

THE IMPACT OF DIFFERENT SPORT ACTIVITIES ON THE BRAND EQUITY OF FOOTBALL CLUBS

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previous work by You and Donthu (2001), Ross, James and Vargas (2006), and others. Cronbach's reliability analysis and exploratory factor analysis was used to extract different factors of brand equity: brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand associations and perceived quality. There was an attempt to follow Aaker's (1991) work on brand equity. Multiple linear regression was used to test the research framework and analyse the impact of each sport activity on the brand equity for each sport club.

Results, Discussion and Implications

An impressive 16.923 individuals completed the survey, corresponding to a response rate of 7.5%. Results show that different sports activities have a positive impact on the main brand equity. In addition, the emotional relationship with the brand is the strongest factor in explaining brand equity, even more so than football, the core sport activity of these clubs. These conclusions are aligned with previous studies stressing the relevance of the emotional relationship in brand building and development of positive attitudes towards the brand. Results also suggest that promotional support of brand extensions, on one hand, and perceived fit between the sports extension and the parent brand, on the other, are major drivers of brand equity. Therefore, club managers should keep these findings in mind when implementing strategies to reinforce the brand, for example by introducing new sports activities or developing existing ones.

Abstract

Aim of Paper

The Portuguese sports clubs -- Benfica, Porto and Sporting -- are well-known brands across Europe. These sports clubs have several activities that correspond, from a marketing perspective, to brand extensions. This paper examines brand equity and brand extensions, and identifies the impact of different sports activities on the equity of the main brand.

Theoretical Background

In Europe, the sport business in general and football in particular, is a lucrative industry. For example, each of the European top ten clubs generates revenues over €200 million each season. To survive the increasingly competitive marketplace, sports managers have to adopt brand management practices and position their brands in the minds of sponsors and fans, thus building relationships to gain or maintain brand equity (Gladden et al., 2001). Therefore, branding and brand management has become a main priority. Brand extensions and brand equity have captured the attention of academics (Keller & Lehmann, 2006) and practitioners alike. However, few studies have examined brand equity in the sport context. At the sports activity level, research into the brand equity is even scarcer, despite the fact that many clubs offer several activities, such as handball, swimming, basketball, and running. This is the case of Benfica, Porto and Sporting.

Methodology, Research Design and Data Analysis

A positivist approach was adopted and a quantitative methodology used for data collection and analysis. An invitation was sent to 225.459 individuals to respond to an online questionnaire early in 2009, after access to club's databases was granted. These individuals were fans, partners and supporters registered in the club's web sites. The questionnaire measures brand equity, brand extensions and respondents' emotional attachment to their favorite team. Scales and questions were drawn from

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