



# The Co-Creation Model of the Brand Value for Professional Football Clubs and the Consequences

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## ABSTRACT

This study aimed to develop a model of the factors influencing the co-creation of brand value for professional football clubs and its consequences. This research was applied in nature and qualitative in method. The research population included sports management and marketing professors, and experts, as well as managers, vice presidents, and coaches from professional sports clubs. 23 individuals were selected using theoretical sampling. Data was collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews and was analyzed using grounded theory (Glazer method). The research revealed 385 primary codes in the open coding stage, which were then condensed into 93 more abstract concepts and 11 main categories in the selective coding stage. These were further categorized into two general categories: "factors influencing the co-creation of brand value for professional football clubs," consisting of 6 components, and "implications for the co-creation of brand value for professional football clubs," consisting of 5 components. In the theoretical coding stage, the final model of the research was developed. The findings suggest that managers and officials should develop appropriate strategies and take action to promote the co-creation of brand value for professional football clubs to reap its numerous benefits across various club departments.

## Introduction

In today's business environment, many organizations prioritize building strong brands as their top marketing focus due to the significant benefits it provides. Meanwhile, the concept of value and its importance in business services has always been an area of interest for marketing company managers and researchers (Cambra-Fierro et al., 2017). In recent decades, advancements in technology have led to significant changes in the way businesses operate and create value. Companies have shifted their focus from traditional, product-centered systems to customer-centered product and service systems, where value is created through a mutually beneficial interaction between the company and the consumer (Kim & Byon, 2018).

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Co-creation is a vital aspect of service management and marketing as it involves the active involvement of consumers and other relevant actors in creating value within network ecosystems. This approach is a powerful tool for increasing customer satisfaction, service demand, and profitability (Hewer et al., 2017). Value co-creation is a business strategy that emphasizes creating shared value between organizations and customers (Kim et al., 2020). Despite the widely recognized benefits of building strong customer relationships and creating customer value, there's a noticeable absence of an appropriate conceptual and theoretical framework in this area in our country (Ghaffari et al., 2021). Research findings suggest that interpersonal interactions significantly impact customers' evaluation of service providers, influencing their support decisions. The lack of interaction and cooperation with customers often leads to negative word-of-mouth advertising and reduced customer retention. Active interactions with customers are crucial for companies to understand their needs and demands and for successful new product development and market growth. Despite its importance, interaction with customers has received less attention than it deserves as an essential component of service provision (Kolyperas et al., 2016). In the field of modern marketing, creating value for customers is of paramount importance. This value-creation process requires the active involvement of all stakeholders and entails organizations leveraging their resources and facilities to foster value through customer interactions (Chanavat, 2017). In the highly competitive sports industry, it is imperative for sports service providers to engage customers in the value-creation process. This involves collaborating with fans, managers, employees, and other stakeholders to co-create products and services, thus establishing a brand that holds significance for all parties involved (Alvarez & Fournier, 2016). Ultimately, for sports clubs, the enduring loyalty of their supporters, who are akin to customers, is the true measure of success, surpassing mere fan and sponsor attraction. Therefore, measures should be taken to ensure that supporters are motivated to stay loyal to the team. Enhancing the team's brand can significantly contribute to its growth and secure long-term backing (Abeza et al., 2020).

In today's world, sports clubs are grappling with rising costs and fierce competition for sports capital, including players, coaches, and sports facilities. Seeking to maximize their revenue, clubs are turning to their brand as a valuable asset. Football clubs and federations worldwide have discovered alternative revenue streams beyond television broadcasting rights, ticket sales, and off-field advertising. Failing to capitalize on their club brand for income generation could lead to significant challenges, as it is one of the most crucial resources for any club (Hollebeek & Chen, 2014). Branding has emerged as a highly lucrative trend and the cornerstone of the current economy. In the sports industry, every team can be regarded as a brand, with their fans representing valuable assets. Consequently, brand managers in this industry can employ branding strategies to optimize the team's reach and profitability (Benesbordi et al., 2017). As stated by economics and management researchers, a company's brand is a critical asset. This implies that a company's value is not confined to its physical assets but also resides in the minds of potential customers. While a product's price reflects its monetary value, the brand introduces the product and emphasizes its unique features (Richelieu & Desbordes, 2013).

Branding is the most lucrative process and serves as the cornerstone of the current economy. During periods of recession and crisis, strong brands tend to experience less decline and challenges due to their established consumer trust. In the sports industry, successful marketing programs hinge on fans' loyalty to their favorite team's brand (Heinonen et al., 2019). Brands play a crucial role in identifying a company's products in today's expanding market. Building a strong brand is the ultimate goal of many organizations, including professional sports clubs. They are now more valuable than all club assets and they increase the economic and strategic value of their owners. However, marketing managers need to plan carefully when creating and maintaining a brand, as a lack of planning can lead to various problems for companies and clubs (ROŞCA, 2013).

Football clubs have undergone significant changes in recent years due to the internationalization of the sports industry. While sports funds used to dominate the nature of football clubs in the past, nowadays, clubs focus on commercial goals as well. This means that football clubs don't only compete in the sports arena but also in the economic and income-generating arenas. In other words, the nature of clubs has shifted from a cultural and social aspect that mostly followed sports goals to a mainly economic nature. As a result, football clubs strive to earn money outside the green

rectangle and on a much wider scale, in addition to fighting for points and wins on the field (Pinho et al., 2014). Various studies have explored the variables of the current research. Some of these are mentioned below. In their 2020 research, Haghghi et al. delved into the co-creation of brands in football and identified prerequisites such as service development, communication skills, and human resource management (Haghghi et al., 2022). Rasooli et al. (2019) study focused on brand management of Iran's premier football league clubs, emphasizing external influencing factors such as media, technology, economy, and competitors (Rasooli et al., 2019). Kazemipour et al. (2022) investigation examined the internationalization of football club brands, categorizing factors affecting this issue into internal, middle, and external environments (Kazemipour et al., 2022). In their respective studies, Zhang and Jang (2022) and Bjerke et al. (2021) delved into the topic of brand value co-creation in sports events (Bjerke & Naess, 2021). They found that the organizers of these events and the attending tourists are the primary beneficiaries. Emphasizing the importance of prioritizing the interests of all stakeholders, they highlighted the significance of brand value co-creation. Additionally, Kolyperas et al. (2016) and Seifi Salmi et al. (2019) investigated the role of sports fans in value creation (Kolyperas et al., 2016; Seifi Salmi et al., 2019). They underscored the diverse actors in the sports industry who collaborate to create value, including sports brands, athletes, media, government, business partners, and sponsors. Given the significant role of professional football clubs in the growth of the industry and the lack of research attention to this topic, this study aims to evaluate and develop a model for the collaborative creation of brand value for professional football clubs.

## **Methodology**

The purpose of this study was to design a model of the factors that co-create the brand value of professional football clubs and its consequences.

The research was qualitative and applied in nature. Due to the lack of theoretical foundations, gaining sufficient knowledge about the important indicators related to the problem and their relationship with each other was not possible. Therefore, the qualitative approach and the "Grounded Theory" method served as the foundation of the work. This method encompasses three approaches: the "systematic approach" by Strauss & Corbin, the "emergent approach" by Glaser, and the "constructivist approach" presented by Charmaz. Glaser's approach was chosen for this research as it provides broader and more diverse patterns for data integration. Instead of imposing theory on data, it explores theory from within the data. Compared to the other two approaches, it is unstructured. The research population comprises experts and specialists with scientific, executive, or scientific-executive backgrounds related to brand value co-creation, brand development in sports, professional sports clubs, and related topics. This includes professors of sports management and marketing, football experts, managers, vice presidents of professional sports clubs, and professional football coaches. The research utilized Theoretical Sampling, a method combining Purposive Sampling and snowball sampling, with 23 individuals from the statistical population being interviewed. Each interview lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes, depending on the depth of discussion required and the availability of the interviewee. Repetition in received information was observed from the 18th interview onwards, and theoretical saturation was reached after the 20th interview. The data was analyzed using the Glaser approach, involving open coding, selective coding, and theoretical coding gauge validity, the research findings were shared with participants, who then reviewed the proposed model and provided their feedback. To verify the validity and reliability of this study, using the concept of trustworthiness and its multiple elements (credibility, transferability, confirmability, and reliability), several methods were used in this field. These methods include confirming the results by referring to the subjects (credibility), reviewing at the time of coding (transferability), and confirming the research colleagues (confirmability); Also, to examine the reliability of the study, the intra-subject agreement method was used. To do this, five interviews were selected from the overall conducted interviews, and two researchers with expertise in the research field were invited to serve as coders. During each interview, similar codes were designated as agreement, while dissimilar codes were marked as disagreement. Subsequently, the

research's accuracy and reliability were evaluated using a specific formula, and the results are detailed in Table 1. All data required for analysis was collected in late 2023 and early 2024.

$$\text{Intra – subject agreement percentage} = \frac{\text{Number of agreements} \times 2}{\text{Total number of codes}} \times 100\%$$

**Table 1.** Reliability calculation by intra-subject agreement method

Row	The title of the interview	Number of codes	Number of agreements	Number of disagreements	Reliability (percentage)
1	The Fourth	41	16	9	<b>%78</b>
2	The ninth	32	14	4	<b>%87</b>
3	The eighteenth	29	11	7	<b>%75</b>
4	The twentieth	37	14	9	<b>%75</b>
5	The twenty-third	24	10	4	<b>%83</b>
	Total	163	65	33	<b>%79</b>

According to Table number (1), the reliability obtained in the intra-subject agreement method using the mentioned formula is 79%, which is higher than 60%; Therefore, the reliability of coding is confirmed.

## Results

Demographic information related to the statistical sample of the research is presented in Table (2).

**Table 2.** Demographic information of the research sample

Index (feature)	Sub-index	Abundance	Percent
<b>Age</b>	30 years and less	2	8.70
	31 to 40 years	8	34.78
	41 to 50 years	6	26.08
	51 years and above	7	30.43
<b>Gender</b>	Male	19	82.60
	Female	4	17.39
<b>Education</b>	Bachelor's degree	4	17.40
	Master's degree	4	17.40
	Doctorate	15	65.21
<b>Work Experience</b>	10 years and less	2	8.70
	11 to 20 years	8	34.78
	21 to 30 years	13	56.52
<b>Total</b>		23	100

In the initial stage, each interview transcript was meticulously prepared and analyzed word by word. This thorough process was applied to all the interviews. During the selective coding stage, the data from the open coding phase were categorized based on thematic and conceptual similarity. This process continued until comprehensive and abstract concepts were assigned to each category. In this specific research, the central category identified was the "co-creation of the brand value of professional football clubs." After completing the open and selective coding stages, a total of 385 initial codes were extracted from the 23 interview transcripts. Through analysis and classification, 93 more abstract concepts were identified, and finally, 11 main categories were determined. These categories and concepts were then divided into two general categories: "factors affecting the co-creation of the brand value of professional football clubs" and "consequences of the co-creation of the brand value of professional football clubs." Table (3) provides an overview of the concepts and categories related to the factors influencing the co-creation of the brand value of professional football clubs.

**Table 3.** Findings from open and selective coding in relation to "factors influencing the co-creation of the brand value of professional football clubs"

Row	Concepts	Categories	
1	Developing suitable marketing plans for football clubs	Marketing and service activities	
2	Attention to digital branding for football clubs		
3	Creating a virtual community for fans of football clubs		
4	Suitable advertising campaign for football clubs		
5	Identification of fans, spectators, and supporters of football clubs		
6	The quality of services provided to fans and spectators		
7	Variety of sports and non-sports services to fans, spectators, and fans of football clubs		
8	Feedback from fans and spectators of football clubs		
9	Flexible pricing regarding match tickets and other services provided by football clubs for fans and spectators		
10	Providing various discount plans regarding various services and goods provided by football clubs for fans and spectators		
11	Assessing the needs of fans, spectators, and fans of football clubs		
12	Management of ideas, suggestions, and criticisms provided by fans to football clubs		
13	Development of customized services for special fans		
14	Improving stadiums and improving facilities according to AFC standards		
15	Creating suitable spaces in stadiums and providing suitable physical facilities in them		
16	Providing ancillary services in stadiums		Organizational communication skills
17	Providing a space for recreation and entertainment for fans of football clubs and showing their matches in parks and public places		
18	Proper communication between football club agents (coach, players, managers, etc.) with fans and spectators		
19	Football clubs have various communication channels with fans		
20	Allocation of specialized managers in connection with football club fans		
21	Modeling world clubs in connection with fans		
22	Designing and rebuilding two-way communication channels between the club and its officials with the fans		
23	Recruitment and recruitment of experts in different parts of football clubs		
24	Knowledge management and keeping it updated in football clubs		
25	Teaching communication skills to fans	Organization	
26	Development of research and development management center		
27	Compilation of professional behaviors of managers, officials, and other people of different departments of football clubs		
28	Strengthening team performance and teamwork and presenting their performance reports		
29	Creating specific job descriptions in the areas of brand value co-creation in football clubs		
30	The existence of written programs in the field of brand value co-creation in football clubs		
31	Structuring areas of co-creation of the brand value of football clubs		
32	Transparency in the performance and financial actions of football		

Row	Concepts	Categories
	clubs	
33	Symbolization in professional football clubs and the creation of special and unique sports anthems and songs	Identification
34	Attention to brand elements such as logo, composition, color, acronym, slogan and typography, heritage, etc.	
35	Creating pleasant experiences in cyberspace such as sites and social networks	
36	Setting up a museum and exhibitions for professional football clubs	
37	Offering complimentary token merchandise to fans before entering stadiums and special events	
38	Development of social responsibility	
39	Creating common experiences between fans and football clubs	
40	The belief of managers and employees of football clubs in creating value	Cultivation
41	Emphasis on fan-centricity in club meetings	
42	Implementation of incentive programs in value co-creation (giving rewards to employees, fans, etc.)	
43	Planning and appropriate actions regarding the fight against racial discrimination and hooliganism	
44	Using cultural symbols and slogans in different club sections	
45	Developing the necessary standards of fan culture (culture of protest, support, purchase, etc.)	
46	Choosing suitable and moral leaders	
47	Allocating a part of the budget of football clubs to culture	
48	Development of communication systems with fans of professional football clubs	Development of information technology
49	Customization of applications based on fans' needs (displaying the stadium map, displaying player characteristics, sports rules and regulations, etc.)	
50	The existence of appropriate technical infrastructure	
51	Strengthening communication channels between fans and football clubs	
52	Designing a mechanism to manage the network of fans of football clubs	
53	Creating suitable software for the communication system with fans and keeping them up-to-date	
54	Creating a database regarding fans	
55	Internet infrastructure for satellite fans, etc.	
56	Strengthening the mass media of football clubs, such as newspapers, magazines, radio, television, etc.	
57	Development of websites and virtual pages of soccer clubs in multiple languages, and providing entertaining and engaging content	
58	Collaborative exchanges of football clubs and their officials with various mass media	

Based on the findings in Table 3, six main categories have been identified as influencing the co-creation of the brand value of professional football clubs. These categories include "marketing and service activities", "organizational communication skills", "organization", "identity", "culture", and

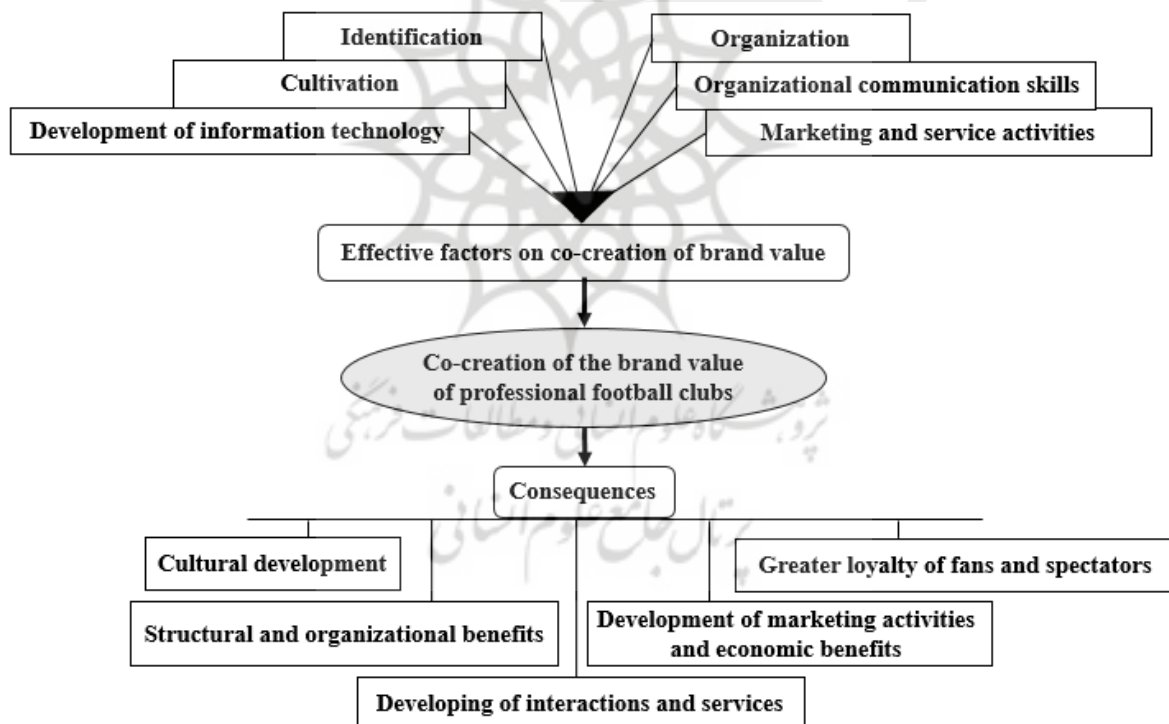
"information technology development", encompassing a total of 58 concepts. Furthermore, Table 4 presents the concepts and categories resulting from the data analysis in the real coding stage about the "consequences of the co-creation of the brand value of professional football clubs", with a total of 35 extracted concepts.

**Table 4.** Findings from open and selective coding regarding the consequences of the co-creation of the brand value of professional football clubs.

Row	Concepts	Categories	
1	Increasing word-of-mouth advertising about the club and its performance by fans	Greater loyalty of fans and spectators	
2	Active and wider presence of fans and spectators in football stadiums		
3	Increasing the membership of football club fans in their fan club		
4	Increasing fans' acceptance and use of various services and goods provided by professional football clubs	Development of interactions and services	
5	Providing more feedback from fans to football clubs		
6	Making suggestions to improve the current situation of the club		
7	Establishing and expanding positive and constructive communication between fans and spectators with football clubs		
8	Encouraging and attracting other people to participate in football actively		
9	Developing respect for players, coaches, and club staff		
10	More effective communication between football club officials and organizers of national and international competitions and events		
11	Unification of fans against competitors		
12	More accurate understanding of the needs and demands of fans and spectators of the club		
13	Help customize the services provided by football clubs to fans		
14	Helping to attract more powerful and important sponsors		
15	Knowledge sharing between fans and professional football clubs		
16	More adherence of fans and club officials to ethics and its various aspects		
17	Greater and wider participation in charitable activities for the benefit of clubs		
18	Greater control of destructive behaviors		
19	Transferring the right culture to other fans and spectators		
20	Better and more accurate exploitation of the best ideas		Development of marketing activities and economic benefits
21	Collecting resources and benefiting from them in different club areas		
22	Wider attention of various domestic and foreign media to the performance of the clubs and the broadcasting of their events and matches		
23	Reducing the marketing costs of professional football clubs		
24	Increasing market share for professional football clubs		
25	Attract more and more important investors		
26	Promotion of the special value of the brand of professional football clubs	Structural and organizational benefits	
27	Hosting big sports events or participating in them		
28	Improving the quality and attractiveness of domestic leagues and foreign competitions		
29	Wider production of new services and goods by football clubs		

Row	Concepts	Categories
30	Identity building for football clubs and their coaches, players, staff and fans	
31	Transferring the culture, morals, and character of Pahlavi to the fans	Cultural development
32	Increasing urban and national pride and national and international respect	
33	Increasing vitality and general satisfaction	
34	Development of social responsibilities of professional football clubs	
35	Increasing the intention to watch league games and international club matches, etc.	

Based on the findings from Table 4, the study has identified 5 main categories related to the co-creation of brand value by professional football clubs. These categories include "more loyalty of fans and spectators", "development of interactions and services", "development of marketing activities and economic benefits", "structural and organizational benefits", and "cultural development", resulting in a total of 35 concepts. The third and final step of the coding process is theoretical coding, which is crucial for theory development. This stage builds on the results of the previous two stages (open coding and selective coding) and focuses on producing theory based on the preliminary categories and relationships between them. The final research model is illustrated in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Model of co-creation of brand value of professional football clubs

## Discussion and Conclusion

The concept of co-creation has been pivotal in-service management and marketing. It entails actively involving consumers and other relevant actors in creating value within network ecosystems. This approach is a powerful tool for enhancing customer satisfaction, driving service demand, and increasing profitability. Value co-creation is a progressive business strategy that emphasizes the continuous creation and recognition of shared values between organizations and

their customers, ultimately leading to a larger base of loyal customers (Kim et al., 2020). Co-creation and destruction of value can occur simultaneously. In the realm of sports services, the delivery of value has shifted towards the co-creation of value. Due to its unique nature, sport provides a distinct context. Various factors play a significant role in the interaction, coexistence, and creation of brand value in sports, particularly in sports clubs. These factors include sports stars, media, states, business partners and financial sponsors, charities, and, of course, the fans (Mohammadi et al., 2021). Research findings have revealed that several factors influence the co-creation of brand value for professional football clubs. Among these factors, the development of effective marketing strategies stands out as particularly significant. In today's digital landscape, it is imperative for clubs to leverage social media and virtual platforms to enhance their brand value. By providing fans with relevant information and engaging with them to improve satisfaction and loyalty, clubs can effectively expand their brand value. Implementing well-crafted advertising campaigns is also crucial for professional football clubs to co-create their brand value. The research conducted by Kazemipour et al. (2022), Byon et al. (2022), and Bjerke et al. (2021) all confirms the effectiveness of advertising campaigns in engaging fans and increasing brand awareness. For professional football clubs, maintaining service quality consistent with the club's reputation, status, and value is crucial in co-creating brand value. Football events attract a diverse audience, and it's important for clubs to offer a range of sports and non-sports services to meet the varied needs of their fans. Ensuring diversity among fans and setting reasonable pricing for products and match tickets are essential considerations for clubs to make their events accessible to a wider audience. In addition, club managers and officials should provide a platform for receiving feedback from fans and spectators by devising appropriate plans and measures. This will not only encourage more fans but also increase their loyalty towards the respective club.

The state of football club stadiums and their facilities is a crucial factor that can significantly impact the satisfaction of fans and spectators, particularly during professional football matches. It's essential to ensure that these stadiums meet AFC standards concerning access, amenities, and ancillary services. Additionally, offering entertainment programs tailored to the audience can enhance the brand of professional football clubs. For those unable to attend matches in person, providing facilities such as public parks to watch club matches can also be considered as part of service development. These findings align with the research of Kolyperas et al. (2019) and Saifi Salemi et al. (2019), highlighting the importance of these points in their studies. Various research studies have affirmed the significance of human resources for both sporting and non-sporting organizations, including professional football clubs. Effective management of human resources is pivotal for cultivating a professional football club's brand value, as emphasized by the participants in this research. It is essential to consider the expertise and experience of the human resources utilized in the club's diverse departments. Additionally, it is crucial to outline the professional behaviors expected of managers, officials, and other personnel, emphasizing adherence to various standards.

The organization of a professional football club is instrumental in co-creating its brand value. This entails implementing written programs for brand value co-creation, structuring co-creation areas, and upholding financial transparency. Transparency in both financial and non-financial aspects is vital for the success of any organization, including football clubs. This fosters trust among fans and stakeholders and facilitates efficient management. The brand value of professional football clubs is influenced by various factors, including "identity building," which encompasses elements such as the logo, color, acronym, slogan, typography, and heritage. It is crucial to focus on these brand elements to yield valuable results, and it is essential to allocate appropriate budget and human resources for this purpose. Symbolization, through unique sports anthems and songs, is crucial for football clubs to distinguish themselves in today's highly competitive environment. Additionally, establishing museums and hosting exhibitions has emerged as a recent trend among professional football clubs, serving as a means to preserve the club's rich history. This practice is widespread among first-tier clubs globally. Creating shared experiences between fans and clubs, and enhancing virtual experiences on websites and social networks, has also garnered significant attention in recent years. Furthermore, professional football clubs are actively involved in social responsibility initiatives to bolster their brand and garner support through various forms of financial and non-

financial assistance. These findings are consistent with the research of Rasooli et al. (2019) and Haghighi et al. (2020), who emphasize the significance of these factors in their research.

When it comes to co-creating the brand value of professional football clubs, "culturalization" plays a vital role, too.

The organizational culture among managers, employees, athletes, coaches, and other individuals within clubs is a crucial consideration. The belief of football club managers and employees in creating value, emphasizing fan-centricity in club meetings, and implementing motivational programs for value co-creation, such as rewarding employees and fans, are all significant factors to be taken into account in shaping the club's culture. It is essential to plan and implement appropriate measures to address racial discrimination and hooliganism. This involves using cultural symbols and slogans in different sections of the club, establishing standards for fan culture (such as protest culture, support, and purchasing), selecting ethical leaders, and allocating a portion of the football club's budget to cultural development. These actions are pivotal for nurturing a healthy and positive club culture and should be given thoughtful consideration in cultural development. Furthermore, "information technology development" and "website and social media development" are also crucial components for co-creating the brand value of professional football clubs. Their significance should not be overlooked. Managing a football club's fan network is pivotal for its success. This involves establishing an efficient communication system to keep fans updated with the latest news and events, maintaining a comprehensive fan database, and creating an internet infrastructure for remote fans. Football clubs should also prioritize bolstering their mass media presence across various platforms such as newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and multilingual websites. Providing captivating content and fostering collaboration with other clubs and officials are essential steps to enhance the club's brand value and identity. These findings align with the research results of Haghighi et al. (2020) and Kazemipour et al. (2022), emphasizing the significance of these aspects in their respective studies. The effective management of knowledge and its application is a crucial factor for professional football clubs striving to operate at a world-class level. In large organizations, a dedicated research and development department is responsible for monitoring significant issues relevant to the organizational mission. Within professional football clubs, this department engages in various activities and should implement effective measures while considering budgetary constraints and the expertise of human resources. The outcomes of these efforts should be utilized across different club departments. Furthermore, human resource management officials should prioritize team performance and synergy, and should produce comprehensive reports on work output, fan engagement, and club management to yield positive results.

Recent research findings indicate that involving fans in co-creating the brand value of professional football clubs can yield significant positive consequences. These encompass enhanced fan loyalty and feedback, improved interactions, expanded services, increased responsibility, more effective marketing activities, structural benefits, economic growth, cultural development, and organizational improvements. Each of these areas comprises various indicators and sub-components. In order to enhance the brand value of professional football clubs, it is recommended to enlist specialized and experienced human resources across various club departments and provide the necessary conditions and facilities for co-creating their brand value. Moreover, clubs should aim to deliver high-quality services and facilities in both sports and non-sports sectors to fans and other stakeholders, thereby enhancing the co-creation of the club's brand with better quality and favorability. Furthermore, it is imperative to conduct meetings and provide explanations to ensure transparency and awareness among managers and officials, as well as to coordinate all work stages for successful cooperation in co-creating the brand value of professional football clubs. Establishing proper communication channels between managers, club officials, fans, leaders, and spectators is also paramount to allow them to express their opinions and suggestions, enabling the club to utilize their ideas and plans to improve performance.

## **Ethical Considerations**

**Compliance with ethical guidelines:** Ethical points have been observed.

**Funding:** No specific financial resources have been used.

**Authors' contribution:** All authors have contributed to the design and implementation of this study.

**Conflict of interest:** there is no conflict of interest.

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