

Comparing the team identification and fans' social interaction on the team in the top four teams with the bottom four teams in the table of the football premier league

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ABSTRACT: The aim of this research was to compare the team identification and fans' social interaction on the team in the top four teams in the table with the bottom four teams in the table of the football premier league. The present research was of a correlation kind and was performed in the field form. The statistical universe included all fans of the top teams in the table (Foolad, Sepahan, Perpolis, Naft of Tehran,) and the bottom teams in the table (ZobAhan, Fajrsepari, Damash of Gilan, and Mes of Kerman) in 2013-2014. The statistical sample was selected among the fans attended sport stadia. Considering at least 9000 fans attended each play, the sample size according to Morgan Table was estimated 380 persons (each team : 190) and available sampling method was used. To collect data, the team identification questionnaire (Gay., 2009) with reliability coefficient (0/80) and social interaction (Gay , 2009) with reliability 0/85 were used. To analyze data, addition to descriptive statistical indexes, the statistical methods of ANOVA were used. The research results showed that the comparison of the team identification and fans' social interaction on the team in the top four teams with the bottom four teams in the table of the football premier league is a significant and positive relationship.

Keywords: team identification, social interaction, premier league, fans.

INTRODUCTION

Sport as a social process includes dynamic forces which can reinforce the existing elements in the social and cultural structures or change them in a new form by interacting with each other (Mohseni Tabrizi, 2004).

Among the various sports, football reflects the mentioned social processes more than the other sports. This popular sport has gradually transformed into an industry, a business, a science and importantly a "culture" and has distributed in the world wide on some specific patterns (Mesbahi pour, Iranian2002). Today, football is the most popular sport in the world. It has also the most players and fans in Iran (Asadi, 2009). In the attendance of ten thousands spectators in the stadia, we can find many various motivations. The fans support their own popular team materially and spiritually by their extensive attendance in the stadia. They finance a part of the team expenditures by buying the tickets. Additionally, the clubs spiritual value increases by their support and the companies compete with one another to attract the team sponsors and invest many material resources using publicity use (Walfare, 2008). Undoubtedly, the most important part of a sport event is the fans attendance in the stadium. In the world wide millions persons spend their time, energy and money to watch the plays (Masoumi, 2008).

The economic institutions and service organizations not only play the role of wealth producer, but also they are obliged to solving the social problems of their own society (Porter2011).

Identification means a degree by which a fan feels dependency on a team psychologically (Van, 1997). People who become unified strongly with a team depends on that team and would like describe themselves in the team conditions (Anderwood, 2001). The more strong identity in the group, the more persons want to describe themselves

in their membership conditions (Chen, 2007) and demonstrate the high level of personal commitment and emotional dependency on the group (Anderwood, 2001). And also, they demonstrate a supportive behavior of the group (Fisher, 1998). Considering the behavioral aspect, and also, they demonstrate a supportive behavior of the group (Fisher, 1998). The researchers also believe that the fans are considered as pillars of sport industry, because they provide athlete with a live and direct environment, so that the athlete cannot exhibit a good play in the competition (Khabiri, 2004). The dependency factor includes two components of fans' dependency and social dependency (Mlink, 1993).

The fans along with the other fans have a sense of commitment and dependency on a special team. They have an unimaginable commitment to the events, and also have some common interests, emotions and feelings to their team (Mlink, 1993). The team fans have some similar characteristics including common interests, emotions and feelings against their interested team (Mlink, 1993). The fans show their feelings and affects against the play, players and team through palming, screaming and performing regular movements altogether and finally take pleasure from the play (Chen, 2007). Horthon and Mack studied the relationship between sport identification and the hierarchy of the role identification in the adult Marathon runners. They found that there is no significance relationship between the degree of subjects' sport role identification in the hierarchical structure of the role identification and their sport identification. Based on his findings, Chezlak found that the athlete students, in spite of their strong and unique sport identification, considered their own family, educational, friendly and affective higher than sport identification.

Ross (2009) studied the effect of team identification on associations of hockey brand. The results related to the sample of 349 persons having season ticket showed the significance effects of the team identification on the brand associations. Determining the effect of loyalty on associations, managers and marketers can concentrate on some benefits of the team's specific characteristics which need reinforcing the reputation or increasing it (Ross, 2009).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present research is of descriptive – scanning kind and in terms of objective is functional. The statistical universe of research includes the fans of 8 teams of football premier league (2013- 2014). Considering there are millions of fans in throughout Iran, and on average about 9000 spectators attended clubs. For more confidence, the researcher selected his statistical sample only among spectators. The sample size was estimated 380 spectators by Morgan Table (each team 190). Considering the probability of fall and increasing generalizability among the fans of each team, 200 questionnaires were distributed and the available sampling method was used.

In this research, two inventories were used. The team identification inventory has been designed by Gay in 2009. It has 3 questions and has been arranged based on 5- point Likert. The questionnaire of the social interaction has been designed by Gay and has 3 questions and has been arranged based on 5-point scale. The questionnaire of team identification (Gay, 2009) with reliability 0.80 and that of the social interaction (Gay, 2009) with reliability 0.85 were used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- 1- Age: 51/2% fans have the age range of 18-24 and 8% were above 45.
- 2- Record of support: 38/5% and 9/2% fans have supported their popular team for 2-5 and 11-15 years, respectively.
- 3- Education: 37/2% and 17/6% fans were holder of diploma and M.A and higher level, respectively.
- 4- Attendance in one season: 37/8% spectators attend 1-3 times in the club and 17/6% of them, 7-10 times.
- 5- Following the plays: 68/ 5% spectators follow all plays of their popular team and 6/5% of them don't follow the plays of their own team.

In the following table, the results of Welch test are presented.

Table 1. the results of Welch test

static	df	Sig.
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welch 57.9 15 0.001

Table 2. The results of ANOVA test

		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
reputation	Between groups	539.045	15	33,936	58.128	0.001
	Within groups	9007.751	13352	0.679		
	total	9546.797	13367			
dependency	Between groups	400.930	15	24.729	39.235	0.001
	Within groups	11357.081	13352	0.878		
	total	11758.011	13367			

Given to the table 2 ANOVA is significant

Table 3. The results of Bonferrioni test

Sig. level	Average difference (I-J)	Bottom teams in the table	Top teams in the table
1.000	0.03	FajrSepasi	
0.001	0.41	Damashe of Gilan	Foolade of Khoozestan
1	0.82	Mes of Kerman	
1	-0.08	ZobAhan	
0.14	0.14	FajrSepasi	
0.001	0.28	Damash of Gilan	Pespolis
1	-0.04	Mes of Kerman	
0.003	-0.21	ZobAhan	
1,000	-0.09	FajrSepasi	
1,000	-0.20	Damash of Gilan	Naft of Tehran
0.001	-0,53	Mes of Kerman	
0.001	0.23	Zobahan	
0.001	0.27	FajrSepasi	
0.001	0.65	Damash of Gilan	Sepahan
0.001	0.32	Mes of Kerman	
1.000	0.03	FajrSepasi	

* shows difference is significance in the level $p \leq 0.05$

Considering the table 3, the comparison of the top teams in the table with the bottom teams is significant.

Discussion and conclusion

The aim of the present research was to compare the team identification and fans' social interaction in the top four teams and the bottom four teams in the table of the football premier league.

The findings showed that there is a positive and significant relationship in the comparison of team identification and fans' social interaction of the top four teams and the bottom four teams in the table of the football premier league.

The results of this research are associated with the results of Behnam, Ahmadi and Bakhshande (2013), Hasani and Heydarzade (2013), Walker (2010) and Abdolrahim (2011).

The results obtained showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between the teams of Foolad with Damsash, Perspolis with ZobAhan, Sepahan with Mesand Sepahan with Damash. It seems that the reputation management is an inseparable part of marketing and social communications. Nowadays companies, institutions and organizations have understood the importance of reputation and human and social communications and patterned upon it (Oliver Sandra 2009). It seems if there is a stronger identification in the group, more persons want to describe themselves in their membership conditions in the group (Chen 2007) and demonstrate their high level of personal commitment and emotional dependency with the group (Andrwood 2001). And also, they demonstrate a supportive behavior of the group (Fisher, 1998). And also, they demonstrate a supportive behavior of the group (Fisher, 1998).

One of the main effective factors on the team dependency is the team quality including the numbers of winnings, the numbers of star players, and the ability level to compete the other teams (Dis Chersour 2002; Pan 1999; Jang 1997). The fans are considered as a valuable human resource. Undoubtedly, maintaining this valuable resource and providing appropriate conditions are as the priorities of every club to protect its benefits. The sport fans along with the other fans have feelings of commitment and dependency on the specific team. They have an inconceivable commitment to the events and also have common interests and emotions and feelings against their own team (Melink, 1993). Some of fans assumes that they and the other fans of the same team are like the members of a group and the fans of the competitor team consider strange and unfamiliar. Therefore, when there is a sense of correlation and commitment between a fan and the other fans, they will intrinsically be biased against the competitor team

(Androud, 2001). The club managers can survey about the reputation and team dependency along with predetermined organizational regulations and level the club success path.

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