

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54663/2182-9306.2023.v11.n21.132-152>

Research Paper

Virtues of Tribal Behaviour in Sport: The Case of Portuguese Football Brands

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ABSTRACT

The tribal behaviour of sport consumers can be observed in football through individuals who unite around a great passion for their team, sharing symbols, rituals, and specific places of worship. Founded on this assumption, a conceptual model was developed based on virtues of sport tribal behaviour to explore the influence of the tribal behaviour of Portuguese football consumers on the brands of three most popular sport clubs. This paper presents an exploratory study conducted with supporters and members of the three most popular football clubs in Portugal. An online questionnaire survey was used, in which were validated 376 answers. The findings suggest the existence of significant differences between the level of tribalism of the football clubs and that the sport tribal behaviour can positively influence word-of-mouth, brand advocacy, and interaction on social networks. This research contributed to identifying and improving the understanding of the key elements of tribal sports behaviour and its virtues, so relevant in brands management.

Keywords: tribal behaviour, football brands, sports marketing.

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Received on: 2023/04/04

Approved on: 2023/10/27

Evaluated by a double blind review system

1. INTRODUCTION

Sporting activities have always been an important component of leisure time in contemporary societies, being a phenomenon that cannot be left aside from any country (Dionísio et al., 2008; Sá & Sá, 2008). They are, among all human activities, the ones that arouse a higher degree of emotion in their supporters. In particular, the club phenomenon involves thousands of fans who, by being members or sympathisers, defend their club in any circumstance (Asada, 2019; Oliveira, 2019). The tribal behaviour of the football consumers and its influence on the sports clubs' brand has economic, cultural, and social impact on society, being a phenomenon capable of moving masses. The brand/club assumes a relevant strength creating a spirit of sports community of fans (Asada & Ko, 2019; Katz et al., 2018, 2019; Coelho et al., 2018; Heere et al., 2011; Schau et al., 2009; McAlexander et al., 2002; Muniz & O'guinn, 2001). Therefore, sports marketing is a fundamental activity in the brand management of football clubs.

Focused on the stated theme, the general objective of this research was to characterize the tribal behaviour of Portuguese football supporters and members of the three most popular football clubs and identify their main virtues for sports clubs' brands. So, to report the study, the paper is organized in six sections: (1) introduction, (2) literature review, (3) conceptual model, (4) method, (5) results and discussion, and (6) conclusion.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Sports marketing being defined as the set of actions and services, produced to satisfy the needs, expectations, and preferences of the sport consumers, it takes place in two major segments: sport products and services, and others which use sport as a means of communication with their consumers (Mullin et al., 2014; Sá & Sá, 2009; Dionísio, 2009).

The concepts of tribalism and tribal marketing emerged firstly by the Northern School and then by Latin School (Cova & Cova, 2001, 2002). They are founded on the believe that the postmodern tribes are inherently unstable, small-scale and can be held together primarily through shared emotions and passions. These exist in only one form, and that is through the commitment manifested symbolically and ritually by their members. In this context, marketing is seen as the

activity of designing and launching products and services with the aim of facilitating the copresence and co-existence of individuals in the time of tribes: tribal marketing. Its credo is that the consumers are not only looking for products and services that allow them to be freer, but also products, services, employees, and physical environments that allow them to connect to other individuals. A tribe can thus be defined as a network of heterogeneous people, in terms of age, gender, income, etc., who are linked by a shared passion or emotion. A tribe is also capable of collective action and its members are not simply consumers but are also its advocates (Cova & Dalli, 2009). Tribal members can adopt four different types of roles/functions, which are: the “member” of institutions (associations, religious sects); the “participant” in informal gatherings (demonstrations, events); the “practitioner” or adherent who has almost daily involvement in tribal activities; the “sympathizer” or fellow traveler who follows fashions and trends and is marginally/virtually integrated into the tribe.

The sport consumers have particularities that need to be understood (Sá & Sá, 2009). The sports product was designed to satisfy the needs and wishes of the sport consumers. Shank and Lyberger (2014) highlight that sport takes individuals away from their daily routine and gives them pleasure. Sport fans and consumers rarely consume only the game, event, or competition in isolation, because the sports experience also includes the surrounding atmosphere of the sports venue, the equipment, the music, and all the pre-event and post-event animation (e.g., Asada & Ko, 2019; Katz et al., 2018, 2019; Coelho et al., 2018). All these elements add value to the sports product and the competition itself. Regarding consumers' behaviour, Dionísio (2009) highlight that consumers can be divided according to the following typology: non-consumers, occasional, regular, and loyal consumers, in the sport brands linked to the show, where one can find many fans. These fans have high levels of involvement with the club, the athletes, or the sport (e.g., Katz et al., 2018, 2019; Mullin et al., 2014; Dionísio, 2009). They establish with them a strong emotional relationship. The phenomenon assumes a greater amplitude in sports that attract a high number of spectators, like in football. According to Sá and Sá (2009), consumer behaviour in sports is based on three factors that are: socialization, involvement, and commitment. And it is influenced by an individual environment, including physical characteristics, education, perception, motivation, attitudes, lifestyle, and self-image, among others. Additionally, it is also influenced by an external environment, including family, friends, coaches, teachers, climate, norms, and values, among others.

From the postmodernist point of view, the behaviour of fans can be considered tribal behaviour, in the sense that there are sacred places, such as, for example, the stadiums or rituals, in moments such as the players' entrance into the field (Dionísio, 2009). In this same line of thought, Oliveira (2019) points out that fans' attitude toward sports brands surpasses all rationality, adopting these true tribes of apostles, attitudes towards these brands, only comparable to the fans of religions and religious sects. Over time, football fans have developed tribal behaviours, a great passion that unites fans through shared places of worship and specific terminology and symbolism. The link in football is in the club (Dionísio et al., 2008).

Teixeira (2017) identified four elements of tribal behaviour in football: the rituals, the symbology, the place of worship "stadium", and the identity and identification. The ritual experience depends on tangible components, like the artefacts, a script, the performance of role(s), or the audience of the ritual (Rook, 1985). Neale (2009) highlights that rituals are essential for social integration. Cova and Cova (2002) underlined that rituals to perform their function in social gatherings need to be supported in various ways, such as: using sacred or cult objects, specific clothes, sacred or ceremonial places, specific or sacred words, and idols, icons, and sacred images. For products and brands to function as communicative symbols, meanings must be socially shared and continuously produced and reproduced during social interactions (Banister & Hogg, 2004). These symbolic products can function as symbols of individuality and uniqueness, autonomy and social distinction, and affiliation and social identification. Consumption emerges as a binding value around a shared passion. Sport clubs, particularly football clubs, are full of symbols, such as t-shirts, flags, or scarves (Dionísio et al., 2008). The stadiums of sport clubs are true places of religious worship where supporters practice a set of rituals (Oliveira, 2019; Fulconis & Pache, 2014). Shank and Lyberger (2014) emphasize that the characteristics of the team, organisation, affiliation (sense of community) and activity (exposure to the team) interact to influence the level of supporter identification. These authors also emphasize that the higher the supporter's level of identification, the more likely he is to attend an event of his team. Apostolopoulou et al. (2012) point out that buying and displaying team merchandising has been seen as typical behaviour of sport fans, especially those who report having high levels of loyalty and identification towards their team. In their study, the authors concluded that the two main reasons for an individual to wear club merchandising relate to the desire to demonstrate affiliation with their team and express their support by identifying them as fans of that team.

Based on the previous statements and in the research question “What influence does the tribal behaviour of Portuguese football consumers have on the brand of sports clubs?”, the influence of sports tribal behaviour was analysed in the light of the following virtues: “brand love”, “word-of-mouth”, “brand advocacy”, “attitudinal loyalty”, “purchase intention”, and “interaction on social networks”.

“Brand love” defined as the degree of passionate, emotional attachment that a satisfied consumer has towards a specific brand. It includes a passion for the brand, attachment to the brand, positive evaluation of the brand, positive emotions in response to the brand and declarations of love towards the brand (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). “Word-of-mouth” (WoM) refers to the transmission of information about products, services or brands between consumers. Because individuals receive feedback from people they know, it tends to be more reliable than messages from more formal marketing channels (Solomon, 2017; Babić et al., 2016). “Brand advocacy” as a favourable communication about a brand, recommending a brand to others or as the defense of a brand when it is attacked. It is voluntarily offered by consumers who evangelize the brands they have experienced to others (Wilk et al., 2020). “Attitudinal loyalty” defined as a deep commitment to buy and patronize a preferred product or service consistently in the future, which generates repeated purchases of the same brand or group of brands, despite situational influences (Oliver, 1999). In sports, team loyalty portrays a psychological connection with the sports team, responsible for consistently and durably generating positive behaviours and attitudes towards the team (Funk and James, 2001). “Purchase intention” is the tendency of an individual to buy a product (Yoo et al., 2000). A combination of consumers’ interest in buying a product and their possibility to make this purchase (Wu et al., 2015). Regarding “interaction in social networks”, Oliveira (2019) highlights that brands use social networks to connect with their consumers and create valuable relationships. The relationship of the fans with the club increase or may decrease, depending on the sport results, but it also takes place through convenient communication and interaction with them. For Nisar and Whitehead (2016), consumers value communication by social media more than by traditional media. Miranda et al. (2014) add that sport clubs can use social media, and when it is done strategically, it allows them to improve their brand management, encourage social interaction among their followers, promote sales and improve the online fan experience. Achen (2019) emphasizes that the more fans interact with their favourite club through the social network, the higher the relationship quality and purchase intention. Also, McCarthy et

al. (2014) argue, about your study with English football clubs, that the development of social media strategies could provide interaction, engagement, and community belonging, increase the traffic flow to the official football club websites and commercial gains. Through social networks, clubs can communicate and interact easily with their fans.

3. CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Considering the main research objective - to characterize the tribal behaviour of Portuguese football consumers and to identify their main virtues for club brands -, the conceptual model (Figure 1) guiding the research was designed. So, to compare the level of sport tribal behaviour of supporters from different football clubs, the following hypothesis were formulated:

H1: There are statistically significant differences in the level of sport tribal behaviour depending on the football club.

H2: Sports tribal behaviour positively influences brand love.

H3: Sports tribal behaviour positively influences word-of-mouth.

H4: Sports tribal behaviour positively influences brand advocacy.

H5: Sports tribal behaviour positively influences attitudinal loyalty.

H6: Sports tribal behaviour positively influences purchase intention.

H7: Sports tribal behaviour positively influences the interaction in social networks.

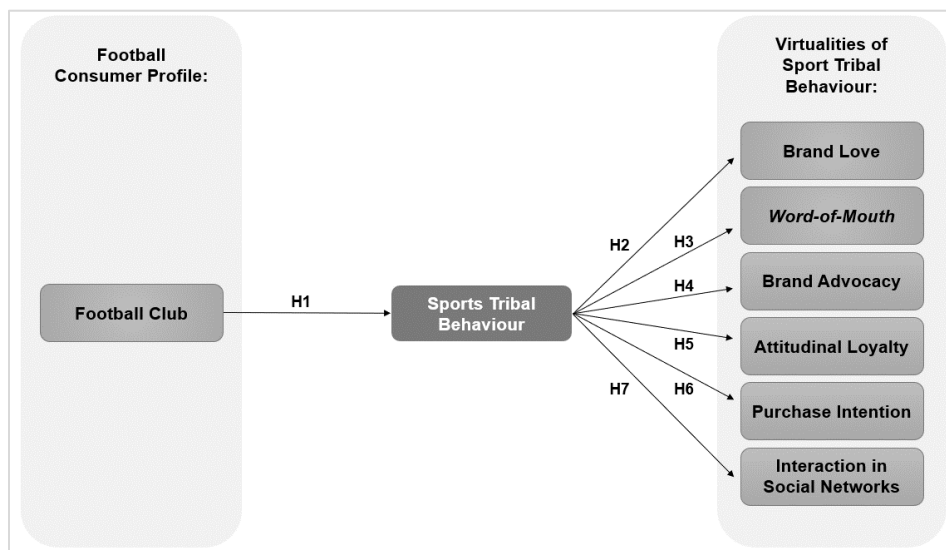


Figure 1. Research conceptual model

4. METHOD

Following an exploratory research design and starting from the general objective of characterizing the tribal behaviour of the Portuguese football consumers and identifying their main virtues for clubs' brands, the research strategy adopted a primary data collection through the completion of a questionnaire survey, applied online. The questionnaire was edited using LimeSurvey software. The population determined were the supporters and members of the following Portuguese clubs: Futebol Clube do Porto (FCP), Sporting Clube de Portugal (SCP) and Sport Lisboa e Benfica (SLB), aged 18 years or older who have ever watched a football match of the club they support. A questionnaire' pre-test was applied to target population in two distinct phases, to 7 and 8 persons (females and males), respectively, to improve the result of it as much as possible. Then, a convenience sampling technique, without replacement, was adopted. A set of specific online channels (mainly, e-mail and Facebook social network platform' groups) were determined for the dissemination of the questionnaire. From April to May of 2021 was collected the responses.

The questionnaire was structured in 3 parts: (1) football consumer profile; (2) sport tribal behaviour; and (3) virtues of sport tribal behaviour. Thus, the variable "sport tribal behaviour" was studied based on 5 dimensions: "rituals" (Neale, 2009), "effective social identity" (Dholakia et al., 2004), "symbolism (brand) and stadium" (Ross et al., 2008) and "brand tribe identification" (Coelho et al., 2018; Heere et al., 2011; Algesheimer et al., 2005; McAlexander et al., 2002). "Brand love" and "WoM" (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006), "brand advocacy" (Celuch, 2010), "attitudinal loyalty" (Biscaia et al., 2013), "purchase intention" (Tsiotsou & Alexandris, 2009), and "social networks interaction" (Achen, 2019) were the 6 variables used to characterize the virtues of sport tribal behaviour.

After the questionnaire application, the collected answers were exported to IBM SPSS Statistics 27 software, and the data were cleaned. Then, descriptive statistical techniques were used to characterize the sample. The internal consistency of the scales used was studied using Cronbach's alpha. To test H1, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test was first performed. This test indicated that a normal distribution did not modulate the data. Therefore, it was concluded that a non-parametric test would be more appropriate and, therefore, the Kruskal-Wallis test was applied. Multiple Linear Regression (MLR) was applied to test the remaining research hypotheses.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It was noted 495 collected answers. Of these, 119 were invalidated for not belonging to the defined target population, i.e., 54 respondents did not like football or had no club preference; 20 respondents supported football clubs other than FCP, SCP or SLB; and 45 respondents stated that they had never watched a match of their club. So, 376 responses were validated, being 238 (63,3%) male and 138 (36,7%) female.

5.1 Football consumer profile

Data analysis to characterize the participants determined relative equity in the distribution by age classes. Regarding the place of residence, there was a distribution of respondents by the various districts and regions of the country. Most respondents (52.1%) were workers, followed by 38.3% who indicated they were students or student workers.

The most represented club in this sample was SCP with 166 respondents (44.1%), followed by SLB with 112 respondents (29.8%), and lastly, FCP with 98 respondents (26.1%). The results showed that the sample consisted of only 23 respondents (6.1%) who belong to a supporter's group. One hundred thirty-three respondents (35.4%) indicated that they were members of the football club they support. SCP was the club with the highest representation of members (45.2%), followed by SLB (28.6%) and in third place appeared FCP (26.5%).

Additionally, 315 respondents (83.8%) stated that they use social networks to follow their club. The social network most used by respondents to follow their clubs were Facebook (used by 285 respondents, 90.5%), followed by Instagram (used by 244 respondents, 77.5%), and then by Youtube (used by 141 respondents, 44.8%) (Table 1).

Table 1. Frequencies of the use of social networks used by respondents

Social Networks	Yes		No	
	Frequency Absolute	Frequency Relative	Frequency Absolute	Frequency Relative
<i>Facebook</i>	285	90,5%	30	9,5%
<i>Instagram</i>	244	77,5%	71	22,5%
<i>Youtube</i>	141	44,8%	174	55,2%
<i>Twitter</i>	94	29,8%	221	70,2%
<i>TikTok</i>	30	9,5%	285	90,5%
Others	3	1%	312	99,0%

Facebook (51.4%) and Instagram (34.9%) were the social networks mentioned as favourites to follow the club. In the classes 18-24 years and 25-34 years, the favourite social network to follow the club was Instagram, and for the remaining age groups was Facebook.

5.2 Tribal behaviour in football

The study of the internal consistency of the variables through Cronbach's Alpha allowed analysis of the proportion of variability in the answers resulting from differences in the respondents' opinions. This value ranges between 0 and 1, where below 0,6 the internal consistency is classified as unacceptable (Pestana and Gageiro, 2014). Thus, and regarding the study of the sport tribal behaviour dimensions and the virtues of sport tribal behaviour, the results presented in Table 2 were obtained when analysing and revising the items resulting from the repetition of some tests to improve the internal consistency of the variables. Then, statistical tests were conducted to answer the research hypotheses early presented.

Table 2. Summary of internal consistency of scales

Variables	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Tribal behaviour dimensions in football		
Rituals	4	0,602
Affective social identity	2	0,887
Symbolism	2	0,851
Stadium	3	0,821
Brand tribe identification	3	0,867
Virtues of tribal behaviour in football		
Brand love	8	0,952
Word-of-Mouth	4	0,883
Brand advocacy	3	0,781
Attitudinal loyalty	3	0,858
Purchase intention	2	0,956
Interaction with social networks	4	0,851

Normality tests were carried out to understand whether the data to be assessed (the dimensions of tribal behaviour) followed a normal distribution. As $n=376$ in all dimensions, it is resorted to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test with Lilliefors correction, testing the following hypotheses:

H_0 : The data are modelled by a normal distribution.

H_1 : The data are not modelled by a normal distribution.

For all variables, the p-value is less than 0.05 ($<0,001$). Therefore, H_0 is rejected for a significance level of 5%. It is concluded that a normal distribution does not model all variables. Therefore, non-parametric tests were then performed. The Kruskal-Wallis test was chosen (Table 3) to answer H_1 , checking whether the medians of each dimension of sports tribal behaviour differ significantly depending on club preference. Thus, the following hypotheses were tested:

H_0 : The medians do not differ statistically between groups.

H_1 : The medians differ statistically between groups.

Table 3. Tribal behaviour dimensions in football - Kruskal-Wallis test

Variable	Sig.
Rituals	0,013
Affective social identity	<0,001
Stadium	0,021
Symbolism	<0,001
Brand tribe identification	<0,001

For all variables, the p-value is less than 0.05. Therefore, H_0 is rejected for a significance level of 5%. It is concluded that there are statistically significant differences in the medians of all dimensions of football tribal behaviour depending on the football club the respondent's support. So, H_1 is thus corroborated.

Through Kruskal-Wallis tests, it is possible to evidence that regarding the dimensions "Rituals", "Affective social identity", "Stadium", and "Brand tribe identification", SCP has higher and significant values in relation to FCP and SLB, which have equal values (Table 4). Only in the "Symbolism" dimension does FCP has a higher and more significant value in relation to SCP and SLB.

Table 4. Medians of tribal behaviour dimensions in football per club

Variable	Club	Median
Rituals	FCP	1,2500
	SCP	1,7500
	SLB	1,2500
Affective social identity	FCP	4,0000
	SCP	4,5000
	SLB	4,0000
Stadium	FCP	5,0000
	SCP	4,5000
	SLB	4,5000
Symbolism	FCP	4,3333
	SCP	4,0000
	SLB	4,3333
Brand tribe identification	FCP	3,0000
	SCP	3,3333
	SLB	3,0000

In short, H1 is confirmed, as the results suggest the existence of statistically significant differences in the level of sports tribal behaviour according to the football club (FCP, SCP and SLB) that the individual supports. Additionally, it was possible to show that SCP has higher medians in all dimensions of sports tribal behaviour, except for “Symbolism”, in relation to FCP and SLB.

Subsequently, to answer research hypotheses H2, H3, H4, H5, H6 and H7, it was chosen to perform the Multiple Linear Regression (MLR). The MLR allows for the analysis of the relationship between a dependent variable (Y) and a set of independent variables (X) (Pestana and Gageiro, 2014). The independent variables are the dimensions of sports tribal behaviour. The dependent variable is different depending on the research hypothesis intended to validate. In H2 is “brand love”, in H3 is “WoM”, in H4 is “brand advocacy”, in H5 is “attitudinal loyalty”, in H6 is “purchase intention”, and in H7 is “interaction in social networks”.

Firstly, in each MLR, the F-test was considered, which allows for verifying whether the regression is meaningful or not. Next, through T-tests, it was analysed whether the constant and each independent variable (x_i) presented in the model is significant to explain the variation of the dependent variable. Then, the MLR equation referring to the fitted model is presented based on the values of the partial regression coefficients (β). Subsequently, the analysis of the adjusted coefficient of determination was performed to measure the frequency of variation of a variable that, on average, is explained by another variable (Pestana and Gageiro, 2014). And finally, it is analysed whether the assumptions of the MLR are fulfilled. Firstly, the assumption that the explanatory variables are linearly independent is confirmed, determining that the multicollinearity is not verified. This assumption can be analysed using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). Field (2009) suggests that if the VIF value is ≥ 10 , there should be cause for concern. Therefore, this is a good reference value. In this sense, it was considered that VIF values should be lower than 10 to validate the inexistence of multicollinearity. Thus, it was also verified whether the assumptions of normality of the standardised residuals and independence and equality of variances of residuals are fulfilled. Regarding the significance of the regression, the p-value of the ANOVA F-test is less than 0.05, and therefore H_0 is rejected. Thus, it is confirmed that the regression is significant. So, in all dimensions, the regression assumptions were validated. First, the absence of multicollinearity was verified through the VIF values. Then, to test the normality of the standardised residuals, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was performed (because $n=376>30$).

Considering H2, in the variables *Ctd_rituals*, *Ctd_asi*, *Ctd_stadium* and *Ctd_bti*, the p-value is less than 0.05 (Table 5). Therefore, H0 is rejected, and it is concluded that these variables are relevant for the model because they contribute significantly to explaining the dependent variable “brand love”. To variable *Ctd_symbolism*, the p-value is greater than 0.05. Therefore, H0 is not rejected. This variable does not have a significant explanatory capacity, i.e., it is not relevant and can be removed from the model. The model’s constant should also be considered since its p-value was less than 0.05. Through these results, the equation (1) was created regarding the adjusted model.

$$\text{Brand love} = 0,927 + 0,114\text{Ctd_rituals} + 0,375\text{Ctd_asi} + 0,168\text{Ctd_stadium} + 0,173\text{Ctd_bti} + \varepsilon \quad (1)$$

Considering the value of R_a^2 , which is 0.657, the model can explain about 66% of the variation in “brand love”. The p-value in this test was 0.004, which is less than 0.05. In this context, the normality of the residuals is rejected for a significance level of 5%. Therefore, the model should be called into question as it did not comply with the assumption of normality of the standardised residuals.

Table 5. Results of MLR: H2, H3 e H4.

Variables	Brand love			WoM			Brand advocacy		
	B	Sig	VIF	B	Sig	VIF	B	Sig	VIF
Rituals (Ctd_rituals)	0,114	<0,001	1,571	0,114	0,004	1,571	0,158	<0,001	1,571
Affective social identity (Ctd_asi)	0,375	<0,001	1,841	0,252	<,001	1,841	0,185	<0,001	1,841
Symbolism (Ctd_symbolism)	0,062	0,079	1,329	0,108	0,025	1,329	0,058	0,17	1,329
Stadium (Ctd_stadium)	0,168	<0,001	1,26	0,123	0,009	1,26	0,083	0,049	1,26
Brand tribe identification (Ctd_bti)	0,173	<0,001	1,69	0,302	<,001	1,69	0,319	<0,001	1,69
Constant	0,927	<0,001	-	0,695	0,002	-	1,158	<0,001	-
Adjusted coefficient of determination (R_a^2)	0,657			0,516			0,547		
F of ANOVA (Regression Significance)	<0,001			<0,001			<0,001		

With respect to H3, in all variables (*Ctd_rituals*, *Ctd_asi*, *Ctd_symbolism*, *Ctd_stadium* and *Ctd_bti*) the p-value is less than 0.05 (Table 5). Therefore, all variables are relevant to the model

as they contribute significantly to explaining the dependent variable “WoM”. The model’s constant should also be considered as its p-value was less than 0.05. Through these results, the equation (2) was created regarding the adjusted model.

$$- \text{WoM} = 0,695 + 0,114\text{Ctd_rituals} + 0,252\text{Ctd_asi} + 0,108\text{Ctd_symbolism} + 0,123\text{Ctd_stadium} + 0,302\text{Ctd_bti} + \varepsilon \quad (2)$$

Being the value of R_α^2 equal to 0.516, the model allows explaining about 52% of the variation of the “WOM”. The p-value in this test was 0.057, which is higher than 0.05. In this context, the normality of the residuals is not rejected for a significance level of 5%. Then, when analyzing the scatter plot of the standardized residuals against the standardized predicted values (Figure 2), the independence and equality of variances of the residuals can be assumed since it is observed as a random cloud of points without evidence of tendencies. Thus, all assumptions are confirmed.

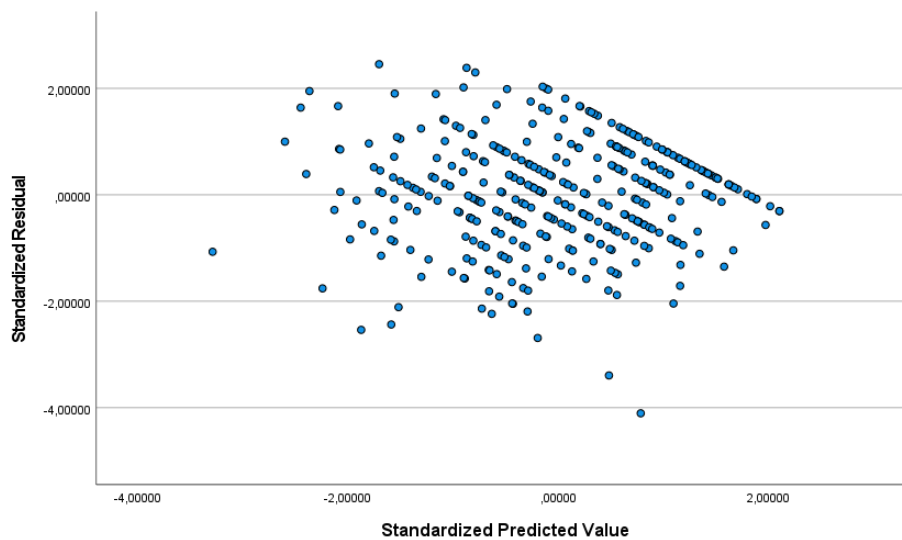


Figure 2. Scatter of standardised residuals against standardised predicted values for H3

Looking to H4 (Table 5), in the variables *Ctd_rituals*, *Ctd_asi*, *Ctd_stadium* and *Ctd_bti*, the p-value is less than 0.05. Therefore, H_0 is rejected, and it is concluded that these variables are relevant for the model as they contribute significantly to explaining the dependent variable “Brand advocacy”. However, in the variable *Ctd_symbolism*, the p-value is greater than 0.05. Therefore, H_0 is not rejected. This variable does not have a significant explanatory capacity and can be removed from the model. The model’s constant should also be considered since its p-value was less than 0.05. Through these resulted the equation (3).

$$\text{Brand advocacy} = 1,158 + 0,158\text{Ctd_rituals} + 0,185\text{Ctd_asi} + 0,083\text{Ctd_stadium} + 0,319\text{Ctd_bti} + \varepsilon \quad (3)$$

Regarding the quality of the adjustment of the MLR and being the value of $R_a^2 = 0.547$, this value indicates that the model allows explaining about 55% of the variation of “Brand advocacy”. Also, being a p-value of 0.20, which is greater than 0.05, the normality of the residuals is not rejected for a significance level of 5%. Looking at Figure 3, it was possible to conclude that the residuals' independence and equality of variances can be assumed since a random cloud of points with no trend is observed. Thus, all assumptions are confirmed.

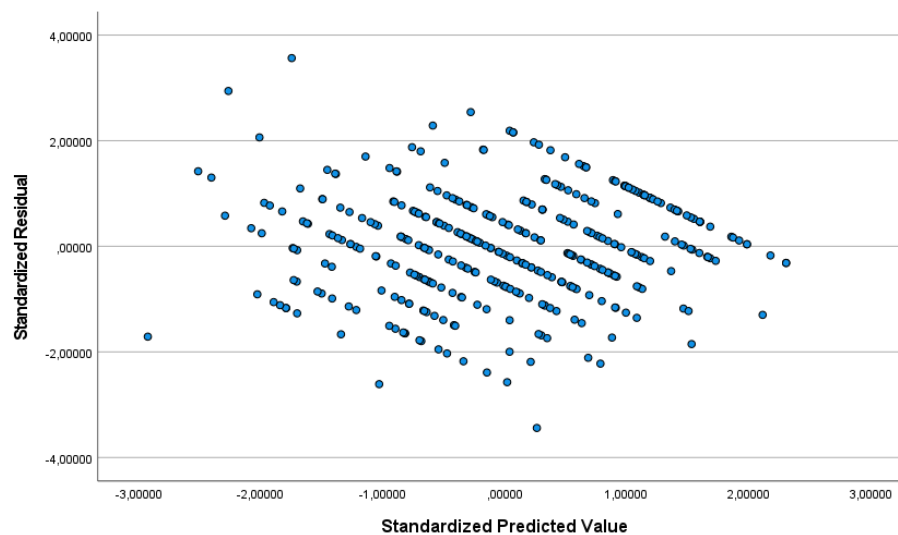


Figure 3. Scatter of standardised residuals against standardised predicted values for H4

Concerning to H5, in the variables *Ctd_rituals*, *Ctd_asi*, *Ctd_stadium* and *Ctd_bti*, the p-value is less than 0.05 (Table 6). Therefore, H_0 is rejected, and it is concluded that these variables are relevant for the model because they contribute significantly to explaining the dependent variable “Attitudinal loyalty”. However, in the variable *Ctd_symbolism*, the p-value is greater than 0.05. Therefore, H_0 is not rejected. This variable does not have a significant explanatory capacity and can be removed from the model. The model's constant should also be considered since its p-value was less than 0.05. Thus, the equation (4) was created regarding the adjusted model.

$$\text{Attitudinal loyalty} = 0,531 + 0,228\text{Ctd_rituals} + 0,137\text{Ctd_asi} + 0,113\text{Ctd_stadium} + 0,427\text{Ctd_bti} + \varepsilon \quad (4)$$

Being the value of R_a^2 equal to 0.521, this indicates that the model allows explaining about 52% of the variation in “Attitudinal loyalty”. The p-value in this test was <0.001, which is less than

0.05. So, the normality of the residuals is rejected for a significance level of 5%. The model should be called into question as it did not comply with the assumption of normality of the standardized residuals.

Table 6. Results of MLR: H5, H6, H7

Variables	Attitudinal loyalty			Purchase intention			Social networks interaction		
	B	Sig	VIF	B	Sig	VIF	B	Sig	VIF
Rituals (Ctd_rituals)	0,228	<0,001	1,571	0,168	0,003	1,571	0,214	<0,001	1,404
Affective social identity (Ctd_asi)	0,137	0,009	1,841	0,224	0,001	1,841	0,480	<0,001	1,595
Symbolism (Ctd_symbolism)	0,059	0,279	1,329	0,056	0,412	1,329	-0,004	0,955	1,249
Stadium (Ctd_stadium)	0,113	0,035	1,26	0,086	0,201	1,26	0,209	0,003	1,186
Brand tribe identification (Ctd_bti)	0,427	<0,001	1,69	0,357	<0,001	1,69	0,309	<0,001	1,502
Constant	0,531	0,041	-	0,885	0,007	-	-1,135	0,004	-
Adjusted coefficient of determination (R_a^2)	0,521			0,369			0,453		
F of ANOVA (Regression Significance)	<0,001			<0,001			<0,001		

Attending to H6, in the variables *Ctd_rituals*, *Ctd_asi* and *Ctd_bti*, the p-value is less than 0.05 (Table 6). Therefore, H_0 is rejected, and it is concluded that these variables are relevant to the model because they contribute significantly to explaining the dependent variable “Purchase intention”. Yet, in the *Ctd_symbolism* and *Ctd_stadium*, the p-value was greater than 0.05. Therefore, H_0 is not rejected. These two variables do not have significant explanatory power and can be removed from the model. The constant should also be considered since its p-value was less than 0.05. Then the equation regarding the adjusted model is the (5).

$$\text{- Purchase intention} = 0,885 + 0,168\text{Ctd_rituals} + 0,224\text{Ctd_asi} + 0,357\text{Ctd_bti} + \varepsilon \quad (5)$$

Being the value of R_a^2 is equal to 0.369, this means that the model can explain about 37% of the variation in purchase intention. The p-value in this test was <0.001, which is less than 0.05. Then, the normality of the residuals is rejected for a significance level of 5%. Therefore, the model is called into question as it did not comply with the assumption of normality of the standardized residuals.

About the last virtue in analysis, and concerning H7, in the variables *Ctd_rituals*, *Ctd_asi*, *Ctd_stadium* and *Ctd_bti*, the p-value is less than 0.05. Therefore, H_0 is rejected, and it is concluded that these variables are relevant to the model because they contribute significantly to explaining the dependent variable “Interaction in social networks”. On the other hand, in the variable *Ctd_symbolism*, the p-value is higher than 0.05. Therefore, H_0 is not rejected. This variable does not have a significant explanatory capacity, and it can be removed from the model. The model’s constant should also be considered since its p-value was less than 0.05. Then, the equation regarding the adjusted model is the (6).

$$\text{- Social networks interaction} = -1,135 + 0,214\text{Ctd_rituals} + 0,480\text{Ctd_asi} + 0,209\text{Ctd_stadium} + 0,309\text{Ctd_bti} + \varepsilon \quad (6)$$

Regarding the quality of the adjustment of the MLR, the value of $R_\alpha^{\wedge 2}$ is 0.453, which means that the model allows explaining about 52% of the “Social networks interaction” variation. The p-value in this test was 0.200, which is greater than 0.05. Then, the normality of the residuals is not rejected for a significance level of 5%. Looking at Figure 4, it is possible to conclude that the independence and equality of variances of the residuals can be assumed since a random cloud of points with no trend is observed. Thus, all assumptions are confirmed.

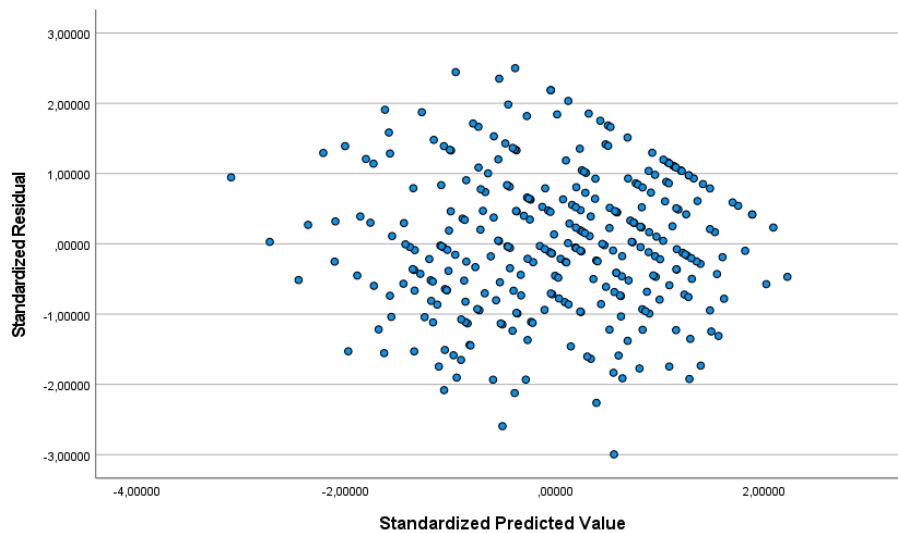


Figure 4. Scatter of standardised residuals against standardised predicted values for H7

In summary, it was possible to conclude that the hypotheses H2, H5, and H6 were not possible to be corroborated because the assumption of normality of the standardised residuals required in the

MLR was not validated. On the other hand, H3, H4 and H7 were corroborated. To “WoM”, all dimensions showed statistical significance to explain it. If the level of the rituals, affective social identification, symbolism, stadium or brand tribe identification dimensions increases by one unit and the others remain constant, the value of the “WoM” level will increase by 0.114, 0.252, 0.108, 0.123, and 0.302 respectively. In this context, H3 is corroborated, which means that the sports tribal behaviour positively influences word-of-mouth. In addition, to “Brand advocacy”, all dimensions except “symbolism” showed statistical significance in explaining the variation of the variable. If the values of the level of the rituals, affective social identification, stadium, or brand tribe identification dimensions increase by one unit and the others remain constant, the value of the brand advocacy level will, respectively, increase by 0.158, 0.185, 0.083, and 0.319. So, H4 is corroborated, the sports tribal behaviour positively influences the brand advocacy. And finally, to H7, all dimensions of sports tribal behaviour except for “symbolism” showed statistical significance to explain the variation “Social network interaction”. If the values of the rituals, affective social identification, stadium or brand tribe identification dimensions increase by one unit and the others remain constant, the value of the social network interaction level will increase by 0.214, 0.480, 0.209 and 0.309, respectively. In this context, H7 is corroborated, which means that the sports tribal behaviour positively influences the interaction in social networks.

6. CONCLUSION

Through a questionnaire survey, a sample of 376 participants was obtained (238 male and 138 female) of different age groups residing in different country’ regions, ensuring a good heterogeneity. It was observed that 166 respondents were supporters of SCP, 112 of SLB, and 98 of FCP. 35.4% of the respondents are members of the club they support, 5.9% are part of a supporters’ group, and 83.8% use social networks to follow their club. After studying the internal consistency of the scales, it was possible to make the necessary adaptations to ensure that the scales used allowed to assess the variables to be studied with the best possible consistency and consequently apply the statistical tests. The results showed statistically significant differences in the medians of football consumers’ levels of tribal behaviour according to the club they support. Additionally, it was also possible to ascertain the positive influence of the respondents’ sports tribal behaviour on WoM, brand advocacy and interaction on the social networks of the club they support.

Answering the research question, it is suggested that there is a positive influence of tribal sports behavior on the brand of Portuguese football clubs. The study made it possible to understand that football fans' level of tribalism can have a positive influence on club brands, specifically in terms of WoM, brand advocacy and interaction on social networks. Thus, this research made it possible to identify and improve understanding of the key elements of tribal sports behaviour and its virtues. Overall, it also provided a greater understanding of the importance of tribal behaviours of football consumers.

As this was an exploratory study, for future research, it is suggested to develop studies by adopting conclusive research designs, such as descriptive or causal research. Thus, it will be possible to confirm or not the results obtained in this study and enrich the current knowledge on the topic with more representative data. It is also suggested to extend the study of tribal sports behaviour of supporters to other football clubs or to conduct a comparative study of the level of tribal behaviour between supporters of different sports teams, such as basketball, handball, and football.

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How to cite this article:

Vieira, T. & Simões, D. M. (2023). Virtues of Tribal Behaviour in Sport: The Case of Portuguese Football Brands. *International Journal of Marketing, Communication and New Media*, Vol. 11, N. 21, 132-152.