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Research Article

Determinants of Marketing Effectiveness and Brand Development in Women's Football: Evidence from the Indian Sports Ecosystem

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Abstract: Women's football has shifted from on-field performance to a globalized, commercially important sport driven by institutional forces, media and commercial forces. In 2017 there was launch of Indian Women's League and Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Women's Champions League and it is still fragile and in the maturing stage through the commercial ecosystem. This study examines the effect of sponsorship, fan engagement and digital media on marketing effectiveness and brand development in Indian women's football. The study is based on customer-based brand equity theory and principles of sports marketing. A quantitative, cross-sectional survey was conducted, engaging 229 participants, with the measurement scale showing excellent internal consistency, with Cronbach's α = 0.961. Studies related to multiple regression showed the β value for sponsorship was 0.383, fan engagement was 0.324, digital media was 0.299 which explains 76.2% of the variance in marketing effectiveness. On the other hand, β value for digital media was 0.38 and that of sponsorship was 0.329 which explains 77.1% of variance in brand development. General football awareness had no measurable results. One-sample t-tests further confirmed that visibility, social-media engagement and sponsor trust are the strategies respondents rate as most important for sustainable growth. Together, the results argue for a relational, digitally-led marketing approach backed by stronger institutional support.

Keywords: Women's Football, Marketing Effectiveness, Brand Equity, Sponsorship, Fan Engagement, Digital Media, Indian Sports Ecosystem

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of women's football has taken place over the past 30 years through institutions, media and commerce rather than improvement in the play itself. FIFA benchmarking data supported the fact that higher revenues, rising attendance, income on broadcast and investment in academies were reported in leagues with formal commercial strategies, which pointed to higher sophistication of organization. In 2017, India entered this phase along with All India Football Federation's launch of Indian Woman's League. Home-and-away competition in 2025 and Odisha FC's in 2024 confirmed that this previously domestic game has now grown into a genuine continental standing. The status of Indian women football is still young and its decisions are taken by federations, clubs, sponsors and media actors though it is advanced enough to issue serious branding analysis.

Marketing success in this space is not simply a matter of visibility. Media coverage shapes legitimacy more than it shapes awareness alone [1], though that legitimacy remains fragile and can regress during institutional disruption [2]. Sponsors, meanwhile, are drawn to women's sport for a mix of commercial and moral reasons, particularly when a property signals authenticity and inclusion [3]. Fans of women's football are also motivated differently than fans of the men's game — by community, identity and support for women's opportunities in sport rather than status consumption

[4-5] and digital platforms convert this motivation into engagement only when leagues pursue deliberate, relationship-based communication rather than sheer volume of posting [6]. In India's cricket- and men's-football-dominated media landscape, digital channels are less a supplement than a primary venue for building brand familiarity, although social presence alone will not create brand commitment without underlying institutional legitimacy.

Framed through Keller's [7] customer-based brand equity model and Mullin *et al.*'s [8] view of sport marketing as a relational exchange system, brand-building in Indian women's football is best understood as an ecosystem-building task rather than a communications exercise: talent pathways, institutional support and cultural attitudes toward female athletes all shape whether visibility converts into trust, trust into engagement, and engagement into durable brand equity [9]. This study responds to that gap by empirically testing how sponsorship, fan engagement and digital media jointly predict marketing effectiveness and brand development for Indian women's football, with the aim of identifying which levers matter most for stakeholders.

Literature Review

Increasingly, sport marketing, performance and branding have become areas of focus among researchers because the success of commercialisation is no longer just about performance on the field, but visibility, sponsor attraction, fan engagement, media coverage and positioning. In the Indian sports landscape, women's football is a nascent sector with significant potential, but it has been plagued by structural inequalities, limited investment and lack of audience appeal. The literature suggests that the factors that influence marketing performance in women's football relate to branding, sponsorship, fan engagement, institutional support, digital media and gender inclusivity. One of the key issues in football in India is the disparity between women's leagues and men's football. Sarkar *et al.* [10] noted the continuing inequality in terms of visibility, sponsorship and institutional support for women's football despite the growing global visibility of the women's game. The authors suggested co-branding efforts between male and female leagues through sponsorship and media rights agreements, and cross-league marketing campaigns. These partnerships could improve viewership and revenue streams; yet, without safeguards such as guaranteed airtime and female-specific development initiatives and grassroots funding, women's football may continue to be subservient. Their research suggests institutional support is a critical success factor for marketing strategies.

International approaches to brand development in women's football have also been explored. Cortsen [11] suggested that women's football is not as popular as men's football in terms of attendance, participation, media coverage, fan attraction and business model. Using Denmark as a case study, the author considered how the introduction of a new sports product called Sensational 1, accompanied by positive development in participation in women's football, may increase brand value and commercial potential. The research attributed brand success to sporting performance, passion, transparency, visibility of role models, and marketability. This research has significant implications for India, where women's football needs to excel in both sport performance and innovative brand collaborations, athlete personalities and marketable products to attract sponsors and consumers.

Audience perceptions and emotions are also critical aspects of sports branding. Coutinho and Furtado [12] found that football brand equity in India is still associated with football-loving states like Bengal and Goa, and traditional club teams like Mohun Bagan. Fans appreciated authenticity, tradition and regional identity, and were dissatisfied with poor facilities and lack of professionalism. This suggests that sports branding is not just about branding and marketing; it is about culture and trust. For women's football, state-specific branding and community narratives might, therefore, be used to develop the brand, particularly in states with a football culture.

There are also insights on the motivations of consumers of women's football. The key motivations behind women's football are the belief in women's opportunities in sport [5]. They also found that socially progressive attitudes positively impacted purchase intention, electronic word-of-mouth and fan identification. This indicates that women's football, as a product, can be promoted not just as a form of entertainment, but also as a social movement for empowerment, equality and change. In countries like India, where gender inclusion is a priority for development, such positioning may bolster audience identification and interest among sponsors. Sports marketing also affects consumer purchase behaviour. Kattunga [13] pointed out that marketing communication creates a sense of urgency and emotional relevance, and therefore drives consumer purchase behaviour. However, price, branding, availability and customer loyalty are also important in the long term. Transferred to women's football, this suggests that while sponsorship marketing may lead to short-term brand awareness, there is also a need for the following to achieve long-term commercial outcomes: brand recognition of sponsors, ongoing consumer engagement, and continued market presence. Therefore, marketing is based on the relationship between sponsors and clubs, rather than short-term exposure.

Sponsorship and fan identification have been studied in Indian sport. In the Indian Premier League, Kamath *et al.* [14] found that attachment to players, teams and the sport contributed to team identification, which positively affected

sponsor attitudes and intentions. Younger fans were particularly inclined to spread positive word of mouth. These insights can be applied to women's football, where relatable and aspirational players, as well as younger communities, can enhance the appeal of the sport and its sponsors and build brand equity.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is another important factor of sports patronage. Mansouri *et al.* [15] discovered that consumers trust, support, and intend to patronise socially responsible sports clubs. They also found that CSR has a positive impact on brand credibility and team brand equity. This is especially relevant for women's football, as many brands increasingly look for connectivity with inclusion, empowerment, education and community welfare. As a result, sponsoring women's football can be done with both commercial and social missions, and positively impact brand equity.

Existing Indian leagues also provide insights into successful strategies for women's football. Sinha *et al.* attributed the success of the Indian Premier League to innovative branding, celebrity appeal, entertainment packaging and partnerships. Likewise, [16] found that its fan support, endorsement and brand identity were positives for the Indian Super League, while infrastructure and governance were major challenges. This suggests that Indian women's football leagues need professional management, reliable scheduling, good infrastructure and consistent long-term marketing strategies. Without organisational stability, brand development may not make an impact. New media has also been critical for new leagues. Trivedi *et al.* discovered that the Pro-Kabaddi League saw significant increases in the level of fan involvement, online community building, attendance and sponsor purchase intention as a result of social media engagement. This is especially critical for women's football, which has historically struggled to gain media attention. Social media offers a relatively inexpensive platform for clubs and players to tell their stories, market events and connect with fans. As such, social media might help overcome historic visibility challenges and drive brand development.

Sport's significance to the economy should be recognised. Shamim stated that sports industries create revenue, jobs, infrastructure, tourism and social integration. In this regard, the commercialisation of women's football can have a positive impact beyond the sport. As such, effective marketing should be considered not just a business issue, but also a socio-economic, urban branding and participation initiative.

However, there are still barriers to women's participation. Adapa and Yarram [17] have found that family support, coaching support, sponsorship opportunities, and life-cycle opportunities are enablers for female athletes. In contrast, a lack of resources, gender stereotypes, gender inequalities and social barriers were identified as significant barriers. These factors impact on brand building because audience engagement is contingent upon a career development pathway, role models and competition leagues. Lacking a development pipeline may result in less authentic and consistent marketing campaigns.

Comparative studies have also debunked stereotypes about athletic ability. Channabasappa and Kumar [18] identified limited differences in the technical, tactical and physical qualities of male and female football players. This bolsters the credibility and competitiveness of women's football and may shape spectators' attitudes positively. Likewise, Gupta [19] in Indian sport climbing observed limited sponsorship awareness, limited financial resources, difficulty finding coaches and lack of access to equipment. While these findings are from a different sport, they are comparable to women's football and show the broader need for sponsorship policy reforms, and institutional support for women athletes in India.

In summary, the literature shows that the success of marketing and brand building in women's football is determined by a mix of branding, fan involvement, sponsorship, online media, institutional, and gender practices. Marketing opportunities lie in co-branding and innovative product development, role model promotion, targeted social media engagement, corporate social responsibility, and youth-oriented community-building. However, a lack of funding, weak infrastructure, lack of exposure, gender inequality compared to men's football, and persisting stereotypes limit the potential. Thus, an empirical study into the drivers of marketing effectiveness and brand building in women's football in the Indian sports industry is warranted.

Framework, Objectives and Hypotheses

Following Keller [7], brand equity is the differential consumer response generated by strong, favourable and unique brand associations; following Mullin *et al.* [8], sport marketing is a relational exchange in which value is co-created by clubs, athletes, sponsors, media and fans. In this study, marketing effectiveness is defined as the degree to which league- and club-level communication and activation translate into awareness, engagement, sponsorship value and consumption, while brand development is defined as the cumulative creation of a unique, credible and socially relevant identity for the sport. Sponsorship, fan engagement and digital media are treated as antecedents of both outcomes, with structural barriers specific to India — limited infrastructure, uneven institutional support and cultural constraints on female athletes — acting as contextual moderators [9].

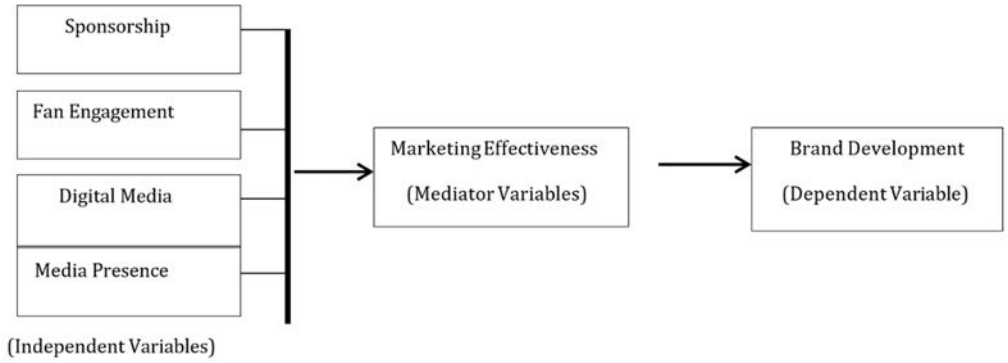


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Objectives

- Identify the key determinants of marketing effectiveness for women's football in India
- Examine how brand development is shaped by fan engagement, sponsorship and digital media
- Recommend evidence-based strategies for the sustainable growth of Indian women's football

Hypotheses

- **H1:** Sponsorship has a significant positive effect on marketing effectiveness
- **H2:** Fan engagement has a significant positive effect on marketing effectiveness
- **H3:** Digital media has a significant positive effect on marketing effectiveness

The conceptual model treats sponsorship, fan engagement, digital media and general media presence as independent variables acting on two outcomes — marketing effectiveness and brand development — with marketing effectiveness also functioning as a channel through which the other variables reinforce brand growth.

Conceptual Model

This study presents a conceptual model that examines the connection between various marketing factors and the success of women's football as a brand in India. This model suggests that there are four independent marketing variables—sponsorship, fan engagement, digital media, and media presence—each of which impacts two dependent variables—marketing effectiveness and brand development. Sponsorship provides financial support and builds credibility for a brand, fan engagement relates to both emotional and behavioral connections to audiences, digital media supports interactions with consumers as well as provides visibility and the ability to share content, and media presence establishes legitimacy and brand awareness. Through strengthening and enhancing overall brand growth, marketing effectiveness serves as a transitional variable Figure 1.

The theoretical foundation of this model is based on the customer-based brand equity theory and sports marketing principles, indicating that all brand value is created through stakeholder interactive relationships and effective communication strategies. Collectively, the framework illustrates moving from traditional promotional methods of marketing to digitally-focused, relationship-based marketing within developing sport environments.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

The current research was based on a quantitative and descriptive research design to investigate the factors of marketing performance and brand building of women's football in the Indian sports environment. A quantitative approach was deemed suitable as the research aims at quantifying perceptions, attitudes, and relationships between variables like fan engagement, sponsorship effectiveness, digital media presence, brand awareness and marketing performance. The descriptive design also helped the researcher to capture the current conditions, trends and behavioural responses to

women's football audiences and stakeholders in a systematic way. Moreover, an analytical element was included to determine the impact of independent variables on the overall development of the brand and marketing efficiency.

The research design was cross-sectional, around which data were gathered on the respondents at one time. This design was appropriate since it was limited by time and resources and yet it enabled effective gathering of primary data and a diverse sample of diversity. The comparability of the responses and statistical reliability were ensured using structured measurement scales. Hypothesis testing and empirical analysis of relationships between chosen constructs also are supported by the research design. Integrating elements of description and analysis, the design offers a clear picture of the current market environment alongside evidence-based information on the factors that propel the growth of women's football in India. As such, the design chosen was suitable in the creation of valid findings that inform marketing strategy and policy recommendations.

Data Collection Methods

The study was based mainly on primary data, which were gathered using a structured questionnaire, among respondents who knew a lot about sports consumption and women's football in India. The questionnaire technique was chosen due to its capability to enable the collection of standardized data on a relatively high number of respondents in a cost-effective and time-efficient way. The questionnaire was made up of closed-ended questions that were rated on a five-point Likert scale of strongly disagree to strongly agree. The questions in the questionnaire pertained to the marketing effectiveness, brand awareness, perception of sponsorship, fan engagement, the impact of digital media, consumer loyalty, and growth potential of women's football.

The questionnaire was administered both online and offline so as to reach as many people as possible and to increase the response rate. Online questionnaires were distributed via email, social media and sports groups and offline data were gathered by the use of printed questionnaires in institutions of learning, sports centers and in public locations. A pilot test was carried out on a small group of respondents before the final administration to determine the clarity, consistency and reliability of the instrument. Feedback was taken into account to make necessary changes.

Besides the primary data, secondary data that was limited in amount and in the form of academic journals, reports and sports industry publications were accessed to aid in conceptual understanding and interpretation of findings. Nevertheless, the questionnaire survey was the primary source of empirical evidence of the study Figure 2.

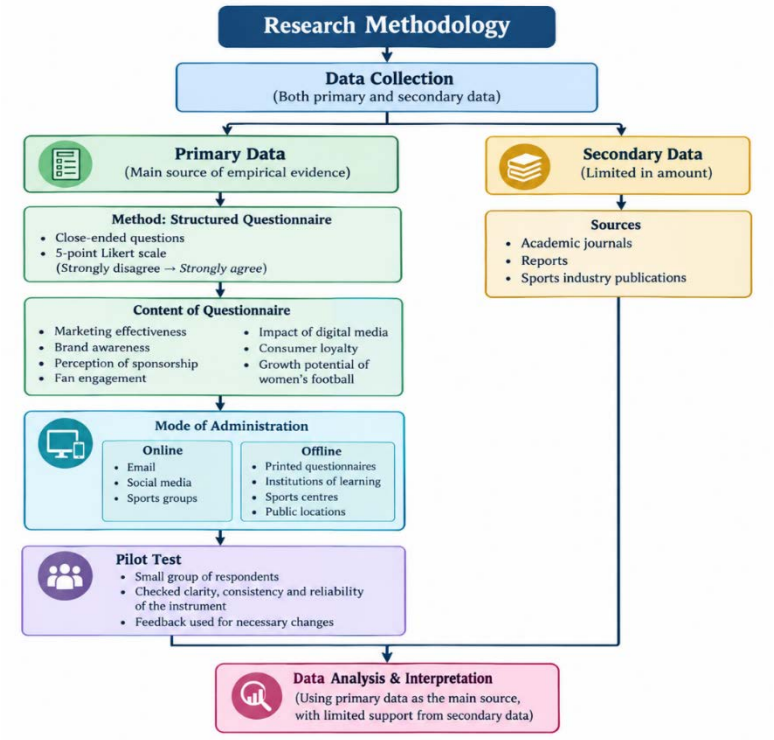


Figure 2: Method of Data Collection (Both Primary and Secondary Data)

Sampling

This research examined people's views about the effectiveness of marketing and developing brands related to women's football in the sports ecosystem of India using 229 people as the research sample. Due to constraints such as time, location, and availability of participants, the researchers used a convenience sampling method to gather participants. Because there was no full database available for consumers, fans and stakeholders of women's football in India, the researchers used convenience sampling for this study [20].

The researchers collected data from participants both online and offline via social media, email, schools, sports centres and public spaces. The participants surveyed were individuals who had a general knowledge of sports media, leagues and/or women's sports. Participants were recruited from various age groups, genders and occupations for their different points of view. Although there was no formal stratification used, the researchers attempted to have diversity in the sample responses.

The sample size of 229 respondents was considered adequate based on Cochran's sample size formula for large populations:

$$n0 = \frac{Z^2pq}{e2}$$

Using the following parameters — Z = 1.96, at a 95% confidence interval, p = 0.50, q = 0.50, and an allowable error (i.e., margin of error) e = 0.065 — we calculated a minimum sample size estimate to be approximately 227 respondents. Therefore, the reached sample size estimate of 229 respondents was considered adequate for reliable survey analysis. Despite the limitations of convenience sampling that restrict generalisations of findings, convenience sampling is still appropriate for exploratory and perception-based studies with the intention of identifying trends and behaviour patterns. Therefore, the sample design chosen for this study was appropriate to meet the study objectives Figure3.

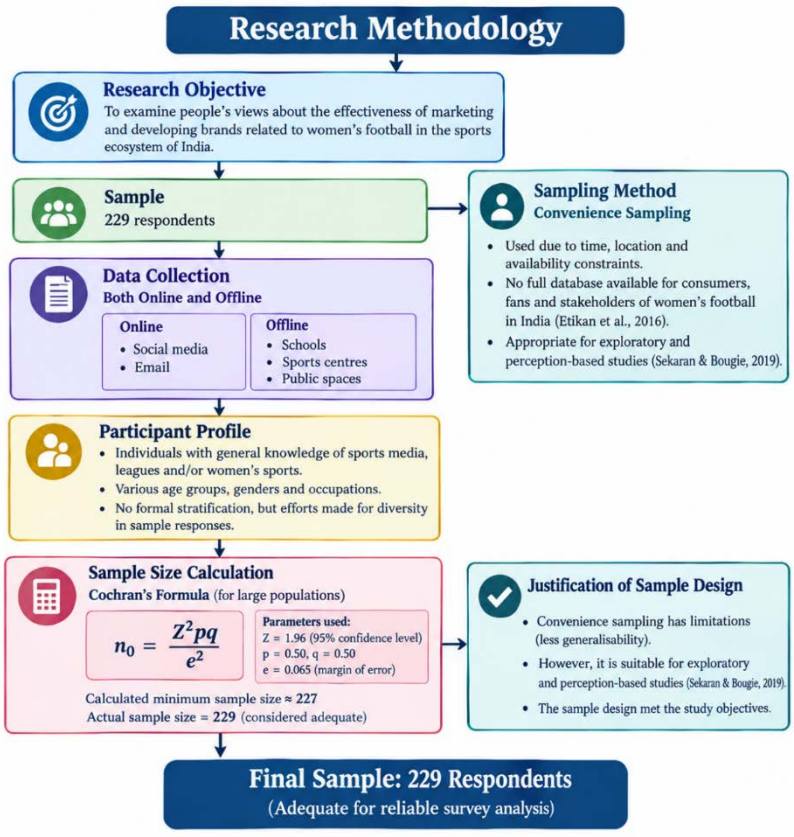


Figure 3: Real Time Sampling Design

Data Analysis Tools

The data collected was analysed using SPSS software for coding, classifying, tabulating, and analysing research. Pallant [21] cites reasons SPSS was chosen include: wide used software within quantitative research; ability to provide efficient data management; ability to provide organised coding of responses/provide an accurate statistical outcome. By using SPSS software for analysis, data collected via questionnaire were handled systematically as defined by use of the analysis they were provided in consistency within their analysis Initially before processing any of the completed responses, all responses were screened for completion, accuracy and consistency. After completion of screening, all data were coded in terms of the demographic characteristics and the major constructs used in this research: marketing effectiveness, brand awareness, sponsorship perception, fan engagement, digital media presence, customer loyalty, and growth potential of women's football.

Descriptive statistical measures such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations [22] were utilised to summarise the profiles of respondents and their overall perceptions. These descriptive statistics assisted in understanding how frequently responses were provided, where there were concentrations of responses and the extent of variability in response data.In order to determine how closely the items in the survey all of the data collected were subjected to reliability analysis to measure how developed the data were. By conducting reliability analysis upon the data that was collected during this research, the quality and credibility of the data collected will increase.

An additional analysis was performed to evaluate how specific variables compare to one another and how much each variable contributes to the success of marketing and brand development for women's football. By identifying which factors are primarily responsible for driving brand growth and overall market success for business within the sport of women's football in India, the research provided systematic results using numerical tables that could easily assist with interpreting results and discussion. Using SPSS software to carry out the analysis allowed for precise computations and ability to present data systematically while maintaining objectivity throughout the entire report. Overall, these analyses provided empirical support for what determines marketing effectiveness and brand development for women's football overall within India.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers followed strict ethical guidelines throughout the conducting of their research regarding adherence to integrity, fairness and respect for participants. Participants were able to participate in this study completely voluntarily. Before completing the questionnaire, all participants were made aware of the academic purpose of the study. All participants gave informed consent before completing the survey, and have been given the right to voluntarily withdraw from the survey at any time during the process without repercussion.

All data was stored confidentially and anonymously. Respondents were not required to provide personal information including their name, phone number and address. All responses provided by participants were used only for academic

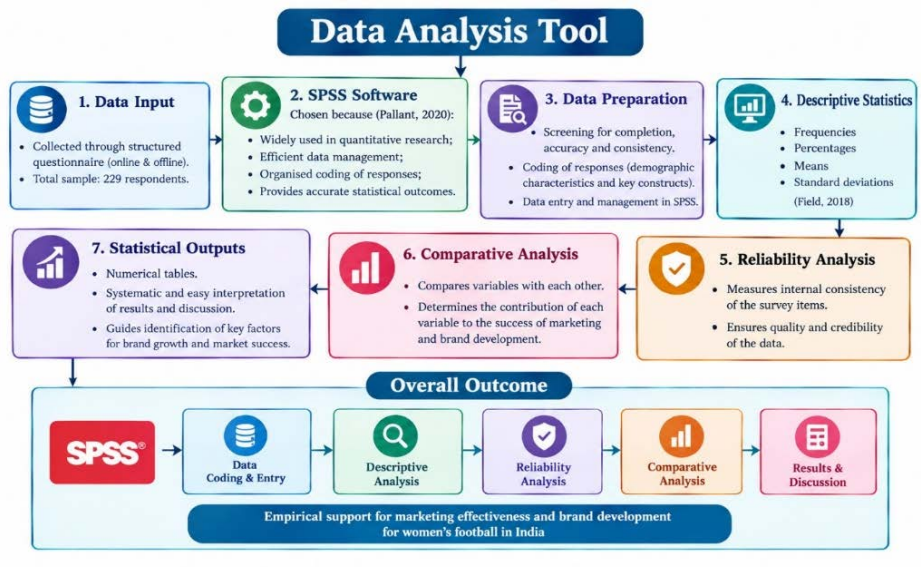


Figure 4: Diagrammatic representation of Data Analysis Tool

purposes and stored securely to protect against unauthorised use. The data collected was reported in aggregate form in such a way it was impossible to identify any one individual. The questionnaire used for this study did not include questions that would be considered offensive, based on discrimination or an invasion of privacy. Furthermore, the questions were written in an unbiased manner so there would not be any influence on the participants towards answering in a requested manner. Secondary data used for this research were properly credited to avoid any issues relating to plagiarism and to ensure academic integrity. The researcher has made a commitment to provide an objective analysis of the findings, free from manipulation or misrepresentation. As a result of the researcher following these ethical principles, the findings of this study are credible and remain trustworthy to the participants; the researcher acted with integrity when conducting the research.

RESULTS

Reliability Statistics

To evaluate the internal consistency of the survey measurements in this study, a reliability analysis was performed. The results yielded a Cronbach's Alpha score of .961 for the 22 measurement items, indicating an extraordinarily high level of reliability across the items measured within the survey. Since the calculated value is well above the accepted threshold of 0.70, the measurement instrument exhibits a superior degree of internal consistency across its items. These findings support strong correlations between the various survey statements and consistent measurement of the underlying constructs related to marketing effectiveness, brand development, sponsorship, fan engagement and overall digital media presence in women's football. Additionally, the very high reliability coefficient supports the dependability and appropriateness of the data collection instrument for future statistical analysis, enhancing the credibility, accuracy and ultimate validity of the research findings Table 1.

Construct-Wise Alpha

The construct-level reliability analysis finds that each study variable has a good level of agreement. The Cronbach's alpha statistics for the following variables were above the standard. Sponsorship had a Cronbach's alpha value of.885, Fan Engagement had a Cronbach's alpha value of.845, Digital Media had a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.873, Marketing Effectiveness had a Cronbach's alpha of.880 and Brand Development had a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.894. All of these values were above the recommended threshold of 0.70, therefore, all variables were adequately reliable. Based on this level of reliability, it can be assumed that the items included in each of the constructs all measure the same underlying construct. Additionally, Brand Development and Sponsorship were very reliable and demonstrated the presence of a well-built measurement scale. Although Fan Engagement (the lowest) is still considered acceptable, all constructs did demonstrate consistency. In conclusion, the reliability of the measurement instrument was validated and the data collected from the study is considered reliable to use for additional statistical analysis (i.e., regression and correlation) and increases the credibility and strength of the study's empirical results Table 2.

Descriptive Statistics

Demographic characteristics of the 229 respondents exhibit diverse and balanced sample composition (by gender): males 48.5%; females 45.9%; other 5.7%. Gender balance enhances inclusivity in the study. Age distribution shows that majority of respondents are from younger age groups: 18-24: 35.4%; 25-34: 33.2%; 35-44: 20.1%; 45+: 11.4%. Educationally, a majority of the respondents were well qualified (undergraduate: 39.3% and postgraduate: 38.9%). Doctorate holders accounted for 7.9% of respondents with 14.0% of respondents classified as 'other' regarding education. Occupationally, 35.8% of participants were students, 31.4% were working professionals, 14.0% were sporting participants in sports, 10.0% of participants were classified as 'other occupation', and 8.7% classified themselves as business/self-employed. The demographic profile shows a diverse group of knowledgeable participants suitable for the aims of this study Table 3.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.961	22

Table 2: Cronbach's Alpha Data Across Different Constructs

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha
Sponsorship	0.885
Fan Engagement	0.845
Digital Media	0.873
Marketing Effectiveness	0.880
Brand Development	0.894

Table 3: Demographic Profile of Respondent

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	105	45.9
	Male	111	48.5
	Other	13	5.7
Age Group	18–24	81	35.4
	25–34	76	33.2
	35–44	46	20.1
	45 and above	26	11.4
Education Level	Doctorate	18	7.9
	Other	32	14.0
	Postgraduate	89	38.9
	Undergraduate	90	39.3
Occupation	Business/Self-employed	20	8.7
	Other	23	10.0
	Sportsperson	32	14.0
	Student	82	35.8
	Working Professional	72	31.4

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.873[a]	0.762	0.758	0.331

a. Predictors: (Constant), Football_Awareness, FE_Total, SP_Total, DM_Total

Table 5: ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	78.367	4	19.592	179.334	.000[b]
	Residual	24.471	224	0.109		
	Total	102.838	228			

a. Dependent Variable: ME_Total b. Predictors: (Constant), Football_Awareness, FE_Total, SP_Total, DM_Total

- **Objective 1:** To identify the key determinants of marketing effectiveness in women's football in India

According to the summary of the multiple regression analysis, there is a strong relationship between the independent variables and marketing effectiveness. This is supported by the correlation coefficient (R = 0.873) indicating a strong level of association between the predicted and actual values of the dependent variable. The R Square value of (0.762) demonstrates that the independent variables, Football Awareness, Fan Engagement, Sponsorship and Digital Media. The rapid growth of women's football has taken place over the past 30 years through institutions, media and commerce rather than improvement in the play itself [27]. FIFA benchmarking data supported the fact that higher revenues, rising attendance, income on broadcast and investment in academies were reported in leagues with formal commercial strategies, which pointed to higher sophistication of organization. In 2017, India entered this phase along with All India Football Federation's launch of Indian Woman's League. Home-and-away competition in 2025 and Odisha FC's in 2024 confirmed that this previously domestic game has now grown into a genuine continental standing. The status of Indian women football is still young and its decisions are taken by federations, clubs, sponsors and media actors though it is advanced enough to issue serious branding analysis collectively explain 76.2% of the variance in Marketing Effectiveness, thus reflecting a high degree of predictive power for the independent variables included in the analysis. Additionally, the adjusted R Square value of (0.758) confirms that the model is very reliable and has little variation from the number of independent variables in the regression equation. The R Square and Adjusted R Square values are very close to each other, indicating stable model performance with minimal overfitting. In addition, the standard error of estimate (0.331) is low and indicates the model is very accurate in its predictions. Thus, the results confirm that these independent variables collectively are significant predictors of marketing effectiveness in women's football Table 4.

The ANOVA findings for the multiple regression model suggest that the overall model is statistically significant for predicting Marketing Effectiveness (ME_Total) and have provided us with an F-statistic value of 179.334 that has (4, 224) degrees of freedom and a p-value of .000 which is less than the benchmark of 0.05; which implies that Football Awareness, Fan Engagement, Sponsorship, and Digital Media combined are significant predictors of Marketing Effectiveness within Women's Football. The regression sum of squares value of 78.367 demonstrates a much larger amount of variance accounted for in the dependent variable than the amount of variance accounted for by the residual

Table 6: Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	0.317	0.151		2.100	0.037		
SP_Total		0.344	0.040	0.383	8.518	0.000	0.525	1.906
FE_Total		0.310	0.043	0.324	7.228	0.000	0.528	1.894
DM_Total		0.280	0.044	0.299	6.413	0.000	0.489	2.046
Football_Awareness		-0.002	0.033	-0.002	-0.069	0.945	0.993	1.007

a. Dependent Variable: ME_Total

Table 7: Correlations

		BD_Total	SP_Total	FE_Total	DM_Total	ME_Media_Pr esence
BD_Total	Pearson Correlation	1	0.765**	0.725**	0.788**	0.627**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	229	229	229	229	229
SP_Total	Pearson Correlation	0.765**	1	0.602**	0.641**	0.610**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	229	229	229	229	229
FE_Total	Pearson Correlation	0.725**	0.602**	1	0.639**	0.576**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000		0.000	0.000
	N	229	229	229	229	229
DM_Total	Pearson Correlation	0.788**	0.641**	0.639**	1	0.623**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000		0.000
	N	229	229	229	229	229
ME_Media _Presence	Pearson Correlation	0.627**	0.610**	0.576**	0.623**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	N	229	229	229	229	229

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

sum of squares (24.471); which represents that these selected predictors explain a large portion of variance associated with the dependent variable. The mean square regression value of 19.592 also exceeds the residual mean square of 0.109; which confirms the strength of the regression model. In conclusion, the results support the overall regression equation and demonstrate that the independent variables as a whole significantly contribute to improving Marketing Effectiveness in the Women's Football Marketplace Table 5.

The regression coefficients table provides an overview of each predictor's individual contributions toward the marketing effectiveness variable (ME_Total). Of the variables tested, sponsorship (SP_Total) was determined to be the most predictive of marketing effectiveness, with the standardized beta coefficient indicating a strong positive relationship ($\beta = 0.383$, $t = 8.518$, $p<.001$). That is, higher levels of sponsorship have a greater likelihood of increasing marketing effectiveness Table 6. In addition to sponsorship, fan engagement (FE_Total) was also identified as having a strong, positive, statistically significant ($\beta = 0.324$, $t = 7.228$, $p<.001$) relationship with marketing effectiveness, suggesting that increased levels of audience engagement will lead to higher levels of marketing performance. Digital media (DM_Total) was also found to have a strong, positive, statistically significant effect on marketing effectiveness ($\beta = 0.299$, $t = 6.413$, $p<.001$) and emphasizes the importance of an online presence and digital marketing strategy. Football awareness had no detectable influence on marketing performance ($\beta = -0.002$, $p = .945$). The results of the collinearity statistics were acceptable as they showed tolerance values above 0.10 and VIF values below 5, thereby supporting that there was no concern about multicollinearity. The overall ranking of predictors is as follows:

- Sponsorship
- Fan engagement
- Digital media

- **Objective 2:** To analyse factors influencing brand development, fan engagement, sponsorship, and media presence

To analyze how brand development, sponsorships, fan engagement, digital media, and media presence relate to each other in women's football, a Pearson correlation analysis was performed. The results show that there were strong, positive correlations between BD_Total and each of the four independent variables: BD_Total and Digital Media (r =

0.788, p<.01), BD_Total and Sponsorship (r = 0.765, p<.01), BD_Total and Fan Engagement (r = 0.725, p<.01) with a moderate positive correlation between BD_Total and Media Presence (r = 0.627, p<.01). In addition to the correlations listed above, Sponsorship was positively correlated with Fan Engagement (r = 0.602), Digital Media (r = 0.641), and Media Presence (r = 0.610), all at the p <.01 level. Also, Fan Engagement showed statistically significant positive correlations with Digital Media (r = 0.639) and Media Presence (r = 0.576). The results indicate the interrelatedness of all variables and how they work together to strengthen brand development. As such, Digital Media emerged as the strongest correlating variable and thus has the potential to serve as an effective strategic tool for growing women's football brands Table 7.

The summary of multiple regression results indicates a strong and statistically significant relationship between selected predictors and brand development (BD_Total). The correlation coefficient (R = 0.878) demonstrates a high degree of association between brand development'spredicted and actual values. The R Square value of 0.771 demonstrates that the combined effect of media presence, fan engagement, sponsorship and digital media accounts for 77.1% of the variance in brand development, indicating significant explanatory power. The adjusted R Square of 0.767 confirms that the model is stable and reliable after accounting for the number of predictors as it is similar to R Square value. The standard error of the estimate (0.340) reflects a low prediction error meaning the model is relatively accurate. F Change value of 188.542 and p = .000 provides additional evidence of the statistical significance of the regression model. Overall, this suggests that these variables play a major collective role in enhancing brand development within women's football Table 8.

According to the ANOVA results derived from conducting multiple regression analysis, this overall model accurately predicts the development of the brand (BD_Total), given its statistical significance as shown by an F-value of 188.542 and with degrees of freedom (4, 224), which results in a significance value of p = .000 - well below the accepted threshold of 0.05. The use of media presence, media engagement, sponsorship, and digital media combined should demonstrate significant prediction of brand development in women's football. The regression sum of squares (86.999) is significantly larger than the remaining sum of squares (25.840), indicating that a significant amount of variance is explained by predictor variables. A further example is that the average regression of squares value (21.750) is significantly greater than the remaining average square values (0.115) which provides further validation for the predictive capacity of this particular regression equation. Overall, this confirms that these variables are indeed a significant contributor to enhancing the development of brands within the women's football ecosystem Table 9.

The regression coefficient table shows how much each predictor contributes to brand development (BD_Total) in women's football. One of the variables, Digital Media (DM_Total), has the highest contribution to brand development with a standardized beta coefficient of 0.386 (t = 8.088, p<0.001). This reveals that having a strong Digital Media strategy has a significant impact on brand development. The variable that is next most significant in terms of impact was Sponsorship (SP_Total), with a beta coefficient of 0.349, (t = 7.594, p<.001). This was followed closely by the predictor name of Fan Engagement (FE_Total) with a value of beta of 0.252 (t = 5.605, p<0.001) and also had a positive effect on developing a brand. However, the variable Media Presence (ME_Media_Presence) does not significantly predict brand development (β = 0.028, p = 0.526). Lastly, the collinearity statistics revealed typical tolerance values greater than 0.10 and typical VIF values less than 5, therefore showing no evidence of multicollinearity among the predictors of this research. Overall, Digital Media has been found to be the most influential variable that determines brand development in women's football, followed by Sponsorship and Fan Engagement Table 10.

Table 8: Model Summary[b]

					Change Statistics				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	0.878[a]	0.771	0.767	0.340	0.771	1880.542	4	224	0.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), ME_Media_Presence, FE_Total, SP_Total, DM_Total b. Dependent Variable: BD_Total

Table 9: ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	86.999	4	21.750	188.542	0.000[b]
	Residual	25.840	224	0.115		
	Total	112.839	228			

a. Dependent Variable: BD_Total b. Predictors: (Constant), ME_Media_Presence, FE_Total, SP_Total, DM_Total

Table 10: Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	0.068	0.129		0.529	0.597					
	FE_Total	0.252	0.045	0.252	50.605	0.000	0.725	0.351	0.179	0.507	10.974
	SP_Total	0.328	0.043	0.349	70.594	0.000	0.765	0.452	0.243	0.485	20.064
	DM_Total	0.378	0.047	0.386	80.088	0.000	0.788	0.475	0.259	0.449	20.226
	ME_Media_Presence	0.025	0.039	0.028	0.635	0.526	0.627	0.042	0.020	0.513	10.948

a. Dependent Variable: BD_Total

Table 11: Collinearity Diagnostics[a]

Model	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	Variance Proportions				
				(Constant)	FE_Total	SP_Total	DM_Total	ME_Media_Presence
1	1	4.925	1.000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	2	0.027	13.523	0.68	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.37
	3	0.019	16.215	0.29	0.21	0.19	0.04	0.59
	4	0.016	17.384	0.02	0.53	0.69	0.01	0.01
	5	0.013	19.181	0.01	0.25	0.10	0.95	0.03

Table 12: One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
SP_Sponsor_Trust	11.467	228	0.000	0.633	0.52	0.74
ME_Visibility	12.967	228	0.000	0.707	0.60	0.81
FE_Social_Media_Engagement	11.401	228	0.000	0.651	0.54	0.76
DM_Content_Quality	9.634	228	0.000	0.528	0.42	0.64
FE_Match_Attendance_Interest	4.024	228	0.000	0.231	0.12	0.34
BD_Brand_Loyalty	7.675	228	0.000	0.419	0.31	0.53

To evaluate the multicollinearity between the independent variables used in the prediction of brand development (BD_Total), collinearity diagnostics were conducted. The findings of the collinearity diagnostics indicate that the highest Condition Index was 19.181, which is considerably lower than the critical threshold of 30 (which is regarded as the critical point for detectingsevere multicollinearity within a regression model), suggesting that there is not a severe amount of multicollinearity present within the regression model. There was some variance concentration within individual components and also across overall dimensions for two of the independent variables: DM_Total had a very high degree of variance concentration across its individual components (0.95) in Dimension 5, and SP_Total had a moderate amount of variance concentration across its individual components (0.69) in Dimension 4. However, the high levels of variance concentration did not occur in conjunction with conditions high enough to result in problematic levels of collinearity Table 11. The moderate variance concentration exhibited by ME_Media_Presence across Dimensions 2 and 3 was likewise not problematic. Overall, the results of the collinearity diagnostics indicate that the predictor variables are sufficiently independent of one another; therefore, multicollinearity should not pose a risk to the validity or stability of the regression estimates. Thus, the overall conclusion is that the regression model can be statistically reliable for the explanation of brand development in women's football.

- **Objective3:** To recommend strategies for sustainable growth of women's football in the indian sports ecosystem

In order to find out which strategies should be used to promote the long-term development of women's football in India, one-sample t-tests with a test value of 3 (neutral point on the Likert scale) were run on variables related to the promotion of the sustainable development of women's football in India, with an overall sample mean higher than the value of 3 ($p<0.001$). As indicated by the comparison of each variable's mean score with the neutral value, respondents are in agreement that each of these variables is important in terms of creating sustainable development for women's football in India. ME_Visibility has the largest mean difference from the neutral benchmark (0.707, t = 12.967), indicating that increasing visibility and promoting women's football through media channels is one of the most viable strategies for creating sustainable development. The variables of FE_ Social_ Media_ Engagement (0.651, t = 11.401) and

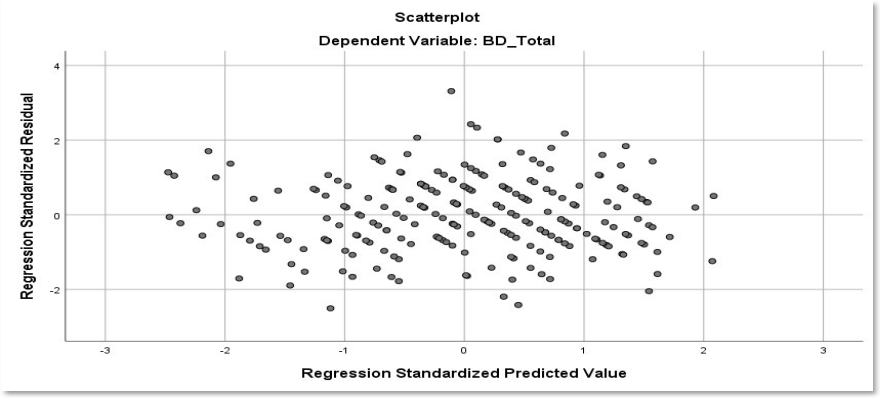


Figure 4: Regression Standardized Predicted Value

SP_Sponsor_Trust (0.633, t = 11.467) had the second and third highest mean differences, indicating that creating a digital presence and confidence in sponsoring women's football through effective social media engagement are both important strategies for developing women's football. DM_Content_Quality showed strong support (0.528, t = 9.634) for creating effective digital content, whereas both BD_Brand_Loyalty (0.419, t = 7.675) and FE_Match_Attendance_Interest (0.231, t = 4.024) demonstrated significant, but lower levels of support. In sum, the findings indicate that the key sustainable development strategies for the growth of women's football in the Indian sports ecosystem are to enhance visibility, engage with women's football through social media, develop trust and confidence in those who sponsor women's football, and create high-quality digital content Table 12.

DISCUSSION

The empirical results of the study contribute to the understanding of marketing processes in an emergent and structurally marginalised sports context like Indian women's football. The study findings, rather than simply reinforcing the prominence of traditional marketing elements, signal a differential hierarchy where relational and value-based mechanisms trample the power of exposure. The pivotal role of sponsorship in the findings is a reflection of both financial support and signalling of quality and institutional legitimacy. In a dynamic market, these signals are essential to turn an emerging sports property into a commercially and socially successful business.

The role of digitally mediated communication in brand development is evident from the analysis in the study. A significant implication of the analysis is the role of digitally mediated communications in brand development. Digital media seem to serve as key spaces for narrative building, community building, and meaning making. This suggests a transition from unidirectional forms of communication to interactive and co-creative communication. The predictive power of digital media on brands' growth implies that communication success is not about reach but rather relevance, interactivity, and storytelling coherence.

The results also point to the role of audience engagement in integrating value creation. Engagement is not merely a reaction to marketing but actively contributes to creating meaning, identity and loyalty. This supports the theoretical underpinning that sport brands are socially constructed, and come about through ongoing stakeholder interactions. Accordingly, the success of marketing in this arena is best viewed as a function of ongoing relationships rather than discrete marketing activities.

On the other hand, the marginal impact of awareness and traditional media suggests a need to reconsider the level of engagement being achieved. Exposure without framing and experiential support seems to lack the impact to create lasting brand connections. This implies that there needs to be a strategy to ensure awareness translates into perception and perception into engagement. Finally, the findings implicitly suggest the influence of moderating factors that go beyond the marketing domain. Structural inequity, cultural attitudes, and institutional inconsistencies still impact branding. Thus, the commentary highlights that the development of women's football in India is dependent on a holistic approach that combines marketing innovation with systemic transformation, ensuring that marketing efforts are supported by a well-developed and inclusive sport system.

CONCLUSION

The current research offers a holistic analysis of the factors influencing marketing effectiveness and brand development in women's football in the Indian sports environment. It is evident that sponsorship, fan engagement and digital media are the key determinants of marketing effectiveness and brand development respectively. Among these, sponsorship was identified as the most influential factor in marketing effectiveness, underlining the importance of financial support, corporate sponsorship and brand affiliations in improving brand recognition and legitimacy. At the same time, digital media was found to be the most significant driver of brand-building, underscoring the rise of digital media in building brand awareness, perceptions and loyalty.

The research also demonstrates that fan engagement is crucial in translating marketing activities into brand development, driving emotional connections, community building, and ongoing customer engagement. The strong intercorrelations among all variables suggest marketing effectiveness and brand development are not separate activities, but integrated aspects of a complex sports marketing environment. Yet, the insignificant role of traditional media visibility in predicting brand development suggests that visibility alone is not enough and requires well-planned engagement strategies, brand narrative, and audience interaction.

Additionally, the results signify the existence of structural problems beyond marketing factors. Infrastructure, governance, socio-cultural and gender constraints still play a role in the growth of women's football in India. These barriers hinder the potential of marketing practices to build equitable brand value and market success. Thus, the research highlights the need for an integrated strategy that involves marketing innovation, institutional support, policy reforms and grassroots movements.

Finally, women's football in India is a promising but emerging space where efforts from various stakeholders, such as governing bodies, sponsors, media groups and communities are needed. Improving digital presence, sponsorship strategies and inclusive fan cultures are crucial for future development. In conclusion, the long-term growth of women's football hinges on its capacity to translate awareness into engagement and engagement into brand equity, thus establishing it as a profitable and competitive part of the Indian sport industry.

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