



## Factors affecting the internationalization of the Iranian football premier league

### Oral Presentation

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** Internationalization has become a common phenomenon in the last few decades. Numerous international companies have evolved from domestic to international marketing. Companies and their brands seek internationalization as part of their efforts to secure a competitive advantage. Internationalization is a process through which an organization or company increases its involvement abroad. Internationalization has also been observed in sports. In this case, professional sports leagues, like so many other organisations, seek to access international markets. For example, the English Premier League (EPL) clubs are increasingly acquiring revenues from non-domestic markets. As a result, the internationalization of sport team brands has become common among major sport organizations. To better understand the issue, we examine the internationalization potential of the Iranian Premier Football League (IPFL).

**Methods:** Data was collected via 20 in-depth interviews with football federation marketing executives, club marketing executives, and experts in internationalization and sports marketing. The data analysis was guided by the principles of grounded theory with the aid of open, axial and selective coding.

**Results:** The analysis produced 39 issues affecting the internationalization of the IPFL. These were classified into five main dimensions - political, economic, managerial, legal, technical-marketing, and socio-cultural factors.

**Conclusion:** Our study contributes to an understanding of internationalization potential and to the ongoing debates about the internationalization constraints for firms in emerging economies. These constraints include a cognitive bias (i.e., the perception in the non-domestic market that the firm's product is inferior based on country of origin), the liability of foreignness (i.e., social costs associated with a lack of knowledge and experience in a foreign country), and resource limitations (i.e., limited capital, human resource, technology, and brand equity). The results of our study certainly resonate with these three issues.

### Keywords

Brand; Internationalization; Sport; football

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