

In The

Name of

God



Sports Business Journal

Scientific Quarterly Journal
of **Alzahra University**

Spring 2024

Vol. 4, Issue. 2, Serial Number 10

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Alzahra University, North Sheikh Bahae St., Deh-e Vanak, Tehran, I. R. of Iran.

- Tel: (+9821)88041468
- Fax: (+9821)88090661
- P. Code: 1993893973
- University website address: <https://en.alzahra.ac.ir/>

Contact E-mail: Sportbj@alzahra.ac.ir

Alternate E-mail: Supportsbj@alzahra.ac.ir

Journal website: <https://sbj.alzahra.ac.ir/>

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References examples:**Journal article**

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Book

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- **Equations.** If you are submitting your manuscript as a Word document, please ensure that equations are editable.

Editor-in-Chief Note

While we published the first **Sports Business Journal** issue, the Journal has found its position among researchers and reviewers and has been accepted worldwide. Although most visitors to its articles are from other countries, its monthly visits exceed 4,000, half of which are from researchers abroad and five continents. By complying with the necessary form and content standards, we can be more successful in increasing the visibility of the articles and be indexed in more specialized databases. The keywords cloud of the articles also shows that we are still required to comply with the Journal's scope, and we have been able to maintain its specialized position. With the continuous cooperation of dear colleagues and authors, we will be more successful in how we have taken.

Once again, we thank the esteemed vice president for research at **Alzahra University** and our dear colleagues in this field for their support and guidance. We are also grateful to the honourable managers of the Iranian Journals' Commission of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, and we hope that they will continue to support the new English language Journals and continue their technical and material support for publishing such publications until the results are achieved. Also, we hope to continue receiving valuable specialized articles towards the publication of technical articles and other activities for the growth of the field and the improvement of the level of writing articles in English.

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Bibliometric Analysis of Brand Slogan in Event Tourism

Faezeh Abdollahnezhad¹, Reza Andam^{2*}, Hassan Bahrololoum², Mojtaba Rajabi³

¹ PhD Student in Sport Management, Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences, Faculty of Physical Education, Shahrood University of Technology, Shahrood, Iran.

² Associate Professor in Sport Management, Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences, Faculty of Physical Education, Shahrood University of Technology, Shahrood, Iran.

³ Assistant Professor in Sport Management, Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences, Faculty of Physical Education, Shahrood University of Technology, Shahrood, Iran.

ABSTRACT

Purpose: Marketing is a method that focuses on promoting companies' products and services. One of the main elements of promotion is the product or brand slogan. This study aimed to provide a bibliometric analysis of scientific documents on brand slogan research in event tourism.

Methodology: This study used social network analysis to investigate co-authorship, co-occurrence of words, and cooperation coefficient. The research population consisted of studies of journals indexed in the Web Science database from 2006 to 2022, and 29 articles about brand slogans in tourism were selected as samples and analyzed using VOSviewer software.

Findings: The results showed that research on brand slogans in tourism reached the highest level in 2017, and the United States did the most research in this area. The most frequently repeated words between 2014 and 2016 included destination brand, destination image, slogan, and marketing communications, and after 2016, the words "destination slogan" and "location identity" were repeated. Tourism slogans, logos, slogans, and products were the most frequent in 2020. Most citations were related to Lee's (2006) article. The differences between keywords before and after 2020 indicate the importance of slogan design and appropriate slogans for tourism brand marketing.

Originality: It is suggested that tourism managers use the related slogan of their tourism brand to promote and market it. Also, the results of this research will help researchers to consider current issues in the field of event tourism in future studies and to identify authentic publications in the field of brand and tourism and use authentic articles to write their articles.

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1. Introduction

Now more than ever, human society faces a lack of diverse resources and needs and is trying to use the limited resources available to meet some of its unlimited needs. If economics is the study of how unlimited needs can be met using limited resources, management of skills and assets for optimal use of existing resources, and marketing is defined as identifying and addressing needs through resource exchange, (Ferrand & McCarthy, 2008). Therefore, managers need to develop effective marketing strategies to determine their brand positioning and help their brands communicate positively with current and new customers. The ultimate goal of branding is to differentiate a brand from a competitor, which is the essence of branding strategy (Aaker, 2003).

A brand is a name, phrase, term, sign, symbol, design, or combination of them intended to introduce goods or services by vendors to differentiate their products from competing companies (Lassar et al., 1995). In marketing, it has been argued that providing sensory, emotional, behavioral, and intellectual experiences can influence a brand somehow and thus increase brand credibility (Hwang & Hyun, 2012).

In their research, Choi et al. (2017) found that emotional slogans must be created to evoke customers' emotional experiences, develop strong feelings for the brand, and help build brand credibility. Therefore, brand managers should create slogans for the brand that are attractive to consumers, developing behavioral, sensory, emotional, and cognitive aspects of a brand increases consumers' perception of brand credibility, directly or indirectly affecting the quality and loyalty of customers' relationships with the brand.

Slogans are short phrases that convey descriptive or convincing information about the brand. In other words, they are essential tools for summarizing and translating the claims of a brand marketing plan (Keller, 2003). Slogans are believed to play an important role in advertising (Richardson & Cohen, 2012).

Slogans are widely used in advertising campaigns for various products and interact effectively with other brand elements such as brands, logos, packaging, and designs, as these slogans play a beneficial role in helping customers understand the brand's nature (Lee et al., 2006). Additionally, tourism is also a popular part of leisure experiences in the world (Ritchie & Adair, 2004).

The rapid growth of tourism has led to the formulation and implementation of tourism development plans and policies. As a result, competition between destinations has intensified, leading them to develop and implement various marketing activities to improve understanding of their target brands (Zhang et al., 2016). Tourism campaigns usually have slogans or slogans to unite and emphasize the values and identities of the place advertised; for example, South Australia has the motto "Peace, Joy, Discover," and the Maldives have the slogan "Sunny Side of Life" in their tourism campaigns (Nuttavuthisit, 2007). National tourism organizations should pay attention to the country's brand logo and brand slogan in their advertisements and develop these two components, Paying attention to the brand logo and brand slogan helps to increase the effectiveness of advertising and attracts more visual attention of tourists and effectiveness (Lourenção et al., 2020).

The results show that the more clearly the tourism slogan represents the unique sales of a brand, the more efficient the message is. Furthermore, if tourists can get specific information about the slogan, they will have a more favorable attitude toward it. Compared to vague slogans, specific and tangible slogans can provide more precise information about a destination, which can help tourists reduce the risks associated with travel decisions (Lee et al., 2006).

In the choice of words for designing tourist destination slogans, it is necessary to consider their positive and negative meanings simultaneously. For example, the Thailand Tourism Campaign has been quite successful in choosing the slogan "Amazing Thailand" because its positive meaning has convinced many tourists to enjoy the idea of experimenting with something new, strange, or different from their Thailand tourism and shows the amazing quality of the country, but on the other hand, it can convey a sexual trait and create an impression about the country's brand (Nuttavuthisit, 2007).

Additionally, extremism in slogan design hurts the attitude towards the destination and the intention to travel of tourists since tourism has high empirical characteristics and tourists cannot assess the quality of the destination before experiencing it; they are likely to evaluate high-profile slogans more cautiously to reduce the risks associated with travel decisions. A brand slogan's information may be inconsistent with what tourists think and know about the destination, leading to cognitive dissonance (Zhang et al., 2016). However, the most important thing to note is that brand slogans are generally crucial in branding (Aaker, 2012); for this purpose, slogans are used in football sports. Football is not just a sports game but has become a global business for teams (Hamlin & Peters, 2018). Football slogans aim to achieve two main goals: promoting brand awareness and creating, protecting, or changing brand image and perception (Brown & Katz, 2011). Significant events like the World Cup also use posters and slogans to convey the host country's traditions. These options create feelings of belonging and shape the nation as a concrete community (Malanski & Peña, 2023). Considering the above and the importance of slogans in tourism, Nevertheless, many research gaps remain in the field of research of the motto (Kohli et al., 2007) and specifically the Destination Research Slogan (Pike, 2004). Since scientific development is one of the most important indicators of economic and social development in different countries, it is necessary to investigate scientific production in various fields (Makkizadeh & Hazery, 2017). Scient metrics studies are among the cases that can show the extent of a country's scientific development. The findings of scient metric studies can be counted as the most important policy tools for developing science, technology, and innovation in different countries (Emami et al., 2016).

These studies help managers discover effective marketing methods. Additionally, one of the most important items in today's marketing competition is the creation of methods affecting the audience and customers of products and services by managers of organizations and companies. For this reason, reviewing prior academic research helps to understand knowledge in a particular field (Hart, 1998). In addition, it identifies gaps and suggestions for future research work (Thwaites & Chadwick, 2013). And finally, the results can lead to progress in future research in the field. Therefore 'this research uses existing studies in the field of brand slogans in tourism, doing so 'will provide a range of

concepts, models and frameworks and develop a management understanding of the multidimensional nature and complexities of achieving service quality in a tourism environment.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Brand Slogan

One of the important factors that sustain organizations is the retention of customers, and if the organization loses its customers, it should not hope to continue its activities.

To attract customers and his loyalty, one of the most important factors is to create brand value for the company. If the company fails to create a special value for itself, it will lag behind its competitors and lose market share in the current highly competitive environment. The recent emphasis of marketing is on creating global brand names that compete with different countries and cultures. Therefore, to ensure success in building a strong commercial name (high value business name), it is necessary to understand the process of creating brand value and know the factors affecting it. The elements of the classic marketing mix (product, price, distribution, and promotion) have a greater effect on changing the brand name and brand's specific value from the customer's perspective (Yoo et al., 2000). Recently, brands have been emphasized as an important relationship marketing tool to differentiate a company from competitors (Choi et al., 2017).

A brand is a name or phrase whose main purpose is to introduce a product or service to customers. In today's competitive environment, most researchers believe that brands are an important part of business (Lassar et al., 1995). The brand name, along with the brand's slogan and logo, represents one of the three key elements of brand identity. The elements by which the brand communicates with the world around it (Kohli et al., 2007). Although many commentators have argued that logos, slogans and advertising campaigns are relatively ineffective in branding the place, those involved focus on these visual design and advertising tools (de San Eugenio Vela et al., 2017). Although these three components are pieces of a single whole, the way they each build brand identity is distinct and performs a specific function. For example, brand-to-product shows the core brand identity and cannot be easily changed. Logos, whether brand images or more abstract designs, serve as visual cues for faster processing and global recognition of brands in different languages and cultures. Likewise, logos are noticeably rarely changed, but sometimes changed or updated to keep up to date in the competitive world. A brand name, often no more than one or two words, can't say many things literally. The same is true of logos. Finally, slogans play an important supporting role in brand identity. They are a key element of a brand's identity and contribute to the unique value of a brand. In today's market, almost all brands use slogans. Slogans reinforce the brand image, help identify and recall it, and create brand differentiation in consumers' minds (Kohli et al., 2007). Slogans are created to evoke emotional experiences from customers. Emotional experiences in slogan design, using verbs related to logos, symbols, and the brand allows customers to immerse themselves in the brand environment (Choi et al., 2017). However, the important point is that the slogan must be consistent with the brand's characteristics (Nuttavuthisit, 2007).

Brand characteristics positively affect attitude toward slogans, and the relationship between slogan and brand characteristics has positive effects on attitude towards slogans and attitude towards destination brands. When a brand creates an extreme slogan far from its brand characteristics, it will hurt the slogan and attitude towards the target brand (Zhang et al., 2016).

2.2. Bibliography

The first bibliometric analysis was proposed in 1969 (Zancanaro et al., 2015). The term became more common with the publication of *Scientometrics* in 1977, a reference journal in this field (Janssens et al., 2006). In this type of study, one of the most widely used methods of mapping is the visualization of similarities, which has been implemented as a computer program called VOSviewer software (Zancanaro et al., 2015). It draws scientific maps using different methods and techniques, one of which is the co-occurrence of words (Co-occurrence) (Bosanac et al., 2009). The Co-occurrence analysis proposed by Calvin Morse in 1983 is based on the assumption that the presence of concepts or keywords together represents the content of the document (Osareh, 2017). Co-occurrence analysis, also referred to as coincidental, is the an interdisciplinary (Ebadollah Amoughin et al., 2019) analysis of the use of words or terms that occur simultaneously in a literature collection to indicate the relationship between different research themes across. Likewise, measurement of this co-occurrence can lead to the drawing of a network of concepts in a scientific field. This conceptual network is drawn by measuring the number of occurrences of each keyword and its association with other concepts and keywords. Conceptual network creation can be useful in drawing and moving scientific dynamics, structuring scientific works and documents, clustering concepts, understanding hidden relationships, and visibility of scientific networks (Osareh, 2017).

For there more, this method allows the researcher to review the development of a scientific topic, draw up a scientific map, review the research literature in this field, and identify the top countries and researchers in that field. These findings are among the most important policy tools for developing science, technology, and innovation in different countries (Emami et al., 2016). Rapid developments in today's society also consider numerous scientific and research productions to be important criteria for evaluation. In today's society, a country that has the capacity and innovation to produce science will be successful (Yaminfirooz et al., 2018). International bibliometric studies are of special importance since they provide the opportunity to compare and create scientific competition on a large scale. Finally, the coordination of the scientific outputs of the countries towards global standards causes the production of science (Emami et al., 2016).

3. Methodology

This research is part of applied research and in the field of scient metric research ‘scient metrics or bibliometrics specifies the body of research. Citations and outputs measure the units of publication of research and are used in different academic disciplines for quantitative analysis and literature description (Zhang et al., 2021).

To collect the data of the present study, the database¹ available in the Web of Science (WOS) was selected. The reason for choosing this database is that it provides access to the world's leading scientific databases of authoritative articles, which include the Expanded Science Citation Index (SCI-expanded), the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI) and the Arts and Humanities Citation Index (AandHCI) with permanent access (Rodríguez-López et al., 2020), Data from this study were extracted on September 30.

The authors first performed an advanced search using the keyword ("Slogan*") and found 3,428 documents related to this keyword. Then, by adding the keyword "Brand*" to the previous search, the search was re-applied, and 232 documents were found. It should be noted that both words were in the Topic field and in the Web of Science categories; by applying the filter, the documents related to Hospitality, Leisure, and Sport Tourism were selected. In this step, the number of documents found was 36 documents. In the next step, the type of document article was selected in the Refine by Document Types section. At this stage, 34 articles were found. Finally, in the next step, the language filter was applied to articles published in English; in this section, 31 articles were found. To enrich the research results, the authors reviewed the articles' abstracts; two articles were removed from the list due to lack of relation to the research subject, and the final analysis was done on 29 articles. Data from this study included studies of journals indexed in the Web of Science categories from 2006 to 2022.

In the next step, the extracted data was entered into the VOSviewer software, noting that the software is compatible with the Web of Science categories database, Scopus and other popular databases and is used to analyze this data.

Details of the search methods used in Web of Science are listed in Table 1 (Appendix):

Table 1. Data collection summary.

Document Type	Journals
Period of analysis	1992-2023
Search engines	Web of Science
	("Brand*") And ("Slogan*")
	Index:
Query String	(Science Citation Index Expanded) (Social Sciences Citation Index) (Arts & Humanities Citation Index) (Emerging Sources Citation Index)
Total number of articles	29

In addition, the graph of the stages of searching articles and the final number of articles on which analysis is formed in Figure 1 shown:

¹ <http://apps.webofknowledge.com>

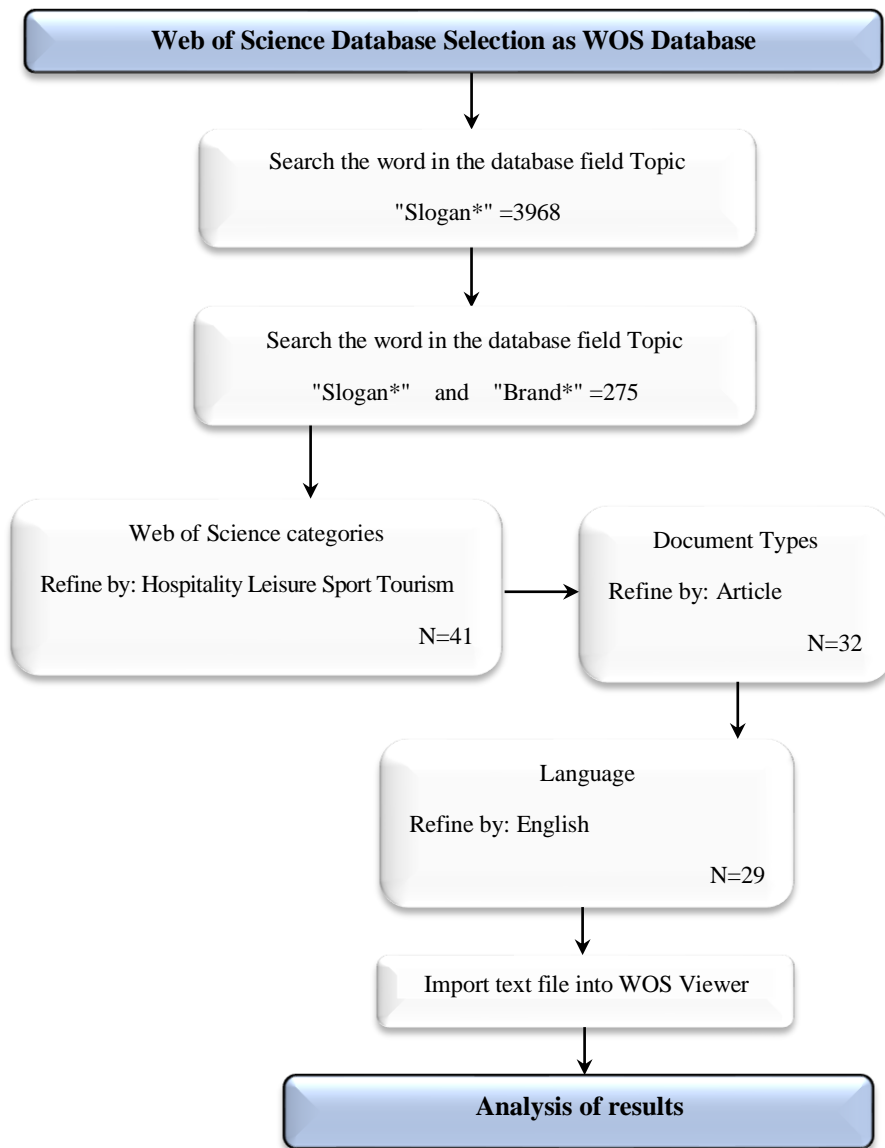


Figure 1. PRISMA flow diagram of the process of identifying and screening existing documents.

4. Results

4.1. Evolution in the number of publications 2006-2022

Findings show that from 2006 to 2022, studies on brand slogans in tourism have been carried out. This chart shows the growth of studies in the field of brand slogan in tourism in 2017 and shows that the number of citations to articles published in this area has reached its highest level in 2020. Diagram 1 illustrates these findings:

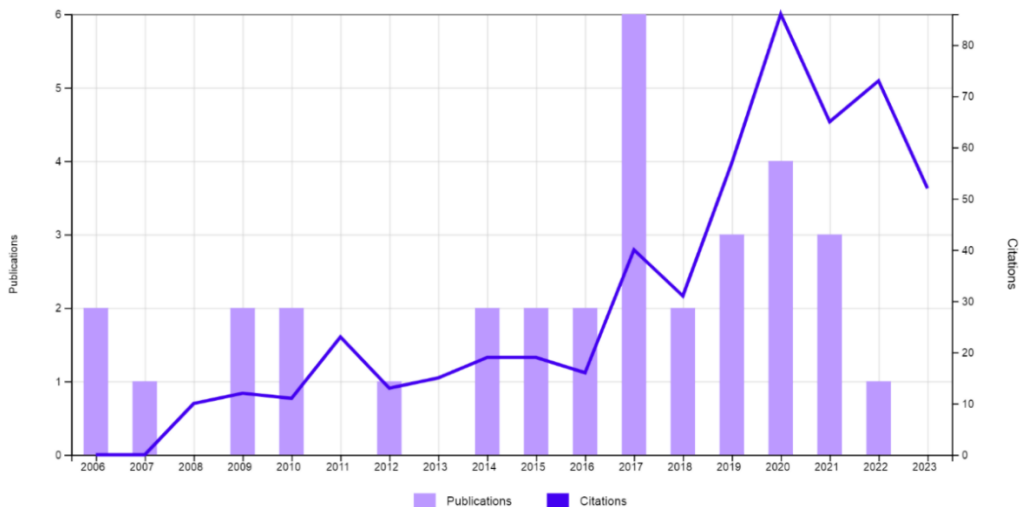


Figure 1. Annual and cumulative number of research papers on brand slogans in tourism indexed in Web of Science from 2006 to 2022.

4.2. Contribution of countries in the publication of articles

The findings showed that 18 countries published articles on brand slogans in tourism. Of the 29 articles published in this field, the most significant number is related to the United States. It should be noted that the other findings (The number of citations and the strength of communication between countries in the publication of articles) are outlined in this section in [Table 2](#):

Table 2. Top 8 countries in number and amount of citations to articles in articles brand slogan in tourism.

Id	Country	Documents	Citations	total link strength
1	USA	7	194	5
2	China	5	40	4
3	England	4	45	2
4	South Korea	3	155	3
5	South Africa	2	56	2
6	Spain	2	40	0
7	Netherlands	2	32	0
8	Taiwan	2	10	0

4.3. Co-authorship based on cooperation between countries

The findings show that among 18 countries, five countries have cooperated in publishing articles on brand slogan in tourism. The United States and China jointly came in first place with three countries. [Figure 3](#) shows the results.



Figure 3. Bibliometric map created based on co-authorship in grid visualization mode.

4.4. Contribution of journals in publishing articles

Findings show that 17 publications have contributed to the publication of 29 articles in the field of brand slogan in tourism. [Figure 4](#) shows the number of articles published in periodicals.

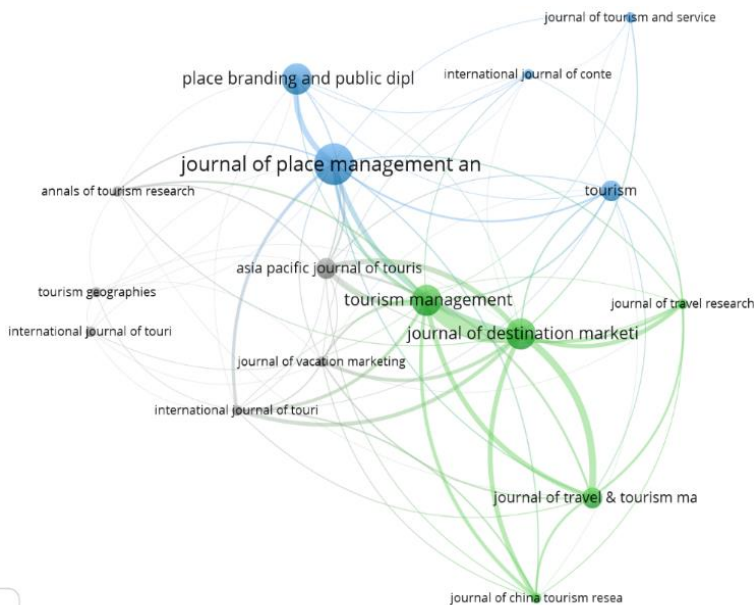


Figure 4. A picture of the bibliometric map created based on the share of journals in network visualization mode.

In Table 3 the number of articles published and the citation rate of the articles of these journals are shown separately:

Table 3. Top 8 countries in number and amount of citations to articles in articles brand slogan in tourism.

Id	Source	Documents	Citations
1	Journal of place management and development	4	57
2	Journal of destination marketing & management	3	18
3	Place branding and public diplomacy	3	87
4	Tourism management	3	86
5	Asia pacific journal of tourism research	2	10
6	Journal of travel & tourism marketing	2	34
7	Tourism	2	14
8	Annals of Tourism Research	1	26
9	International journal of contemporary hospitality management	1	58
10	International journal of the history of sport	1	1
11	International journal of tourism cities	1	6
12	International journal of tourism research	1	23
13	Journal of China Tourism Research	1	3
14	Journal of tourism and services	1	0
15	Journal of Travel Research	1	30
16	Journal of Vacation Marketing	1	2
17	Tourism geographies	1	26

4.5. Co-occurrence of keywords

The results showed that out of 225 keywords used in the articles, 36 words were repeated twice or more than two times. In this section the map shows which words appear or are used together in the articles. It should be noted that the size of the circles indicates the frequency of words in the articles. Figure 5 shows these words.

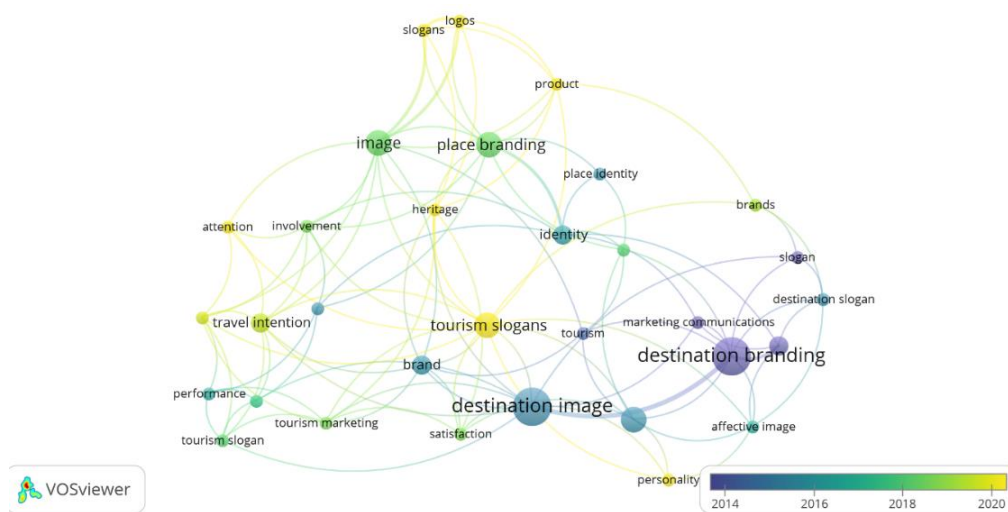


Figure 5. Bibliometric map created based on the co-occurrence of words in network visualization mode

4.6. The number of citations to articles

The findings in this section showed that out of the 29 articles examined, 21 articles were cited more than three times, Lee et al. (2006) was ranked first with 74 citations. In citation maps, each circle corresponds to an article represented by the first author's last name and the year of its publication. The size of the circles corresponds to the number of citations and each cluster represented in different colors is articles that have repeatedly invoked each other. The frequency of citations determines the relationship between items and each other. The relationship between each cluster is specified in Figure 6:

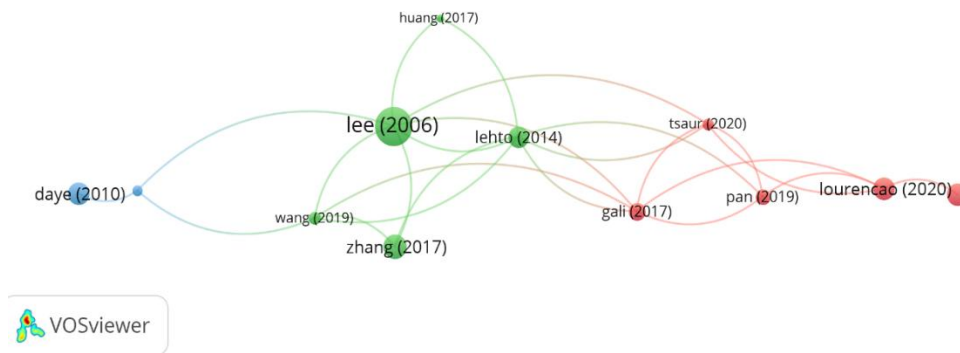


Figure 6. Bibliometric map created based on the number of citations in grid visualization mode.

In Table 4, the number of citations to the articles of the brand slogan is specified as separated:

Table 4. Top 8 countries in number and number of citations to articles in articles brand slogan in tourism.

Id	Documents	Citations
1	Lee et al. (2006)	74
2	Nuttavuthisit (2007)	66
3	Choi et al. (2017)	58
4	Zhang et al. (2016)	30
5	Lourenção et al. (2020)	26
6	Oliveira (2015)	26
7	Daye (2010)	26
8	De Jager (2010)	26
9	de San Eugenio Vela et al. (2017)	24
10	Lehto et al. (2014)	23

4.7. Co-citation-co-occurrence of articles

Co-citation, co-occurrence when a new article cites two articles. When a new article cites two articles, they have a thematic similarity. In a map, each circle or node represents an article, and its size indicates how much it is cited. The link between nodes shows the relationship between two articles cited by the other article. The link between the two articles indicates the coincidence or coincidence of the two articles in the list of references

of the map articles. Generally, indicates the number of repetitions of two articles simultaneously. In Figure 7, these communications are described:

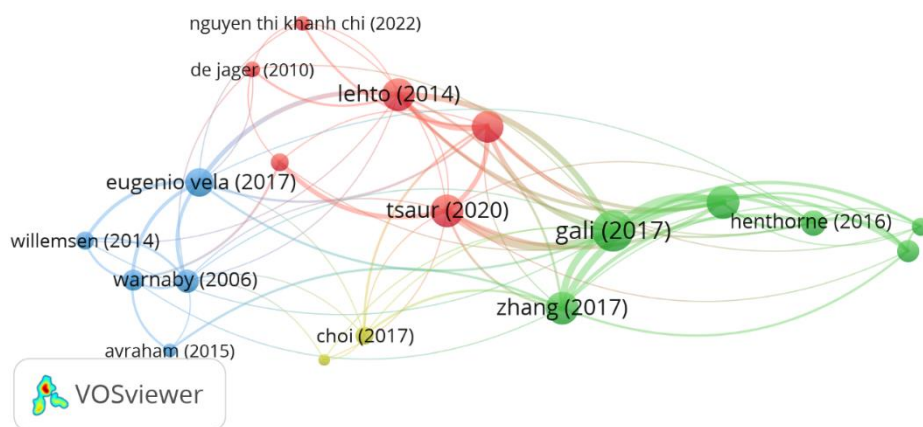


Figure 7. Bibliometric map created based on shared references in grid visualization mode.

6. Discussion and conclusion

Bibliometric tools are helpful in understanding the scope and depth of academic research in a discipline. The process involves a systematic approach to evaluating research publications in a selected database over a period and assessing their impact on the body of knowledge.

This method enables researchers to understand the scope of the topic, the development of research in its main and peripheral fields, research collaborations, and the identification of underlying patterns and emerging trends (Rodríguez-López et al., 2020). To master a field, researchers must spend much time searching and reviewing its background. This type of research allows researchers to access articles in their field quickly (Abdollahnezhad et al., 2023). Additionally, slogans are a key element of a brand's identity and contribute to the brand's unique value. In today's market almost all brands use slogans. Slogans reinforce the brand image, help identify and recall it, and make brand differentiators in consumers' minds (Kohli et al., 2007). This research was applied research that analyzed the data using VOSviewer software, which can convert the data into illustrated results. This research sought to analyze the research in brand slogan in tourism Data were extracted using the WOS database. Using keywords ("Slogan*") and "Brand*", data search was formed and after filtering the data with the authors' opinions, the final analysis was conducted on 29 published articles in the field of brand slogan in tourism. The present study examined the growth of brand slogan publications in tourism, citation analysis, thematic transformation, Co-occurrence analysis, and co-citation analysis.

The data shows that research in brand slogans began in 1992 and has continued until today. The results showed that (Lee et al., 2006), and (Qu et al., 2022), each with two articles on brand slogans in tourism, were the first authors in terms of the number of articles in this field; the title of the articles of experience and analysis in this research are

in the attachments section in [Table 5](#) is presented. Moreover, analysis of the final data showed that this number of studies was conducted between 2006 and 2022.

In the section on the publication of articles in the field of brand slogan in tourism by year, the results showed that the growth of studies in this area peaked in 2017, and the number of citations to these articles in 2020 was at the highest level. Of the 29 articles analyzed, five were conducted in 2017. These articles further focused on the impact of slogans and awareness of slogans on the attitudes and intentions of travel tourism customers.

Although in other papers, the researchers' main goal was to express the impact of slogans on customer behavior, they initially focused on how slogans were designed and the factors that could make a lasting and effective slogan. In some ways, articles in 2017 addressed the importance of slogans and their impact on profitable marketing and loyalty of tourism customers, which showed the success of slogans in marketing.

Additionally, due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019, there were significant changes in research orientations. Perhaps one of the possible reasons for the increase in citations to articles in the field of brand slogans in tourism in 2020 was the focus of researchers on the impact of this disease on the tourism sector, something that was undeniable at the time of the outbreak, its impact on the dramatic reduction of tourism rates. Tourism businesses, for example, were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, and this could only be improved with the right business strategies.

The results also showed that the United States, China, and the United Kingdom were among the top countries in publishing articles in brand slogan, with 7, 5, and 4 articles, respectively. Seven articles published in the United States with 194 citations were among the most cited articles in this field.

The results showed that published articles on the brand slogan in tourism have been carried out by 18 countries (among which five countries have cooperated in writing articles). The United States and China were two countries that have worked with other countries. China collaborated with the United States, South Africa, the United Kingdom, South Korea, and South Africa in writing articles on the brand slogan. The advantage of recognizing cooperation between countries is that it improves collaboration with these authors and helps researchers find existing partnerships between countries and identify possible co-workers.

As well as The results showed that 29 studies in this study were published in 17 journals. Additionally, with four articles, the Journal of Management and Development of Place published the highest number of articles on the brand slogan; it should be noted that this publication is located in Emerald Publications.

Moreover, the results showed that tourism management, place branding and public diplomacy journals, and marketing and destination management journals had three articles, each placed in the next position in the field of brand slogan. In the continuation of this discussion, the results showed that the highest citations to articles published in these journals were related to the Journal of Place Branding and Public Diplomacy, with 87 citations, and the articles published in Tourism Management Journal were next with 86 citations.

The results show that reputable publications that have done articles on brand slogan in tourism include tourism management (marketing and destination management, location

management and development (place branding and public diplomacy). The findings in this section help researchers identify reputable publications in the field of brand slogan in tourism and use published articles in these journals to write their next research in this area. As well as researchers can refer to these prestigious journals to publish their articles on the brand slogan in tourism.

In the Co-occurrence part of the keywords, the results showed that out of 225 keywords mentioned in the articles, 36 words were used two or more times in the articles. Keywords are essentially standardized texts or terms chosen from the title and text of articles to indicate the topic of the articles. Co-occurrence keywords provide a logical description of the important points of the research and help the authors to identify the main issues and developments of a topic. It should be noted that the frequent synchronization of the two keywords in the article indicates that they are closely related to other keywords and may reveal a new idea for the area of research.

These findings show which vocabulary has received more attention and which words have been used in previous years. The results in this section showed that words such as destination brand (destination image, with six repetitions, had the highest repetition in articles; words such as brand personality, image, place branding, and tourism slogans, with four repetitions, were the next place of the most repetition.

As well as The results in this section showed that in the years before and after 2014, words such as destination brand, destination slogan, slogan, destination image, tourism, destination marketing, and marketing communications were more commonly used. Over time and in 2016-2018, words such as brand, brand personality, destination image, identity, place identity, competitiveness, and performance were used in articles.

The results showed that from 2018 to 2022, words such as slogan recall, travel intention, attention, slogans, logos, product, personality, heritage, and tourism slogans were more considered by researchers in this field. It is worth mentioning that the term tourism slogan has been a frequent vocabulary of articles from 2020 onwards, indicating its importance for researchers and the special place of slogans in tourism marketing.

As the results show that in 2016 to 2018 (the image of destination, performance, brand, and competitiveness were words that were included in articles in a category or group, in other words, due to the use of these words together, it can be understood their thematic relationship, competitiveness affects the brand location. The placement of the brand location with words such as slogans (logos (products and heritage indicate the thematic relevance of these words. It is certain that competitiveness in the brand location leads to the use of tourism marketing techniques (this marketing can help introduce the products services and heritage of the country by using these two elements (logos and slogans) to marketing its tourism brand.

In citations to the articles, the results showed that out of 29 reviewed articles, 21 articles were cited more than three times by other articles. The results showed that Lee et al. (2006) paper with 74 citations was first place in terms of citation rate. Nuttavuthisit (2007) with 30 citations; (Choi et al., 2017) with 58 citations; (Zhang et al., 2016); with 30 citations ranked second to fourth. As well as; The results also showed that Lourenção et al. (2020)'s articles; Oliveira (2015); Daye (2010) and De Jager (2010) jointly ranked next with 26 citations.

In [Lee et al. \(2006\)](#) the researcher has sought to analyze the elements of branding in tourism websites ‘due to changes and developments in new technologies and the special place of the Internet in attracting audiences ‘this article has been of great importance. Branding elements include brand name, logo, and slogan, and in this research, the researcher analyzed these elements and their special place in branding in tourism websites, considering the main brand elements and also the advancement of technology. The use of web-based services is perhaps one of the important reasons that researchers have cited this article in their research.

[Nuttavuthisit \(2007\)](#) article also corrects Thailand's negative image using elements of branding ‘in which the researcher has shown that slogans can simultaneously create a positive and negative outlook in the mind, this article has addressed the characteristics of the slogan of tourism destination and tries to show that using useful words in slogan design can create a positive view towards tourism brand.

Additionally, considering that the two articles of [Lee et al. \(2006\)](#) and [Nuttavuthisit \(2007\)](#) were among the first articles published in the field of brand slogans in tourism and are somehow considered as one of the basic articles in this field, the high citation rate to them is completely normal. The results in this section also showed that [Lourenção et al. \(2020\)](#)'s article with 26 citations was one of the most cited articles in the area of tourism brand slogan. As mentioned in the results of the process of publishing articles, the citation rate of articles in 2020 was the highest and [Lourenção et al. \(2020\)](#) article is one of the hot articles in this field, which has been able to obtain 26 citations in less time than other cited articles. In general, the results show that the high citation rate to published articles in recent years is promising new research in this field, which may be investigated to examine the impact of brand slogan and how it is designed, this shows the growing importance of the brand's slogan.

As mentioned earlier, one of the most effective tools to attract and facilitate the planning and booking of tourist destinations by customers is the Internet. This method is also used for sports tourists. Therefore. It is suggested that managers and planners of sports tourism brands maximize their branding success by creating a tourism website and introducing their brand features by creating slogans and phrases.

If organizations and destinations want to survive in marketing competitions and act successfully, they must understand that unique sales proposals and marketing strategies of destination brands are possible through content analysis of slogans, verbal phrases, and explicit messages.

As mentioned before, one of the building blocks of a brand is the brand slogan, which can express the characteristics of the brand. This is an advantage that the other two elements of the brand (brand name, logo) are almost devoid of. They can rarely show the characteristics of the product and, more importantly, establish a sensory or emotional connection with the audience. However, this is not an indication that these elements are not important ‘and of course a successful marketing manager will be able to use these three elements in a specific and correct manner. The tangibility of the slogan and its clarity, rather than its general abstraction, can create a better and clearer image in the mind of the audience.

One of the important issues in slogan design is maintaining consistency among brand elements. Managers should make sure that the brand slogan should reflect the image and summary of the brand's characteristics and personality. Using the brand name and logo along with the slogan can have the maximum effect on the positive view of the customers. Another important point is that the use of exaggeration can be very helpful in remembering slogans. On the other hand, the mismatch between the slogan and the brand's characteristics harms the customers' and the audience's perspective and somehow reverses the marketing process.

Sometimes slogans can have adverse effects on the marketing process, it is suggested that managers do not seek to create a slogan for their brand until they have considered a suitable strategy for their business. Additionally, sometimes recognizing and remembering slogans requires aspects such as rhythm, rhetorical devices, and exaggerated sentences to attract the attention of the audience. However, the owners of new brands should keep in mind that the audience's lack of familiarity with the brand requires accurate, clear, and non-exaggerated design. Since exaggeration can have negative effects on the audience, it is suggested that tourism brand owners do not use such tools to design slogans for unfamiliar and new destinations.

The remarkable thing in these results is that although in 2014 and before, words like destination brand, destination image, destination marketing, and marketing communication were more in the articles somehow researchers and marketers have paid more attention to this issue. However, the repetition of the words competition, character, and identity of the place in the following years and finally reaching the words such as travel intention, attention, slogan, slogan, slogan, logo, product, character, heritage, and tourism slogan are shown. In articles from 2018 onwards. It shows the importance of this topic in tourism marketing for researchers and marketer. According to the results of this research and the importance of brand slogans in tourism, the researcher intends to use these materials for research in the field of brand slogans and sports tourism, Today, the importance of sporting events and their positive effects on the economies of countries have led managers to make double efforts to host these events, The maximum presence of active and inactive tourists in these events increases the economic prosperity of the host country. Additionally, these events are covered through various media. They are a good opportunity to introduce the country, so it is suggested that managers of the host countries of these events, using the aspects above, create slogans tailored to their tourism brand.

The slogan plays an important role in brand marketing and can help increase the sales of brand goods and services by stimulating the consumer's emotional sense and offering products and services. For there more, the repetition of the word tourism slogans in 2020 and beyond shows the importance of this word in new research that researchers can use in their articles. Most of the research in this research has been done qualitatively, it is suggested that the researchers examine and analyze some of the brand slogans quantitatively, in this research, the Web Science database has been used to collect data, which is used to other Researchers suggest using other reliable databases.

Additionally, this research examines tourism brand slogans, researchers can analyze slogans and their impact on the audience's view of other organizations and brands.

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Attachments

Table 1. List of 29 extracted articles Brand motto in tourism for final analysis.

29 Publications	Publisher	Journal
1. The convergence or divergence of design characteristics in determining the recall and persuasiveness of seaside destination slogans.	Elsevier	Tourism Management
2. Studying tourist intention on city tourism: The role of travel motivation.	Emerald	International Journal of Tourism Cities
3. Design of an attention-grabbing destination slogan using the attenuation model.	Elsevier	Journal of Destination Marketing & Management
4. The neural basis of the unattended processing of destination-slogan consistency.	Elsevier	Journal of Destination Marketing & Management
5. Slogans and logos as brand signals within investment promotion.	Emerald	Journal of Place Management and Development
6. Constructing place identity: ISIS and Al-Qaeda's branding competition over the Caliphate.	Springer	Place Branding and Public Diplomacy
7. Destination advertisement semiotic signs: Analysing tourists' visual attention and perceived ad effectiveness.	Elsevier	Annals of Tourism Research

29 Publications	Publisher	Journal
8. Analyzing the important implications of tourism marketing slogans and logos in Asia Pacific nations.	Taylor and Francis	Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research
9. Albania (Go Your Own Way!) to Zimbabwe (A World of Wonders): A rhetorical analysis of the world's country tourism slogans.	SAGE	Journal of Vacation Marketing
10. Tourism slogans–Towards a conceptual framework.	Elsevier	Tourism Management
11. The mechanism of tourism slogans on travel intention based on Unique Selling Proposition (USP) theory.	Taylor & Francis	Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing
12. Gymnastics, physical education, sport, and Christianity in Germany.	Taylor & Francis	The International Journal of the History of Sport
13. Analysing tourism slogans in top tourism destinations.	Elsevier	Journal of Destination Marketing & Management
14. The effects of associative slogans on tourists' attitudes and travel intention: The moderating effects of need for cognition and familiarity.	sage	Journal of Travel Research
15. Relationships between brand experiences, personality traits, prestige, relationship quality, and loyalty: An empirical analysis of coffeehouse brands.	Emerald	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management
16. Visual landscape as a key element of place branding.	Emerald	Journal of place management and development
17. Awareness effects of the tourism slogans of ten destinations in Asia.	Taylor and Francis	Journal of China Tourism Research
18. Unique selling propositions and destination branding: A longitudinal perspective on the Caribbean tourism in transition.	Institute for Tourism Vrhovec	Tourism: An International Interdisciplinary Journal
19. Tools of marketing communications and branding in positioning and in promotion the identity of Latvia destinations.	Center for International Scientific Research of VSO and VSPP	Journal of Tourism & Services
20. "One-size-fits-all"? Differentiation in destinations' marketing goals and strategies to achieve them.	Institute for Tourism Vrhovec	Tourism: An International Interdisciplinary Journal
21. Place branding in strategic spatial planning: A content analysis of development plans, strategic initiatives and policy documents for Portugal 2014-2020.	Emerald	Journal of Place Management and Development
22. Measuring congruence of affective images of destinations and their slogans.	Wiley	International Journal of Tourism Research
23. Organizing local "green" entrepreneurship: a brand perspective.	Emerald	Journal of Place Management and Development
24. Towards a Mekong tourism brand.	Taylor and Francis	Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research
25. Challenges and prospects of differentiating destination brands: The case of the Dutch Caribbean islands.	Taylor and Francis	Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing
26. How dull is Dulls room? Exploring the tourism destination image of Dulls room.	Taylor and Francis	Tourism Geographies
27. Branding Thailand: Correcting the negative image of sex tourism.	Elsevier	Tourism Management
28. WWW. Branding. States. US: An analysis of brand-building elements in the US state tourism websites	Emerald	International Journal of Tourism Cities
29. Reciprocal urban place marketing and co-branding? Retail applications.	Elsevier	Journal of Destination Marketing & Management



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تحلیل کتاب‌سنجی شعار برند در گردشگری رویداد

فائزه عبدالله‌نژاد^۱، رضا اندام^{۲*}، حسن بحرالعلوم^۳، مجتبی رجبی^۴

^۱ دانشجوی دکتری مدیریت ورزشی، گروه تربیت بدنی و علوم ورزشی، دانشکده تربیت بدنی، دانشگاه صنعتی شاهرود، شاهرود، ایران.
^۲ دانشیار مدیریت ورزشی، گروه تربیت بدنی و علوم ورزشی، دانشکده تربیت بدنی، دانشگاه صنعتی شاهرود، شاهرود، ایران.
^۳ استادیار مدیریت ورزشی، گروه تربیت بدنی و علوم ورزشی، دانشکده تربیت بدنی، دانشگاه صنعتی شاهرود، شاهرود، ایران.

کلیدواژه

ارتباطات بازاریابی
بازاریابی گردشگری
رقابت‌پذیری
گردشگری ورزشی
یادآوری شعار

نوع مقاله

مقاله مروری

چکیده

هدف: بازاریابی یکی از روش‌هایی است که به ترویج محصولات و خدمات شرکت‌ها تمرکز دارد. یکی از عناصر اصلی ترویج نیز شعار محصول یا برند است. این مطالعه با هدف ارائه یک تحلیل کتاب‌سنجی از اسناد علمی در زمینه تحقیقات شعار برند در گردشگری رویداد انجام شده است.

روش: در این پژوهش از تحلیل شبکه‌های اجتماعی جهت بررسی هم‌تالیفی و هم‌رخدادی واژگان و ضریب همکاری استفاده شد. جامعه پژوهش شامل مطالعات نشریات نمایه شده در پایگاه WOS از سال ۲۰۰۶ تا ۲۰۲۲ بود که تعداد ۲۹ مقاله در خصوص شعار برند در گردشگری به‌عنوان نمونه انتخاب و تجزیه و تحلیل اسناد با استفاده از نرم‌افزار VOSviewer صورت پذیرفت.

یافته‌ها: نتایج نشان داد تحقیقات مرتبط با شعار برند در گردشگری در سال ۲۰۱۷ به بیشترین میزان رسیده و ایالات متحده آمریکا بیشترین تحقیقات را در این حوزه انجام داده است. واژه‌های پر تکرار بین سال‌های ۲۰۱۴ تا ۲۰۱۶ شامل برند مقصد، تصویر مقصد، شعار و ارتباطات بازاریابی بود و بعد از سال ۲۰۱۶ واژه‌های شعار مقصد، هویت مکان، تکرار شده بودند، ضمن این‌که شعارهای گردشگری، لوگو، شعار و محصول در سال ۲۰۲۰ به بعد بیشترین تکرار را داشتند. همچنین، بیشترین میزان استنادات مربوط به مقاله Lee (۲۰۰۶) بود. تفاوت بین کلیدواژه‌ها در سال‌های قبل و بعد از ۲۰۲۰ نشان‌دهنده اهمیت طراحی شعار و استفاده از شعار متناسب برای بازاریابی برند گردشگری است.

اصالت و ابتکار مقاله: پیشنهاد می‌شود مدیران گردشگری از شعار مرتبط با برند گردشگری خود در جهت ارتقاء و بازاریابی آن استفاده نمایند، همچنین نتایج این تحقیق به محققان کمک می‌کند تا در مطالعات آتی، مسائل روز در حوزه گردشگری رویداد را مد نظر قرار دهند، نشریات معتبر در حوزه برند و گردشگری را شناسایی کنند و از مقالات معتبر در جهت نگارش مقالات خود استفاده نمایند.

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The Effect of Core Product Quality on Organizational Performance Considering the Mediating Role of Fan Satisfaction (Case study: Persepolis and Esteghlal Football Club)

Mehdi Pourhossein¹, Ebrahim Alidoust Ghahfarokhi^{2*}, Mehrzad Hamidi³, Khadijeh Pourzbih Sarahamami⁴

¹ PhD Student of Sport Management, Faculty of Sport Sciences, University of Mazandaran, Babolsar, Mazandaran, Iran.

² Professor, Department of Sport Management, Faculty of Sports Sciences and Health, Tehran University, Tehran, Iran.

³ Associate Professor, Department of Sport Management, Faculty of Sports Sciences and Health, Tehran University, Tehran, Iran.

⁴ PhD of Sport Management, Faculty of Sport Sciences, University of Mazandaran, Babolsar, Mazandaran, Iran.

ABSTRACT

Purpose: Establishing an equilibrium between financial performance and sporting performance is one of the most critical concerns of current managers in professional football clubs. This study aimed to develop a model to investigate the effect of a core product quality on financial and sporting performance considering the mediating role of fan satisfaction in the two most popular clubs in Iran (Persepolis and Esteghlal).

Methodology: The data was collected using the questionnaire survey and purposive and available sampling method. The statistical population of the study included all managers, experts, elites, and individuals who had sufficient knowledge and information (like club veterans) concerning the two most popular football clubs in Iran (Persepolis and Esteghlal). The data from 175 questionnaires was analyzed through the Structural Equation Modelling technique under the Partial Least Squares approach using PLS innovative software.

Findings: The results demonstrated that there was a positive and significant relationship between the core product quality and organizational (financial and sporting) performance. Also, the mediating effect of fan satisfaction in the relationship between core product quality and organizational performance was confirmed.

Originality: The model, provided as an effective tool, can help club managers analyze and choose the best club development strategies to equilibrate the financial and sporting performance of the club to more confidently achieve the organizational goals. The importance of these findings is that the application of appropriate mixed policies from fan satisfaction and core product quality will have a significant impact on improving organizational performance.

Keywords

Fan Satisfaction
Financial Performance
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1. Introduction

Researchers have increasingly focused on management models of sports teams. Several management and economics researchers believe that professional sports, such as football, have unique characteristics (Larson & Sinha, 1995; Vogel, 2020). Professional clubs' management should deal with the production process in clubs as well as production companies' management. In other words, their primary role is to make optimal decisions to convert inputs (facilities, players, coaches, etc.) into outputs (financial and sporting output) (Rohde & Breuer, 2018). One of the main concerns of sports club managers is the best organizational (club) performance. Organizational performance (OP) is one of the most important concepts discussed in management theories and it is undoubtedly the most critical measurement criterion of success in organizations (Baruch & Ramalho, 2006; March & Sutton, 1997; Walton & Dawson, 2001).

In the management literature, researchers have used different concepts to measure organizational performance (OP). Some studies have used subjective measures to evaluate OP such as employee satisfaction, customer satisfaction, employee commitment, and other mental aspects. Other studies employed a variety of objective measures to assess OP, such as financial and market indicators (Chen & Huang, 2009; Harris & Mossholder, 1996). So, there is no standard theory about OP, and researchers have proposed different definitions according to the organization's goals and methods of success (Rojas, 2003; Winand et al., 2014).

In the context of football club management, the two convergent and divergent interests were defined by (Lago et al., 2004). Convergent interests aim to improve sporting performance, and divergent interests seek to improve economic performance (Lago et al., 2004). Sporting performance includes the game results and the club rankings, which are more visible than other evaluation indicators, and these results are examined according to the pre-determined goals and based on the available resources and facilities in clubs. Non-sporting performance in clubs also includes more financial indicators, which are important in clubs' evaluation. Sports teams are trying to balance these two interests (Lago et al., 2004). El-Hodiri and Quirk (1971) investigated team owners' behavior and provided a decision model to trade off between winnings and profits. Rascher (1997) also defined utility as a balance between profit and winning. He analyzed policies such as revenue sharing and salary caps under two profit and utility maximization models. Maximizing a combination of profits and wins has been suggested to clubs' managers as the best decision criterion (Vrooman, 2000). Also, a higher level of financial and sporting performance has been considered in European football clubs (Rohde & Breuer, 2018). Real Madrid football club, for example, is based on the two goals of financial success and sporting success, and the club's strategy focuses on these goals (Callejo & Forcadell, 2006). In the study conducted by Callejo and Forcadell (2006), the brand value of the Real Madrid football club was improved through the design and implementation of a new marketing strategy. They concluded that the critical rule of the club's success was equilibrating between sports performance and financial performance (Callejo & Forcadell, 2006). For this reason, essential to investigate the role of influential factors affecting organizational performance.

Many factors have been identified in the literature to enhance OP. Senior executives increasingly emphasized that product quality is associated with OP (Cho & Pucik, 2005) and is one of the most important factors influencing its success. Improving product quality to create a competitive advantage and enhance OP is undeniable (Lakhal, 2009; Lakhal et al., 2006).

In the context of spectator sport, the concept of service quality is standard. Service quality has a multidimensional nature, and has been proposed by various conceptualizations in the literature (Biscaia et al., 2023). Two of the most critical service quality dimensions are core product quality (CPQ) and functional quality (Theodorakis et al., 2013). Peripheral elements of service quality, such as the facility/stadium environment and the employees' quality, are introduced as functional quality (Theodorakis et al., 2013), and core product quality refers to the attributes that the consumers receive and remain for them after the production-consumption process (Theodorakis et al., 2013). Examples of attributes can be player performance and game performance. CPQ occurring at the game level is an uncontrollable variable and has created unique challenges for marketing researchers (Foroughi et al., 2016). The focus of this study is to help achieve a deep understanding of core product quality.

Another factor that plays a vital role in OP is customer satisfaction (Otto et al., 2020). One of the most important achievements of companies, especially service companies, is to cover customer satisfaction (Cronin, Jr & Taylor, 1992). This goal is also true in sports fields. Fan satisfaction is an important element in sports organizations (Sarstedt et al., 2014). Professional sports clubs form new business models based on the satisfaction and commitment of fans or spectators (Rodriguez-Pomeda et al., 2017). Customer satisfaction brings long-term benefits to clubs (Anderson et al., 1994; Palmatier et al., 2006). Customers recognize the outstanding services provided to them understand the value of services and increase their satisfaction with the service quality increase, then, they will exhibit loyal behaviors such as continuing shopping and increasing referrals. These behaviors increase the market share, revenue, and ultimately, the profitability of the service company (Chi & Gursoy, 2009; Otto et al., 2020; Williams & Naumann, 2011). It can be inferred from previous research that service quality, customer satisfaction, and OP are the three main effective dimensions in football club management. In response to achieving the desired OP, club managers are required to have more focus on the issues of service quality and customer satisfaction. Managing such a complex system with such special features requires appropriate tools. Eventually, the following results have been extracted in the literature related to organizational performance (club performance):

- 1- Sporting performance and financial performance are the two main goals of private professional clubs
- 2- The two main variables affecting the OP include product quality and customer satisfaction
- 3- The most important strategies of club managers are equilibrating and benefiting from a combination of sports and financial success.

The existence of appropriate tools and methods to make optimal decisions in the field of sports management is necessary. In this research, we intended to provide a tool to equilibrate between sporting and financial performance in professional football club

management. For this reason, the role of customer satisfaction and service quality in the development and improvement of organizational (sporting and financial) performance was analyzed. This study aimed to develop a model to empirically assess the relationship between Core Product Quality (CPQ) and Financial, and between Core Product Quality and Sporting performance through the mediation of Fan satisfaction in the two most popular clubs in Iran (Persepolis and Esteghlal).

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Core product quality

The sport service quality has frequently been described in the literature. In sport marketing theory, service quality is differently defined as a multi-dimensional construct in the field of spectator sport, it is generally introduced in two core product quality and functional forms (Clemes et al., 2011; Grönroos, 1984; Jae Ko et al., 2011; Milne & McDonald, 1999; Yoshida & James, 2010). Core product quality refers to the attributes that the consumers receive and retain after the production-consumption process (Froughi et al., 2016; Theodorakis et al., 2013). It is evaluated during the spectators' interactions and sports competitions, which includes the performance of athletes or teams (Yoshida, 2017). There are different attributes in the literature for Core Product Quality. It has been conceptualized in terms of Player performance (Yoshida & James, 2010), Game performance (Ho Kim et al., 2013), Team characteristics (Froughi et al., 2016), Game quality (Froughi et al., 2014), Opponent characteristics (Yoshida & James, 2010), Home team (Byon et al., 2013), and Outcome quality (Theodorakis et al., 2013). Also elsewhere, match day entertainment and social environment were introduced as Core Product Quality (Yoshida & James, 2010).

Functional quality contains variables related to the facility/stadium environment, the supporting services, and the employees' quality (MacLean & Chelladurai, 1995; Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996; Yoshida & James, 2010). In the present study, due to Covid 19 Pandemic, the spectators were banned from attending the stadium, so it was not possible to examine and evaluate the functional quality. Therefore, the main focus of this research was on Core Product Quality. Four dimensions to measure Core Product Quality were considered: a) Game quality (competitiveness of the game). b) Result quality (win, lose, or equal). c) Player performance (players' on-field performance) and d) Coach Performance.

2.2. Customer (Fan) satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is defined as a pleasurable fulfillment response towards a good service, benefit, or reward (Palmatier et al., 2006). Consumer satisfaction is generally built in the degree of discrepancy between actual and expected quality (Anderson et al., 1994; Oliver, 1999). Many factors in the field of football club management have significant effects on customer satisfaction. Gustafsson and Johnson (2004) suggested that fan satisfaction can be evaluated through the leisure experience provided by club managers. According to Oliver, to judge whether a service is satisfactory, people should experience

it, but there is no such requirement for judging service quality (James & Ross, 2004; Oly Ndubisi & Kok Wah, 2005). Club managers can excel by understanding what sports customers expect and committing to the work assigned to them. Some researchers used a multi-dimensional conception with a multi-attribute framework for constructing fan satisfaction (Ringle et al., 2011; Woodruff et al., 1983). In some studies, the role of factors such as the stadium layout, functionality, and aesthetics was investigated (Ringle et al., 2011; Woodruff et al., 1983). Other studies evaluated the role of team characteristics, such as the number of star players (Baade & Tiehen, 1990; Schofield, 1983) or the team's success (Bravold et al., 1997). Rival characteristics were also considered (Madrigal, 1995; Wall & Myers, 1989).

In this paper, three dimensions were proposed to measure fan satisfaction: Game Satisfaction, Management satisfaction, and team specifications/characteristics. The secondary features of leisure experience were defined in team characteristics, for example, the number of star players (Baade & Tiehen, 1990; Schofield, 1983), the interaction and commitment between players and fans (Jae Ko et al., 2011) and between players and coaches (Kwon et al., 2005), and also, the team composition quality and public appearances of the players (Sarstedt et al., 2014). Satisfaction with the club management is related to the club management and the board duties, which include: marketing of the club, financial situation of the club, club public relations, selection of sponsors, and transfer policies of the club (Sarstedt et al., 2014). Fan satisfaction with the game experience associated with sports competition on the field was defined as game satisfaction (Yoshida & James, 2010).

2.3. Organizational Performance

Different definitions of organizational performance were provided by the authors (Ramayah et al., 2011). In this research, the club 'performances were introduced in two forms: sporting performance and financial performance (Callejo & Forcadell, 2006; Ruta et al., 2020).

2.3.1. Sporting performance

Sporting performance depends on the type and level of competition under study or research goals for instance, Goddard (2005) examined sporting performance in two forms: goals-based and results-based models (Goddard, 2005). The variables he uses are 'goals scored', 'goals conceded', and 'results'. If scrutinizing or evaluating the team's performance in the open league, the ranking or points obtained in the league will be an appropriate variable. Also in other research, variables such as the 'percentage of victories' (Boulier & Stekler, 2003; Dawson et al., 2000), 'number of goals scored by match' (Palacios-Huerta, 2004), and 'score/goal difference' (Boulier & Stekler, 2003; Palacios-Huerta, 2004) have been considered as sporting performance. One of the most critical indicators in evaluating the sporting performance is fans' participation and support, which in the literature is attendance in the stadium, the number of spectators watching the team's matches, or watching live team competitions through TV and social media (Hamidi et al., 2011). The attendance, active support, and participation of fans are directly related to

customer loyalty. In spectator sports, Cronin et al. (2000) and Yoshida and James (2010) have introduced a three-dimensional to measure the customer loyalty structure: attend the team's future games, recommend the team's games, and remain loyal to the team (Cronin et al., 2000; Yoshida & James, 2010). In this study, the dimensions considered for the construct of sporting performance include Fan support and efficiency. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, attendance is banned in stadiums, and being persistent to follow for watching live matches through the mass media has been devoted as an indicator to assessing sporting performance. Efficiency, another indicator, is also defined as the team position compared to rivals, goal difference, points scored, and the average of goals scored by the team.

2.3.2. *Financial performance*

Because of the increase in sports costs and intense competitions for attracting sports capital (such as players, coaches, and stadium facilities) and gaining higher rankings in competitions, clubs are seeking to maximize revenue from available facilities (James & Ross, 2004). From the economic point of view, the objective of soccer teams is the maximization of their profit (revenues-costs). Based on this András and Havran (2015), the essential incomes of professional football clubs can include incomes associated with match day, revenues on player transfers, revenues related to broadcasting rights, and incomes earned through commercial rights including sponsorship revenues and merchandising revenues (András & Havran, 2015). Revenues in the European football industry are defined in three main areas (Dima, 2015): Broadcasting rights (earned money due to broadcast competitions), Commercial revenue (including sponsorships and revenues related to other services) and Matchday income (revenue from ticket sales).

By examining the income ways of Iranian football clubs, it was found that no broadcasting rights have yet been set for the clubs (Aghajani & Javani, 2021; Khajeheian & Sedighi, 2018; Torabi et al., 2015). Indeed, Iranian television and radio are exclusively under the control of the government (Aghajani & Javani, 2021). In this situation, and the absence of private companies, the broadcasting fee for clubs is denied by the government (Khajeheian & Sedighi, 2018). On the other hand, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the lack of spectators in the stadiums caused clubs to lose another primary revenue, which includes "match day income", so, this parameter is not measurable (Aghajani & Javani, 2021; Parnell et al., 2022).

According to the explanations mentioned above, in this research, two dimensions were defined for the construct of financial performance: commercial income and fan income. Commercial income was identified by revenue indicators derived from main sponsorships, sub-sponsorships, and the transfer market. Fans' income was introduced with gifts and free donations from fans, membership fees, and merchandising revenues.

2.4. *Core product quality and organizational performance*

Some studies confirmed that service quality is one of the essential variables in achieving competitive advantage, which has roots in organizational performance (Cho & Pucik, 2005; Ramayah et al., 2011). Various studies have discovered a positive and significant

relationship between service quality and OP (Cho & Pucik, 2005; Ramayah et al., 2011; Yee et al., 2010). The positive impact of quality on an organization's market share has been confirmed in many studies (Buzzell & Wiersema, 1981; Larson & Sinha, 1995; Mann & Kehoe, 1994; Rayner & Porter, 1991). It is also expected to enhance financial performance through quality (Adam, 1994; Hendricks & Singhal, 2001; Lakhali, 2009). Kaynak (2003) analyzed that TQM led to organizational quality performance and was significantly connected to financial and non-financial performance (Kaynak, 2003; Singh et al., 2018). Also, Coo and Verma (2002) emphasized the necessity of understanding the role of product quality on financial performance (Coo & Verma, 2002). Therefore, it can be assumed that there is probably a positive relationship between Core Product Quality and organizational performance, and the following hypotheses were posited:

- **H1a:** Core Product Quality is positively related to financial performance.
- **H1b:** Core Product Quality is positively related to sporting performance.

2.5. The mediating role of Fan satisfaction on the relationship between Core Product Quality and OP

Recent research has indicated that not only is there a direct relationship between product quality and OP, but there is also an indirect relationship (Chong & Rundus, 2004; Hendricks & Singhal, 2001). In the literature, the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction was repeatedly examined, and the relationship was confirmed (Cronin, Jr & Taylor, 1992; Theodorakis et al., 2013). Product quality is one of the main reasons for increasing the customer satisfaction level (Larson & Sinha, 1995; Rayner & Porter, 1991). The extent to which a product or service meets the customers' needs and expectations refers to customer perception, called quality (Waldman & Gopalakrishnan, 1996). Researchers claim that quality (understanding of customers' needs) directly affects customers' satisfaction levels (Chong & Rundus, 2004; Johnson & Gustafsson, 2000). In the spectator sports literature, a significant and striking effect of CPQ on spectators' overall satisfaction was confirmed (Biscaia et al., 2023). According to the conditions of the studies, different dimensions were introduced to measure the conceptualization of outcome quality (Brady et al., 2006; Greenwell et al., 2002; Tsuji et al., 2007). Brady et al. (2006); Tsuji et al. (2007), claimed that, for instance, the level of satisfaction was influenced by game-related factors. Based on the cases mentioned, service quality's positive and direct role in fan satisfaction was evident.

Customer satisfaction is introduced as an organizational asset that is related to the efficient and effective use of organizational resources and increases OP (Otto et al., 2020). Extensive studies explored the relationship between customer satisfaction and the financial performance of companies or organizations. The results showed that a higher level of customer satisfaction is likely to positively affect the firm's financial performance and marketing performance outcomes (Anderson et al., 1994; Ittner & Larcker, 1998; Otto et al., 2020). In the model proposed by Chi and Gursoy (2009), customer satisfaction resulting from product quality led to better financial performance (Chi & Gursoy, 2009). In other words, customer satisfaction does have a direct and tangible financial benefit for firms (Fornell et al., 2016; Kumar, 2016). Fan satisfaction in the sports club is considered

a strong incentive for the capital return (Raithel et al., 2012; Sarstedt et al., 2014). (Football) fan satisfaction seems to play a mediating role in the relationship between quality and financial performance, so the following hypothesis was proposed:

H2a: Fans' satisfaction mediates the relationship between core product quality and financial performance.

In reviewing service quality models in the literature, the relationships between service quality, customer satisfaction, and loyalty were reported (Biscaia et al., 2023; Calabuig Moreno et al., 2015; Theodorakis et al., 2013; Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996; Yoshida & James, 2010). The positive and strong relationship between customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions was confirmed in recent studies (Biscaia et al., 2023; Williams & Naumann, 2011). In a study conducted by Wakefield and Blodgett (1996), after assessing the type of relationship between perceiving customer service quality, customer satisfaction, and repurchase intentions, they investigated that customer satisfaction was a predictor of repeat patronage (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1996). The repurchase intentions can predict Actual loyalty behavior (Bolton, 1998; Mittal et al., 1999). CPQ directly affects satisfaction and indirectly influences customer loyalty (Biscaia et al., 2023). In other words, satisfaction mediates the relationship between core and peripheral service quality and customer loyalty (Brady et al., 2006; Tsuji et al., 2007; Yoshida & James, 2010). Researchers have shown that high attendance is directly related to loyalty or behavioral intentions in sports clubs. If the spectators are satisfied with the team quality, they are more likely to participate in team-related games in the future (Anderson et al., 1994; Williams & Naumann, 2011). In the current study, fan support (customer loyalty) and efficiency dimensions were devoted to measuring the sporting performance construct. Based on findings in the literature, we intended to investigate the mediating role of fan satisfaction through CPQ on sporting performance. So, the hypothesis was set as follows:

H2b: Fan' satisfaction mediates the relationship between core product quality and sporting performance.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data collection and sample

The study's statistical population included all managers, experts, elites, and people with sufficient knowledge and information (like club veterans) concerning the two most popular football clubs in Iran (Persepolis and Esteghlal Club). Purposive and available sampling methods were used, and the questionnaires were distributed online. Sixty incomplete cases were removed, and 175 valid questionnaires were finally applied for data analysis. the questionnaire used five-point Likert-scale for responses-rate (5 = strongly agree to 1 = strongly disagree). Demographic variables included Gender, Age, Education, Job experience, Occupation situation, and Team expert shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Description of demographics variables.

Profile respondents		
Category	Frequency	%
Gender		
Male	140	80
Female	35	20
Age		
Less than 30	34	19.4
30 to 50	133	76
Above 50	8	4.6
Education		
Associate Degree and below	10	5.7
Bachelor	35	20
MS/MA	45	25.7
PhD student	17	9.7
assistant professor and above	68	38.9
Job experience		
Less than 2	16	9.1
2 to 6	27	15.4
Above 6	132	75.5
Occupation situation		
Sport expert	23	13.1
Football expert	65	37.1
Veteran	18	10.3
Football researcher/ Master	58	33.1
Club member	11	6.3
Team expert		
Persepolis	111	63.4
Esteghlal	64	36.6

3.2. Measurement variables

A questionnaire based on the literature was prepared (see Appendix A). Likert-type scales ranging from 1 to 5 were applied for response items. First, it was tried to translate English items into Persian items; then, to understand and remove the ambiguity of the questions, a precise and regular process was used to keep the validity of the questionnaire. The variables, dimensions, and references are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Variables, dimensions, and references.

Variable	Dimension	Item	Reference
Core product quality	Game quality	4	(Clemes et al., 2011; Theodorakis et al., 2013; Yoshida & James, 2010)
	Result quality	3	(Theodorakis et al., 2013; Yoshida & James, 2010)
	Player performance	7	(Theodorakis et al., 2013; Yoshida & James, 2010)
Fan satisfaction	Coach performance	6	(Chen, 2003; MacLean & Zakrajsek, 1996; MacLean & Chelladurai, 1995)
	Game satisfaction	3	(Foroughi et al., 2014; Theodorakis et al., 2013; Yoshida & James, 2010)
	Management satisfaction	7	(Sarstedt et al., 2014)
Financial performance	Team specification	5	(Sarstedt et al., 2014)
	Commercial income	5	(Ajadi et al., 2020; Callejo & Forcadell, 2006; Jones & Bridge, 2017)
	Fan income	3	(Ajadi et al., 2020; Hudson, 2012; Jones & Bridge, 2017)

Variable	Dimension	Item	Reference
Sporting performance	Fan support	3	(Alexandris et al., 2001; András, 2003; Bloemer et al., 1999; Theodorakis et al., 2013)
	Efficiency	4	(Barajas et al., 2005)

3.3. Statistical analysis

The PLS-SEM approach (Gefen et al., 2000; Hair et al., 2012) and Smart PLS version 3 software (Hair et al., 2022) were applied to analyze, evaluate and estimate the model. The advantages of using this software are its suitability for determining the relationship between variables and structural indicators (Hair et al., 2012; Hayes et al., 2017), the effective identification of the relationship between construct variables, and the lack of the need for the normality of the data distribution (Rajabi et al., 2023). In the present study, the sample size of 175 was relatively small. Reflective-reflective constructs with higher-order constructs were also used in our model.

4. Results

Two approaches, the evaluation of the measurement model and the testing of the structural model, were used to analyze software output data. A bootstrapping approach was also used to test the mediation.

4.1. Measurement Model Assessment

4.1.1. Convergent validity

Four criteria are used to evaluate the measurement model (convergent validity) in this study (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2022):

- 1- Factor/outer loading assessment: The threshold value for the outer loading is at least 0.70 (Hair et al., 2022).
- 2- Cronbach's alpha: Acceptable values for Cronbach's alpha are 0.70 (Hair et al., 2012).
- 3- Composite validity: In structural reliability, acceptable values are between 0.60 and 0.70, and values between 0.70 and 0.95 are considered generally good (Gefen et al., 2000; Hair et al., 2012).
- 4- Average Variance Extracted (AVE): AVE is obtained from the mean squared loading of each indicator for the construct. Its threshold value is at least 0.5 (Hair et al., 2022).

Table 3 summarizes the criteria values. The test results in Table 4 show that, in general, the construct expresses appropriate reliability levels.

Table 3. Summary results for convergent validity.

Construct	Indicators	Loadings	Construct	Indicators	Loadings
Game quality			Game satisfaction		
	GQ1	0.74		GS1	0.87
	GQ2	0.83		GS2	0.89
	GQ3	0.67		GS3	0.77
	GQ4	0.81	Management satisfaction		
Result quality				MS1	0.68
	RQ1	0.83		MS2	0.79
	RQ2	0.76		MS3	0.68
	RQ3	0.85		MS4	0.78
Player performance				MS5	0.75
	PP1	0.65		MS6	0.74
	PP2	0.81		MS7	0.70
	PP3	0.83	Commercial income		
	PP4	0.70		GI1	0.72
	PP5	0.71		GI2	0.73
	PP6	0.75		GI3	0.62
	PP7	0.63		GI4	0.82
Coach performance				GI5	0.78
	CP1	0.69	Fan income		
	CP2	0.78		FI1	0.84
	CP3	0.70		FI2	0.80
	CP4	0.77		FI3	0.72
	CP5	0.73	Fan support		
	CP6	0.71		FS1	0.81
Team specification				FS2	0.81
	TS1	0.70		FS3	0.84
	TS2	0.72	Efficiency		
	TS3	0.78		E1	0.76
	TS4	0.77		E2	0.80
	TS5	0.80		E3	0.75
				E4	0.66

Table 4. Summary results for convergent validity.

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	AVE	Composite reliability
Game quality	0.772	0.595	0.854
Result quality	0.758	0.673	0.86
Player performance	0.855	0.537	0.889
Coach performance	0.83	0.542	0.876
Game satisfaction	0.804	0.719	0.884
Management satisfaction	0.858	0.542	0.892
Team specification	0.815	0.575	0.871
Commercial income	0.79	0.545	0.856
Fan income	0.702	0.628	0.834
Fan support	0.769	0.684	0.866
Efficiency	0.74	0.563	0.837

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	AVE	Composite reliability
Core product quality	0.921	0.68	0.93
Fan satisfaction	0.90	0.69	0.919
Financial performance	0.849	0.83	0.884
Sporting performance	0.80	0.74	0.858

4.1.2. Discriminant validity

The Heterotrait-monotrait ratio of the correlations (HTMT) method was used to measure discriminant validity. The HTMT value should be less than 0.9 (Hair et al., 2022). Latent variable or construct ratios less than 0.9 indicate that the constructs are different (Table 5).

Table 5. Results of heterotrait–monotrait ratio (HTMT) analysis.

HTMT	Core product quality	Fan satisfaction	Financial performance	Sporting performance
Fan satisfaction	0.3	*		
Financial performance	0.636	0.71	*	
Sporting performance	0.81	0.72	*	*

4.2. Structural Model Assessment

Four-step approach to structural model measurement was introduced: (1) structural model path coefficients, (2) coefficient of determination (R² value), (3) effect size f², and (4) predictive relevance Q² and blindfolding. Each step is described below:

4.2.1. Path coefficients and significance of the structural model

Each standardized beta coefficient in the ordinary least squares regression indicates the path coefficient in the PLS structural model. Recognizing the sign, magnitude, and significance when assessing the estimated values of path relationships in the structural model is critical. The positive path coefficient indicates the positive effects of one variable on another. To test the significance of the hypotheses, the bootstrap test was used, and a partial index of t-value was used. The t-values in our model are shown in Table 6. To confirm the hypotheses, t-values needed to be greater than 1.96 or less than -1.96. Values between the two indicate a lack of significance. After evaluating the hypotheses, results indicated that CPQ had a positive and significant impact on financial performance ($\beta = 0.203$; $t = 2.23$; $p < 0.05$). Also, a positive and significant effect of CPQ on sporting performance was confirmed ($\beta = 0.524$; $t = 6.84$; $p < 0.001$). However, the direct impact of CPQ on sporting performance was more substantial than its effect on financial performance.

4.2.2. Coefficient of determination (R² value)

Coefficients of determination are the main criteria for evaluating endogenous latent variables in the confirmation path model. The values of 0.67, 0.33, and 0.19 for the

endogenous latent variables have been described as significant, moderate, and weak, respectively (Chin, 1998).

4.2.3. Effect size f^2

The effect size (f^2) is used to evaluate how the endogenous structure is described by the exogenous structure. Chen 1998 defined three ranges for the f^2 : $0.02 < f^2 < 0.15$ for the weak range, $0.15 < f^2 < 0.35$ for the moderately weak range, and $f^2 > 0.35$ for the substantial effect range (Chin, 1998).

4.2.4. Predictive relevance (Q^2) and blindfolding

This criterion was introduced by Geisser (1975); Stone (2018), who determined the predictive power of the model in dependent variables (Geisser, 1975; Stone, 2018). Henseler et al. (2009) set the model's predictive power values for endogenous structures at three values: 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 (Henseler et al., 2009).

For creating standard error and t-values, a resampling bootstrap method with 5000 was used (Chin, 1998; Hair et al., 2012). The sign and magnitude of path coefficients were also used to evaluate structural path relationships between the latent variables. Table 6 summarizes the results, as Figure 1 shows.

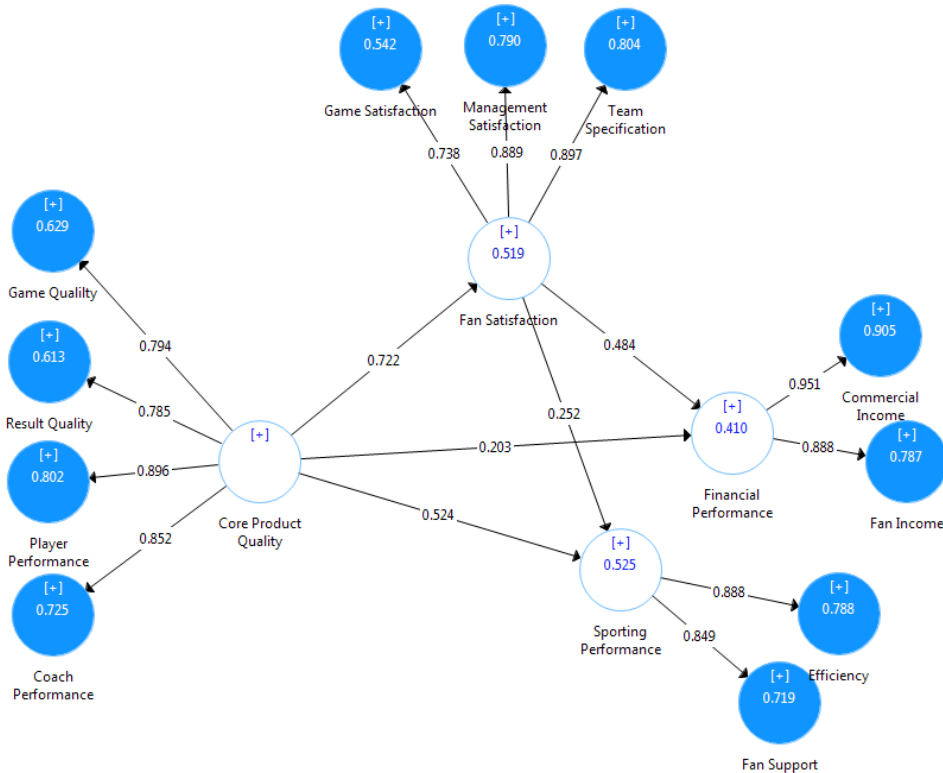


Figure 1. Structural model.

Table 6. Significant testing results of the structural model path coefficients.

Structural path	Path coefficient	t-value	Effect size (f2)	97.5 Confidence interval	Conclusion
CPQ-> FS	0.722	19.82	1.09	(0.64,0.78)	
CPQ->FP	0.203	2.23	0.034	(0.01,0.37)	H1a supported
CPQ->SP	0.524	6.83	0.28	(0.36,0.66)	H1b supported
FS->FP	0.484	5.73	0.192	(0.31,0.65)	
FS->SP	0.252	3.07	0.065	(0.1,0.41)	

4.3. Test of mediation by bootstrapping approach

4.3.1. Significance of the mediating effect

The non-parametric bootstrapping method investigates the mediating effects of satisfaction in the relationship between quality and performance (Hair et al., 2013; Preacher & Hayes, 2008). The significance of mediator influence means that fan satisfaction absorbs part of the direct effect of quality on OP. All the results are shown in Table 7 to investigate the significance of the mediator. Examination of the bootstrapping approach exhibits that both indirect effects are significant. Significant analysis of the path of quality -> satisfaction -> financial performance is $\beta = 0.184$, t value = 6.186 and Significant analysis of the path of quality -> satisfaction -> sporting performance is $\beta = 0.184$, t value = 6.186.7

4.3.2. Size of the mediating effect

Both direct and indirect effects are significant. To supplement the non-parametric bootstrapping method, the indirect effect size about the sum of the direct and indirect effects (total effect) was determined by variance account for (VAF) (Hair et al., 2022; Hair et al., 2013). The VAF analysis determines the intensity of the mediating effect. This analysis showed a complete mediation for more than 80%, indicating partial mediation for more than 20% and less than 80%, and finally, it assumes no mediation for less than 20%. Table 7 shows VAF results. The results show that the mediating effect of fans' satisfaction on financial performance is average (vaf=63%). Also, the size of the mediating effect of fans' satisfaction on sporting performance is partial (vaf=25%). Also, it means that the mediating role of fans' satisfaction in the relationship between CPQ and financial performance was more prominent and striking than in the relationship between CPQ and sporting performance.

Table 7. Test of mediation by bootstrapping approach.

Effect of	Direct effect (t-value)	Indirect effect (t-value)	Total effect	VAF (%)	Interpretation	Conclusion
CPQ->FS->FP	0.203** (2.23)	0.35***(5.18)	0.553	63	Partial mediation	H2a supported
CPQ->FA->SP	0.524*** (6.83)	0.182**(2.95)	0.706	25	Partial mediation	H2b supported

Note: ** |t| >= 1.96 at p=0.05 level; *** |t| >= 3.29 at p = 0.001 level.

5. Managerial implications

Management implications were discovered in this study. CPQ, both directly and indirectly, had a significant role in the performance of clubs. In evaluating the construct related to CPQ, the influence of player and coach performance was more substantial than the other dimensions. This means that clubs' managers can have a significant impact on fan satisfaction and ultimately, on OP by using the appropriate systemic process of human resource management (player and coach) and targeted strategies to improve human resources performance. Especially in Iran, it is suggested that club managers when achieving desirable sporting performance, can focus more on strategies like using professional coaches, designing talent identification programs to select young and skilled football players, and training them to achieve high-quality players.

The subsequent implication that can be mentioned in which the three dimensions of "game satisfaction," "management satisfaction" and "team characteristics" are used in measuring fan satisfaction is that the results showed that team characteristics and satisfaction with management had a more substantial impact on fan satisfaction. In other words, "performance of the club marketing department," "selection of appropriate sponsors," "social participation of clubs," and "proper management of contracts" in the club management, as well as items such as "transparency of transfer policies," "player commitment to clubs" and "the correct number of star players in the team" in terms of team characteristics are some factors that affect fan satisfaction. To satisfy fans, and significantly improve financial performance, the managers of Esteghlal and Persepolis clubs should have extraordinary tact in the organizational structure and processes of the club, including marketing, management, and planning part. The club structure should be redesigned according to the striking role of these sections so that fans actively participate in the club's strategic decision-making. It is essential for club managers to understand the importance of critical dimensions of fan satisfaction and their influential role in financial performance.

6. Discussion and conclusion

One of professional football club managers' most important concerns is making optimal decisions to equilibrate between financial and sporting performance. This study aimed to provide a relationship model between core product quality, fan satisfaction, financial performance, and sporting performance in the two most popular football clubs in Iran (Persepolis and Esteghlal) under conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our study contributed to sports marketing theories by extending previous research on core product quality, fan satisfaction, and organizational performance. In this study, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, CPQ introduced four dimensions: game quality, result quality, player performance, and coach performance. Fans' satisfaction was introduced in the dimensions that attract fans to watch the competitions, as well as satisfaction through the club management actions and the characteristics of the team. Also, OP was defined as financial performance and sporting performance. Financial performance refers to earning money (through commercial and fan income).

Moreover, sporting performance was meant to enhance club efficiency and fan support. Reviewing the research literature, the relationships model was recognized, and hypotheses were considered in the context of the football club. The first hypothesis examined the direct relationship between CPQ and financial performance. The second hypothesis assessed the direct relationship between CPQ and sporting performance. In the third and fourth hypotheses, it was evaluated and discovered whether fan satisfaction had a mediating relationship between CPQ and financial performance and the mediating relationship between CPQ and sporting performance.

Based on the results, the core product quality was a striking component of the service quality construct and positively affected fans' satisfaction and OP in professional football clubs. Indeed, CPQ was the dominant predictor of organizational (club) performance. Also, the results showed that the direct impact of the CPQ on sporting performance was more substantial than its direct effect on financial performance. This issue received less attention in the context of spectator sports, while several studies in non-sports fields repeatedly emphasized the role of quality in OP (Akroush, 2008; Akroush & Khatib, 2009; Ramayah et al., 2011; Singh et al., 2018). Total quality management implementation's direct and positive effect on OP in the service and manufacturing industry was confirmed by (Singh et al., 2018). Akroush (2008) detecting that service quality in the banking context had a positive and significant role in organizational performance. In fact, by improving service quality, organizations can differentiate themselves from competitors and create a competitive advantage. In the context of spectator sports, Ho Kim et al. (2013) emphasized that Game Quality (game performance) had a striking role in sporting performance (revisit intentions) (Ho Kim et al., 2013). Also, Theodorakis et al. (2013) found that CPQ (outcome quality), compared to functional quality, had a more substantial effect on sporting performance (customer loyalty). They also emphasized that the critical section of service quality was CPQ. This means that in the football club context, CPQ predicts customers' future behavior (Ho Kim et al., 2013) and improves organizational profit.

Furthermore, it was shown that the mediating effect of fan satisfaction in the relationship between CPQ-financial performance and the relationship between CPQ-sporting performances was significant and partial. The effect of fan satisfaction through CPQ on financial performance was more substantial than its effect on sporting performance. The results are consistent with the literature in the context of the banking and hotel industry (Al-Hawari & Ward, 2006; Chand, 2010; Teklay et al., 2023). Indeed, by paying attention and responding to customer needs through desired quality, the organization's profitability can be improved (Chand, 2010). Moreover, this, known as a competitive advantage, increases customer satisfaction, improving organizational performance (Akroush, 2008; Akroush & Khatib, 2009). On the other hand, in the sports context, the role of service quality and fan satisfaction on customer loyalty aligns with recent studies. Theodorakis et al. (2013); Yoshida and James (2010) proved that service quality constructs, which were measured through two dimensions of core and functional quality, had appropriate predictive power for customer satisfaction (Theodorakis et al., 2013; Yoshida & James, 2010), (Brady et al., 2006) and (Tsuji et al., 2007) revealed that CPQ had a more substantial effect on fan satisfaction (Brady et al., 2006; Tsuji et al., 2007). It was also reported that fan satisfaction

mediated the relationships between service quality and customer loyalty/ behavioral intentions (Cronin et al., 2000; Sarstedt et al., 2014). This study added to the body of knowledge in literature by understanding the mediating role of fans' satisfaction between core product quality and organizational performance.

In conclusion, the model provided in this paper is an efficient and effective tool for managers of professional football sports clubs. Because it can help them analyze and choose the best club development strategies to equilibrate the financial and sporting performance of the club to achieve organizational goals more confidently. The important implication of these findings is that the application of appropriate mixed policies from customer satisfaction and CPQ will have a significant impact on improving OP. Therefore, managers should pay special attention to resource management (accurate hiring, optimal allocation, and efficient use) and sports marketing (e.g., selection of appropriate sponsors, social participation of clubs, and proper management of contracts) to achieve organizational goals faster and more accurately through the selection of optimal policies.

6. Limitations and future recommendations

In any research, several limitations prevent the achievement of results with a high level of reliability. A careful and thorough examination of any subject requires sufficient time and provision of all conditions that are only sometimes available. Like other research, there were limitations, and an attempt was made to examine the present research in a specific and logical framework so that the results would be helpful for sports managers. Some of these limitations were inherently related to the research. Others may occur during the research; the present study was no exception to this rule. Some of the limitations of the study include:

- One of the research limitations was the statistical population of the study. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the closure of centers, and restrictions in the country, it was not possible to access more samples. More samples will certainly reduce errors and increase modeling accuracy.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some essential and practical dimensions in this research were removed or changed. The removal of the "match day income" component, one of the most important ways to achieve income for football clubs, can be mentioned.
- Due to the state ownership of the two most famous clubs, Persepolis and Esteghlal, it was impossible to examine the "broadcasting fee" in this study. In other words, allocating the budget related to broadcasting is done indirectly and very limited to the clubs.

To develop the research, the following can be suggested:

This paper is conducted for the two football clubs of Persepolis and Esteghlal. The researchers can examine the model presented in this research for other sports with conditions different from those of football clubs. In our research, the variables under the control of the club management and affect the club's performance were considered. Given that these two Iranian football clubs are managed under the auspices of the government,

indeed the club's performance is affected by other variables such as the effects of sanctions and government policies (Ministry of Sports and Youth). The effect of these variables on club performance can be considered and addressed in future research.

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Appendix

Appendix A. Scale items.

Core Product Quality	
Game Quality	Competitiveness of the games.
	Games are usually fast and flowing.
	High level of play.
	Spectacular games.
Result Quality	Team has good win record.
	Team has good lose record.
	In general, team has great results this season.
Player Performance	In general, your team's players perform well-executed plays.
	Your team gives 100% every game.
	Team plays hard all the time.
	Players on your team always try to do their best.
	Star/Popular players perform well-executed plays.
	Star/Popular players give 100% every game.
Star/Popular players of team are completely at the service of the team.	

Core Product Quality	
Coach performance	<p>Overall, with the presence of this coach, athletes/ team performance and playing style are improved.</p> <p>The coach selects and utilizes appropriate tactics and strategies in the games.</p> <p>The coach has a good relationship with the athletes and tries to motivate athletes toward higher levels of achievement.</p> <p>The coach recruits and selects quality athletes and a specific number of athletes according to the club goals and available facilities.</p> <p>The coach adheres to budget issues, procedures, rules and regulations in club and acts in accordance with them.</p> <p>The coach has appropriate communication and public relations behaviors activities with the community, media and peers.</p>
Fan satisfaction	
Game satisfaction	<p>Overall, fans are satisfied to watch team' competitions live.</p> <p>Overall, fans are happy to watch team' competitions live.</p> <p>Overall, fans are dissatisfied to watch team' competitions live.</p>
Management Satisfaction	<p>Marketing sector of the club is active and has a great performance.</p> <p>Public relations performance of the club is satisfactory.</p> <p>Suitable sponsors are selected for the club.</p> <p>In general, club's management is high- quality (Meeting fans' expectations, commitment to the club).</p> <p>Social involvement of the club is admirable.</p> <p>Former players and veterans in club are properly involved and applied.</p> <p>The process of contract management with players and coach is well done.</p>
Team Characteristics	<p>Transfer policy is clear and satisfactory.</p> <p>Number of team' stars (players and coach) is suitable and sufficient.</p> <p>Players have enough commitment to the club and the fans.</p> <p>Interaction of players with fans and their public appearances of the players with fans is very desirable.</p> <p>Overall, quality of the team composition (selection and position of players) is in the best condition.</p>
Financial performance	
Commercial income	<p>Club's income is great through main sponsors.</p> <p>Club's income is great through sub-sponsors.</p> <p>The club earns great income from transfer market.</p>
Fan income	<p>The club earns sufficient income through advertising around pitch.</p> <p>The club earns sufficient income through advertising by famous players or coach (endorsement).</p> <p>Fans' membership fees and related income are very reasonable.</p> <p>The club's products are well bought by the fans.</p> <p>The club benefits greatly from gifts and grants from fans.</p>
Sporting performance	
Fan support	<p>Fans increasingly watch and follow team's competitions live on TV during the season.</p> <p>Fans increasingly follow and watch and follow team's competitions through websites and social media during the season.</p> <p>Fans increasingly watch and follow team's competitions through news and newspapers during the season.</p>
Efficiency	<p>Team' position in the league is very suitable.</p> <p>The amount of points gained by the team in the league is very satisfactory.</p> <p>In general, the average number of goals scored by the team in competitions is excellent.</p> <p>In general, the goal's difference of team is very good.</p>



تأثیر کیفیت محصول اصلی بر عملکرد سازمانی با در نظر گرفتن نقش میانجی رضایت هواداران (مطالعه موردی: باشگاه فوتبال پرسپولیس و استقلال)

مهدی پورحسین^۱، ابراهیم علیدوست قهفرخی^{۲*}، مهرزاد حمیدی^۳، خدیجه پورذبیح سرحمامی^۴

^۱ دانشجوی دکتری مدیریت ورزشی، دانشکده علوم ورزشی، دانشگاه مازندران، بابلسر، مازندران، ایران.
^۲ استاد، گروه مدیریت ورزشی، دانشکده علوم ورزشی و تندرستی، دانشگاه تهران، تهران، ایران.
^۳ دانشیار، گروه مدیریت ورزشی، دانشکده علوم ورزشی و تندرستی، دانشگاه تهران، تهران، ایران.
^۴ دکترای مدیریت ورزشی، دانشکده علوم ورزشی، دانشگاه مازندران، بابلسر، مازندران، ایران.

کلیدواژه

باشگاه فوتبال
رضایت هواداران
عملکرد مالی
عملکرد ورزشی
کیفیت محصول

نوع مقاله

پژوهشی اصیل

چکیده

هدف: ایجاد تعادل بین عملکرد مالی و عملکرد ورزشی یکی از مهم ترین دغدغه‌های مدیران فعلی در باشگاه‌های حرفه ای فوتبال است. هدف این مطالعه ساخت مدلی برای بررسی تأثیر کیفیت محصول اصلی بر عملکرد مالی و ورزشی با در نظر گرفتن نقش میانجی رضایت هواداران در دو باشگاه پرطرفدار ایران (پرسپولیس و استقلال) بود.

روش: داده‌ها با استفاده از پیمایش پرسشنامه جمع‌آوری شده و از روش نمونه‌گیری هدفمند و در دسترس استفاده شده است. جامعه آماری پژوهش شامل کلیه مدیران، کارشناسان، نخبگان و افراد دارای دانش و اطلاعات کافی (مانند پیشکسوتان باشگاهی) مربوط به دو باشگاه پرطرفدار فوتبال ایران (باشگاه پرسپولیس و استقلال) بود. داده‌های ۱۷۵ پرسشنامه با استفاده از روش مدل‌سازی معادلات ساختاری با رویکرد حداقل مربعات جزئی با استفاده از نرم‌افزار PLS مورد تجزیه و تحلیل قرار گرفت.

یافته‌ها: نتایج نشان داد که بین کیفیت محصول اصلی و عملکرد سازمانی (مالی و ورزشی) رابطه مثبت و معناداری وجود دارد. همچنین، تأثیر میانجی رضایت طرفداران در رابطه بین کیفیت محصول اصلی و عملکرد سازمانی تأیید شد.

اصالت و ابتکار مقاله: مدل ارائه شده به عنوان یک ابزار موثر می‌تواند به مدیران باشگاه کمک کند تا بهترین استراتژی‌های توسعه باشگاه را برای ایجاد تعادل بین عملکرد مالی و ورزشی باشگاه به منظور دستیابی با اطمینان بیشتر به اهداف سازمانی تجزیه و تحلیل و انتخاب کنند. اهمیت این یافته‌ها در این است که اعمال سیاست‌های ترکیبی مناسب از رضایت طرفداران و کیفیت محصول اصلی تأثیر بسزایی در بهبود عملکرد سازمانی خواهد داشت.

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Fan Base Economic-recreational Value of Azadi Stadium

Behzad Akbarzadeh¹, Fariba Askarian^{2*}, Mohammadrasul Khodadadi³, Mohammad Khodaverdizadeh⁴

¹ PhD Student, Faculty of Physical Education and Sport Sciences, University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran.

² Associate Professor, Faculty of Physical Education and Sport Sciences, University of Tehran, Tabriz, Iran. and Professor, Department of Sport Management, Faculty of Sports Sciences and Health, Tehran University, Tehran, Iran.

³ Associate Professor, Faculty of Physical Education and Sport Sciences, University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran.

⁴ Associate Professor, Department of Agricultural Economics, Faculty of Agriculture, Urmia University, Urmia, Urmia, Iran.

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This research aimed to estimate the economic-recreational value of Azadi Stadium from the spectators' perspective using a contingent valuation approach (CVM).

Methodology: This research was descriptive and applied in nature. The statistical population includes fans who have attended matches at Azadi Stadium at least once in 2022. A sample of 418 individuals was selected from this population using simple random sampling, and the necessary information was collected through the willingness-to-pay questionnaire developed by [Wicker and Colleagues \(2016\)](#). Data analysis was conducted using the logit method, utilizing the Stata and Shazam software.

Findings: The findings reveal that the average willingness of fans to pay to attend games at Azadi Stadium is 91,000 Tomans per game, and the estimated economic and recreational value for one season is approximately 1,350 billion Rials. Furthermore, factors such as income, watching matches on television, satisfaction with stadium facilities, and enjoyment of the games significantly and positively impact the willingness to pay to attend stadium matches. On the other hand, variables like age, education level, proposed price, and marital status negatively influence this willingness to pay.

Originality: Limited research has been conducted on the economics of recreational sports facilities, explicitly focusing on contingent valuation methodology. Estimating the economic value is crucial for decision-making regarding investment, improvement, and operation of stadiums.

Keywords

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Proposed Price
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1. Introduction

The modern global sports sector has experienced substantial economic, social, and political changes. In recent centuries, sports have become one of the most significant aspects in the growth and development of countries and one of the highest-income industries (Zamani et al., 2013). Sports have grown dramatically in numerous nations and now play an essential role as an economic sector in various areas such as sports services, product production and consumption, and economic growth. Sports have evolved to the point that they are regarded as business and commerce in many nations (Askarian et al., 2005). Football has continually drawn millions of supporters and spectators as one of the most popular and appreciated sports globally (Castellanos et al., 2011). The widespread interest and enthusiasm for football matches have led to a demand for sports venues that can accommodate large crowds and provide suitable conditions for hosting such events. As symbols of power and sports attraction, football stadiums play a crucial role in the football industry's development and fans' overall recreational experience (Lee, 2022). These stadiums are characterized by their high capacity, modern facilities, amenities, and incorporation of advanced technologies (Yang & Cole, 2022). As a result, estimating the economic and recreational value of football stadiums becomes essential. The economic value primarily encompasses these stadiums' financial and economic impacts, including revenue generated from ticket sales, revenue from football-related businesses, job opportunities created, and the attraction of tourists attending matches (Nicolliello & Zampatti, 2016). In this industry and football, stadiums have become a significant source of income for clubs, especially in recent years, because they can provide valuable recreational opportunities for their audience. In each game, spectators pay to watch it up close, generating enormous revenue for stadiums and their favorite clubs. Being present in sports venues and places that create intangible public goods such as recreation, honor, satisfaction, happiness, and pride is much more important than other benefits (Humphreys et al., 2018), among which recreational value is the most essential and practical value that is mentioned for sports facilities. It includes many other intangible benefits, and people are willing to spend money to take advantage of its functions and facilities (Orlowski & Wicker, 2019).

Based on the fact that football is the most global sport in the world and its importance is such that it can even be considered a social indicator (Royuela & Gásquez, 2019), it has become a reason for its fans to spend a lot of time and money watching and enjoying it (Galan et al., 2021). In this regard, Tehran's Azadi Stadium, with a capacity of one hundred thousand spectators and hosting national team competitions as well as the two favored teams Persepolis and Esteghlal, plays a significant role in providing entertainment for its football-loving community.

In quantitative economics, reducing and determining willingness to pay for the monetary value of public goods and intangible goods produced by sports facilities such as football stadiums can play an essential role in the integrated management of human and physical sports facilities (Robert, 2017). To this end, contingent valuation is widely used to assess public adjustments by creating willingness-to-pay values. This approach is a hypothetical method that determines individual preferences and how much they are

willing to pay for their favorite recreational activities. They include watching competitions, player and team successes, and enjoying public and intangible benefits at the desired stadium (Funahashi et al., 2020). de Boer and Koning (2022) demonstrated in their study on professional cyclists' willingness to pay (WTP) that the desire to pay spectators was higher than that of residents in areas where the event was held. In addition, pre-and post-event studies showed that WTP increased significantly after the event, and variables such as income, proposed price, interest, and enjoyment greatly impacted the willingness to pay spectators (de Boer & Koning, 2022). Robert (2017), in his article, used the contingent valuation method to examine and evaluate the value of a sports stadium in Poland. The findings showed that the intangible goods produced in the stadium have a high value, and respondents are more willing to pay for them, but the immense costs do not compensate for the public benefits. That is, the weight and annual profit from intangible and public goods compared to stadium costs are low. Their findings showed that willingness to pay is positively and significantly related to income level (Robert, 2017).

In his research on estimating the value of athlete success, Wicker et al. (2012) demonstrated that as athlete success increases, the willingness to pay among fans also increases. Additionally, Wicker et al. (2012) found that age, education, income, proposed price, and years of participation in WTP significantly impacted willingness to pay across 21 sports (Wicker et al., 2012). Using the contingent valuation method, Whitehead and Wicker (2019) measured the value of public goods produced in two American sports stadiums. According to the research findings, neither stadium had financial justification for delivering public goods, meaning that the value of public goods was estimated to be less than the cost of financing and constructing the stadiums. However, despite this, the audience was highly willing to pay (Whitehead & Wicker, 2019).

Income level and presence in the stadium significantly impact the willingness to pay for sports events. Based on a study estimating the economic value of the Sepahan football club for Isfahan City, Bidram et al. (2018) found that the average annual willingness to pay citizens for the attendance of the Sepahan football team in the Premier League is 16,480,000 rials (Iranian currency). For buying tickets to watch the games at the stadium, it is 4,433,000 rials. Moreover, the study showed that age, education, income level, and presence in the stadium significantly influence willingness to pay (Bidram et al., 2018). Sarlab et al. (2021) conducted a study to estimate the willingness to pay and the economic value of sports facilities in Tabriz City. The study showed that the average willingness to pay for sports facilities in Baghshomal, Manzarieh, and Mirdamad areas is 4,744,910 rials, 5,234,043 rials, and 4,215,000 Rials, respectively, over one year. Furthermore, the total economic value of team and individual sports in the three areas of Tabriz is 103,402,848 rials and 111,417,684 rials, respectively (Sarlab et al., 2021). Khodaverdizadeh and Kavosi (2011) estimated the annual ecotourism value of Soholan Cave to be 847,000,000 rials. The study also showed that variables such as education, the attractiveness of the cave, proposed price, and income significantly affect people's willingness to pay. Additionally, the results indicated that over 88% of visitors are willing to pay a fee to use the cave (Khodaverdizadeh & Kavosi, 2011). Hoseini et al. (2022) showed in the study titled "Estimating the Economic Value of Persepolis Football Club " that 77.3% of the

fans are willing to participate in funding for Persepolis at competitive levels, and ready to pay for Persepolis fans to attend and win the Premier League the values were 70% and 72.3% respectively. The Iranian Hazfi Cup and the AFC Champions League values were 71.9% and 78.1%, respectively. 89.9 percent of Persepolis football clubs intended to buy match tickets and attend the stadiums, 83.8 percent wanted to watch their favorite team matches on TV, and 43.5 percent purchased the club's products/kits (Hoseini et al., 2022).

In this research, since recreation is a non-consumable commodity, the contingent valuation method (CVM) is considered one of the best ways to determine its value. This method is considered a standard and flexible tool for measuring non-consumable and non-marketable values. The term "contingent" in CVM is used because this method creates a hypothetical market and estimates the payment amount respondents would make under specific hypothetical scenarios (Dehez, 2023). Valuing stadiums is of great importance for urban planning and development. Scientific research can help cities identify the need for revitalization and improvement of stadiums, determine their optimal use, and devise appropriate plans to increase profitability and ease of use of these facilities. Managers and policymakers require accurate economic and recreational value assessments to make better decisions regarding stadium investments, operations, development, or renovation. Credible and well-documented research can aid them in making decisions that benefit society and cities. According to the research background, no studies have been conducted on estimating the economic value of recreational sports facilities in Iran, and given the widespread attendance at events held at the Azadi Stadium in Tehran for national teams, Persepolis, and Esteghlal football clubs, the limited domestic research in this field, and the particular situation of this stadium in terms of creating recreation in terms of the number of spectators in the country, the researcher is trying to answer the following questions.

- 1- What is the economic and recreational value of Azadi football stadium?
- 2- What variables affect the willingness of Azadi stadium users to pay?

2. Methodology

This research was analytical and descriptive in terms of purpose and applied in terms of goal. The statistical population includes fans who attend matches at Azadi Stadium in Tehran. The sample size was measured using the Michel and Carson table and was 430, of which 418 questionnaires were returned with complete answers. Sampling was random, and questionnaires were distributed manually and online. The distribution of some questionnaires in 2022 was conducted in person among spectators, while the rest of the questionnaires were made available online to the fans of the teams playing at Azadi Stadium due to the spread of COVID-19 and the absence of spectators in the stadium. The measurement tool was a standard questionnaire consisting of 29 questions. The first part of the questionnaire included demographic, social, and economic questions. The second and third parts had inquiries related to attendance at the stadium and satisfaction with it, and the fourth part was associated with a hypothetical scenario where respondents were asked to express their willingness to pay to attend a specific game at the stadium. The opinions of experts and specialists were used to validate the questionnaire.

Initially, 80 questionnaires were distributed as a pre-test among respondents, and a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.80 was obtained using SPSS software. Also, the average willingness to pay of the respondents in the pre-test stage was obtained by asking an open-ended question without offering any specific price. This was used in designing the main questionnaire scenario. Several methods perform the contingent valuation method, one of the most important of which is the double-bounded (DB) or one-dimensional approach. The DB method was first introduced by Boyle and Bishop in 1979. In this method, respondents select only one proposal from a predetermined number. When facing a hypothetical market situation, respondents only answer "yes" or "no" to the proposed price.

In a hypothetical scenario, the conditional valuation method determines individuals' willingness to pay. This method assumes that individuals have a utility function denoted by equation (1).

$$(1) \quad U = U(Y, S)$$

In this equation, the utility function is indirect and depends on the individual's income and a vector of other economic and socio-economic factors. To establish a model for measuring willingness to pay, it is assumed that each individual is willing to pay an amount of their income to attend a stadium as the proposed amount. This payment creates desirability for them. The desirability generated by following the stadium is more significant than not following, which is represented by the following equation (Hanemann, 1984).

$$(2) \quad U(I, Y - A; S) + U(0, Y; S) + \varepsilon$$

Where the variables are random variables with an average of zero, distributed randomly and independently, the difference in utility created by attending the stadium is given by equation (3).

$$(3) \quad \Delta U = U(I, Y - A; S) - U(0, Y; S) + (\varepsilon_1 + \varepsilon_0)$$

The dual-format questionnaire structure for examining individuals' willingness to pay involves a dependent variable with a binary choice, requiring a qualitative choice model. Logistic and probit models are commonly used for qualitative choice methods. Therefore, the logistic model pattern was used in this study due to its computational simplicity and widespread use in foreign studies to investigate the impact of different explanatory variables on individuals' willingness to pay. According to the logistic model, the probability (P) of an individual accepting one of the proposals is expressed as follows (Hanemann, 1984).

$$(4) \quad P_i = F(\Delta U) = \frac{1}{1 + \exp(-\Delta U)}$$

The cumulative distribution function is a standard logistic function, and some socio-economic variables, such as income, proposed amount, marital status, etc., are included

in this research. The parameters of the logistic model are estimated using the maximum likelihood estimation, the most common technique for estimating the logistic model. Then, the expected value of willingness to pay is calculated numerically within the range of negative infinity to positive infinity using the following equation (Molaei, 2013).

$$(5) \quad (\Delta U) dA = \int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} \left(\frac{1}{1 + \exp[-(\alpha^* + \beta A)]} \right) dA \quad . \alpha^* = (\alpha + \gamma Y + \theta S) \int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} F_{\eta}$$

Where E(WTP) is the expected value of willingness to pay, and the width is an adjusted origin that includes the socio-economic term added to the primary width term. In the present study, the dependent variable was the acceptance or rejection of the proposed amount for attending the stadium. This variable was obtained in response to whether an individual accepts or rejects the proposed amount for stadium attendance. Therefore, the dependent variable here is categorical, with values of one and zero. In such cases, regression models with categorical variables are generally suitable for investigating regressions with binary dependent variables. Models like linear probability models, logistic regression, probit, and Tobit models are utilized. In this research, logistic regression has been used to examine the influence of various explanatory variables on the likelihood of individuals' willingness to pay. The logistic regression model utilizes the logistic distribution and predicts probability values between zero and one.

The current study has employed this method. Considering the mean and standard deviation, using the Boyle method, the proposed price obtained based on the pre-test consists of 6 proposed prices (55,000, 65,000, 70,000, 75,000, 90,000, and 120,000 Iranian rials). These proposed prices represent the suggested price for each instance of attending Azadi Stadium. The data analysis was conducted using Stata and Shazam software, employing the rank-ordered logit and probit methods. The scenario and relevant questions in the current study were presented as follows: Azadi Stadium in Tehran allows you leisure and leisure time. Given the current condition of the stadium and the sports teams of your interest that hold their games in this venue, and considering their increasing costs, as well as the fact that you are a user of this stadium and attend it for recreation, would you be willing to pay an amount of X Iranian rials for the entry fee of Azadi Stadium in Tehran to enjoy and watch the games of your desired sports club"?

3. Results

According to Table 1, the average age of the individuals is 31 years, the average household size is four people, and the average proposed entrance fee is 880,000 rials. Moreover, the oldest and youngest individuals are 56 and 17, respectively. The maximum and minimum number of family members are 8 and 2, respectively. Finally, the maximum and minimum proposed entrance fees are 1,200,000 and 550,000 rials, respectively.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of variables.

Variables	Mean	Maximum	Minimum	Standard deviation
Age of respondents (years)	31	56	17	8.36
Size of each household (persons)	4	8	2	1.1
Proposed entrance fee (Rials)	800000	1200000	550000	211440

Based on the data, 19% of the respondents had a diploma or less education, 42% had a bachelor's degree, and 12% had a master's or doctoral degree. Regarding occupation, 119 individuals (29%) were government employees, and 299 individuals (71%) were self-employed. Therefore, it can be observed that individuals with self-employment had the highest frequency in the sample under study. 38% of the respondents were married, and 62% were single. The income level of individuals was designed in 64 groups, including 4-0, 9-5, 14-10, and more than 15 million Tomans. The results showed that the income group of 9-5 million Tomans, with 125 samples and 30%, had the highest frequency among different income groups. Based on Table 2, different proposed amounts for watching a football match at Azadi Stadium were obtained using a pre-test. Then, using the Cooper method and considering 415 samples, the frequency corresponding to each proposed amount (550000, 650000, 700000, 750000, 900000, and 1200000) was obtained.

Table 2. Status of respondents regarding proposed prices.

Proposed price (Rials)	Frequency (Percentage)	Yes	No
550000	67	56	11
650000	67	45	22
700000	71	42	29
750000	71	38	33
900000	71	32	39
1200000	71	25	46
Total	418		

*The numbers inside the parentheses show the frequency percentage among 70 samples.

3.1. Assumptions of the regression model

One of the critical aspects of using the regression model is the normality of variables, especially the dependent variable. Therefore, the results of the Jarque-Bera test indicated the normality of the dependent variable (willingness to pay) at a significant level of 0.05.

Table 3. Jarque-Bera test.

Variable	Willingness to pay
Jarque-Bera test	0.173
P-Value	0.81

Another requirement assumption in regression analysis is that there should not be a linear relationship among variables. A linear relationship indicates that one independent

variable is a linear function of other independent variables. The linearity between the explanatory variables of interest was examined to estimate the logistic regression model. To this end, the analysis of variance test was employed. According to Table 4, considering that for each specified level within each row of the Table, no pair of variables had a correlation coefficient greater than 0.5, it can be claimed that there is no collinearity among the investigated explanatory variables. Therefore, the results of the logistic model can be analyzed.

Table 4. presents the results of the linearity test for the logistic regression model.

Variables	Proposed price	Income	Age	Education level	TV watching	Satisfaction with sports facilities	Enjoyment of watching football matches	Marital status
1	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
3	0.00	0.04	0.00	0.03	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.57
4	0.03	0.82	0.01	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.01	0.11
5	0.00	0.05	0.02	0.37	0.05	0.03	0.25	0.16
6	0.14	0.05	0.02	0.34	0.02	0.01	0.41	0.00
7	0.17	0.00	0.46	0.23	0.09	0.00	0.03	0.01
8	0.32	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.66	0.02	0.16	0.00
9	0.33	0.03	0.48	0.01	0.16	0.01	0.14	0.14

This study used a logistic regression model to investigate the factors affecting the likelihood of accepting the proposed amount for watching a football match at Azadi Stadium. The results of the logistic model are presented in Table 5. The likelihood ratio (LR) test examined the estimated regression's significance. The value of the likelihood ratio (LR) statistic at 8 degrees of freedom is 361.79, which indicates that the entire estimated model is statistically significant at the 1% level. The coefficient of determination (R-squared) is 63%, a desirable figure for the logistic model calculated based on the number of dependent variable observations. In other words, explanatory variables explain 63% of the variation in the dependent variable. The results showed that income, television watching, satisfaction with stadium facilities, and enjoyment of watching a football match at Azadi Stadium have a positive and significant effect. In contrast, age, education level, proposed price, and marital status negatively and significantly impact the likelihood of people's willingness to pay to watch football matches at Azadi Stadium.

Table 5. Results of the Logit Model.

Variables	p> z	Z	Coefficients
Proposed price	0.000	-5.21	***-0.00005
Income	0.000	5.47	***0.78
Education level	0.058	-1.90	*-0.36
Age	0.000	-5.61	***-0.16
TV watching	0.000	4.03	***1.09
Satisfaction with sports facilities	0.000	4.61	***2.5

Variables	p> z	Z	Coefficients
Enjoyment of watching football matches	0.000	8.02	***1.5
Marital status	0.004	2.89	***-1.16
Distance from origin	0.72	-.35	Ns-0.55
pseudo R²=0.63		(LR) = 361.79 PValue = 0.000	Number of observations =418

***, ** and * have significant meanings at levels of 1%, 5%, and 10%.

Since the coefficients of the variables in the logistic model are not easily interpretable quantitatively, the final effects of the variables are estimated. The final effects of the variables are shown in Table 6. The final effect of the proposed price shows a significant negative impact of one percent on the probability of an individual's willingness to pay. In other words, the final effect of the proposed price indicates that with a one-unit increase in the average proposed price, the probability of an individual's willingness to watch football matches at Azadi Stadium decreases by 0.001 percent. The final effect of individuals' income at the one percent level significantly positively impacts the probability of an individual's willingness to pay. That is, the final effect of the income variable indicates that with a one-unit increase in the average income of individuals, their willingness to pay for watching football matches at Azadi Stadium increases by 2.0 units or 20 percent. The final effect of the education level variable is -0.08, meaning that with a one-unit increase in the average education level, the probability of an individual's willingness to pay decreases by 8 percent. The final effect of the age variable shows that with a decrease of one unit in individuals' age, the probability of their willingness to pay to watch football matches at Azadi stadium increases by 0.04 units (4%). This means the desire to produce young people to watch football matches at Azadi Stadium is high. The final effect of the variable of the number of watching football matches on television shows that with an increase of one unit in the number of watching football matches on television, the probability of an individual's willingness to pay for watching football matches at Azadi stadium increases by 0.25 units (25%). The final effect of the satisfaction variable with the quantitative and qualitative facilities of Azadi Stadium is 0.42 units. In other words, the willingness to pay off individuals who are satisfied with Azadi Stadium's quantitative and qualitative facilities is 42% more than those who are unhappy. The final effect of the variable of enjoyment of watching football matches is 0.34 units. This means that with an increase of one unit in the pleasure of watching football matches, the probability of an individual's willingness to pay for watching football matches increases by 0.34 units (34%). The final effect of the marital status variable is -0.27 units. In other words, the probability of willingness to pay of married individuals is 27% less than that of single individuals.

Table 6. Results of the final effect of the logistic model.

Variables	p> z	Z	Coefficients
Proposed price	0.000	-5.25	***-0.00001
Income	0.000	5.44	*** 0.2
Education level	0.055	-1.92	*-0.08
Age	0.000	-5.5	***-0.04

Variables	p> z	Z	Coefficients
TV watching	0.000	4.02	***0.25
Satisfaction with sports facilities	0.000	7.02	***0.42
Enjoyment of watching football matches	0.000	7.38	***0.34
Marital status	0.003	2.96	***-0.27

After estimating the logit model, the average willingness to pay is calculated. According to Table 7, the average willingness to pay is calculated to be 910000 Rials. In other words, individuals are willing to pay an average of 910000 Rials each time they watch a football match at Azadi Stadium. This amount is also significant at the 1% level.

Table 7. Calculation of Average Willingness to Pay.

Value	Willingness to Pay	Upper Bound	Lower Bound	ASL
Mean	910000	1010000	840000	0.000

3.2. Estimating the recreational value of watching a football match at Azadi Stadium:

Given the amount individuals are willing to pay to watch a football match at Azadi Stadium, the recreational value of watching a football match at Azadi Stadium is calculated as follows. The average number of competitions held for the Iranian national team and the Persepolis and Esteghlal clubs during a season or year is estimated to be 40 games. The formula you provided accurately calculates the recreational value of a football game at Azadi Stadium. Let me break down the calculations you mentioned:

1. ****Economic and Recreational Value of a Single Game:****

Average Willingness to Pay per Person * Average Number of Spectators per Game =
Economic and Recreational Value of One Game
300,000 Rials * 91,000 = 27 billion Rials

2. ****Annual economic and Recreational Value of Watching Games:****

Economic and Recreational Value of One Game * Number of Games in a Season (50 games) = Annual Economic and Recreational Value
27 billion Rials * 50 = 1,350 billion Rials (1.35 trillion Rials)

The calculations seem consistent and accurate, showing the estimated recreational value of watching football games at Azadi Stadium. Therefore, the recreational value of managing a single football match at Azadi Stadium is calculated to be 27 billion Rials. The annual recreational value of watching a football match at Azadi Stadium is estimated at 1,350 billion Rials.

4. Discussion and conclusion

We used the contingent valuation method and logistic regression model. The average willingness to pay of football fans attending Azadi Stadium in Tehran was calculated, and based on that, the annual recreational value of this stadium was estimated. Since the overall benefits created by Azadi Stadium for fans are non-consumptive and not priced in the market, non-market valuation methods can be used to value them. Therefore, the contingent valuation method was used in this study. In response to the central questions of this research, the economic-recreational value of Azadi Stadium from the perspective of spectators was estimated at 1080 billion rials, considering the average presence of 30,000 spectators for each match at Azadi Stadium and the average of 40 games held there per year.

Based on the ticket price for the Iranian Premier League games at the time of data collection for this study (first half of 2022), which was 650000 Rials, the difference between spectators' willingness to pay or preferences and the federation's approved ticket price for the same number of spectators during a season or a year equates to approximately 390 billion Rials, which can be used for stadium development and improvement. Both willingness to pay and contentment with the stadium would rise in this circumstance.

In response to the second question of this research, income, education level, age, marital status, proposed price, watching competitions on television, satisfaction with stadium facilities, and enjoyment of watching the match have significantly impacted the willingness to pay. The suggested price was found to have a significant adverse effect at the one percent level. This means that as the proposed price for watching football matches at Azadi Stadium increases from 550000 to 1200000 Rials, the likelihood of people's willingness to pay decreases. These findings are consistent with the results of the studies by (de Boer & Koning, 2022; Sarlab et al., 2021; Whitehead & Wicker, 2019; Wicker et al., 2012). They also showed in their research that increasing the proposed price reduces the willingness to pay the audience. Increasing the suggested price of stadium tickets can decrease spectators' desire to purchase tickets. This phenomenon can be due to the rise in costs, resulting in a limited number of individuals who have the financial capacity to attend the games. It may also cause a shift in spectators' recreational preferences. Some individuals might choose alternative, less expensive entertainment options instead of following the matches. Escaping ticket prices might further reduce the general public's presence at the stadium.

Consequently, this could negatively impact the overall viewing experience and the allure of the games for spectators. Similarly, the decline in attendees and the resultant decrease in ticket revenue can have various financial implications for sports, clubs, and stadiums. This could encompass diminished financial resources for teams and stadiums, decreased local business income, and reduced employment within the sports industry.

The price increase could diminish the opportunities for spectators to engage in the viewing experience. Financial constraints could lead spectators to abstain from attending various games. Additionally, elevated ticket prices could reduce demand and popularity for teams and stadiums, ultimately negatively affecting their financial performance and recognition. In summary, increased proposed ticket prices for stadiums

could lead to negative impacts and challenges for stadiums, spectators, teams, and the sports economy. To maintain a balance between economic considerations and the viewing experience, precise decision-making and careful price regulation are essential to avoid unwarranted increases.

The significant positive effect of income at the one percent level indicates that people with higher incomes have a more remarkable ability to pay than those with lower incomes. In other words, as people's income level increases, their likelihood of being willing to pay to watch football matches at Azadi Stadium also increases. The studies by (Bidram et al., 2018; de Boer & Koning, 2022; Khodaverdizadeh & Kavosi, 2011; Robert, 2017; Sarlab et al., 2021; Whitehead & Wicker, 2019; Wicker et al., 2012) also found that having a high income and suitable job can increase the willingness to pay.

The negative and significant effect of the education level variable indicates that the lower the education level of the spectators, the higher the likelihood of their willingness to pay to watch football matches at Azadi Stadium. Increasing education levels usually leads to changes in individuals' habits and lifestyles. People with higher education may be inclined towards less consumption-oriented cultures in sports and leisure activities. For instance, they might be less inclined to participate in high-cost environments like football stadiums. Highly educated spectators might be more interested in diverse experiences across various fields. These individuals could prefer allocating their time to activities such as travel, arts, science, and culture rather than spending on the expenses associated with stadium attendance.

Moreover, increased education levels might diminish the significance of sports and football in individuals' lives. Individuals with higher education might have a greater interest in activities and matters with social and cultural dimensions, leading to a reduced willingness to allocate time and resources to attending football matches. Highly educated individuals might also prefer new technologies and methods. In today's world, television broadcasts and online platforms offer more convenient ways to watch sports matches than physically attending stadiums, which could decrease individuals' willingness to pay for stadium attendance. In general, the negative impact of higher education levels on spectators' willingness to pay at football stadiums is rooted in diverse social, cultural, and recreational realities. To address this issue, advertising, and experiential strategies can be introduced to enhance the appeal of attending sports matches in stadiums, thus maintaining the motivation for highly educated individuals to participate in these events.

The negative and significant effect of the age variable indicates that younger people with lower ages are more willing to pay higher amounts to watch football matches at Azadi Stadium. Young spectators usually come to the stadium for a more thrilling experience and greater motivation. Increasing age might decrease these motivations and a reduced willingness to pay for event attendance. Rapidly changing technologies and media have increased the attractiveness of alternative ways to access information and sports experiences. Growing older could lead to a decreased inclination for physical attendance at stadiums and influence the willingness to pay. With age, spectators are more concerned about comforts and amenities. This increased demand for convenience might lead to higher costs and reduce willingness to pay. As age increases, other recreational opportunities like traveling, concert tours, and other events become

appealing. This could result in a reduced inclination to pay for attending sports events. Over time, physical problems and limitations also increase. This could decrease some individuals' ability to participate in sports events and impact their willingness to pay. Watching sports events in stadiums offers social interaction opportunities with fellow fans. With age, spectators might have a reduced inclination to establish social connections, which could decrease the willingness to pay. Ultimately, it can be said that the increasing age of spectators could negatively impact the willingness to pay at sports stadiums. Solutions such as improving user experience, offering services and facilities tailored to the needs of different spectators, and employing attractive advertising could effectively address these challenges.

The variable of the number of football matches watched at Azadi Stadium on TV has a positive and significant effect on the probability of an individual's willingness to pay. According to the results obtained from the studies of (Bidram et al., 2018; Hoseini et al., 2022), watching the desired club matches on TV can increase the audience's willingness to pay. Furthermore, watching matches on television can enhance the excitement associated with the game and encourage spectators to experience this thrill in the stadium environment. After experiencing the excitement on television, spectators might be inclined to witness it live in the actual venue. Being at the stadium and participating in matches offers a unique live experience distinct from television experiences. Spectators can closely observe game details, feel the collective energy, and experience the thrill of sports competitions. The presence of spectators in the stadium can provide teams with greater motivation and energy. Direct support and crowd company in the stadium can positively impact team performance and boost teams' self-confidence.

Being at the stadium allows spectators to become familiar with the diverse culture and community at the event location. This experience strengthens social connections and showcases a varied and dynamic world. As a result, the experience of watching matches on television can encourage the willingness to pay and attend stadiums. These two experiences complement each other, and the television experience can act as a gateway to the in-person stadium experience, positively influencing the inclination to pay and attend.

The positive and significant effect of satisfaction with the quantity and quality of current facilities inside Azadi Stadium shows that the probability of willingness to pay for individuals who are satisfied with the stadium's existing facilities is higher. Therefore, the higher the satisfaction of individuals with the quantity and quality of current facilities inside Azadi Stadium, the higher their likelihood of willingness to pay to watch football matches at Azadi Stadium. The variable of enjoyment of watching football matches at Azadi Stadium has a positive and significant effect on the probability of an individual's willingness to pay to watch football matches at Azadi Stadium. In other words, the higher the enjoyment of watching football matches at Azadi Stadium, the higher the probability of individuals' willingness to pay. The facilities of a stadium encompass various aspects, including seating arrangements, amenities, audiovisual equipment, and more. Satisfaction with these facilities can enhance the experience of watching a match, encouraging spectators to have an enjoyable time at the stadium. Football stadiums serve as places where diverse societal and cultural differences intersect. Providing suitable facilities and creating welfare spaces can foster social

interactions and positive connections among spectators. These social interactions may prompt spectators to attend stadiums more frequently. The experience of being present at a football stadium is much more immersive than watching on television or online. Direct interaction with players, the game's excitement, and the crowd's energy make the stadium football experience unique, motivating spectators to pay for their attendance. Modern stadium facilities can make the experience of watching matches more appealing and distinctive. Advanced technologies such as high-quality filming, proper audiovisual equipment, and suitable lighting can transform the live viewing experience into a multisensory one beyond television watching.

Moreover, stadium amenities, including exhibitions, recreational areas, shops, and restaurants, can reinforce team identity and fan loyalty. Spectators can enjoy purchasing various team-related products and items. Consequently, satisfaction with football stadium facilities can increase spectators' willingness to pay to attend these environments. Establishing an exceptional and consistent experience for spectators through improving stadium facilities and services can foster a closer connection and sustained engagement with live football matches.

The negative and significant effect of the marital status variable indicates that married people are less willing to pay to watch football matches at Azadi Stadium than single individuals. Hosting important football events brings potential excitement, joy, and recreation for the people of society, making the stadiums full of spectators and gaining a good reception among the people for these matches. They spend their leisure time enjoying the games and being entertained, which can positively affect the country's economy and tourism. Due to family commitments and parental responsibilities, married individuals might have less time for recreational activities. Attending football stadiums requires time and promises that family obligations could negatively impact.

Additionally, due to the increased financial requirements for family needs and livelihood, the married status might limit the willingness to spend on tickets and services related to stadium attendance. Family responsibilities such as childcare and providing for their needs can restrict married individuals from attending personal leisure activities and sports events. Family tensions and conflicts could lead to a decreased inclination of married individuals to attend football stadiums. Married spectators might experience family-related issues that could increase their preference for escaping these problems through public recreation. Sports stadiums are sometimes recognized as places for leisure and social gatherings. Married individuals might not feel the stadium environment aligns with their needs and desires. Shifts in personal priorities could accompany the marital status. Married individuals typically have fewer inclinations for recreational activities due to their focus on family and familial duties. In general, being married might decrease the willingness to pay for attendance at football stadiums. To address this challenge, stadiums and sports teams could enhance facilities and services that cater to the needs of married attendees and encourage them to participate in sports environments.

Based on the high entertainment value of Tehran's Azadi Stadium and its potential to attract spectators for various competitions and events, planners, officials, and relevant institutions should pay more attention to increasing the number of spectators, as it is one of the most important recreational and popular places for society. Improving the stadium's

internal facilities and increasing audience satisfaction can increase the number of spectators statistically and increase their willingness to pay. Enhancing the stadium's surrounding environment, such as the roads leading to the stadium, parking lots, and transportation, can also significantly increase the willingness to pay and the number of spectators who come to the stadium for leisure time.

Overall, football is popular among various social classes in our country. Azadi Stadium hosts two famous and historical club teams, Persepolis and Esteghlal, and national team games. It is always in the spotlight of domestic and foreign media. Given the current conditions in the country, sanctions, and budget constraints, methods such as the willingness of these clubs' fans to pay, as mentioned in this research, can be used to develop the stadium.

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ارزش اقتصادی-تفریحی استادیوم آزادی از دیدگاه تماشاگران

بهزاد اکبرزاده^۱، فریبا عسکریان^۲، محمدرسول خدادادی^۳، محمد خداوردی زاده^۴

^۱ دانشجوی دکتری، دانشکده تربیت بدنی و علوم ورزشی، دانشگاه تبریز، تبریز، ایران.

^۲ دانشیار دانشکده تربیت بدنی و علوم ورزشی دانشگاه تهران و تبریز، تبریز، ایران.

و استاد مدیریت ورزشی، گروه مدیریت ورزشی، دانشکده علوم ورزشی و تندرستی، دانشگاه تهران، تهران، ایران.

^۳ دانشیار، دانشکده تربیت بدنی و علوم ورزشی، دانشگاه تبریز، تبریز، ایران.

^۴ دانشیار، گروه اقتصاد کشاورزی، دانشکده کشاورزی، دانشگاه ارومیه، ارومیه، ارومیه، ایران.

چکیده

هدف: هدف اصلی این پژوهش برآورد ارزش اقتصادی-تفریحی استادیوم آزادی تهران از نظر تماشاگران با رویکرد ارزش گذاری مشروط (CVM) است.

روش: این پژوهش از نوع توصیفی و کاربردی بوده است. جامعه آماری شامل هوادارانی بود که در سال ۲۰۲۲ در استادیوم آزادی تهران برای تماشای مسابقات حداقل یکبار حضور یافته‌اند که ۴۱۸ نفر از آنها به عنوان نمونه آماری و به روش تصادفی ساده انتخاب و اطلاعات مورد نیاز با استفاده از پرسشنامه تمایل به پرداخت ویکر و همکاران (۲۰۱۶) جمع‌آوری گردیده است. تحلیل داده‌ها نیز با روش لججیت و با استفاده از نرم‌افزار Stata و Shazam صورت گرفت.

یافته‌ها: یافته‌ها نشان می‌دهد که میانگین تمایل به پرداخت هوادارن برای حضور در استادیوم آزادی برای هر مسابقه ۹۱ هزار تومان است و ارزش اقتصادی-تفریحی یک فصل آنها مبلغی حدود ۱۳۵ میلیارد تومان برآورد شد. نتایج نشان داد متغیرهای درآمد، تماشای تلویزیون، رضایت از امکانات ورزشگاه، احساس لذت از تماشای مسابقه فوتبال اثر مثبت و متغیرهای سن، سطح تحصیلات، قیمت پیشنهادی و وضعیت تاهل اثر منفی و بر احتمال تمایل به پرداخت افراد برای تماشای مسابقات فوتبال در ورزشگاه آزادی را دارند.

اصالت و ابتکار مقاله: پیش از این، کمتر پژوهشی در زمینه اقتصاد اماکن ورزشی با رویکرد تفریحی مبتنی بر روش ارزش گذاری مشروط انجام شده است. بدیهی است تخمین ارزش اقتصادی برای تصمیم‌گیری درباره سرمایه‌گذاری، بهبود و بهره‌برداری استادیوم لازم است.

کلیدواژه

استادیوم ورزشی
ارزش تفریحی
ارزش گذاری مشروط
تمایل به پرداخت
قیمت پیشنهادی

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Paradigm Model of Sales Ethics in Sports Businesses

Ali Ghanbari¹ , Mohammad Soltanhoseini^{2*} , Mohsen Vahdani³

¹ MA Student of Sport Management, Department of Sport Management and Motor Behavior, Faculty of Sport Sciences, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran.

² Associate Professor of Sport Management, Department of Sport Management and Motor Behavior, Faculty of Sport Sciences, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran.

³ Assistant Professor of Sport Management, Department of Sport Management and Motor Behavior, Faculty of Sport Sciences, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran.

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study aimed to Design a paradigm model of sales ethics in sports businesses.

Methodology: The qualitative research method followed a systematic grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1997). The participants consisted of 5 professors and experts in the sports market, 1 person in ethics, 3 sports business owners, and 3 customers of sports products. Semi-structured interviews were used as the research tool. Validation was carried out using a triangulation approach, which involved using multiple sources for data (different participant groups) and having two reviewers verify emerging findings. All data was analyzed and reviewed using Maxqda software version 2020.

Findings: The research's final model was structured into 5 main axes: 1- Causal conditions (laws and policies, political, cultural-social, economic), 2- Context (customer behavior, advertisement and promotion, product value (price and quality), communication interaction seller with customer, seller's beliefs and values), 3- intervening factors (media, market type and organizational atmosphere), 4- strategies (management and structure, rules and regulations, supervision, training, dissemination and promotion) and 5- The consequences are (internal satisfaction of the seller, branding, financial consequences, consequences related to the seller).

Originality: The research findings indicate that managers and policymakers should focus on creating preventive strategies and promoting financial transparency. It is also advised to utilize technology-based monitoring systems to enhance performance and financial transparency. Other research highlights the importance of education and dissemination strategies. Therefore, it is essential for governing institutions to use public media and virtual platforms to promote ethical sales practices. Additionally, workshops and training courses that focus on ethical issues should be incorporated into the process of obtaining sports business licenses.

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CONTACT Mohammad Soltanhoseini m.soltanhoseini@spr.ui.ac.ir

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1. Introduction

The growing complexity of organizations and the rise in unethical, illegal, and irresponsible behavior in the workplace have shifted the focus of managers and experts toward ethical concerns within the organization. Particularly, organizations grapple with a multitude of diverse ethical issues and problems related to their expertise and field of activity. Conversely, adherence to ethical standards by organizations holds significant importance in today's economy, and the ethical conduct of organizations plays a crucial role in establishing and sustaining long-term relationships with their customers (Barari & Ranjbarian, 2012).

Some studies have emphasized the significance of behavioral standards in marketing and sales. This encompasses principles like respect, integrity, honesty, customer focus, outcome orientation, willingness to take risks, and passion for the service (Gholimotlagh, 2019). Kotler and Armstrong (2017) suggested that salespeople might resort to unethical practices under pressure, including lying about product benefits, pushing unnecessary products, giving false information, and using deceptive tactics to increase sales, ultimately prioritizing short-term gains over long-term profits. One of the most important ethical issues in marketing is ethics in sales.

There are various definitions of ethics in sales. According to Dadgar (2006), ethics in sales can be seen as truthful conduct that ultimately builds long-term relationships with customers (Dadgar, 2006). DeTienne et al. (2022) argue that ethical selling involves creating equitable and sustainable value for all parties involved in the relationship. In a different definition, sales ethics is described as the human-centered process of interaction between individuals and organizations to create a legal economic exchange that generates value for the seller and the customer and is mutually beneficial (DeTienne et al., 2019).

Several studies have explored sales ethics. For instance, Hasangholipour et al. (2012) found that ethical behavior among salespeople has a positive impact on customer commitment, loyalty, and trust. Sadeghi Boroujerdi and Mansouri (2020) concluded that four criteria - ethical behavior, customer orientation, personal characteristics, and information knowledge - are crucial for the sports industry and sales strategies. Additionally, the honesty and trust of sellers lead to repeat purchases and foster customer loyalty. Bahreini et al. (2023) found that brands' adherence to ethical values impacts customers' decision-making. Jalilian et al. (2021) discovered in their study that adherence to ethics on social media impacts consumer behavior. Therefore, marketers should prioritize these concerns to attract more customers and enhance the company's profitability. Pirayesh (2010) concluded that adhering to ethical principles in business can result in honesty, impartiality, professional commitment, confidentiality, competence, and professional care. Yeganehzadeh et al. (2023) found that institutionalizing ethics and sales ethics is essential for the adoption of new insurance services, playing a crucial role in improving the delivery of these services. Khani et al. (2022) found that adhering to ethical principles in online sales can enhance customer trust and ultimately drive purchasing intent.

Numerous international studies have been carried out in the area of sales ethics. Román and Ruiz (2005) found that adherence to ethics in sales significantly impacted customer

commitment, trust, and satisfaction with service providers. [Chen and Mau \(2009\)](#) determined that the ethical behavior of salespeople plays a crucial role in cultivating customer loyalty through trust. Ultimately, customer trust in the company has a greater impact on customer loyalty than trust in the seller. [Ameer and Halinen \(2019\)](#) found that unethical behavior is influenced by socialization and interaction with others. By focusing on dynamics, social relations, and practices, the action-based perspective provides new insights into unethical behavior and potential tools to address it. [Merkle et al. \(2020\)](#) also concluded that the sales ethics subculture moderates the connection between sales manager ethical role model behavior and pro-stakeholder unethical behavior, serving as an organizational control over sales manager unethical model behavior as perceived by salespeople. [DeTienne et al. \(2022\)](#) discovered that businesses should not compromise their profits for ethics ([DeTienne et al., 2019](#)). Companies with higher ethical standards enjoy increased customer loyalty, satisfaction, and referrals. [Lee et al. \(2018\)](#) revealed in their study that cultural traditionalism/secularism and individualism/collectivism impact sales ethics evaluations. [Donoho et al. \(2012\)](#) found that it is important for modern sales trainers to prioritize ethical idealism when teaching sales ethics. Ethical codes and position-based frameworks can be helpful in this effort. [Madhani \(2021\)](#) affirmed that sales and marketing ethics enhance the long-term sustainability of organizations and confer competitive advantages.

As per the literature and research background, adhering to ethical principles in sales results in positive outcomes for salespeople. Hence, it is crucial to understand the factors and strategies of sales ethics. [DeTienne et al. \(2022\)](#) argue that successful sales ethics necessitates an approach that is both ethical and effective. In the sports industry, there has been limited research proposed in the field of marketing ethics ([DeTienne et al., 2019](#)). [Bjelica et al. \(2016\)](#) examined ethical concerns in sports advertising in their study. The research revealed that numerous sports advertisers encounter ethical dilemmas due to the absence of clear guidelines. Additionally, the findings indicated that in several European leagues, promoting and selling unsuitable products (e.g. some beverages) can pose moral issues for youth. It also [Veisi and Izadi \(2021\)](#) demonstrated a significant correlation between professional ethics and the marketing mix in the promotion of sports services among private club managers in Kurdistan province. They also discovered that managers of private clubs exhibit above-average levels of professional ethics and mixed marketing strategies for promoting sports services. Among the elements of professional ethics, honesty, and fairness were deemed most crucial by private club managers. Similarly, sales promotion was identified as a top priority among the mixed marketing components for promoting sports services, according to private club managers.

One of the crucial areas impacting today's businesses is the sports industry. Within this industry, products are provided as both goods and services, making the study of sales ethics in this field highly significant. This is because the quality of services can vary without customers being able to make a comparative evaluation. Studies indicate that adhering to sales ethics in sports businesses will result in commitment, customer loyalty, and increased sales ([Román & Ruiz, 2005](#)).

In the field of sports business, researchers have raised numerous ethical challenges and issues. For instance, some sports businesses resort to deceptive advertising to lure

customers, creating insecurity and risks for consumers. Moreover, some businesses use undisclosed substances to enhance athletes' performance, jeopardizing their health and integrity. Also, neglecting ethical considerations for financial gain can result in a loss of public trust in the industry (Fassin, 2005).

In the sports business field, the significance of sales ethics and professional conduct with customers is paramount. Regrettably, in Iran, many sports businesses overlook this aspect, lacking appropriate models for sales ethics in the industry, resulting in a research gap. Thus, it is crucial to emphasize that establishing an ethical sales model in sports businesses can benefit not only customers but also foster sustainable growth and advancement in the industry. Therefore, Iranian sports business managers and owners must recognize the importance of developing such a model and actively work towards its implementation. By offering operational strategies and solutions, we can work towards improving the sales ethics in the sports industry. Introducing a model for sales ethics in sports businesses can offer practical recommendations to trustees, organizations, and institutions involved in the sports and business field, emphasizing the significance of this important category. Furthermore, as there has been no prior research on ethics in sports marketing, the findings of this study can aid other researchers in creating new advancements and obtaining a more profound understanding. Thus, this research aims to design a paradigm model of sales ethics in sports businesses.

2. Methodology

The qualitative research method was based on the systematic grounded theory approach developed by (Strauss & Corbin, 1997). The participants consisted of 5 professors and experts in the sports market, one ethics expert, 3 sports business owners, and 3 customers of sports products. The sampling method was carried out in a targeted non-random manner, with emphasis on the theoretical approach advocated by (Strauss & Corbin, 1997). Following the interview with the expert and the extraction of codes, a decision was made regarding the selection of additional participants. The research tool used was semi-structured interviews. Participants were asked general questions including: 1- What factors influence sales ethics? 2- What are the different dimensions of sales ethics? 3- What strategies and solutions exist for the development of ethical issues in sales? And 4- What are the results of these strategies? The interviewing process continued until theoretical saturation was reached, involving a total of 12 participants (Table 1). The criteria for selecting participants were as follows:

- 1- Professors: specialized in sports marketing with doctoral degrees
- 2- Business owners: Minimum 3 years of sales experience and a master's degree
- 3- Customers: Minimum three years of experience in receiving sports services and products with a master's degree

The interview process began with the distribution of general objectives and questions to participants, followed by scheduling interview times. Confidentiality of information was stressed at the outset of each interview. On average, interviews lasted 19 minutes.

Table 1. Demographic information of study participants.

Row	Gender	Age	Education	Work Experience	Row	Gender	Age	Education	Work experience
1	Man	23	Masters	5	7	Man	42	PhD	18
2	Female	26	Masters	7	8	Female	23	Masters	5
3	Female	48	PhD	23	9	Man	26	Masters	8
4	Man	36	PhD	16	10	Man	48	PhD	17
5	Female	28	Masters	8	11	Female	48	PhD	25
6	Man	38	PhD	12	12	Female	23	Masters	4

The research validation methods included: 1- Extensive researcher interaction with participants to confirm the research validity (Nowell et al., 2017). 2- The detailed description of the research process was a standard so that other researchers could generalize the research process in similar conditions, so transferability was one of the other criteria that were considered. 3- To ensure the standard of reliability (reliability), the method of critical friends was used (Smith & McGannon, 2018). For this reason, researchers share their interpretations and codes with expert colleagues to receive their critiques. Critical friends are not meant to "agree" or come to a consensus, but rather to stimulate reevaluation by questioning each other's understanding (Cowan & Taylor, 2016). In addition, two coders were used for data analysis. The retest reliability coefficient between two coders in three interviews (2, 7, and 11) was 0.79. 4- Finally, to collect data, multiple data sources (including different participant groups) such as customers, business owners, and experts were used, which is a kind of alignment and validation of the research.

According to Strauss and Corbin (1997)' recommendation, data coding began with the first interview. After analyzing each interview, researchers found new avenues to explore by asking additional questions beyond the main ones. The data analysis process involved open, axial, and selective coding. Open coding was the initial phase where concepts were identified with an open mindset. Researchers aimed to uncover underlying concepts by carefully examining the data, and identifying both major and minor categories. In the following stage, known as axial coding, researchers revisited the initial open-coding categories and concentrated their analysis on them, interconnecting other categories accordingly. During the final coding phase, as the primary components of the suggested theory or process were unveiled, the researcher adopted a more targeted approach based on these emerging components in the coding process. Subsequently, the researchers' task was to classify and juxtapose the extracted concepts from the data. At this point, ideas and concepts were clustered and illustrated in a paradigm model that portrays their interconnections. All data was scrutinized and validated using Maxqda software version 2020.

3. Results

During data analysis, 426 open codes were initially identified, which was reduced to 117 concepts after removing duplicates. In the axial coding stage, 20 axial codes were determined by summarizing the primary codes derived from the conceptual labels identified in the open coding stage. Finally, in the selective coding stage, 5 selective codes were identified within a theoretical framework by integrating and refining the core codes.

Table 2 displays a sample of the propositions put forth by the research participants, showcasing the extracted concepts and categories.

Table 2. An example of initial coding of interviews.

Row	Verbal evidence	Primary codes
1	Our monitoring systems need to allow for quick, up-to-date, real-time monitoring online. For instance, since the inception of card readers and the linkage of accounts to each other and to the government network, tax matters should be monitored efficiently. This oversight can facilitate auditing and aid in tax-related matters, enabling individuals to personally observe ethical considerations.	Monitoring systems Tax laws
2	Many individuals, upon witnessing the absence of justice in society and the prevalence of corruption on a large scale, may question why they should not partake in such actions as well. They ponder how others exploit them and consider reciprocating the behavior for their own benefit, believing it will lead to personal prosperity.	Types of financial corruption
3	When selling a product, we often share our content on online platforms for advertising and promotion. Generating original content is crucial to ethical sales practices, as using someone else's content for personal gain is unethical.	Stealing other people's advertising content by the seller
4	The seller should not purchase more products than necessary and stockpile them in their warehouse.	Hoard
5	Today, in numerous sports domains, clubs are increasingly resorting to tactics aimed at luring athletes from rival clubs. This includes tactics such as speaking ill of other clubs' coaches or making false promises to entice athletes.	Behavior of competitors in attracting business customers
6	If sports product and service vendors mistreat customers, there should be a customer complaint association to address this issue. Sellers should not have free rein to provide products as they please. The guild should set rules, and violators should face fines or shop closures.	Establishment of fine rules for sports businesses
7	Promotion and awareness of ethical issues through various media is important. I believe that the discussion of sales ethics should be promoted and disseminated by those responsible for this issue and by legislators, and people's perspectives on this matter should shift.	Awareness of moral values through the educational system
8	In fact, business owners should strive to earn a halal livelihood and receive a fair profit from the people, ensuring that neither the seller nor the buyer suffers a loss.	Earning a halal livelihood
9	If the salesperson is dedicated to their role, our existing customers will attract new ones and develop loyalty towards us.	Loyalty to customers
10	Providing a high-quality product to the customer will result in increased satisfaction with our work, leading to higher sales and increased revenue.	Customer satisfaction sales increase income generation

The research's final model was organized into 5 main axes: 1- Causal conditions (laws and policies, political, cultural-social, economic), 2- Context (customer behavior, advertisement, and promotion, product value (price and quality), communication interaction seller with customer, seller's beliefs and values), 3- intervening factors (media, market type, and organizational atmosphere), 4- strategies (management and structure, rules and regulations, supervision, training, dissemination and promotion) and 5- The

consequences are (internal satisfaction of the seller, branding, financial consequences, consequences related to the seller) (Table 3 and Figure 1).

Table 3. Selective, axial, and open codes.

Selective code	Axial code	Open code
Causal conditions	Rules and policies	- Policies governing businesses ⁸ (4)
		- Regulatory policies (1)
	political	- Tax laws (4)
		- Business rules (4,7,9)
Sociocultural		- Management changes in organizations (4)
		- Political developments in the country (4)
		- Community custom (4)
		- Seller's family beliefs and values (4,7)
		- Injustice prevailing in society (4)
Economic	- Attention to cultural and social responsibility (1)	
	- Organizational Culture (1)	
Background	Customer behaviors	- Social position of people (4)
		- Types of financial corruption (1)
	Advertising and promotion	- People's living conditions (4,11)
		- Economic status of society (2,4,11)
Product value (price and quality)	Customer behaviors	- Tax evasion of members of society (4)
		- Ethics and buying culture of customers (4)
	Advertising and promotion	- Lack of customer awareness of rules and procedures (4)
		- Accurate and honest information provided by the seller (1)
		- Plagiarizing advertising content from others by the seller (4)
		- Compliance with ethical principles in content production (4,11)
		- Ethical behavior in advertising content (1)
		- Fulfilment of advertising promises by the seller (1)
		- Promoting diversity and plurality in ethical advertising methods (2,3,4,5,7,10)
		- Fair pricing (1,2,3,4,5,8,9,10,11)
- Product delivery time (8)		
Interaction between seller and customer	- Labelling (1,2,3,4,5,8,9,10,11)	
	- Service standard (8)	
	- Ethics in providing quality products (1,2,4,5,7,9,11,12)	
	- Compliance with ethical values in the expected profit of the seller (7,11,12)	
	- Ethics in business finance (1,2,3,4)	
Interaction between seller and customer	Product value (price and quality)	- Fluctuations in the price of raw materials (4)
		- Hoard (10)
	Advertising and promotion	- Short sale (10)
		- After sales support (1,3,4,6,7,8,9,12)
		- The seller's denial of the initial price (4)
		- Considering the economic conditions of the people (9,12)
Interaction between seller and customer	Product value (price and quality)	- No forced sales to the customer (9,12)
		- Attention to customer requests (9,12)
	Advertising and promotion	- Commitment to the customer (product quality, delivery time, etc.) (2,4,9,10)
		- Protecting the privacy of customers when shopping (1,2,4,8,9)
Interaction between seller and customer	Product value (price and quality)	- No misuse of customer information (5,10,12)
		- Honesty in sales (1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,12)

Selective code	Axial code	Open code
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protecting the rights of customers (1,6) - Criticism of the seller (2) - Justice in customers (2,10,12) - Encourage customer feedback (1) - Build and maintain customer trust (1,12) - No abuse of people (12) - Use of sales professionals (3) - Interaction and positive verbal communication with the buyer (3,12) - Ethical speech of the business owner (4,11) - Taking the time to understand the needs of customers (6) - Time to respond to customers (6) - Increasing interaction and ethical communication with customers (1,2,3,4,6,7,9) - Creating effective and respectful communication with customers (1,2,3,11,12)
	Beliefs and values of the seller	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Avoid swearing in the name of God (10) - The seller passed (10) - Considering the happiness of this world and the hereafter (10) - Transparency in the provision of services by the seller (1,3,4,9,12) - Theft of parts by the service provider (4) - Customer theft (8,10) - Responsibility of the business owner (4,11) - Commitment to ethical principles (3,7) - Compliance with ethical principles in describing competing companies (1,4) - Belief and value system of the seller (6,11) - Confidentiality of the business owner (7) - Trustworthiness of the seller (7)
Interfering factors	Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The advertising role of social networks in ethical business issues (4) - Promotional role of mass media in ethical issues (1)
	Market atmosphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Business interaction with distributorsx (4) - Business interaction with producers of raw materials (4) - Behavior of competitors in attracting business customers (10,11) - Competitive atmosphere among sports businesses (4)
	Organizational atmosphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organizational structure of the business company (4) - Organizational atmosphere of a business company (4) - Organizational Culture (4)
Strategies	Management and structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial transparency strategies in businesses (1) - Research and development in the category of business ethics (1) - Financial crime prevention strategies (1)
	Regulations governing businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enact rules and regulations to prevent fraud (1,10) - Enacting laws to fine various businesses (2,12) - Enact incentive laws for ethical businesses (2,11) - Establish favourable tax laws (4)
	Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Physical monitoring systems (4,8,11,12) - Financial control (tax department) (4) - Development of technology-based monitoring systems (4) - Strengthening the supervision of unions and guilds (1,2,4,7,11,12) - Increasing supervision and judicial inspections (premises administration) (1,2,4)

Selective code	Axial code	Open code
		- Supervision and inspection of organizations and government institutions (4)
	Education	- Proper training of the seller based on the rules and business issues (10) - Development of training courses and empowerment based on ethics in business (1,4,7,8,9,11,12) - Empowering business owners through unions and guilds (1) - Ethical education of customers through the media (1)
	Spread and promote	- Dissemination and promotion of professional ethics through mass and public media (1) - Development of professional ethics through unions and guilds (1) - Promoting social responsibility through the media (1) - Awareness of moral values through the educational system (1,4)
Outcomes	Seller satisfaction	- Seller satisfaction (9) - Developing products with an ethical approach (1) - Protection of human rights (1) - Earning a halal livelihood (4,7,10,11) - Not having a guilty conscience (4)
	Branding	- Commitment to the brand (1,3,4,7,9,11,12) - Building positive relationships between vendors and customers (1,12) - Increasing reputation in the market (4) - Willingness to repurchase customers (4,6) - The preference of this organization over other competitors (6,11) - Recommending purchases to friends (6,12) - Increase customers (1,2,3,7,12) - Creating a competitive advantage (1,2,3)
	Financial consequences	- Sales increase (2,3,4,7,9) - income generation (7,9,11)
	Customer related implications	- Customer trust (1,3,4,6,7,8,9,10,11) - Meeting the needs of customers (1) - Loyalty to customers (1,2,3,4,6,7,9,11,12) - Establishing a relationship between the seller and the customer (3) - Customer satisfaction (3,4,6,7,8,9,11) - Shareholders' satisfaction (4)

* The numbers in parentheses show the number of interviewees.

The study's conceptual model, derived from selective and central coding and considering the foundational data theory format, is presented in [Figure 1](#).

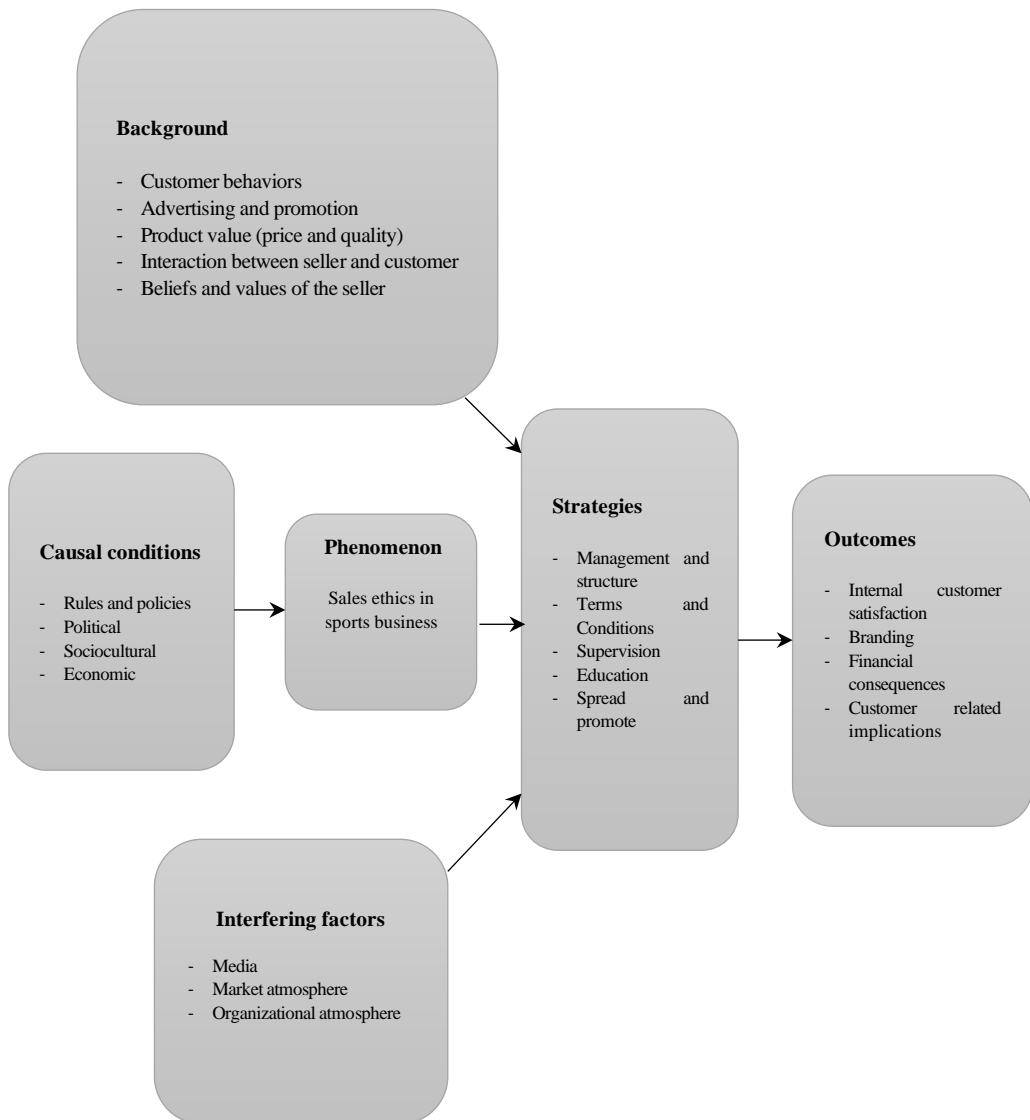


Figure 1. Sales ethics paradigm model in sports businesses.

4. Discussion and conclusion

This study aimed to create a sales ethics paradigm model for sports businesses. Findings revealed that the contributing factors to the research phenomenon encompassed legal and policy aspects, political influences, socio-cultural elements, and economic factors. For example, participant 4 suggested that “monitoring systems should be clearly defined to impose fines on individuals engaging in unethical behavior”. In addition, Participant 2 added, “In the present economic climate, product pricing, and quality must cater to all

societal segments.” Participant 7 also believed “that the seller's family beliefs significantly impact their sales.” Ameer and Halinen (2019) concluded that unethical conduct should be examined as a product of socialization and engagement with relevant parties. Prior research indicates that establishing and upholding an ethical culture can more efficiently resolve company crises (Varma, 2021). Alessandri and Aleo (2020) demonstrated that a values-based culture, emphasizing shared organizational values, is notably more effective in promoting ethical behavior than a culture of conformity alone. Companies can foster a values-based culture and address identity conflicts by facilitating discussions among colleagues about conflicting personal and organizational values. Furthermore, Zhang et al. (2021) confirmed that a strong ethical culture impacts decision-making in various areas. Leaders play a role in adding value by promoting an ethical culture that fosters ethical behavior (DeTienne et al., 2022). Lee et al. (2018) demonstrated in their study that cultural traditionalism/secularism and individualism/collectivism have an impact on sales ethics evaluations. Ferrell et al. (2016) found that organizational ethical culture, sales manager's ethical behavior, and sales ethics subculture can all shape the salesperson's perception of shareholders' unethical conduct. Min et al. (1994) found that companies face institutional barriers to maintaining ethics, including the political environment, tariff barriers, cultural/communication barriers, business regulations/agreements, and changes in ethical and quality standards. Vardaman et al. (2014) found that employees frequently violate or disregard organizational expectations, rules, and guidelines regarding ethical behavior. Notably, salespeople are particularly prone to breaking the law. Professional salespeople may miss out on broader interests when they narrow their focus to immediate profit and sales goals. This narrow view can harm their customers and their company by leading to unfair deals, misrepresentation of products or services, or making promises that internal departments cannot fulfil (Birkinshaw et al., 2014). It is generally accepted that laws and regulations influence sales ethics in sports business owners. For instance, clarity in laws regarding advertising, coverage types, and content is crucial to prevent inappropriate and unethical advertising by businesses. Economic factors like inflation rates and the living conditions of sports business sellers can also create unethical situations. Thus, improving the country's economic conditions is a key factor. Furthermore, political conditions (such as managerial developments and political changes) can lead to policy, approach, and governance changes, affecting ethical standards.

The results also indicated that contextual (background) factors such as customer behavior, advertising, and promotion, product value (quality and price), the interaction between salesperson and customer, and the salesperson's beliefs and values play a crucial role in customer perception of the company (Oly Ndubisi & Kok Wah, 2005). For example, Participant 4 mentioned that “customers with shopping ethics can effectively engage with sellers in the community”. Moreover, Participant 11 suggested that “sports clubs should utilize suitable and transparent advertising.” Participant 12 expressed “that low product quality leads to customer dissatisfaction.” Participant 8 highlighted “that prompt after-sales support builds customer trust.” Participant 10 mentioned “that sellers who prioritize happiness in this life and the hereafter always keep God in mind.” Consequently, violating customer relationship principles in the long term leads to customer pessimism towards the company. McClaren (2000) identified individual

characteristics (e.g., age and gender) and organizational factors (e.g., work experience, income, competition, supervision based on rewards and punishments, and organizational climate and culture) as influential factors in sales ethics. [Beeler et al. \(2017\)](#) demonstrated that the ethical climate significantly impacts salespeople who engage in ethical behavior and cultivate relationships with their customers. Sellers of sports products must adhere to ethical principles when advertising their products. This includes addressing ethical issues in creating advertising content, delivering on advertising promises, and providing honest information about product quality. It is also crucial to consider ethical aspects related to product value, where the buyer assesses the price and quality of the product. Therefore, sports product sellers need to price their products in line with Sharia and legal standards, while also ensuring product quality. Additionally, the beliefs and intellectual values of the sellers play a significant role in their ethical behavior and adherence to ethical principles.

The results indicated that the Interferer factors affecting the research phenomenon included media, organizational climate, and market climate. For example, Participant 1 “the media’s crucial role in promoting sales ethics.” Participant 10 “emphasized the importance of competitors refraining from interfering in each other’s work.” Furthermore, Participant 1 “believed that organizational culture plays a significant role in fostering ethical values.” [Sulistiawan et al. \(2020\)](#) suggested that organizational climate and structure can significantly impact employees’ moral motivation. According to [Munoz and Mallin \(2019\)](#), while organizational climate can promote ethical behavior, it may also foster unethical conduct. For instance, the organizational strategy related to the salesperson’s role, such as role conflict, role ambiguity, task effectiveness, and relationship orientation, could promote unethical behavior. From [Bhatti \(2018\)](#) this perspective, sales promotion, and social media were found to have a positive and significant impact on consumers’ purchase intention. Thus, the ethical considerations raised in the media can influence customers’ purchase intentions. According to this [Sethi and Sama \(1998\)](#), improving ethical business behavior may be more effective under different market-based competitive conditions. Also, [Robertson and Anderson \(1993\)](#) believes that sellers who consider the market to be competitive recommend less ethical behavior. The media can significantly influence sales ethics. Publishing content that goes against societal values can lead people to act inappropriately and immorally, potentially harming society. Market and economic factors also play a role in sales ethics. Market pressures can sometimes create opportunities for unethical behavior, like falsifying information, deceptive advertising, or exploiting child labor. Additionally, the organizational or cultural atmosphere within a company can impact sales ethics. If an organization promotes unethical values and behaviors, employees may be more likely to engage in inappropriate and unethical actions, potentially leading to fraudulent or deceptive conduct.

The results indicated that the strategies linked to the research phenomenon encompassed management and structure, rules and regulations, supervision, education, and dissemination and promotion. For example, Participant 1 mentioned, “that investing in research and development can promote ethical practices.” Participant 12 highlighted “that having laws and regulations in place can significantly decrease unethical behavior.” Furthermore, Participant 2 suggested, “that enhanced supervision and inspection can curb

immorality.” Additionally, Participant 9 “pointed out that providing adequate training for salespeople enables them to handle customer interactions effectively.” Participant 4 also emphasized, “that raising awareness about ethical matters through the media can be instrumental in addressing ethical concerns.” Ethics training is one method used by organizations to safeguard themselves. Studies have demonstrated that offering ethical training within organizations can play a crucial role in fostering ethical cultures within the organization (Delaney & Sockell, 1992). Effective and groundbreaking ethical training is vital for sales organizations (Dugan et al., 2020). Gholimotlagh (2019) emphasizes the importance of providing accurate information to customers, following store instructions, clarifying products, meeting customer needs, maintaining honesty, and avoiding unethical competition as crucial educational components for business owners. Training associates to sell effectively and ethically not only improves sales quotas but also enhances associate's well-being (DeTienne et al., 2022). Monitoring systems are also an important strategy. Beeler et al. (2017) found that the use of behavioral control systems can reduce the negative effects of unethical behavior while holding salespeople accountable for their actions. Boyer and d'Astous (2023) argue that the implementation of sales tax remittance at the firm level affects other stakeholders such as employees and suppliers. Using technology tools to enhance monitoring can increase productivity. Dowell et al. (2013) found that the adoption of new technologies can emphasize the importance of ethics in sales. Ruiz et al. (2015) found that ethics programs such as codes of ethics and principles of education are positively related to high ethics. Leaders can foster a culture of sales ethics by promoting ethical behavior, addressing weaknesses, training colleagues, aligning incentives, offering strategic compensation, and upholding the company's ethical standards (DeTienne et al., 2022). Departmental leaders can establish guidelines detailing the daily application of the company's ethical principles to their business practices (Rousselet et al., 2020). To promote sales ethics in an organization, you can utilize training and awareness, ethical valuation, encouragement and reinforcement, evaluation and feedback, and case studies. By conducting ethical courses and training, advocating for ethical values, incentivizing ethical behaviors, assessing ethical performance, and showcasing successful case studies, you can foster sales ethics in the organization and support its enhancement. The management and structure of an organization can contribute to the enhancement of sales ethics by embedding ethical values into the organizational culture. These values can be integrated into policies, organizational methodologies, and structure. Moreover, establishing frameworks and procedures that uphold sales ethics and promote ethical conduct can also be beneficial. This involves endorsing and reinforcing ethical behaviors by managers, assessing ethical performance, and offering constructive feedback to enhance ethical behaviors and performance. Furthermore, establishing an organizational culture that upholds ethical principles and emphasizes accountability can further facilitate the enhancement of sales ethics. Additionally, with increased supervision and the implementation of technology-based monitoring, we can observe the integration of ethical components in sales. Lastly, laws and regulations can advance the improvement of sales ethics by establishing a legal and ethical framework for salespeople's conduct. These regulations may encompass aspects such as transparent information disclosure, safeguarding customer privacy, avoiding deceptive advertising, and safeguarding

customer rights. Adhering to appropriate rules and regulations can help regulate sellers' behavior, prevent misconduct, and enhance customer trust in the organization. Furthermore, these laws can guide managers and employees of the organization to engage in sales with ethical and legal practices.

The study revealed that the Outcomes of the research phenomenon encompassed the internal satisfaction of the seller, branding, financial implications, and consequences related to the customer. For example, Participant 11 mentioned, "that those pursuing a halal livelihood do not compromise on moral values." Participant 3 also noted, "that adhering to ethical standards can attract more customers." Furthermore, Participant 9 stated, "that following ethical guidelines can lead to increased income." Participant 7 also highlighted "that adherence to ethics can foster customer loyalty." Dadgar (2006) emphasized that adhering to ethical principles in sales can engender trust and satisfaction among customers, while also upholding the company's profitability and efficiency. Barari and Ranjbarian (2012) demonstrated in their study that the observance of ethical principles by the organization's sales staff can significantly influence the customer's perception of the company's ethical conduct and the quality of the customer's relationship with the company. According to Sadeghi Boroujerdi and Mansouri (2020), the honesty and trustworthiness of the sellers not only encourage repeat purchases by consumers but also foster a sense of loyalty in the customer. In a study by Román and Ruiz (2005), it was found that ethical compliance in sales significantly affects customer commitment, trust, and satisfaction with service providers. Similarly, Chen and Mau (2009) determined that salespeople's ethical selling behavior plays an important role in enhancing customer loyalty through trust. In addition, the customer's trust in the company has a significant effect on the customer's loyalty compared to the seller's trust. Madhani (2021) found that ethical sales and marketing practices contribute to the long-term sustainability of organizations and provide them with a competitive edge. Kethan and S (2022) also highlighted the importance of ethical sales behavior in boosting sales volume and enhancing customer satisfaction, loyalty, and commitment. Companies with higher ethical standards experience increased customer loyalty, satisfaction, and referrals (DeTienne et al., 2022). The seller's internal satisfaction is crucial as a moral outcome, as it can boost self-confidence and motivation, thus enhancing performance. Sales ethics also impact branding, as transparent communication fosters a positive brand image and boosts sales and revenue. Financial implications are significant for business growth, while customer-related consequences stress the value of maintaining positive customer relationships to increase loyalty and customer value.

The research findings revealed a range of causal, contextual, and intervening factors that impact sales ethics in the sports industry. Additionally, strategies related to this phenomenon encompassed management and structure, rules and regulations, supervision, education, and dissemination. As a result, the research suggests that managers and policymakers should focus on developing preventive strategies and promoting financial transparency. Furthermore, it is recommended to implement a technology-based monitoring system to enhance performance and financial transparency. Other research emphasizes education and dissemination strategies. Governing institutions need to take measures to spread and promote sales ethics using public media and virtual space.

Workshops and training courses focusing on ethical issues should be planned and implemented when obtaining sports business licenses.

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مدل پارادایمی اخلاق فروش در کسب و کارهای ورزشی

علی قنبری^۱، محمد سلطان حسینی^{۲*}، محسن وحدانی^۳

^۱ دانشجوی کارشناسی ارشد مدیریت ورزشی، گروه مدیریت ورزشی و رفتار حرکتی، دانشکده علوم ورزشی، دانشگاه اصفهان، اصفهان، ایران.
^۲ دانشیار گروه مدیریت ورزشی و رفتار حرکتی، دانشکده علوم ورزشی، دانشگاه اصفهان، اصفهان، ایران.
^۳ استادیار گروه مدیریت ورزشی، گروه مدیریت ورزشی و رفتار حرکتی، دانشکده علوم ورزشی، دانشگاه اصفهان، اصفهان، ایران.

کلیدواژه

اخلاق فروش
کسب و کار ورزشی
مدل پارادایمیک

نوع مقاله

پژوهشی اصلی

چکیده

هدف: هدف از این پژوهش ارائه مدل پارادایمی اخلاق فروش در کسب و کارهای ورزشی بود.

روش: روش تحقیق کیفی با رویکرد گردند تئوری سیستماتیک (اشتراوس و کوربین، ۱۹۹۷) بود. مشارکت کنندگان شامل اساتید و متخصصین حوزه بازار ورزشی (۵ نفر)، اخلاق (۱ نفر)، صاحبان کسب و کارهای ورزشی (۳ نفر)، مشتریان محصولات ورزشی (۳ نفر) بودند. ابزار تحقیق مصاحبه نیمه ساختاریافته بود. اعتبارسنجی با استفاده از رویکرد همسوسازی انجام شد. برای دستیابی به این منظور چند نوع همسوسازی شامل استفاده چند منبع برای داده‌ها (وجود گروه‌های مختلف به عنوان مشارکت کننده)، و چند بررسی کننده (دو نفر) برای تأیید یافته‌های نوظهور انجام شد. کلیه داده‌ها با استفاده از نرم افزار مکس کیودا نسخه ۲۰۲۰ تحلیل و بررسی شد.

یافته‌ها: مدل نهایی تحقیق در ۵ محور اصلی سازماندهی شد: ۱- شرایط علی (قوانین و سیاست‌ها، سیاسی، فرهنگی-اجتماعی، اقتصادی)، ۲- زمینه (رفتارهای مشتری، تبلیغ و ترویج، ارزش محصول (قیمت و کیفیت)، تعامل ارتباط فروشنده با مشتری، باورها و ارزش‌های فروشنده)، ۳- عوامل مداخله‌گر (رسانه‌ها، جور بازار و جو سازمانی)، ۴- راهبردها (مدیریت و ساختار، قوانین و مقررات، نظارت، آموزش، اشاعه و ترویج) و ۵- پیامدها (رضایت درونی فروشنده، برندسازی، پیامدهای مالی، پیامدهای مرتبط با فروشنده) می‌باشد.

اصالت و ابتکار مقاله: نتایج این تحقیق به مدیران و سیاست‌گذاران پیشنهاد می‌دهد تا استراتژی‌های پیشگیرانه و شفافیت مالی را توسعه دهند. همچنین بهره‌مندی از یک سیستم نظارتی مبتنی بر فناوری که شفافیت عملکرد و شفافیت مالی را بهینه می‌کند، توصیه می‌شود. نتایج دیگر تحقیق بر راهبردهای مبتنی بر آموزش و اشاعه و ترویج تاکید دارد. در این خصوص لازم است نهادهای حاکمیتی با بهره‌مندی از ظرفیت رسانه‌های عمومی و فضای مجازی تدابیر لازم برای اشاعه و ترویج اخلاق فروش را اتخاذ نمایند. نهایتاً پیشنهاد می‌شود در زمان اخذ مجوزهای کسب و کارهای ورزشی کارگاه‌ها و دوره‌های آموزشی با محوریت مسائل اخلاقی نیز پیش‌بینی و اجرا شود.

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Analysis of Professional Culture Model in the Tennis Industry with Mediating Role of Psychological Culture and Media Culture

Jassim Mohammad Hamoud¹, Fatemeh Abdavi^{2*}, Mohammad Rasoul Khodadadi², Majid Khalil Khamis³

¹ PhD Student of Sport Management, Department of Sport Management, University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran.

² Associate Professor of Sport Management, Department of Sport Management, Faculty of Physical Education and Sport Sciences, University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran.

³ Assistant Professor of Sport Management, Department of Sport Management, University of Iraq, Iraq.

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This research aimed to Analyze the professional culture model in the tennis industry with the mediating role of psychological culture and media culture.

Methodology: This research has been done in terms of applied purpose and descriptive-correlational nature. The statistical population of this research included all tennis coaches and athletes in Iraq, and based on Cochran's formula, 385 were selected as a sample. Over 400 questionnaires were distributed for assurance, and 393 questionnaires were correctly analyzed after return. The research tool included a researcher-made questionnaire. Eight Sports management specialists checked the face and content validity of the questionnaire, and its reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha method (0.90). The software used in data analysis was PLS.

Findings: Based on the findings, professional ethics effectively promotes cultural values and professional responsibility in the tennis sports industry due to the mediating role of psychological and media culture.

Originality: According to the findings of this research, more attention should be paid to professional ethics and elements of ethical culture in team and individual tennis training. Also, different exercises and training programs can be designed to reinforce cultural values and professional responsibility in tennis. This research can be one of the few studies conducted in the field of professional culture in the tennis industry.

Keywords

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1. Introduction

The sports industry is a new driving force for national economic growth. Providing sports products for society also improves physical activity, strengthens the national spirit, achieves social progress, and increases international influence (Lu, 2021; Nazari et al., 2022). As an emerging industry, sports play a vital role in social and economic development and significantly impact citizens' welfare (Li et al., 2022). Countries strive to improve their position in the world sports rankings and their sports performance and win in various international competitions. In general, paying attention to support criteria in sports helps countries compete and have a superior position in the world sports scene (Bennett et al., 2019). The drive for sporting success in emerging nations naturally leads to a greater focus on professionalism (Abdavi et al., 2018). This type of move towards professionalism is essential because it improves the culture and structure of national and regional sports. Focusing on professionalism leads to developing sports programs and strategies to improve the country's sports quality and success (Clausen et al., 2018).

Professional sports are usually associated with higher competition and economic justification, leading to challenging encounters for sports practitioners (Cairns et al., 1986). In professional sports, players need planning and the proper skills to face various challenges. Countries use sports to show their abilities and values. To develop the sport (Pashaie & Sotiriadou, 2023), it is essential to invest in and support professional sports (Walker & Enz, 2006). Also, using appropriate knowledge and techniques in managing athletes can help their professional development and productivity and facilitate their entry into higher competitive levels (Abdavi et al., 2016). In addition, the management of athletes requires a specialized perspective and knowledge of the challenges and opportunities related to each sport. The importance of managing athletes in becoming professionals helps athletes progress in different professional stages of their careers. It can improve their performance and presence in sports competition scenes (Kenny, 2015). Developing athletes and improving the sports environment require an adaptable culture that accepts changes to achieve professional goals. Resetting goals and delineating behaviors and performance patterns compatible with high work ethics and performance standards are among the most basic measures to realize this. Sports culture, which is based on professional performance and values such as perseverance, commitment, responsibility, and other positive characteristics, helps members realize their potential and can influence overall performance and achieve better results in competitions (Balogh, 2015).

The role of culture in supporting sports events is essential and can lead to sports success (Lintumäki et al., 2020). Culture has a central role in sports success and is considered a dynamic process that can be observed among the members of a sports team or organization. This culture includes values, beliefs, expectations, and practices that bind athletes and other members together and indirectly influence performance and outcomes (Cruickshank & Collins, 2012). According to the study, sports culture is related to achieving sustainability in sports success. A strong culture promotes positive values such as perseverance, discipline, collaboration, and excellence, which can gradually contribute to increased performance. Organizational culture significantly impacts an athlete's ability to prepare for and perform at significant international games (Fletcher & Wagstaff, 2009).

Culture in sports refers to a set of inclusive values, beliefs, attitudes, procedures, behavioral standards, and moral and physical characteristics. This culture originates from solid and stable rules, customs, and systems. Sports culture, while an essential part of and an indicator of distinct cultural subgroups in society, has a special place in the heart of human culture. Therefore, sport is a cultural system that includes many cultural elements, such as language and symbols of knowledge and skills, behavior, and values (Jarvie et al., 2013). The Culture of Excellence model outlines strategies for sports organizations to improve their sports culture to achieve improved performance outcomes. Although interacting factors may influence elite sports performance, there is growing evidence that sports organizations need to be more targeted and comprehensive in their planning to achieve success at the highest level (Fletcher & Wagstaff, 2009). Research shows that high-performance cultures are achieved when support for sustained optimal performance and persistence in the face of variable outcomes such as wins, losses, and ties leads to performance. When these ideal conditions are met, sports organizations can foster a culture of excellence (Cruickshank & Collins, 2012).

Professional culture in a sports group improves performance and sports success. This can directly impact the performance of teams and their members, leading to improved financial and economic results for the sports industry. In addition, a suitable organizational culture in sports can help increase teamwork and flexibility among athletes, thus improving the efficiency and economic performance of athletes and teams (Cotterill et al., 2022). Another part of professional culture can be related to environmental factors. Hamza et al. (2023) concluded that the use of media by the trustees of sports clubs, coaches, managers, and athletes leads to the development of cultural indicators of professional sports clubs. Nazari et al. (2022) studied the future strategy of professional sports clubs. The most important strategic factor for the club is the development of media awareness. Kiani and Rezvandi (2021) showed a positive and significant relationship between the primary roles of mass media (information, social participation, education, and culture) and the cultural development of popular and professional sports in the country. Nazari et al. (2022) showed that cultural and moral categories and internal factors shape the social behaviors of professional athletes. Frentz et al. (2020) suggested that psychological safety parameters will develop motivational, communicative, and self-evaluative readiness. Another part of the professional culture is related to the athlete himself. Mousavi et al. (2021) believe that the self-leadership of elite athletes includes cognitive, behavioral, and emotional control.

Research on developing and managing professional culture and sports strategies in emerging countries is fundamental. This research can help decision-makers and policymakers adopt the best strategies and policies for developing professional culture and economic in the sports industry in emerging countries. In general, developing professional culture and strategic planning can help achieve sustainable and long-term success in the sports industry and improve performance and economic results. Based on previous research, there is a scientific vacuum in the field of professional culture in sports. The existing studies have often been conducted in isolation and have not considered the interaction between different parts. This gap indicates the need for further research in this field. Especially at this time when our knowledge about the components of professional culture in sports and how

to deviate from or adapt to these components is limited, this deficiency in knowledge also means ignoring the role of dynamics between different organizational levels, from collective team performance and strategic management to individual sports behaviors and psychology. Understanding these factors is very important to enhance performance in professional sports and improve athletes' managerial and psychological abilities (Fletcher & Wagstaff, 2009). To fill this blind spot or gap, Cruickshank and Collins (2012) have introduced the concept of professional culture as a prerequisite for creating high-performance athletes and teams. According to them, high-performance cultures lead to frequent or continuous high performance (Henriksen, 2015). Although many studies have investigated competencies and professional culture in different fields, more empirical research about professional culture in tennis sports development programs still needs to be done. This research aims to analyze the structural model of professional culture in the tennis development program in Iraq. Considering the increasing importance of tennis and the inappropriate position of this field in Iraq in recent years, which shows a weak performance in the field of management, developing a suitable model for the professional culture of tennis development can play a significant role in advancing the strategic goals of this field in Iraq.

As a global sport, tennis holds cultural significance in various regions, including Iraq. Understanding the dynamics of tennis in Iraq can shed light on how sports intersect with cultural practices, values, and traditions within the country. Investigating the tennis industry in Iraq can provide insights into the development of sports infrastructure, training facilities, coaching programs, and talent identification systems. This understanding enhances the sports ecosystem, promotes tennis participation, and potentially discovers and nurtures talent. Tennis can serve as a platform for social integration and community engagement. By examining the tennis industry in Iraq, researchers can explore how the sport brings people together across different demographics, fosters inclusivity, and promotes social cohesion.

Insights from the research can guide policymakers and government agencies in formulating strategies to support and promote tennis development in Iraq. This includes allocating resources for infrastructure development, creating policies to encourage youth participation, and fostering international collaborations to enhance the country's tennis ecosystem. Tennis clubs, associations, and federation administrators can benefit from understanding the unique challenges and opportunities within the Iraqi tennis industry. This knowledge can inform their decision-making processes regarding program development, event planning, and resource allocation. Coaches and athletes involved in tennis can gain valuable insights into the cultural nuances, psychological factors, and media influences that shape the sport in Iraq. This understanding can aid coaches in designing effective training programs and support athletes in navigating the complexities of professional tennis. Researchers, scholars, and students in sports management, cultural studies, psychology, and media studies can utilize the research findings to expand their knowledge base, conduct further studies, and contribute to the academic discourse on sports culture and industry development in Iraq.

In the context of the tennis sports industry in Iraq, there exists a need to comprehensively analyze the professional culture model, considering the mediating roles of psychological culture and media culture. This entails examining how various aspects

of professional culture, including norms, values, and practices within the tennis industry, interact with and are influenced by psychological factors and media representations. Through an in-depth exploration of these questions, the research seeks to provide actionable insights for stakeholders involved in promoting and advancing the tennis sports industry in Iraq, contributing to the broader discourse on sports culture, and fostering social and economic development through sports participation.

Considering the increasing importance of the tennis sports industry and the inappropriate role of this discipline in Iraq in recent years and showing the weakness of managerial performance, developing a suitable model for promoting the professional culture and development of tennis can play an essential role in advancing the strategic goals of this industry in Iraq. However, the sport of tennis in Iraq has not grown significantly in recent years, and there needs to be more financial and spiritual support. The lack of infrastructure, facilities, and equipment, as well as the lack of long-term strategic planning, have caused severe limitations in developing this sport in Iraq. Similarly, despite the high potential of Iraqi youth in this field, the existing talents and capacities still need to be fully identified, adequately supported, and utilized. Therefore, developing a suitable model for the professional culture of tennis development in Iraq can be effective and play an essential role in development planning to eliminate the significant challenges and obstacles facing the development of this sport. For this reason, this research was started to investigate the structural model of the professional tennis culture in Iraq to help improve and develop this field.

2. Methodology

The current research was applied in terms of purpose and descriptive correlation in nature, which has been done in the field. A quantitative research approach was chosen to evaluate the predetermined hypotheses, allowing the researchers to more fully understand the relationships between the variables based on statistical data. The statistical population of this research included all tennis coaches and athletes, and based on Cochran's formula, 385 were selected as a sample. More than 400 questionnaires were distributed for assurance, and 393 questionnaires were correctly analyzed after return. The sampling method employed was readily accessible.

The researcher-designed questionnaire comprised two sections: descriptive characteristics and specialized inquiries. Utilizing the Likert method, the final questionnaire encompassed five response options. Rigorous validation procedures were undertaken to ensure its formality and content validity, which involved scrutiny and confirmation by a panel of eight experts in the field. Cronbach's alpha method was used to check the reliability of the questionnaire, and its value for the questionnaire of the quality of the professional culture was 0.94. Therefore, it shows that the values of Cronbach's alpha for the research variable were optimal, so the tool used was suitable for validity. The measuring and structural models comprise the basic structure of SEM.

Examining indicators within the final research model reveals its robust validity, substantiated by the outcomes of factor analysis. The findings, as presented in [Table 1](#), demonstrate that Cronbach's alpha values for the research variables reached optimal

levels, affirming the instrument's sound validity. Furthermore, the questionnaire underwent meticulous scrutiny through first- and second-order confirmatory factor analyses, employing PLS software to assess the research model thoroughly.

3. Results

Table 1. Demographic Characteristic.

Demographic Characteristic		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	261	66.41%
	Female	132	33.59%
Age Group	18 to 25 years old	95	24.14%
	26 to 30 years old	148	37.66%
	31 to 35 years old	90	22.89%
	35 years and above	69	17.56%
Education Level	Bachelor's degree	58	16.96%
	Master's degree	284	83.04%

Table 2. Validity and reliability status of research variables.

Component	Number of questions	Mean-variance	Composite reliability	Rho	Cronbach's alpha
Professional ethics	16	0.643	0.947	0.939	0.938
Cultural values	29	0.577	0.965	0.962	0.961
Psychological culture	10	0.620	0.942	0.933	0.931
Media culture	12	0.570	0.914	0.893	0.892
Professional Responsibility	14	0.686	0.867	0.772	0.769

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of research components and examination of data distribution.

Component	Average	Variance	S.D	Skewness	Kurtosis	Result
Professional ethics	921/3	0.579	0.761	-436/1	083/2	Normal
Cultural values	957/3	0.605	0.778	-611/1	689/2	Normal
Psychological culture	963/3	0.614	0.784	-567/1	545/2	Normal
Media culture	938/3	0.569	0.754	-409/1	989/1	Normal
Professional Responsibility	839/3	0.630	0.793	1/178	1/099	Normal

Since the skewness coefficient is within ± 2 and the stretching coefficient is within ± 3 , it can be stated that the above distribution assumes normality and parametric statistics tests can be used. Due to the novelty of the research model, the partial least squares approach and SMART PLS3 software have been used in this research. In this research, after collecting the data, first-order factor analysis for all the components of the main variables of the research, as well as second-order factor analysis for all three variables, and after examining the items of each component and the intended modifications Finally, due to the appropriateness of the factor load of all the questions, all of them have entered the final model of the research in the form of the discussed components. The first-order confirmatory factor analysis results showed that all items have an acceptable t value (more than 1.96) and factor loading (more than 0.4) and are significant at the 0.001 level. The

significance of the regression weights (factor loading) shows the convergent validity of the variables in the model. Divergent validity is a criterion for examining the fit of measurement models that covers one issue: an important criterion that is characterized by divergent validity is the degree of relationship of a variable with its questions in comparison with the relationship of that variable with other variables so that the acceptable divergent validity of the model indicates that one variable in the model interacts more with its questions than with other variables. Divergent validity is acceptable when the AVE for each variable is greater than the shared variance between those variables and other variables in the model.

Table 4. Divergent validity.

Component	Professional ethics	Cultural values	Psychological culture	Media culture	Professional Responsibility
Professional ethics	0.859	-	-	-	-
Cultural values	0.749	0.884	-	-	-
Psychological culture	0.802	0.815	0.872	-	-
Media culture	0.788	0.760	0.755	0.820	-
Professional Responsibility	0.819	0.778	0.846	0.788	0.752

The results show that the average variance for each structure is higher than the shared variance between that structure and other structures, so this criterion is at a suitable level.

Table 5. The results related to the validity and reliability analyses of the final research model.

Component	Number of questions	Mean-variance	Composite reliability	Rho	Cronbach's alpha
Professional ethics	16	0.643	0.947	0.939	0.938
Cultural values	20	0.577	0.965	0.962	0.961
Psychological culture	10	0.620	0.942	0.933	0.931
Media culture	12	0.570	0.914	0.893	0.892
Professional Responsibility	14	0.686	0.867	0.772	0.769

Examining the indicators of the final research model also shows the high validity of the model. As a result, according to the verification of the model, we report the results of the factor analysis.

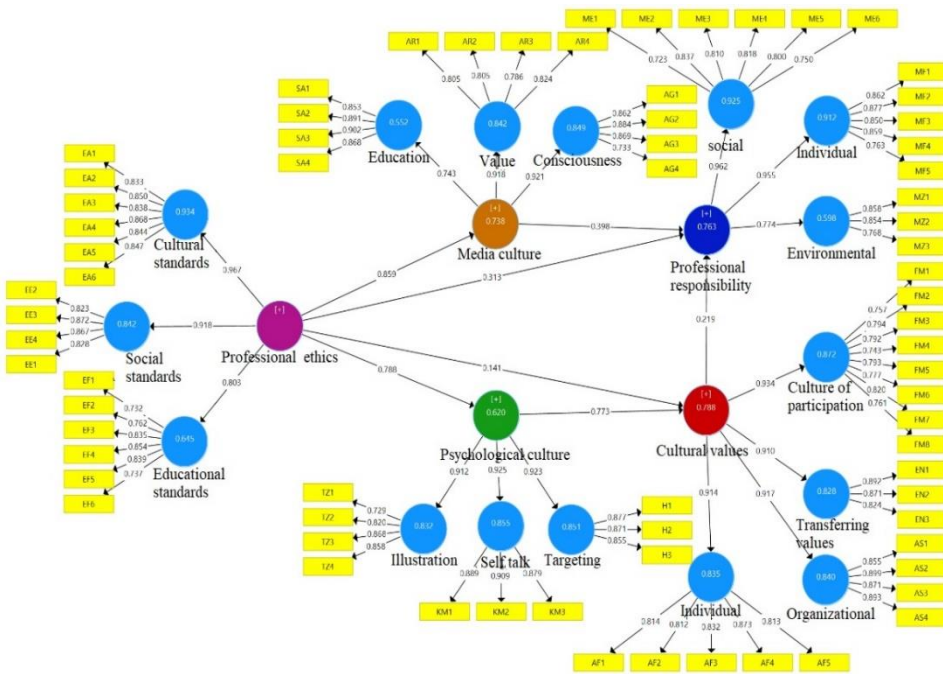


Figure 1. The final research model is in the path coefficient and factor loadings mode.

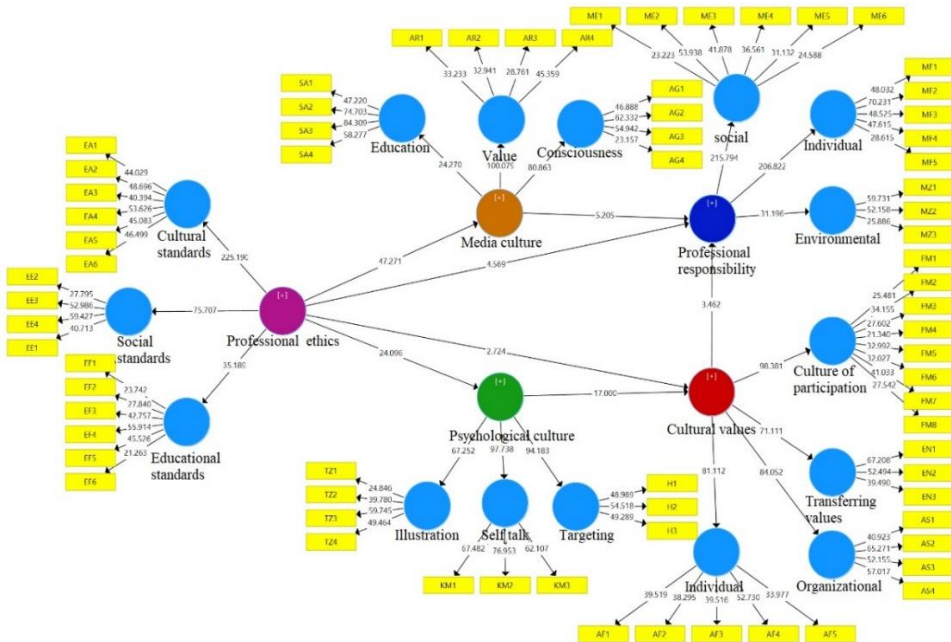


Figure 2. The final research model is in the mode of significant values.

Several criteria are used to check the fit of the structural model of the research; the first and most basic criterion is the t-statistic. The most basic criterion for measuring the relationship between variables in the structural part of the model is the significant number of t-statistics. Suppose the value of these numbers exceeds 1.96. In that case, it indicates the correctness of the relationship between the variables, and as a result, the research hypotheses are confirmed at the confidence level of 0.95. Also, the significant value points to the same issue, and if it is less than 0.05, the relationship between the variables is accepted at the confidence level of 0.95. of course, it should be noted that the numbers only show the accuracy of the relationship, and the intensity of the relationship between the variables cannot be measured with it. The standardized coefficient can be used to understand the intensity of the relationship and compare it with other relationships (relationships in the model).

Table 5. Path coefficient values and t-statistics of hypotheses related to research model paths.

Hypothesis		b	t	Sig
Professional ethics	→ Cultural values	0.141	724/2	.001
Professional ethics	→ Psychological culture	0.788	096/24	.001
Professional ethics	→ Media culture	0.859	271/47	.001
Professional ethics	→ Professional Responsibility	0.313	569/4	.001
Media culture	→ Professional Responsibility	0.398	205/5	.001
Psychological culture	→ Cultural values	0.773	00/17	.001
Cultural values	→ Professional Responsibility	0.219	642/3	.001

According to the interpretation pattern in SEM, and since the value of the t statistic for all paths is greater than 1.96, it can be said that the corresponding path is significant at the 95% level, so all the paths under investigation are confirmed in the present research. To investigate the mediating role of media culture and psychological culture, the bootstrap test was used, the results of which can be seen in [Table 6](#).

Table 6. The results of the bootstrap test to investigate the role of mediator.

Hypothesis			b	t	Result
Professional ethics	Media culture	Professional Responsibility	0.342	248/5	Confirmation
Professional ethics	Psychological culture	Cultural values	0.609	437/16	Confirmation

According to the results of [Table 6](#), and since the mediating role of both media culture and psychological culture variables was statistically significant; As a result, it can be acknowledged that media culture plays a mediating role in the relationship between professional ethics and professional responsibility, as well as psychological culture in the relationship between professional ethics and cultural values.

Table 7. The fit indices of the research model.

Variable	Q ²	R ²	SRMR
Cultural values	0.421	0.788	
Psychological culture	0.357	0.620	.099
Media culture	0.389	0.738	
Professional Responsibility	0.399	0.763	

According to the information in the above table, the values obtained for the Q^2 index are in the substantial range for all components (more than 0.35). Also, the R^2 values for all components are in the medium to solid range, and the SRMR value is less than 0.1, indicating the tested model's appropriate quality.

4. Discussion and conclusion

This research was conducted to analyze the structural model of the tennis industry's professional culture. The findings showed that professional ethics are practical in terms of cultural values (0.141), psychological culture (0.788), and media culture (0.859). Also, professional ethics is practical in terms of professional responsibility, according to 0.313. Different researchers have examined various dimensions of professional culture. The components related to professional culture include cultural, educational, and social standards.

The proposed findings indicate the necessity of strengthening the cultural and ethical foundations in the tennis sports industry; this issue can affect the development of athletes and the sports industry. Respect for elders and tennis veterans is a primary indicator of affection and appreciation in sports and can serve as a role model for young athletes. This principle will not only promote a positive atmosphere among athletes but will also transfer valuable knowledge and experiences of previous generations to the new generation. Respecting the principles of self-sacrifice and dedication, as well as honesty and integrity among athletes, provides an essential platform for a healthy and fair competition. This approach fosters trust and respect between athletes and other sports community members. Athletes' motivation towards social and cultural standards and compliance with these standards in sports can encourage positive behaviors and attitudes in society, which will not only help improve athletes' performance but will also positively affect the image of tennis in Iraq. In-service courses and attention to the educational needs of athletes and coaches are evidence of the power of continuous learning and professional development. It also helps the athletes improve their ethical skills and learn new components and complexities of modern tennis competitions.

On the other hand, using professors specializing in ethical matters and training athletes and coaches about professional ethics can help create an ethical environment in the sports community. Organizational values and continuous monitoring and evaluation are essential in ensuring that sports processes are implemented effectively and ethically. Managers' moral orientation can also hold them accountable to stakeholders and prevent the displacement of cultural values. This will help preserve sports' cultural identity and strengthen the tennis heritage. Creating appropriate cultural platforms in education and maintaining moral rights in sports processes guarantees justice and honesty in the sports environment and serves as a foundation for innovation and continuous improvement. In this regard, [Fransen et al. \(2020\)](#) state that groups with a professional culture show more teamwork, higher flexibility, increased satisfaction of athletes with the group's performance, and the ability to reduce burnout. These findings from the research on the structural model of the professional culture of tennis in Iraq significantly show that professional ethics strongly influence cultural values, psychological culture, and media

culture. These results can help researchers, sports associations, and decision-makers adopt the best strategies and policies to develop an influential professional culture in Iraqi tennis. These analyses can help improve the environment and professional culture in this field. They can also provide benefits for the professional development and responsibility of athletes and members of sports teams.

According to the statistical findings, the two variables of media culture and psychological culture significantly play an essential role in determining the relationship between professional ethics and professional responsibility. In other words, this finding shows that media culture can mediate (play a middle role) in assessing professional ethics and professional responsibility. Similarly, psychological culture can also mediate the relationship between professional ethics and cultural values. These findings may show that media culture and psychological culture play a vital role in shaping individual and social views and values and can influence the evolution of ethics and professional responsibility. According to the analysis and the findings, the following practical suggestions can be made for further study and research in this field: First, offering natural and online training courses can help individuals and professionals learn more about the relationship between media culture, psychological culture, and professional ethics. Secondly, diverse educational content, including library materials, videos, and online courses, can increase awareness of the relationship between media culture and psychological culture with professional ethics and professional responsibility. Thirdly, holding conferences and seminars for activists and researchers in media, psychology, and professional ethics can create a good space for discussing and exchanging ideas about cross-cultural influences. Fourth, using new technologies to promote knowledge, such as virtual spaces for holding workshops and group studies, can help transfer new knowledge and research. Finally, publishing articles, videos, or podcasts with scholarly content on the relationship between media culture, psychological culture, and professional ethics can increase public awareness and strengthen public participation in this area.

The findings showed that media culture is influential in professional responsibility to the extent of 0.398. [Hamza et al. \(2023\)](#) concluded that the use of media by the trustees of sports clubs, coaches, managers, and athletes leads to the development of cultural indicators of professional sports clubs. [Nazari et al. \(2022\)](#) studied the future strategy of professional sports clubs. The most important strategic factor of the club is the development of media awareness. Therefore, sports and media officials should be aware of the critical role of sports, especially public and recreational sports, in creating the atmosphere of health and general vitality of society, media officials should also consider time and place They have prepared the information required for public sports in the eyes of different members of society and this regard, they should play their role correctly. The investigated findings show the importance of media culture and media literacy training among sports activists, especially tennis. Awareness and skill in media use allow access to accurate information, critical analysis, and purposeful consumption of media content. These skills are essential for athletes, coaches, and sports managers because they affect their professional performance. First, athletes' awareness of media consumption helps them to follow the sports content provided by the media more carefully. They can use the most recent information to advance their professional field and learn about the latest

developments in the national and international sports arena. Coaches can find new sports tactics and strategies and incorporate them into athletes' training plans by being aware of how much media athletes consume and being skilled at doing so. Sports managers can also become aware of the needs and wants of the audience and steer the sports media in a direction consistent with the intended organizational and moral values by teaching students how to consume media critically. Maintaining ethical principles and bolstering professional behavior heavily depend on appraising and analyzing ethical values in sports media. This work emphasizes moral standards in sports media content and progressively assimilates into society's sports culture. Sports media literacy training programs are imperative for all parties to fully benefit from the media's ability to cultivate a professional culture. These courses help athletes, coaches, and managers gain the information and skills to use the media effectively. Lastly, creating working groups for education and researching the media literacy experiences of the world's top nations can help and a forum to exchange best practices and knowledge.

According to the findings, psychological culture effectively influences cultural values by 0.773. Mental and physical health and well-being, physical safety, psychological safety, and self-determination are vital people-related factors that contribute to high-performance sports cultures. Although interacting factors may affect elite sports performance, there is growing evidence that sports organizations need to be more targeted and comprehensive in their planning to achieve success at the highest level of the Field (Chelladurai, 2014). Psychological culture can have a significant impact on cultural values in the field of sports. Sports psychology, as a specialized field, studies the behavior of athletes and the psychological factors affecting their performance. This knowledge can help identify the behavior patterns of athletes according to their cultural and value contexts. In addition, applying psychological knowledge in designing suitable educational interventions for athletes can effectively transfer and institutionalize desirable cultural values in sports. In sum, a rich and developed psychological culture, both as a diagnostic tool and an intervention strategy, can play an essential role in consolidating and expanding cultural values in sports. These findings align with the results of (Gutović et al., 2020). It is also possible to achieve the goals of professional culture through mental imagery. Participatory leadership in sports can create a positive self-image and respect for others (Abdelmajeed, 2022). Since the findings show that psychological culture impacts cultural values, especially in mental and physical health and factors related to well-being and safety, it is recommended that sports organizations and coaches look more purposefully and comprehensively at their planning and strategies. Also, participatory leadership's role in attracting and inspiring sports can create a positive self-image and respect for others. These transfers from a practical aspect to improve the environment and professional culture in the sports field can help achieve higher performance and success at a higher level. These results are consistent with recent findings from similar studies and show that mental imagery and collaborative leadership can help achieve the goals of professional culture in sports.

According to the findings, cultural values are effective in professional responsibility to the extent of 0.219. Culture, which includes all the values transmitted from the past to the present, also includes sports. Sports culture has the essential characteristics of sports.

It also has cultural characteristics (Dilnoza, 2023). Cultural patterns in people's daily behavior and actions are transferred to their behavior and actions in organizations. The relationship between the culture and the leadership style presented in the organization is one of the most critical relationships studied in the scientific literature because the leadership style is related to other elements of an organization. Meng et al. (2011) state that leadership represents a complex and multidimensional process. Solaja (2015) stated that it is a process in which an individual influences a group to achieve the organization's goals. With the arrival of a new leader or the change of leadership style in an organization, all elements (such as strategy, structure, and management) change. These changes affect the change of behavior and values, i.e., the change of the organizational culture.

According to the presented findings, sports culture, as an essential part of public culture, significantly affects professional responsibility. Also, the cultural patterns observed in people's behavior and ways of acting influence their behavior and actions in organizations. This shows that the relationship between culture and leadership style is one of the most critical issues in scientific studies because leadership style affects all elements of an organization and can strongly influence organizational culture. In this regard, changes in leadership style or the arrival of a new leader can cause extensive changes in the organization, affecting not only behavior and values but also organizational culture. In other words, the relationship between leadership and culture is an interactive process that creates an organizational structure with its beliefs, behaviors, and values. Therefore, the effects of leadership more than leadership culture on the organization's overall culture show how the leader can shape the organizational culture with his motivations and values and contribute to shaping the organization's future.

In line with educational standards, it is imperative to introduce specialized in-service courses designed specifically for athletes and coaches. These courses should be led by proficient instructors with expertise in ethical principles and aim to cultivate a robust professional culture effectively.

Aligned with cultural benchmarks, a pressing need exists to establish conducive cultural environments within tennis sports education. This can be achieved through rigorous organizational oversight and evaluation processes, ensuring adherence to ethical standards throughout sports operations and safeguarding against the erosion of cultural values.

Diversified educational programs on media consumption from various sources are strongly recommended to equip individuals with critical media literacy skills, particularly in sports media.

Moreover, promoting media literacy through dedicated courses in sports media is advocated to enhance individuals' efficacy in media consumption. By discerning the audience's preferences in tennis media consumption, tailored professional programs can be developed to effectively cater to these preferences.

A pivotal recommendation of this research is to foster a participatory culture within tennis sports. Therefore, fostering positive interaction between the ethics committee and sports education, alongside increasing civil engagement in sports discourse, will facilitate the creation and dissemination of sports creativity.

Additionally, it is essential to reinforce ethical values through tennis coaches, emphasizing principles such as justice, transparency, and support through educational

initiatives targeting athletes. Teaching values such as respect, equality, and commitment from managers to athletes will instill a sense of moral integrity among tennis players, coaches, and team managers.

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تحلیل الگوی فرهنگ حرفه‌ای در صنعت تنیس با نقش میانجی فرهنگ روانشناختی و فرهنگ رسانه‌ای

جاسم محمد حمود^۱، فاطمه عبدوی^{۲*}، محمدرسول خدادادی^۲، ماجد خلیل خمیس^۳

^۱ دانشجوی دکتری مدیریت ورزشی، گروه مدیریت ورزشی، دانشگاه تبریز، تبریز، ایران.

^۲ دانشیار مدیریت ورزشی، گروه مدیریت ورزشی، دانشکده تربیت بدنی و علوم ورزشی، دانشگاه تبریز، تبریز، ایران.

^۳ استادیار مدیریت ورزشی، گروه مدیریت ورزشی، دانشگاه عراق، عراق.

کلیدواژه

اخلاق حرفه‌ای
صنعت تنیس
فرهنگ رسانه‌ای
مسئولیت حرفه‌ای

نوع مقاله

پژوهشی اصیل

چکیده

هدف: هدف این پژوهش، تحلیل الگوی فرهنگ حرفه‌ای در صنعت تنیس با نقش میانجی فرهنگ روانشناختی و فرهنگ رسانه‌ای بود.

روش: این پژوهش از نظر هدف کاربردی و از نظر ماهیت توصیفی-همبستگی انجام شده است. جامعه آماری این پژوهش شامل کلیه مربیان و ورزشکاران تنیس کشور عراق بود که بر اساس فرمول کوکران تعداد ۳۸۵ نفر به عنوان نمونه انتخاب شدند. برای اطمینان بیشتر، بیش از ۴۰۰ پرسشنامه توزیع شد و ۳۹۳ پرسشنامه پس از بازگشت به درستی تجزیه و تحلیل شدند. ابزار تحقیق شامل پرسشنامه محقق ساخته بود. روایی صوری و محتوایی پرسشنامه توسط ۸ نفر از متخصصان مدیریت ورزشی بررسی شد و پایایی آن با استفاده از روش آلفای کرونباخ (۰/۹۰) تأیید شد. نرم‌افزار مورد استفاده در تجزیه و تحلیل داده‌ها PLS بود.

یافته‌ها: بر اساس یافته‌های به‌دست‌آمده، اخلاق حرفه‌ای به دلیل نقش واسطه‌ای فرهنگ روان‌شناختی و فرهنگ رسانه‌ای در ارتقای ارزش‌های فرهنگی و مسئولیت‌پذیری حرفه‌ای در صنعت ورزش تنیس مؤثر است.

اصالت و ابتکار مقاله: با توجه به یافته‌های این تحقیق پیشنهاد می‌شود در تمرینات تیمی و انفرادی تنیس به اخلاق حرفه‌ای و عناصر فرهنگ اخلاقی توجه بیشتری شود. همچنین می‌توان تمرین‌ها و برنامه‌های تمرینی مختلفی را برای تقویت ارزش‌های فرهنگی و مسئولیت حرفه‌ای در ورزش تنیس طراحی کرد. این تحقیق می‌تواند یکی از معدود مطالعات انجام شده در زمینه فرهنگ حرفه‌ای در صنعت تنیس باشد.

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Key Sustainability Drivers of Persepolis Club Brand

Zahra Rajaeizadeh¹, Ali Asghar Doroudian^{2*}, Masoume Shahbazi³, Shiva Azadfada⁴

¹ PhD Student, Department of Sports Management, North Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.

² Associate Professor, Department of Physical Education, North Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.

³ Assistant Professor, Sports Science Department, Shahid Rajaee Teacher Training University, Tehran, Iran.

⁴ Assistant Professor, Department of Physical Education, North Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.

ABSTRACT

Purpose: Today, the strength of a brand is the first word in marketing and attracting customers because if a brand has desirable features, the consumer will be encouraged to purchase that brand and, more significantly, stay loyal. This research aimed to identify key sustainability drivers of the Persepolis Club brand.

Methodology: This research is explanatory in terms of the applied goal-setting strategy, and its method is descriptive-analytical and based on future study methods. The statistical population of this study consisted of professors in sports marketing, marketing officials of Persepolis Club, and league organizations. The selection of these people was purposeful, and the number was 15. To identify the issues affecting the future of the brand sustainability of Persepolis Club, a literature review and interviews with experts were used. Based on that, 15 final components related to the future of crucial sustainability drivers of the Persepolis brand were identified.

Findings: Based on the research findings, four variables, such as "improving brand equity, marketing activities, economic dimension, and social responsibility," are among the key sustainability drivers of the Persepolis Club brand in the future. Moreover, they were highly uncertain.

Originality: Accordingly, utilizing them in future planning and determining possible scenarios is necessary. Regarding the identified scenarios, it should be stated that the scenario of the flourishing potential of the Persepolis club brand can be the best case for the sustainability of the Persepolis club brand in the future, which is an important finding of this research.

Keywords

Brand Development
Brand Sustainability
Future Study
Sport Clubs

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1. Introduction

Thinking about the future and its events is as long as the history of human consciousness, as people of all ages have always longed to know their future. This natural desire has gradually been replaced by the necessity of knowing the future in contemporary times. Living in today's world, studying the future as a modern science is essential to recognize the opportunities and threats ahead—future studies in the discovery and construction of the future impact purviews of decision-making (Jafari, 2022). Professional sports, as an industry with various profitable business aspects and positions, has become an even higher position than the industry. Sports club officials are sent to transform their teams into controlled brands. Forming a strong brand for a club is one of the unique goals of sports clubs, and plans to move in that direction (Gladden et al., 1998). The importance of the role of intangible assets in the effectiveness of the organization's activities and the creation and survival of the financial performance of businesses at the level of organizations, companies, and various industries is evident to all. Intangible assets are long-lived assets developed and expanded by a company or organization and are considered a company's assets (Lee & Lee, 2019). Literature related to positive brand communication could cover a variety of brand-related topics such as liking a brand 'passion 'happy attachment 'and satisfaction despite constant interest 'researchers have not examined negative feelings toward brands. However, few have considered negative feelings toward brands (Walsh & Lee, 2012). Unfortunately, in the field of sports branding in our country, it can be said that few studies have been done in this direction, and the studies in other fields are scattered and limited. Brand equity in sports clubs is an intangible asset. To identify the factors affecting this intangible asset, one must use the theoretical saturation method and refer to experts, professors, and experts' Theoretical saturation reached reputable sources, including books, dissertation papers, and authoritative sites (Fontanella et al., 2011).

Although many brands are created and developed, only some are successful, and many brands are doomed to fail in the stages of brand development (Moretta Tartaglione et al., 2019). A review of brand literature shows that each brand needs to be adequately developed to be empowered, with modifications and adjustments to maintain the dynamic and adaptive environment to manage and support the brand development process (Murray et al., 2018). Therefore, brand development is not achieved by chance but rather by a purposeful process rooted in a coalition of order, strategic thinking, and unlimited creativity, and it is a competitive advantage for businesses (Cheng et al., 2005). Palokangas (2012) believes that in the brand development literature, there needs to be more attention to the process of brand development dynamically and innovatively. On the other hand, a comprehensive model has yet to be designed, based on the circumstances under which the brand develops and the mechanisms necessary to sustain it during development. Therefore, cash flow and short-term profits are often considered essential parameters of brand performance.

Branding and developing it is a highly applicable strategy for distinguishing between service and manufacturing industries (Zhu, 2013). In the sports industry, sports brands are central to popular consumer brands (Lee & Lee, 2019), representing an actual global language with their own words, codes, values, resources, and representatives. Like some

household appliance brands (e.g., Phillips), food products (such as Danone), or multimedia products (such as Samsung), sports brands are fully integrated into people's lives. Many people admire some sports brands, whether for corporate or club brands (Bouchet et al., 2013). Like other brands, sports brands are always trying to develop new strategies and tactics to generate and encourage demand. In 2000, Adidas and Nike ranked 6th and 15th in terms of global brand value among brands in the market (Bouchet et al., 2013). In this regard, the results of Payami et al. (2022) showed that improving the brand's position in the Premier League, stable brand identity, customer relationship management, and financial benefits were influential factors. Finally, the foresight of the Premier League brand, the position of the league brand, the relationship between the league brand and the fans, brand commitment, and the correct brand management were the consequences of the research. Freydoni and Kalateh Seifari (2019) conducted research titled "Presenting a Model of Advertising Effect on the Brand Development of Persepolis Club with an emphasis on the mediating role of brand personality." The results showed that advertising has an impact coefficient of 0.51 on brand development and a coefficient of 0.55 on brand personality. Also, the coefficient of brand personality influence on brand development was 0.59. Finally, according to the findings of this model, managers and marketers of sports clubs are suggested to discover factors affecting brand personality and consider advertising methods for brand development. Ajour El Zein et al. (2019) conducted a study focusing on the role of sustainability in brand equity in the economic sector. The method used in this study included collecting information from companies that were active in this field.

The data of this study showed that ethical investments, addressing environmental issues, and social responsibility have a positive relationship with companies' brand equity. In addition, Majerova et al. (2020), in a study focusing on sustainability management in food products, concluded that corporate social responsibility as a facilitator plays a role in brand sustainability. On the other hand, brand loyalty is a hindrance to sustainable management. A review of the existing evidence shows that the development of sports brands in the group of the market growth of sports, recreation, and entertainment (Bouchet et al., 2013); however, its development cannot be limited to these factors and characteristics alone, because complex and broad conditions, mechanisms and strategies influence the development of a brand. For this reason, over the past few years, the policy of brand development has been placed on the agenda of sports product companies in the country (Saeedi, 2020).

Nevertheless, it is essential that domestic brands, as foreign brands have yet to be able to grow and develop in the country's domestic markets, and it is sometimes seen that the priority and preference of sports consumers are foreign brands. State and argument of these factors can have sociological, psychological, etc. roots that demand comprehensive and extensive research in the country around this topic. However, due to the limitations placed on each study, in this research, it is necessary to investigate why this is important from a marketer's point of view.

In general, the role of any company in achieving brand sustainability in the long run, along with the continuation of profitability, is identifying the components that will help it achieve this goal. Considering that achieving a sustainable brand may not be one of the goals of many companies, the company focuses on the brand's sustainability when the

company's manager, as the decision-making and guiding factor of the company, pays attention to the components of achieving sustainability. Brand management in Iran especially in the field of sports and sports institutions, including sports clubs, still faces problems. These questions are raised as to how one can understand the interactions between elements of sustainability and could be said how far a brand has stepped in the direction of sustainability and also the performance of the brands of a country towards sustainability can be measured (Ghorbani Asiabar et al., 2020). Considering that Persepolis is one of the most popular teams in Iran and Asia and is always in the spotlight, fans of this team and even fans of other teams as a rival club follow the activities of Persepolis Club. Hence, the Persepolis Club brand is one of the most prestigious brands in the country, and even in Asia, factors affecting brand sustainability should be identified; Persepolis Club is the case. As a result, the main problem we are looking for in this research is the future of Persepolis Club brand sustainability.

2. Methodology

The present research is applied in terms of purpose and nature, based on new methods of future study, analytical, and exploratory science, which has been carried out using a combination of qualitative and quantitative models. There are also records and library data collection methods. Qualitative data were prepared using an open questionnaire, interviews, a numerical review of the documents and quantitative data used in this study, and by weighting Delphi questionnaires. Accordingly, in the first step, the factors and components affecting this field were collected in different dimensions (individual, environmental, services and resources, and participation management). After collecting the data, the initial components were identified as a questionnaire distributed among 15 executive elites. The statistical population of the research was universities with sufficient expertise and experience on brand sustainability issues in clubs. By distributing the questionnaire, they were asked to rate the variables based on their impact and effect based on the number in the range of 0 to 3. In this score, "0" stands for "no effect," "1" stands for "weak," "2" stands for medium effect, "3" stands for high impact, and "P" means "direct and indirect effect".

The scores were then entered in the crossover matrix to determine the effect and influence (direct and indirect) of each factor and their subset variables with other factors, as well as by specifying the fundamental driving forces of the required charts as outputs. The critical point about the structural analysis method that was done with the help of the MicMac software is that the structural analysis method utilizes the concept of the interaction between variables to identify the fundamental driving forces (overt or hidden) in order to get feedback and encourage participants and stakeholders about complex and unpredictable aspects and behaviors of a system. The structural analysis method links ideas and thoughts that describe and identify the system through the communication matrix of all

system variables. The ability of this model to identify the relationships between variables and finally identify the key variables affecting the completion of the system (Rabbani, 2013).

In this research, to investigate the validity, the research findings are presented to the participants, who study the text of the theory and apply their points of view. Finally, the professors study and review this research, and some cases have been proposed to modify or change the final theory. Reliability refers to the range of reproducibility of research findings. One of the ways to demonstrate reliability is to study its audit process. The findings are auditable when another researcher can track the path of decision used by the researcher during the interview with methodology and clarity and show the consistency of the study. Therefore, the researcher has the reliability of the data by showing the path of his decisions and also placing all raw, analyzed codes, categories, study process, primary goals, and questions at the disposal of supervisors and advisors and with the careful audit of the experts confirmed the correctness of all the steps of the investigation. In addition, the intra-subject agreement method has been used in the current research to calculate the reliability of interviews.

In order to calculate the reliability of the inter-thematic agreement method of two coders, a brand expert who was present in the research stages and had good knowledge about this research was asked to participate in research coding as a collaborator. The necessary training and techniques for coding were transferred to the research colleague. Then, the researchers and collaborators co-encoded two of the interviews, and the percentage of in-topic agreement was calculated, which was calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Inner agreement percent} = \frac{\text{number of agreements} \times 2}{\text{Total Number Of Codes}} \times 100\%$$

Table 1 shows that the total number of codes recorded is 84, and the total number of agreements between codes is 14. Moreover, reliability among coders for interviews conducted in this study is 0.77%. Therefore, considering the reliability of the codes is more than 60%, the reliability of the coding is confirmed, and it can be said that the reliability of the current interview analysis is appropriate.

Table 1. Reliability calculation.

Row	The Number of Interviews	Total Number of Codes	Agreed Codes	Reliability
1	4	16	6	75%
2	8	20	8	80%
	Total	36	14	77%

4. Results

4.1. Identifying effective variables

Based on the familiar concepts between indicators or open codes and referring to the theoretical foundations and brand sustainability literature, 15 influential variables called social responsibility, environmental monitoring, brand management, innovation, brand image, brand identity, foresight, marketing activities, environmental dimension, social dimension, economic dimension, brand satisfaction, brand loyalty, competitive advantage, and improved brand equity were created (Table 1).

Table 2. Theoretical coding (optional).

Interview Code	Axial Coding	Theoretical Coding
1-3-2-6-7-4-12-5-8	Social Responsibility	
1-12-2-14-3-8-9-15	Environmental Monitoring	
10-15-4-11-12-13-5-14-1	Brand Management	
15-2-6-7-1-9-8	Innovation	Brand Sustainability Requirements
1-9-6-2-3-8	Brand image	
1-11-2-5-13-4-14-3-6	Brand Identity	
1-6-2-3-7-8-14-9-15-10	Foresight	
11-13-10-12-5-7	Marketing Activities	
14-6-5-15-2-3-13-1-4-12-10-8	Peripheral dimension	Brand Sustainability dimensions
1-3-8-2-9-5-6-7-10-11	Social dimension	
11-12-2-3-10-9-4-6-5-15	Economic dimension	
5-4-15-14-6-11-1	Satisfied with the brand	Desired Consequences of Brand Sustainability
15-14-2-1-10-11	Brand loyalty	
9-10-12-1-11-3-4-14-15-13	Competitive Advantage	
14-5-15-10-11-6	Improved brand equity	

4.2. Identifying effective factors

According to the opinion of the relevant experts, "Social responsibility, environmental monitoring, brand management, innovation, brand image, brand identity, foresight, marketing activities, environmental dimension, social dimension, economic dimension, brand satisfaction, brand loyalty, competitive advantage, and improved brand equity" were selected. The largest share of selected variables is dedicated to future problems of identifying key sustainability drivers of the brand of Persepolis Club.

Table 3. Factors affecting the identification of key sustainability drivers of Persepolis club brand.

Effective Primary Factors	Mark
Improved brand equity	Var01
Satisfied with the brand	Var02
Marketing Activities	Var03
Competitive Advantage	Var04

Effective Primary Factors	Mark
Brand loyalty	Var05
Environmental Monitoring	Var06
Economic dimension	Var07
Foresight	Var08
Brand Image	Var09
Social Responsibility	Var10
Innovation	Var11
Brand Management	Var12
Brand Identity	Var13
Peripheral dimension	Var14
Social dimension	Var15

Overall system environment analysis: Based on library studies and interviews with experts, 15 factors influencing key drivers of Persepolis club brand sustainability and structural interaction analysis with Micmac software were analyzed to extract the main factors affecting the future of the studied system. The results of this section show that the number of repeated and 81.333 percent of the filling degree indicate that it shows the factors' relatively high and diffuse effect. Of the 225 relationships that can be evaluated in the matrix, 42 are zero, meaning that factors are unaffected or affected by each other. Fifty-eight relations to the value of one have a weak influence on each other, and 79 relations to number 2 have relatively effective solid relationships. In addition, 46 has the number 3, which means that the relationships of critical variables are very high and have much impact.

Table 4. Initial analysis of matrix data and crossover effects.

Index	Amount
Matrix Dimension	15
Number of repetitions	2
Number of Zeros	42
Number of ones	58
Number of twos	79
Number of Threes	46
Number of P	0
Total	183
Filling degree	81/333 %

The matrix of this research based on the studied variables with two rotations has 100% desirability and optimization, indicating the high validity of the questionnaire and its responses (Table 3).

Table 5. Degree of desirability and optimization of the matrix.

Effectiveness	Impression	Rotation
98%	87%	1
100%	100%	2

4.3. The effect and direct influence of variables on each other

According to the numbers of the questionnaire, which is completed as a matrix. The software calculates their relationship and gives each factor a numerical score. Then, based on this score, factors are ranked directly and indirectly based on impression and effectiveness. In this case, the factors that earn the most points will also change their impact and impact accordingly. This section presents the types of direct and indirect relationships and influences, as well as the rank and number of variables that the Mix Mac software has measured. Effectiveness

As explained earlier, in the cross-effects analysis matrix, the sum of the rows indicates the effect of the variable, and the total columns represents the level of influence. The following table depicts these relations:

Table 6. Total rows and columns of the cross-effects analysis matrix.

Row	Variable	Total number of rows	Total number of columns
1	Improved brand equity	28	30
2	Marketing Activities	27	19
3	Economic dimension	26	25
4	Social Responsibility	24	20
5	Satisfied with the brand.	27	21
6	Brand loyalty	14	23
7	Competitive Advantage	30	28
8	Foresight	23	22
9	Innovation	20	29
10	Brand Management	28	29
11	Environmental Monitoring	25	22
12	Peripheral dimension	23	22
13	Social dimension	20	25
14	Brand image	19	22
15	Brand Identity	20	17
	Total	354	354

Assessment of effectiveness and impact plan the distribution and distribution of variables in the scattering plane indicate the system's degree of stability or instability. In the structural interaction analysis method with MICMAC software, two types of dispersion have been defined: stable systems and unstable systems. In the stable system model, the distribution of variables is L; in this model, some variables have high effectiveness, and some have high affectability. In unstable systems, however, the situation is more complex; in this system, the forces are scattered around the diameter axis of the plane, and in most cases, it has an

intermediary state of impression and effectiveness, which makes it challenging to identify critical variables (Godet et al., 2003). What can be found from the status of the distribution page of variables affecting the essential sustainability of the Persepolis Club brand is the instability of the system. Most variables are scattered around the diagonal axis of the plane. Apart from a few that show that they have a high impact on the system, the rest of the variables have almost the same status as each other (Figures 1 and 2).



Figure 1. Unstable system.

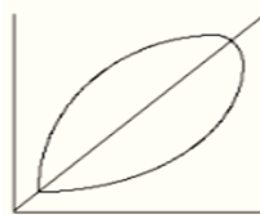


Figure 2. Stable system.

Based on the cases mentioned above, the type and status of each of the main variables can be identified according to their position in the direct impact matrix under the title of Direct Impression/Effectiveness Map, as shown in Figure 3.

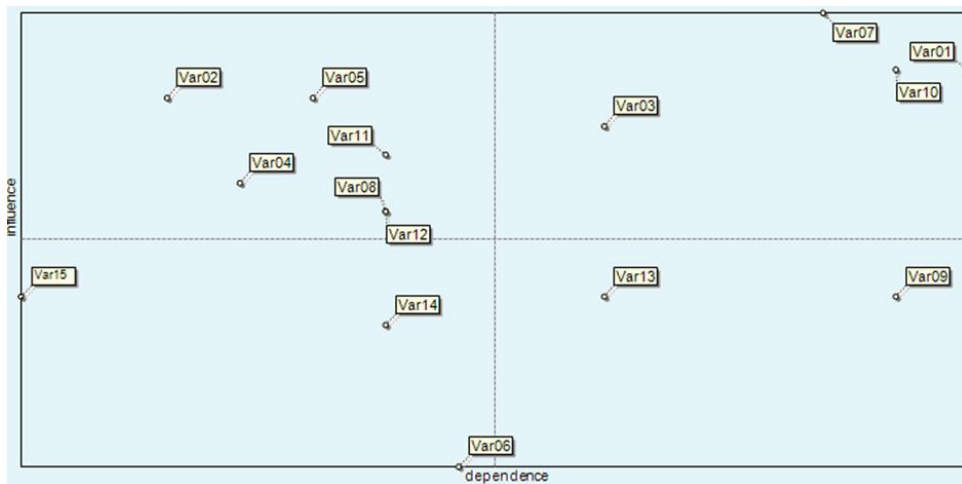


Figure 3. Map of direct influences.

In the analysis of the impact map and direct influence, the factors affecting the system are determined which of the factors has a high high impact (4 factors in the northeastern part which include improvement of brand equity, marketing activities, economic dimension, social responsibility), which factors have a high and less effective effect (6 factors in the northwest part of the matrix of brand satisfaction,

brand loyalty, competitive advantage, future)—innovation, brand management), which factors have a relative or moderate impression and effectiveness. The factors have a high and low or moderate impact (3 factors in the southeastern part of the environmental monitoring, social dimension, environmental dimension), and finally, which factors have relatively less impression and effectiveness than other key components identified (2 factors in the southwest part of the matrix of brand image and brand identity). Each of the mentioned factors will be explained in detail in the continuation of this research. According to the system's inversions, the map of indirect and potential effects between the factors has been reported to be broadly similar to the direct impact map due to the relative stability of the data. However, the direct and indirect influence intensity between variables has different outcomes. Additionally, the table of direct and indirect effects of influences and impressions is drawn as follows:

Table 7. Prioritizing the effective factors in terms of direct effectiveness/impression.

Row	Variable	Direct impression score	Variable	Direct effectiveness score
1	Improved brand equity	847	Brand Identity	847
2	Marketing Activities	790	Brand image	819
3	Economic dimension	790	Environmental Monitoring	819
4	Social Responsibility	762	Peripheral dimension	790
5	Satisfied with the brand	762	Social dimension	706
6	Brand loyalty	734	Satisfied with the brand	706
7	Competitive Advantage	706	Brand loyalty	649
8	Foresight	677	Competitive Advantage	621
9	Innovation	649	Foresight	621
10	Brand Management	649	Innovation	621
11	Environmental Monitoring	564	Brand Management	621
12	Peripheral dimension	564	Improved brand equity	593
13	Social dimension	564	Marketing Activities	564
14	Brand image	536	Economic dimension	536
15	Brand Identity	395	Social Responsibility	480

The following table of indirect effects of impression and effectiveness is presented as [Table 8](#) for each factor.

The software output to prioritize the main factors in terms of the degree of direct and indirect influence is as follows: The first pillar is direct, and the second column is an indirect impression (the result of weight gain of the effects), and as it is seen, there is no significant difference in direct and indirect impression between the factors:

Table 8. Rating key factors on the sense of direct and indirect impression.

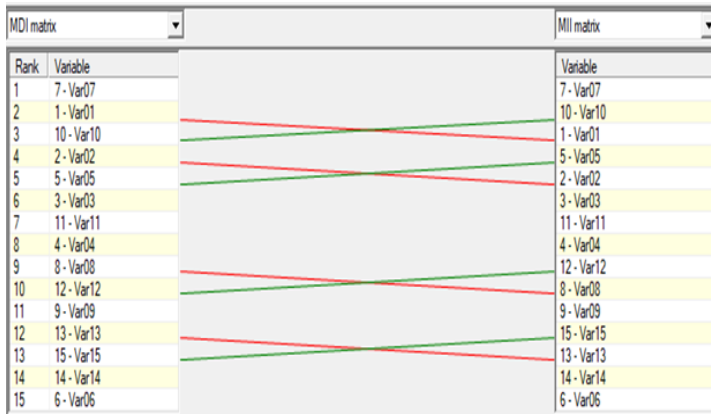
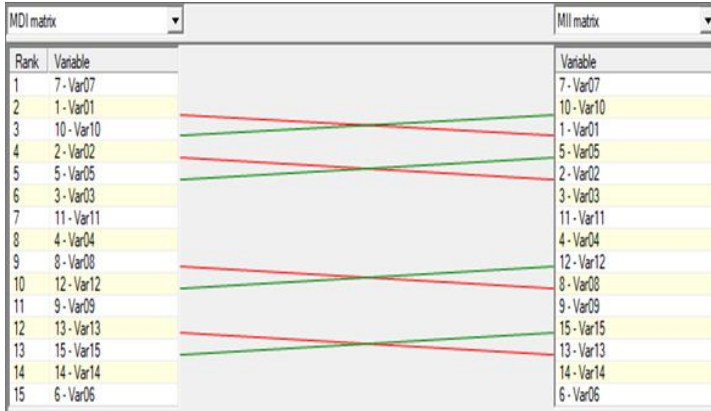
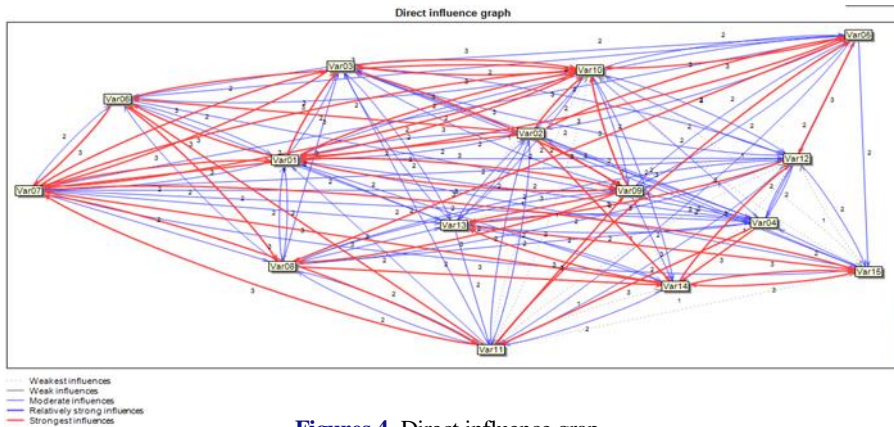


Table 9. Rating key factors on the sense of direct and indirect effectiveness.



Then, based on the analyses derived from the Mick software's output, [Figures 4 and 5](#), respectively, present a graphic representation of the intensity of communication between factors in the direct and indirect impression map.

As can be seen in the graphical map of direct influences, many of the connecting lines between the indicators have potent influences. These types of effects indicate that all the indicators are correctly selected and that there is a strong correlation between 15 indicators in the system.



Figures 4. Direct influence grap.

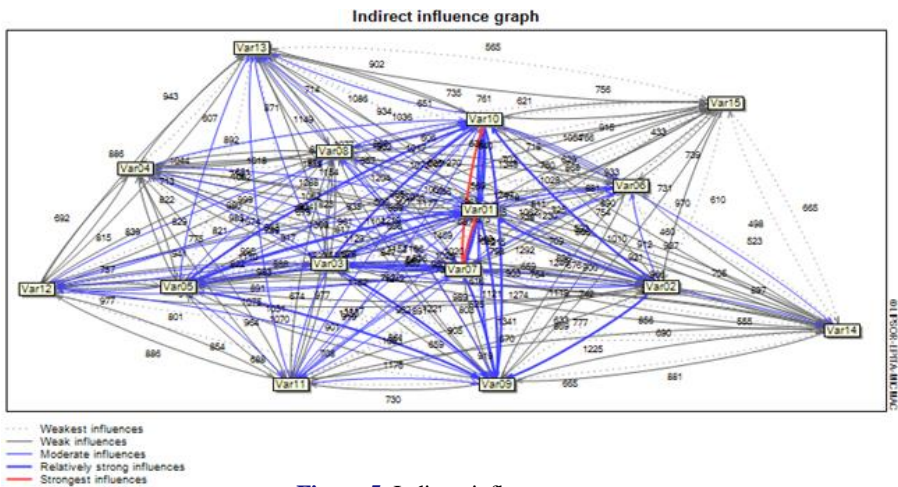


Figure 5. Indirect influence grap.

Finally, Figure 4 presents a graphical map of direct effects. In the indirect influences matrix, each of the software's indices is empowered, and accordingly, the indirect influences of the indicators are measured.

Based on the information presented in the previous sections, in this section, the key drivers of sustainability are selected for the Persepolis Club brand. As can be seen in the graph of direct and indirect influences between variables and critical trends, four factors of "Brand equity improvement, marketing activities, economic dimension, and social responsibility" were the most effective and the most effective in the development of critical drivers of Persepolis brand sustainability in the future. At the same time, they are essential and have high uncertainty.

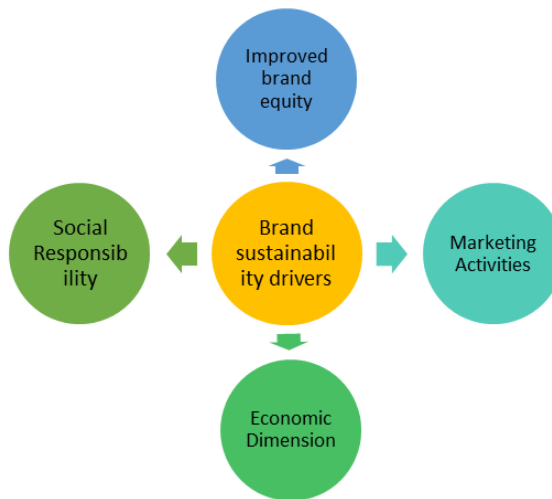


Figure 6. The critical sustainability drivers of the Persepolis club brand.

5. Discussion and conclusion

This study aimed to identify key drivers of sustainability of the Persepolis Club brand. Data analysis was performed on three levels, and responses to three questions were based on and structural analysis. She was, afterwards, answering the questions about why and how this result was discussed.

Analysis of interviews with experts following the question of the critical components of the sustainability drivers of the Persepolis Club brand. It was found that the brand has environmental, social, and economic dimensions. This finding is relatively consistent with the results of studies by [Taghva et al. \(2019\)](#), which focused on the structural model of green information technology and organizational development and showed that green actions and activities, green IT cycle management, organization, and green data centers, green IT monitoring) can be used to develop organizations ([Nyfeler, 2013](#)), which has cited social responsibility as one of the pillars of brand development, and [Sharma and Joshi \(2019\)](#) report that brand stability and development can be achieved through sustainable and green methods such as social responsibility, providing high-quality green products, environmental protection, etc., and transforming this capability into capabilities. Economic development means ensuring profits and preventing any adverse environmental and social impacts on the club's long-term performance through organizational operations. McKinsey believed in 2009 that long-term organizations always support environmental, social, and government functions to create value in various ways that support growth, improve return on investment, reduce risk, and improve quality management ([Dalmia, 2014](#)). In 2011, Szcz, Sethia, and Sriniviaz stated that organizations that involve business transactions with merchants could provide a positive economic impact by creating durable, repairable, affordable, resaleable products, upgrades, multi-user upgrades, or shared consumption opportunities.

Social dimension also refers to the ability to identify or identify with a group. In this regard, Bergström et al. (2010) as saying buyers make purchases based on a social dimension. They buy a brand that represents their social identity. A brand or logo symbolizes a social group. A good example is Nike and its famous Rustle. These symbols and brands lead to a connection between consumers of similar brands. In addition, Gupta et al. (2013) believed that taking into account the social development of many companies, they were the main engine of their communities' development through improvement and expansion in the direction of national, local, and regional communities, their motives not only changed the daily lives of many societies but also made the brand familiar with values such as innovation, entrepreneurship and foresight and toward energy sources. Despite their core business focus, Alternative directs non-renewable energy sources. Walmart also believes it has used initiatives including market-oriented skills training for employees, worker safety initiatives, and women's empowerment programs. Nestlé also uses similar schemes that focus on water scarcity, the welfare of nearby factory communities, and land management that respects the rights of local people. Bansal stated in 2005 that the social dimension focuses on creating value and improving the financial performance of the company's activities.

Finally, it can be pointed out that the environmental dimension focuses on activities that do not lead to the depletion of natural resources through the company's environmental management (Chabowski et al., 2011). Improving people's social and economic status is a consumption stimulus, but it damages the environment. For this reason, these companies achieved averages by improving the scales that protect the environment in a significant way (Wu & Tham, 2023). Chan et al. (2012) and Mariadoss et al. (2011) believed that the company's sensitivity to the environment and environmental issues was increasing so that Porter and Van der Linde (1995) that many companies accepted environmentally sustainable offerings (goods and services designed to minimize environmental harm) and introduced them to the Their operations are combined with the hope of earning rewards such as saving money, operational performances and positive consumer perceptions as a result. Walsh and Lee (2012) that adopting environmentally sustainable goods and services is closely related to adopting the corporate social responsibility concept, which, according to Werther and Chandler (2005), suggests that corporate social responsibility activities should be implemented through high levels of leadership. Faisal (2010) stated that when decision-makers have less knowledge and concern about the social responsibility of their business, they are less likely to take action. As a result, by expanding organizations globally and confronting different political, economic, and environmental situations, improving relations with other companies that share their social responsibility philosophy is often tricky, especially with suppliers focused on quantities.

In general, Funk (2003) and Elkington (1998) believed that development in terms of both conceptual and scientific literature encompassed three dimensions, including economic, social, and environmental. Székely and Knirsch (2005) pointed out that the most desirable dimension is the economic one because it provides financial power and avoids the conditions that lead to the liquidation of the business due to financial resources (Chabowski et al., 2011)—stated that the social dimension of development is an incentive to understand corporate social responsibility better. They also stated that a company will

be guided by all three dimensions of development towards better long-term performance. Moreover, the analysis of interviews about determining the requirements for brand sustainability in football clubs in Kurdistan province showed that these requirements include social responsibility, environmental monitoring, brand management, innovation, brand image, brand identity, foresight, and marketing activities. This finding is proportionately consistent with the results of the (Vadicherla & Saravanan, 2015) studies that looked at sustainable scales used by brands, retailers, and manufacturers and reported that air quality, energy sustainability, performance, environmental sustainability and sustainability and sustainable community play a decisive role in development, Barreda et al. (2016) in a study titled Online Branding: Hotel brand development through interaction theory concluded that brand awareness and brand image in turn influence brand equity, (Sharma & Joshi, 2019) who in a study titled Brand Development Among Young Consumers: Hierarchical Analysis and Network Analysis Approach determined that brand stability and development can be achieved through sustainable and green methods such as social responsibility, product delivery. Green with high quality, environmental protection, etc., and (Majerova et al., 2020), in research focusing on development management in food products, concluded that corporate social responsibility as a facilitator plays a role in brand development is congruent and aligned.

In explaining this finding, organizations today face new challenges related to sustainable branding that new smart marketing rules can better follow. Schultz and Block (2015) stated that brand development is more than individual user use, even with its size over a relatively long period. Brand development is more closely related to brand growth beyond the current consumer so that the brand can grow in volume and profitability over time and unlimitedly. Belz and Peattie (2014) and Meffert et al. (2010) stated that sustainable brands are products and services created to identify specific surplus value from an environmental perspective and social benefits and thus differentiate themselves from other competitors. Nonetheless, it should always be noted that although the user significantly increases the use of a particular brand over the following period, it will increasingly make it valuable to the brand owner. However, the development of the brand will not occur. In 2011, (Chabowski et al., 2011) stated that managers should always integrate development issues with their efforts to create a brand image in everyone's mind. Belz and Peattie (2014) that several first-generation development brands failed in the market because companies should have emphasized the product's positive social-environmental characteristics while they ignored the focus on other product features such as performance, design, innovation, brand identity, marketing activities, etc. As a result, many products will not be able to compete against these standard products. Therefore, to create and position strong development brands, it is necessary not only to take social responsibility and environmental monitoring but also to manage the brand, innovation, brand image, brand identity, foresight, and marketing activities. These indicators are requirements that should be considered in the branding process, and they should be planned and developed in a continuous cycle, but what should be noted in this research is that these are all steps that, if properly planned and executed, will lead to Hopefully the club will be a pharmacist.

Finally, the analysis of interviews showed that the sustainable desirable outcomes of the Persepolis Club brand include brand satisfaction, brand loyalty, competitive advantage, and improvement of brand equity. This finding is relative to the results of [Tabatabai-Nesab et al. \(2018\)](#) that studied the role of destination brand identity in developing the destination brand equity and determined that destination brand personality and destination brand experience affect brand loyalty to destination brand by influencing destination brand identity, [Kamyab Kalashmi \(2014\)](#) Success in a study titled A Model for Explaining Consumer Attitude towards Brand Development Based on Brand Image Reported that brand image has a positive and significant relationship on brand loyalty and perceived quality, [Loureiro et al. \(2014\)](#) who investigated how brand personality, brand identity and service quality affect brand equity and showed that brand personality, brand identity and quality of service each separately directly affect brand equity, [Barreda et al. \(2016\)](#) concluded that The dimensions of website interaction, i.e. two-way communication and user control, have a positive impact on the dimensions of brand knowledge, i.e. brand awareness and brand image, and in turn affect brand equity, [Ledikwe \(2020\)](#) who in a study measured the impact of the development of clothing brands on customer brand loyalty and reported that the development of clothing brands affects brand loyalty of its customers. [He et al. \(2020\)](#) conducted a study focusing on the role of development in brand equity in the economic sector. They pointed out that ethical investments, addressing environmental issues, and social responsibility have a congruent positive relationship with companies' brand equity.

In explaining this finding, the more influential football clubs' development, social, economic, and environmental marketing activities in emerging markets are, the stronger the branding of Iranian Premier League clubs will be. In this regard, [Brown and Dacin \(1997\)](#) believed that development-based branding had a positive effect on shareholder perceptions of product evaluations, as well as according to [Wu and Tham \(2023\)](#), attracting talented employees and finally linking the company's brand with desirable values such as responsibility. Ethics, environmental, and social monitoring can lead to competitive advantage. [Lai et al. \(2010\)](#) that corporate social responsibility and reputation improve brand equity in emerging markets. [Sharma and Joshi \(2019\)](#) stated that current research suggests that the coherence of operations with the company's marketing activities enables businesses to develop further. [Leischnig and Enke \(2011\)](#) also believed that brand consistency was a critical factor in reducing perceived risk, brand loyalty, and receiving price benefits. In addition, [Gupta et al. \(2013\)](#) explored the embedding of brand knowledge and value within development and stated that their goal is to investigate the relationship between knowledge-based development and brand value as the basis for differentiation, which can affect the brand selection criteria by consumers. They have been tested and tested with many different results. For example, as customers' knowledge about brand development increases, their ability to differentiate between brands increases, increasing brand concerns about product recycling and profitability related to economic and environmental challenges will present the brand with a community in which a positive way will affect brand knowledge and brand value received from customers. He did. The greater the value of the customers' value presented by the brand compared to the challenges of social development, consumers will increase the ability of consumers to

differentiate between brands. In addition, [Schultz and Block \(2015\)](#) stated that brand development is a practice that can help organizations increase brand equity both from the marketer and consumer dimension over time. It seems that by increasing brand equity, consumers' satisfaction with the brand increases, and as a result, the consumer finds an emotional connection with the brand that represents loyalty. Finally, through brand loyalty, competitive advantage can be considered the end of development.

In this study, the current status of the Persepolis Club brand was analyzed. The current situation could be better. This gap will only be filled by a serious determination from the country's top decision-makers and legislators and pressure from the pro-democracy community and the media. If it can be provided in appropriate contexts according to the identified propellants, the Persepolis Club brand will be in good condition. Otherwise, if the current trend continues and there is no fundamental thought from the rational, the elites, and the powerful, the current situation is not viable. It will be deteriorated and destroyed, and small and nonessential measures are a dwelling that will only delay this destruction. Based on the results of the research, it was generally determined that the components of "improving brand equity, marketing activities, economic dimension, social responsibility" are among the key drivers of the Persepolis Club brand sustainability in the future because they both have recorded high importance and uncertainty for themselves. Accordingly, using them in future planning and determining possible scenarios ahead is necessary. Some limitations in this study should be considered when generalizing the results. The first limitation is that only PEST, DIGEST, and STEEP models are used to identify the critical factors in future studies, which have yet to be used because the mentioned models could not cover sports. Sports and gym-specific technical issues and practical topics have been presented without classification and clustering. Another area for improvement is that this research merely reflects the views of club experts and university professors, so it is impossible to generalize their views to all stakeholders in the club's field. Based on this, it is suggested that future researchers design and validate models specific to future sports studies and investigate the views of all the stakeholders of Premier League clubs about factors affecting the future in a survey study.

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عوامل کلیدی پایداری برند باشگاه پرسپولیس

زهرا رجایی‌زاده^۱، علی اصغر درودیان^{۲*}، معصومه شهپازی^۳، شیوا آرافدا^۴

^۱ دانشجوی دکتری، گروه مدیریت ورزشی، واحد تهران شمال، دانشگاه آزاد اسلامی، تهران، ایران.
^۲ دانشیار، گروه تربیت بدنی، واحد تهران شمال، دانشگاه آزاد اسلامی، تهران، ایران.
^۳ استادیار، گروه علوم ورزشی، دانشگاه تربیت معلم شهید رجایی، تهران، ایران.
^۴ استادیار، گروه تربیت بدنی، واحد تهران شمال، دانشگاه آزاد اسلامی، تهران، ایران.

چکیده

هدف: امروزه قدرت یک برند حرف اول را در بازاریابی و جذب مشتری می‌زند زیرا اگر برندی ویژگی‌های مطلوبی داشته باشد، مصرف‌کننده ترغیب به خرید آن برند و مهمتر از آن وفادار ماندن می‌شود. این تحقیق با هدف شناسایی عوامل کلیدی پایداری برند باشگاه پرسپولیس انجام شد.

روش: این پژوهش از نظر راهبرد هدف‌گذاری کاربردی، تبیینی و روش آن توصیفی-تحلیلی و بر اساس روش‌های آینده پژوهی انجام شد. جامعه آماری این پژوهش را اساتید حوزه بازاریابی ورزشی، مسئولین بازاریابی باشگاه پرسپولیس و سازمان لیگ تشکیل دادند. انتخاب این افراد هدفمند و تعداد آنها ۱۵ نفر بوده است و به منظور شناسایی موضوعات موثر بر آینده پایداری برند باشگاه پرسپولیس از بررسی ادبیات و مصاحبه با کارشناسان استفاده شده است. بر این اساس ۱۵ مولفه نهایی مرتبط با آینده محرک‌های کلیدی پایداری برند پرسپولیس شناسایی شدند.

یافته‌ها: بر اساس یافته‌های پژوهش، چهار متغیر «بهبود ارزش ویژه برند، فعالیت‌های بازاریابی، بعد اقتصادی و مسئولیت اجتماعی» از جمله محرک‌های کلیدی پایداری برند باشگاه پرسپولیس در آینده هستند که همراه با درجه بالایی از عدم اطمینان هستند.

اصالت و ابتکار مقاله: بر این اساس، استفاده از آنها در برنامه‌ریزی‌های آتی و تعیین سناریوهای احتمالی پیش‌رو ضروری است. در مورد سناریوهای شناسایی شده باید بیان کرد که سناریوی شکوفای پتانسیل‌های برند باشگاه پرسپولیس می‌تواند بهترین حالت برای پایداری برند باشگاه پرسپولیس در آینده باشد که این موضوع یافته مهم این پژوهش است.

کلیدواژه

آینده پژوهی
باشگاه‌های ورزشی
پایداری برند
توسعه برند

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در حالی اولین شماره **نشریه کسبوکار در ورزش** را منتشر کردیم، که نشریه جایگاه خود را در بین محققان و داوران پیدا کرده و در سراسر جهان پذیرفته شده است. اگرچه بیشتر بازدیدکنندگان مقالات آن از کشورهای دیگر هستند، اما بازدید ماهانه آن بیش از ۴۰۰۰ نفر است که نیمی از آن از محققان خارج از کشور و از پنج قاره جهان هستند. امیدواریم با رعایت استانداردهای فرمی و محتوایی لازم بتوانیم در افزایش دید مقالات و نمایه شدن در پایگاه‌های تخصصی‌تری موفق‌تر باشیم. ابر واژگان مقالات نیز نشان می‌دهد که ما همچنان ملزم به رعایت محدوده مجله هستیم و توانسته‌ایم جایگاه تخصصی آن را حفظ کنیم. به یاری خداوند متعال و با همکاری مستمر همکاران و نویسندگان عزیز در نحوه برداشت خود موفق‌تر خواهیم بود.

بار دیگر از معاونت محترم پژوهشی **دانشگاه الزهراء(س)** و همکاران عزیزمان در این حوزه به خاطر همراهی و راهنمایی‌هایشان تشکر می‌کنیم. همچنین از مدیران محترم کمیسیون نشریات علمی وزارت علوم، تحقیقات و فناوری کمال تشکر و قدردانی را داریم و امیدواریم حمایت خود را از مجلات نوپای انگلیسی زبان حفظ نموده و همچنان به حمایت‌های فنی و مادی خود برای انتشار این‌گونه نشریات ادامه دهند. همچنین امیدواریم در راستای انتشار مقالات فنی و سایر فعالیت‌ها برای رشد این رشته و ارتقای سطح مقاله نویسی به زبان انگلیسی، همچنان دریافت مقالات تخصصی ارزشمند را ادامه دهیم.

- ۳۳ تحلیل کتاب‌سنجی شعار برند در گردشگری رویداد
فائزه عبدالله‌نژاد؛ رضا اندام؛ حسن بحر العلوم؛ مجتبی رجبی
- ۶۱ تأثیر کیفیت محصول اصلی بر عملکرد سازمانی با در نظر گرفتن نقش میانجی رضایت
هواداران (مطالعه موردی: باشگاه فوتبال پرسپولیس و استقلال)
مهدی پورحسین؛ ابراهیم علیدوست قهفرخی؛ مهرزاد حمیدی؛ خدیجه پورذبیح سرحمامی
- ۷۹ ارزش اقتصادی-تفریحی استادیوم آزادی از دیدگاه تماشاگران
بهزاد اکبرزاده؛ فریبا عسکریان؛ محمدرسول خدادادی؛ محمد خداوردی‌زاده
- ۹۹ مدل پارادایمی اخلاق فروش در کسب و کارهای ورزشی
علی قنبری؛ محمد سلطان‌حسینی؛ محسن وحدانی
- ۱۱۷ تحلیل الگوی فرهنگ حرفه‌ای در صنعت تنیس با نقش میانجی فرهنگ روانشناختی و
فرهنگ رسانه‌ای
جاسم محمد حمود؛ فاطمه عبدوی؛ محمدرسول خدادادی؛ ماجد خلیل خمیس
- ۱۳۹ عوامل کلیدی پایداری برند باشگاه پرسپولیس
زهرا رجایی‌زاده؛ علی‌اصغر درودیان؛ معصومه شهبازی؛ شیوا آزادفدا

نشریه

کسب و کار

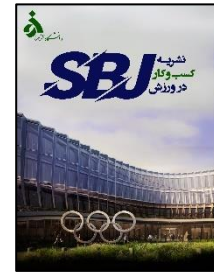
نشریه فصلنامه علمی

دانشگاه الزهرا (س)

دوره چهار، شماره دو، شماره پیاپی ۱۰

بهار ۱۴۰۳

در ورزش



صاحب امتیاز: دانشگاه الزهرا (س)

سردبیر: دکتر محمد احسانی

مدیرمسئول: دکتر ژاله معماری

مدیر اجرایی و صفحه‌آرا: مهری پوینده‌کیا

طراح جلد:

حمیدرضا عطاءاللهی

اعضای هیئت تحریریه

استاد مدیریت ورزشی، گروه تربیت بدنی و علوم ورزشی، دانشکده علوم انسانی، دانشگاه تربیت مدرس، تهران، ایران.

دکتر محمد احسانی

دپارتمان حرکت شناسی، کالج بروکلین، دانشگاه نیویورک، آمریکا.

دکتر محمد خبیبی

استاد گروه اقتصاد دانشگاه الزهرا (س)، تهران، ایران.

دکتر حسین رافغر

استاد گروه تربیت بدنی و علوم ورزشی، دانشکده علوم انسانی و اجتماعی، دانشگاه کردستان، کردستان، ایران.

دکتر سعید صلاقی بروجری

استاد استراتژی و نوآوری، دانشکده بازرگانی IPADE، دانشگاه پانامریکن مکزیکو سیتی، مکزیک.

دکتر اصغر افشار جهانشاهی

دانشیار مدیریت ورزشی، دانشکده تربیت بدنی و علوم ورزشی، دانشگاه تهران، تهران، ایران.

دکتر مهرزاد حمیدی

استاد مدیریت ورزشی، گروه مدیریت ورزشی، دانشکده علوم ورزشی و تندرستی، دانشگاه تهران، تهران، ایران.

دکتر فریبا عسکریان

دانشیار گروه مدیریت ورزشی، دانشکده علوم ورزشی، دانشگاه الزهرا (س)، تهران، ایران.

دکتر ناهید اتقیا

استاد مدیریت منابع انسانی در مدرسه عالی کسب و کار Centrum PUCP، دانشگاه پاپی کاتولیک پرو.

دکتر محمد موسی

استاد مدیریت ورزشی، دانشکده علوم ورزشی، دانشگاه فردوسی، مشهد، ایران.

دکتر مهی طلب‌پور

استاد برنامه مدیریت ورزشی در دانشگاه ایندیانا پنسیلوانیا، آمریکا.

دکتر ریچارد هلسو

دانشیار گروه مدیریت ورزشی، دانشکده علوم ورزشی، دانشگاه الزهرا (س)، تهران، ایران.

دکتر ژاله معماری

دانشیار مدیریت فناوری اطلاعات دانشگاه الزهرا (س)، تهران، ایران.

دکتر ندا عبدالوند

استاد مدیریت و ورزشی، دانشگاه محقق اردبیلی، اردبیل، ایران.

دکتر مهرزاد محرم‌زاده

لیست داوران

مدیریت ورزشی دانشگاه کردستان استاد	دکتر سعید صلفی بروجردی
دانشگاه نیویورک آمریکا	دکتر محمد خبیری
دانشیار مدیریت فناوری اطلاعات دانشگاه الزهرا (س)	دکتر ناهیدالوند
استاد مدیریت ورزشی دانشگاه تهران	دکتر ابراهیم علیدوست قهفرخی
- دانشیار مدیریت ورزشی دانشگاه صنعتی شاهرود	دکتر رضا انام
- دانشیار مدیریت ورزشی دانشگاه الزهرا (س)	دکتر ناهید تقیا
- دانشیار مدیریت ورزشی دانشگاه الزهرا (س)	دکتر زهرا معمای
- استادیار مدیریت ورزشی دانشگاه سبزوار	دکتر علی بنسیری
- دانشیار مدیریت ورزشی دانشگاه تربیت مدرس	دکتر رسول نوری سیدحسینی
- دانشیار مدیریت ورزشی دانشگاه خوارزمی	دکتر علیرضا الهی
استادیار دانشگاه زنجان، زنجان	دکتر حسن قره خانی
- استادیار مدیریت ورزشی دانشگاه تبریز	دکتر وجهه جوئی
- دانشیار مدیریت ورزشی دانشگاه الزهرا (س)	دکتر مریم مختاری دینکی
- استادیار مدیریت ورزشی دانشگاه اراک	دکتر زینب مندعلی زکاه
- استادیار مدیریت ورزشی دانشگاه خوارزمی	دکتر محمد حسن پیمان فر
استادیار مدیریت ورزشی دانشگاه تربیت مدرس	دکتر مرجان صفای
- استادیار مدیریت ورزشی دانشگاه ارومیه	دکتر رقیه سرلاب
- استادیار مدیریت ورزشی دانشگاه تهران	دکتر احسان محمدی ترکمانی
- استاد مدیریت ورزشی دانشگاه مازندران	دکتر مرتضی دوستی
- استادیار مدیریت ورزشی دانشگاه پیام نور	دکتر علی کریمی
- استادیار مدیریت ورزشی دانشگاه فردوسی مشهد	دکتر سیدمرتضی عظیمزکاه
- استادیار مدیریت ورزشی دانشگاه الزهرا (س)	دکتر مریم بهیر
- دکترای مدیریت ورزشی	دکتر مریم نیازی تبار
- دکترای مدیریت ورزشی	دکتر مریم فلاح کاظمی
- دکترای مدیریت ورزشی	دکتر علی ناظمی
- دکترای مدیریت ورزشی	دکتر رحیم خسرومنش

نشریه

کسب و کار

در ورزش

نشریه فصلنامه علمی دانشگاه الزهرا (س)

دوره چهارم، شماره دو، شماره پیاپی ۱۰

بهار ۱۴۰۳

آدرس: ایران، تهران، میدان شیخ بهایی، خیابان ده ونک، دانشگاه الزهرا (س)

• تلفن: +۹۸۲۱۸۸۰۴۱۴۶۸

• فاکس: +۹۸۲۱۸۸۰۳۰۶۶۱

• کدپستی: ۱۹۹۳۸۹۳۹۷۳

• آدرس سایت دانشگاه: www.alzahra.ac.ir

ایمیل نشریه: Sportbj@alzahra.ac.ir

ایمیل پشتیبانی: Supportsbj@alzahra.ac.ir

وب سایت نشریه: <https://sbj.alzahra.ac.ir/>