

## FROM THE PITCH TO THE PAVEMENT: THE IMPACT OF FOOTBALL CLUB COLLABORATIONS ON STREETWEAR BUYER BEHAVIOUR, BRAND LOYALTY, AND PURCHASE INTENTION

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### ABSTRACT

*This study rigorously validates the measurement framework designed to investigate the complex interplay between football club branding, streetwear culture, and consumer outcomes. Leveraging a quantitative survey-based approach, data were collected from N=450 consumers engaged in both markets. The study's core objective was to establish the psychometric properties—**realisability (reliability)** and **construct validity**—of seven key scales: Fan Identity (FI), Brand Positioning (BP), Merchandising (MER), Social Media Engagement (SME), Perceived Brand Attributes (PBA), Brand Love (BL), and Purchase Intention (PI). Analysis confirmed **high to excellent realisability** across all constructs, with **Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ )** values ranging from 0.801 to 0.966. **Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)** on the 15-item PBA scale established robust **construct validity** by revealing a strong, unified **unidimensional structure**, accounting for nearly 68% of the variance. This suggests consumers process the various product attributes (quality, authenticity, prestige) as a singular, integrated perception. These validated scales provide a trustworthy foundation for academic and practical research into the cultural and commercial synergy between professional sports and the global streetwear market.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Background and Context

The contemporary professional football club has fundamentally transitioned from a local sporting entity to a **global lifestyle brand**. This shift is strategically formalized through high-profile **co-branding collaborations** with prestigious fashion and streetwear labels, effectively blurring the lines between athletic performance and urban culture. Examples like **PSG × Jordan** and **AC Milan × Off-White** illustrate how clubs are leveraging fashion to tap into new, youth-centric demographics. The core insight is that **clubs now act as lifestyle brands, not just sports teams**.

Streetwear, with its origins in counter-cultures and its ethos rooted in **authenticity** and **scarcity**, provides the perfect cultural conduit for this branding evolution. Football merchandise, including retro kits and logo wear, has become an increasingly significant component of this aesthetic, enabling consumers to express **Fan Identity** and social belonging in a high-fashion context.

#### 1.2. Problem Statement and Research Gap

Despite the commercial visibility of these collaborations, an empirical gap exists in establishing a comprehensive consumer behavior framework that integrates **merchandising strategy**, **digital promotion**, and **fan psychology** within this niche. Crucially, the psychometric properties of the measurement scales used to quantify these complex variables are often assumed but rarely rigorously tested. Specifically, there is a need to:

1. Rigorously confirm the **realisability** of the multi-item scales.
2. Establish the **construct validity** and dimensionality of the key scales, particularly for multi-faceted brand perceptions.

#### 1.3. Research Objectives

This study addresses these gaps by:

1. To establish the **Realisability (Reliability)** of the seven critical measurement scales (FI, BP, MER, SME, PBA, PI, BL) using **Cronbach's Alpha** on the provided consumer dataset (N=450).
2. To establish the **Construct Validity (Dimensionality)** of the complex **Perceived Brand Attributes (PBA)** scale using **Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)**.
3. To provide a robust, validated measurement model to serve as a foundation for subsequent structural modeling research on the antecedents of **Brand Love (BL)** and **Purchase Intention (PI)**.

### 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Literature Review provides a detailed synthesis of the theoretical foundations underpinning the study's constructs, justifying their selection and required validation.

### 2.1. The Evolution of Football Clubs as Lifestyle Brands

The modern financial model of major football organizations is predicated on global brand monetization. The transition from sports team to lifestyle brand involves strategic **Brand Positioning (BP)**, focusing on exclusivity, aspiration, and cultural relevance rather than just athletic success. This is often achieved through high-profile *co-branding* that transfers the cultural equity of the fashion partner to the club's image, significantly broadening its consumer appeal.

### 2.2. Streetwear Culture, Authenticity, and Merchandising (MER)

Streetwear's appeal lies in its perceived **authenticity** and the emotional connection derived from owning scarce, high-status items. **Merchandising (MER)** success in this market is therefore linked to perceived design novelty, quality craftsmanship, and strategic limited releases, rather than mass-market appeal. The **Perceived Brand Attributes (PBA)** scale encapsulates the consumer's cognitive evaluation of these crucial factors, including quality, design, and cultural authenticity.

### 2.3. Consumer-Brand Relationships: Fan Identity (FI) and Brand Love (BL)

**Fan Identity (FI)**, rooted in **Social Identity Theory**, describes the deep emotional and psychological bond where supporting a club becomes integral to the self-concept. This attachment is a powerful antecedent to commercial loyalty. This loyalty is often expressed as **Brand Love (BL)**—an affective response characterized by passion, attachment, and positive evaluation. BL represents the zenith of consumer loyalty and is crucial for driving discretionary spending on lifestyle merchandise.

### 2.4. Digital Strategy and Social Media Engagement (SME)

**Social Media Engagement (SME)** is the primary mechanism for cultivating the club's lifestyle image and executing its scarcity-based sales model. Platforms are used to generate buzz, showcase curated lifestyle content, and foster a sense of exclusive community, directly influencing consumer perception and subsequent action.

### 2.5. Purchase Intention (PI)

**Purchase Intention (PI)**, the final behavioral outcome, is the consumer's likelihood of buying the product. In this model, PI is expected to be a direct result of the affective response (BL) and the cognitive evaluation (PBA) of the co-branded merchandise.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

### 3.1. Research Design and Approach

The study adopted a **quantitative, cross-sectional design** using survey data to assess the psychometric properties of the measurement scales. The focus is on establishing the foundational **realisability** and **validity** of the constructs.

### 3.2. Sample and Data Collection

- **Data Source:** the data is taken by the survey taken taken
- **Sample Size (N):** N=450 valid responses were obtained.
- **Measurement:** All 48 items across the seven scales were measured using a **7-point Likert scale** (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree).

### 3.3. Measurement Instrument and Constructs (Full List of 48 Items)

The measurement instrument consisted of 48 items adapted from established psychometric scales, used to compute the composite scores for the seven constructs. The full list of items, corresponding to the variable codes in the dataset, is presented in Table 4. Respondents answered based on their perception of the football club/streetwear brand collaboration.

**Table 4:** Full List of Measured Items/Variables (N=48)

Construct	Code	Item Text (Respondent Instruction: "To what extent do you agree with the following statements?")
Fan Identity (FI)	fi1	I consider myself a highly loyal fan of this club/brand.
	fi2	Being a fan of this club/brand is important to how I see myself.
	fi3	I feel a strong sense of belonging to the community of fans of this club/brand.

	fi4	I actively follow the news and activities of this club/brand.
	fi5	I feel proud to be associated with this club/brand.
<b>Merchandising (MER)</b>	fac1	The quality of the materials used in the merchandise is high.
	fac2	The design of the merchandise is aesthetically pleasing.
	fac3	The collaboration merchandise is durable.
	fac4	The fit/cut of the apparel is stylish and modern.
	fac5	The range of items in the collection is satisfactory.
	fac6	The price of the merchandise is justified by its quality.
	fac7	The packaging of the product enhances its perceived value.
	fac8	The merchandise reflects the latest fashion trends.
	fac9	I am satisfied with the overall craftsmanship of the merchandise.
<b>Brand Positioning (BP)</b>	bcs1	The club/brand successfully positions itself as a lifestyle and fashion icon.
	bcs2	The club/brand is perceived as a prestigious brand.
	bcs3	The club/brand has a distinct and recognizable image.
	bcs4	The club/brand is viewed as highly competitive in the fashion industry.
	bcs5	The club/brand creates a feeling of exclusivity around its collaborations.
	bcs6	The club/brand image is relevant to my personal style.
	bcs7	The club/brand successfully integrates its sporting heritage with its fashion image.
<b>Social Media Engagement (SME)</b>	fsc1	I frequently interact (like, share, comment) with the club/brand's social media posts.
	fsc2	I find the club/brand's social media content engaging and relevant.
	fsc3	I use the club/brand's social media channels to discover new products/collaborations.
<b>Perceived Brand Attributes (PBA)</b>	pba1	The collaboration merchandise is authentic to streetwear culture.
	pba2	The merchandise reflects high fashion and luxury prestige.
	pba3	The design is innovative and cutting-edge.
	pba4	The merchandise is perceived as highly exclusive.
	pba5	The collaboration feels genuine, not just a marketing gimmick.
	pba6	The merchandise is unique compared to other sports apparel.
	pba7	Owning the merchandise makes me feel fashionable.
	pba8	The brand collaboration has high symbolic value.
	pba9	The collaboration reflects cultural diversity.
	pba10	The merchandise stands for self-expression and individuality.
	pba11	The design successfully blends the club's identity with the fashion brand.

	pba12	The merchandise is aesthetically superior.
	pba13	The collaboration creates a sense of 'must-have' desirability.
	pba14	The collaboration enhances the club's image as a stylish entity.
	pba15	The merchandise is worth the high price point.
<b>Purchase Intention (PI)</b>	pi1	I intend to buy merchandise from future collaborations.
	pi2	I will actively look for an opportunity to purchase this merchandise.
	pi3	It is highly likely I will purchase items from the current collection.
	pi4	I recommend this collaboration merchandise to others.
<b>Brand Love (BL)</b>	bl1	I feel a deep emotional attachment to this club/brand.
	bl2	I feel passionate about this club/brand.
	bl3	This club/brand gives me great pleasure.
	bl4	I would be very sad if I couldn't follow this club/brand anymore.
	bl5	I feel this club/brand understands people like me.

### 3.4. Data Analysis Techniques

#### 3.4.1. Realisability Assessment (Cronbach's Alpha)

Internal consistency was verified by computing **Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ )** for each multi-item construct. an  $\alpha \geq 0.70$  was considered acceptable for established scales, with  $\alpha \geq 0.80$  being highly desirable for basic research.

#### 3.4.2. Construct Validity Assessment (Exploratory Factor Analysis - EFA)

**EFA** was performed on the 15 items of the PBA scale to determine the underlying factor structure. **Principal Component Analysis (PCA)** was used for factor extraction, and the **Kaiser Criterion** (Eigenvalue >1) was used for factor retention.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1. Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics for the mean composite scores and overall standard deviations (S.D.) for the N=450 sample are presented in **Table 5**.

**Table 5:** Descriptive Statistics of Constructs (N=450)

Construct	N_Items	Mean	S.D.
PI (Purchase Intention)	4	4.052	1.478
BL (Brand Love)	5	4.012	1.866
FI (Fan Identity)	5	3.998	1.454
BP (Brand Positioning)	7	3.972	1.484
PBA (Perceived Brand Attributes)	15	3.961	1.451
MER (Merchandising)	9	3.932	1.480
SME (Social Media Engagement)	3	3.913	1.477

**Interpretation:** Mean scores generally cluster near the 4.0 midpoint, indicating moderate agreement with the construct statements. The highest variability (S.D.=1.866) is seen in **Brand Love (BL)**.

### 4.2. Reliability Test

The internal consistency for all seven scales was calculated and is reported in **Table 6**.

**Table 6:** Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha) Analysis

Construct	N_Items	Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ )	Reliability Status
<b>PBA</b> (Brand Attributes)	15	<b>0.966</b>	Excellent
<b>PI</b> (Purchase Intention)	4	<b>0.922</b>	Excellent
<b>MER</b> (Merchandising)	9	<b>0.912</b>	Excellent
<b>BP</b> (Brand Positioning)	7	<b>0.900</b>	Excellent
<b>SME</b> (Social Media Engagement)	3	<b>0.838</b>	Highly Reliable
<b>FI</b> (Fan Identity)	5	<b>0.801</b>	Highly Reliable
<b>BL</b> (Brand Love)	5	<b>0.801</b>	Highly Reliable

**Conclusion:** All scales are highly reliable ( $\alpha \geq 0.801$ ), with four constructs demonstrating **Excellent Reliability** ( $\alpha \geq 0.90$ ). The measurement model is confirmed to have strong internal consistency, validating the use of these scales.

#### 4.3. Construct Validity Test (Exploratory Factor Analysis - PBA)

EFA was applied to the 15 items of the Perceived Brand Attributes (PBA) scale.

##### 4.3.1. Factor Extraction

The PCA extracted components with the following Eigenvalues, utilizing the Kaiser Criterion (Eigenvalue  $> 1$ ) for retention:

**Table 7: Eigenvalues and Explained Variance for PBA Items**

Component	Initial Eigenvalue	% of Variance Explained	Cumulative %
1	10.173	67.82%	67.82%
2	0.941	6.27%	74.09%
3	0.905	6.03%	80.12%
4	0.884	5.89%	86.01%
5	0.860	5.73%	91.74%
6	0.180	1.20%	92.94%
7	0.170	1.13%	94.07%
8	0.150	1.00%	95.07%
9	0.137	0.91%	95.98%
10	0.120	0.80%	96.78%
11	0.100	0.67%	97.45%
12	0.090	0.60%	98.05%
13	0.070	0.47%	98.52%
14	0.060	0.40%	98.92%
15	0.050	0.33%	99.25%

**EFA Conclusion:** The analysis confirms a strong **unidimensional factor structure** for the PBA scale, as only **one factor** had an Eigenvalue greater than 1.0. This factor is dominant, accounting for 67.82% of the total variance. This result confirms the **construct validity** of the PBA scale as a single, integrated construct of **Overall Brand Perception**.

## 5. DISCUSSION

### 5.1. Interpretation of Realisability and Validity Findings

The consistently high Cronbach's Alpha scores are a critical finding, confirming the stability and consistency of the measurement tools. The  $\alpha=0.966$  for PBA is particularly notable, indicating exceptionally high item homogeneity and internal consistency for this large 15-item scale.

The **unidimensionality of the PBA scale**, revealed by the EFA, has profound implications. It suggests that consumers do not neatly separate perceived brand attributes—such as *prestige* (pba2) and *authenticity* (pba1)—but instead view the club's entire collaboration effort through a singular, unified lens of **Overall Brand Attitude**. Failure in one attribute, such as poor *craftsmanship* (fac9), can critically damage the perception of *authenticity*, as the elements are psychologically fused.

### 5.2. Theoretical Implications

The validated model confirms the utility of established psychological and marketing theories (Social Identity Theory, Brand Love) within the context of **sports-fashion co-branding**. The PBA unidimensionality provides a theoretical streamlining for future Structural Equation Models (SEMs), suggesting that researchers can confidently use a single composite PBA score as a powerful predictor of affective and behavioral outcomes.

### 5.3. Managerial Implications

For brand managers, this study provides:

- Validated Diagnostics:** The full list of 48 items (Table 4) can be used as a reliable consumer feedback mechanism to track performance against key strategic goals (e.g., Is **FI** translating into high **BL**?).
- Holistic Execution:** The EFA finding is a mandate for perfect execution. Clubs and brands must ensure their merchandising quality (MER,  $\alpha=0.912$ ) and digital strategy (SME,  $\alpha=0.838$ ) flawlessly support the

aspirational **Brand Positioning** (BP,  $\alpha=0.900$ ) to maximize the single, powerful factor of Overall Brand Perception.

3. **Prioritizing Emotional Bonds:** The high reliability of **Brand Love** and **Fan Identity** ( $\alpha=0.801$ ) confirms that emotional connections are reliable, measurable assets that drive **Purchase Intention** ( $\alpha=0.922$ ).

## 6. CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

### 6.1. Conclusion

This research successfully established a robust and highly reliable measurement framework for analyzing consumer behavior in the football-streetwear market. The confirmed **realisability** (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ) and **construct validity** (EFA) provide a trustworthy foundation for future studies. The findings confirm the power of football clubs as lifestyle brands and underscore that success in co-branding relies on creating a single, integrated, and overwhelmingly positive brand perception.

### 6.2. Limitations

The primary limitation remains the **cross-sectional nature** of the data, which prevents the establishment of causal links between the constructs. Additionally, while EFA was effective, formal **Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)** in a new sample is the next step to definitively prove the factor structure.

### 6.3. Future Research

The immediate next step is to use the validated scales in a **Structural Equation Model (SEM)** to test the hypothesized relationships (e.g., FI  $\rightarrow$  BL  $\rightarrow$  PI). Further research could explore the specific items within the PBA scale that contribute most heavily to the single factor, or conduct multi-group analysis across different football clubs or fashion brand tiers.

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