable competitive advantage of sports organizations. This research employed a descriptive-correlational method with data collected through a field study. The study population comprised 110 employees of the General Department of Sports and Youth in West Azerbaijan Province in 2022. Based on the Morgan table, a sample of 86 employees was selected using simple random sampling. The research instruments included three standardized questionnaires. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics in SPSS 23 and structural equation modeling, specifically confirmatory factor analysis, in Smart PLS 3.1.1. The results of the study indicate that the research model fits well, with talent management ( $p=0.001$ ;  $t=30.990$ ) and corporate social responsibility ( $p=0.001$ ;  $t=3.270$ ) having a positive and significant impact on achieving a sustainable competitive advantage in sports organizations. These findings highlight that the effective integration of these two factors can significantly contribute to creating and maintaining a competitive edge. Therefore, sports organizations can enhance their competitive position and ensure long-term success by investing in human resource development and adhering to their economic, legal, ethical, and social responsibilities.

### Introduction

In recent decades, sports have evolved from a recreational activity into a major and rapidly growing sector of the global economy, contributing over \$700 billion annually (KPMG, 2016). The

**How to Cite:** Rahbar, M., Sarlab, R., Sadeghi, M. (2025). The Impact of Talent Management and Corporate Social Responsibility on Sustainable Competitive Advantage in Sports Organizations. *Journal of New Studies in Sport Management*, 6(4), 1-17. DOI: 10.22103/jnssm.2024.24151.1334



remarkable growth in the number of professional leagues and the increasing number of sports spectators, both in stadiums and via television broadcasts, have transformed sports into an attractive investment arena (Hassan et al., 2022). In this constantly changing environment, sports organizations strive to gain competitive advantages that not only enhance performance but are also sustainable and enduring. In the economic landscape, key indicators of success include competitiveness and efficiency, particularly in the sports sector, which has transitioned from a volunteer-based structure to a professional one. Sports organizations must redefine their strategic objectives, tools, and processes (Ekmekçi, 2019). Moreover, achieving sustainable competitive advantage varies under different conditions, and the differences between industries, as well as among companies within the same industry, can influence the methods used to maintain this advantage (Evans, 2016). Therefore, strategies for achieving competitive advantage must be tailored to the specific conditions of each industry, taking into account its unique characteristics. Given the distinctive features of the sports sector, identifying effective and modern strategies that go beyond traditional approaches is crucial for obtaining and maintaining a sustainable competitive advantage. Sustainable competitive advantage refers to superior performance relative to competitors that can be maintained over the long term (Evans, 2016). Reed and DeFillippi (1990) describe this advantage as "developing walls" that make it difficult for competitors to replicate a company's success. Furthermore, sustainable competitive advantage is considered the core of a company's performance and is a dynamic process that can adapt to current competitive demands without compromising the organization's ability to meet future needs (Mahdi et al., 2019; Porter, 2011).

Leonidou et al. (2013) concluded in their study that service industry players, due to the intangible nature of services, need to have more sustainable competitive advantages compared to manufacturing industries. Evans (2016) explores the fundamental differences between soft and hard services and their role in achieving sustainable competitive advantage in the tourism industry. Hard services can separate production from consumption and allow for standardization and mass production. In contrast, soft services, such as tourism and sports services, require simultaneous production and consumption, highlighting their intangibility and inseparability. Evans emphasizes the importance of managers understanding the fundamental characteristics of soft services to design strategies that leverage these unique features for competitive advantage. Additionally, according to the Resource-Based View (RBV), resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and organized provide competitive advantages to organizations (Tatoglu et al., 2016). Among these, talented and service-oriented employees are crucial for achieving sustainable competitive advantage in both manufacturing and service organizations (Abbasi & RahimiKolor, 2012). Talent within an organization refers to the key employees and leaders who propel the business forward (Hansen, 2007). Talent management is a vital instrument for fostering organizational learning and development (Ibrahim & Daniel, 2018). At its core, talent management involves a variety of Human Resource Management (HRM) activities and processes that are methodically designed to attract, identify, develop, engage, retain, and deploy talents that contribute strategic and sustainable value to the organization (Collings et al., 2019). Effective talent management processes enhance organizational competitiveness by reducing employee turnover and increasing employee satisfaction and commitment (Kaliannan et al., 2023). However, Kehinde (2012) also pointed out that talent management systems in many organizations have failed due to inadequate planning, ineffective management policies, and weak processes and programs. Nevertheless, effective strategies have a positive impact on attracting, hiring, and retaining talented employees, enabling organizations to leverage them for competitive advantage. To achieve sustainable performance and competitive advantage, it is essential for all departments to align with the overall organizational goals and enhance their operational capacity (Mary et al., 2015). McKinsey and Co highlighted the strategic importance of talent, predicting that over the next 20 years, talent will become the most crucial corporate resource. This talent includes individuals who are intelligent, advanced, technologically savvy, globally aware, and agile in operations (Ibrahim & Daniel, 2018). Despite the growing demand for such talent, its supply is expected to decrease, making the competition among companies to attract and retain these scarce talents a major concern in human resources (Mäkelä et al., 2010). Inclusive Talent Development (ITD), as part of broader Talent Management

(TM) strategies, focuses on developing all employees rather than only elite talent (exclusive talent development) (Crane & Hartwell, 2019). This approach is crucial due to the shortage of talent and global competition for top talent. It benefits both employee career growth and organizational growth and sustainability by utilizing talent as key resources for competitive advantage (Golubovskaya et al., 2019).

Another key factor in creating a competitive advantage for sports organizations is Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). CSR refers to the demands and expectations that people have of organizations (Goharrostami et al., 2022). Today, companies and organizations have become key elements in the social structure of humanity (Chen, 2018). Given this prominent role, expectations for these organizations to embrace their roles and responsibilities have increased (Zargar & Rynne, 2023). According to Carroll and Shabana (2010), the concept of CSR can be understood through four dimensions: ethical, economic, legal, and philanthropic commitments. In terms of the second and third dimensions, organizations are obligated to generate profit and meet societal needs while adhering to laws and regulations established by legal authorities. With respect to the ethical dimension, organizations are expected to respect the values, norms, beliefs, and convictions of the public (Boso et al., 2017). Finally, in the philanthropic dimension, organizations are expected to contribute to the reduction of social issues and the improvement of the quality of life in the community (Sierra et al., 2010). Recently, Wagner-Tsukamoto (2019) revisited and refined Carroll's CSR theory, concluding that adopting an integrated business approach to CSR can create mutual benefits, thereby reinforcing Carroll's theory. CSR policies have been widely adopted by companies across the globe, transforming the competitive landscape and industrial structures of economies worldwide (Cao et al., 2019). Numerous studies have shown that corporate social responsibility (CSR) has a positive impact on marketing performance. Jamali and Karam (2018) and Schreck and Raithel (2018) found that after examining the impact of CSR on company identity, image, and marketing performance, CSR enhances brand attractiveness and the organization's competitive advantage. Servera-Francés and Piqueras-Tomás (2019) noted in their research that implementing CSR policies in companies aimed at fulfilling consumer needs creates a competitive advantage. Recent studies on professional sports organizations (PSOs) have shown that engaging in CSR initiatives yields favorable outcomes (Smith & Casper, 2020). For example, Football Club Barcelona attributed its higher customer retention to its CSR activities (Hamil et al., 2010). Davies and Moyo (2017) found that Ajax Cape Town Football Club also gained several strategic benefits from its CSR initiatives, distinguishing its brand through these efforts. According to research conducted by Zargar and Rynne (2023), the effective implementation of CSR programs in Iranian sports clubs has yielded significant results. These initiatives have not only strengthened public trust but have also enhanced the clubs' competitive advantage by promoting sportsmanship, opening new market opportunities, and attracting fan attention. Thus, it is evident from various studies on CSR that it has a significant impact on the competitive positioning of sports organizations and can help them maintain a competitive advantage.

A comprehensive understand of the internal and external processes affecting competitive advantage in sports companies is essential. Previous study has mostly concentrated on external variables, such as branding and advertising, while neglecting the concurrent impact of internal elements, like talent management and corporate social responsibility (CSR), in cultivating lasting competitive advantage. Moreover, the majority of current research has examined CSR and talent management independently, with minimal emphasis on their integrated use to establish sustainable competitive advantage in sports. For example, prior research has investigated factors including talent management strategy (Rahimiaghdam et al., 2020), knowledge management methods (Mahdi et al., 2019), and green human resource management techniques (Gharibeh, 2019). This disparity indicates that sports organizations have not successfully utilized the synergy between these two domains. Moreover, the majority of existing research has been restricted to commercial and financial sectors, with less examination pertaining to sports organizations. Research on corporate social responsibility, consumer loyalty, and satisfaction (Goharrostami et al., 2022; Wei et al., 2020), together with the financial advantages for companies and enhancements in employees' mental well-being (Kim et al., 2018), has predominantly concentrated on non-sport sectors. The special characteristics of sports organizations, including their reliance on public trust and social

involvement, highlight the necessity of properly aligning internal talent management (TM) with external corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts. When coordinated, TM and CSR produce a synergistic effect. Corporate Social Responsibility projects gain credibility and efficacy when spearheaded by employees who are profoundly invested in the organization's mission. A strong commitment to CSR can augment the organization's attractiveness to elite talent, cultivating a favorable employer brand. This beneficial loop enhances both employee contentment and stakeholder relations. By highlighting this alignment, sports organizations can enhance their internal capabilities (via a motivated, value-oriented workforce) and their external influence (through significant CSR initiatives), attaining a balance that guarantees sustained success in a progressively competitive landscape. Given the importance of these factors and the existing gaps in research, the present study seeks to answer the following question: What is the role of talent management and corporate social responsibility in attaining sustainable competitive advantage within the General Directorate of Sports and Youth of West Azerbaijan Province?

## **Methodology**

In this study, the applied research approach focuses on a descriptive survey method, specifically employing the structural equation modeling (SEM) approach. The research population consisted of 110 employees from the General Directorate of Sports and Youth in West Azerbaijan Province in 2022. Based on the inclusion criteria, which required participants to have executive-management experience within the organization and relevant educational qualifications (sports management, physical education, and management), a purposive sample of 86 participants was selected. For data collection, after obtaining the necessary approvals and coordinating with the Faculty of Physical Education at Urmia University and the General Directorate of Sports and Youth in West Azerbaijan Province, the questionnaires were distributed in person. All questionnaires were completed and returned. The data collection process took place from late April to July 2022. The research utilized three standardized questionnaires: The Talent Management Questionnaire developed by Cunningham (2007) comprises 18 items measured on a five-point Likert scale. This questionnaire assesses talent management across four dimensions: talent selection, talent engagement, talent development, and talent retention. Its validity was confirmed by (Sharifzadeh et al., 2014), and its reliability was established with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.89. The Sustainable Competitive Advantage Questionnaire developed by Hill Charles et al. (2014) includes 16 items divided into four subscales: quality, innovation, customer responsiveness, and efficiency. The reliability of this questionnaire was reported as 0.792 in a study conducted by (Soltani et al., 2014). The Corporate Social Responsibility Questionnaire developed by Carroll (1991) consists of 20 items designed to evaluate four dimensions of social responsibility: economic responsibility, legal responsibility, ethical responsibility, and philanthropic responsibility. The reliability of this questionnaire was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.8 in a study conducted by (Ardalan & Bazi, 2015). All three questionnaires are standard and their validity and reliability have been confirmed in previous researches, but in order to re-examine and gain more confidence, in the current research, the face and content validity of the research tools were examined and approved by professors and sports management experts, and their reliability was also confirmed. From the data collection of 30 people from the statistical sample, using Cronbach's alpha test, it was confirmed that the Cronbach's alpha value of the talent management questionnaire was 0.858, the sustainable competitive advantage questionnaire 0.894 and the corporate social responsibility questionnaire was 0.745. Also, in this research, in order to check the construct validity of the research tool, convergent validity (AVE) and divergent validity (Fornell-Larker matrix) were used. The results of convergent validity showed that the AVE value of all variables was higher than 0.5, which indicates appropriate convergent validity and the root mean square value (AVE) of all first-order variables is greater than the correlation value between them, which indicates the appropriate divergent validity of the research tool. It shows

that more details of construct validity are reported in the results section of the research model fitting section.

Descriptive statistics (mean, median, and frequency) were used to describe the demographic characteristics of the research sample using SPSS23 software. For analyzing the primary research data, structural equation modeling (SEM) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were employed using SmartPLS3.1.1 software. All data analyses were conducted at a significance level of 0.05.

## Results

This section first describes the demographic information of the research participants, with the results presented in Table 1.

*Table 1.* Demographic characteristics of research participants

Demographic variables	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	16	18.6%
Male	70	81.4%
<b>Age</b>		
30 years or younger	8	9.3%
31 to 35 years	16	18.6%
36 to 40 years	24	27.9%
Over 40 years	38	44.2%
<b>Education</b>		
Associate Degree	4	4.7%
Bachelor's Degree	42	48.8%
Master's Degree	35	40.7%
Doctorate Degree	5	5.8%
<b>Service Duration</b>		
5 years or less	21	24.4%
6 to 10 years	16	18.6%
11 to 15 year	30	34.9%
More than 15 years	19	22.1%

In this section, data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with a specific focus on the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) technique, employing the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach through the SmartPLS 3.1.1 software. The evaluation of the reflective measurement model in PLS was based on three criteria: indicator reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Indicator reliability was assessed using three measures: (1) factor loadings, (2) Cronbach's alpha, and (3) composite reliability (Davari & Rezazadeh, 2013). The results related to factor loadings are presented in Figures 1 and 2. An examination of the factor loadings for each questionnaire item, as shown in Figure 1, reveals that the factor loading for three items is below 0.4, indicating that they should be removed from the model (these three items are highlighted in red in Figure 1). The remaining items have factor loadings greater than 0.4. Consequently, at this stage, the mentioned items were removed from the model, and the remaining items were retained for further analysis. In Figure 2, the corresponding items were removed, and the model was re-executed.

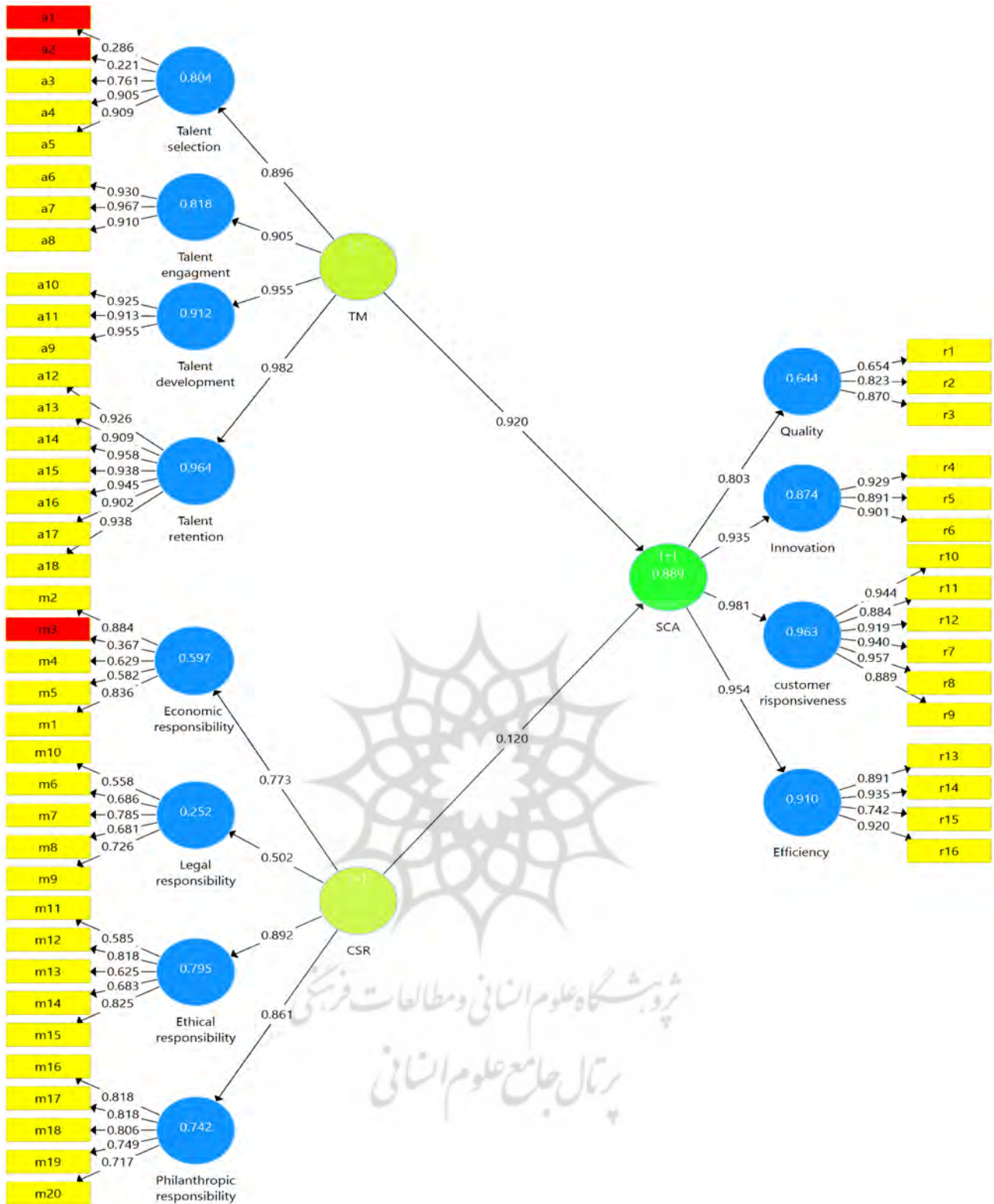


Figure 1. Model with Factor Loadings (Before Removing Items with Factor Loadings Below 0.4)

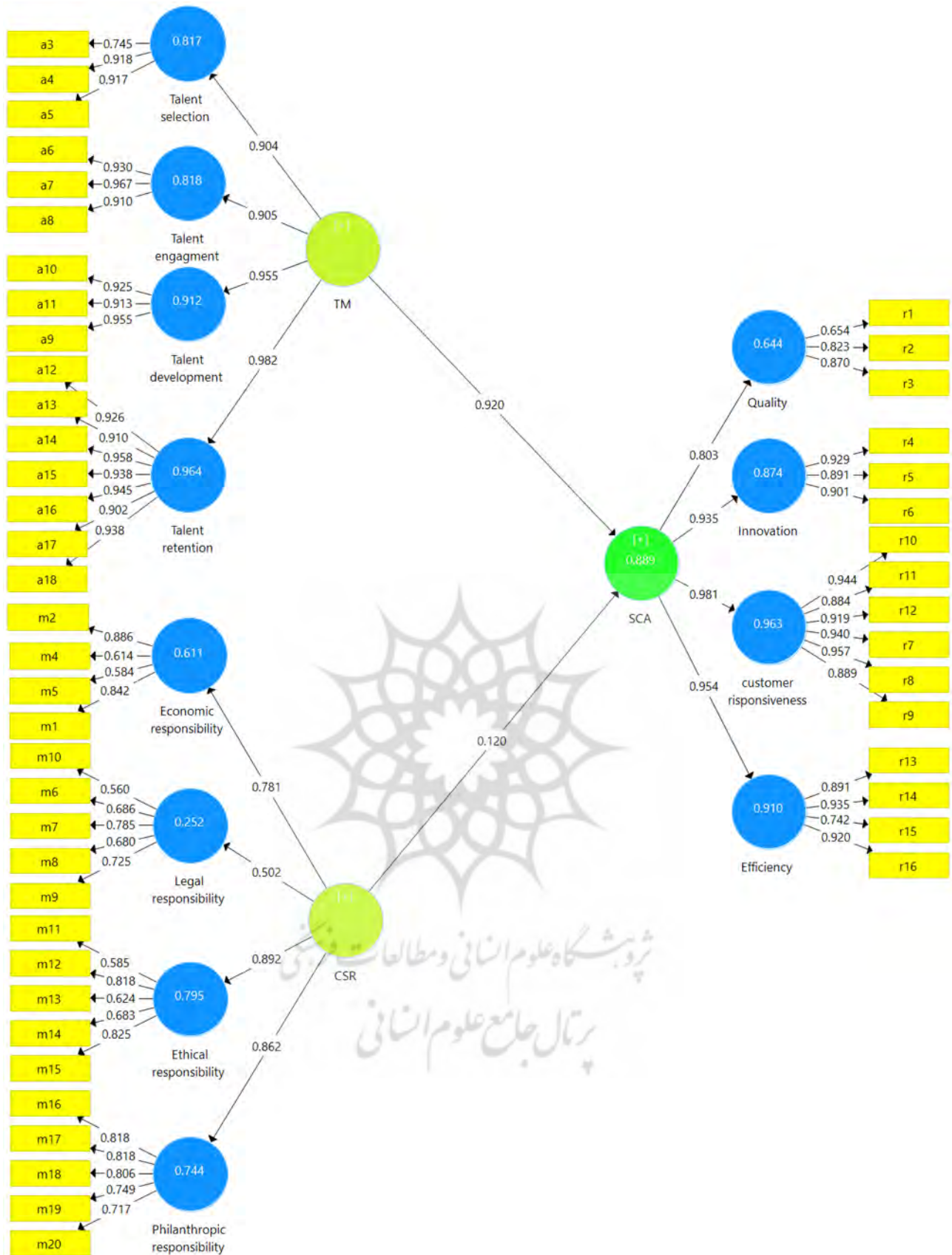


Figure 2. Model with Factor Loadings (After Removing Items with Factor Loadings Below 0.4)

To assess reliability, which indicates internal consistency and measurement accuracy, Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability coefficients were utilized. Table 2 reports the Cronbach's alpha values and composite reliability coefficients for all variables. Since both indicators have

values above 0.7 for all variables, the research instrument demonstrates adequate reliability, and the research model shows a good fit. Additionally, Table 2 presents the results for convergent validity (measured by the AVE criterion) and the variance inflation factor (measured by the VIF criterion). According to the results, all convergent validity values exceed 0.5, and the variance inflation factor values are below 5, indicating that both criteria are in satisfactory condition and support a good model fit.

*Table 2.* Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, AVE, and VIF Values

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE	VIF
Corporate Social Responsibility	0.863	0.885	0.507	3.524
Economic Responsibilities	0.723	0.827	0.553	3.237
Legal Responsibilities	0.732	0.819	0.578	2.243
Ethical Responsibilities	0.754	0.836	0.510	3.421
Philanthropic Responsibilities	0.841	0.888	0.613	1.714
Talent Management	0.964	0.972	0.678	1.425
Talent Selection	0.824	0.897	0.746	2.484
Talent Engagement	0.929	0.955	0.876	2.991
talent development	0.923	0.951	0.867	2.141
Talent Retention	0.974	0.979	0.867	1.214
Competitiveness	0.966	0.071	0.686	2.663
Quality	0.724	0.829	0.621	2.418
Innovation	0.983	0.933	0.823	1.953
Customer Responsiveness	0.965	0.972	0.851	3.556
Efficiency	0.895	0.929	0.766	2.137

Discriminant Validity is another criterion used to assess the fit of measurement models. To evaluate discriminant validity, the Fornell-Larcker matrix is employed. This method compares the correlation of a construct with its own indicators against its correlation with other constructs. Table 3 presents the Fornell-Larcker matrix for the current study.

*Table 3.* Fornell-Larcker Matrix Results

Variable	Competitiveness	Talent Management	Corporate Social Responsibility
Competitiveness	0.938		
Talent Management	0.935	0.943	
Corporate Social Responsibility	0.241	0.131	0.554

According to the matrix above, the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for all first-order constructs is greater than their correlations with other constructs. This indicates adequate discriminant validity and a good fit of the measurement models.

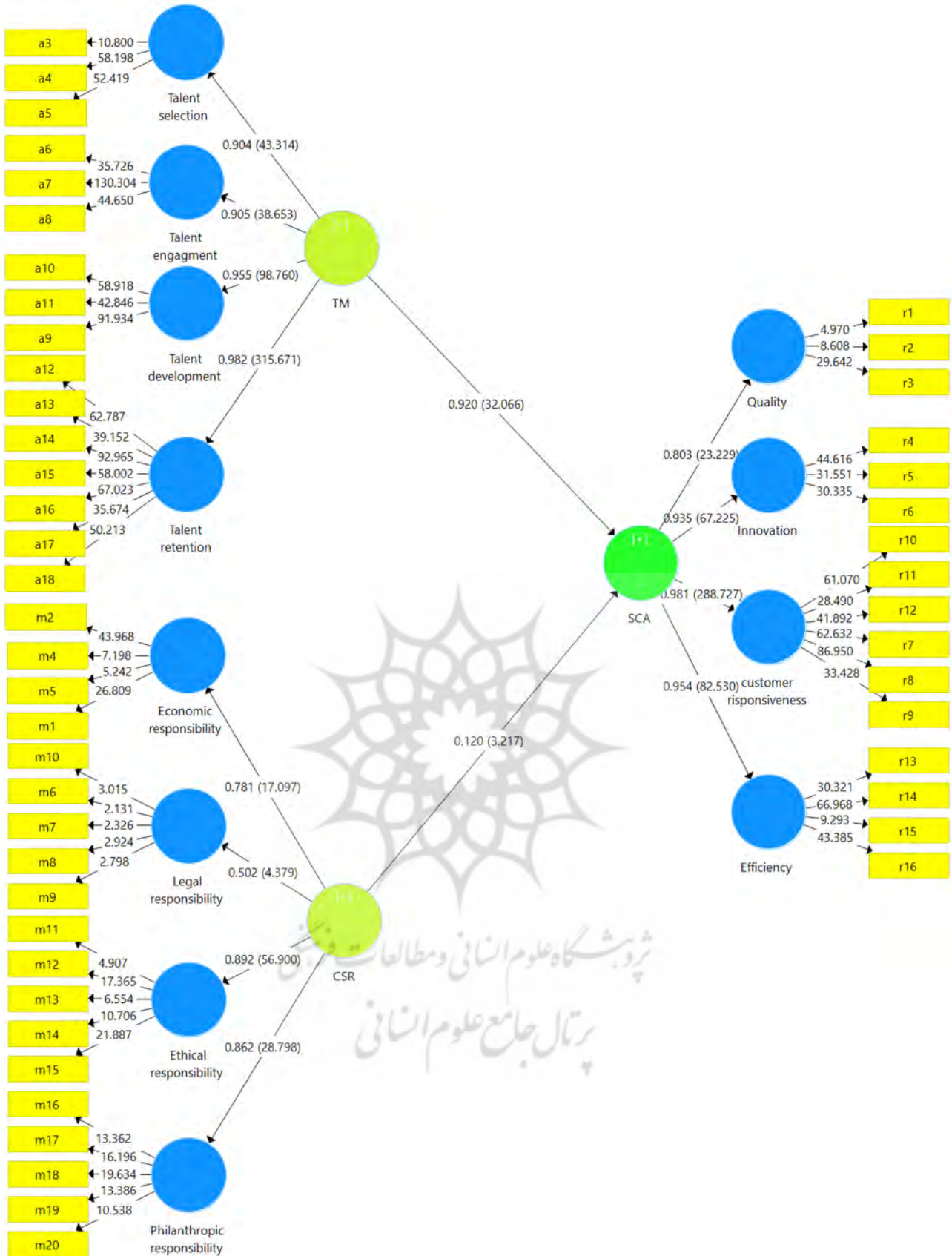


Figure 3. Model with Path Coefficients and t-values

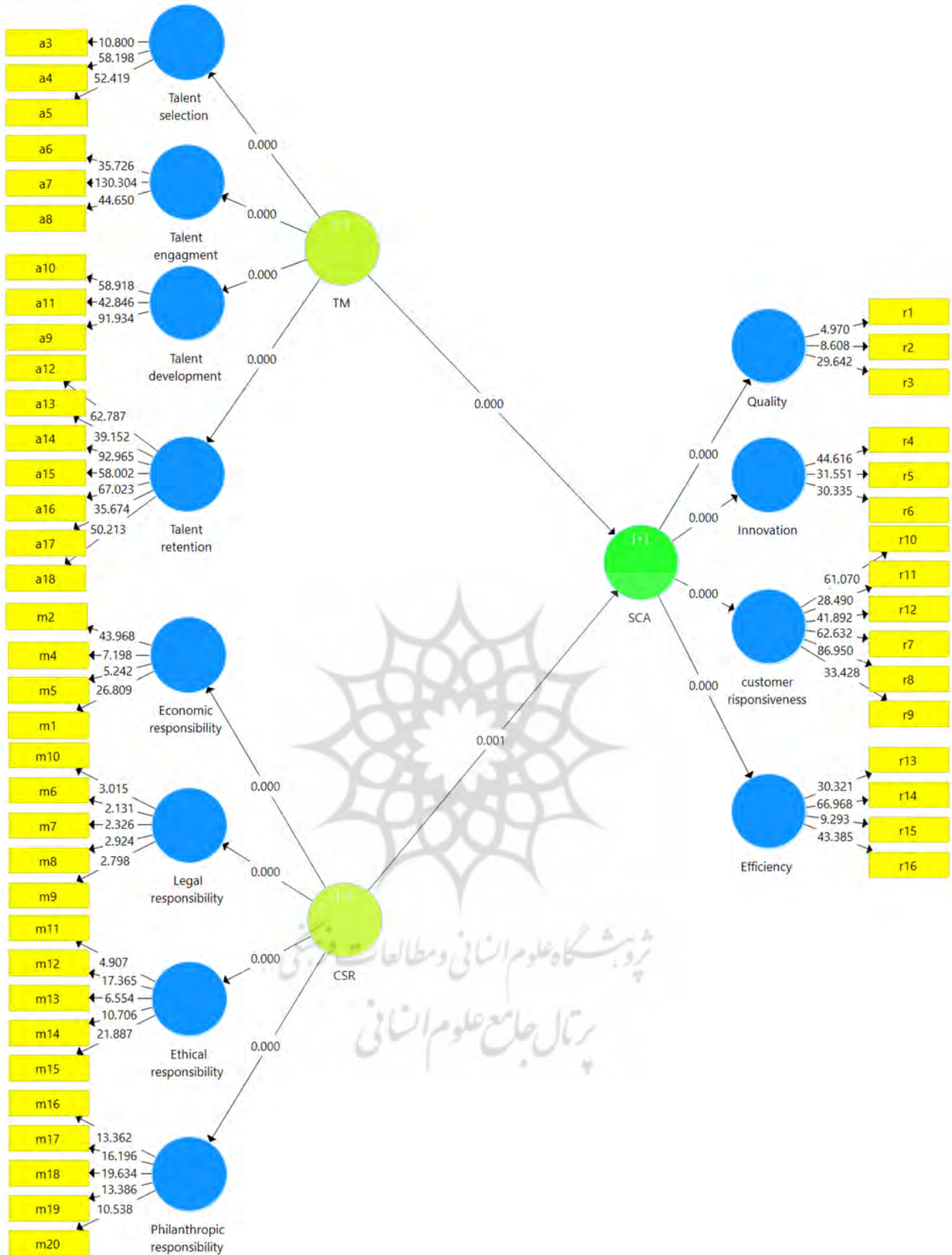


Figure 4. Model with p-value Significance Levels

In this section, three indices have been used to assess the fit of the structural model: 1) R-square and Q<sup>2</sup>, 2) effect size (F<sup>2</sup>), and 3) goodness of fit (GoF). Table 4 presenting the R-square and Q<sup>2</sup> indices for the structural model's fit.

**Table 4.** R-square and Q2 index

Variable	Competitiveness
R-square	0.889
Q <sup>2</sup>	0.552

Chin (1998) proposed three threshold values of 0.19, 0.33, and 0.67 for weak, moderate, and strong R-squares, respectively. Henseler et al. (2009) also suggested three threshold values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 for the predictive power (Q<sup>2</sup>) of the model concerning endogenous constructs (Davari & Rezazadeh, 2013). As shown in the table above, the R-squares index for the competitiveness construct exceeds the strong threshold of 0.67, indicating a good fit for the structural model. Additionally, the model's strong predictive power for this construct is confirmed. In Table 5, the values related to the F<sup>2</sup> index for the competitiveness construct are presented.

**Table 5.** F<sup>2</sup> index

Index	Talent management*competitiveness	Social responsibility*competitiveness
F <sup>2</sup>	0.507	0.158

Cohen (2013) defined three thresholds 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 for small, medium, and large effect sizes of one construct on another, respectively. According to Table 5, talent management exhibits a strong effect size on competitiveness, while social responsibility demonstrates a medium effect size on competitiveness. According to Wetzels et al. (2009), values of 0.01, 0.25, and 0.36 are defined as thresholds for weak, moderate, and strong goodness of fit (GoF), respectively. A GoF value of 0.789 indicates a high level of overall model fit. In the subsequent sections of the research, after evaluating the fit of the structural model, the various paths in the research model were examined based on the significant t-values and p-value S (Table 6).

**Table6.** Examination of Different Paths in the Research Model

Path	Path Coefficient	P-value	t-value
Talent Management → Competitiveness	0.920	0.001	30.990
Talent Management → Talent development	0.955	0.001	98.224
Talent Management → Talent Selection	0.904	0.001	45.563
Talent Management → Talent Retention	0.982	0.001	312.754
Talent Management → Talent Engagement	0.902	0.001	39.215
Corporate Social Responsibility → Competitiveness	0.120	0.001	3.270
Corporate Social Responsibility → Economic Responsibility	0.781	0.001	16.505
Corporate Social Responsibility → Philanthropic Responsibility	0.862	0.001	30.252
Corporate Social Responsibility → Ethical Responsibility	0.892	0.001	54.319
Corporate Social Responsibility → Legal Responsibility	0.502	0.001	4.817
Competitiveness → Innovation	0.935	0.001	68.261
Competitiveness → Customer Responsiveness	0.981	0.001	272.346
Competitiveness → Efficiency	0.954	0.001	85.534
Competitiveness → Quality	0.803	0.001	22.616

Table 6 presents the results of the path analysis for the research model, showing the path coefficients, p-values, and t-values for each path. The path coefficients represent the strength of the relationships between variables, with values closer to 1 indicating stronger effects. All paths have p-values of 0.001, indicating that the relationships are statistically significant. The t-values are notably high for most paths, especially those involving Talent Management → Talent Retention (312.754) and Competitiveness → Customer Responsiveness (272.346), suggesting very strong evidence for these relationships. The Corporate Social Responsibility → Competitiveness path has a lower

coefficient (0.120) and t-value (3.270), indicating a weaker but still significant relationship. Overall, the table illustrates the significance and strength of the various paths within the research model.

## Discussion and Conclusion

In the turbulent and competitive environment of organizations, achieving a sustainable competitive advantage is crucial for long-term success. This issue is of particular importance not only in business and industrial sectors but also in sports organizations. The results of this study indicate that talent management has a significant and positive impact on achieving a sustainable competitive advantage at the General Directorate of Sports and Youth of West Azerbaijan Province. These findings are consistent with the results of previous studies (Hassan et al., 2022; Rahimiaghdam et al., 2020). Managers and business owners have come to realize that organizations increasingly face challenges related to talent shortages rather than capital shortages (Kehinde, 2012). In sports organizations, talented staff play a crucial role in establishing a competitive edge by introducing innovation and making effective decisions to achieve organizational goals. Due to the growing competition for skilled labor, organizations are increasingly promoting their value propositions and positioning themselves as "employers of choice" to attract qualified candidates (Sparrow & Makram, 2015). To attract talent, sports organizations must focus on strengthening their brand as an "attractive and superior employer." Additionally, talent acquisition in sports organizations can be achieved through various methods, including online advertising, collaborating with recruitment agencies, launching training and internship programs, and partnering with universities to attract graduates and promising students. Furthermore, Knowledge and skills create competitive advantage because they enable innovation in products, services, and processes or improve their execution. Attracting skilled professionals with the necessary knowledge and skills is a competitive advantage. Efficiency and innovation are sub-components of sustainable competitive advantage. Additionally, how well an organization responds to customers, the expertise of its staff, ease of access to communication channels, and the quality of information provided are crucial and should be managed effectively to ensure customer satisfaction. Employees at the General Directorate of Sports and Youth in Urmia can engage in various activities to improve the organization's performance. These activities include participating in team projects and training workshops, providing suggestions for process improvements, joining cultural and social events, contributing to decision-making processes, developing new initiatives, and offering mentorship and support to colleagues. By involving employees in these activities, the organization can significantly boost their motivation and commitment. This increased engagement is crucial for achieving and maintaining a sustainable competitive advantage in sports organizations. Additionally, the General Directorate of Sports and Youth in Urmia can strengthen its competitive advantage by employing key employee development strategies. These include organizing specialized training workshops and professional development courses, offering coaching and individual mentoring, encouraging participation in relevant conferences, providing clear career advancement paths, conducting regular performance evaluations with constructive feedback, and fostering an environment that supports innovation and creativity. Organizations need to move from simple management practices to a targeted approach focused on retaining key employees, as losing these individuals can lead to the loss of crucial skills and threaten organizational growth (Ibrahim & Daniel, 2018). Kay and Moncarz (2004) that the turnover of key employees results in the loss of essential skills, poses a threat to organizational growth, and can disrupt the operations of the organization. Employee turnover also incurs significant costs due to the expenses of recruiting and training new hires. Therefore, organizations must implement effective strategies to retain top talent and align recruitment with future needs and retention plans. Additionally, the responsibility for developing employees should not be left solely to the individuals themselves but should be managed by the human resources department (Ibrahim & Daniel, 2018).

Another finding of the study revealed that corporate social responsibility (CSR) has a positive and significant impact on gaining a sustainable competitive advantage in the General Directorate of Sports and Youth in West Azerbaijan Province. This finding is consistent with numerous studies, all of which indicate that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) plays a significant role in enhancing

the organizational image (Jamali & Karam, 2018; Moyo et al., 2022; Nochamani et al., 2021; Sadeghimoghaddam et al., 2021; Schreck & Raithel, 2018). In the modern world, organizations striving for a competitive edge must engage with communities and institutions in ways that reflect goodwill and altruism. This means taking responsibility for the social and environmental impacts of their operations and actively working to create positive change. Such efforts not only enhance the organization's public image but also lead to increased satisfaction among external stakeholders and employees alike. The benefits of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in sports organizations—including brand loyalty, brand recognition, a positive brand image, an expanded fan base, increased sponsorship, optimized sponsorship leverage, and greater commercial value—appear to stem from core marketing objectives. These findings offer empirical support for the idea that CSR can be effectively utilized as a strategic marketing tool (Moyo et al., 2022). The findings of Story et al. (2016) indicate that corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities have a significant positive impact on organizational attractiveness. This is important because attracting talent to organizations is a key challenge for today's human resource managers and a crucial source of competitive advantage for firms. In this regard, the General Directorate of Sports and Youth of Urmia can achieve improved performance and sustainable competitive advantage by employing the four dimensions of corporate social responsibility (i.e., economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic). These four dimensions, each from different perspectives, address the organization's commitments to create a positive impact on society and can lead to the organization's enhanced position and success in various ways. The economic responsibility emphasizes profitability and organizational efficiency, focusing on increasing revenue and reducing costs to contribute to a sustainable competitive advantage. For the General Directorate of Sports and Youth of Urmia, this dimension can be achieved through the development and implementation of revenue-generating sports programs and attracting sponsors. For example, creating new and profitable sports programs can boost the organization's revenue and enable it to offer higher-quality services. This, in turn, provides the organization with more resources to invest in improving infrastructure and sports programs, thereby strengthening its competitive position. Attracting financial sponsors from private companies and enhancing economic interactions can place the organization in a better position for growth and help it compete more effectively against rivals. This approach also contributes to improving the organization's brand reputation. Regarding legal responsibility, the General Directorate of Sports and Youth of Urmia can establish itself as a credible and trustworthy organization by strictly adhering to regulations and legal standards. For example, ensuring compliance with safety and legal standards in sports programs and activities helps the organization avoid legal issues and build trust with the community and stakeholders. This enables the organization to operate with greater confidence in a competitive environment. Additionally, transparency in contracts and interactions with partners and stakeholders enhances the organization's reputation as a lawful and fair entity, which constitutes a competitive advantage in itself. Ethical Responsibility and respect for social norms play a crucial role in building trust and loyalty within the community towards the organization. The General Directorate of Sports and Youth of Urmia can enhance its public image by promoting ethical values such as equality and fairness, and ensuring equal access to sports facilities for all segments of society, particularly vulnerable groups. Providing transparent reports and making responsible decisions in management also helps increase stakeholder trust. These approaches strengthen the organization's relationships with the community and create a sustainable competitive advantage. Philanthropic Responsibility relates to the organization's charitable and volunteer activities, focusing on improving the quality of life and providing social support. The General Directorate of Sports and Youth of Urmia can play a significant role in enhancing community well-being by organizing charity sports events and offering free services to vulnerable groups such as child laborers, the elderly, or those with specific illnesses. These initiatives not only build a positive image of the organization but also increase its popularity among the public, strengthen social connections, and enhance local engagement, ultimately contributing to a sustainable competitive advantage.

This study clearly demonstrates the significant impact of talent management and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on establishing and sustaining a competitive advantage in sports organizations. Effective talent management, which encompasses attraction, engagement,

development, and retention of athletes and staff, is recognized as a key factor in enhancing competitive superiority. Sports organizations must focus on attracting top talent by strengthening their employer brand and providing professional growth opportunities. Additionally, implementing effective retention strategies is crucial to mitigate the high costs associated with staff turnover and to ensure organizational stability. On the other hand, CSR serves as a strategic tool that can effectively improve public image and stakeholder relationships, contributing to a sustainable competitive advantage. Sports organizations should integrate CSR into their core strategies and address economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities. Initiatives such as launching revenue-generating sports programs, adhering to legal and ethical standards, and promoting charitable activities can help bolster financial standing, enhance reputation, and build positive connections with the community and stakeholders.

Therefore, the effective integration of both talent management and CSR can help sports organizations achieve a sustainable competitive advantage and strengthen their position in today's competitive environment. For future research, examining the interaction between emerging technologies such as data analytics and sports performance technologies with talent management and CSR could reveal innovative pathways for gaining a competitive advantage. Additionally, analyzing the perspectives of various stakeholders, including athletes, staff, and sponsors, could provide deeper insights into the impacts of talent management and CSR, helping to refine strategies for sports organizations.

### Ethical Considerations

**Compliance with ethical guidelines:** In this research, ethical considerations related to research, including data extraction from reliable sites, have been observed.

**Funding:** This research was done without using financial resources.

**Authors' contribution:** All authors participated equally in all phases of this research.

**Conflict of interest:** Informs that this work has not been published elsewhere and has not been submitted to another publication at the same time. Also, all rights to use the content, tables, images, etc. have been assigned to the publisher.

**Acknowledgments:** The respected referees are thanked for providing structural and scientific comment.

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