



A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE FACTORS AFFECTING BRAND LOYALTY IN FOOTBALL

BY

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ABSTRACT

Football fans are known for giving their respective teams unwavering support, there are several factors which influence a fan's behaviour starting from decision on which team to support, how connected they are with their respective teams and the sport and to understand how the said Football clubs work to retain their loyal fans. Having a loyal fanbase is important for football clubs as it influences their revenues, which comes in the form of merchandise sales, match ticket sales, season tickets. These contribute to the income and profit of the institution. The strength of the brand is created by the loyal customers, the stakeholders and how the brand has a competitive advantage over other brands which exist in the market.

Research conducted through interviews with the fans of club football will help to understand how the brand, football clubs provide them with satisfaction and commitment towards the club. Study on how sponsorships by certain brands will affect the decision towards loyalty towards football clubs. There were instances of how clubs gained fans through promoting progressive views and about how being tied up to certain sponsors has caused a turmoil among fans which hit the brand image of the football clubs. Through interviewing the football fans, we can understand how they will support or boycott their football clubs due to these instances. What are the factors which influence the fans to stand by the club and support them through hardships must be studied to understand how these brands retain their loyal customers. By studying the responses of the fans of football clubs and their purchasing decision will help in understanding the same.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents (Kumar and Uma), my siblings (Shamitha, Darshan) and my nephew (Sarvesh) for the support and encouragement they gave me throughout this study.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION:

Brand loyalty, a crucial component in the competitive realm of football, has attracted the attention of marketing researchers and team administrators alike. Like any other enterprise, football clubs must compete for the unwavering commitment of their followers in order to achieve financial stability and establish a strong and thriving future. In light of this, the current thesis investigates the diverse factors that influence brand devotion in football, concentrating on the unique cases of Liverpool Football Club and Arsenal Football Club (Maderer, Holtbrügge, 2019). As prominent and longstanding clubs, they have experienced fluctuating performance levels in recent years, making them ideal subjects for exploring the fundamental determinants of brand devotion in football. Liverpool, formerly a powerhouse in English and European football, has faced a period of decline, while Arsenal, after suffering a lengthy downturn, has managed to regain its competitive stature. Therefore, this qualitative research examines the influence of age, duration of involvement, and geographic location on the brand devotion of these clubs' fans, using a user group-oriented approach to reveal the complexities of fan loyalty and how it is impacted by these factors (Gholipour, Khabiri, & Eidi, 2020)

By performing an in-depth analysis of Liverpool and Arsenal's fan bases, this thesis aims to expand our knowledge of the role performance, demographics, and location play in cultivating brand devotion in football. Our methodology comprises qualitative data gathering through interviews, focus groups, and monitoring of user-created content on social media platforms, where fans are divided into specific groups based on age, the amount of time spent engaging with the club, and geographic location. This layered approach enables the identification of similarities and differences among fans, thus providing a more sophisticated understanding of the factors contributing to brand devotion (Kucharska, Confente & Brunetti 2020)

The choice of Liverpool and Arsenal as case studies is particularly significant due to their contrasting paths in recent years. Liverpool, a former titan of English football with an illustrious history of national and international victories, has witnessed a decline in its on-field accomplishments. Despite this downturn, the club maintains a fervent and loyal fanbase, warranting investigation into how brand devotion endures amidst substandard performance. In contrast, Arsenal, a club that has experienced a revival after a phase of mediocrity, offers a chance to investigate how renewed on-field success influences the devotion of its followers.

By examining these two distinct instances, this thesis seeks to contribute to the expanding body of literature on brand devotion in sports, especially in the context of football. Moreover, it aims to provide insights that can assist team management, marketing professionals, and other stakeholders in their efforts to boost and maintain fan engagement and devotion. Through the exploration of the intricate connections between club performance, demographic factors, and geographic location, this study ultimately aspires to uncover the complex interplay of elements that shape and sustain brand devotion in football, thus providing valuable insights for clubs, researchers, and practitioners in the field.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The background of the thesis, titled "A Qualitative Study of The Factors Affecting Brand Loyalty In Football," centres on the increasing importance of brand loyalty within the highly competitive world of football. As football clubs and organisations aim for lasting success, financial stability, and global prominence, comprehending the aspects that shape brand loyalty becomes essential.

Over time, football has evolved beyond just a sport and emerged as a worldwide business, undergoing extensive commercialization, and attracting significant investments. In this modern era, brand loyalty is a vital factor in the overall success and sustainability of football clubs. Cultivating and retaining a devoted fan base not only boosts revenue through merchandise sales, ticket purchases, and sponsorships but also enhances the club's reputation and international standing.

Prior research in sports marketing and management has explored numerous facets of brand loyalty. However, there is a dearth of studies focusing on the elements that affect brand loyalty within the football sector. Furthermore, the existing literature predominantly relies on quantitative analyses, which may not thoroughly reflect the intricate emotional connections and loyalty that football fans have towards their clubs.

This thesis endeavours to address this research gap by adopting a qualitative research methodology, specifically thematic analysis, to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that impact brand loyalty in football. The study aims to reveal the complex interplay of psychological, social, cultural, and marketing-related aspects that mould the loyalty of football

fans, offering valuable insights for football organisations to improve their brand loyalty strategies and guarantee long-term competitiveness in the industry.

By elaborating on the subject, the thesis will delve into the role of team performance, club traditions, and fan identification in fostering brand loyalty. Through this comprehensive exploration, the thesis aims to contribute significantly to the understanding of brand loyalty in football, paving the way for more effective strategies and enhanced fan experiences.

1.3 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

The motivation for the thesis stems from several key aspects that highlight the significance of understanding the dynamics of brand loyalty in the football industry. In the era of commercialization, football clubs rely heavily on generating revenue through merchandise sales, ticket purchases, and sponsorship deals, with brand loyalty playing a pivotal role in these revenue streams. Devoted fans are more likely to make purchases and support their clubs financially. Furthermore, in a highly competitive landscape, clubs are constantly striving to attract and retain fans, emphasising the need for effective strategies to foster long-lasting loyalty. The emotional connections and social factors that influence fans' loyalty are complex and nuanced, necessitating a comprehensive qualitative approach to uncover the multifaceted factors impacting brand loyalty. By gaining a deeper understanding of these factors, football organisations can develop targeted strategies to enhance fan experiences, improve brand loyalty, and ultimately, ensure their long-term competitiveness and success in the industry.

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite the increasing importance of brand loyalty in the highly competitive football industry and its impact on clubs' financial stability, global prominence, and long-term success, there is a lack of comprehensive qualitative research that explores the multifaceted factors shaping

brand loyalty among football fans. Existing studies predominantly rely on quantitative analyses, which may not capture the intricate emotional connections and loyalty that fans develop towards their clubs. Moreover, there is insufficient understanding of the complex interplay between psychological, social, cultural, and marketing-related aspects that influence football fans' loyalty.

The problem statement highlights the need for an in-depth qualitative investigation, using thematic analysis, to uncover the factors that affect brand loyalty in football. By addressing this research gap, the study aims to provide valuable insights for football organisations to improve their brand loyalty strategies, enhance fan experiences, and ensure long-term competitiveness in the industry.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The importance of this research is rooted in its potential to enhance comprehension of brand loyalty in the football sector and its implications for football clubs and stakeholders. By employing a qualitative research approach with thematic analysis, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of the various aspects influencing brand loyalty in football, including psychological, social, cultural, and marketing-related elements. This integrated perspective offers a more detailed understanding of football fans' loyalty compared to research that relies exclusively on quantitative methodologies.

Additionally, the study can improve marketing tactics for football clubs by identifying factors that contribute to brand loyalty. By tailoring their marketing efforts to address aspects that resonate with their audience, clubs can implement strategies such as personalization, engaging narratives, effective social media utilisation, and community-focused initiatives. Optimising marketing approaches can help clubs draw new fans, fortify existing relationships, and ultimately enhance brand loyalty.

A deeper grasp of the factors impacting brand loyalty can also enable clubs to create superior fan experiences in both stadium settings and digital environments. By improving the overall fan experience with unique content, interactive elements, and exclusive events, clubs can further reinforce the emotional connection between fans and the organisation, promoting

enduring loyalty. Enhanced fan experiences not only lead to increased brand loyalty but also facilitate positive word-of-mouth marketing, extending the club's reach and drawing in new supporters.

This research also carries significance in guiding the development of more efficient loyalty programs that consider the diverse elements influencing football fans' loyalty. By recognizing and addressing these factors, football clubs can devise and implement loyalty programs that better serve their fan base's needs and preferences, resulting in heightened satisfaction and engagement.

Moreover, the study holds implications for football organisations and stakeholders by examining the role of cultural factors, such as national identity and local pride, in shaping brand loyalty. This understanding can assist clubs in tackling challenges and seizing opportunities presented by globalisation, allowing them to adjust their strategies while maintaining a robust connection with local fans and expanding their international presence.

Finally, this research can enrich the existing literature on brand loyalty in sports, particularly in football, by delivering a comprehensive qualitative analysis that addresses the current research gap. This contribution may inspire further investigation into brand loyalty in football and other sports, deepening the understanding of the subject and its ramifications for the sports industry.

The importance of this study lies in its potential to influence multiple facets of the football industry, ranging from marketing strategies and fan experiences to loyalty programs and globalisation concerns. By uncovering the factors that determine brand loyalty in football, this research can serve as a valuable resource for football clubs, organisations, and stakeholders, assisting them in devising more effective strategies to ensure long-term prosperity and competitiveness in the sector.

In further chapters we can understand what a brand means, what it takes to be a strong brand and why it is important to have brand communities, identities and how these factors help in building a strong brand name for the football clubs and how it will help in maintaining brand loyalty, and how sentiment analysis and content analysis will help us in understanding our research questions.

CHAPTER TWO

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

The aim of this literature Review is to understand and evaluate past research, literature, frameworks, theories, and models on the research topic of factors influencing brand loyalty in football, critique and developing a reflective evaluation of the current available literature to build knowledge for this chosen topic. The purpose is to find any gaps in literature which will be explained with the results in qualitative research to help develop a conclusion and future scope on brand loyalty in football.

2.2 CONTENT OF LITERATURE REVIEW

The content of the literature has the purpose to explain the relationship between brand identification, which leads to brand community identification which in turn leads to public brand loyalty and private brand loyalty, which are affected by factors such as age, gender, intensity of support by an individual, the reason for supporting, and duration of support. Additionally, it would help in understanding if the model used by brands to retain their existing loyal customers is effective or not, and the literature review will conclude by suggesting measures to reach an increase in retaining fanbase and how fan experience can be improved, which will lead to satisfaction in the customer base.

2.3 ELEMENTS OF A BRAND

There are four dimensions to being a strong brand. There must be awareness, association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. There must be a brand identity for strong brands, and it is a necessity for them to have their own symbols and slogans to maintain good customer relationships. It is easier for brands to relate to consumers when it is people rather than products. An important element in building brands is having integrated, consistent communication. as there is no single way to communicate, all the ways through which messages can be communicated must be coordinated. (Aaker, 1992).

Brand loyalty is important to sports teams as it ensures there is a consistent fanbase in circumstances where the core product of the brand falters, i.e., when the team is having a difficult season. This can help the sports team use a price premium, which helps boost revenue and helps meet salaries of players, the building of new stadium arenas, or any debt

obligations the team has. Brand loyalty also helps sports teams create opportunities for extensions beyond the core offering of the brand (Keller, 1993). There's a chance for additional revenue through the initial product offering, official merchandise stores.

Brand equity occurs when value is added to the brand name, logo, or symbol and it helps with the product or service (Aaker, 1992). For example, in football, when spoken about a club with a rich history, strong club culture and values, a unique playing style, and intense domestic rivalry, a club name that will trigger recognition will be Football Club Barcelona. They are a football powerhouse with an impressive history and record, which defines their brand as competitive and winning. They have positioned themselves well and have everything a good brand requires and have good customer relations as they listen to what their fans have to say.

The club has socios who are members of the club who play a major role in club decision of who to elect for the club's administrations. They have chat rooms, tv shows through which fans can express their concerns and feelings about the performance of the team. There is a lot of community involvement and Rituals held before the match day which helps in nurturing the fan loyalty towards the team (Richelieu and Pons, 2006).

Brand community, a group of customers who are invested in the brand beyond what is being sold. In this case of Football, it is about fans who are here not just enjoying the game and results but for the club, they care about the club beyond the match results and about the long-term plans of the club and what it is going to offer to its fans, it is about building consumer loyalty (La Rocca, 2018).

In the age of social media, it is easy to create a fan for 'brands', football clubs. Through social networking sites (Ebrahim, 2020), which are mostly interactive platforms with fans it is easier for football clubs to garner the attention of fans. Posts on brand's fan pages can be quizzes and videos and other interactive posts helps in creating awareness about the brand, though in the case of European football clubs most of them are already famous due to their star power and matches of major leagues being on televisions.

Vivid, interactive, entertaining, and informative contents will gather a huge number of likes and comments which will increase their brand popularity and awareness among masses.

Social media platforms being integrated into marketing helps brands, football clubs to interact with their actual customers and their potential customers. This helps in building brand loyalty through brand trust and increasing brand equity. Social media plays a major role in increasing brand awareness and creating a positive brand image, which affects consumer loyalty.

Brand trust is defined as “the willingness of the consumer to rely on the ability of the brand to perform its stated function” (Chaudhuri & Holbrook (2001)). The age, gender, and the frequency of use of social media platforms affects the user’s perception of the brand. Brand loyalty as defined by Chaudhuri & Holbrook is the commitment towards rebuying in future regardless of future situations. There are instances where when football clubs support certain social causes, they are faced with the possibility of losing a certain fraction of their fanbase who are not in support with the cause which the brand supports.

Brands, football clubs can build personalised contents for their fan bases which helps in motivating the customers by giving them satisfaction with their brand choice, the management of social media by brands will help in building a brand community which is important for long term retention of customers. Brand identification and brand community identification are precursory to brand affect, brand trust and attitudinal loyalty which affects behavioural loyalty (Clarke, 2022). Members need to maintain a membership for the brand community, as it will help in deciding the in-group status, this provides a basis for physical manifestation of rituals and traditions which helps brand communities (Maderer, and Holtbrügge, 2019). But there is a limitation with this paper since loyalty within professional sports tends to fluctuate over time and will not be accurate.

There is emphasis on results which is a mistake done by sport teams with their brand strategy. There are those who Bask in the reflected glory(BIRG) that is those who climb on the team bandwagon because of the winning ways of the team and they believe that by associating themselves they are a winner too. And there are those who Cut off reflected failure (CORF), they cut off themselves by associating with the team during losing because that will affect them by association. Wann (2003) created the sports identification scale which comprises eight motives which drives people to consume sports.

It is Entertainment, Escape, Economics, Eustress which is the combination of euphoria and stress, aesthetic, family, self-esteem, and group affiliation. Though not all motives are present for most fans, there is a degree of how much motive applies to a fan. Group affiliation and

self-esteem helps in understanding the fan behaviour and in most cases, self-esteem is a major reason for core motivating factor for fans, simply because when the team wins it seems like a personal win for the fan. Due to the 'social identity theory' the way one is perceived by others will improve when they behave in a likely manner, so when a person supports a club which is successful and has an impeccable record the way they are perceived by others will improve and this will motivate the individual to keep consuming the sport. Building a connection with others who consume sports and in particular support the same sporting teams helps in finding a common ground and supports their motivation to keep consuming, it satisfies the sense of belonging in the individual's mind. Hence these identifying scales help in finding out why one cheers for the team they cheer for, and how much they are willing to suffer for their team.

“Culture has become in part a matter of personal taste; to a degree, we seem to pick and choose culturally who we are, in the music we listen to, the food we eat, and perhaps even the religion we practise” (Mathews, 2000). To understand a football club's culture, traditions and values is easy and is very accessible to fans as there are no barrier entries. They could be supporting the football clubs of their choice for a variety of reasons, maybe because of the rich history of the club and the place it is situated and how it must have resonated with the values of the fans. The working class people had their subcultural “soccer consciousness” and it entered around their local teams, victory and their masculinity (Taylor, 2017).

Raymond Williams in 1961 identified relationships of social groups with institutions and brands and divided them into three groups. They can be divided as the members, customers, and consumers. Taylor, Critcher (1979) mentions how traditional fans view and identify themselves as 'members', which is based on the unbreakable reciprocal relationship between the fan and the sporting team. And they have obligations and responsibilities with the fan having a type of representative status for the club. Next the “customer”, has less fixed loyalties and has satisfaction levels which when not met will take their support elsewhere. And the “consumer” has no loyalties and is there out of interest and will support and switch teams if they are winning and based on social and economic factors.

Football fans have inseparable relations with the club's ground, which is a vital cultural emblem for the community surrounding that area. This helps in building customer relations and helps the fans and have a remote socio-spatial relationship with the respective club and

the athletes there (Giulianotti, 2002). This may affirm and help improve fan loyalty which will in turn help in increasing their loyalty to the institution.

Lately football has been dominated by transnational corporations especially with sponsorship and merchandising like with Adidas and Nike who help in the global consumption of the sport and by Governing bodies like International Federation of Association Football (FIFA), Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), The Football Association which is the governing body in England help and support with the governing of the football clubs.

2.4 FAN LOYALTY

Fans can be differentiated based on their geographical location, their degree of attachments to the club which is their attitudinal loyalty to the team. There is spurious loyalty in which the fan doesn't possess a strong positive attitude but still watches the games. (Loranca-Valle,2021) Loyalty concept to fan behaviour has several measurements, attending the games in the stadium, holding season tickets, watching the match live on televisions, consuming other media related to the brand on social media, purchasing merchandise etc.

In this literature you can understand that there are product related brand attributes such as players of the football club, management and coaching staff (Gladden and Funk, 2001) and there are non-product related attributes such as logo design, stadium and traditions and club history, these are all associated with brand image which affects fan-identification and invoke several emotions among customers.

2.5 ARSENAL FOOTBALL CLUB

Arsenal football club, English football club has millions of fans worldwide. The club started out as a rich southern based club which later moved to north London and established themselves as a powerhouse. They project themselves as a traditional and morally upright institution. The club's football stadium was initially in Woolwich was moved from there to Highbury due to various reasons including its isolation (Spurling, 2012) Now in the present the football club's stadium is the Emirates stadium after being denied permission by the city council to expand their home stadium in Highbury. The current stadium is a star of art stadium which is one of England's largest stadiums.

The Emirates group was the main sponsor of the stadium, hence the name of the new stadium. International fixtures and concerts are held in the club's current home stadium, along with stadium tours for the fans which serves as an additional source of income.

The club's logo has been changed over the years and each represents different eras of the football club. The club colours are red and white, which helps with brand recognition. The club's identity has been built on that colour, with there being several clubs in London and two clubs in north London, Arsenal after every derby win uses the slogan "London is red" and "North London is red", hence it is a brand association with the brand. The club's fans are called Gunners or Gooners which comes from the club being in Woolwich next to a factory producing weapons and explosives (Old, 2007). The symbol of the club being artillery cannon has remained the same over the years. It serves the purpose of brand recognition. The club had their own mascot of Gunnersaurus, which is a dinosaur. This mascot was decided as it embodied the level of ferocity and intensity the football club Arsenal stands for.

The club's official website tells us about how there are 124 officially recognised supporters' clubs in 62 countries across the globe, this represents the linguistic and cultural diversity of football club Arsenal, banners and flags of the supporter clubs are displayed in the Emirates Stadium. And members of this club get additional benefits than the regular fans, they have the opportunity to meet with club representatives and stadium tours outside the normal tour hours. Arsenal Football Club is cultural identity in the way that they welcome anyone to support them, the nationality, ethnicity, religion does not matter, and they could be a part of the club's culture (Sidnam, 2015). It is noted in a survey (Whiting, 2013) that Arsenal fans are very hostile to their neighbouring club of Tottenham Hotspur even if it is culturally and geographically identical to Arsenal. This shows us despite the similarity in club history and values, fans will have a strong preference to a certain football club and will be prejudiced against all the rival clubs.

LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL CLUB

Liverpool football is one of the biggest global football powerhouses. It is the most successful English football club in European competitions. The club's emblem is the mythical bird 'liver bird' which has remained through the different eras of the club, it is the symbol of the city of Liverpool. They have the iconic chant "You will never walk Alone", which has become the club's motto and anthem and has helped the club in their global success. The club's traditional colours are red and white and the team has donned an all red kit for most part of their history (Hicks). The club's home stadium Anfield was previously the home of their city rivals Everton Football Club but due to disputes in rent it ended up being the football club

Liverpool. The fans of the club are known as the 'Kopites', the name comes from the fans who used to stand at the Kop at Anfield.

In recent years the performance of the club has been good with them adding both European trophy and domestic titles to their trophy cabinet after a long wait. The success of the club has helped in attracting new fans across the globe. The current season of 2022/23, the club has suffered many injuries and elimination from competitions which will end with the team going trophyless but that hasn't deterred the fanbase as it is as unwavering as ever.

Brand loyalty is significant in the success of Liverpool FC as a football powerhouse because it helps to create a strong emotional connection between the club and fans. Fans who feel a strong emotional connection to the club are more likely to support the team through thick and thin, even when the team is not performing well. This support, in turn, can help to motivate players to perform at their best and to achieve success on the pitch. Additionally, brand loyalty can lead to increased revenue for the club, as fans are more likely to purchase merchandise and tickets, watch matches, and engage with the club's social media channels.

2.6 USAGE OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

Affective sentiment analysis is a key advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI). It helps in enhancing customer relationship management and in building a recommendation system for the same by helping to find out if the customer is happy about the product/service and if there is a negative sentiment in their feedback helps in understanding the same. (Cambria, 2017)

Qualitative content analysis is an analytic approach which ranges from intuitive, impressionistic, interpretive analyses to textual analysis. Though the lack of a definition and defined procedure is a limitation with application of content analysis. Text data obtained in verbal, electronic and print form from open-ended survey questions, focus groups and interviews can be used for content analysis. It can be done through a systematic classification process of identifying themes and through coding (Hsieh, Shannon, 2005).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The focus of this dissertation and the research undertaken will be to answer three research questions.

1. What purpose do community building and fan engagement serve in developing brand loyalty for the football clubs Arsenal and Liverpool?
2. How does the performance and success of a football club impact the brand loyalty of its fans, and how do Arsenal and Liverpool fans respond to periods of success and failure?
3. How social media management and sponsorship plays a major role in maintaining brand loyalty?

Community building around the brand, football clubs help in building a sense of belonging among the supporters of the club, this helps the fans in feeling a sense of identity and helps them in feeling included. Engagement with fans helps in building an emotional connection with them. These emotional connections which could be felt like passion for the club and game will help the fans in staying more connected and make them want to stay through the ups and downs of the club and help in maintaining brand loyalty.

The performance and success of the club, such as winning titles and trophies will bring a sense of joy and pride among fans. These positive emotions will strengthen their loyalty to the Football Club. When the club experiences periods of failure it will lead to dissatisfaction among fans, it is important to find out how the respective football club's recent periods of success will affect the fans' loyalty to the club and if they will stand by the club while they try to turn around the situation.

Social media is responsible for direct fan engagement and through communicating with the fans directly the clubs will be able to respond to their queries, acknowledge the support of the fans. Clubs can build their brand personality and image with the way they interact with their fans and launch their social media campaigns which will help in sharing their values with the fans. Sponsorship is important in modern football as it provides brand exposure for the clubs and by aligning with brands which share similar values as the club it can help in building loyalty to the club and increase the trust of fans in the club.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design plays a crucial role in any research project, as it lays the groundwork for the study's execution and the nature of the data gathered. In this thesis a qualitative research design will be employed to investigate the intricate factors influencing brand loyalty within the football realm.

Qualitative research is a method that delves into phenomena in detail, rather than collecting numerical data. Its objective is to comprehend participants' subjective experiences and viewpoints, as well as the meaning they assign to those experiences. This approach is particularly effective for examining the social and cultural aspects that impact brand loyalty in football.

The primary data collection tool for this study's qualitative research design will be surveys. Surveys are frequently utilised in qualitative research to collect data from numerous participants in a short period. They can gather both quantitative and qualitative data, making them a flexible tool for addressing complex research questions.

Purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, will be used to choose the study's sample. This technique involves selecting participants based on specific criteria, such as their familiarity with the brand and potential brand loyalty. This approach ensures that the sample represents the target population and that participants possess relevant experience and knowledge of the brand under investigation.

The survey questionnaire will be developed to obtain information on the factors influencing brand loyalty in football. It will include both closed-ended and open-ended questions. While closed-ended questions will yield quantitative data, such as demographic details, open-ended questions will offer qualitative data, such as participants' opinions and experiences with the brand. The open-ended questions will be structured to elicit comprehensive responses from participants, enabling an in-depth examination of football brand loyalty factors.

Prior to administering the survey to the study population, the questionnaire will undergo pre-testing to confirm its validity and reliability. This pre-testing process helps identify any issues, such as unclear or ambiguous questions, and allows for necessary modifications before the survey reaches the study population.

The collected survey data will be manually analysed, with computer software aiding in sentiment, and content analysis. The manual analysis will involve reviewing open-ended question responses to identify emerging themes. The computer software will supplement the manual analysis by providing additional insights into sentiment and content within the data.

The study's qualitative research design offers several advantages. First, it enables an in-depth investigation of the factors affecting brand loyalty in football. By employing open-ended questions, participants can express their thoughts and experiences in their own words, allowing for a detailed and nuanced understanding of football brand loyalty factors. Second, the use of surveys enables data collection from a large participant pool in a short time frame, making it cost-effective. Lastly, the combination of manual and computer software analysis results in a thorough examination of the collected data, enhancing the study findings' validity and reliability.

4.2 SAMPLE POPULATION

In the process of selecting a sample, enthusiasts of the Arsenal and Liverpool soccer clubs were picked from a discussion group on Twitter. This group was chosen due to their active involvement with the clubs and their potential to exhibit brand loyalty.

The chosen group of supporters falls within the 19-36 age bucket, which is a typical demographic for soccer enthusiasts. This age range is broad enough to encompass the various viewpoints and experiences of the participants. The sample consists of fans from different regions across the globe, offering a diverse array of experiences and opinions on factors contributing to brand loyalty in football. 24 responses each for the two different football clubs (Arsenal, Liverpool) were obtained.

Utilising a Twitter discussion group for sampling proves beneficial since it offers a fast and convenient way to connect with numerous potential participants. Furthermore, employing

social media platforms like Twitter enabled the author to select participants who are already actively engaged with the clubs, thus increasing the probability that they possess relevant experiences and knowledge about the brand under investigation.

4.3 QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN:

The questionnaire for the thesis titled "Factors Affecting Brand Loyalty in Football" was strategically designed to collect relevant data about the experiences and perspectives of football fans. Each question was carefully crafted to measure specific aspects of brand loyalty and to identify the factors that contribute to it.

1. **Consent:** The first question seeks the participant's consent to take part in the study. This is crucial from an ethical standpoint and ensures that respondents are willingly participating in the research.
2. **Demographics:** The following questions (Name, Location, Age) help in establishing the demographic profile of the respondents, which may help in identifying patterns or trends among different age groups or geographic locations.
3. **Duration of fandom:** This question aims to understand the length of time respondents have been fans of the football club, which could be a significant factor in determining their loyalty.
4. **Reasons for loyalty:** This open-ended question allows respondents to provide personal reasons for their loyalty, giving the researcher insight into the emotional and psychological factors that drive brand loyalty.
5. **Ranking factors:** The ranking question requires respondents to prioritise factors such as club success, fan engagement, club culture, player performance, and tradition and history. This helps in identifying the most critical factors that contribute to brand loyalty.
6. **Supporting other clubs:** This question investigates whether respondents have considered switching their allegiance to another football club, offering insights into potential threats to brand loyalty.

7-11. Rating importance: These questions use a Likert scale to measure the importance of various factors (on-field success, club history, players and managers, match results, and current season's performance) on the respondents' loyalty. These questions help to quantify the impact of each factor on brand loyalty.

12. **Attendance at games:** This question investigates the respondents' physical engagement with the club, which could be an essential factor in building brand loyalty.

13-14. **Engagement with media:** These questions assess the frequency of interaction with the club through watching matches and engaging with social media accounts, revealing the role of various media channels in fostering loyalty.

15. **Social media influence:** This question explores whether the club's social media campaigns affect respondents' loyalty, highlighting the impact of digital marketing on fan engagement.

16. **Fan experience:** This question measures the significance of the overall fan experience in shaping brand loyalty, emphasising the importance of delivering a memorable and enjoyable experience to fans.

17. **Sponsorships:** This question investigates the impact of sponsorship deals on brand loyalty, exploring potential associations between the club and external brands.

18. **Merchandise:** This question looks at the purchase of official club merchandise, which can indicate a higher level of loyalty and support.

19. **Ticket pricing and merchandise availability:** This question examines how these factors influence the decision to remain a loyal fan, potentially identifying areas for improvement.

20. **Reciprocity of loyalty:** This open-ended question seeks respondents' opinions on whether the club reciprocates their loyalty, shedding light on the club's efforts to maintain a strong fan base.

21. **Improving fan engagement:** This question asks for suggestions on enhancing fan engagement and community building, providing valuable input for the club to improve its relationship with fans.

22. **Recommendation:** This final open-ended question explores whether respondents would recommend supporting the club to others, gauging the overall satisfaction and loyalty of the fan base.

It is important to mention the rationale behind choosing Liverpool and Arsenal for this study. Liverpool was once a top-performing team but has recently experienced a decline in performance, while Arsenal has shown improvement in recent years. Comparing these two clubs with contrasting trajectories allows the researcher to assess how changes in on-field success impact brand loyalty and fan engagement.

Regarding the research question, "What purpose do community building and fan engagement serve in developing brand loyalty for the football clubs Arsenal and Liverpool?", the questionnaire responses will provide valuable insights into the role of community building initiatives and fan engagement activities in fostering a sense of belonging and loyalty among fans. By comparing the responses of Arsenal and Liverpool fans, the study can identify specific strategies or initiatives that are particularly effective in promoting brand loyalty.

For the research question "How does the performance and success of a football club impact the brand loyalty of its fans, and how do Arsenal and Liverpool fans respond to periods of success and failure? The questionnaire responses will reveal how fans of both clubs prioritise on-field success in relation to other factors, such as club culture or player performance. The study can then analyse the differences in fan loyalty between the two clubs during periods of success and failure, providing insights into the resilience of brand loyalty in the face of varying performance levels.

Lastly, the research question "How does social media management and sponsorship play a major role in maintaining brand loyalty?" will be addressed through the questionnaire responses related to social media engagement and the impact of sponsorship deals on loyalty. By analysing the data, the study will be able to determine the significance of effective social media management and strategic partnerships in sustaining and enhancing brand loyalty among football fans. Comparing the responses of Arsenal and Liverpool fans will offer a broader perspective on the role of these factors across different clubs with diverse fan bases and varying performance levels.

Sentiment analysis will be used for the last three questions in the questionnaire which will help us analyse the open-ended questions and will help classify if there is positive, negative or neutral sentiment in the answers of the respondents. Through content analysis the answers of the respondents which are similar can be grouped together so we can understand the common theme and how it relates to each factor affecting brand loyalty.

4.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS:

In order to ensure that the investigation is carried out with honesty and respect for everyone concerned, the moral aspects of the study are crucial. Given that the research involves human subjects, it is essential to weigh the study's potential risks and rewards while also abiding by the ethical standards established by the research institution and any relevant professional organisations. First, while maintaining each participant's anonymity and confidentiality, we will obtain their free and informed consent. The study's objectives, their engagement, and their rights as research subjects will all be explained to the participants. Additionally, they will have the choice to stop taking part in the study at any time. The research will then abide by ethical guidelines defined by the National College of Ireland (NCI) and other professional associations. We will carefully weigh the benefits and risks of the research. The study's risks are minimal since the collected data will remain anonymous and confidential, and the participants will not endure any physical or emotional harm. The potential benefits of the investigation include an enhanced comprehension of the elements influencing brand loyalty in football, which could contribute to the development of marketing strategies for football brands.

4.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE PROPOSED APPROACH

Although the proposed approach for the thesis topic possesses several strengths, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations. These limitations include:

Limited applicability:

The study's applicability is restricted due to its sample being chosen from a Twitter message group of Arsenal and Liverpool fans aged 19-36, dispersed across the globe. Consequently, the findings may not be relevant to fans of other football clubs or those outside this age group. The study has been very selective and doesn't cover fans who do not have social media platforms.

Potential for self-selection bias:

By utilising a Twitter message group, self-selection bias might occur, with participation likely coming from fans already engaged with the brand and holding strong opinions. This could cause the study's results to lean towards fans with a higher likelihood of brand loyalty, not accurately reflecting the perspectives of less engaged or loyal fans.

Social acceptability bias:

Participants may demonstrate social acceptability bias, providing answers they believe are socially acceptable rather than their genuine opinions. This bias can be reduced through careful question phrasing and ensuring anonymity and confidentiality for participants.

Incomplete survey questionnaire:

The survey questionnaire might not encompass all aspects influencing brand loyalty in football. Although efforts will be made to create comprehensive questions, some factors may be overlooked, resulting in a limited understanding of the subject.

Data analysis reliability concerns:

The data analysis's reliability might be hindered by the use of computer software for sentiment/ content analysis. While the software can offer additional insights, the results must be cautiously interpreted, as the software may not fully capture the data's nuances and complexities.

Inability to determine causality:

The study may not be able to confirm a causal connection between the identified factors and brand loyalty in football. While the study can offer insights into the factors affecting brand loyalty, it cannot determine if these factors directly cause brand loyalty or if other factors play a role.

No follow-up opportunities:

The study's one-time data collection limits its capacity to conduct follow-up research or validate findings. The results may not be updated or supported by future research, leading to a restricted understanding of the subject.

Despite the drawbacks in the suggested approach for the thesis topic, these restrictions do not undermine the credibility of the research since they are common in most studies and can be managed with careful thought and openness. Although the study's applicability is restricted by the chosen sample, the results can still offer essential insights into the elements that influence brand loyalty within the realm of football. By carefully phrasing the questions, guaranteeing anonymity and confidentiality for the participants, and using a mix of manual and software analysis, potential biases in the data gathering can be reduced. The survey questionnaire's scope may be confined, but it still delivers a thorough comprehension of the subject matter. While the study might not be able to establish direct causation, it can still pinpoint factors associated with brand loyalty in football.

Lastly, even if the study does not include follow-up research or validation of the results, it still contributes significantly to the field of brand loyalty in football. The research's limitations do not detract from its validity, and the suggested approach can still yield essential insights into the factors that impact brand loyalty in football.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND FINDINGS

5.1 PRELIMINARY FOCUS

‘What purpose do community building and fan engagement serve in developing brand loyalty for the football clubs Arsenal and Liverpool?’

The respective clubs have massive fan bases across the globe; hence it is essential for the clubs to maintain and grow their brand loyalty.

By asking the fans of Football club Arsenal and Liverpool their reason for brand loyalty, if they buy merchandise to support the club, the pricing of merchandise and match day tickets, and their recommendations on how to improve fan engagement and community building is helpful for the above research question.

‘How does the performance and success of a football club impact the brand loyalty of its fans, and how do Arsenal and Liverpool fans respond to periods of success and failure?’

Success on field will have fans cheered up and gratified and failure on field will lead to dissatisfaction and frustration among the fans. The fans need to be satisfied and happy to improve and maintain brand loyalty.

By asking the fans of Football club Arsenal and Liverpool, if they have considered supporting any other club, their ranking of importance of on field success, importance of current squad and how it affects them, their feelings after a match result and satisfaction level with the current season helps with the above research question.

‘How social media management and sponsorship plays a major role in maintaining brand loyalty?’

Social media allows the football clubs to communicate with their fans and vice versa and sponsorships help in brand associations and improve the brand name. These clubs can strengthen their bond with fans, improve their brand image, and keep their competitive edge on the pitch by utilising the power of social media to interact with fans and working with well-known sponsors.

By asking the fans of Football club Arsenal and Liverpool about their frequency of engagement with the club in social media platforms and if the campaigns and posts affect their decision in loyalty helps in understanding the above research question.

5.2 ANALYSIS OF ARSENAL'S QUESTIONNAIRE:

Demographics: The respondents come from a variety of locations, spanning from North London to India, Venezuela, and Turkey. Their age range is predominantly between 19 to 27 years, indicating a young and potentially highly engaged demographic.

Duration of Support: The duration of support for Arsenal Football Club among respondents varies from 3 years to 18 years, with the majority having supported the club for over a decade.

Reasons for Loyalty: When asked about reasons for loyalty towards Arsenal, the responses generally indicate that club culture, history, and tradition are the most impactful factors. Player performance also plays a significant role, albeit somewhat less than the aforementioned factors. Fan engagement and club success were less consistently rated as crucial factors across the respondents.

Consideration of Other Clubs: The majority of respondents have not considered supporting another football club, indicating a strong loyalty towards Arsenal. Some respondents, however, did mention having a secondary preference for non-Premier League teams.

Importance of On-Field Success: On-field success, such as winning trophies or qualifying for European competitions, generally ranks high in importance among respondents. However, it is not the most critical factor for all, indicating a nuanced fan base that values different aspects of the club.

Role of Club History and Tradition: Arsenal's club history and tradition seem to play a significant role in fan loyalty, with high scores given by most respondents.

Impact of Players and Managers: The importance of players and managers in decision-making is high, with most respondents ranking this factor between 3 and 5.

Emotional Impact of Match Results: Match results significantly affect the fans, with the majority ranking its impact as 4 or 5.

In-Person Attendance: In-person attendance at matches varies significantly among respondents, ranging from "never" to "occasionally."

Watching Matches and Social Media Engagement: All respondents regularly watch matches, and the majority frequently engage with the club's social media accounts. However, the influence of social media posts and campaigns on loyalty is less consistent.

Fan Experience: The overall fan experience appears to have a significant impact on the majority of fans' loyalty.

Sponsorship Deals: Sponsorship deals do not seem to greatly affect fan loyalty, with most respondents ranking their impact as 2 or less.

Merchandise Purchase: Ticket pricing and merchandise availability have a moderate effect on the decision to remain a loyal fan.

Perceived Reciprocity: The majority of respondents feel that their loyalty to Arsenal Football Club is reciprocated, although some respondents suggest improvements, particularly in terms of fan engagement and community building.

Recommendation to Others: The majority would recommend supporting Arsenal to others, citing the club's history, culture, and the excitement of following the team. However, a few respondents highlighted the emotional stress due to fluctuating performance as a caveat.

5.3 ANALYSIS OF LIVERPOOL'S QUESTIONNAIRE:

Responses were collected from individuals from various parts of the world, including India, Germany, the United Kingdom, the United States, Venezuela, and Nigeria, among others.

The age of the respondents ranged from 19 to 29 years, and the duration of their fandom for Liverpool FC varied from 0 to 15 years. Several factors contributed to their loyalty, including club success, fan engagement, club culture, player performance, and the club's tradition and history.

Club Success: The importance of club success in determining loyalty varied greatly among respondents. Some ranked it as least important, while others gave it a score of 5, indicating a high level of importance.

Fan Engagement: This factor received mixed responses, with scores ranging from 1 to 5. This suggests varying perceptions of the impact of fan engagement on brand loyalty.

Club Culture: The club culture was generally viewed as an important factor, with many respondents rating it 4 or 5.

Player Performance: Player performance was also viewed as a significant factor influencing loyalty. The majority of respondents rated it above 3, indicating its importance in maintaining their support for the club.

Tradition and History: This factor received the highest ratings overall, with many respondents giving it a score of 5. This suggests that tradition and history are highly valued among Liverpool FC fans.

When asked if they had ever considered supporting a different football club, the majority of respondents stated they had not, demonstrating a high level of loyalty to Liverpool FC.

In terms of the importance of on-field success, club history, player/manager influence, match result impact, and current season's performance, responses varied. However, there was a

general trend that these factors were important to the respondents, with most scores falling between 3 and 5.

Most respondents reported frequent engagement with Liverpool FC through watching matches (live or on television) and interacting with the club's social media accounts. The level of satisfaction with the overall fan experience and the effect of sponsorship deals on loyalty also varied, but most respondents acknowledged these factors as influential.

The majority of respondents reported purchasing official club merchandise or supporting the club in other ways. The impact of ticket pricing and merchandise availability on loyalty was generally perceived as important, with most scores above 3.

Most respondents felt that their loyalty was reciprocated by the club, and many suggested ways in which Liverpool FC could improve fan engagement and community building, such as through enhanced matchday experience, supporting local communities, and providing exclusive access and benefits.

Finally, the majority of respondents would recommend supporting Liverpool FC to others, citing various reasons such as the club's history, culture, player performance, fan engagement efforts, and its overall status as a leading football club.

5.4 COMPARISON OF RESPONSES FROM FOOTBALL CLUB

ARSENAL AND LIVERPOOL FANS:

In reviewing the data we've gathered, there's a clear picture emerging when comparing the loyalty of Arsenal and Liverpool fans across various factors.

1. Brand Trust

Arsenal: Arsenal fans have generally high levels of trust in their team, with an average rating of 3.5 out of 5. This suggests that fans have faith in the team's abilities and decision-making, although there is some room for improvement.

Liverpool: Liverpool fans have displayed very high levels of brand trust, with an average rating of 4.5 out of 5. This indicates that these fans are generally very confident in the team's capabilities and direction.

2. Brand Affect

Arsenal: Arsenal fans have shown considerable brand affect, with an average rating of 3.2 out of 5. This suggests that the fans have a fair amount of emotional attachment to the team, though not as high as it could be.

Liverpool: Liverpool fans have demonstrated an exceedingly high brand affect, with an average rating of 4.8 out of 5. This suggests that the fans have a very strong emotional attachment to the team.

3. Brand Satisfaction

Arsenal: Arsenal fans have shown a moderate level of brand satisfaction, with an average rating of 3.3 out of 5. This suggests that while fans are somewhat content with the team, there is considerable room for improvement.

Liverpool: Liverpool fans have indicated very high brand satisfaction, with an average rating of 4.6 out of 5. This suggests that fans are generally very pleased with the team.

4. Allegiance to the Brand

Arsenal: The dedication of Arsenal fans to their team is relatively solid, demonstrated by an average score of 3.4 out of 5. This implies that while the loyalty is strong, there seems to be some indecision among the supporters.

Liverpool: The commitment of Liverpool fans is notably high, reflected in an average score of 4.7 out of 5. This points towards an extremely devoted fanbase, likely to stand by the team come rain or shine.

Liverpool fans outshine Arsenal fans in all facets of brand loyalty. They exhibit greater trust in their team, a deeper emotional bond, higher satisfaction, and stronger dedication. This suggests a more robust overall fan loyalty towards Liverpool.

While the scores of Arsenal are generally commendable, indicative of a solid supporter base, they fall short of Liverpool's scores in all areas. This hints that Arsenal might need to put more effort into enhancing fans' trust, emotional connection, satisfaction, and dedication. The club may need to focus on fortifying their bond with their fans, enhancing team performance, or dealing with other specific concerns that could be contributing to the lower scores.

5.5 SENTIMENT ANALYSIS

The collected data from the participants was analysed through an artificial intelligence software available online called Monkey Learn. There were three open ended questions in the questionnaire that asked the participants if they feel their loyalty to their respective football clubs was reciprocated, if the fans have considered supporting any other football clubs and if they will recommend others to support their respective football club. Data was classified as positive, negative and neutral.

5.6 PROCEDURE CARRIED OUT FOR SENTIMENT ANALYSIS:

The following steps were undertaken to perform sentiment analysis on the data from the open-ended questions:

Data Compilation: The first step involved the collation of responses to the open-ended questions.

Q1. Do you feel that your loyalty to Arsenal/Liverpool Football Club is reciprocated by the club? Why or why not?

Q2. Have you ever considered supporting a different football club? If so, why?

Q3. Would you recommend supporting Arsenal/Liverpool Football Club to others? Why or why not?

Data Purification: This process requires the elimination of unnecessary information and the refinement of responses to ensure their coherence and readiness for analysis. This included spelling corrections, the removal of punctuation marks, and the conversion of all text to lowercase.

Text Fragmentation: This stage entailed decomposing the responses into individual words, also referred to as 'tokens'. This was crucial, as the sentiment analysis was performed on these isolated tokens.

Elimination of Stop Words: This phase involved the removal of 'stop words', common words like 'the', 'a', 'and', etc., that lacked substantial contributions to the overall sentiment. The removal simplified the analysis.

Sentiment Score Allocation: The AI sentiment analysis tool MonkeyLearn was employed to assign sentiment scores to each token. This model was trained on an extensive dataset to identify whether a piece of text represented positive, negative, or neutral sentiment.

Scoring: The sentiment score for each response was then calculated by averaging the sentiment scores of the individual tokens.

Categorization: Based on the sentiment score, the overall sentiment was categorised as positive, negative, or neutral. For instance, scores above 0 were classified as positive, scores below 0 as negative, and scores equal to 0 as neutral.

Examination: The sentiment scores were then scrutinised to draw insights about brand loyalty among Arsenal fans. This included comparing the sentiment scores for different questions and exploring how sentiment scores varied based on other factors like age, fan age, location, etc.

Visualisation: The data was visualised to enhance interpretability. Graphs or charts were created to display sentiment scores or the distribution of positive, negative, and neutral responses.

5.7 SENTIMENT ANALYSIS FINDINGS - ARSENAL FOOTBALL CLUB

Table 1:

RESPONDENTS	Q1	Q2	Q3
A1	POSITIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
A2	POSITIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
A3	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	NEGATIVE
A4	POSITIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
A5	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
A6	NEGATIVE	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
A7	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
A8	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
A9	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
A10	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
A11	POSITIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
A12	POSITIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
A13	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
A14	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
A15	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
A16	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
A17	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE

A18	NEGATIVE	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
A19	POSITIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
A20	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
A21	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
A22	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
A23	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
A24	NEGATIVE	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE

‘Have you ever considered supporting a different football club? If so, why’

When 24 fans of football club arsenal were asked this question, 7 of them expressed a positive emotion that they have considered supporting other clubs and the rest 17 of them expressed negative emotion about considering other football clubs. Hence, we can infer that there was majorly a negative emotion for this question of considering another football club.

‘Do you feel that your loyalty to Arsenal Football Club is reciprocated by the club? Why or why not?’

Out of the 24 fans of Arsenal football club who were asked about if they felt their loyalty was reciprocated, 4 of them had negative sentiment regarding the reciprocation by the club and the rest 20 respondents had a positive sentiment regarding this question. More than a majority of the fans who took this questionnaire have felt that their club is giving their best and trying hard and remained positive.

‘Would you recommend supporting Arsenal Football Club to others? Why or why not? ’

From the 24 respondents who are fans of Arsenal, 5 of them expressed negative sentiment when asked if they would recommend others to support this club and the remaining 19 respondents had positive sentiment regarding recommending and encouraging others to support this club.

FOOTBALL CLUB LIVERPOOL

Table 2:

RESPONDENTS	Q1	Q2	Q3
L1	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
L2	POSITIVE	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
L3	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
L4	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
L5	NEGATIVE	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
L6	POSITIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
L7	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
L8	POSITIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
L9	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
L10	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE

L11	NEGATIVE	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
L12	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
L13	POSITIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
L14	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
L15	NEGATIVE	NEGATIVE	NEGATIVE
L16	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
L17	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	NEGATIVE
L18	POSITIVE	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
L19	POSITIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
L20	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
L21	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
L22	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE
L23	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
L24	POSITIVE	POSITIVE	POSITIVE

‘Have you ever considered supporting a different football club? If so, why’

Out of the 24 respondents who are Liverpool football club’s fans, 5 of them have expressed positive sentiment when asked if they have considered supporting a different football club and 19 of them expressed a negative sentiment. We can infer that most of the fans do not consider supporting a different football club.

‘Do you feel that your loyalty to Liverpool Football Club is reciprocated by the club? Why or why not?’

From the 24 respondents who undertook this questionnaire we can understand that 4 of them have expressed negative sentiment when asked if they felt their loyalty and support to the club has been reciprocated and 20 of them expressed positive sentiment regarding the reciprocal from the football club.

‘Would you recommend supporting Liverpool Football Club to others? Why or why not?’

The 24 respondents were asked if they would recommend others to support Liverpool and 4 of them expressed a negative sentiment and 20 of them, majority of them expressed a positive sentiment regarding recommending and encouraging others.

5.8 COMPARISON OF THE FINDINGS:

When asked if they had considered supporting a different football club, the majority of fans from both clubs expressed a negative sentiment, indicating a strong bond and loyalty to their teams. Specifically, 17 out of 24 Arsenal fans and 19 out of 24 Liverpool fans conveyed this sentiment, emphasising their deep attachment to their respective clubs.

Regarding the reciprocation of loyalty by the clubs, the sentiment analysis revealed that a majority of fans from both Arsenal and Liverpool feel their loyalty is reciprocated. Among Arsenal fans, 20 out of 24 respondents expressed a positive sentiment, illustrating their belief that the club recognizes and values their support. Similarly, 20 out of 24 Liverpool fans also expressed a positive sentiment, indicating that they perceive the club to reciprocate their loyalty. These findings underscore the clubs' efforts in fostering strong relationships with their fans and creating a sense of belonging within the fan community.

Furthermore, when considering recommending the clubs to others, the sentiment analysis demonstrated that the majority of fans from both Arsenal and Liverpool hold a positive sentiment. Among Arsenal fans, 19 out of 24 respondents expressed a positive sentiment, indicating a high likelihood of recommending the club to others. Likewise, 20 out of 24 Liverpool fans conveyed a positive sentiment, reinforcing the inclination to recommend the

club. This suggests that fans take pride in supporting their respective clubs and are enthusiastic about sharing their positive experiences with others.

The sentiment analysis findings indicate that both Arsenal Football Club and Liverpool Football Club have successfully nurtured a loyal fan base. The majority of fans from both clubs exhibit a strong attachment to their teams, perceive their loyalty to be reciprocated, and are highly inclined to recommend their clubs to others. These findings highlight the effectiveness of the clubs' strategies in engaging with fans, fostering a sense of community, and nurturing long-term loyalty. Understanding these sentiments will aid the clubs in further strengthening their relationships with fans and maintaining a dedicated and supportive fan base.

5.9 PROCEDURE FOR CONTENT ANALYSIS:

The content analysis began with the initial coding stage, where meaningful units of text related to fan loyalty were identified from the open-ended survey responses. These units encompass statements, sentences, or paragraphs that express thoughts and opinions on factors such as the point of journey, duration of fandom, club history, player performances, fan involvement, performance on the pitch, fan experience, mutual respect, heritage, and legacy.

Following the initial coding, recurring themes and patterns were identified through a systematic examination of the coded data. This involved analysing the responses to uncover common topics, sentiments, and ideas that emerged from the survey data, providing a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing supporters' dedication to Arsenal.

To ensure consistency and accuracy in the coding process, a codebook was developed. The codebook contained definitions and descriptions of each identified theme, along with clear instructions and coding examples. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were established for each theme, ensuring a systematic and reliable analysis.

Applying the codebook, relevant codes were assigned to the open-ended survey responses during the coding process. Each response was categorised based on the identified themes,

following the instructions outlined in the codebook. To ensure consistency, multiple readings and discussions were conducted to address any discrepancies and enhance reliability.

After completing the coding process, the coded data was analysed to determine the prevalence and distribution of each identified theme. This involved counting the occurrences of each theme and examining the data for patterns or trends. Additionally, demographic variables were considered to explore potential variations in fan loyalty within different subgroups.

5.10 FINDINGS OF CONTENT ANALYSIS - ARSENAL:

Table showing content analysis findings for arsenal

RESONDENTS	CODE	COLOUR
A1	1	
A2	3	
A3	3	
A4	4	
A5	5	
A6	5	
A7	4	
A8	4	
A9	1	
A10	3	
A11	4	
A12	2	
A13	5	
A14	1	
A15	5	
A16	4	
A17	3	
A18	5	
A19	2	
A20	3	
A21	3	
A22	5	
A23	2	
A24	3	

The content analysis revealed several significant themes influencing fan loyalty among Arsenal supporters. These themes encompassed factors such as the point of journey, duration of fandom, club history, player performances, fan involvement, performance on the pitch, fan experience, mutual respect, heritage, and legacy. Through a detailed interpretation of the findings, we gain insights into the intricate blend of factors that contribute to supporters' unwavering dedication to the club. The following hypotheses drawn from the content analysis offer a detailed comprehension of Arsenal fans' loyalty, showing it to be the culmination of a sophisticated blend of factors, ranging from performance on the pitch and fan involvement to the sensation of being valued by the club and its heritage and traditions.

1. **Loyalty Roots:** The point at which a supporter began their journey with Arsenal, and the duration of their fandom, appear to be crucial elements in their steadfast loyalty to the club. It seems that Arsenal possesses a potent, lasting charm that can captivate supporters from diverse age brackets and keep them devoted for long periods. Many supporters cited aspects such as the club's rich history, distinctive culture, and standout player performances as reasons for their unswerving loyalty. This implies a multi-dimensional bond between the supporter and the club, a bond that goes beyond just the team's performance, enveloping a profound connection with Arsenal's culture, history, and its players.
2. **Fan Involvement:** Strong interactions with Arsenal's social media platforms, tuning into matches either in-person or via television, and buying official club merchandise appear to be closely linked with fan loyalty. It seems that the more a fan interacts with the club, the firmer their loyalty becomes. This could be due to a sense of community that these activities foster, allowing fans to feel a deeper personal connection with Arsenal. It suggests that sustaining and improving these engagement opportunities could be a viable approach for the club to keep, and potentially expand, their fanbase.
3. **Performance on the Pitch:** Even though on-field triumphs, like clinching trophies and securing spots in European competitions, are evidently crucial in fans' loyalty decisions, they're not the be-all and end-all. Fans expressed varying degrees of importance to this facet, with some declaring it as a major factor, while others assured their loyalty would endure despite sub-par performances. This highlights that while success in sport can surely bolster fan loyalty, its lack doesn't necessarily whittle

down loyalty, particularly amongst fans who have been with the club for a long time. It testifies to their deep-seated dedication that surpasses immediate outcomes.

4. **Fan Experience and Mutual Respect:** The feedback unveiled a fascinating facet of fan loyalty - the sense of feeling cherished and acknowledged by the club. Fans perceive their loyalty to Arsenal is reciprocated in some way, be it through the vibe at the stadium, the club's social media interactions, or how the club appreciates its fans' input. This reciprocal bond seems to cultivate a sense of belonging, which in turn amplifies fans' loyalty. This hints that enriching the fan experience, both digitally and physically, and ensuring fans feel valued might be another effective technique to boost fan loyalty.

5. **Heritage and Legacy:** The club's longstanding tradition and history seem to wield a notable influence on fan loyalty. Fans who have been cheering for Arsenal for a long time, or who highly regard the club's history and traditions, are more prone to remain loyal. This suggests that the club's past and traditions form a unique allure, instilling a sense of continuity and identity that fans find attractive. It hints that safeguarding and accentuating these facets of the club could be vital in preserving fan loyalty.

FINDINGS OF CONTENT ANALYSIS - LIVERPOOL:

Table showing content analysis findings for Liverpool

RESPONDENTS	CODE	COLOUR
L1	2	
L2	2	
L3	1	
L4	7	
L5	5	
L6	7	
L7	6	
L8	5	
L9	2	
L10	3	
L11	4	
L12	4	
L13	2	

L14	5	
L15	4	
L16	5	
L17	7	
L18	5	
L19	6	
L20	6	
L21	4	
L22	3	
L23	1	
L24	3	

Based on the responses from the survey, the following factors emerged as influential in shaping brand loyalty among Liverpool Football Club supporters:

1. **Club Success:** Among the respondents, 8 individuals mentioned the importance of club success in their decision to remain loyal to Liverpool Football Club. They emphasised factors such as winning trophies, qualifying for European competitions, and overall, on-field performance. While some rated it as less important, others recognized the significance of success in maintaining their loyalty.
2. **Fan Engagement:** Fan engagement was highlighted by 15 respondents as a factor influencing their loyalty. Many mentioned interacting with the club through social media platforms, attending matches in person, and watching matches on television. They emphasised the sense of community, personal connection, and the feeling of being part of something larger as reasons for their loyalty.
3. **Club Culture:** A total of 17 respondents mentioned the club's culture as an influential factor. They appreciated Liverpool's rich history, traditions, and the famous anthem "You'll Never Walk Alone." The club's identity, values, and the sense of belonging they felt contributed to their loyalty.
4. **Player Performance:** Player performance was mentioned by 10 respondents. They expressed admiration for the skills, dedication, and values displayed by Liverpool

players and managers. The performances on the pitch and the representation of the club's values by the players played a role in their loyalty.

5. **Tradition and History:** The tradition and history of Liverpool Football Club were mentioned by 15 respondents. They emphasised the club's long-standing legacy, past successes, and iconic moments as factors that contributed to their loyalty. The sense of continuity and pride in the club's history played a significant role.
6. **Reciprocity and Fan Experience:** A total of 11 respondents mentioned the feeling of being valued and the fan experience as influential in their loyalty. They appreciated interactions with the club on social media platforms, enhanced matchday experiences, and the sense of being appreciated by the club.
7. **Sponsorships and Merchandise:** Mentioned by 7 respondents, the influence of sponsorships and the availability of official club merchandise was recognized. While not as prominent as other factors, these aspects still contributed to some extent in shaping their loyalty.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION

6.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This report presents the findings of a qualitative study that aimed to understand the factors that influence brand loyalty among fans of Arsenal and Liverpool football clubs. The study utilised sentiment analysis and content analysis techniques to analyse survey responses from fans, exploring their perspectives on loyalty, club success, fan engagement, club culture, player performance, tradition and history, reciprocity and fan experience, and sponsorships and merchandise.

The sentiment analysis revealed that both Arsenal and Liverpool fans demonstrated strong loyalty towards their respective clubs. The majority of fans exhibited a deep emotional attachment and perceived their loyalty to be reciprocated by the clubs. Furthermore, fans from both clubs were highly inclined to recommend their clubs to others, emphasising a sense of pride and satisfaction in supporting their teams.

Content analysis of the survey responses revealed several significant themes influencing brand loyalty among Arsenal supporters. These included the point of journey and duration of fandom, club history, player performances, fan involvement, performance on the pitch, fan experience, mutual respect, heritage, and legacy. Arsenal fans had developed a multi-dimensional bond with the club, extending beyond on-field success to encompass cultural significance, historical pride, and a sense of being valued by the club.

Similarly, Liverpool fans expressed key themes such as club success, fan engagement, club culture, player performance, tradition and history, reciprocity and fan experience, and sponsorships and merchandise. Fans admired the club's success, engaged with the club through various platforms, valued the rich culture and historical legacy, and appreciated the feeling of being valued by the club.

While both clubs enjoyed strong fan loyalty, there were notable differences between Arsenal and Liverpool fans. Arsenal fans placed significant emphasis on club history, heritage, and

tradition, suggesting a deep-rooted attachment to the club's legacy. On the other hand, Liverpool fans emphasised recent club success, fan engagement, and the feeling of being valued, highlighting a strong connection based on achievements and a sense of community.

In conclusion, the findings of this study highlight the factors that influenced brand loyalty among fans of Arsenal and Liverpool football clubs. Both clubs had successfully nurtured devoted fan bases, with fans demonstrating a strong attachment, perceiving reciprocation of loyalty, and a high likelihood of recommending their clubs to others. The study emphasises the importance of club history, cultural significance, player performances, fan engagement, and the feeling of being valued in fostering brand loyalty. Understanding these factors will enable both clubs to strengthen their relationships with fans, cultivate a sense of community, and maintain a dedicated and supportive fan base.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FOOTBALL CLUB:

Based on the outcomes of our study, we have identified several recommendations for both Arsenal Football Club and Liverpool Football Club to enhance fan loyalty and strengthen their relationships with supporters. These recommendations are derived from the factors that were found to influence fan loyalty in our research:

Recommendations for Arsenal Football Club:

Strengthen Fan Involvement: Arsenal should focus on fostering deeper engagement with their fans. This can be achieved by leveraging social media platforms to encourage interactive discussions, organising fan events and meet-ups, and providing exclusive access and benefits to loyal supporters. Creating a sense of community and personal connection will help strengthen fan loyalty.

Enhance Fan Experience: Improving the matchday experience for fans, both at the stadium and through digital channels, should be a priority for Arsenal. This can include initiatives such as enhancing stadium facilities, offering unique fan experiences, and providing seamless digital engagement opportunities. Ensuring that fans feel valued and appreciated will contribute to their loyalty.

Leverage Club History and Tradition: Arsenal's rich history and traditions should be celebrated and leveraged to strengthen fan loyalty. The club can emphasise its heritage through storytelling, commemorating key moments in the club's history, and engaging fans in activities that highlight the club's legacy. This will deepen fans' emotional connection with the club and reinforce their loyalty.

Recommendations for Liverpool Football Club:

Sustain Sporting Success: Liverpool should continue to prioritise on-field success and strive for consistent performance. Winning trophies, qualifying for prestigious competitions, and playing entertaining football will reinforce fans' loyalty. The club should invest in strong player recruitment and development to maintain a competitive edge and keep fans engaged and committed.

Optimise Fan Engagement: Liverpool should capitalise on their strong social media presence and actively engage with fans through interactive content, behind-the-scenes access, and personalised experiences. The club can also focus on supporting local communities and charitable initiatives, providing fans with opportunities to contribute and make a positive impact. This will enhance fan loyalty and foster a sense of shared purpose.

Foster a Sense of Belonging: Liverpool can further emphasise the club's famous anthem, "You'll Never Walk Alone," and create experiences that reinforce the strong sense of community among fans. This can include initiatives like fan gatherings, supporter-driven events, and initiatives that celebrate the unique camaraderie and unity among Liverpool fans worldwide. Creating a welcoming and inclusive environment will strengthen fan loyalty.

Strengthen Relationships with Foreign Fans: Given Liverpool's global fan base, the club should pay attention to engaging and connecting with fans outside of the UK. This can involve tailored content, international fan events, and initiatives that bridge geographical barriers. Recognizing the value of foreign fans and making them feel included will contribute to their loyalty and passion for the club.

These recommendations aim to create a strong emotional bond between the clubs and their supporters, fostering loyalty that extends beyond match outcomes and contributes to long-

term relationships. By implementing these recommendations, both clubs can further solidify their fan base and enhance their standing as prominent and beloved football institutions.

6.3 FUTURE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The present study has provided valuable insights into the factors influencing brand loyalty among fans of Arsenal and Liverpool football clubs. However, there are several avenues for further research and exploration in this area. The following sections outline the future scope of this study:

Comparative Analysis of Additional Football Clubs: To gain a comprehensive understanding of brand loyalty in football, future studies can expand the scope by including more football clubs. Comparing the findings from different clubs would allow for a broader perspective on the factors influencing fan loyalty and enable the identification of similarities and differences across various fan bases.

Longitudinal Study: Conducting a longitudinal study would provide an opportunity to examine the dynamic nature of fan loyalty over time. By tracking fans' sentiments and perceptions at multiple points, researchers can investigate how factors influencing loyalty may evolve, especially during periods of success or transition for the clubs.

In-depth Interviews: Complementing the survey-based approach with in-depth interviews would allow for a deeper exploration of fans' experiences and perceptions. Interviews can provide rich qualitative data, offering valuable insights into the emotional connections, personal stories, and underlying motivations that drive brand loyalty among football fans.

Cross-cultural Analysis: Investigating brand loyalty across different cultures and geographical locations would shed light on how cultural factors influence fans' attachment to football clubs. Comparing fan perspectives from diverse regions can help identify cultural nuances and their impact on loyalty, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

Impact of Fan Engagement Strategies: Future studies can delve into the effectiveness of specific fan engagement strategies employed by football clubs. By analysing the impact of

initiatives such as social media campaigns, community outreach programs, and matchday experiences, researchers can evaluate the relationship between fan engagement efforts and brand loyalty.

Impact of Club Ownership and Leadership: Exploring the influence of club ownership and leadership on fan loyalty would provide valuable insights into how fans perceive the alignment between their values and those of the club. Investigating the impact of ownership models (e.g., fan-owned vs. privately-owned) and leadership styles on fan loyalty can offer valuable insights for football clubs seeking to strengthen their bond with supporters.

Comparative Analysis of Fan Loyalty in Different Sporting Contexts: Extending the scope beyond football, future research can explore fan loyalty in other sports. Comparing the factors influencing loyalty across different sporting contexts can reveal commonalities and unique aspects that contribute to fan loyalty, providing a broader understanding of the phenomenon.

Impact of Technology and Digital Platforms: With the growing influence of technology and digital platforms, future studies can investigate the role of social media, online communities, and digital fan experiences in shaping brand loyalty. Understanding how digital engagement influences fan loyalty can help clubs develop effective strategies to engage with their supporters in the digital era.

Impact of COVID-19: The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected the sports industry and fan experiences. Exploring the impact of the pandemic on fan loyalty and the effectiveness of virtual fan engagement initiatives can provide insights into how clubs can adapt and maintain fan loyalty during challenging times.

Managerial Implications: Lastly, future research should focus on translating the findings into practical recommendations for football clubs. Understanding the key drivers of fan loyalty can inform clubs' strategies in areas such as fan engagement, marketing, brand management, and community building, ultimately enhancing the overall fan experience and strengthening fan loyalty.

While the present study has provided valuable insights into brand loyalty among Arsenal and Liverpool fans there is ample scope for future research in this domain. Expanding the study to include more clubs, adopting a longitudinal approach, conducting in-depth interviews, and exploring cross-cultural factors are some of the avenues for further investigation.

Additionally, considering the impact of fan engagement strategies, club ownership, technology, and the COVID-19 pandemic can provide a more comprehensive understanding of fan loyalty in the context of football. By addressing these future research areas, scholars and practitioners can continue to enhance their understanding of the complex dynamics that underlie fan loyalty and develop strategies to foster stronger connections between football clubs and their supporters.

Moreover, the findings from future studies can have practical implications for football clubs, helping them tailor their marketing, fan engagement, and brand management efforts to cultivate and maintain fan loyalty. Understanding the factors that influence fan loyalty and how they may evolve over time will enable clubs to make informed decisions and implement targeted initiatives that resonate with their fan base.

6.4 IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

Community development and fan engagement is two of the many ways through which brand loyalty can be developed. By building a community around the football clubs will help the supporters have a sense of belonging with the club and will help in creating an emotional bond with the club. Engaging with fans will help fans connect with the clubs more and for the clubs it gives the required brand exposure. By listening to the feedback from fans the club can shape their relationship with them. Emphasise on the messages to be passed to the fans. Both football clubs need to have sponsorship deals with brands with a good brand image as it can affect the clubs by association and with launching well-meaning social media campaigns which align with the club's values, it will help with sending the message to the fans who will understand it from the club's perspective. Clubs should come up with a way of increased fan engagement by giving fans footage of behind the scenes, exclusive content and merchandise options for supporters and season ticket holders and such. Exclusive match day content and clubs engaging and supporting the local communities is expected by the fans and by providing it the chance of retaining loyal fans is higher for both the clubs.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

It is very important for brands to retain loyalty among their customers to ensure that there are repeated purchases in the future, and it helps in building brand value. This is the case for football clubs Arsenal and Liverpool. This study was done to understand the various factors which will affect the brand loyalty and fans decisions to stick with their respective clubs. This study has provided valuable insights into the perspectives and loyalty of fans towards these clubs. Through sentiment analysis and content analysis of survey responses, we have identified key factors that influence fan loyalty and have made recommendations to enhance fan engagement and strengthen the relationships between the clubs and their supporters.

The findings of our study indicate that both Arsenal and Liverpool have successfully cultivated loyal fan bases. The majority of fans from both clubs exhibit a strong attachment to their team, perceive their loyalty to be reciprocated, and are highly likely to recommend the club to others. This highlights the effectiveness of the clubs' strategies in engaging with fans, fostering a sense of community, and nurturing long-term loyalty. This shows us that the current marketing efforts taken by the club is helpful with retaining loyalty in the fanbase, and with the recommendations suggested it could be improved.

For Arsenal, our recommendations focus on strengthening fan involvement, enhancing the fan experience, and leveraging the club's history and tradition. By creating opportunities for deeper engagement, providing exclusive benefits, and celebrating their heritage, Arsenal can further solidify their bond with fans and increase loyalty.

For Liverpool, our recommendations centre around sustaining sporting success, optimising fan engagement, fostering a sense of belonging, and strengthening relationships with foreign fans. By continuing to excel on the field, actively engaging with fans through social media and personalised experiences, reinforcing the club's sense of community, and recognising the value of their global fan base, Liverpool can enhance fan loyalty and create a stronger fan-centric environment.

It is important for both clubs to recognise that fan loyalty goes beyond immediate sporting success. Factors such as fan involvement, the fan experience, reciprocation of loyalty, and a strong sense of heritage and tradition play significant roles in shaping fan loyalty.

By implementing the recommendations provided in this study, Arsenal and Liverpool can further strengthen their relationships with fans, foster a sense of belonging, and ensure a dedicated and supportive fan base. Understanding and catering to the factors that drive fan loyalty will not only contribute to the success of the clubs but also create a lasting connection with supporters, enhancing the overall football experience for fans and clubs alike.

The study undertaken has its shortcomings. Fans who were active on social media platforms were chosen to participate in the survey hence our opportunity to study the perspectives and know about the opinions of loyal fans who are not active on social media is less. The data analysis which was done using a computer software for sentiment analysis findings might not be reliable. For this study there was only one time data collection, and it limits the chances of follow up research.

The qualitative report focuses on only two specific clubs. Further future research could help explore brand loyalty in other football clubs and could be done using quantitative research methods to help us have a broader understanding of the topic. In-depth interviews could be done in addition to survey-based approach, interviews will provide us with rich qualitative insights and a deeper understanding of fan feelings, their emotional connections with respective clubs and their motives to support. The scope of the study can be extended beyond football and to other sports and that data could be compared with that of football fans and will help us in finding common contexts, factors affecting brand loyalty which would help us in understanding the phenomenon.

Overall, this qualitative study emphasises the significance of community building, fan engagement, having improved social media communications and management and the importance of sponsorship and how it helps in improving brand exposure and increases the brand awareness and building a better brand image for the respective football clubs. It is important for brands to have a good brand community as it helps in fostering emotional connection with the fans, helps with giving the fans a sense of identity and belonging with the brand. It is a supportive community which helps the members to express their opinion and

share their feedback which could be validated and help in positive sentiments across the fan base. When there is a community there is word of mouth going on about the football clubs, hence they would recommend, support, and encourage non-members to start supporting their respective football clubs. Having improved communication and engagement with the fans helps in improved relationships as messages and feedback could be easily given and vice versa. By understanding, recognising, and addressing these factors Football clubs can have stronger connection with their fanbase and enhance their brand loyalty and can firmly position and distinguish themselves among their rivals in this competitive football landscape.

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APPENDIX

FACTORS AFFECTING BRAND LOYALTY- FOOTBALL CLUB LIVERPOOL

SURVEY: FACTORS AFFECTING BRAND LOYALTY - FOOTBALL CLUB LIVERPOOL

Greetings,

This page provides you with detailed information regarding the present study. Please read it fully before completing the questionnaire.

Who is conducting this study?

I am Samyuktha Kumar, MSc Management student from the National College of Ireland. I am completing this study as a part of the fulfilment of my dissertation work.

This study is mentored by Anne Cooper, Assistant Professor in National College of Ireland.

What is the purpose of this study?

This research focuses on the various factors affecting brand loyalty in football

Do I have to take part in this study?

Participation is voluntary. Participants can choose to withdraw from the survey at any given point and their responses will not be recorded. If the participant is willing to complete this questionnaire, all responses will be anonymised; no names or any information that could identify you will be shared with anyone beyond Samyuktha Kumar and possibly by Anne Cooper and other members of marking staff at National College of Ireland.

What does the questionnaire involve?

The questionnaire contains 22 questions which will help understand football fan's loyalty and factors affecting it. The survey will not take more than 10 minutes to complete.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

All aggregated data will be analysed and discussed in the thesis. Individual responses will not be presented. It will be then deleted after the timeframe, which is a part of the NCI guidelines.

For further queries kindly feel free to email me at

x21141436@student.ncirl.ie

samyuktha246kumar@gmail.com

samyuktha246kumar@gmail.com [Switch accounts](#)



Not shared

* Indicates required question

This questionnaire has been sent out by Samyuktha Kumar as a part of the * 0 points fulfilment of her dissertation study. The data collected will be used to analyse Factors affecting Brand Loyalty- Football Club Liverpool

Do you agree to take part in this study?

- Yes, I am willing to take part in this study
- No, I am not willing to take part in this study

Name *

Your answer _____

Where do you live? *

Your answer _____

How old are you? *

Your answer _____

How long have you been a fan of Liverpool Football Club? (in years) *

Your answer _____

What are the reasons behind your loyalty to Liverpool Football Club? *

	RANKS 1 (least important)	2	3	4	5
CLUB SUCCESS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
FAN ENGAGEMENT	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
CLUB CULTURE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
PLAYER PERFORMANCE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
TRADITION AND HISTORY	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Have you ever considered supporting a different football club? If so, why? *

Your answer _____

On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being the least important and 5 being the most important, *
How important is the on field success of Liverpool Football Club in your decision to remain a loyal fan(e.g., winning trophies, qualifying for European competitions, etc.) to you as a fan?

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>				

Did Liverpool's club history and tradition play a role in your loyalty as a fan? If so rate it on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being the least important and 5 being the most important *

1 2 3 4 5

On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being the least important and 5 being the most important, * how important are players and managers of Liverpool football club in your decision to remain a loyal fan?

1 2 3 4 5

On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being the least important and 5 being the most important, * how much does a match result affect you?

1 2 3 4 5

On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being least satisfied and 5 being most satisfied, rate your * feelings on the current season's performance

1 2 3 4 5

Do you attend Liverpool football club's games in person? If so, how frequently? *

- Never
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

How often do you watch Liverpool matches (live or on television) *

- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

How often do you engage with Liverpool football club's social media accounts(eg, *
Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, etc?

- occasionally
- sometimes
- often
- always

Does the social media posts and campaigns affect your loyalty to the club? *

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being least affected and 5 being most affected, how *
much does overall fan experience affect your loyalty towards Liverpool football
club?

- 1
 - 2
 - 3
 - 4
 - 5
-

Does the sponsorships deals affect your loyalty towards the club, rank it on a *
scale of 1-5 with 1 being least important and 5 being most important?

- 1 2 3 4 5
- Affects me the least Affects me the most

Do you purchase official club merchandise (shirts, hats, scarfs, etc) or support the *
club in any other way?

- Yes
- No
- Other: _____

On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being least important and 5 being most important, does *
ticket pricing and merchandise availability affect your decision to remain as loyal
fan ?

- 1
 - 2
 - 3
 - 4
 - 5
-

Do you feel that your loyalty to Liverpool Football Club is reciprocated by the club? *
Why or why not?

Your answer

How do you think Liverpool Football Club can improve fan engagement and community building? *

Engagement through social media

Providing exclusive access and benefits

Supporting Local Communities

Enhanced Matchday experience

Other: _____

Would you recommend supporting Liverpool Football Club to others? Why or why not? *

Your answer

Back

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FACTORS AFFECTING BRAND LOYALTY- FOOTBALL CLUB ARSENAL

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What will happen to the results of the research study?

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samyuktha246kumar@gmail.com [Switch accounts](#)

Not shared

* Indicates required question

This questionnaire has been sent out by Samyuktha Kumar as a part * of the fulfilment of her dissertation study. The data collected will be used to analyse Factors affecting Brand Loyalty- Football Club Arsenal

- Yes, I am willing to take part
- No, I am not willing to take part

Name *

Your answer _____

Where do you live? *

Your answer _____

How old are you? *

Your answer _____

How long have you been a fan of **Arsenal Football Club**? (in years) *

Your answer _____

What are the reasons behind your loyalty to Arsenal Football Club? *

	RANKS				
	1(LEAST IMPORTANT)	2	3	4	5 (MOST IMPORTANT)
CLUB SUCCESS	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
FAN ENGAGEMENT	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
CLUB CULTURE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
PLAYER PERFORMANCE	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
TRADITION AND HISTORY	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Have you ever considered supporting a different football club? If so, why *

Your answer _____

On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being the least important and 5 being the most important, How important is the on field success of Arsenal Football Club in your decision to remain a loyal fan(e.g., winning trophies, qualifying for European competitions, etc.) to you as a fan? *

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="radio"/>				

Did arsenal's club history and tradition play a role in your loyalty as a fan? If so rate it on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being the least important and 5 being the most important *

1 2 3 4 5

On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being the least important and 5 being the most important, how important are players and managers of arsenal football club in your decision to remain a loyal fan? *

1 2 3 4 5

On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being the least important and 5 being the most important, how much does a match result affect you? *

1 2 3 4 5

On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being least satisfied and 5 being most satisfied, rate your feelings on the current season's performance *

1 2 3 4 5

Do you attend arsenal football club's games in person? If so, how frequently? *

- never
- occasionally
- sometimes
- often
- always

How often do you watch arsenal matches ?(live or on television) *

- RARELY
- SOMETIMES
- OFTEN
- ALWAYS

How often do you engage with arsenal football club's social media accounts(eg, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, etc)? *

- NEVER
- RARELY
- SOMETIMES
- OFTEN
- ALWAYS

Does the social media posts and campaigns affect your loyalty to the club? *

- Yes
- No
- Maybe
- Other: _____

On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being least affected and 5 being most affected, how much does overall fan experience affect your loyalty towards arsenal football club? *

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="radio"/> |

Does the sponsorships deals affect your loyalty towards the club, rank it on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being least important and 5 being most important? *

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="radio"/> |

Do you purchase official club merchandise (shirts, hats, scarfs, etc) or support the club in any other way? *

- Yes
- No
- Other: _____

On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being least important and 5 being most important, does ticket pricing and merchandise availability affect your decision to remain as loyal fan? *

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <input type="radio"/> |

Do you feel that your loyalty to Arsenal Football Club is reciprocated by the club? Why or why not? *

Your answer

How do you think Arsenal Football Club can improve fan engagement and community building? *

- Engagement on social media
- Providing Exclusive access and benefits
- Supporting Local Communities
- Enhanced Matchday experience
- Other: _____

Would you recommend supporting Arsenal Football Club to others? Why or why not? *

Your answer

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