Research Paper

Relationship between CRM and competitive advantage of sports clubs in Province of Alborz

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between customer relationship management and competitive advantage in sports clubs in Alborz province of Iran. In terms of purpose, this research is an applied research. In terms of data collection, it is a descriptive correlation. The study population included all private sports clubs in Alborz province that 244 clubs were selected by random sampling and research questionnaires were distributed among managers and employees of clubs. In order to collect data, Alavi Shad Customer Relationship Management Questionnaire (2008) and Porter Competitive Advantage Questionnaire were used. The reliability of the research instrument was obtained using Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the customer relationship management questionnaire ($\alpha = 0.89$) and competitive advantage ($\alpha = 0.84$). Descriptive statistics (frequency distribution tables and graphs) and inferential statistics (Pearson correlation and regression) were used to analyze the data. Findings showed that there is a significant positive relationship between customer relationship management (customer perception and segregation, customer interaction, customer acquisition and retention, and customer relationship development and specialization) with the competitive advantage of clubs.

The results of regression analysis also showed that the components of customer perception and segregation (Sig = 0.001, T = 4.141) and customer acquisition and retention (Sig = 0.001, T = 5.748) have a significant effect on competitive advantage in sports clubs. As a result, due to these factors and optimal customer relationship management, high success and productivity can be achieved in today's competitive world.

Keywords: Customer Relationship Management, Customer Understanding and Separation, Customer Interaction, Customer Recruitment and Retention, and Development and Specialization, Competitive Advantage, Sports Clubs.

1. Introduction

In today's competitive world, the success of companies depends on knowing the customers and creating value for customers, and the key to the success of leading companies in any industry, including sports and sports services, is the ability to create value and create a competitive advantage for customers over competitors. A sports organization in the form of a sports club to provide superior value to customers and have a competitive advantage over other competitors must create distinct marketing capabilities and customer orientation and use them in its activities. Competitive advantage is a set of unique capabilities of an economic unit that allows it to penetrate arbitrary markets and be superior to competitors (Bagheri and Afzali, 2014).

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Competitive advantage is created by differentiating an organization in a particular business, in the opinion of stakeholders, especially customers. The customer must mentally feel that the organization is able to create more value for him than other competitors (Navarro et al., 2010). In general, competitive advantage shows that an enterprise can achieve better business performance than its competitors in the same industry by using its assets and competencies (Lee and Hsieh, 2010). In recent years, competition has been proposed as an economic concept affecting sustainable development in sports, and competitive advantage has been at the center of the discussion of competitive strategies and there has been much discussion about competitive advantage. The existence of private and public sports clubs and complexes has made people have a wider choice to do their sports activities than in the past. Therefore, this issue has made the managers and officials of these clubs and complexes, a difficult task in retaining their customers and attracting new customers. In this regard, one of the categories that can be effective in improving sports clubs in the field of marketing and competition is customer relationship management. Some researchers believe that improving marketing performance can be achieved by paying more attention to customer relationship management (CRM) (Suleiman, 2011). In today's competitive business environment, CRM and competitive advantage are considered the vital tools needed for efficient and effective competition (Nagovan et al., 2020). CRM is described as the result of the development of a variety of systems, including transaction support systems, decision support systems, marketing information systems, database marketing, and call center management. It can also involve various business and technology-related processes (Al-Gasawane et al., 2021).

In addition, CRM includes an organizational approach that facilitates organizations in identifying, attracting, and enhancing the retention of profitable customers by maintaining relationships with those customers (Alwahishi & Amineh, 2018). Finally, the main goal of CRM is to maximize the long-term development and profitability of the company through a good understanding of customer behavior (Al-Qurashi et al., 2020). Today, with the advancement of technology and economic development, in order to succeed in business and performance, most institutions have a duty to gradually attract customers and take effective measures to retain the customers they have acquired, with the aim of managing the relationship with It takes its customers (Kafko, 2017). CRM is a strategic process for customer selection that a company can serve more profitably and shape the interactions between a company and these customers. The ultimate goal is to optimize the present and future value of customers for the company. According to this definition, the main principle of CRM is the maximum sales of each customer. This system helps the company to collect data in one system and thus analyze the potential needs of the customer. Understanding and adapting to or even going beyond the individual needs of the customer is very important and these are the main dimensions of companies to find a competitive advantage (Kumar and Reinartz, 2012).

Customer relationship management is a philosophy that is extremely important for any business and industry, because CRM knowledge is how to attract, reach, retain potential new customers for a business in order to compete and survive in a tough competition. Increasing. According to Lyon et al. (2008), CRM emphasizes the focus on attracting and maintaining a long-term relationship with customers, which leads to customer satisfaction and thus marketing performance. Nguyen et al. (2007) proved that customer relationship management, when used properly, develops an organization's ability to achieve the ultimate goal of retaining a customer in order to improve a strategic advantage over competitors. According to Parvatiar & Shet (2002), the implementation of CRM as a tool for competitive advantage is increasing worldwide. There is no doubt, however, that the actual implementation and thoughtful performance of CRM is critical to a company's success. They stated that most companies that use CRM so far have benefited from it in terms of increasing profitability, expanding market share, increasing sales volume, customer satisfaction, customer retention and reducing customer errors by attracting potential customers. Srivastava et al. (2010) stated that customer relationship management is a core organizational process that focuses on creating, maintaining, and strengthening long-term customer relationships; In other words, the customer relationship management approach is to maximize communication with all customers. In addition, it also includes business and marketing activities. Boulding et al. (2015) also found that applying CRM principles yields positive financial results. Martini et al. (2019) showed that customer relationship management and partnership management have a positive effect on marketing performance. Angolo-Ruiz (2020) in his research on the impact of marketing and innovation capabilities on the performance of indigenous and non-indigenous marketers in Alberta, British Columbia and Canada. The results showed that marketing capabilities consistently affect all performance measures in both groups. Innovation capability also affects financial performance in indigenous and non-indigenous businesses. Al-Gasawane et al. (2021) showed that the results

showed that key CRM customer focus, CRM knowledge management and CRM-based technology had positive effects on service quality. Nagovan et al.'s (2020) results on achieving competitive advantage through customer relationship management dimensions show that only three dimensions of CRM, namely technology, organizational customer relationship management and knowledge management have a significant effect on SMEs' competitive advantage, but between focusing on Key customers and competitive advantage of SMEs have no significant effect. Abedian Jelodar (1399) showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between customer relationship management and its dimensions (customer perception and separation, customer interaction, customer acquisition and retention, and development and specialization) with the marketing performance of sports clubs. The results of path analysis showed that only the dimensions of customer acquisition and retention and customer perception and segmentation could predict marketing performance. Ruh Elahi et al. (2015) in their research on the role of customer relationship management in gaining a competitive advantage in service markets, the overall results of data analysis show from the perspective of senior managers of travel agencies in Shiraz customer perception and segregation And the mutual relationship with him has a synergistic role in gaining the competitive advantage of these agencies. Also, attracting and retaining customers and developing and specializing the relationship with the customer is effective in gaining the competitive advantage of travel agencies. The results of Kalhor et al. (2016) showed that there is a significant relationship between the dimensions of customer relationship management and productivity. Also, the share of customer relationship management dimensions in predicting and changing the productivity of sports clubs has been about 34%. Regarding the importance of customer relationship management and the competitive advantage of sports clubs, they have stated that establishing good relationships with sports customers can increase their satisfaction and loyalty, which is the core of customer relationship management and marketing activities. Customers in sports clubs are considered as the main source of income and success; Thus, recognizing the obvious needs of customers, predicting, determining and guiding their hidden needs, designing and implementing service delivery programs to meet these needs to attract customers is one of the basic pillars of their activities. Therefore, in order to prevent customers from turning to their competitors, sports clubs should more than ever seek to understand the wants and needs of customers so that they can

better meet their needs and establish long-term business relationships with them, which is one of the best. Approaches that can achieve loyalty are customer relationship management. CRM seems to be a pioneering and important approach. The research results will help the management of sports organizations and clubs to better satisfy customers, respond effectively to their needs and timely behaviors. In addition, the adoption of CRM is a platform for building a good partnership with customers, which in turn leads to the development and improvement of services. In fact, in order to gain a competitive advantage and improve market performance, sports clubs need to recognize value from the customer's point of view and respond to it better than the competitor, and by developing their marketing capabilities and creating superior and sustainable value for customers can achieve this important Achieve and create different competitive opportunities compared to competitors and increase the performance of the club. As a result, the present study has been compiled with the aim of the relationship between customer relationship management and the competitive advantage of sports clubs.

2. Methodology
The method of this research is applied in terms of purpose, retrospective in terms of time and in terms of how to collect data, it is a descriptive correlational design that is done in the field. The study population in this study included all private sports clubs in Alborz province that 200 clubs were selected by random sampling as a sample and research questionnaires were distributed among managers or employees of clubs. After collecting and removing incomplete cases, finally after distributing and collecting research questionnaires and removing incomplete and non-analyzable items, 244 questionnaires were reviewed and analyzed.

3. Customer Relationship Management Questionnaire:
In this study, in order to assess customer relationship management, Alavi Shad (2008) customer relationship management questionnaire was used. This questionnaire includes 24 items and four components of customer perception and separation, customer interaction, customer attraction and retention, and development and specialization of customer relationships with a five-point Likert scale (very low = 1 to very high = 5). The validity of the content of the questionnaire has been confirmed in various studies such as Alavi Shad (2008) and Hejazi (2017). Also, Hejazi (2017) in his research examining the role of customer relationship management on customer satisfaction of Mashhad pools has obtained the reliability of the

questionnaire based on Cronbach's alpha coefficient equal to 0.82.

4. Porter Competitive Advantage Questionnaire:

In this study, in order to measure competitive advantage, the Porter model competitive advantage questionnaire was used, the validity of which was confirmed in Hosseini (2011). This questionnaire consists of 17 items and five components (tangible advantage, sustainable advantage, dynamic advantage, homogeneous advantage, compound advantage) with a five-point Likert scale (very low = 1 to very high = 5).

The face and content validity of the questionnaire has been confirmed using the expert opinions of sports management professors. Also, with a preliminary study on 30 subjects, the reliability of competitive advantage and customer relationship management questionnaires based on Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.89 and 0.84, respectively. In this study, descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used to analyze the data. Pearson correlation coefficient and regression with SPSS software version 26 were used in the research hypotheses section.

5. Results

In this section, before performing statistical tests and due to the presumption of using or not using parametric or non-parametric tests, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used. Accordingly, the components studied in this study were analyzed. Based on this, it can be said that the research variables have a normal or abnormal distribution.

Table 1. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test statistics

research variables	Statistics		
	Test Statistic	p	Type of distribution
Customer perception and separation	0.156	0.215	Normal
Customer Relationship	0.123	0.112	Normal
Customer Attraction and Retention	0.144	0.142	Normal
Development and specialization of customer relations	0.201	0.89	Normal
Customer Relationship Management	0.12	0.142	Normal
Competitive Advantage	0.093	0.200	Normal

The results of Table 1 show that due to the significance level higher than 0.05, the distribution of competitive advantage and customer relationship management has been a normal distribution. As a result, Pearson correlation and regression tests were used to investigate the relationship between research variables. Initially, Pearson correlation was used for the relationship between customer relationship management and its components with competitive advantage and due to the normality of data distribution.

Table 2. Pearson correlation matrix between customer relationship management and its dimensions with competitive advantage

Competitive Advantage			
	Quantity	Spearman correlation	Significance level
Understanding and separating the customer	244	0.362 **	0.001
Mutual relationship with the customer	244	0.18 **	0.005
Attracting and retaining customers	244	0.395 **	0.001
Development and specialization of customer relations	244	0.233 **	0.001
Customer Relationship Management	244	0.549 **	0.001

* = Significance at the level of P≥0.05; ** = Significance at the level of P≥0.01

The findings of Table 2 show the correlation between customer relationship management and its dimensions with competitive advantage in sports clubs that there is a positive and significant relationship between customer relationship management and competitive advantage in sports

clubs (sig = 0.001, r = 0.549). Pearson correlation results show that between competitive advantage with components of customer relationship development and specialization (Sig = 0.001, r = 0.233), customer perception and segregation (Sig = 0.001, r = 0.362) there is a significant positive relationship between customer relationship (Sig = 0.005, r = 0.18) and customer acquisition and retention (Sig = 0.001, r = 0.395).

In order to evaluate the ability of customer relationship management components to predict competitive advantage in sports clubs, multiple linear regression test has been used simultaneously.

Table 3. summarizes the regression model of customer relationship management components and competitive advantage

regression model	Multiple correlation coefficient	Coefficient of determination	Adjusted coefficient of determination	Significance level	Watson Camera
Concurrent	0.601	0.361	0.35	0.001	1.962

The results of Table 3: Summary of the regression model of the research hypothesis of multiple correlation coefficient show that there is a significant relationship between the components of customer relationship management with competitive advantage in sports clubs (Sig = 0.001,

R = 0.601) and with Considering the coefficient of determination, these components are able to explain 36.1% of the total variance of competitive advantage.

Table 4. ANOVA test analysis test results

Statistics	Total squares	degree of freedom	Average squares	value of F	Significance level
Results	24.116	4	6.029	33.745	0.001

Considering the significance of F value (Sig = 0.001, F = 33.745) obtained from the results of ANOVA analysis test, it can be concluded that the research regression model consists of an independent variable (components of customer relationship management) and the dependence variable

(competitive advantage) is a good model and these components are able to explain the changes in competitive advantage in sports clubs.

Table 5. Results of regression analysis between the components of customer relationship management with competitive advantage

Simultaneous multiple linear regression	Non-standardized impact coefficients		Standardized impact coefficients	T value	Significance level
	B	STD Error	Beta		
Width from origin	1.905	0.244	-	7.807	0.001
Understanding and separating the customer	0.293	0.071	2.267	4.141	0.001
Development and specialization of customer relations	0.04	0.053	0.042	0.755	0.451
Reciprocal communication with the customer	-0.073	0.075	-0.091	-0.073	0.332
Attracting and retaining customers	0.386	0.067	0.5	5.748	0.001

Based on the findings of regression analysis, it can be said that the components of customer

perception and separation (Sig = 0.001, T = 4.141) and customer acquisition and retention (Sig =

0.001, T = 5.748) They have a significant effect on competitive advantage in sports clubs and the effect of developing and specializing customer relationships (Sig = 0.451, T = 0.755) and customer interaction (Sig = 0.332, T = -0.973).) Was not significant on competitive advantage. Non-standardized impact coefficients also show that the effect of customer perception and segregation (B = 0.293) and customer attraction and retention (B = 0.386) have a positive effect on competitive advantage in sports clubs. Standardized regression coefficients also show that customer acquisition and retention culture (β = 0.5) had a stronger effect on competitive advantage in sports clubs than customer perception and segregation (β = 0.267). According to the values of the regression equation, the research hypothesis will be as follows:

+1 / 905 (customer perception and separation) + 0.293 (customer acquisition and retention) 0.386 = competitive advantage.

6. Discussion and conclusion

The results of Pearson correlation test show a positive relationship between customer relationship management and its components and competitive advantage in sports clubs. Also, based on the findings of regression analysis, it can be said that the components of customer perception and separation and customer attraction and retention have a significant effect on competitive advantage in sports clubs and the effect of developing and specializing customer relationships and customer interaction. Competitive advantage was not significant. The results are consistent with the findings of Abedian Jelodar (1399), Mir Aghaei et al. (2014), Toma et al. (2014), Kafgo (2017), Martini et al. (2019), and Ruh Elahi et al. (2015). Ruhollahi et al. (2015) showed that the views of senior managers of travel agencies in Shiraz, understanding and segregation of the customer and the relationship with him in achieving a competitive advantage of these agencies have a synergistic role. Also, attracting and retaining customers, and developing and specializing in customer relationships are effective in gaining the competitive advantage of travel agencies. The results of Oskooi Barghi (1398) also showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between the dimensions of customer relationship management, focus on key customers, knowledge management, technology and organizational structure with gaining a competitive advantage. Explaining the results means that if the management of sports clubs can create a sustainable competitive advantage due to their competencies, which is valuable for customers and always superior to competitors, in fact, they will leave a good performance and compete. They bring. Toma et al. (2014) believe that customer relationship management is an essential advertising strategy to improve a company's innovation capability and to increase the company's competitive advantage. The significant relationship in this study between CRM and competitive advantage motivates sports clubs to offer many different aspects of CRM. Such systems enhance process, product, marketing, and office activities and service innovation capabilities. They can enhance the club's ability to maintain productive customer relationships by integrating data and analyzing customer information. Through the use of technology, clubs can easily assess the needs of potential customers and respond to them effectively.

Explaining the results can be presented based on the views of Vivo and Lowe (2014) who stated that through effective communication and understanding, a company can influence customer behaviors so that customer relationship management strategies, in choosing the right channel to present Valuable products or services help customers and then build a good relationship with the customer and achieve relationship marketing effects. In short, implementing a customer relationship management strategy leads to positive effects on relationship marketing and ultimately improves competitive advantage. Successful implementation of customer relationship management affects cost and customer loyalty. According to Freeland (2003), customer relationship management is still one of the best strategies for revenue growth and increasing market share, and customer relationship management offers richer opportunities to develop customer franchise and increase brand value. As far as most companies are concerned. Indeed, for companies seeking to maintain strong customer relationships with profitability and profitability, achieving the right combination of customer relationship management processes, approaches, and workforce management technologies is critical (Hazbon, 2006). Zhou and Walton (2005) showed that the motivating factors of companies moving towards customer relationship management technology improve customer satisfaction, retain existing customers, improve customer lifetime value, provide strategic information from the CRM system and attract new customers. Becomes. Finally, CRM is a tool that helps profit. If clubs turn customer data into knowledge and then use that knowledge to build relationships, it will increase customer satisfaction, attract, retain, loyalty and reduce customer losses, thereby increasing its competitive advantage over other clubs. On the other hand, customer relationship management is a combination of people, process and technology (technology) that seeks to understand and

differentiate the customer. It is an integrated approach to relationship management with a focus on customer retention and relationship development. As a result, organizations that successfully implement CRM will be rewarded with customer loyalty and long-term profitability. The results are consistent with Kalhor et al. (2016) which showed that there is a significant positive relationship between customer perception and segregation and productivity of sports clubs. Also, having a successful relationship with customers is one of their legitimate ways, creating satisfaction in them and ultimately enjoying competitive advantages. Increasing the quality of interaction between salespeople and sports club managers increases benefits for customers. Abedian Jelodar (1399) showed that customer interaction improves the marketing performance of sports stores, which is consistent with the present study. Also, attracting customers is always the most important goal when launching a new product and launching new businesses. To grow a big business with ambition, customer acquisition is often as important as customer retention. Customer retention also has a positive effect on organizational efficiency, productivity, reducing customer change to competitors and introducing a new perspective.

As a result, it can be said that retaining and attracting customers can improve the competitive advantage in sports clubs. On the other hand, Turban (2007) stated that in customer relationship management strategies, valuable customers are identified and when strong and specific information is obtained from customers, organizations can establish a favorable relationship with customers. As a result, achieving the right mix of CRM processes, approaches, and workforce management technologies is critical for companies looking to maintain strong and profitable customer relationships. Customer relationship management can create an effective capability in customer relationship management and prepare a developed organization with the right leadership of effective strategy and organizational culture. Customer Relationship Management encourages customers to provide suggestions and opinions to improve the quality of products and services provided. It is suggested that in order to improve the attraction and retention of customers of sports clubs, all available solutions and solutions for absorption and retention should be determined and presented to customers

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