

Contribution of Football Club Jerseys towards English Premier League Fans' Loyalty in Nigeria

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Abstract—The globalization of football especially among youth over the decade is uprising. Nigeria youth displaying football jerseys at every opportunity is an acceptance of football globalization. The Love for English Premier League (EPL) football jersey is very strong among Nigeria fans. Football club jerseys of the EPL are a common sports product among fans in Nigeria. This study investigates the contribution of football club jerseys towards EPL fans' loyalty in Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. The population consists of EPL fans in Nigeria. Simple random sampling technique (fish bowl without replacement) was used to select two states from the six geo-political zones. Purposive sampling technique was used to pick eight viewing centres while accidental sampling technique was used to pick five vendor stands from each State. An average of 250 respondents was selected from each state. A total of 3,200 respondents participated in the research. Two research instruments were used. A self-developed structured questionnaire on Football Jersey Scale (FJS): The instrument consists of 10 items. Fans Loyalty Scale (FLS): The instrument was modified from the psychological commitment to team (PCT) scale, and consists of 20 items. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.72 and 0.75 was obtained, respectively. The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 significant levels. Data were analysed using frequency, percentages count, pie chart and multiple regressions. The result showed that the b-value of football club jersey is 0.148 also the standard regression coefficient (Beta) is 0.089. The $t = 4.759$ is statistically significant at $p = 0.000$. This signified a relative contribution of football club jersey on EPL fans loyalty in Nigeria. Club jersey, which is the most outstanding identifier of every club, was found to significantly predict loyalty. The jersey on the body of the fan has become the site for a declaration of loyalty which becomes available for social interaction and negotiation. The Nigerian local league clubs in an attempt to keep Nigerian fans loyal must borrow a leaf from their European counterparts.

Keywords—Club jersey, English Premier League, football fans, Nigeria youth.

I. INTRODUCTION

FOOTBALL has become a global event with billions of fans in countless cities round the world. Nigerian fans are not left out as there are no families in Nigeria without a football fan especially of the EPL. Nigeria youths are football enthusiasts and are so engrossed in the sport that often times, their discussion among their peers delves more on football clubs, football celebrities and football leagues [1]. EPL sports products are available in the Nigeria market, and the most common one is the football jerseys.

Football jerseys have become a contemporary outfit in Nigeria. Football fans not only put on jerseys when their team

is playing but also wear it to occasions like wedding, birthday, naming ceremony and other social gatherings. Nigeria EPL fans identify with their clubs through the use of jerseys. These jerseys come in different colours and logos and are sold at several outfit outlets across the country. The majority of fans have at least a jersey of his club. Reference [2] stated that Nigerians are often seen to show excessive fanaticism for foreign football teams by wearing of a jersey with the colour and inscription of the clubs, decorating their house and animals with club colours, constant boasting, betting and a lot more.

A lot of Nigerian youth have embraced the EPL and tend to be loyal to their clubs. For every social gathering there is the possibility of fans chatting among themselves about the next EPL game. Reference [5] reported that it is not a blown out of proportion to say that almost every Nigerian family is a fan of one of the clubs that make up the EPL. The rate at which the loyalty is spreading cannot be over emphasized. It is on this premise that this study investigated contribution of football club jerseys towards EPL fans' loyalty in Nigeria

II. HYPOTHESIS

There is no significant relative contribution of football club jerseys on EPL fans' loyalty in Nigeria.

III. METHODOLOGY

The design of the study was the descriptive survey research. The population consists of all fans who watch the English Premier Football League and who live in Nigeria. Three thousand two hundred (3,200) respondents comprising male and female English premier football league fans were sampled. The instruments were administered at viewing centres and vendor stands. For the viewing centres the researcher employed a multi-stage sampling procedure in choosing the respondents for the study.

At the first sampling stage, simple random sampling technique (fish bowl without replacement) was used to pick two states from the six geo-political zones. The second stage involved the use of purposive sampling technique to select eight viewing centres and five vendor stands from the selected states. Only viewing centres with sitting capacity of average of 50 people were considered. At the final stage, random sampling technique was used to pick the respondents in each sitting row. At the vendor stands in populated area accidental sampling technique was used to pick the respondents also in the selected states.

A. Instruments

Two research instruments were used.

- A self-developed structured questionnaire on FJS was used. The instrument consists of two sections. Sections A seek information on the demographic data of the respondents. Section B is divided into 10 items.
- FLS. The instrument was modified from the psychological PCT scale developed by [4]. The instrument consists of 20 items.

B. Procedure

The instruments were administered at viewing centres and vendor stands across the selected states in Nigeria. Fans present before the commencement of the matches were used as respondents. At the vendor stands, the instruments were collected as soon as the respondent finishes filling it, while it is being retrieved before the kickoff at the viewing centres.

C. Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentages and pie-chart was used for the demographic characteristics of the respondents while inferential statistics of multiple regressions was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 alpha levels. Out of the

3,200 administered instruments, 2,726 were analysed.

IV. PRESENTATION OF RESULT

This study was designed to examine the contribution of football club jerseys on EPL fans' loyalty in Nigeria.

A. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

TABLE I
PRESENTATION OF RESPONDENTS BY AGE

Age Range	Frequency	Percent
18-24 Years	1361	49.9
25-31 Years	939	34.4
32-38 Years	286	10.5
39 Years and Above	140	5.1
Total	2726	100.0

Findings as shown in Table I reveal that respondents within the age bracket of 18-24 years accounted for the largest proportion of the respondents at a frequency of 1361 which made up 49.9%; almost half of the total respondents. Respondents within the age bracket of 39 years and above accounted for the least proportion at a frequency of 140 which represents only 5.1% of the total respondents.

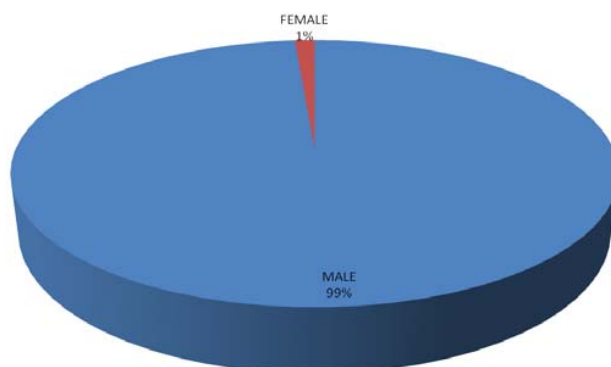


Fig. 1 Distribution of Respondents by Gender

B. Distribution of Respondents by Gender

The result of the study as shown in Fig. 1 indicated that male respondents accounted for the largest proportion at 98.8% with their female counterparts making up the remaining 1.2%.

TABLE II
DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY OCCUPATION

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
STUDENTS	1277	46.8
CIVIL SERVANT	700	25.7
PRIVATE SECTOR	474	17.4
UNSKILLED LABOURER	275	10.1
Total	2726	100.0

The study findings in Table II showed that students accounted for the largest proportion at 46.8%, while unskilled labourers made up the least proportion at 10.1%.

The study findings in Table III showed that fans that have

been with their club for the past 3-5 years accounted for the largest population at 56.5%, while those that join this year made the least proportion at 5.9%.

TABLE III
DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY DURATION

Duration as fans	Frequency	Percent
THIS SEASON	161	5.9
LAST SEASON	565	20.7
3-5 YEARS AGO	1539	56.5
6 YEARS AND ABOVE	461	16.9
Total	2726	100.0

C. Distribution of Respondents by Clubs

Findings in Fig. 2 showed that Chelsea supporters made up the largest proportion at a frequency of 727 which accounted for 26.7%, followed by Arsenal supporters at a frequency of 24.5%. Manchester City supporters accounted for the least at 6.0% with 10.6% of the respondents citing other clubs other

than the ones listed as their preferred clubs.

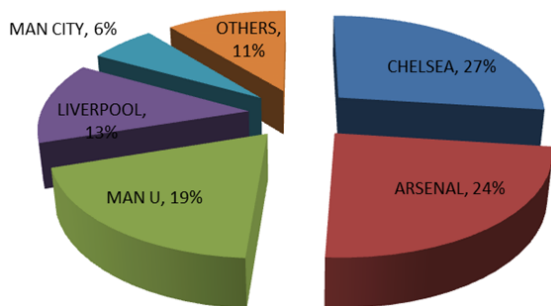


Fig. 2 Distribution of Respondents by Clubs

Hypothesis

There is no significant relative contribution of football club jerseys on EPL fans’ loyalty in Nigeria.

The study findings as presented in Table IV showed that the b-value of football club jersey is 0.148 and the standard regression coefficient (Beta) is 0.089, while t=4.759 is statistically significant at p=0.000. This reveals a significant relative contribution of football club jerseys on EPL fans’ loyalty among football fans in Nigeria. The hypothesis is here by rejected.

TABLE IV
RELATIVE CONTRIBUTION OF FOOTBALL CLUB JERSEY ON EPL FANS’ LOYALTY

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	26.979	0.903		29.869	0.000
CLUB JERSEY	0.148	0.031	0.089	4.759	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: FAN LOYALTY

V. DISCUSSIONS

This study examined the contribution of football club jerseys on EPL fans’ loyalty in Nigeria. The finding of the hypothesis, as shown in Table 6, indicated that the football club jersey is a significant predictor of fan loyalty among EPL fans in Nigeria. The jersey is the main identifier which fans use to express their loyalty to their club of support. A club jersey is outstanding as the brand with which a fan identifies with his/her team. Loyal fans demonstrate their commitment by wearing their club’s jerseys. This is an important way of identifying with the club to which one’s allegiance has been sworn. This finding of the study supports the findings of previous researchers that have also documented the club jersey as an important tool in fan loyalty. Specifically, it is in line with the findings of [3] who reported that the club jersey is important in fan loyalty as it provides a platform through which loyalty is expressed beyond verbal communication. Reference [6] also reported that it is difficult to walk through a street in a Nigerian city without noting a few people wearing an Arsenal or Manchester United jersey.

VI. CONCLUSION

The football jersey has contributed to EPL fan loyalty in Nigeria. Club acceptance and loyalty is highly rated by the extent to which the fan can identify with his or her club. This is made possible by club jerseys. This is because the club jersey empowers a special relationship between fan and his/her sporting team. In fact, the evidence of being a fan of a particular club is socially recognised and validated by wearing the jersey of that club. The jersey on the body of the fan thus becomes the site for a declaration of loyalty which becomes available for social interaction and negotiation.

The loyalty expressed by such fans can be seen each day with the follow up of information and news of the leagues, matches and players through different avenues provided by the media. Mass media coverage has been identified to contribute significantly to fan loyalty of football leagues in Europe. Latest football league updates, information and news are all over the print media in Nigeria. The mass media’s role in bringing sports to fans has succeeded in increasing European’s football league fans in Nigeria.

VII. RECOMMENDATION

1. There is equally the need for sports agencies, training institutes and the academia in sports to forge a common front in promoting and marketing football and generally sports in Nigeria in way to attract more fans.
2. Nigerian local league clubs need to borrow leaf from the European counterparts in an attempt to keep Nigerian fans loyal to the indigenous football clubs.
3. Multi-nationals and private business men must see sports as a viable business venture and as such, invest massively to its development. It is high time business moguls in Nigeria also consider investing in football as well as other sports to attain the same feat that the English Premiership has attained.

VIII. SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER STUDIES

To this end, a comparative study of top Nigerian football clubs and English football clubs is highly recommended with a view to finding areas for which necessary improvement could be made. In the same vein, a comparative study of the modus operandi of the Nigerian League Management Company and the English FA is also highly recommended with a view to identifying steps and strategies that could be adopted to make the Nigerian league to be of global reckon.

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