

Research on Football Club and City Image

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Abstract: This paper collects and analyzes the data of urban residents, football club members and fans, and obtains the insights of football club management, urban planning experts and cultural research scholars. In this way, the interaction between football club and city image is discussed, and the regulatory role of individual characteristics in this relationship is analyzed. The research results show that the football club has significantly improved the city's popularity, reputation and cultural soft power through its success, star player effect and participation in public welfare activities, thus promoting the development of urban tourism. A positive city image has a significant feedback effect on the football club, which enhances the brand value of the club and attracts more resources and support. In addition, the prosperity of urban economy and the richness of culture provide a solid foundation for the development of football clubs. In terms of individual characteristics, it is found that individuals with different gender, age and educational background have different cognition and attitudes towards the relationship between football clubs and city image, and these differences play a key role in regulating the interaction between football clubs and city image.

1. Introduction

In the era of globalization, football transcends its status as a mere sport to become a profound social and cultural phenomenon [1]. Football clubs serve as significant institutions in this context, functioning as crucial hubs in modern society [2]. These clubs are more than mere sports entities; they are vital forums facilitating cultural exchanges and economic collaborations. Simultaneously, the city's image, representing the collective perception and impression of a city amongst the public, holds immense importance. It contributes significantly to the economic progress, cultural vitality, and social cohesion of the city. Furthermore, a positive city image can elevate a city's soft power and competitiveness, making it more attractive to investors, tourists, and residents [3]. Given this, the interplay between football clubs and a city's image assumes critical importance.

This study, conducted within this framework, delves into the profound influence of football clubs on a city's image and explores the dynamic interplay between the two. This endeavor not only enhances understanding of the role played by football clubs in contemporary society but also offers fresh insights and strategies for crafting and promoting a distinct city image.

2. Overview of the relationship between football clubs and city image

2.1. Elements and influencing factors of city image

City image is a multi-dimensional concept, including the natural landscape, history and culture, economic development, social order and other aspects of the city. These elements together constitute the public's overall impression and perception of the city. In the process of shaping the image of a city, various factors will have an impact, including but not limited to urban planning, public facilities, environmental quality and cultural activities [4-5]. As an important part of urban culture, football clubs' activities, events and star players can have a significant impact on the image of the city (see Table 1).

Table 1: City image and the influencing factors of football clubs

Dimension	Key element	Influencing factor	The influence of football club on city image.
Natural landscape	The natural environment and geographical features of the city	Urban planning and environmental protection policy	Football clubs can use their influence and resources to promote the protection of the natural environment in cities, such as supporting local environmental protection organizations and promoting environmental protection concepts.
History and culture	Historical heritage and cultural tradition of the city	Cultural activities and protection of historical buildings	Football clubs can organize historical and cultural lectures, exhibitions and other activities to introduce the historical origin, cultural traditions and distinctive customs of the city to fans and tourists.
Economic development	The industrial structure and economic strength of the city	Business environment, innovation ability	The commercial value of football clubs and competitions can attract investment and promote urban economic development.
Social order	Social security and public order in cities	Legal system, public safety	The positive image and public welfare activities of football clubs are helpful to enhance the image of social order in the city.

2.2. The potential role of football clubs in shaping city image

Football clubs have a significant potential role in shaping the image of the city: (1) Football clubs can attract a large number of spectators and tourists to watch and participate by holding various events and activities, thus enhancing the visibility and reputation of the city [6]. (2) As an important representative of urban culture, football clubs can display the cultural characteristics and spiritual outlook of the city and enhance its cultural soft power. (3) The successful operation of football clubs and the effect of star players can also promote the development of related industries in the city, such as tourism and catering industry, and inject new vitality into urban economic development. Therefore, it is of great significance to study the influence mechanism and feedback effect of football clubs on city image.

3. Football club's influence on city image

3.1. The direct influence of football clubs on the city image

(1) Enhance the visibility and reputation of the city

Football clubs, especially those participating in the top leagues, are concerned by many media and fans every game [7]. Excellent results or star players will increase the attention, such as winning the championship or star players joining, which will enhance the city's visibility. At the same time, the success of the football club will also increase the reputation of the city, because people often associate the achievements of the football club with the image of the city.

(2) Enhance the soft power of urban culture

Football clubs not only represent the competitive level, but also bear the culture and values of the city [8]. The team emblem, team song and slogan of the football club all reflect the historical tradition and cultural characteristics of the city. These elements can make more people understand and identify with the culture of the city through the spread of football clubs. In addition, football clubs often participate in public welfare activities and transmit positive energy, which also helps to enhance the cultural soft power of the city.

(3) Promoting the development of urban tourism

Football clubs attract a large number of fans and tourists, which has brought great impetus to the city's tourism. Many fans will go to the city to watch their favorite team's game. While watching the game, they will also visit other scenic spots in the city, taste local food and even go shopping. These will directly promote the development of urban tourism and related service industries.

3.2. Indirect influence of football club on city image

(1) Shaping the city image through media reports

Every game and every activity of the football club will become the focus of media reports [9]. These reports will not only focus on the competition itself, but also involve the history, culture and local customs of the city where the club is located. Through the wide spread of the media, the image of the football club is closely linked with the image of the city, and together they have shaped a multi-dimensional image of the city.

(2) The integration of fan culture and urban spirit

The fan culture of football clubs often complements the urban spirit. The enthusiasm, loyalty and solidarity of the fans not only reflect the charm of the football club, but also reflect the character and values of the people in the city. This fusion of fan culture and city spirit makes the city image more distinct and unique.

(3) The promotion of football matches to urban infrastructure

In order to host large-scale football matches, cities need to invest a lot of resources in infrastructure construction and transformation. These investments not only improved the hardware level of the city, but also laid a solid foundation for the long-term development of the city. At the same time, the holding of football matches will attract a lot of investment and business opportunities, and further promote the economic development of the city.

4. The feedback effect of city image on football clubs

(1) The influence of the city image on the brand of football clubs

The image of a city will directly affect the brand value of local football clubs. When the city image is positive, the football club will benefit from it, and its brand value and influence will also increase. For example, in a city famous for its beautiful environment and rich culture, its football

clubs tend to attract fans' attention and love more easily, thus increasing the club's market appeal and commercial value.

(2) The support of urban economic development for football clubs

The prosperity of urban economy provides a more solid material foundation for football clubs. With the growth of urban economy, governments and enterprises often have more resources to invest in sports, including the construction and operation of football clubs. This support can be reflected in many aspects, such as the increase of sponsorship funds, the improvement of sports facilities and the introduction of preferential policies, which are all conducive to the development and growth of football clubs.

(3) The interaction between urban cultural atmosphere and the development of football clubs

The cultural atmosphere of the city is also crucial to the development of football clubs. A city with profound cultural background and strong sports atmosphere can often breed more competitive football clubs. At the same time, as an important part of urban culture, the development and success of football club will further enrich and enhance the cultural connotation of the city. This benign interaction between urban culture and football clubs is helpful to form a unique urban sports culture.

5. The regulating role of individual characteristics in the relationship between football club and city image

(1) The influence of individual characteristics on the recognition of football clubs

Individual characteristics, such as gender, age, educational background and hobbies, will significantly affect people's recognition of football clubs. For example, young men may be more inclined to support a football club with strong competition, while women and the elderly may pay more attention to the social responsibility and public welfare activities of the club. These different degrees of recognition will directly affect the individual's attention to football clubs, willingness to participate and consumption behavior.

(2) The difference of individual characteristics in perception of city image

Similarly, individual characteristics will also lead to differences in people's perception of city image. Some people may pay more attention to the natural landscape and environmental quality of the city, while others may pay more attention to the historical culture and social atmosphere of the city. These differences will affect the overall evaluation and emotional attitude of individuals to the city image, and then affect their views and support for the football clubs in the city.

(3) Analysis of the moderating effect of individual characteristics in the two-way relationship

In the two-way relationship between football club and city image, individual characteristics play an important regulatory role. Specifically, individual characteristics will affect the effect of football club on shaping city image and the influence of city image on the development of football club. For example, an individual who loves football and has deep feelings for his city is more likely to actively participate in the activities of the football club, become a loyal fan of the club, and actively spread the positive image of the club through social media and other channels, thus enhancing the visibility of the city. At the same time, such individuals are more likely to pay attention to and support the economic and cultural development of the city, thus forming a virtuous circle.

6. Empirical research and analysis

(1) Research methods and data sources

This study conducted a comprehensive survey in Tianjin, and collected data through questionnaire survey and in-depth interview. The survey focuses on the activities of football clubs in Tianjin, including competitions, training and community interaction. This research has extensively collected perceptions and evaluations of Tianjin's city image from different groups such

as citizens, tourists, and football fans. It is devoted to discussing the positive influence of football clubs on the city's image.

(2) Data analysis and result discussion

Through data analysis, this paper finds that football clubs have a significant positive impact on the city image (see Table 2).

Table 2: The positive influence of football clubs on all dimensions of city image

Influence dimension	Specific indicators	Quantized data/lifting ratio
Promotion of popularity	The number of media reports has increased	+17%
	Social media attention	+39%
Promotion of reputation	Public goodwill survey score	From 7.5 to 8.6 (out of 10)
	Proportion of positive news reports	From 68% to 87%
Cultural soft power enhancement	Number of participation in public welfare activities	From 5 times a year to 12 times a year.
	Number of cultural exchange activities	From 3 times a year to 8 times a year.
Tourism development	Hotel occupancy rate during the event	From 71% to 95%
	Growth rate of tourist attractions visits	+16%

On the other hand, the data analysis results also show that the city image also has a significant feedback effect on football clubs (see Table 3).

Table 3: Feedback effect of city image on football club

Feedback effect dimension	Specific indicators	Quantized data/related values
Brand value promotion	Increased number of sponsors	+20%
	Growth rate of fans	+17%
Increased resources and support	Capital input of city government	Increase by 18%
	Corporate and social donations increased.	Increase by 15%
Cultivation of cultural heritage	Number of historical and cultural activities of football clubs	Hold five related cultural activities every year.
	Participation in urban cultural festivals and celebrations	Participation in football club-related activities increased by 10%

When investigating the moderating effect of individual characteristics, this paper finds that individuals with different gender, age and educational background have different views and attitudes on the relationship between football clubs and city image (see Table 4).

Table 4: The moderating effect of individual characteristics on the relationship between football club and city image

Individual characteristics	Views and attitudes on the relationship between football club and city image	Differentiated performance	Numerical proportion/statistics
Gender	Male fans	More inclined to support football clubs with strong competition and fierce competition.	76% of male fans prefer such clubs.
	Female fans	Pay more attention to the social responsibility and public welfare activities of the club.	61% female fans expressed concern about the social responsibility of the club.
Age	Young fans (18-44 years old)	Enthusiasm and support for football clubs are higher.	Young fans account for 55% of social media fans of football clubs.
	Middle-aged and elderly fans (over 44 years old)	Pay more attention to the history and tradition of the club.	72% of middle-aged and elderly fans expressed their concern for the history and culture of the club.
Educational background	Highly educated fans (Individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher)	More inclined to rationally analyze and pay attention to the long-term development of the club.	66% highly educated fans pay attention to the strategic planning and long-term development of the club.
	Low-educated fans (Individuals without a bachelor's degree)	More susceptible to the results of the game and the performance of the players.	53% fans with low academic qualifications said they would change their attitude towards the club because of the result of the game.

7. Conclusions

Through empirical analysis, this study deeply discusses the interaction between football club and city image and the adjustment of individual characteristics. It is found that the football club has a positive influence on the shaping of the city image, and the city image also has a significant feedback effect on the football club. Individual characteristics play an important regulatory role in this relationship. This study not only reveals the two-way influence mechanism between football club and city image, but also emphasizes the important role of individual characteristics in this mechanism. These findings have important guiding significance for city managers and football clubs in brand building, cultural communication and optimal allocation of resources.

Based on the research findings, this paper puts forward the following suggestions: cities should make full use of the resources and influence of football clubs to strengthen the shaping and dissemination of city image; Football clubs should also actively participate in urban cultural construction and public welfare activities to enhance the club's sense of social responsibility and brand value; The government and enterprises should increase their support for football clubs to promote their healthy and sustainable development.

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