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Designing a Structural Model of Talent Management Based on Good Governance in the Sports Organization

ABSTRACT

Talent management is a set of integrated human resource processes that function beyond the boundaries of individual HR practices. A talent management strategy requires a comprehensive perspective on these processes. The present study aimed to design a structural model of talent management based on good governance in the sports organization. This research, in terms of purpose, is exploratory and, in terms of application, is applied. The methodology adopted is a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches. In the qualitative phase, thematic analysis and open, axial, and selective coding were applied. In the quantitative phase, structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to evaluate the research model and examine the relationships among the designed questions and model categories. The statistical population in the qualitative part consisted of 15 senior managers of the sports organization in Tehran, who were considered experts for the qualitative stage. In the quantitative part, the population included 200 middle managers and experts from the sports organization in Tehran. Using the Krejcie and Morgan table, 127 participants were selected as the statistical sample. The data collection tool in the qualitative phase was semi-structured interviews, designed based on the components of the paradigmatic model. In the quantitative phase, a 57-item questionnaire was developed, derived from the conceptual model formed in the interview stage. To assess reliability in the qualitative phase, the test–retest method was applied. For the quantitative phase, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to determine the reliability of the questionnaire; the alpha coefficient for all variables exceeded 0.70, indicating acceptable reliability. In the quantitative analysis, SEM was employed, and all computations were performed using SmartPLS software. The findings revealed that the main components of the structural model of talent management based on good governance in the sports organization include: managing generational differences based on good governance, sustainability of talent management based on good governance, talent identification based on good governance, talent acquisition based on good governance, talent development and empowerment based on good governance, talent retention based on good governance, and talent management performance evaluation based on good governance. Moreover, the resulting model demonstrated appropriate validity.

Keywords: Talent Management, Good Governance, Structural Model, Sports Organization

Introduction

In the contemporary organizational landscape, talent management has emerged as a critical strategic capability that shapes sustainable competitiveness and long-term value creation. As global markets become increasingly knowledge-driven and digitally interconnected, organizations face complex pressures to identify, attract, develop, and retain high-performing employees while simultaneously aligning these efforts with the principles of good governance and ethical management [1]. Traditional human resource practices, often transactional and reactive, are no longer sufficient; instead, a holistic and integrative approach to talent management is required to respond to rapid technological changes, shifting workforce

demographics, and evolving stakeholder expectations [2, 3]. Talent management is no longer confined to the recruitment and development of employees; it represents a strategic architecture that supports organizational agility, resilience, and sustainable performance [4, 5].

The concept of good governance—characterized by transparency, accountability, equity, responsiveness, and rule of law—provides an essential framework for strengthening talent management systems [6]. Integrating governance principles into talent management ensures that processes such as recruitment, career development, and performance evaluation are fair, inclusive, and strategically aligned with organizational values [7]. Such alignment is particularly significant in public and semi-public sectors, where stakeholder trust and ethical stewardship of human capital are critical to operational legitimacy [8]. Research shows that governance-driven human resource models can improve fairness in talent pipelines and strengthen institutional capacity to navigate environmental and societal changes [9]. Furthermore, organizations embracing good governance are better positioned to create equitable talent ecosystems that value generational diversity and leverage diverse perspectives for innovation and sustainability [10, 11].

The rapid digital transformation of organizations has intensified the urgency for strategic talent management frameworks that are both adaptive and future-oriented [12, 13]. As digital technologies reshape business models, work processes, and skill requirements, talent strategies must anticipate and respond to evolving competencies, digital literacy, and innovation demands [14]. Mahroof [12] highlights that digital transformation disrupts traditional talent pipelines by creating both opportunities and resistance; leaders must actively manage change to sustain employee engagement and mitigate the fear of technological displacement. Similarly, Montero Guerra [13] argues that organizations undergoing digital change must redesign their HR systems to remain agile while safeguarding employee trust and well-being.

Emerging frameworks, such as Lean Human Resource 4.0, integrate advanced technologies to improve employee experience and data-driven decision-making [14]. These systems enable predictive analytics for recruitment, personalized learning pathways, and real-time performance monitoring, enhancing responsiveness and fairness. However, as digital HR tools expand, good governance mechanisms become essential to ensure transparency, protect employee data, and prevent bias in technology-enabled talent assessments [9]. Organizations that fail to embed ethical and governance standards into digital talent management risk exacerbating inequalities and disengagement among employees [2].

Modern organizations also face the challenge of managing a workforce spanning multiple generations—Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z—each with distinct expectations, values, and learning preferences [15]. Inclusive talent development has emerged as a vital strategy for addressing generational complexity by designing equitable opportunities for growth, adaptability, and meaningful career experiences [3]. Inclusive practices such as participatory decision-making, flexible career pathways, and skills-based assessments can foster psychological safety and organizational commitment among diverse employee groups [16].

Gowharrostami [10] and Talebzadeh [11] emphasize that in sectors like sports and education—where generational diversity among employees is highly visible—developing adaptive models for talent attraction, retention, and development is crucial for sustaining institutional knowledge and organizational innovation. Similarly, research by Maleki [17] underscores the significance of employee participation in designing talent frameworks, which fosters inclusion and strengthens engagement across different age groups. Effective integration of governance values in these contexts enhances trust, reduces perceptions of favoritism, and aligns career development with fairness principles.

As organizations encounter unprecedented environmental and social disruptions, talent management must become more agile, resilient, and sustainability-oriented [18]. Agile talent management emphasizes adaptability, iterative skill development, and rapid responsiveness to changing external conditions. Subrahmanyam [18] demonstrates that higher education institutions, facing volatile global environments, have turned to agile HR models to ensure their talent remains relevant and committed. Such agility is enhanced when paired with strong governance systems that safeguard ethical standards during rapid transitions [6].

Sustainability in talent management further extends beyond immediate operational needs to long-term employee well-being, environmental consciousness, and socially responsible workforce policies [5]. Sustainable HR practices, including transparent career progression, green recruitment, and equitable resource allocation, not only support corporate responsibility but also strengthen employer branding and retention. In sports organizations, where public accountability and community impact are highly visible, sustainable talent practices can cultivate loyalty and improve organizational legitimacy [10, 11]. Integrating sustainability with good governance transforms talent management into a mechanism for both competitive advantage and societal value creation [7].

Despite significant advances in talent management theory and practice, scholars note persistent conceptual ambiguities and fragmented frameworks [2]. The term "war for talent" has been critiqued for fostering hyper-competition and transactional relationships, undermining sustainable and ethical people strategies [2]. Mohammadi Moghaddam [1] points out that while talent management literature has grown substantially, many models remain context-specific, failing to integrate governance principles systematically. Furthermore, digital transformation and globalized talent mobility have outpaced traditional conceptual frameworks, creating a pressing need for contextually relevant, ethically anchored models [12, 13].

In addition, empirical research addressing talent management in emerging economies and sector-specific contexts, such as public service and sports organizations, remains limited [10, 11]. Maleki [17] argues that participatory talent models are underexplored in environments where hierarchical culture and centralization dominate decision-making. Similarly, Shamani [8] underscores the need for holistic frameworks that integrate governance, digital transformation, and learning organizations to address knowledge-based growth. Chinchilla [4] emphasizes that bridging talent management and organizational learning fosters dynamic capability building, yet the governance dimension of learning organizations remains underdeveloped in scholarship.

This study responds to these theoretical and practical gaps by designing and testing a structural model of talent management anchored in good governance principles and tailored to the specific context of sports organizations. Sports institutions often operate at the intersection of public accountability, performance excellence, and cultural significance, making them a complex environment for talent systems [10, 11]. Furthermore, digitalization, global competition, and generational shifts have added layers of complexity to talent management in this sector [12, 19]. Yet, few empirical studies provide a comprehensive and context-driven model that integrates governance frameworks with talent attraction, development, and retention strategies in sports management.

By leveraging a mixed-methods approach, this research seeks to provide both theoretical refinement and actionable insights for policymakers and managers. The study incorporates good governance dimensions—such as transparency, accountability, inclusivity, and ethical compliance—into talent management processes, while also recognizing the dynamic

digital environment and the need for agile adaptation [9, 14]. This integration offers a balanced perspective that addresses organizational performance imperatives and social legitimacy, advancing beyond fragmented HR models [4, 5].

The proposed model is expected to strengthen organizational capacity to manage talent in a way that is fair, data-driven, and sustainable. It builds on previous efforts to conceptualize talent strategies in sports and public service [10, 11] while embedding digital transformation as an enabler rather than a disruptor [12, 13]. Moreover, the study responds to the call for contextually embedded frameworks that respect local governance and cultural factors while aligning with global HRM best practices [7, 8].

From a practical standpoint, the model will help sports organizations move beyond ad hoc HR practices to structured talent ecosystems that promote generational inclusivity, ethical leadership, and adaptive learning. By aligning talent management with governance, organizations can reduce turnover, enhance engagement, and strengthen their reputation among employees and stakeholders [15, 16]. Furthermore, the integration of sustainability principles positions talent management as a driver of long-term societal impact, resonating with global shifts toward responsible business and social accountability [5, 14].

In summary, the growing complexity of talent challenges—driven by digital disruption, workforce diversity, and ethical demands—requires innovative and context-sensitive solutions. This study addresses these needs by offering a structural, governance-driven model tailored to sports organizations.

Methodology

The present study, in terms of its purpose, is exploratory and, in terms of application, is applied. The research method is a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches. In the qualitative phase, thematic analysis and open, axial, and selective coding were used. In the quantitative phase, structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed to assess the research model, examine the relationships among its components, and analyze the associations between the designed questions and the categories of the model.

The statistical population in the qualitative phase consisted of 15 senior managers of the sports organization located in Tehran, who were considered experts for the qualitative stage. In the quantitative phase, the population comprised 200 middle managers and experts from the sports organization in Tehran. Based on the Krejcie and Morgan sampling table, 127 individuals were selected as the statistical sample.

The data collection tool in the qualitative phase was a semi-structured interview, designed according to the components of the paradigmatic model and the strategy of thematic analysis. In the quantitative phase, a questionnaire was used as the data collection instrument. This 57-item questionnaire was developed based on the conceptual model derived from the interviews.

To assess reliability in the qualitative phase, the test–retest method was applied. In the quantitative phase, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to measure the reliability of the questionnaire; the calculated Cronbach's alpha for all variables exceeded 0.70, indicating acceptable reliability. In the quantitative analysis, SEM was employed, and all computations were performed using SmartPLS software.

Findings and Results

After completing the interviews, the coding process began. Following the transcription of the interviews with experts and specialists, the data were examined word by word, and key points from each interview were extracted as open codes. After completing the interviews, the open coding process commenced; codes from the expert interviews were extracted through open coding, and then shared codes, along with other significant codes identified by the researcher, were finalized.

For accurate categorization of concepts among the categories, each concept, after separation, was labeled, and the raw data were conceptualized by thoroughly reviewing the interview transcripts and field notes. In the initial stage, after conducting the interviews with experts, 354 preliminary codes were extracted. Then, by grouping similar extracted codes, the main concepts were identified. Based on this, 57 concepts were recognized, and ultimately, all inferred concepts were categorized under the following seven main categories:

1. Managing generational differences based on good governance
2. Sustainability of talent management based on good governance
3. Talent identification based on good governance
4. Talent acquisition based on good governance
5. Talent development and empowerment based on good governance
6. Talent retention based on good governance
7. Talent management performance evaluation based on good governance

The main and subcategories are presented in the following table:

Table 1

Main and Subcategories Related to Talent Management Based on Good Governance

Basic Themes	Organized Themes	Overarching Themes
Structured fair learning system	Talent management for Generation X	Managing generational differences based on good governance
Annual feedback system		
Establishing work–life balance		
Interactive and digital-based learning system	Talent management for Generation Y	
Continuous periodic feedback system		
Flexible work–life system		
Instant responsive feedback system	Talent management for Generation Z	
Rapid fair learning system		
Responsible work–life integration		
Supporting talents to engage with social entrepreneurs	Social responsibility	Sustainability of talent management based on good governance
Monitoring compliance with international labor laws		
Involving talents in philanthropic social projects		
Employing low-carbon, digital-based tools	Environmental responsibility	
Environmental sustainability in talent development		
Transparent investment in future-oriented skills	Economic responsibility	
Responsible and optimal use of human capital		
Fair distribution of project-generated profits		
Competency-based structured interviews with talents	Transparency and fairness in talent identification	Talent identification based on good governance
Assessing talent capabilities in sports data analytics		
Using psychometric assessments		
Using skills-based assessments		
Relevant professional experience in sports	Accountability in talent identification	
Complaint registration system		
Compliance with regulations throughout talent identification	Rule of law in talent identification	
Ethical adherence during all talent identification stages		
Oversight during all talent identification stages		

Digital ranking system with standardized criteria	Transparency and accountability in talent acquisition	Talent acquisition based on good governance
Periodic recruitment statistics reports		
Mapping organizational competencies based on fairness		
Anti-discrimination policies in recruitment	Fairness and responsibility in talent acquisition	
Green recruitment		
Job–talent fit fairness		
Designing personal–career growth pathways	Transparency and accountability in talent development	Talent development and empowerment based on good governance
Psychological support systems		
Publishing periodic progress reports of talents		
Developing transparent supportive policies for talents		
Creating opportunities for all generations to engage in innovation	Participation in talent development	
Forming intergenerational problem-solving teams		
Including all generations in expert working groups		
Targeted support for underrepresented talents	Fairness in talent development	
Fair job rotation processes		
Equal opportunities for career advancement		
Supporting mentoring programs by experienced staff	Accountability and responsibility in talent development	
Defining frameworks for talent autonomy		
Creating a stable and safe work environment	Transparency, participation, and accountability in talent retention	Talent retention based on good governance
Involvement in managerial decision-making		
Promoting effective communication between managers and employees		
Impartial enforcement of organizational regulations in managing violations	Fairness and transparency in talent retention	
Performance-based rewards		
Providing generation-appropriate welfare facilities		
Adaptability to organizational change	Individual	Talent management performance evaluation based on good governance
Innovation and problem-solving–oriented performance evaluation		
Professional development programs aligned with organizational challenges		
Assessing each talent's contribution to the organization's goals	Organizational	
Transparency in managerial policies		
Reviewing fairness in opportunity distribution		
Employee engagement in organizational policymaking		

At this stage, axial coding was performed. The researcher developed a theoretical framework by describing the relationships among the categories identified in the axial coding model. The process of integrating and refining the theory in selective coding was carried out using techniques such as writing the storyline that links the categories together and organizing categories through personal theoretical notes and memos. This research strategy is built upon three core elements: concepts, categories, and propositions.

Now, based on the identified concepts, the 57-item questionnaire was distributed among the individuals in the statistical population. After collecting the data, it was determined that all constructs followed a normal distribution. Subsequently, the model fit was assessed in two parts: the measurement model and the structural model.

In the demographic findings, it was revealed that 23.6% of the respondents were female and 76.4% were male. It was also found that 11.8% of the respondents held an associate degree, 57.5% had a bachelor's degree, 18.1% held a master's degree, and 12.6% had a doctoral degree. Additionally, to examine sampling adequacy, the Bartlett's test was used. A value above 0.7 indicates suitability, while a value between 0.5 and 0.7 is considered acceptable.

Table 2

Sampling Adequacy Test

Test Statistic	0.908
Degrees of Freedom	234
Decision Criterion	0.000

Therefore, it was concluded that the sample size was adequate for conducting the analysis, and there was a significant correlation among the variables.

In this section, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using LISREL software to evaluate the measurement models of the study. For a coefficient to be statistically significant in the measurement model, its absolute *t*-value must be greater than 1.96. A significant *t*-value indicates that each observed variable is meaningful. In the software, blue color represents significance, while red represents non-significance, and in such cases, the relationship should be removed. Overall, based on standardized loadings and *t*-values, the suitability of the indicators (questions) and constructs can be assessed.
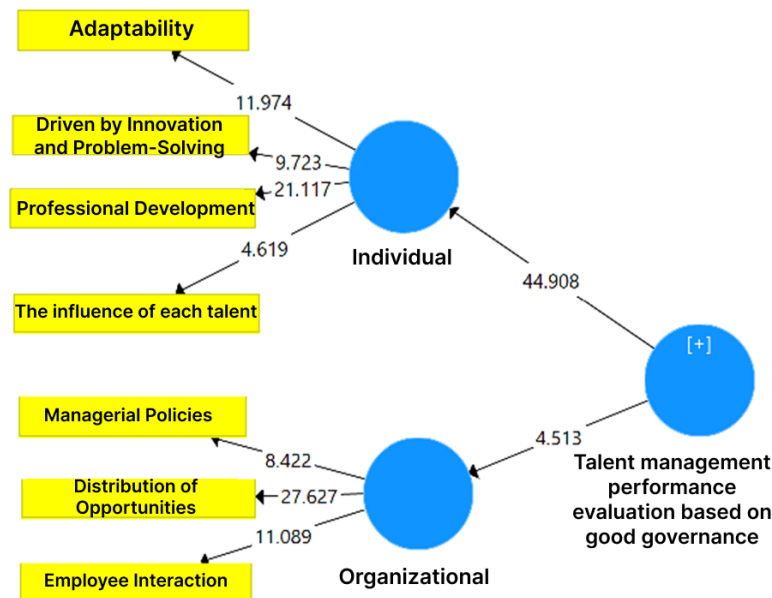
Table 3

Selected Goodness-of-Fit Indices for the Measurement Model

Indices	Obtained Values
Degrees of Freedom	215
Chi-square	269.30
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	0.036
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI)	0.92
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.93
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	0.93
Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI)	0.97

Figure 1

Measurement Model of the Study

As shown, the chi-square value is 269.30 with 215 degrees of freedom, resulting in a chi-square to degrees-of-freedom ratio of 1.25, which is less than 3 and therefore acceptable. The RMSEA value is 0.036, which is below the 0.08 threshold and thus acceptable. Although the *p*-value equals 0.000 and is lower than 0.05 (suggesting lack of fit), this statistic is highly

sensitive to sample size; since the RMSEA is acceptable, the low *p*-value is not problematic. Other fit indices also confirm that the model has an appropriate fit.

Additionally, it was found that the third question in the construct of "talent retention based on good governance" had the lowest correlation with its construct, with a standardized factor loading of 0.27. Conversely, the second question of "talent management performance evaluation based on good governance" had the highest correlation, with a standardized factor loading of 0.89. All factor loadings were greater than 1.96, indicating statistical significance; therefore, all questions explain the dimensions of the study appropriately.

Based on the conceptual framework of the research, the figures below present the structural model in two forms: significance (*t*-value) and standardized estimates. Relationships are considered significant if the absolute *t*-value exceeds 1.96.

Figure 2

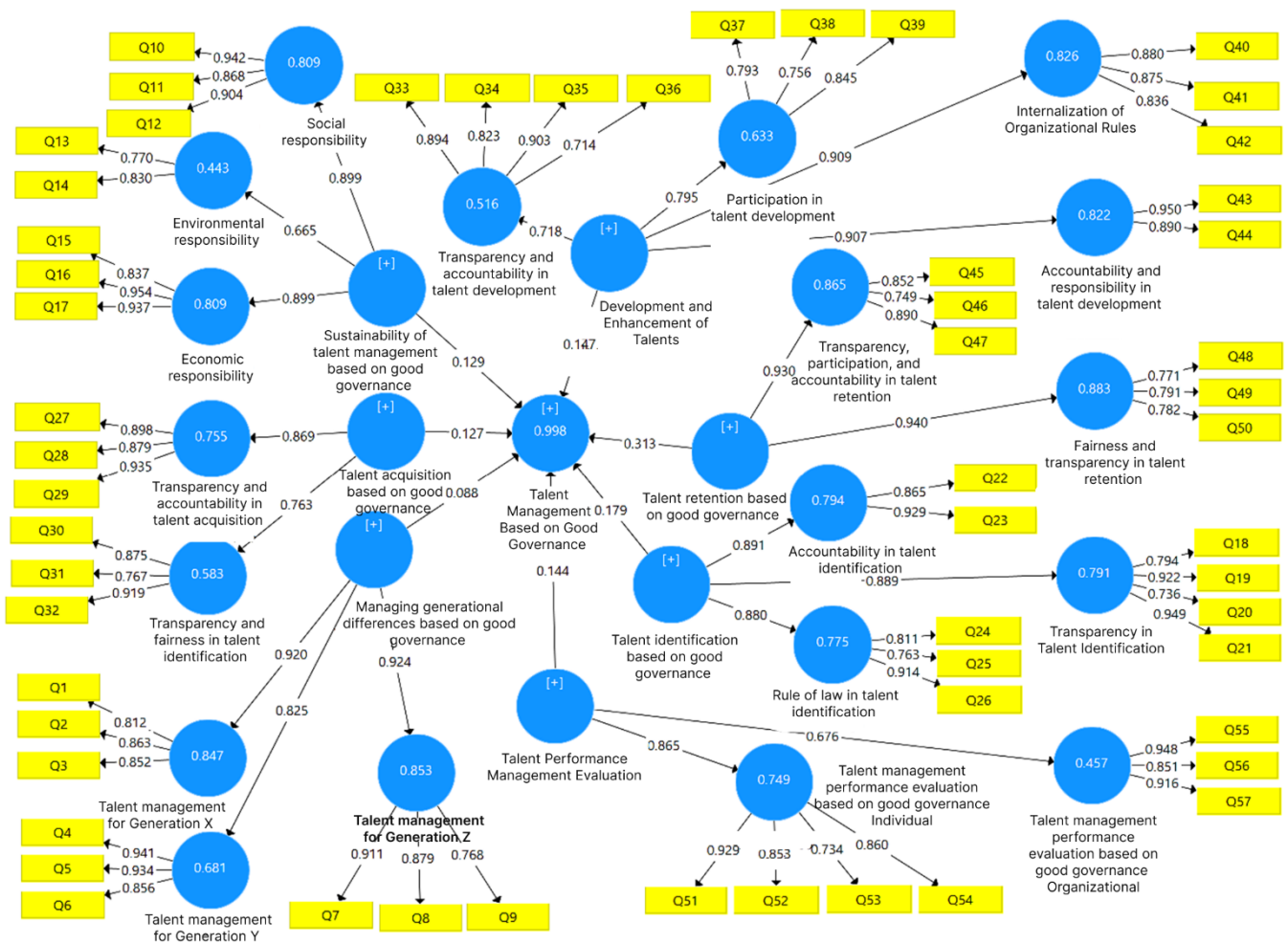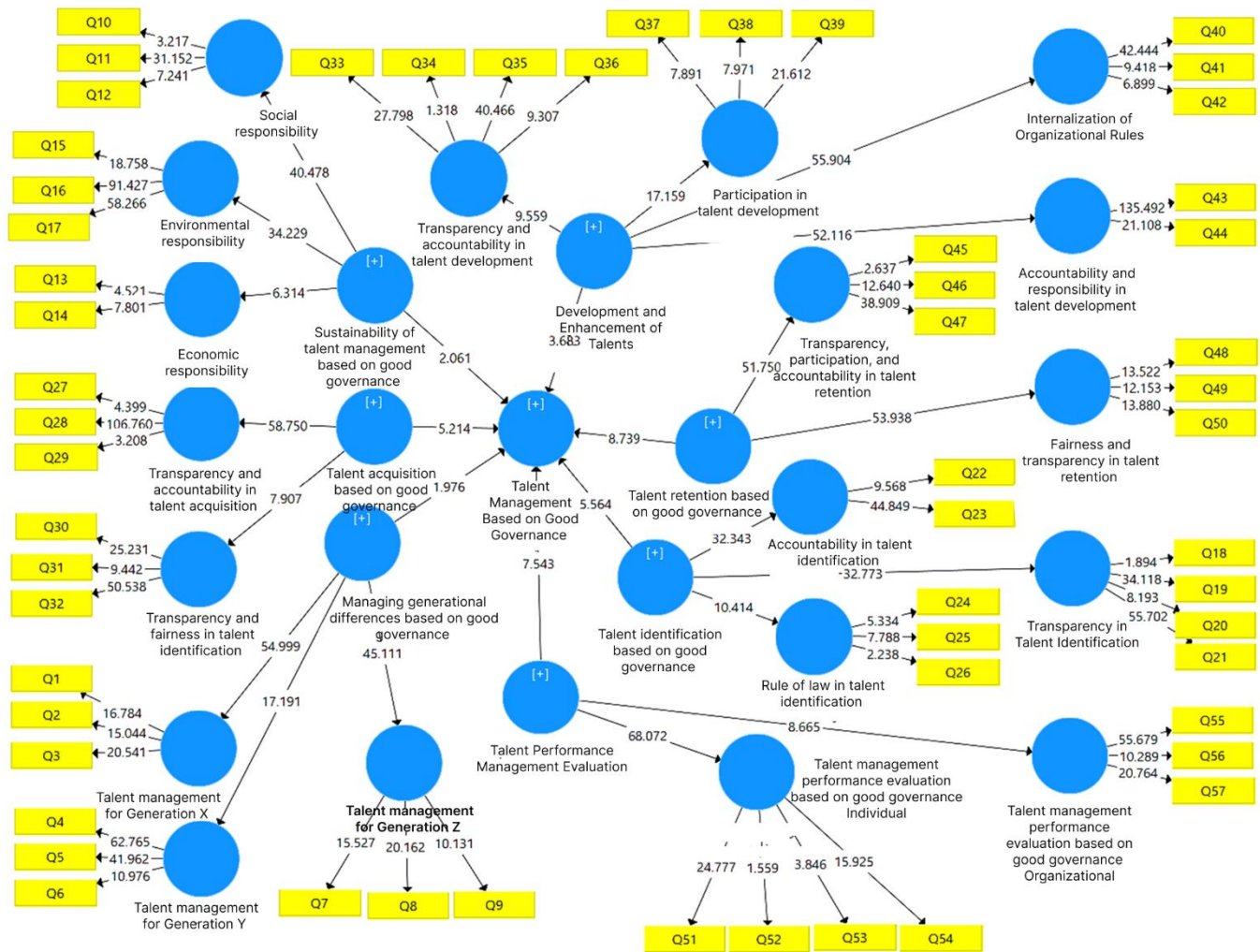*Structural Model of the Study (Standardized Estimates)*

Figure 3

Structural Model of the Study (Significance Values)

The SmartPLS output showed that the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) was 0.016, and the Normed Fit Index (NFI) was 0.96. These indices indicate a good model fit. The Goodness-of-Fit (GoF) index was also calculated, and its results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Results of the Structural Model Fit Assessment

Main Constructs	R²	Q²	F²	GoF
Generational Differences	0.623	0.582	0.226	0.634
Sustainability	0.521	0.468	0.372	—
Identification	0.618	0.577	0.465	—
Acquisition	0.587	0.564	0.366	—
Development	0.664	0.449	0.383	—
Retention	0.578	0.603	0.280	—
Evaluation	0.632	0.619	0.397	—

The findings in the table show that the coefficient of determination (R²) for the endogenous constructs of the research model is considered desirable if greater than 0.60 and relatively desirable if between 0.50 and 0.60. Here, four overarching constructs achieved desirable R² values, and three had relatively desirable R² values. The Q² index was positive for all constructs, indicating that the model has an appropriate predictive relevance and fit.

The effect size (F^2) was between 0.15 and 0.35 for two constructs, showing moderate predictive power, while for five constructs it exceeded 0.35, indicating strong predictive capability of the model in those areas.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this study provide an empirically grounded and contextually adapted structural model of talent management based on good governance within sports organizations. The findings showed that seven overarching categories—managing generational differences, sustainability of talent management, talent identification, talent acquisition, talent development and empowerment, talent retention, and performance evaluation—are interconnected and collectively define an integrated framework for strategic human resource management in the sports sector. The model's fit indices demonstrated robust validity, with strong explanatory power (R^2 values above 0.60 in four core areas and between 0.50 and 0.60 in the remaining three), predictive relevance (positive Q^2 values across constructs), and substantial effect sizes ($F^2 > 0.35$ in most constructs). These results validate that talent management, when governed by principles of transparency, accountability, fairness, and participation, can be systematically operationalized in complex organizations such as sports institutions.

The prominence of managing generational differences as a core dimension indicates that addressing the needs of a multigenerational workforce is critical for sustainable human capital systems. The findings echo the work of Kaliannan [3], who emphasized inclusive talent development as a way to reduce generational friction and improve engagement. Sports organizations, like other dynamic sectors, rely on the experience of older professionals and the digital fluency and innovation mindset of younger employees. Studies by Gowharrostami [10] and Talebzadeh [11] similarly observed that generationally sensitive HR policies in sports settings can foster stronger loyalty and institutional memory. This alignment suggests that sports organizations can avoid "one-size-fits-all" strategies by using governance-based mechanisms—such as equitable learning systems, fair rotation of roles, and inclusive participation in decision-making—to ensure that no generation feels marginalized.

Another important outcome is the confirmation of sustainability as an essential dimension of talent management. The findings show that sustainable practices—economic fairness, environmental responsibility, and social impact orientation—are not peripheral but central to how talent systems are designed and perceived as legitimate. This supports the argument of Kafetzopoulos [5], who linked sustainable performance with talent practices rooted in responsibility and ethical stewardship. Similarly, Hajilou [7] demonstrated that governance-driven HR models can promote educational and social responsibility, enabling institutions to remain both competitive and socially accountable. In sports organizations, where public perception and community impact are heightened, sustainability becomes even more crucial for attracting and retaining talent that values purpose-driven work.

The strong empirical loading of talent identification and acquisition also highlights the growing demand for fairness and transparency in early talent pipeline processes. Our model shows that structured competency-based interviews, psychometric assessments, and compliance with legal and ethical norms significantly improve the credibility of hiring systems. This aligns with the critique of Kwon [2] that traditional competitive "war for talent" paradigms can lead to opaque and biased selection processes. Instead, governance-led models—as advocated by Sukianto [6]—create clarity and accountability that enhance candidate trust and reduce the risk of misaligned placements. Moreover, digital tools in recruitment, when ethically applied, enable data-driven talent discovery while protecting fairness and privacy [9, 14].

The category of talent development and empowerment demonstrated particularly strong relationships with overall model fit, indicating that opportunities for growth and skill advancement are a decisive factor in sustaining a motivated and innovative workforce. This supports the findings of Chinchilla [4], who highlighted the synergy between talent management and learning organization frameworks, where continuous learning and cross-generational mentoring increase organizational adaptability. Maleki [17] also argued that involving employees in shaping their developmental pathways enhances participation and commitment. Within sports organizations, the presence of clear, transparent, and individualized growth routes can mitigate turnover risks and maintain high performance in highly competitive environments [16]. Furthermore, the increasing digitalization of development systems [12, 13] supports personalized skill-building while reinforcing the need for governance to ensure fair access and inclusivity.

Equally important is the validation of talent retention strategies guided by transparency, fairness, and supportive work environments. Our findings show that governance-based retention practices—such as fair compensation, meaningful participation in decision-making, and safe, stable work conditions—are strongly associated with talent sustainability. This aligns with Tan [15], who found that perceived organizational support and fair treatment significantly influence engagement and retention in diverse workforces. Yumhi [19] also identified that in digital transformation contexts, retention depends on trust and psychological safety fostered by leadership accountability. In the sports sector, where turnover disrupts institutional knowledge and performance, governance-driven retention helps maintain long-term talent pipelines and reduce replacement costs.

The performance evaluation dimension, particularly its emphasis on innovation, problem-solving, and fairness in assessment, provides a forward-looking contribution to the literature. Our results indicate that when evaluation systems are transparent, consistent, and linked to organizational goals, they not only measure contribution but also inspire continuous improvement. This is consistent with Shamani [8], who proposed comprehensive governance-based talent models integrating fair and data-driven evaluation mechanisms. Moreover, Subrahmanyam [18] showed that agile evaluation frameworks enhance adaptability in volatile contexts, aligning individual capabilities with evolving institutional needs.

A notable theoretical implication of this study is its synthesis of digital transformation and good governance within a single talent management architecture. Prior studies have either focused on the technological modernization of HR systems [12-14] or on governance frameworks for ethical and fair management [6, 7], but rarely integrated the two systematically. Our results indicate that digital HR tools—when guided by transparency, accountability, and inclusion—can drive fairness and sustainability rather than increase risk or resistance. This integration helps address the concerns of Kwon [2] about the potential unintended consequences of technology-led talent systems.

Additionally, the study adds to the ongoing conversation about contextualizing global talent frameworks for emerging economies and sector-specific challenges. While global models offer valuable insights, their direct application to sports organizations in contexts such as Iran often fails to consider public accountability, cultural dynamics, and institutional governance structures [10, 11]. Our research shows that adapting frameworks to local governance norms and sector-specific realities enhances relevance and acceptance. This responds directly to calls from Maleki [17] and Shamani [8] for indigenous, participatory models of talent management.

Finally, the strong fit indices and predictive capabilities of the proposed model support the assertion that good governance is not merely a compliance function but a strategic enabler of talent excellence. By embedding governance values into all

stages of the talent lifecycle—from identification to retention and evaluation—organizations can create transparent, sustainable, and high-performing human capital systems [4, 5]. This insight advances both theoretical understanding and practical guidance for institutions seeking to navigate the complex interplay between performance imperatives and ethical responsibility in the digital era.

While this study makes significant contributions, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the research was conducted within the specific context of sports organizations in Tehran, which may limit the generalizability of findings to other cultural, economic, or sectoral settings. Organizational governance practices and HR systems can differ considerably between private and public sectors, as well as across different countries with distinct institutional frameworks. Second, although the mixed-methods design enriched the model's depth and rigor, the quantitative sample size, while adequate for structural equation modeling, might not fully capture the diversity of talent management experiences across all subunits and roles. Third, the study relied on self-reported data through interviews and surveys, which may be subject to response biases, including social desirability and selective recall. Additionally, the rapidly evolving nature of digital HR technologies means that the technological aspects of the model may require continuous updating to remain aligned with emerging tools and best practices.

Future studies could expand the scope of this research by validating the proposed model across different industries and cultural contexts to assess its external applicability and identify sector-specific adaptations. Comparative studies between sports organizations and other public service or knowledge-intensive sectors could provide deeper insights into how governance principles shape talent outcomes under varying institutional pressures. Additionally, longitudinal research tracking the long-term impact of governance-based talent management on retention, engagement, and organizational performance would strengthen the causal understanding of these relationships. Scholars could also explore how emerging digital technologies, such as artificial intelligence and predictive analytics, interact with governance frameworks to enhance fairness, reduce bias, and optimize career development systems. Moreover, qualitative studies examining employee perceptions of governance-driven talent systems could uncover nuanced factors influencing trust and commitment.

For practitioners, the study underscores the importance of integrating good governance principles into every stage of the talent management process. Leaders in sports organizations should implement transparent and fair identification and recruitment methods, ensure inclusive development opportunities tailored to generational diversity, and maintain open communication channels for employee participation in strategic decision-making. Managers should also adopt sustainability-oriented HR policies that go beyond compliance to emphasize social responsibility and long-term employee well-being. Furthermore, digital transformation in HR must be guided by ethical standards and data governance to prevent bias and build trust. By adopting the model presented in this study, sports organizations can strengthen their employer brand, enhance talent retention, and cultivate a workforce that is engaged, innovative, and aligned with organizational and societal goals.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this study.

Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants. Written consent was obtained from all participants in the study.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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