

DESIGNING A BRAND IDENTITY MODEL IN THE FOOTBALL INDUSTRYSiavash Khodaparast¹, Bisotoon Azizi², Vahid Bakhshalipour³**ABSTRACT**

Today, football is one of the most popular sports globally. Its particular attractiveness is firmly linked to brand concepts; therefore, this study aimed to design a brand identity model in the football industry. This research applied in terms of purpose and descriptive-survey in terms of nature. The study's statistical population included all spectators, elites, athletes of the Iranian football Premier League, 384 of whom were selected as a statistical sample in an accessible and targeted manner. To analyze the data, descriptive and inferential statistical tests and model fit analysis of structural equation modeling with PLS software have been used. According to the results, all brand identity dimensions have a significant relationship at the level of $p \leq 0.05$ with the Premier Football League's brand identity. The non-product extent had the most role by explaining 93% of brand identity changes, and then from that dimension, empirical equivalence explained 91% of the brand identity variable changes. Then the product-related variable explained 86% of the changes in the brand identity variable. Finally, visual identity explained 85% of the changes in the brand identity variable. According to the research results, it is suggested that football clubs are among the factors of their brand identity, including; Use social responsibility, customer relationship management, the use of managers who specialize in football, marketing, and sports economics.

Key words: Football. Brand Identity. Visual Identity. Experimental Identity.

1 - Department of Physical Education and Sport Science, Lahijan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Guilan, Lahijan, Iran.

2 - Department of Physical Education, Piranshahr Branch, Islamic Azad University, Piranshahr, Iran.

3 - Sama technical and vocational training college, Lahijan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Siyahkal, Iran.

E-mail Author:

s.khodaparast@yahoo.com

vahidbakhshalipour@yahoo.com

bistonazizi@gmail.com

RESUMO

Projetando um modelo de identidade de marca na indústria do futebol

Hoje, o futebol é um dos esportes mais populares do mundo. Sua atratividade particular está firmemente ligada aos conceitos de marca; portanto, este estudo teve como objetivo projetar um modelo de identidade de marca na indústria do futebol. Esta pesquisa aplicada em termos de finalidade e descritiva-survey em termos de natureza. A população estatística do estudo incluiu todos os espectadores, elites, atletas da Premier League iraniana de futebol, 384 dos quais foram selecionados como uma amostra estatística de forma acessível e direcionada. Para a análise dos dados, foram utilizados testes estatísticos descritivos e inferenciais e análise de ajuste de modelos de modelagem de equações estruturais com o software PLS. De acordo com os resultados, todas as dimensões da identidade da marca têm uma relação significativa ao nível de $p \leq 0,05$ com a identidade da marca da Premier Football League. A extensão não-produto teve o maior papel ao explicar 93% das mudanças na identidade da marca e, a partir dessa dimensão, a equivalência empírica explicou 91% das mudanças nas variáveis da identidade da marca. Em seguida, a variável relacionada ao produto explicou 86% das mudanças na variável de identidade da marca. Por fim, a identidade visual explicou 85% das mudanças na variável identidade da marca. De acordo com os resultados da pesquisa, sugere-se que os clubes de futebol estão entre os fatores de sua identidade de marca, incluindo; Use a responsabilidade social, a gestão do relacionamento com o cliente, o uso de gerentes especializados em futebol, marketing e economia do esporte.

Palavras-chave: Futebol. Identidade da Marca. Identidade Visual. Identidade Experimental.

Corresponding Author:

Siavash Khodaparast

s.khodaparast@yahoo.com

INTRODUCTION

Football is one of the most popular sports, as many countries on five continents have made it their national sport.

In today's world, football has gone from being a hobby to becoming a thriving industry that has invested heavily in economics. Hence, football leagues have become reputable economic enterprises and have found a preeminent role in branding (Marquette e colaboradores, 2017).

A brand has a significant impact on recognizing organizations' products and services and is an intangible asset. Today, the importance of brands and their role has increased dramatically; Many organizations believe that by spending much money, they try to introduce their brand in a better way to differentiate themselves and their products and services from competitors. Many organizations have come to believe this. One of their most valuable assets is the brand of their products and services. Many researchers have pointed out that building a strong brand is critical in achieving competitive advantage and long-term survival in the market (Hewer, Gannon, Cordina, 2017).

In modern marketing, companies and their brands are working hard to maintain their existence and, at the same time, gain a new market share.

In contrast, the rising cost of sporting events, the limited budget allocated by the Ministry of Sports and Youth, and the government's emphasis on privatization have led to a great need for sponsors in various sports. Has been financed (Essamri, McKechnie, Winklhofer, 2019).

The brand is one of the most valuable concepts in business discussion, and marketers are forced to use a strong brand as a competitive advantage (Arakelian, Brito, Rosenthal, 2020).

Motivations to choose and buy goods reached their highest level since 1980 with the emergence of the brand's first role, and this brand value was transferred from developed countries to other parts of the world. The existential necessity of branding led to the emergence of a wide range of models defined for brand identity. So that so far, there are more than 300 brandings models globally, and most branding models, the brand, from the buyer's perspective (Thomas, 2018).

The brand is one of the most important intangible assets that researchers have considered (Kunkel, Biscaia, 2020).

A brand includes a name, title, mark, symbol, or design or combination of all of these that seek to identify products or services from a vendor or group of vendors and to differentiate them from other competitors (Karamaki, Lahtinen, Tuominen, 2018).

The importance of the role of intangible assets in the effectiveness of organizational activities as well as creating the survival of financial performance of businesses at the level of various organizations, companies, and industries is evident to everyone, so that the sports industry can be called a sports team as a brand and viewed fans as customers (Essamri, McKechnie, Winklhofer, 2019).

Therefore, sports managers must manage their teams, leagues, and assets from a brand's perspective. The brand's most essential and unique feature is reflected in the brand identity (Saraniemi, Komppula, 2019).

Among the sports, football is one of the sports that has its popularity and, such as world competitions, generates many profits and professional football leagues attract many spectators' attention. Given these characteristics, marks in today's world are of interest to countries and large companies. Large teams seek to bring large spectators to the stadium through marketing methods and in competition with domestic teams and foreign leagues to gain a more significant share of Absorb the media and increase through clubs' income (Osakwe e colaboradores, 2020).

Of course, since the nature of sports is unstable, the problem of attracting and gaining customer loyalty is raised, and sports marketers must take steps that contain unique associations for the fan so that he can not only win in time but also in times of failure between the team and Fans communicate that one of these measures is brand identity design (Keshtidar, Shajie, 2018).

Identity and then the brand identity of the team is a topic that is the key to establishing a strong relationship between the fan and the team and can be proposed based on the theory of social identity in which the fan because the group meets one or more needs for self-knowledge, Identify (Braun e colaboradores, 2018).

Given the phenomenon that the fan introduces himself as a team member through cognitive categorization, emphasizing the standard features with the team and with other

members and differences with non-members, the assumptions of identity theory and self-categorization can be applied to situations where the official member of the organization Nor did he generalize that the term collective identity could be used here instead of formal affiliation, so fans must spend their time and money supporting the team because of the similarity they feel to the team in some elements of their identity.

They form a team with no formal connection and will not take this path unless they design a strong foundation called brand identity (Rather e colaboradores, 2019).

It is evident that if the teams succeed in this strategy, they will attract more fans, and then they can use different sources of income, among which the right to broadcast television, environmental advertising, and so on. has a special place for clubs (Coelho, Rita, Santos, 2018).

Research has been done, including Davvetas and Halkias's (2019) research, which showed that the main factors that create brand skills could be related to its products or services. Consumers expect positive emotional behaviors to the company or brand to be compensated through the functional and social benefits they derive from this relationship; brands provide social goals by reflecting social affiliations such as family, cultural and social groups, and brand communities (Davvetas, Halkias, 2019).

Showed that experience-based benefits are tied to all related and unrelated features of the brand-covered product, and in fact, it is the dominant feeling that results from the related and non-brand-related features for the customer. Furthermore, consumers prefer brands that are relevant and compatible with a set of personality traits (Zeng, 2019).

Bairrada, Coelho and Coelho (2018), in a study entitled Prediction and results of brand love: useful and symbolic qualities of the brand showed that the brand as an internal product advantage and usually related to the product features covered by the brand, and In practice, these benefits go back to the customer's functional needs from purchasing the product and generally include such things as ease of use, efficiency in solving the customer's problem, the quality of the product and its parts.

In a comprehensive study and based on previous research, examined brand identity through its constituent components; Brand values, brand vision, and brand positioning.

Brand positioning and brand vision directly impact brand performance, which positively affects financial performance and guides brand orientation components of brand identity (Muhonen, Hirvonen and Laukkanen, 2017).

Today, the popularity of brand identity is recognized as an asset, and people are willing to pay any price for their desired brand. The well-known brand seeks to establish its brand identity, maintain brand loyalty and popularity, and develop new product lines in sports by investing capital and time to gain more market share.

Thus, brand identity remains the largest source of competitive equity in the industry; Hence, brand equity plays a strategic role in helping football managers achieve competitive equity and make wise management decisions.

On the other hand, given that sports brands in football can achieve many positive outcomes by creating a brand personality, in other words, a competitive advantage, so identifying the dimensions of brand identity can have positive and negative consequences in the minds of football friends.

It should be different, so in this regard, designing a model for brand identity in football seems necessary.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research is applied in terms of purpose type and descriptive-analytical research method.

This study's statistical population included experts and all spectators participating in the Football League of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Three hundred eighty-four people from the statistical population were selected as the sample population IN the non-probability sampling method.

A researcher-made questionnaire was used to collect the required data. Based on library study and exploratory interviews, the researcher-made research questionnaire was made and included 46 items related to the brand identity framework, which provides four main perspectives (identity Is empirical, visual identity, product-related, and non-product-related).

There are two dimensions of goods delivery and the stadium, including eight items in practical identity, three dimensions of color, emblem, and clothing in terms of visual identity, including ten items. There are four dimensions of elite players in the product-

related perspective: non-player personnel, success, and performance, including 12 items. There are four dimensions in the non-product-related perspective: competitor, fan, background, and native region, including 16 items.

The questions are based on a Likert scale with five meager options (value 1) very high (value 5). All questions have a direct score, i.e., one is given to a low number and 5 to a very high number.

The research's importance was considered a numerical equivalent (between 1 and 5) for each response option to analyze the questionnaire's data. It was attributed to the insufficient option number 1, the low option 2, the medium importance number 3, the high importance number 4, and the very high

importance option number 5. The Cronbach's alpha value is 0.91, which indicates that it has high validity. At this stage, for descriptive analysis of the collected data, descriptive statistical indicators such as frequency, mean, standard deviation and inferential statistical methods such as the climograph-Smirnov test were used to determine usual (standard) or abnormal and for data analysis. SPSS and PLS software were used.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the frequency related to the gender of the sample, of which 55% (212) of the sample were male, and 45% (172) of the sample were female.

Table 1 - Description of the statistical sample studied by gender.

gender	Frequency	Frequency (number per person)
male	55%	212
female	45%	172
total	100%	384

Table 2 shows the frequency related to the sample level of the sample, with the highest frequency with 29% (110 people)

related to the level of undergraduate education and the lowest frequency with 8% (31 people) related to the level of doctoral education.

Table 2 - Description of the statistical sample studied by educational status.

Educational status	Frequency	Frequency (number per person)
Diploma and less	25.52	98
Associate	9.63	37
master	28.64	110
Master	28.12	108
P.H. D	8.07	31
total	100	384

Index reliability, convergent validity, and divergent validity were used to measure the measurement model's fit. Index reliability for measuring internal reliability includes three criteria: factor load coefficients, Cronbach's alpha, and combined reliability.

Convergent validity shows the degree of correlation of a structure with its characteristics, and divergent validity is the degree of relationship of a structure with its characteristics compared to that structure's relationship with other structures.

Calculating the correlation value of a structure's characteristics with that structure, the calculation and its appropriate value is equal to or greater than 0.4. The factor load indicates that the variance between the structure and its characteristics was more significant than the variance of that structure's measurement error. The factor loads resulting from the implementation of the model are shown in Table 4-6. Also, in the research, factor loads have been reported along with the Cross Loading test.

Table 3 - Factor load coefficients of research variables.

Structure	questions	Factor load	Structure	questions	Factor load	Structure	questions	Factor load
Elie player	Q1-1	0.901	Non-playing personnel	Q4-1	0.650	success	Q7-1	0.783
	Q2-1	0.832		Q5-1	0.821		Q8-1	0.815
	Q3-1	0.608		Q6-1	0.802		Q9-1	0.706
function	Q10-1	0.886	color	Q13-1	0.858	sign	Q16-1	0.731
	Q11-1	0.895		Q14-1	0.463		Q17-1	0.822
	Q12-1	0.862		Q15-1	0.781		Q18-1	0.754
outfit	Q20-1	0.836	delivery	Q23-1	0.691	The stadium	Q19-1	0.777
	Q21-1	0.734		Q24-1	0.854		Q28-1	0.830
	Q22-1	0.832		Q25-1	0.834		Q29-1	0.845
				Q26-1	0.757		Q30-1	0.824
				Q27-1	0.759			
competitor	Q31-1	0.812	fans	Q36-1	0.694	history	Q39-1	0.829
	Q32-1	0.793		Q37-1	0.886		Q40-1	0.799
				Q38-1	0.849		Q41-1	0.845
	Q33-1	0.760	Native area	Q43-1	0.849		Q42-1	0.826
	Q34-1	0.755		Q44-1	0.510			
	Q35-1	0.682		Q45-1	0.858			
				Q46-1	0.789			

As shown in Table 3, the factor loads of the measures in their respective structures are higher than 0.4; Questions with factor loads less than 0.4 were removed from the research model, the number of which was equal to eight items.

Two latitude variable validity matrices and Fronel and Locker criteria are used to evaluate the measurement model's divergent validity.

According to this criterion, a model's acceptable divergent validity indicates that one

structure in the model has more interaction with its characteristics than other structures.

We use two correlation validity matrices of latent variable and Fronel and Locker criteria to investigate the measurement model's divergent validity.

Based on this criterion, a model's acceptable divergence validity indicates that one construct in the model has more interaction with its indicators than other structures.

Table 4 - Fronel and Locker matrices of divergent validity.

	Unrelated to the product	Related to the product	Brand identity	Experimental identity	Visual identity
Unrelated to the product	0.671				
Related to the product	0.759	0.633			
Brand identity	0.940	0.868	0.620		
Experimental identity	0.789	0.771	0.913	0.726	
Visual identity	0.699	0.695	0.847	0.743	0.649

Based on the results obtained from the correlations and the square root of AB, which is on the diameter of Table 4, the model's divergent validity at the structural level can be confirmed in terms of Fronel and Locker criteria.

The first and most essential criterion for measuring the relationship between

structures in the model (structural part) is the significant number of T-values.

If the value of these numbers is more significant than 1.96, it indicates the accuracy of the relationship between structures and confirms the research hypotheses at the confidence level of 95%. In the following figure, the model related to the values of T-values is presented.

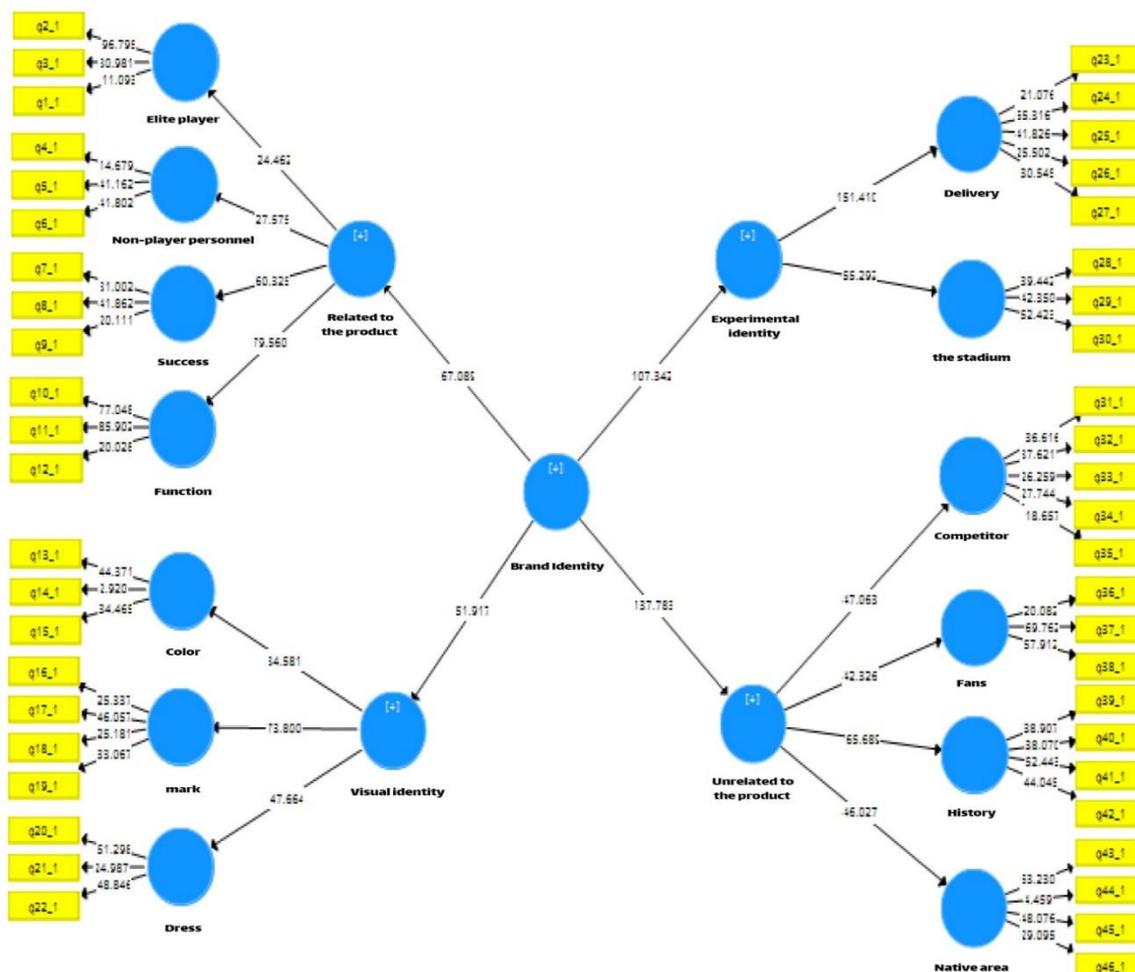


Figure 1 - T-values of the relationships between main factors with each other and with the sub-factor

Table 5 - Significant coefficient (T-values) relationships between main factors with each other and with sub-factors

p Values	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	Relationships of each factor
p≤0.001	783.137	Unrelated to the product: Brand identity
p≤0.001	085.67	Related to the product: Brand identity
p≤0.001	347.107	Experimental identity: Brand identity
p≤0.001	783.137	Visual identity: Brand identity

Considering that all the paths of relationships between research components and items with each of their factors are more

remarkable than 1.96 and significant, this sign indicates the correct prediction of research model relationships.

Table 6 - Q2 Index Coefficient Model Prediction Power.

Predicting Power	Q ² (1- (SSE/SSO))	SSE ²	SSO ¹	Variable
Very strong	0.514	359.16	359.16	Brand identity

According to table 6- it is determined that the model has extreme predicting power because the predicting power of brand identity structure has an intensity greater than 0.35.

Table 7 - Communalities and R2 values to calculate the model's overall grace index (GOF).

Research variables	Communalities	R2
Stadium	0.694	0.734
Elite Player	0.624	0.709
Product Delivery	0.611	0.882
Competitor	0.680	0.684
Color	0.620	0.769
History	0.681	0.769
Performance	0.683	0.759
Unrelated to the product	0.650	0.877
Clothes	0.668	0.677
Related to the product	0.701	0.755
Indigenous region	0.685	0.746
Success	0.692	0.726
sign	0.696	0.767
Fans	0.663	0.698
Brand identity		
Experimental identity	0.627	0.835
Visual identity	0.621	0.723
Non-player personnel	0.680	0.693
Average	0.663	0.753

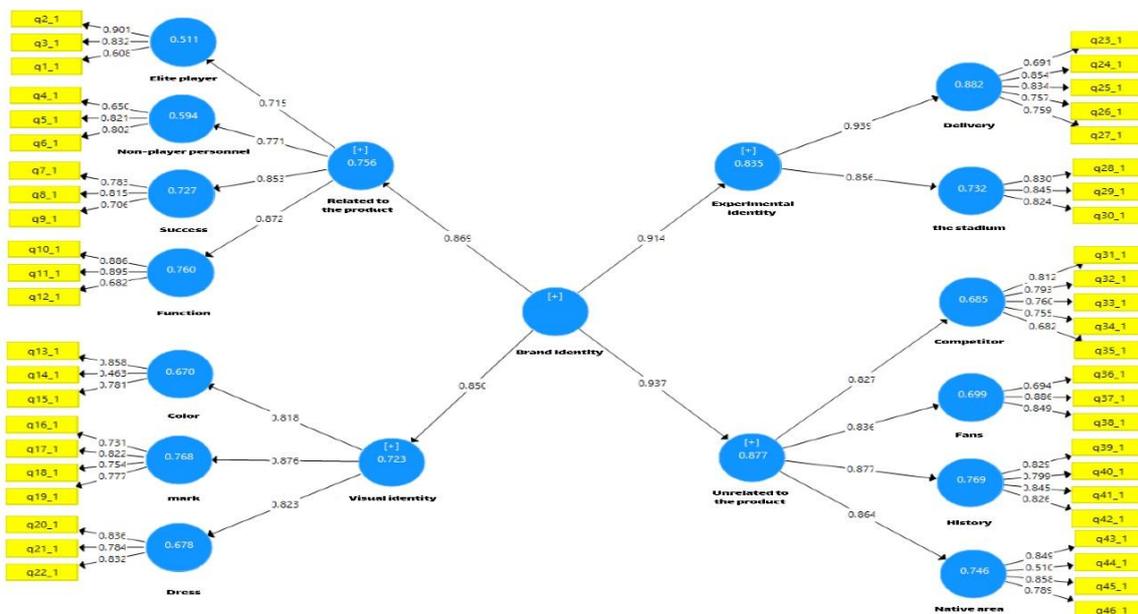


Figure 2 - Path coefficients of the general research model.

1. SSO: Sum of square values of indices¹
2. SSE: Sum of square values of error in predicting endogenous structural indices

$$GOF = \frac{\sqrt{\text{communalities} \times R}}{\sqrt{0.753 \times 0.663}} = 0.706$$

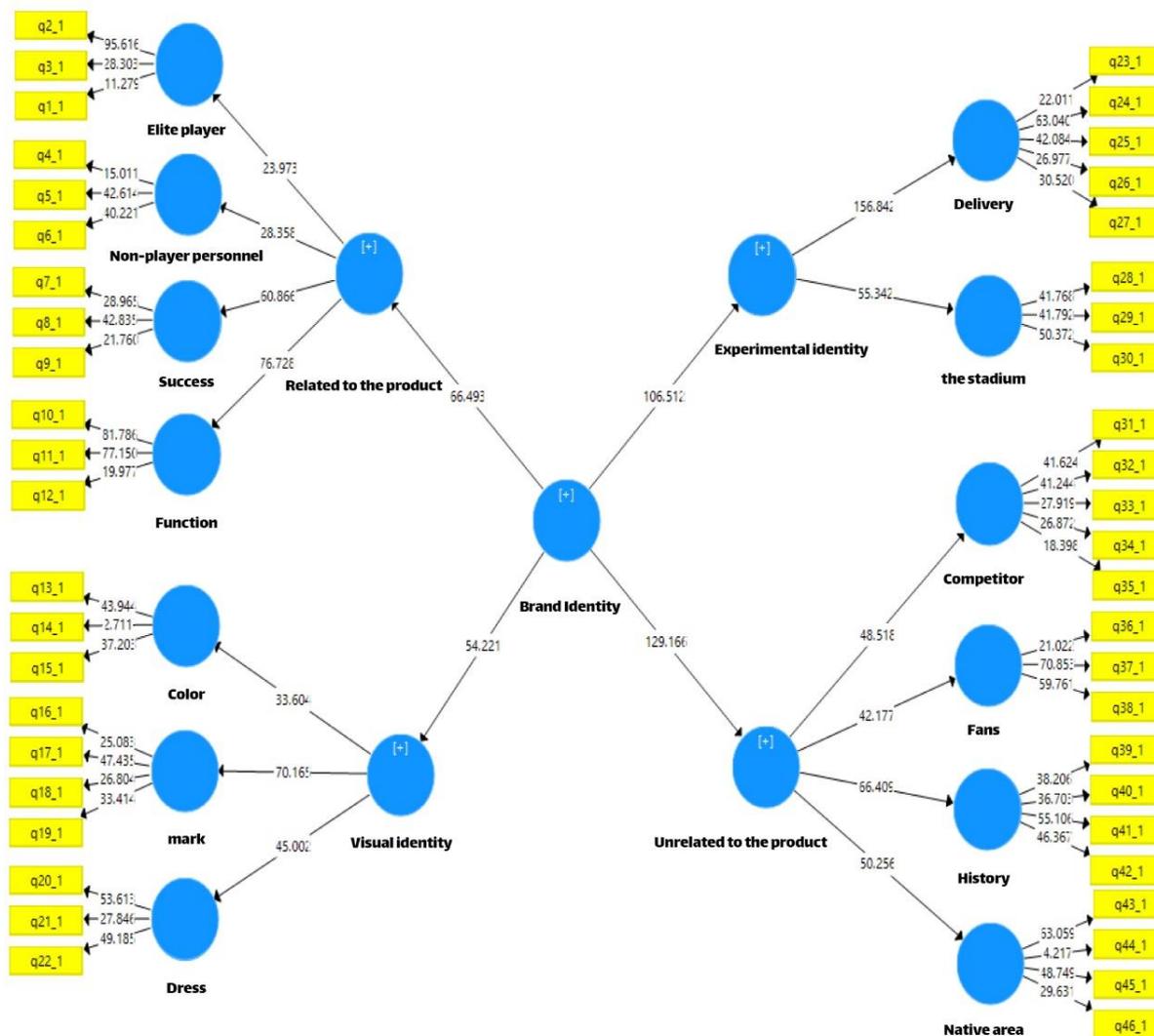


Figure 3 - Significant statistics of T value of research model.

Considering that the mentioned criterion is 0.706, the overall model's grace is confirmed at an extreme level.

Table 8 - Investigation of Research Hypotheses.

Research Hypotneses	Path Coefficient	T statistics of	p Values
Brand identity: Unrelated to the product	0.937	129.126	p≤0.05
Brand identity: Related to the product	0.869	66.493	p≤0.05
Brand identity: Experimental identity	0.914	106.512	p≤0.05
Brand identity: Visual identity	0.850	129.166	p≤0.05

Based on table 8 and shape (2 and 3) and conducting path analysis in the presence of all brand identity variables at the same time, it was found that all four brand identity conditions had a direct and significant relationship at the level of $p \leq 0.05$ with the brand identity of the football League.

In a way that non-product related aspect has the most role by explaining 93% of changes in brand identity variables and then the experimental identity aspect explained 91% of changes in brand identity variables and then product-related variables with the explanation was 86% of the changes in the brand identity variable and finally the visual identity explained 85% of the changes in the brand identity variable.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to design a brand identity model in the football industry. In the sports industry, any sports team can be considered as brands and fans as customers.

The presence of spectators in the stadiums and the encouragement of their beloved teams increases the attractiveness and excitement of the match, and psychologically and psychologically also has a significant impact on the performance of teams and players and will bring countless financial benefits to the clubs.

According to the results, the product-related aspect has an explanatory role on the brand identity, which is consistent with the results of research Chen (2019), Rutter (2018).

The strong positive impact of the product on the brand identity brings the critical point that teams and sports clubs, among which the competition is currently very intense and fierce, should pay more attention to the concept of brand identity and be more critical for it (Muhonen, Hirvonen and Laukkanen, 2017).

Teams and clubs seek to create and develop a brand identity but are unaware that the core of brand identity stems from its subsets (Carr, Hayes, 2019).

Brand identity is formed by brand-owned clubs and groups and grows by fans and fans, and teams and clubs should not use the brand merely to raise awareness, but brand investments should pay special attention to development. Have a brand identity in the eyes of customers (Arakelian, Brito, Rosenthal, 2020).

It should be noted that brand identity originates from the team and the club itself. Club attractiveness relates to selecting brand identity. Clubs try to design the logo and choose the right color for the team and team outfit to reach this goal.

By developing the club's attractiveness among their fans, they can improve their club's economic and social status and enjoy its benefits (Hewer, Gannon, Cordina, 2017).

It can be said that the development of the product identity of sports clubs will lead to an increment and augmentation of loyalty among their fans, and it seems that team success and players are essential motivational factors in the presence of fans (Hewer, Gannon, Cordina, 2017).

According to the researchers' findings, the team's head coach is one of the factors that has had a positive and notable impression on the loyalty of fans to the brand of popular professional football league teams in the Professional football League. Due to the research results, it can be said that using prominent and famous coaches and players and significant achievements are influential factors in the development of fans' loyalty to club teams. The ability to pay attention to and apply management in these factors enhanced fans' commitment to their favorite teams (Marquette e colaboradores, 2017).

The path analysis conclusions displayed a direct and significant relationship between Non-product factors and brand identity. Researchers investigate four subscales of Non-product identity factors, including club history, club location (indigenous region), fans, and competitors. These findings are from studies by researchers such as Daniar, Marta, Sampurna (2020), Bairrada, Coelho and Coelho (2018) and Muhonen, Hirvonen and Laukkanen (2017).

They were trying to Confirm the impact of Non-product-based later factors on team identity; these research results are consistent with the present study outcomes on the effects of stated factors in the form of fans Non-product brand identity.

It seems that with more emphasis on symbols, outfit, stories, and the history of clubs, reviving the values and practices of clubs that have a long history and involving fans in the process of selecting managers and owners of clubs, this identity can be strengthened and developed among the fans (Kunkel, Biscaia, 2020).

Defining team identity is the first step in the branding process of sports teams. Considering that the brand loyalty factor is regarded as one of the particular value aspects and critical pillars of branding, football managers should analyze fans' perceptions and determine the identity factors for sports teams at the head of their marketing and branding strategies to create powerful sports teams' brands in the sports industry and achieve loyal fans.

They can take advantage of the potential of more dedicated fans. In other words, by strengthening the fan brand's identity, we can hope to accelerate the branding process of football teams.

Paying attention to teams and sports clubs' identity as powerful brands in the sports industry has a relatively long history in developed countries. Still, this issue in Iranian sport is a new topic that highlights the need for more consideration to this issue (Thomas, 2018).

Path analysis results attested that visual identity is useful in defining brand identity. The results of this study are consistent with the results of researches by Helmi, Bridson, Casidy (2020), Aghazade, Jafari, Esmaeily (2020), and Welsh, Gomez, Pierce (2018).

It seems that the starting point in sports branding is creating and promoting brand identity, so managers of Football clubs should be searching for crucial activities. Football Managers club should search for essential activities to develop and strengthen sports brands' particular value by providing a suitable identity for their teams (Byun, Chiu, Bae, 2018).

Research conclusions indicate that having these subscales is useful for football clubs in developing fan loyalty. Based on this, clubs can design the club logo, choose the right color for the team and the club's outfit to develop its loyalty to their favorite teams.

Therefore, they improve their club's economic and social status among the fans and enjoy its benefits (Ke, Wagner, 2020).

Researchers believe that the brand of professional football league clubs has had a positive and significant impact on fans' loyalty to the brand of popular professional league teams. So, clubs can use attractive colors, logos, and outfits to increase team attractiveness and increase fans' commitment to a team.

The use of designers and specialists in the design of club logos, the creation of sports outfit of teams and clubs, along with the service and use of fan ideas and opinions in designing and determining the design and color of sports outfit of groups can help to increase the attractiveness of these factors and develop the loyalty of fans to teams and sports clubs (Heo, 2018).

CONCLUSION

Generally, since creating brand identity necessitates investment and special attention in marketing programs, especially potential and current customers, these sports clubs' marketing managers should try to increase their fans' and customers' loyalty by considering each dimension of their influence.

Researchers recommend to the football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran design a brand identity model of sports teams present in the world stages. It is better to pay attention to gender, color, and sewing in designing a team's visual identity and outfit.

There is a suggestion for creating the identity related to the product, using elite players is a priority, and the team's non-player personnel should be trained with public relations, maintaining a suitable and graceful appearance, professional behavior, and always highlighting the team's performance and success in the media.

Moreover, about the non-product identity, the formation of the national team's fan club, highlighting the team's history and providing a good picture of the country in all expedition competitions, and expressing the superiority of the team to the competing teams can have a significant impact on the brand identity of the national teams.

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RESUMEN

Diseñar un modelo de identidad de marca en la industria del fútbol

Hoy en día, el fútbol es uno de los deportes más populares a nivel mundial. Su atractivo particular está firmemente ligado a los conceptos de marca; por lo tanto, este estudio tuvo como objetivo diseñar un modelo de identidad de marca en la industria del fútbol. Esta investigación se aplicó en términos de propósito y encuesta descriptiva en términos de naturaleza. La población estadística del estudio incluyó a todos los espectadores, élites, atletas de la Premier League de fútbol iraní, 384 de los cuales fueron seleccionados como muestra estadística de una manera accesible y específica. Para analizar los datos se han utilizado pruebas estadísticas descriptivas e inferenciales y análisis de ajuste del modelo de modelado de ecuaciones estructurales con software PLS. Según los resultados, todas las dimensiones de identidad de marca tienen una relación significativa al nivel de $p \leq 0.05$ con la identidad de marca de la Premier Football League. La extensión de no producto tuvo el mayor papel al explicar el 93% de los cambios de identidad de marca, y luego, desde esa dimensión, la equivalencia empírica explicó el 91% de los cambios de variable de identidad de marca. Luego, la variable relacionada con el producto explicó el 86% de los cambios en la variable de identidad de marca. Finalmente, la identidad visual explicó el 85% de los cambios en la variable identidad de marca. Según los resultados de la investigación, se sugiere que los clubes de fútbol se encuentran entre los factores de su identidad de marca, entre ellos; Utilice la responsabilidad social, la gestión de relaciones con los clientes, el uso de gerentes que se especialicen en fútbol, marketing y economía deportiva.

Palabras clave: Fútbol. Identidad de marca. Identidad visual. Identidad experimental.

Orcid Author:

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3662-6852>

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4552-7792>

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5300-4935>

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