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Systematic Literature Review: Broadcasting and Product Life Cycle of Club Football (Soccer)

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Abstract

The broadcasting of club football (soccer) has undergone significant transformations over the years. This systematic literature review aims to explore the intricate relationship between club football broadcasting and the product life cycle. By meticulously analyzing existing research, it is aimed to identify key themes, challenges, and opportunities related to broadcasting strategies, audience engagement, and revenue generation. These findings will contribute to a deeper understanding of how football clubs navigate the dynamic landscape of media distribution and strategically adapt their approaches throughout the product life cycle. Delving deeper into the impact of broadcasting revenues, this review will examine empirical evidence that explores the positive influence on the club football product life cycle. This analysis will not only focus on the financial benefits but also delve into how broadcasting deals can enhance the overall product. The review will contribute to how increased broadcast revenue can be strategically invested in areas that improve the on-field product, in turn leading to a more competitive and exciting league, attracting a wider audience and further enhancing the product life cycle. Furthermore, the review will explore the challenges and opportunities related to audience engagement in the digital age. The rise of streaming services, social media platforms, and on-demand content consumption necessitates a shift in broadcasting strategies. Examining how clubs can leverage these new platforms to create engaging content, foster deeper fan connections, and personalize the viewing experience will be crucial. By critically analyzing best marketing practices employed by successful clubs, the review will provide valuable insights for stakeholders within the industry. This includes not only clubs themselves, but also broadcasters, sponsors, and merchandising companies. Identifying innovative marketing campaigns that leverage broadcasting opportunities to build brand loyalty, drive merchandise sales, and attract new sponsors will be a key focus. Ultimately, the review aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how club football broadcasting can be strategically utilized to not only enhance revenue streams but also strengthen the overall product and cultivate a passionate global fanbase.

Keywords: Football, Soccer, Broadcasting, Product Life Cycle (PLC), Marketing

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Introduction

Development of Football as People's Game

Football has been played for a long time, as early as 3000 years ago (footballhistory.org). It has been enjoyed as people's games since medieval times as people used to play "folk football" in towns and villages according to local customs however the current form of Football takes its roots in England during 1850s and 1860s (Giulianotti et al., 2024). The traces of the game can also be found in eastern cultures (China and Japan) since 3rd and 2nd Century BC, ancient Greece during 7th century CE, Florence in the 16th century, emphasizing the popularity and appeal of the game across the globe. A mix of races in the players has been a special feature in the football since the development of football leagues in the nineteenth century. Expansion of the game took place with Britishers who travelled to their colonies in other continents (footballhistory.org). Likewise, the establishment of football clubs, usually by former school lads, people at large meeting places and factories, can be traced to the middle of the 19th century in England, subsequently transitioning the game into the professional level due to its growing popularity among the people. Football's importance is not only economic, but also social and cultural (Dobson and Goddard, 2011).

Popularity of Club Football as Product

Club football (soccer) as global phenomenon has immense popularity (Singh & Sharma, 2022). Football clubs have a massive fanbase, not only in Europe and South America predominantly, but in the entire world, even outside of the lands of top football leagues as highlighted by Gratton & Solberg (2007). The popularity of club football is visible in the large fan bases of clubs like Manchester United, Barcelona, Liverpool, and Real Madrid. The same has extended to a couple of million fans in the Middle East and USA after the transfer of Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo to Major League Soccer and Saudi Professional League in 2023, respectively. It is particularly popular in Latin American countries like Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay, where it originated with European immigrants in the 1800s. Football has become a globalized sport, reaching almost every country and having a significant impact on society (Tovar, 2021). The financial aspects of football, including broadcasting revenues, have gained increasing interest and importance in recent years (Calahorro-López & Ratkai, 2024). The top professional football clubs generate significant revenues, and the economic behavior of these clubs is a subject of study for economists and financial experts.

As it occurs today, no other sport has large stadiums to host people up to 100000 and beyond, which speaks to the mass popularity of the game. Biggest viewership of international sports event belongs to FIFA WC, played every four years since 1930. Largest viewership is reserved for the biggest club competition the Champions League transformed from European Cup in 1992. There are 211 countries and associations registered with FIFA (fifa.com).

Contribution of Broadcasting to Revenue Generation

Broadcasting fuels this global phenomenon and is the invisible thread that stitches together fans, players, and the beautiful game itself. What was once confined to spectators only, radios commentaries and noisy black-and-white screens, now blazes in HD fibre optical TV channels, streaming platforms, and social media feeds.

Professional football, as it is seen today, can be compared to very few products sustaining the lifecycle. Club football was professionally organized in 1880s. Through the centuries-old popularity of the game evolving into the professional sphere, the game has expanded into a large sports conglomerate where billions are invested. Thus, the game is a beautiful blend of emotions, sociology and business let alone the physical fitness and sports. Whereas football clubs give a sense of identification to the players (Leeds et al., 2018), football clubs resemble traditional enterprises, focusing on financial benefits alongside good sports results (Majewski & Rapacewicz, 2021) and are subject to product life cycle with regards to players and clubs (Desbordes, 2007). He also highlights that product lifecycle model guides clubs to export their products during the decline stage, with globalization serving as a strategy to mitigate sales decrease.

The Messi and CR7 Effect

Superstars have a great impact on the popularity of the game. Topmost followed personalities on social media platforms are the two football superstars Lionel Messi and CR7. They offer huge appeal to viewers, even in their closing years. That is why the emerging poles in the football enterprise, USA and KSA have contracted them. The day Messi signed up for InterMiami FC, the streaming service of Apple.inc experienced a rise of 1690% in the subscription (Valinsky, 2023) besides an increase in social media following of their respective clubs by millions. Besides other factors, these can be taken as marketing-driven transfers to boost the club football as product by Major League Soccer and Saudi Pro League.

Broadcasting and Product Life Cycle of Club Football

Broadcasting plays an important role in connecting fans to their favourite clubs and players, surpassing commercial sponsorships and matchday revenues. Broadcasting is a crucial source of revenue for football clubs and its significance of exporting the TV Football is increasing day by day (Solberg, 2015). It is evident that broadcasting significantly contributes to revenue generation (Pifer et al., 2018). Revenue of football for top five leagues (English premier league, Bundesliga, Ligue1, Laliga, Seria A) was 47 % of the gross in 2013-14. As technology evolves, which includes but is not limited to enhancement in frequency bands, economies of scale cause lower transmission costs and, resultantly, ease of economic access for mass viewers. Consumer preferences shift, football clubs must strategically manage their broadcasting efforts to maximize reach, revenue, and fan engagement. Football clubs utilize broadcasting rights to counter the decline phase by expanding into new markets and increasing revenue streams (Desbordes, 2007). Increasing viewership and media valuation are key to maximizing media rights value growth and the overall development of the game. Pitfalls, however, do exist due to saturation of the industry and an attention-deficit era caused by multi-stream opportunities for the viewer. There is a need for empirical study on which marketing practices executed through broadcasting contribute to revenue generation and enhancing the product life cycle of club football.

There is substantial evidence that despite mass popularity of the game, continuous endeavors have been made by organizing bodies, clubs' management, and broadcasters to enhance life cycle of club football as business enterprise through innovation, purpose and players profiles. This literature review investigates the relationship between club football broadcasting and the

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product life cycle, shedding light on best practices, challenges, and emerging trends to enhance the product life cycle of club football.

Methodology

A systematic search of academic databases, ScienceDirect and Google Scholar, was carried out using keywords such as "club football," "soccer," "broadcasting," and "product life cycle" to identify relevant studies. Considering the main objective of this review that is contribution of broadcasting revenues to product life cycle of club football, the articles and papers were carefully scanned. After screening articles based on inclusion criteria, 33 papers and documents were selected for detailed analysis. A complete compliance to PRISMA framework has been limited by full accessibility to databases such as Scopus and WoS. To compensate for that open source accessed through SciSpace, literature and reports from, relevant websites (FIFA, UEFA) and books have been included in the literature review. An overall gap of qualitative research has been found. Literature of last five years has been reviewed through databases, however, high value articles and books with hardcore data and knowledge feed outside the time range have also been included in the review.

During the initial screening and search using the given search terms, 339 articles were listed by ScienceDirect and 204 articles by Google Scholar. Of these 27 articles in the English language, which were available with complete text through Google Scholar and have been shortlisted for further scanning while the same number from ScienceDirect is 7. Moreover, relevant sections of two exclusive books (The Economics of Football, 2011 & The Economics of Sports Broadcasting, 2007) have also been included in the reviewed literature. The review is spanned over a range of research areas related to media, marketing, economics, management and customer psychology.

The following criteria for inclusion and exclusion of the literature according to the PRISMA framework have been adopted in this review paper:-

Table 1: Criteria for Publication Selection

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Study type	Book, research articles, Conference papers	Discussions, Web articles and data
Key words	Club Football, Club Soccer, Broadcasting, Product Life Cycle (PLC)	Not included
Publication date	2020 to 2024	Before 2020
Language	English	Others
Research Domains	Sports Business, Management, Marketing, Economics, Econometrics Psychology, Social Sciences, Decisions Sciences and Finance	Medical Science. Computer Science
Accessibility	Opensource availability of Text	Text not available

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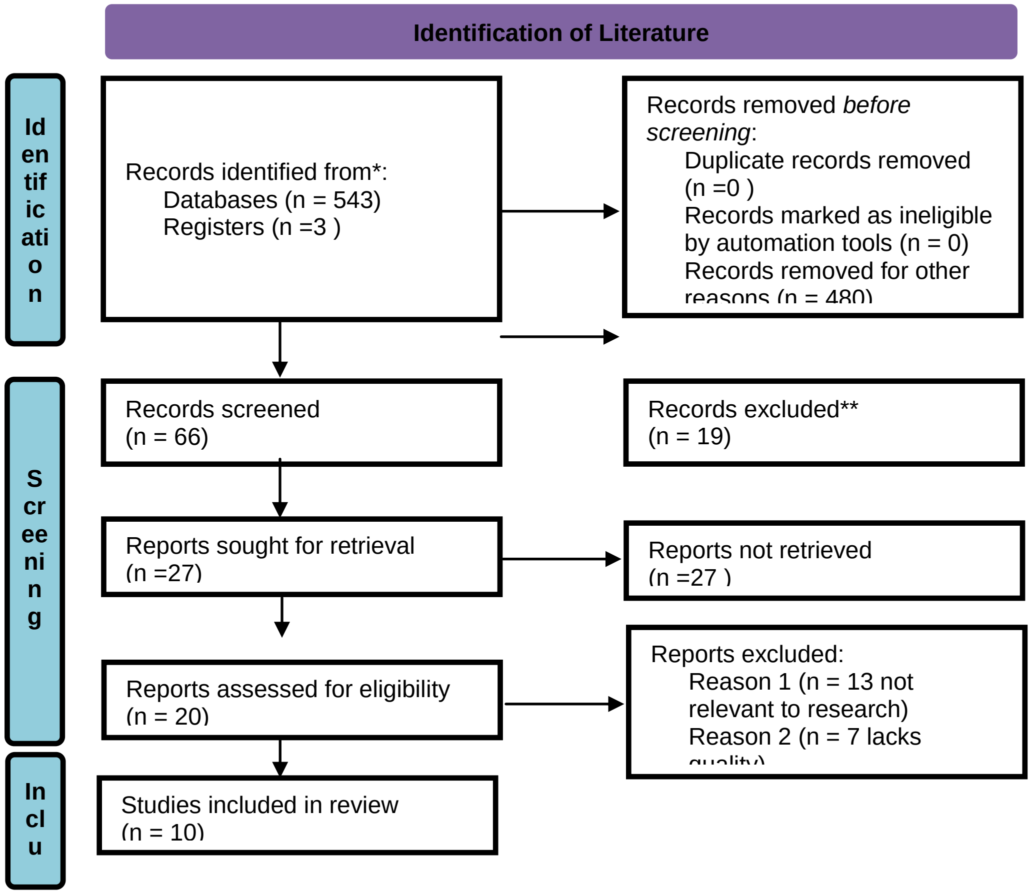
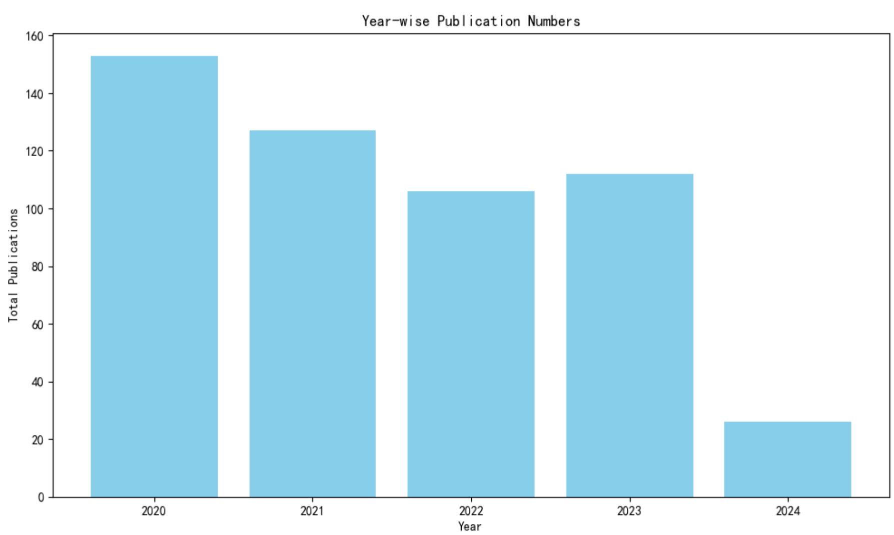
Figure 1: PRISMA FLOW CHART



A year-wise summary of searched articles on databases is given as figure 2 below.



Analysis

Clustering

A phased clustering technique has been adopted for selected articles and documents for the review.

Cluster One

Literature related to impact of broadcasting on revenue generation for the club football has been included.

Rules of the Game: Strategy in Football Industry by İrge Şener and Ahmet Anıl Karapolatgil

The paper is based on the theory of strategic groups in the context of the football industry. It explores how football clubs can be classified into different strategic groups based on revenue generation and analyzes the main strategies followed by clubs within each group. The study aims to identify the main strategic groups of football clubs and examine the differences in strategies between these groups. The authors discuss revenue generated through broadcasting in the football industry and highlight that broadcasting rights, sponsorship contracts, and the popularity of a country in terms of football significantly impact the brand value of football clubs. Additionally, they also mention that clubs follow strategies like adding a share of champions to the broadcasting pot and signing agreements with old aged stars to increase revenues. The study analyzes the strategic groups in the global football club industry based on revenue, identifying three groups with distinct strategies. It highlights that brand value acts as a mobility barrier between these groups, emphasizing the sport's transition from entertainment to a high-revenue business. The research fills a gap in sports industry studies, as it explores strategic aspects in football clubs, which have become significant due to commercialization, sponsorships, and the growing importance of financial power. These strategic groups consist of football clubs that follow similar strategies within each group. The analysis reveals that each strategic group has distinct strategies, highlighting the heterogeneity in the industry. However, this study is limited to 50 clubs only. The study is quantitative while SPSS has been used to statistically analyse the data. Empirical stats with respect to revenue generation are given at table-2 while slogans for some of the top clubs representing fan engagement are shown in table-3.

Has financial fair play changed European football? by Ariela Caglio et al.

The research article discusses revenue through broadcasting in the context of the Financial Fair Play Regulation (FFPR) and its impact on European football clubs. It highlights the distribution of broadcasting revenue and its role in fine-tuning the balance within the football industry. The paper employs an ex-post econometric analysis to assess the joint effects of the Financial Fair Play Regulation (FFPR) on the income statements and balance sheets of European football clubs, as well as the competitive balance of European leagues. It addresses revenues through broadcasting by discussing the distribution of broadcasting revenue and its impact on the financial dynamics and competitive balance within the European football industry.

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Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of the Sample

List of Countries of Football Clubs	n	%	Brand Value (million$)*	Sponsorship	Manufacturer	Matchday	Broadcast
United Kingdom (UK)	15	30	3,790	273	211	889	2,280
Germany	8	16	2,077	142	76	433	511
Spain	5	10	1,692	95	109	493	814
Italy	6	12	926	67	82	192	919
France	5	10	665	52	29	194	462
Turkey	3	6	298	22	24	121	163
Brazil	4	8	249	81	15	148	564
Netherlands	2	4	208	20	11	75	15
Scotland	1	2	84	2	5	15	41
Portugal	1	2	83	5	4	5	18

Note: *Data of "Brand-Finance Football-50 Report" (2014).
Note: Derived from authors' calculations.

Table 3: Strategies Followed by Runner-up Clubs

Brand 50 Rank	Football Club	Country	Strategy	Characteristics
8	Liverpool FC	UK	Distinctive Image	"You will never walk alone" philosophy
9	Borussia Dortmund	Germany	Distinctive Image	Support of Middle-Class
10	Paris Saint-Germain FC	France	Distinctive Image	Being a 'Parisienne'
11	FC Schalke 04	Germany	Distinctive Image	Club of Mine Workers
12	Tottenham Hotspur FC	UK	Distinctive Image – Content Follower	Club of Jewish fans
13	Juventus FC	Italy	Distinctive Image	No prejudice for support
14	AC Milan	Italy	Distinctive Image	Capitalize on recent past glories
15	FC Internazionale Milano	Italy	Distinctive Image	Capitalize on recent past glories
19	Club Atlético de Madrid	Spain	Distinctive Image – Content Follower	Faithful supporters
20	SSC Napoli	Italy	Distinctive Image – Content Follower	Symbol of the indigent people
34	SC Corinthians Paulista	Brazil	Distinctive Image – Content Follower	Democratic Vision
49	CR Flamengo	Brazil	Distinctive Image – Content Follower	Symbol of the indigent people

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Valuation of Football Clubs by Jakob Dalsø and Casper Friis Jensen

The authors signify a heavy stream of revenue generated from TV rights, as well as discuss other sources of income and a good mix of these revenue streams for Danish clubs.

Cluster Two

Articles covering linkages of broadcasting with product life cycle of club football and innovations adopted by clubs for revenue generation including broadcasting and fan engagement have been segregated and analysed in this cluster.

The Business Model of European Football Club Competitions by Teodor Dima

The paper discusses the economic cycle of European football club competitions, focusing on the financial structure and dynamics of the industry. It highlights the significant changes in European football over the last 20 years, emphasizing the trading, marketing processes, and the substantial financial impact on the sport. The paper employs a research methodology that includes reviewing official documents of UEFA, Deloitte reports, and conducting critical reviews of scientific materials and articles related to European football club competitions. The study also involves a comparative analysis of European Club Competitions, specifically the UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League. European club competitions, such as the UEFA Champions League, have a significant impact on social good and fan engagement. These competitions contribute to the economic development of countries by attracting investments, increasing tourism, and promoting local businesses. Moreover, the high viewership numbers and fan engagement in these competitions create a sense of community and excitement, fostering social interactions and cultural exchanges among supporters. Broadcasting plays a crucial role in the development of club football by significantly impacting the revenue streams and global reach of clubs. Media rights, a key income-generating factor in the European football industry, contribute substantially to the financial stability and growth of clubs. Broadcasting allows clubs to expand their fan base internationally, increase their market value, and attract sponsorships, ultimately enhancing their overall competitiveness and success in the industry. Approximately 77.04% of the total revenue generated from club competitions comes from broadcasting rights, highlighting the significant financial contribution of media rights to the income of European football clubs. This substantial percentage underscores the critical role that broadcasting plays in the financial sustainability and success of clubs participating in competitions like the UEFA Champions League. Global appeal of the game and interest of investors are represented by the ownership of the top clubs.

Table 4: Major European Clubs by Owner Nationality

Position	Club	Owner Nationality
1	Real Madrid	Europe
2	FC Barcelona	Europe
3	Bayern Munich	Europe
4	Manchester United	USA
5	Paris Saint-Germain	Middle East
6	Manchester City	Middle East
7	Chelsea	Europe
8	Arsenal	USA
9	Juventus Torino	Europe

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10	AC Milan	Europe

Source: Deloitte Football Money League 2014

The Economics of Sports Broadcasting by Chris Gratton and Harry Arne Solberg

The book discusses the life cycle of club football and the role of broadcasting in revenue generation. It highlights how the influx of Asian players into European football has been influenced by the success of Japanese and Korean national teams, as well as the interest in European club football in Asia. Furthermore, it explains how the distribution of power between teams/clubs and sport governing bodies differs in North American professional leagues compared to European football, impacting revenue generation and broadcasting strategies. Broadcasting can be used innovatively to increase the life cycle of club football by exploring new revenue streams and market opportunities. For example, clubs in Italian Serie A and Spanish Primera Liga have considered launching their own TV channels to avoid the monopoly power of TV companies, which can enhance their market power and revenue generation. Additionally, integrating with TV companies can provide clubs with access to new technology and distribution channels, enabling them to reach a wider audience and enhance their commercial rights exploitation. It provides data on the life cycle of club football, including insights into the impact of the influx of Asian players into European football and the strategies adopted by clubs to tap into the Asian market. Additionally, it discusses the distribution of power between teams/clubs and sport governing bodies in different continents, highlighting how this affects revenue generation and the broadcasting strategies of clubs. A set of viewership is given in figure -3

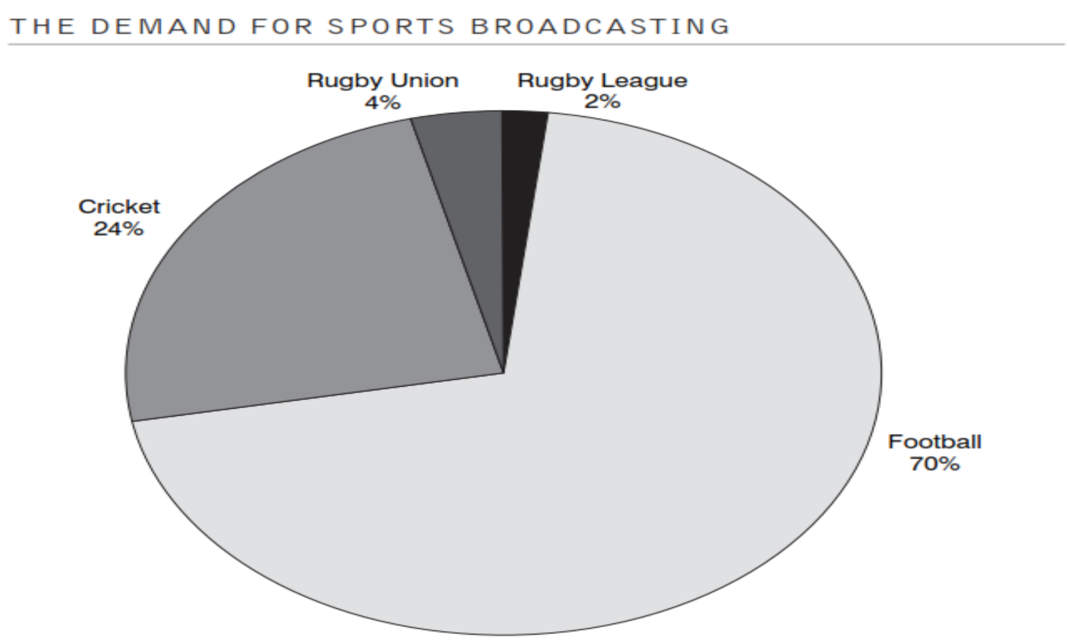

Figure 2.6 *BBC coverage devoted to the four main professional team sports during 1998*
Source: BBC Information Analysis Department and BSkyB Research

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The Economics of Football by Stephen Dobson and John Goddard

The paper discusses the historical development and commercial structure of English professional football, providing insights into the competitive structure, team performance, and financial aspects. It also covers topics such as match attendances, financial structures, players' salaries, and ownership in English football. The analysis includes the economics of professional football over the past ten years, emphasizing the unique characteristics of the English experience. European football leagues include foreign players to enhance the overall quality and competitiveness of the teams, benefiting from diverse skill sets and experiences. The inclusion of foreign players also adds to the global appeal of European football, attracting a wider audience and increasing the commercial viability of the leagues. International migration of professional footballers contributes to the cultural exchange and diversity within the teams, enriching the footballing experience for players and fans alike. However, the book is limited to English football.

Estimation of Football Player Performance Rights Using Econometric Models and Product Life Cycle by Sebastian Majewski and Anna Rapacewicz

The authors state that relationship between the product life cycle in club football and broadcasting revenues is significant. In club football, the stages of a player's career can be likened to the stages of a product life cycle, such as introduction, growth, maturity, and decrease. As a player progresses through these stages, their value and marketability increase, leading to potential growth in broadcasting revenues for the club. This connection highlights the importance of accurately valuing players' performance rights, as it directly impacts the financial aspects of the club, including broadcasting revenues. The paper provides data on the market value of football players, including variables like monthly market value, goals scored, assists, yellow cards, and red cards. It also discusses the application of econometric models and the product life cycle theory in evaluating players' performance rights. The study uses classical econometric models and logistic trend functions to estimate the life cycle of players, highlighting the importance of accurate valuation methods in sports clubs.

The conclusion regarding enhancing the product life cycle in club football emphasizes the importance of accurately valuing players' performance rights and integrating them into the club's financial management. By understanding and applying the stages of a player's career as a product life cycle, clubs can make informed decisions to maximize the value of their assets and potentially increase revenues, including broadcasting revenues. This approach underscores the need for clubs to adopt robust valuation techniques and accounting practices to navigate the dynamic and competitive football market effectively.

Sponsorship of the Euro 2024 by Nufer

The writer discusses how media can attract viewers through various means such as marking equipment, presence in the run-up to sporting events, presence in the vicinity of sporting events, use of predicates, naming a sponsorship object after the sponsor, marking of printed matter of the sponsee, use of sports personalities as testimonials, and organization of sporting events. Additionally, media can enhance their appeal by offering engaging content, providing exclusive

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coverage, and creating interactive experiences for the audience through the affinity concept. The paper discusses the popularity of football indirectly by highlighting the dominant position of sports sponsorship, with around two-thirds of sponsorship expenditure going to the sports sector, particularly benefiting sports with high media presence. This indicates the significant role of sports like football in attracting sponsorship and enhancing its popularity through sponsorship activities

Shortfalls in the Literature and Future Discourse

While the reviewed literature covers the financial impact of broadcasting, it lacks the following:

Fan perspective: While revenue generation is explored, the impact of broadcasting on fan engagement and experience is limited.
Global scope: The available literature focuses heavily on European leagues, with limited exploration of broadcasting's influence on clubs in other regions.
Technological advancements: The review literature mentions clubs launching their own channels but doesn't delve into the impact of new technologies like streaming services like Apple Seasons Pass for American Football League Major League Soccer.
Future outlook: The literature focuses on the current state and doesn't discuss potential future trends in broadcasting and club strategies specifically.

Key Findings

Research indicates that broadcasting revenues heavily outweigh any negative impact on match day revenue, emphasizing the importance of sharing revenue between clubs to enhance competitive balance and product life cycle of club football. The product life cycle model provides a framework for understanding how broadcasting strategies evolve. Clubs must tailor their approaches to fit the introduction, growth, maturity, and decline phases. Additionally, collaboration between clubs, broadcasters, and technology providers is crucial for sustainable growth. Unlike any conventional industry, clubs must combine together to produce a product. Thus, they also have an interest in upholding the economic health of their rivals (Solberg & Haugen, 2010).
The significance of star players in the NBA could be explained by the league's strategy of signing local players in an effort to build fan attachment to clubs (Agha & Berri, 2023).
Financial Lifeline: Broadcasting rights constitute a substantial revenue stream for clubs, exceeding matchday income and playing a pivotal role in their financial well-being.
Collaboration Imperative: Sustainable growth in club football broadcasting hinges on collaborative efforts between clubs, broadcasters, and technology providers.

Product Life Cycle Guidance: The product life cycle model serves as a framework for formulating broadcasting strategies. Clubs must tailor their approaches to effectively address each stage of the cycle, from introduction to decline.

Audience Engagement: Effective broadcasting enhances fan engagement. Interactive features, behind-the-scenes content, and personalized experiences contribute to fan loyalty. Clubs must adapt their broadcasting approaches to cater to different audience segments considering the affinity concept.

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Revenue Streams: Broadcasting revenue is a critical income source for clubs. Negotiating broadcasting deals, exploring digital platforms, and leveraging social media are essential for sustained financial success.

Challenges: Piracy, changing viewer habits, and technological disruptions pose challenges to club football broadcasting. Clubs must innovate to stay relevant and protect their content.

Emerging Trends: Virtual reality, augmented reality, and interactive streaming are shaping the future of broadcasting. Clubs should invest in these technologies to enhance fan experiences.

Conclusion

This literature review has investigated the nexus between club football broadcasting and the product life cycle. Through a meticulous analysis of extant research, the review has identified critical themes, challenges, and opportunities germane to broadcasting strategies, audience engagement, and revenue generation. These findings illuminate a deeper understanding of how football clubs navigate the ever-evolving landscape of media distribution and strategically adapt their approaches throughout the various stages of the product life cycle.

The review also identified some gaps in the current body of literature. By addressing these knowledge gaps in Future research and staying abreast of emerging trends, clubs can leverage broadcasting not only to generate revenue but also to fortify the overall product and cultivate a fervent global fanbase.

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