

# Role of sports marketing in achieving competition among the Iraq sport clubs

<sup>1</sup>Asst. Prof. Mohammed Fadhil Mosleh; <sup>2</sup>Asst. Prof. Othman Mahmoud Shehadeh;  
<sup>3</sup>Dr. Widad Yousef <sup>3</sup>

## **Abstract**

*Sports marketing is an important part of the financial activities carried out by sports institutions and clubs. It is generally considered one of the most important recourses on which the economies of some of the developed countries are based. The present study aims to identify the role of sports marketing in achieving the competitive feature of the Iraqi sports clubs. To achieve this, two hypotheses are set: (1) there is a correlation between sports marketing and the competitive feature of the Iraqi sports clubs and (2) sports marketing plays a role in achieving the competitive feature of the Iraqi sports clubs. The research sample includes a random selection of (60) members of the administrative staff of sports clubs in Iraq through the period from October 2, 2019 till December 17, 2019. As for the study tools and instruments, an experimental method (questionnaire with the descriptive method) is used to collect the data. In this regard, the researchers have adopted the marketing scale previously prepared. The second tool includes the construction of the distinctive performance scale. The scientific principles of the two forms have been done in addition to carrying out the pilot study followed by the main experiments of the study sample that consists of (60) individuals. Then, the data are statistically treated by using the (SPSS) program and the obtained results show that there is a correlation between the sports marketing and the competitive feature of sports clubs with a value of (0,849). Thus, sports marketing has a great role in the competitive feature in sports clubs. Besides, it is concluded that there is a strong correlation between sports marketing and the distinctive performance of workers in sports clubs. Finally, the researchers highly recommend the adoption of sports marketing in all the Iraqi sports clubs which would in turn reflected in the distinctive performance of the sports clubs.*

**Keywords:** competitive feature, sports marketing, Iraqi sport clubs

## **1. Introduction**

Sports institution is not different from other institutions because it depends on the number of funds to cover all sports activities and champions. So, the marketing aspect becomes one of the important parts of sports institutions in general and sports clubs in particular. Besides, some countries have started to depend on the sports and sports marketing sector as one of their most economic resources. In light of the economic development in the world, the objectives and the needs of sports institutions vary so that they make sports be managed by an industrial system. Thus, the concept 'sports industry' became a common terminology, and large companies started to invest in the world of sports to open new markets that were not available before and sports became an interesting area for investment and marketing. Iraq is not different from other countries; but it suffers from a bad economic situation. However, the application of sports marketing still does not give its distinguished results in the Iraqi sports clubs because it does not have a specific basis or knowledge, and the workers who manage sports marketing do not have good skills. Thus, the researchers assume that there is a need to study and motivate sports marketing in sports clubs and institutions. As such, the present study aims to investigate the relationship between sports marketing and competitive feature of Iraqi sports clubs on one hand and the role of sports marketing in distinctive performance in these clubs, on the other hand.

## **3. Literature review**

Since ancient times, most people like sports and competitions because they are considered one of the important activities to remove the stress of life. So, people do not hesitate to express their admiration to famous athletes to the public. This attracts the attention of the investors and businessmen to invest in the field of sports. Thus, they have started to contract with famous athletes to be the face of the advertisements about their goods. In this respect, Hassanein and Darwish (2004, p. 43) argued that "sports athletes become famous characters for commercial advertisements, and so, sports sponsorship, sports marketing, and sports funds have appeared in the sports field". In

<sup>1</sup> College of physical education and sport science, Diyala University, Iraq, [Fadhilmohammed6@gmail.com](mailto:Fadhilmohammed6@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>College of physical education and sport science, Diyala University, Iraq, [oth.shehada@yahoo.com](mailto:oth.shehada@yahoo.com)

<sup>3</sup>Directorate General of education in Diyala , [wedad44sf@gmail.com](mailto:wedad44sf@gmail.com)

recent times, many countries in the Middle East face economic crises, as a result, the sports institutions and clubs suffer from a lack of government funds. This has led many Middle East universities to study sports marketing as a new field. Comparatively, Western universities have passed a long way in this respect. Shalaby (2005, p. 19) explains that "Sports marketing seemed to be considered an additional academic system that considers one of the most important courses for the rehabilitation and preparation of administrators in sports organizations, which activates many colleges of physical education to include it in their curricula". Muhyiddin *et al.* (2001, p. 1) add "recently, there is more interest in studying and applying marketing concepts in different types of sports institutions of all kinds". Some studies suggested that marketing has gradually developed and divided into some main tasks and sub-jobs that all need to be taken care of in light of the nature of the sports institutions, the nature of what is provided and the nature of the target market". This means that sports marketing is not an easy task because it has many minor sections.

Ahmad (2011, p. 21) stated that marketing is a sports administration service that includes a group of tasks such as planning, pricing, promoting and providing a set of programs, activities, stadiums, sports devices that are provided to the beneficiary. Thus, its role to achieve their needs is not less than sports activities as it aims at building and evaluating a balanced personality in all physical, psychological, mental and social aspects of society and at satisfying their desires to achieve educational and material goals of the sports institutions. Notably, the exploitation of sports marketing has started in Iraqi sports institutions, in general, and sports clubs, in particular, because of the critical economic situation. Thus, there is a need to develop appropriate marketing strategies to ensure their application in the real ground because interest has increased recently in the study and application of marketing concepts in most institutions of all types. (Al-Azhari *et al.*, 2001, p. 1).

These strategies are not based on scientific studies, but they are rather based on personal jurisprudence and done with no reference to strategies and plans for marketing. This, in turn, clearly demonstrates the reluctance of many economic and commercial institutions and companies to sponsor sports activities in Iraqi sports institutions, as well as the lack of interest in sports marketing by many sports institutions. These facts have negatively affected the achievement of the competitive feature of sports clubs. So, the researchers of the present study are capable of observing the accurate identification of the goals and methods that are necessary to achieve those goals. Besides, strategic planning enables staff to organize thinking about the future via the study and analysis of the various changes inside and outside the institutions to make rational management decisions away from improvisation, randomness, and personal desires. Then, the analysis of institution capabilities helps to exploit the strengths of it, and address weakness and transform it into strength in a way that leads to improving the competitive feature of the sports institution. The current study aims to identify the role of sports marketing in achieving the competitive feature of Iraqi sports clubs. The researchers assume two hypotheses: (1) there is a correlation between sports marketing and the competitive feature of Iraqi sports clubs, and (2) sports marketing plays a role in achieving the competitive advantage of Iraqi sports clubs.

### **3- Research methodology**

The research sample includes 60 heads and administrative coordinators of Iraqi sports clubs during the period (11/29/2019 - 17/2/2020) under study; their choice is randomly done. The researchers adopt the descriptive approach (questionnaire) for its suitability to the nature of the current study and the data, its ability to identify the strong and weak sides of the topic under study and to achieve the aims of the study. The obtained data are analyzed by applying the statistical program (SPSS) as it is the best procedure to follow in analyzing the answers of the respondents (in the questionnaires) and to get the results. Therefore, the obtained findings will be represented in tables to discuss and draw conclusions.

#### **3.2 Description of the study questionnaire**

The questionnaire contains two parts: the first part primarily aims to measure sports marketing by adopting Ali 's model (2019) that aims to measure sports marketing. The (64) items are distributed into eight variables:

1. Internal environment of the sports institution,
2. External environment of the institution,
3. Marketing budget in the sports institution,
4. Executive procedures of sports marketing strategies,
5. Mixing of the marketing in sports activity,
6. Role of media in the sports marketing service,
7. Evaluation and follow-up of the sports marketing plan,
8. Factors that attract commercial enterprises to sponsor sports activities for sports institutions (and each variable consists of eight items).

While, the second part of the questionnaire is designed by the researchers and it is based on several studies such as (Schwartz; 2001, Al-Salami; 2001, Abbas; 2006). It has included five variables that aim to measure the components of the distinctive performance (performance planning, performance review and follow-up, performance evaluation, feedback, performance improvement and development) to form 21 items.

#### **3.3 The validity of the study**

To ensure that the questionnaire meets the research objectives, the researchers follow some psychometric procedures of research design to ensure the validity of the study. So, the questionnaire becomes subject to some tests before applying it to the whole research sample.

##### **3.3.1 Face validity**

To achieve the validity of the questionnaire to measure the study variables, the apparent test of the questionnaire items was conducted by exposing it to group of specialized experts (see appendix 3) to make use of their knowledge

regarding the clarity of the questionnaire items, their correlation, and their suitability to measure the study variables and comprehensiveness of the questionnaire dimensions and variables. The experts' suggestions were discussed and the necessary modifications were done, including the deletion and addition, and finally, the questionnaire met the requirements of the majority of the experts. Table 1 below shows the last version of the questionnaire.

**Table 1: Questionnaire adopted**

variable	Item	Items	Total of each variable's items	Total of each part
Sports Marketing	Internal environment of the sports institution,	1- 8	8	64
	External environment of the institution,	9-16	8	
	Marketing budget in the sports institution,	17-24	8	
	Executive procedures of sports marketing strategies,	25-32	8	
	Mixing of the marketing in sports activity,	33- 40	8	
	Role of media in the sports marketing service,	41-48	8	
	Evaluation and follow-up of the sports marketing plan,	49- 56	8	
	Factors that attract commercial enterprises to sponsor sports activities for sports institutions	57- 64	8	
	Performance management and performance planning.	65- 68	5	21
	Performance Review and Follow-up.	69- 71	3	
	Performance Evaluation.	72- 76	5	
	Performance feedback.	77- 80	4	
	Performance improvement and development	81- 85	5	

### 3.3.2 Reliability

To examine the reliability of the questionnaire variables, a pilot test was carried out by the researchers on a small group that consisted of (5) respondents on 25/10/2019 and repeated after (15) days. The purpose of this test was to confirm the accuracy of the questionnaire variables after repeating the test. The results showed that there is a high percentage of consistency reaching (93%) in the answers of the respondents in the two tests.

#### 3.3.2.1 Pilot Test

The pilot test was applied to five administrative staff members of the Iraqi sports clubs, who randomly selected on (25/10/2019). It was conducted to explore the suitability of the research variables before taking any action. This was to ensure the clarity of the research tools and the extent to which it followed the instructions and procedures of the research, as well as, to correct any errors, if found, before starting the post-test. In other words, it was a proactive procedure before the post-test.

### 3.2 The post-test

The post-test is conducted during (3/11/2019 - 29/1/2019) with a total of (60) Iraqi administrative staff members who represented the research sample. After the test was completed, the researchers confirmed that all the procedure was fine and there was no more than one answer for each item in the questionnaire. Then, the data were statistically treated by the statistical (SPSS) program to get the result.

## 4. Data analysis and discussion

The obtained findings of the data analysis show a number of issues. In relation to the first hypothesis which states that 'there is a correlation between sports marketing variable and the competitive advantage of Iraqis sports clubs', Table (2) indicates that there is a positive correlation between sports marketing strategy and the competitive feature of sports clubs, as the value of the overall correlation coefficient is (0,849) at (0.05) of the function value.

**Table (2): Correlation coefficient between sports marketing and competitive feature of sport clubs**

Dependent factor Independent factor	Competitive factor
Sport Marketing	0.849 *

Significant at (0.05)\*

It is significant to indicate that the independent variable is related to the dependent variable. This suggests that more interest in sports marketing would increase and improve the competitive feature of sports clubs because marketing works to create a new atmosphere and opportunities to continue the work, through the positive role of marketing in the continuity of the work in sports institutions by providing financial resources. This is the primary resource to enable these institutions to cover their sports activities and projects.

This finding is emphasized by Mahmoud's study (2008, p.35), as he indicated that the world is characterized by a high degree of complexity and change, as a result of rapid technological developments, as well as the global challenges accompanying the opening of sports towards globalization, and modern information systems. So, the sports

product and marketing has become a competitive weapon and strategic resource upon which the success or failure of the sports institution depends, so there must be a marketing strategy which is capable of dealing with the vast amount of information and sports products by building management information systems that help decision-makers and all coordinators of the sports institution to perform the required work in a manner that ensures the achievement of its mission and goals.

**Table (2): Analysis of sports marketing in achieving competitive feature of Iraqi sport clubs**

		Performance planning				
Dependent variable	R	D.F	F		oβ	β
			Calculated	Tabular		
Independent variable						
System of administrative information	0,662	1	14.475	4,001	0,604	0,723
		58			2234	12,303

**\* Significant at (0.05)**

Regarding the second hypothesis which states “sports marketing plays a role in achieving the competitive feature of Iraqi sports clubs”, data analysis in table 3 suggests that there is a significant role for sports marketing in achieving the competitive feature of sports clubs as a dependent variable supported by the calculated value of F at (14,475) which is greater than the tabulated value of (4,001) by two degrees of freedom (1, 58) at the level of significance (0, 05). The coefficient of determination (2R) also indicates that there is a highly significant difference between the achievement of the competitive feature in terms of its combined dimensions due to the role of sports marketing reaching to (67.2%) and the remaining ratio of (32.8%) that represents the contribution of the excluded or uncontrolled variables which are excluded in the study model. This is indicated by a good deviation curve in its interpretation of the relationship between sports marketing and the competitive feature of Iraqi sports clubs.

From the coefficient (β) and its test (T), the results indicate that the role of sports marketing in achieving a competitive feature is by (0,723), showing from the respondents' answers to the role of sports marketing in achieving the competitive feature of Iraqi sports clubs. Based on the results related to the second main hypothesis, the researchers explain that sports marketing has a role in increasing the work competition, which contributes to achieving the best performance because of its positive impact in increasing the work performance in institutions. Thus, marketing is an important element to continue the work of sports institutions and its effective role in achieving competitive feature. This is also confirmed by Al-Rawi and Khalid (2016, p.63) who claim that Marketing has been associated with the increasing demand for building sports stadiums, sports devices, equipment, and other sports products, as it has become a target for commercial marketing and a field for making money and advertising. This reflects on the competitive performance of the sports institutions and clubs. It is also considered a great factor to motivate some companies and profit institutions to invest in the sports field to improve the quality of sports products and marketing them according to the strategies that take up with the requirements of sports institutions and clubs. This is also suggested by Al-ghrab's study (2019, p.37) which states that sports marketing, based on academic, scientific studies, has an impact on raising the level of planning, implementation, follow-up, and evaluation in the sports and marketing field. This study deals with the role of sports marketing strategies to improve the performance of sports institutions, and analyze the marketing environment while identifying opportunities of Marketing and prioritization.

**5. Conclusions**

Based on the obtained findings, the researchers have concluded the followings:

1. The interest in sports marketing and the development of marketing strategies has a positive effect on developing the work performance of sports institutions, improving their activities, and increasing their financial resources.
2. There is a need to keep pace with new world developments, and new global strategies in sports marketing, and work to qualify the performance of the staff by encouraging them to join different courses to in the field of sports marketing inside and outside of Iraq, and in the philosophy related to the sports marketing in sports institutions.
3. Sports marketing creates more a competitive environment among Iraqi sport clubs which achieve the competitive feature among sports institutions, unions and sports clubs.
4. All media coverage is exploited for local sports competition and champions to activate sports marketing because it is a good device to attract the attention of companies to advertise for their brands and products.
5. The findings also show that there is an increase in competitive performance of the Iraqi sports clubs after activating sport marketing.

**Recommendation**

The researchers recommend that there is a need to find new areas of sports marketing in Iraqi sports clubs to achieve the competitive feature between sports clubs, as well as the development of curricula and strategic plans for sports marketing through training and the development of marketing skills for workers in the Iraqi sports clubs.

#### References

- Ahmed, Aladdin (2011). *Marketing Strategy of Sports Marketing Services* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.). Alexandria, Dar Al-Wafaa for Printing and Publishing.
- Azhari, Muhyiddin and et al. (2001) *Principles of Marketing*. Cairo University. Cairo, University Center for Open Education.
- Darwish, Kamal Al-Din& Hassanein, Mohammad (2004) *Marketing and Modern communications and the dynamics of human performance in sport management*: Cairo, Dar Al-Fikr Al-Araba.
- Ghrab, Ibrahim (2010). *The reality of sports marketing in sports institutions: The case of Yemeni sports institutions*. Unpublished Thesis, University of Algeria, Algeria.
- Ghrab, Ibrahim (2019). *Sports Marketing Strategies and Their Impact on Developing Performance of Sports Institutions: Case of Yemeni Sports Federations* Abdel Hamid Bin Badis University, Institute of Physical and Sports Education, Algeria.
- Mohammad, Abbas (2006). *Human Resources Management, Strategic Entry*. Amman, Wael Publishing House,
- Mohammad, Al-Sharman (2004). *Introduction to Administrative information MIS*, (1<sup>st</sup> ed.). Amman, Dar Safa for Publishing and Distribution,
- Salami, Ali (2001). *Strategic Human Resources Management*: Cairo, Dar Gharib for Printing, Publishing, and Distribution.
- Schwartz, Andrew A. (2001). *Performance Management*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed.). CITY, Jarir Bookstore for Distribution and Publishing.
- Shahadeh, Othman (2008). *The role of watching sports satellite channels in spreading sports culture among students of Diyala University*. Master Thesis, College of Physical Education and Sports Science - Diyala University
- Shalaby, Saad (2005). *Foundations of Sports Marketing Management*, (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Mansoura, The Modern Library.

#### Appendix (1): A list of experts

No.	Title	Names	Area	Affiliation
1	Asst.Prof.	Abdullah Hazza Ali	Sport management	College of Physical Education and Sports Science- University of Baghdad
2	Asst.Prof.	Waed Abdul Rahim Farhan	Sport management	College of Physical Education and Sports Science- University of Anbar
3	Asst.Prof.	Naseer Qasim Khalaf	Sport management	College of Physical Education and Sports Science- University of Diyala
4	Asst.Prof.	Kamel Abboud Hussein	Test and Measurement	College of Physical Education and Sports Science- University of Diyala
5	Asst.Prof.	Khaled Aswad Laiikh	Sport management	College of Physical Education and Sports Science- University of Muthanna

#### Appendix 2: Questionnaire

	Study of the internal environment	GOOD	BAD
1.	Marketing objectives are clearly defined by the institution's management.		
2.	There is a marketing vision for the sports institution.		
3.	There is a clear database for the institution, its activities, and its marketing objectives.		
4.	There are specialists in sports marketing.		
5.	The readiness of the stadiums and sports facilities of the institution to invest.		
6.	Sports institutions have has highly qualified workers in sports marketing.		
7.	Sports institutions have innovative potentials for strategic planning for sports marketing.		
8.	The organizations have good censorship over the progress of the marketing process.		

2. Study of the institution's internal circumstances			
9.	There is clarity of the club's general policy towards activating sports marketing		
10.	Economic factors have an impact on sports marketing strategies.		
11.	Clarity of legal regulations towards sports marketing		
12.	There is a trend from the state leadership to establish new sports facilities		

	and institutions		
13.	There are enthusiasm and awareness by the sponsors towards marketing in the sports field		
14.	There are new sources of funding rather than government funding		
15.	Marketing research is prepared to know the external environment of the institution.		
16.	The government deals with sports with an economic and investment mentality		

<b>3.The executive procedures for sports marketing strategies</b>			
17.	Data and information are collected on the needs of athletes and beneficiaries.		
18.	There is clarity of regulations that facilitate the self-financing of the sports activities of the institution through sports sponsorship.-		
19.	Planning a budget for marketing sports activities.		
20.	Linking prizes with incentives to achieve goals, develop performance and implement well.		
21.	Training courses will be held in the field of sports marketing.		
22.	The best experiences are employed for continuous improvement for achievements.		
23.	Ability of applying and marketing of scientific researches in the sports field.		
24.	People in senior management follow and supervise the implementation and progress of the marketing strategy		

<b>4. Marketing budget in sports institutions</b>			
25.	Financial allocations for sports marketing are determined from the general budget of the sports institutions		
26.	There is a fund for marketing research.		
27.	There is spending on promotional activities.		
28.	The returns of sport marketing activities are analyzed.		
29.	The burden of spending on marketing activities is determined		
30.	There is an approved budget for marketing activities and sport champions		
31.	Cost of prize and gifts is determined		
32.	Cost of spending on media is determined through the transfer of sports activities		

<b>5. The mixing of Marketing for Marketing Sports activity</b>			
33.	Sports service is provided to the public, according to the geographical location of the sports market.		
34.	Adding the services of on-line registration and participation for stadiums and sports activity services on the websites		
35.	Ability of sports institutions to promote marketing activity services		
36.	Sports institutions define the strategies of a list of prices that are appropriate for the beneficiaries		
37.	Process of distributing services is identified by the ability to move this service to new and different places		
38.	Paying attention to the quality of marketing activities		
39.	Organizing sports seminars and festivals by hosting sports stars.		
40.	Designing of electronic boards for advertisement in front of the main gates of the sports institutions		

<b>6. Role of media in the sport marketing</b>			
41	Media plays a positive role in serving the marketing activity of sports institutions		
42.	Recreational goals for the internal and external audiences are achieved		

	by the media		
43.	Sports and promotional tourism goals will be achieved through the media		
44.	There is awareness by sports media about sports marketing		
45.	There is a great turnout by media organizations to purchase news material from the sports institutions		
46.	Doing the continuous evaluation process for media messages used in sports marketing		
47.	Posting sports competitions summaries on the websites		
48.	Finding a media, press, television to cover different activities of the institutions		

<b>7. Attractive factors for commercial institutions to sponsor sports activities for sports institutions</b>			
50.	.Finding space for displaying commercial products of institutions in distinctive places within the sports institutions		
51.	Sponsor's name prefers to announce on entry tickets for matches		
52.	Advertising in sports seminars and conferences in the presence of sports stars		
53.	Announcing the sports uniforms of sports teams and teams		
54.	Sponsorship of, local, regional sport and international events and festivals		
55.	Advertising for brands in the sports magazine of institutions magazines		
56.	Advertising on the sports institution's website		
57.	Doing huge advertisements for some sports institutions in different periods for their financing and maintenance		

**2. Competitive feature**

<b>1. Planning for Performance</b>			
	Organization's management information systems contribute to the process of planning employee performances		
	Organization's management information systems facilitate		
	Process of setting performance expectations for working individuals		
	Organization's management information systems enable harmony between employee's performance expectations and job descriptions		

<b>2. Reviewing and following up on performance</b>			
	.Institution's management information systems provide managers with information on performance review and follow-up to support compensation decisions.		
	Institution's management information systems support performance review and follow-up with job description reports		
	Management information systems in our organization can be used from the inclusion of employees' proposals in development plans		

<b>.Performance evaluation 3.</b>			
	. Management Information Systems support the organization's evaluation process by providing accurate information about employee performances.		
	Use of management information systems makes it easy to compare the actual performance of employees with the institution standards		
	Use of management information systems in the organization ensures fairness in the process of evaluating employee performance		
	Use of management information systems reduces potential errors in the process of evaluating employee performance		
	Use of management information systems contributes to providing solutions to performance problems in a manner appropriate to the evaluation results		

<b>4.Feedback</b>			
-------------------	--	--	--

	Results of the evaluation process in the institution are compared to the provision of feedback		
	Formation systems can be used to accurately identify strengths and weaknesses in employee performance		
	Management information systems in the organization provide workers with objective information about their performance		
	Use of management information systems ensures that workers receive feedback from multiple sources to determine exactly what is required of them		

**5. Development and improvement of performance**

	Use of management information systems in the institutions makes it easy to compare the quality of performance improvement programs with their cost.		
	Ability of management information systems to determine the skills and capabilities required in the future		
	Institution's management information systems define the organizational benefits that future performance improvement and development will bring		
	Management Information Systems help identify individuals who need to improve and develop in their performance		
	Administrative information systems in the institution contribute to suggesting suitable amendments for performance improvement and development programs		