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Presentation of the Development Model of Branding of Clubs in the Premier Football League of Isfahan Province

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Article type: Research Article</p> <p>Received: 13 May 2023</p> <p>Accepted: 25 May 2023</p> <p>Published online: 30 June 2023</p>	<p>The purpose of this research is to provide a branding model for clubs in the premier football league of Isfahan province. The method of this research was descriptive and causal, which was carried out by survey method. The statistical sample is determined after estimating the statistical population using Cochran's formula. The field of study of this research is the Premier League clubs of Isfahan province. The statistical population of the research includes all the professors (doctoral students) who have opinions in the field of marketing and sports branding, and the managers and experts of the Premier League football clubs in the study area. 384 people were considered as a statistical sample; Sampling was done randomly. Based on this, 384 questionnaires were distributed, of which 316 questionnaires were completely referred (return rate: 81%). The results of the second-order factor analysis showed that there is agreement between the experimental data and the conceptual model of the research; Therefore, the model of factors affecting the development of branding of Isfahan Premier League clubs was confirmed in the form of 4 factors, including performance (11 indicators), brand image and value (10 indicators), fan satisfaction (12 indicators) and service delivery (3 indicators) .Finally, based on the results of Friedman's test in ranking the factors, team performance was identified as the most important factor; Therefore, for the development of the club's brand, managers of football clubs must adopt strategies to improve the club's performance.</p>
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Introduction

Currently, in developed countries, the issue of health and recreation is a very important industry, an effective factor in the growth and development of the national economy of countries. The industry has expanded its roots quickly throughout the world. So that billions of people benefit from it. At present, exercise, both practical and theoretical, plays a key role in the production and consumption of sports and services and the economic development of different societies. In recent years, football sport has been made to a money industry that is highly attractive it is always at the forefront of the audio and video media, business companies and Owners of other industries are located. Clubs are the most important part of the football industry that the industry's life continues to be very dependent on clubs in football. When they will be able to survive when they can afford their expenses and income nowadays, football has become a business from a simple sport to a business and has come up with other existing industries and professions (Zolfaghari et al., 2022).

The football industry accounts for about 9% of the world's exchange and trade, so that in recent decades, football has become a multi-billion dollar industry, and today, for many people in the world, the world without football is unimaginable. The number of FIFA member countries 202 is more than the number of UN member countries 192 (Andre & Szymanski, 2006). From the past until now, there has been a growing trend in branding. The purpose of branding is to create a favorable situation for the organization's brand through its various stakeholders. A brand is a name, phrase or term, sign, sign, symbol (such as a logo or packaging design) or a combination of them whose purpose is to introduce a product or service that a seller, or a group of sellers offer, and thus they are among the products of companies that differentiate competitors (Naghshzan Khajouie et al., 2021). This has caused brand strategies to have a special place in the organization's macro strategy. From the point of view of brand management, it is necessary to create a general picture of the brand position, brand values and its communication in all the definitions of the processes related to the field of human resource attraction and maintenance, organizational structures, etc., and maintain it with intelligent management (Chernatony, 2010). When branding is used in sports, it means that a product or service like a Sport, a type of event (World Cup or Olympics), a person (athlete or coach) or a sports organization (club or federation) can be perceived as a brand. At the same time, the fans can be considered as consumers of these brands considered (Amoozadeh et al., 2020).

The success or failure of sports leagues in the branding process will have a significant effect on the promotion or decline of the brand of the member clubs. The sharp increase in commercial competition between sports institutions with each other and with other entertainment options to gain more market share, the effective role of branding in this issue, the focus of sports branding literature on clubs (Nazemi et al., 2020). Branding is an approach that should be comprehensively implemented in the institution or organization. This requires coherence and coordination between different units of an organization or institution, which forces managers to continuously examine the appropriateness of brand principles and assumptions (Benito & Sanchez, 2014). Sports teams generally cooperate with each other to build their brand, for example, Nike is working with Barcelona, Manchester United and Inter Milan, and Adidas is working with Real Madrid, Chelsea and AC Milan. Sponsors and equipment manufacturers are looking for ways to synergize with sports teams that can use brands active in the international market (Abdolmaleki & Babaei, 2021). Therefore, paying attention to the dimensions of brand management of teams and sports clubs as attractive brands who are looking to promote their place in competition with other brands improve their athletic and financial performance. Paying attention to winning management tools such as brand personality, brand preference, and loyalty to brand management improvement in the field of sports industry be considered. Brand loyalty is a profound commitment to buy and re -support product or service It is pleasant that despite the environmental impacts and other competitors' performance. A professional attitude toward the team should be in a way that encourages him to support the continued and intense support of his favorite team. Lead to committed behavior towards the sports team. The purpose of the current research is to identify and validate the effective strategies on branding of the Premier Football League of Isfahan province. So far, the researchers conducted in this field have investigated the influencing factors in this field. In today's businesses, the use of the brand and its management is considered one of the important indicators that leads to the improvement of the marketing and economic situation. The results obtained from the research and design of the Premier Football League branding model can be used by individuals and institutions including the Premier Football League organization, Premier Football League clubs, the Football Federation, Premier

League sponsors, investors, etc. Small to improve the country's sports conditions. As big clubs become more global and rich, small clubs have to compete and Even their survival is challenged and this is the importance of entering the industry cycle and branding process to become a reliable business brand, it makes it more visible for sports teams. In order to attract fans and generate more income, Iranian football clubs should transform themselves into a reliable brand to attract the attention of the public and the media, as well as be attractive to commercial enterprises (Miri et al., 2021). The purpose of the present study is to identify and validate the strategies effective in the branding of Isfahan Premier League clubs. So far, research has been investigated in this field. In today's businesses, the use of brand and its management is one of the important indicators that improve marketing and economics. The results of the research and design of the Premier League branding model can be used by individuals and institutions including the Premier League organization, the Premier League clubs, the football federation, the Premier League sponsors, investors, and so on. Small to improve the country's sporting conditions. Although the concept of branding is widely used in the field of products and services, the branding of sports leagues is a relatively new concept. According to previous studies, the creation and development of a sports brand produces new resources of wealth and leads to new business opportunities. Also, increasing participation in the creation of a strong brand increases the number of people involved directly in entrepreneurship, and enhances entrepreneurial efforts. Branding in today's world is a competitive weapon. Branding is to add the power of a brand to products and services. Brand marketing is the creation of the necessary conditions to pay attention to the consumption of the company's existential ink through brand awareness tools and supplies such as logo, company mission statement, and strong and motivating slogans. Sports clubs should always improve the brand value of the brand in order to achieve the benefits of high brand-specific value. The first thing is that it attracts new customers and the other is as a reminder tool for the current customers to remember. The brand can be defined as a factor in the involvement .Of buyers and sellers in the process of long -term communication, which has a key role in establishing this connection. Therefore, the brand can be used as a tool for preserving current customers and as an offensive tool to attract new customers.

Research Methods

The research method in the current study is considered to be a type of survey research in terms of its practical purpose, in terms of descriptive type and in terms of data collection. In this research, the researcher identifies the effective factors on the development of the branding of the Premier League clubs of Isfahan province. In this research, the validity of the content and form of the questionnaire designed by prominent professors was confirmed and also to measure the reliability of the questionnaire, this questionnaire was given to a small sample (30 people) of the sample people, and after collecting, its Cranach's alpha coefficient It was equal to 0.77, which had a good reliability indicator. The field of study of this research is the Premier League clubs of Isfahan province. The statistical population of the research includes all the professors (doctoral students) who are experts in the field of marketing and sports branding, and the managers and experts of the soccer league clubs (Zob Ahan and Sepahan clubs) in the study area, and since the number of people in the community is not exactly known, the number 384 people were considered as a statistical sample; Sampling was also done as available. Based on this, 384 questionnaires were distributed, of which 316 questionnaires were completely referred (return rate: 81%). According to the pre-determined goals of the research, after identifying the effective factors on the development of branding of the Premier League clubs of Isfahan province and confirming the validity and content and reliability of the questionnaire, and after performing a second-order confirmatory factor analysis on the obtained data. Friedman's test was used to prioritize factors and components. AMOS and SPSS software were used to analyze the data.

Findings

The field of study of this research is the Premier League clubs of Isfahan province. The statistical population of the research includes all the professors (doctoral students) who have opinions in the field of marketing and sports branding, and the managers and experts of the Premier Football League clubs (Zob Ahan and Sepahan clubs) within the scope of the study. In this section, the demographic characteristics of the sample groups are examined and described according to the variables of job title, work experience and level of education. Since

knowing the general characteristics of the people participating in the research is important and necessary in understanding and interpreting the findings, therefore, in this research, information related to their basic characteristics has been collected. The results and findings of the research are as follows: The factors and indicators obtained for the branding of Premier League clubs in the subject area of the research are:

- The performance factor includes 11 items in the questionnaire
- Brand image and value factor including 10 items in the questionnaire
- The fan satisfaction factor includes 12 items in the questionnaire
- The service provider includes 3 items in the questionnaire

Based on the analysis and the final model of the research, the obtained factors and indicators are very important and related, which are comprehensive examples with high reliability for the branding of clubs in the field of the research subject. The findings of the research show that the effective factor on the development of the branding of the Premier League clubs of Isfahan province is the team's performance, followed by brand image and value, fan satisfaction and service delivery.

Table 1- Description of sample group based on job title

Indicator	Sub-index	Abundance	Percent
work experience	Less than 5 years	93	29.4%
	5 to 15 years	104	32.9%
	More than 15 years	119	37.6%
	no answer	0	0
-	Total	316	100%

The job titles of the sample group are presented in Table 1 As can be seen in this table, in the division of the sample group based on this characteristic, there are 26 people with the job title of university professor, 42 people are managers and experts, and 32 people are coaches, 28 people are master's and doctorate students in sports management, 44 people the players, and 144 fans are placed.

Table 2- Description of sample group based on job title

Indicator	Sub-index	Abundance	Percent
Job title	University professor	26	8.2%
	Manager and expert	42	13.3%
	Masters student and a doctorate in sports management	28	8.8%
	The coach	32	10.1%
	Player	44	13.9%
	Fan	144	45.3%
	No answer	0	0
-	Total	316	100%

The work history of the sample group is presented in table 2 As can be seen in this table, in the division of the sample group based on this feature, 29% have less than 5 years of experience, 33% have 5 to 15 years of experience, and 38% have more than 15 years of experience.

Table 3- Description of the sample group based on the level of education

Indicator	Sub-index	Abundance	Percent
Level of education	Undergraduate Diploma	54	17%
	Associate Degree	82	25.9%
	Bachelor's degree	91	28.7%
	Master's degree and higher	89	28.1%
-	No answer	0	0
-	Total	316	100%

The level of education of the sample group is presented in table 3 as can be seen in this table, 54 people are under diploma and diploma, 82 people equivalent to 25.9% have postgraduate degree, 91 people equivalent to 28.7% have bachelor degree, and 89 people equivalent to 28.1% have degree. They were masters and above. Confirmatory factor analysis examines whether the factors considered by the researcher really explain the variances of the observed variables according to the established pattern. In this method, the researcher assumes the relationship pattern using theoretical knowledge and then tests the hypothesis statistically. In fact, in this method, it is determined whether the questions or items included in a questionnaire are suitable for measuring each factor; therefore, in the current research, after developing the research questionnaire which was developed based on library studies and after confirming the reliability between the statistical sample of the second order confirmatory factor analysis in order to measure the identified items in relation to the factors affecting the development of the branding of the league clubs. The superiority of Isfahan province was used, and the results of the data analysis are presented below. In factor analysis, the degree of agreement between the experimental data and the conceptual model is of interest, and to know the degree of agreement between the experimental data and the conceptual model, indices and criteria are used, which are called goodness of fit indices. The indicators related to the fit of the model in relation to the model of the factors influencing the development of the branding of the Premier League clubs of Isfahan province are presented in table 4.

Table 4- Indicators related to model fit

Indicator	symbol	acceptable range	The value is obtained
Chi-square ratio to degree of freedom	X ² /DF	Smaller than 3	2.848
Comparative fit index	CFI	More than 0.9	0.906
Taker Lewis index	TLI	More than 0.9	0.917
Incremental fit index	IFI	More than 0.9	0.911
Normalized parsimonious fit index	PNFI	More than 0.5	0.541
The square root of the estimation of the variance of the error of approximation	RMSEA	Less than 0.08	0.078
parsimonious adaptive fit index	PCFI	More than 0.5	0.684

Based on the results of table 4, all the goodness of fit indices are in the acceptable range, so it can be concluded that there is agreement between the experimental data and the conceptual model. The model of factors affecting the development of branding of clubs in the Premier League of Isfahan province can be seen in Figure 5.

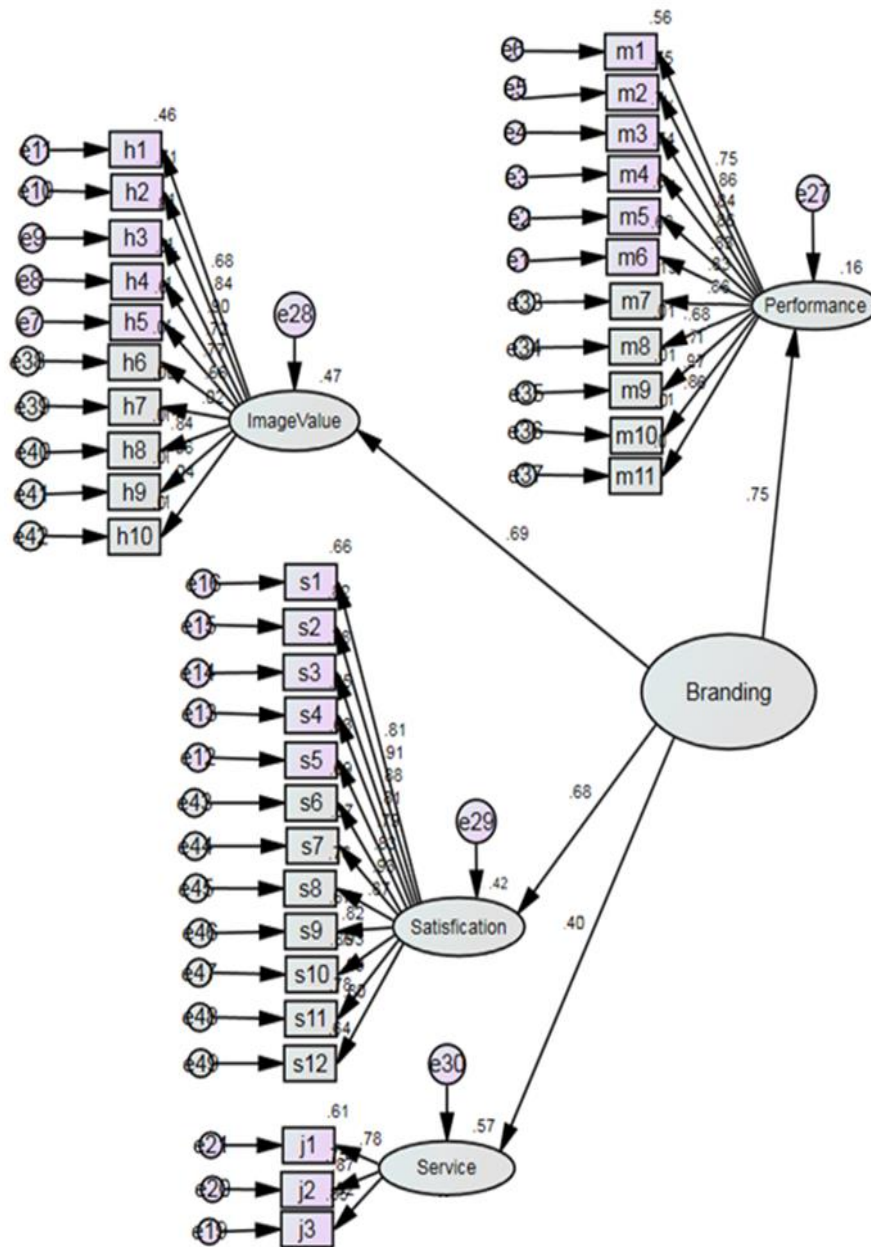


Figure 5. Second-order confirmatory factor analysis model in standard mode

Table 6- Regression weight of the branding development indicators of Isfahan Premier League clubs

Row	Related factors and indicators	Standard regression weight
Function		
1	The quality of my favorite team's games is very good.	0.751
2	My favorite club uses ethical strategies to differentiate itself from other clubs	0.863
3	My favorite club has star players who develop the club's brand.	0.839
4	My favorite club has star players who help improve the performance of their teammates.	0.855
5	My favorite team is doing well in the competition.	0.680
6	My favorite team has quality players.	0.831

7	My favorite team has a quality head coach.	0.861
8	The good management of my beloved club is remarkable	0.682
9	The managers of my favorite club do their best to improve the performance of the team and promote the brand.	0.714
10	My beloved club has a good championship history.	0.910
11	The good performance of my favorite team attracts sponsors.	0.865
Brand image and value		
1	The brand of my beloved club is unique in the competition with other domestic club brands	0.679
2	I am able to recognize the brand logo of my favorite club compared to other clubs.	0.843
3	When I think of the sport of football, I immediately remember the name of my favorite club.	0.870
4	My favorite club has an active presence on social media.	0.899
5	Some positive characters of my favorite team immediately come to my mind.	0.718
6	My beloved club has a high brand social status.	0.661
7	My beloved club has a positive social image.	0.920
8	My favorite club has a high brand value due to its star players.	0.843
9	My favorite team is a great team.	0.673
10	The stadium of my favorite club is in accordance with international standards.	0.941
The satisfaction of the fans		
1	My favorite club, compared to other Iranian football clubs, has a higher customer retention rate.	0.811
2	The commitment of the fans of my beloved team is very remarkable.	0.906
3	My favorite team has fans who have been supporting this team for years.	0.883
4	Many fans of my favorite team regularly follow the news of the team.	0.807
5	My beloved team has positive brand satisfaction.	0.793
6	The opinion of the fans of my beloved club is positive towards attending the stadium.	0.829
7	My favorite club pays special attention to the values desired by the fans.	0.932
8	My beloved club is very loyal to its fans.	0.827
9	My favorite team feels close to its fans.	0.819
10	I will always remain a loyal supporter of my beloved club.	0.927
11	Nothing can change my commitment to my beloved club.	0.885
12	Watching the games and matches of my favorite club is worth more to me than what I pay for it.	0.802
Providing services		
1	The sports products offered by my favorite club (such as clothes, hats, bags, etc.) are very	0.778

	good and of high quality.	
2	The services of my favorite club are remarkable compared to other clubs	0.866
3	My favorite club provides excellent service during matches.	0.923

As can be seen in table 6, the factors affecting the development of the branding of Isfahan Premier League clubs in the form of 4 factors, including performance 11 indicators, brand image and value 10 indicators, fan satisfaction 12 index and service provision 3 indices and a total of 36 indices were approved.

The results of Friedman's test:

Friedman's test is used to compare more than two groups or dependent or correlated distribution when the data is ranked or can be ranked. This test is mainly used to prioritize or rank variables. In the present study, Friedman's test was used to rank the effective factors on the development of branding of the Premier League clubs of Isfahan province. In order to compare the average data obtained from the opinions of the sample about the factors affecting the development of the branding of the Premier League clubs of Isfahan province, before the implementation of Friedman's test, a sample t-test was used; In this section, only factors whose scores are significantly higher than the average value will be used for prioritization. Before applying the t-test, a sample of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to ensure the normality of the data distribution. The results of comparing the average data obtained from the opinions of the sample about the factors affecting the development of the branding of the Premier League clubs of Isfahan province with the average value can be seen in Table 7.

Table 7- The results of the t-test sample

Agents	Average	t	df	Sig
Function	3.444	13.59	316	0.001
Brand image and value	3.229	10.92	315	0.001
The satisfaction of the fans	3.225	10.90	315	0.001
Providing services	3.108	8.34	316	0.001

As the results of the sample t-test in table 7 show, the average opinions of the respondents about all the factors are significantly higher than the average value 3; therefore, all factors were used in the ranking process. The results of Friedman's test, which shows the results of the ranking of factors affecting the development of the branding of clubs in the Premier League of Isfahan province, can be seen in Table 8.

Table 8- Friedman test results

Agents	average rank	rank	X ²
Function	2.853	1	136.42
Brand image and value	2.782	2	
The satisfaction of the fans	2.778	3	
Providing services	2.380	4	

As the results in table 8 show, from the point of view of the respondents, the most important factor affecting the development of the branding of clubs in the Premier League of Isfahan Province was team performance, followed by brand image and brand value, and satisfaction. Fans and service providers are located.

Discussion

Football is the most popular sport in most countries. To the extent that many countries of the world have included it in the ranks of their national sports. The fact that the stadiums are full of fans in domestic, national, continental and international competitions and the competitions have millions of television viewers has introduced football as the most popular sport in the world. The football industry accounts for about 9% of the world's exchange and trade, so that in recent decades, football has become a multi-billion dollar industry, and today, for many people in the world, the world without football is unimaginable (Andre & Zimensky, 2006). According to the calculated psychometric indicators, this questionnaire can be suitable for evaluating the integrated marketing communication in the clubs of the professional football league of Iran and helping to improve their performance. One of the main factors obtained from the findings of the research is the special value of the brand in line with the development of the Premier League clubs' brand. In the scientific research of sports branding, Gladden and Milne (1999) did the first conceptualization of brand value in sports for American university sports teams, and after that, Charumbira (2016) adjusted and modified their model. Gladden and Funk (2002); Ross (2006); Bauer et al. (2008); Biscaia et al. (2013); and Kunkel et al. (2017) they have prayed. Richelieu (2003); Schilhaneck (2008); and Watkins (2014) have also presented different models for understanding branding in sports. Also among the other researchers conducted, we can refer to Joana César et al. (2020) research. Their findings show that social influence, entertainment, searching for information and rewards are the most relevant motivations for consumers to engage with brand-related content on Facebook. Entertainment, rewards and social influence are the main motivations influencing consumer interactions on Instagram. Group moderation was only confirmed in the impact of social influence on Facebook page content consumption. The inappropriateness of products or sports competitions may require changing its shape and design. To repeat the purchases of a sports customer, marketers can use two brand levers: the first lever: sports marketers design the marketing mix variables to increase customer satisfaction with more precision and tact, and the second lever: sports marketers reduce sports costs. Reduce the price for sports customers. Brand satisfaction leads to brand loyalty, and one of the distinctive features of brand loyal customers is always favoring one brand and turning away from other brands. In other words, loyal customers have a positive attitude and attitude towards repeat purchases in the future. Researchers believe that brand loyalty and brand preferences increase customers' purchase intention and make customers buy from the brand continuously (Yoo & Lee, 2000). In explaining these results, it can be said that customers feel closer to the brand they choose in terms of personality, and they define their personality through the brand they use and remain loyal to that brand and continue to buy from it. Don't show In this regard, the brand of Fouled Mubarak Siphon Premier League clubs is worthy; Pay special attention to the different personalities of people in their services and try to create a unique personality in their club in the long term. Pradhan et al. (2020) did a reasearch with title when fan engagement with sports club brands matters in sponsorship: influence of fan–brand personality congruence. They found them Sport fans engage themselves in several forms of behaviour to lend support to their favourite sport clubs. Brands, officially sponsoring these sport clubs, are keen on attracting and building relationships with these highly engaged club fans. Drawing on congruity theory, the study examines the influence of fan personality–sponsor brand personality (FP–BP) congruence on fan engagement with sport clubs, sponsor brand attitude, and purchase intention towards the sponsor brand. Data were collected from stadium spectators during professional football games ($n = 503$) in India. The findings indicate a positive influence of FP–BP congruence on sponsor brand attitude and brand purchase intention. The study reveals that in-role behaviours (such as buying tickets, watching club games, and BIRGing) and extra-role behaviours (such as wearing club apparel, displaying logo of club) are two necessary yet distinct components of fan engagement. Consequently, the study demonstrates that only in-role fan engagement with clubs significantly contributes to the formation of a favourable attitude towards the sponsor brand, whereas surprisingly, extra-role fan engagement does not. This study extends the stimulus–organism–response model to brand management literature by linking the brand personality and fan engagement concepts. Overall, this aids brand managers and sports clubs in cementing the engagement of fans with sponsor brands and clubs, respectively. The present research, with a qualitative-quantitative approach, has focused on the branding indicators of Isfahan Premier Football League clubs, specifically Fouled Mubarak Siphon and Sob Adan. This research has a prominent point of distinction compared to other similar researches, and that is that in the branding process

of the football league clubs of Isfahan province, from the most basic indicators to the most important ones, the model and final factors have been considered. The research is the result of examining 36 indicators part by part. Therefore, club managers, football experts, football coaches and other interested people in this matter can use the findings of this research along with other researchers conducted in this field, comprehensively and with high reliability to brand the league clubs. Pay attention to the superiority of football.

Conclusion

At the end of every research, the researcher must present the results of his work after testing the hypotheses. The results of the assumptions are also the foundations on which proposals are formed. Therefore, one of the important parts of research, which can actually be a way to turn theories into action for future success, is correct conclusions and appropriate suggestions. Conclusions that are based on correct analysis can solve the existing problems in the field of football club branding. The present research was conducted with the aim of branding the clubs of the premier football league of Isfahan province. Based on the analysis and the final model of the research, the obtained factors and indicators are very important and related, which are a comprehensive example with high reliability for the branding of clubs in the field of the research subject. The findings of the research show that the effective factor on the development of the branding of the Premier League clubs of Isfahan province is the team's performance, followed by brand image and value, fan satisfaction and service delivery.

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Conflicts of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

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