



Unlocking the Relationship Between Talent Management Practices and Performance Sustainability in the Sports Industry

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigated the effect of talent management practices on performance sustainability in the sports industry. The study used the deductive reasoning approach to predict new cricketer performance sustainability. The hypotheses were tested using partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) techniques. The self-administered structured questionnaires were used to collect data. The total sample size was 270, which were collected from respondents playing in Bangladesh Premier League domestic and international matches. The results revealed that onboarding and engagement, player development, performance management, and strategic teamwork planning positively influence performance sustainability. However, the findings suggested that policymakers and other concerned authorities should implement this result to sustain players' performance continuously. This is the first paper that applies talent management practices to magnify performance sustainability.

KEYWORDS

Onboarding and Engagement, Performance Management, Performance Sustainability, Player Development, Strategic Teamwork Planning, Talent Acquisition, Talent Management

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, talent management has become a significant part of the managerial discussion and organizational practices in global competition (McDonnell, 2011). One of the most potent intangible assets of an organization is the employees' talent, i.e., human capital (Ramey et al., 2019; Wuen et al., 2020). Moreover, the resource-based firms demonstrated that the specific assets within an organization could give dynamic capabilities, which can be turned into sustainable

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competitive advantages, productivity, and prominent performance (Al Aina, & Atan, 2020). In this case, talented employees are valuable resources for their distinctive competence that might encourage others to reproduce (Gelens et al., 2014; Maqueira et al., 2019).

The sports industry has relished productive growth in the recent decade (Teo, 2018). The sports industry represents a unique industry that involves people, actions and business activities inbound and outbound logistics (Bizen et al., 2018; Yeh et al., 2018). Customers' taste and fashion undergo change and shaped with the experiential marketing of sport celebrates. Subsequently, Ghai and Zipp (2020) and Tan and Pyun (2018) argued that sports industry makes revenue from by promoting other businesses through advertisements and sponsorship. Thus, sports industry has turned into a big market for businesses that offers a good platform for promoting their products and services (Da Silva, & Las Casas, 2017; Kwak, & Pradhan, (2020).

Furthermore, talent management can ensure optimal performance and achieve competitive advantages in the sports sector, like cricket. Notably, a reality check is essential regarding professional cricketers' talent management practices (Kerr & Gladden, 2008; Kantor, Holdsworth, & Barr, 2008; Khurshid & Darzi, 2016). At present, why the most talented and experienced cricketers cannot keep their consistent performance is a significant concern. This study's significance will guide the policymakers to manage talent management concerning performance management efficiently.

Recently, researchers, entrepreneurs, businesspersons, and policymakers are exhibiting their interests to bring learning and insights into their critical areas for bringing novelty (Burnes & O'Donnell, 2011; Megheirkouni, 2017). The study will also help broad cricket managers acknowledge talent management practices, leading to an increased level of perception about talent retention (Pandey, 2018). However, the sports coordinators, team managers, trainers, coaches, senior cricketers, junior cricketers, and trainees will get numerous benefits from this study. As per our knowledge goes, no study investigates the relationship between talent management and performance consistency in the sports industry.

This study contributes to the existing body of literature and practices in many ways. First, we extend the sustainable performance literature through identifying its antecedent and further nuance contributions into talent management literature and its effect on performance. Second, by finding out the stimulus factors in a new way that significantly influence performance sustainability in the sports industry, such as onboarding and engagement, player development, performance management, succession planning, strategic teamwork planning, and talent acquisition are the main influencing factors (Bartlett & Hughes, 2015; Collings, Mellahi, & Cascio, 2018). Third, even though the literature of talent management on performance is quite rich; however, recent studies in the sports sector lack the use of talent management on performance sustainability. Fourth, recently a very vibrant issue on sports and leisure was published in the International Journal of Asian Business and Information Management (Leng et al., 2018) in Asian perspective on Baseball (Shih et al., 2018), Football (Teo, 2018), children's sports (Bizen, 2018), sports brand apps (Byun, 2018). Despite the market for Cricket occupies a large space, this sports has been given a very little attention from academia. Surprisingly, no study on Cricket and its talent management is emphasized till now. Lastly, the research will find out the impact of talent management practices on performance sustainability among professional cricketers in the sports industry that can help facilitate the performers' consistent performance in any cricket tournaments in specific and other sectors in general.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Talent Management Practices and Performance Sustainability

At present, talent management is a predetermined function of the cricketer's possessions because it provides a pathway toward the cricket board. Also, talent management is an ultra-critical function where the cricket board always strives to have a forward-looking approach to harness the best talent,

closing all the talent gaps, and managing the talent to gain the best possible outcomes effectively and efficiently (Khurshid & Darzi 2016). Performance sustainability means consistency performance, a successive strike-rate, a balanced run-rate, a proportional economy rate of the individual cricketers to maximize and sustain their team's performance. Bartlett and Hughes (2015) defined that a sustainable performance indicator is a combination of action variables that aim to define all performance aspects. Finally, taking these findings as a note, the study's goal is to examine the impact of talent management practices on performance. The research will also focus on the reasons for conducting talent management practices, its structures, and its perceived effect on team performance.

2.2 Onboarding and Engagement as Well as Performance Sustainability

Mainly, onboarding and engagement is a crucial driver of performance sustainability. It also represents an exclusive opportunity to set the stage for the rest of a cricketer's life cycle and consistent team performance. On the other hand, the meaningful connections with the most experienced and new cricketers can serve only two purposes: (1) it reinforces them access to subject matter experts who can accurately guide them, (2) the cricketers who are connected to the road (its purpose and culture) are far more engaged than those who are not (Collings, Scullion, & Dowling, 2009). Chillakuri (2020) posited that effective onboarding and engagement strength performer psychological resources which in turn trigger them to perform more and more continually. Thus, it can be hypothesized as:

H1: Onboarding and engagement have a positive effect on performance sustainability.

2.3 Player Development and Performance Sustainability

Player development is the journey of a player that takes with their coach toward improving performance. Generally, a player's development is needed for building their learning, commitment, and hardworking capability, which are required for high-level performance. However, the essential skills, such as self-motivation, self-awareness, self-responsibility, and learning autonomy, are recognized as great importance for maintaining the cricketers' consistency performance (Martindale, Collins, & Abraham, 2007). Jehanzeb (2020) and Mensah (2019) postulated that taking initiatives for talent development promote their emotional commitment i.e., citizenship behavior and subsequently influences them to perform consistency. Therefore, the hypothesis can be formulated as follows:

H2: Player development has a positive effect on performance sustainability.

2.4 Performance Management and Performance Sustainability

Nowadays, performance management is implemented in a wide variety of policy areas. The ideal ideas and practices can be gleaned from so many experiences (Gerrish, 2016). Performance management is the first and foremost duty of human resource managers to continuously support the talented cricketer's development and focus on the sports organizations' human resource management. In a word, performance management emphasizes benchmarking over time to provide a valid comparison and replicate the professional cricketers (Gerrish, 2016). Moreover, DeNisi and Murphy (2017) indicated that individuals perform with their consistence efforts, which result from accurate performance management. Hence, the hypothesis can be developed as follows:

H3: Performance management has a positive influence on performance sustainability.

2.5 Succession Planning and Performance Sustainability

Succession planning is a process that helps ensure the performance sustainability of the professional cricketers and is also used as a systematic effort designed to make sure sustainable performance.

Ali and Mehreen (2019) argued that succession planning builds an individual's confidence because it generates psychological capability and resources to engage in their work efficiently. In addition, individual efficiency and effectiveness to achieve organizational goals is influenced by succession planning (Pennell, 2010). Moreover, succession planning generates a competitive advantage mentality against competitors, which improves professional development, and triggers consistent performance (Ali, Mahmood, & Mehreen, 2019). Chakraborty and Biswas, (2020) elucidated that succession planning renders a positive link to performance sustainability through developing potential performers to achieve competitive advantages over rivalry. Consequently, the hypothesis can be formulated as follows:

H4: Succession planning has a positive effect on performance sustainability.

2.6 Strategic Teamwork Planning and Performance Sustainability

In general, a team's sustainable performance is higher than the individual performance when strategic teamwork planning requires a broader scope of judgment, knowledge, and professional cricketers' opinion. Besides, strategic teamwork planning creates an environment that facilitates more knowledge, information exchange, and knowledge sharing with the experienced cricketers (De Knop, Van Hoecke, & De Bosscher, 2004). On the other hand, the ability of new forms of the strategic teamwork planning enables the performance sustainability of the cricketers through the multi-skilling competencies in communication, problem-solving, and also supports the new ways of professional attitudes of the cricketers (Totterdill, Dhondt, & Milsome, 2002; Davis, 1985). Indeed, Esfahani, Mosadeghrad, and Akbarisari (2018) contended that individuals expose to low performer due to the lack of sound strategy and actions, and vice versa. So, the hypothesis can be shown as below:

H5: Strategic teamwork planning has a positive effect on performance sustainability.

2.7 Talent Acquisition and Performance Sustainability

Currently, the "war for talent" has focused on acquiring and assimilating "the best". The cricketer's resources can play a significant role in achieving sustainable performance. Furthermore, talent has become the best key differentiator human capital management and leveraging competitive advantage. Maximizing motivation, retention, and team engagement through due diligence in talent acquisition is vital in today's highly competitive cricket world. A well-executed talent acquisition results are consistent and resilient performance (Ronn, 2007). Moghtadaie and Taji, (2016) and Al Aina and Atan (2020) elucidated that sustainable talent acquisition strategy leads to the continuance of sustainable performance. Thus, the hypothesis can be formulated as:

H6: Talent acquisition has a positive effect on Performance Sustainability.

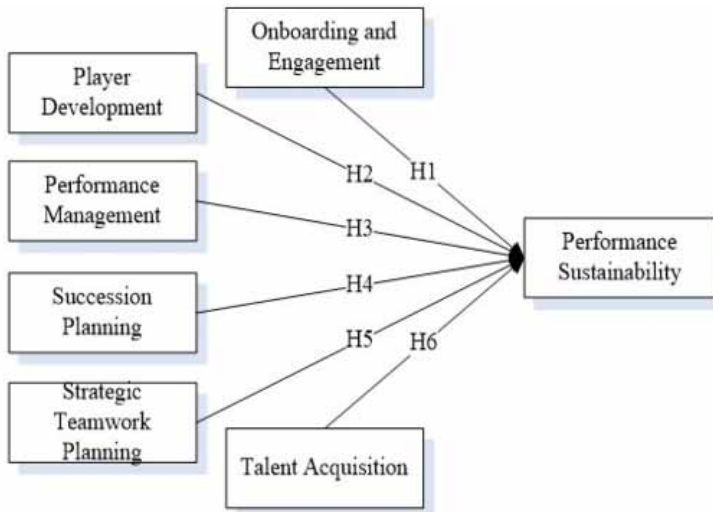
Figure 1 reveals the conceptual framework entailing influences of onboarding and engagement, player development, performance management, succession planning, strategic teamwork planning, and talent acquisition on performance sustainability.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Sample and Procedures

A convenience sampling method was applied to collecting data. The simple attitude scales and Likert Scale were used in categorizing the questions and answers. This study's sampling unit was Bangladeshi cricketers who are listed in Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) and Bangladesh Kriya Shikka Prosikkhon

Figure 1. Conceptual model



(BKSP) for domestic and international matches. Three hundred seventy questionnaires were delivered to the cricketers, and 300 questionnaires were filled and submitted. In fact, this study's useable data was collected 270 through a period of one month, which exceeded the minimum calculated sample size (i.e., 146) using G*Power (Faul et al., 2007). The response rate is 81.11% for this data.

3.2 Instrument Development

First, onboarding and engagement were adapted from Mensah (2015). Second, player development was adapted from Tepayakul, et al. (2016). Third, performance management and succession planning were adapted from Tepayakul et al. (2016). Fourth, talent acquisition was adapted from Tepayakul et al., (2016) and Mensah (2015). Fifth, the authors developed scales for strategic teamwork planning and performance sustainability. Due to the unavailability of the scale, we developed a scale following the method reported in Miah et al. (2017). We adopted the mixed method-quantitative approach by conducting pilot study and –qualitative method through online focus group study among a group of potential respondents comprising teachers with diverse backgrounds, such as gender, education, age, income, geographical location, etc. Moreover, we made few changes to the structured items through focus group study and pre-testing among academicians, coach, manager and researcher Finally, all scale items except the demographic variable were rated using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

4. RESULTS

4.1 Method Bias

Firstly, data were screened to find missing values and outliers for further analysis that reports no defective case. Harman's single-factor assessment is 35.43% less than the threshold value of 50% (Fuller et al., 2016; Podsakoff et al., 2003). So, there is no problem in the data set using common method bias (CMB). The collinearity test is shown for testing CMB under PLS-SEM. If the VIF value is greater than 3.30 for reflective indicators, it shows CMB (Hair et al., 2017; Kock, 2015). Hence, all VIF values are less than the threshold value, ranging from 1.480 to 3.145; thus, the data has not suffered by CMB problem.

4.2 Demographic Information of Respondents

The respondents' profile is presented in Table 1. 67.8% of data were collected from BCB and the remaining from BKSP, and the percentage between males and females is 72.6% and 27.4%, respectively. The majority of respondents was 14-24 years old (53.7%), and the greater part of educational qualification was higher secondary (31.5%). Furthermore, the prime level of engagement for playing was a trainee (30.4%), junior cricketer (30.7%), and senior cricketer (31.1%). On the other hand, most of the participants' income levels were less than 10,000, covered by 33.3%.

4.3 Measurement Model

Next, the current study was performed following the two-stage SEM approach (Jilani, Fan, Islam, & Uddin, 2020; Uddin, Akter, Al-Amin, Rahman, & Ferdousy, 2020; Uddin, Priyankara, & Mahmood, 2020). These two stages are the measurement model and structural model (Azim, Fan, Uddin, Jilani, & Begum, 2019; Das, Biswas, Jilani, & Uddin, 2019; Fan, Mahmood, & Uddin, 2019; Mahmood, Uddin, & Luo, 2019). We selected PLS-SEM over because this research's primary purpose was prediction (Hair et al., 2017; Shih & Putri, 2016). The measurement model was examined by using internal reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2017). Indeed, all the computed values of Cronbach's Alpha as well as composite reliability are above threshold values, such as 0.70 (Hair et al., 2017). Convergent validity is also satisfied where all the values of AVE exceed the threshold value of 0.50 (Hyun, Weisheng, & Jung-sup, 2018).

Table 1. Profile of Respondents

Variables	Category	Frequency	%
Area	BCB, Dhaka	183	67.8
	BKSP, Savar	87	32.2
Gender	Male	196	72.6
	Female	74	27.4
Age	Less than 24	160	59.2
	25-35	92	34.1
	36-46	11	4.1
	47 through Highest	7	2.6
Educational qualification	Graduate	42	15.6
	Higher secondary	85	31.5
	Secondary	54	20.0
	Others	89	32.9
Level of engagement for playing	Trainee	82	30.4
	Junior Cricketer	83	30.7
	Senior Cricketer	84	31.1
	Retired Cricketer	19	7.0
	Others	2	0.7
Income levels	Less than 20,000	154	57.0
	20,000-30,000	54	20.0
	30,000-40,000	27	10.0
	40,000 above	35	13.0

The discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) was examined using the correlation matrix and the AVE's square root, which shows the bold diagonal value in Table 2. To test discriminant validity, the AVE of a construct's square root should be greater than its associated correlation with other constructs of the corresponding row and column values (Hair et al., 2017). As shown in Table 3, the square root of AVE was higher than the corresponding correlation values that confirm data's discriminant validity. Therefore, validity issue has been satisfied and achieved (Das, Abdul Kader Jilani, Uddin, Uddin, & Ghosh, In Press; Mahmood, Uddin, Ostrovskiy, & Orazalin, 2020; Yi, Uddin, Das, Mahmood, & Sohel, 2019).

4.4 Structural Model

Firstly, collinearity issues were examined for testing the structural model. The values of the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) were ranging from 1.480 to 3.145, which were less than the threshold value of 3.33 (Mahmood et al., 2019). Hence, this study argues that there is no collinearity problem. Next, Figure 2 shows the validate proposed research model of this study, and also Table 3 presents the outcomes direct effects that were analyzed using the bootstrap 5000 re-sampling technique. The coefficient of determination (R^2 value) is generally used to assess the structural model. The R^2 value was utilized to assess the difference clarified by the independent variables in the structural model (Klarner et al., 2013). As shown in Figure 2, the values of R^2 of performance sustainability with .705, which is a substantial effect, and player development with .489 moderate influence to yield dependent variables (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011).

As per the results in Table 3, two hypotheses of direct path relationships were not supported. Results also pointed out that onboarding and engagement, performance management, player development, and strategic teamwork planning were positive influences on performance sustainability, with ($\beta=0.108$, $t=2.347$, $p<0.019$), ($\beta=0.208$, $t=4.068$, $p<0.000$), ($\beta=0.297$, $t=4.613$, $p<0.000$), ($\beta=0.291$, $t=5.073$, $p<0.000$) respectively. Consequently, the association between performance management and player development ($\beta=0.699$, $t=15.608$, $p>0.000$) were a significant positive impact. In short, among seven hypotheses of direct associations, H4 and H7 were not accepted.

5. DISCUSSION

In this study, the structural modeling approach was applied to understand the connection between talent management practices and professional cricketers' sustainability. In a way, the empirical finding

Table 2. Estimates on Reliabilities and Validities

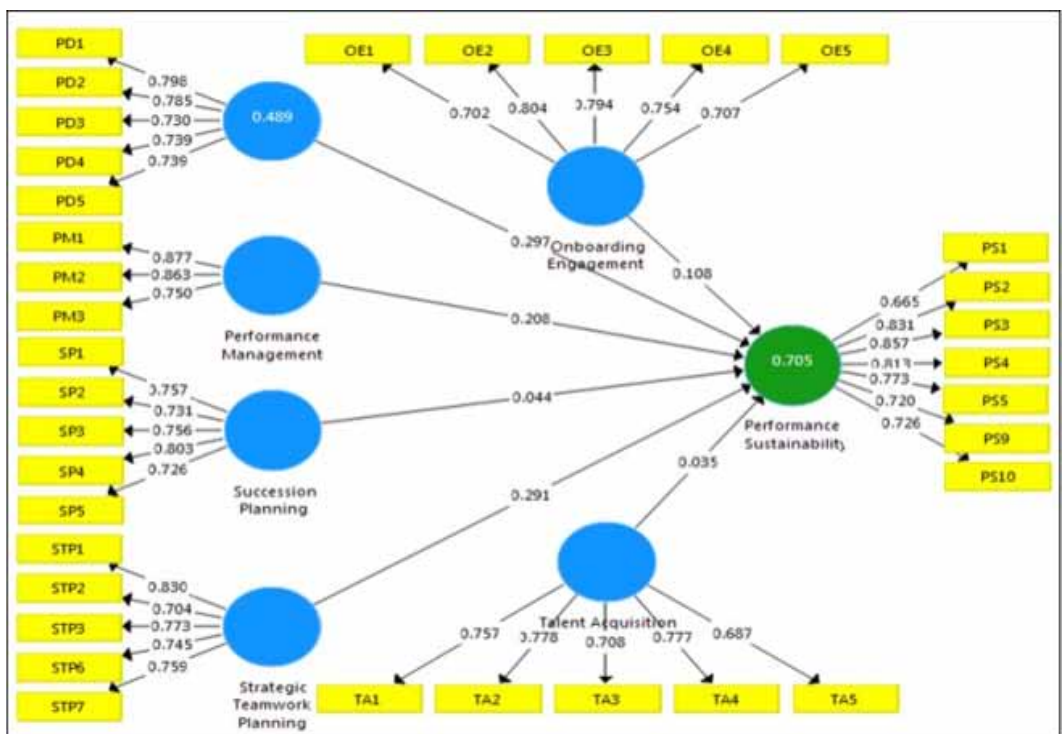
Constructs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Onboarding and Engagement (1)	0.753						
Performance Management (2)	0.497	0.832					
Performance Sustainability (3)	0.604	0.718	0.772				
Player Development (4)	0.580	0.699	0.758	0.759			
Strategic Teamwork Planning (5)	0.602	0.720	0.763	0.719	0.763		
Succession Planning (6)	0.546	0.377	0.428	0.373	0.412	0.755	
Talent Acquisition (7)	0.589	0.620	0.673	0.753	0.692	0.431	0.742
Cronbach's Alpha	0.813	0.776	0.885	0.815	0.820	0.812	0.859
Composite Reliability	0.867	0.870	0.911	0.871	0.874	0.869	0.859
Average Variance Extracted	0.568	0.692	0.596	0.575	0.582	0.570	0.551

Table 3. Outcomes of Direct effects

Hypotheses	Path Relationship	Beta (β)	T Statistics	P Values	Decisions
H1	OE-> PS	0.108	2.347	0.019	Supported
H2	PD-> PS	0.297	4.613	0.000	Supported
H3	PM-> PS	0.208	4.068	0.000	Supported
H4	SP-> PS	0.044	1.031	0.303	Not Supported
H5	STP-> PS	0.291	5.073	0.000	Supported
H6	TA-> PS	0.035	0.683	0.495	Not Supported

Note: OE. Onboarding and engagement, PS. Performance sustainability, PD. Player development, PM. Performance management, SP. Succession planning, STP. Strategic teamwork planning, TA. Talent acquisition

Figure 2. Results Wise Validate Structural Model



can provide much information regarding talent management practices and the cricketers’ performance sustainability in Bangladesh Cricket Broad. The result is remarkable through the structural equation model because it introduces and validates the measurement and structural model in an integrated manner (Hair et al., 2017). Furthermore, among the seven hypotheses, five were supported, while two were rejected.

Concerning the factors that significantly predict the sustainable performances, it was observed that onboarding & engagement ($\beta=0.108$; $p=0.019$), player development ($\beta=0.297$; $p=0.000$), performance management ($\beta=0.208$; $p=0.000$), and strategic teamwork planning ($\beta=0.291$; $p=0.000$) all had a positive and significant impact on performance sustainability. In addition, it was also observed that performance management ($\beta=0.699$; $p=0.000$) had a positive significant effect on player development.

These findings only supported player development's performance management factor (De Knop, Van Hoecke, & De Bosscher, 2004). Lastly, it was observed that succession planning ($\beta=0.044$; $p=0.303$), talent acquisition ($\beta=0.035$; $p=0.495$) all had no significant impact on performance sustainability. These findings did not support the succession-planning factor affecting performance sustainability and the talent acquisition factor affecting performance sustainability in respectively (Shibli, 1999).

5.1 Theoretical Contributions

This study theoretically extends the literatures on performance sustainability and its antecedents to trigger continuity of performance. Prior studies showed that the effect of talent management on employee (Mensah, 2019) and organization performance (Al Aina & Atan, 2020; Collings et al., 2019; Son et al., 2020; Latukha & Veselova, 2019; Almaaitah et al., 2020). Furthermore, our study also theoretically contributes to talent management literature and how the different dimensions of talent management influence performance sustainability. To best our knowledge, this study is going to be the first research on sports industry, especially in Bangladesh contexts. This study confirmed that all dimensions of talent management practices significantly affect the cricketers' performance sustainability. Precisely, performance management ($\beta = 0.699$) has the most substantial impact on the cricketers' performance sustainability. In contrast, the succession planning ($\beta= 0.044$) and talent acquisition ($\beta=0.035$) have the lowest insignificant effect on the cricketers' performance sustainability in Bangladesh Cricket Broad. In addition to onboarding and engagement, player development and strategic teamwork planning have a significant positive effect on performance sustainability regarding the cricketers in Bangladesh Cricket Broad.

5.2 Practical Implications

In addition to the above discussed several theoretical contributions, our study also implies some practical contributions for applying talent management for performance sustainability. First, our results show that players' onboarding and engagement can enhance performance regularly. Thus, team coordinators, managers and human resources manager would attract players through providing rewards and recognitions extrinsically and intrinsically. As a result, performer will more likely to engage in better performance. Second, our results also showed that sustainable performance could be achieved through ensuring player development. Team coaches and human resource managers might arrange training and workshops that would elicit the skill of talent. Third, the next results of our study prove that effective performance management promotes continuity of performance. Thus, human resource manager should ensure performance appraisal and provide different facilities for magnifying performance. Fourth, this study demonstrate that strategic teamwork raises sustainable performance. Thus, management of organization should initiate strategic planning depending on expertise, time, internal capacities, environment and competitors' assessment.

Finally, we observed that the performance sustainability will be obtained through accurate talents' selection. Hence, human resource managers must demonstrate their dexterity while hunting the right talents. These results will be worthwhile for the cricket broads, especially management departments, including batting, blowing, fielding. Moreover, this study will significantly help both sports coordinators and team managers know more and improve their core understanding. This study will also help guide the Bangladesh cricket policymakers in managing talent regarding performance in the sports organization. Also, the sports researchers will be able to pay adequate attention to talent management practices and performance sustainability-related activities to help enhance the professional cricketers' sustainable performance and goodwill.

5.3 Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study is not without some potential limitations. Firstly, this study was conducted with small samples from BCB, Dhaka, and BKSP, Savar in Bangladesh. So, the findings may not be able to represent in favor of the entire professional cricketers. Future research should give special importance

to conducting in this area by taking more cricketers that are professional. Secondly, this study was only conducted among cricketers. Therefore, future researchers should pay more attention to other sports sectors. Thirdly, this study was only done on the Bangladeshi cricketers. Therefore, future research should emphasize the foreign cricketers through conducting cross-cultural research more effectively. Lastly, the various demographic conditions and independent variables can strengthen talent management practices on performance sustainability. So, potential future research can be done by mediating and moderating impacts of demographic or independent variables (i.e., national culture, creative skills, organizational support, learning climate) between talent management practices and performance sustainability.

6. CONCLUSION

This study examines the relationship between talent management practices and performance sustainability in sports organizations. The authors use talent management factors and consider other crucial factors that significantly influence on continuity of performance in a developing country's context. Different statistical analyses have been used in this study. The respondents of this study have identified some problems and given some suggestions related to the talent management practices and performance sustainability in BCB.

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