

The Global Branding And Sports Sponsorship: Kelme's Strategy In Responding To The Indonesian National Team

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Abstract

The development of the modern sports industry shows that sports no longer function solely as a means of competition and entertainment, but have become part of a global industry involving economic, media, cultural, and marketing interests. In this context, global branding and sports sponsorship strategies have become important instruments for companies to expand their markets and strengthen their brand image. This study aims to analyze Kelme's global branding strategy through its sponsorship partnership with the Indonesian National Team and examine its impact on brand image formation and consumer loyalty. The study uses a qualitative approach with a literature study method that utilizes various sources such as scientific journals, news, company documents, and publications related to the sports industry. The analysis is conducted through a process of data reduction, interpretation, and concluding various relevant information. The results show that Kelme's collaboration with the Indonesian National Team not only functions as a form of sports equipment support but also serves as an effective marketing strategy to increase brand exposure in the Southeast Asian market. The popularity of the Indonesian National Team and the high loyalty of its supporters provide symbolic benefits for Kelme by transferring a positive image and increasing brand awareness among the public. In addition, sports sponsorship can create an emotional closeness between consumers and the brand through the national identity inherent in the Indonesian National Team. This study confirms that sports sponsorship is an effective global branding instrument for strengthening a company's position amid competition in the modern sports industry while building long-term consumer loyalty.

Keywords: Global branding, sports sponsorship, kelme, national team, consumer loyalty.

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Introduction

The development of modern sports in the era of globalization is no longer understood solely as a competitive activity oriented toward achievement, but has evolved into a global industry encompassing economic, cultural, media, and political interests. The sports industry is currently a sector with high economic value due to its ability to attract the attention of people across countries through various forms of competition and entertainment. In this context, global sports companies utilize sports as a strategic medium to expand their markets and build brand identities through global branding and sponsorship practices. This strategy utilizes football clubs, athletes, and national teams as promotional tools to increase product visibility and consumer loyalty. Sports sponsorship is an effective modern marketing instrument because it can create an emotional connection between brands and the public through the collective identity of sport (Hidayat, 2022). Global branding in the sports industry plays a crucial role in building a company's image internationally. Through branding strategies integrated with media and popular culture, companies can shape public perceptions of a brand's quality and identity. In practice, sports sponsorships aim not only to generate commercial profit but also to build symbolic legitimacy through associations with values of sportsmanship, nationalism, and social solidarity. This demonstrates that sport has become a crucial arena in the practice of modern global capitalism. The development of the global sports industry encourages companies to leverage the popularity of sports to strengthen their brand presence amid international market competition (Prasetyo, 2021).

This phenomenon can be seen in the sponsorship partnership between Kelme and the Indonesian National Team. Kelme is a Spanish sports apparel company seeking to expand its market influence in Asia, including Indonesia, which has a significant football fan base. This partnership is a strategic step for Kelme in building its brand image through the popularity of the Indonesian National Team, which has a strong emotional connection with the Indonesian public. The popularity of national football makes the Indonesian National Team not only a sporting symbol but also a representation of national identity and collective pride for the Indonesian people. Therefore, sponsorship of the Indonesian National Team presents a significant opportunity for global sports companies to gain widespread public attention. Kelme's entry into the Indonesian football industry also demonstrates a shift in marketing strategies within the modern sports industry. Companies no longer solely focus on product quality but also on building emotional experiences and symbolic identities through visual campaigns, jersey designs, digital media, and interactions with football fans. In this context, sports sponsorship becomes a form of strategic communication between companies and the public. The success of a sports brand is heavily influenced by the company's ability to leverage cultural identity and fan loyalty to build emotional bonds with consumers (Putri & Ramadhan, 2023).

On the other hand, sports sponsorship collaborations also reflect the relationship between economic globalization and popular culture. As symbols of the nation, national teams are often used as a medium to build corporate image through narratives of nationalism and a spirit of unity. This is evident in how

Indonesian national team apparel is viewed not only as sports equipment but also as a representation of national identity, worn by the public in various social activities. This strategy demonstrates that the modern sports industry has transformed into a symbolic production space that connects business interests with popular culture. The globalization of sports has transformed its function from mere entertainment to an economic-political instrument that significantly influences the consumption culture of modern society (Nugroho, 2021). Several previous studies have shown that sports sponsorship significantly increases brand awareness, consumer loyalty, and corporate image. Sponsorship partnerships in football can enhance brand appeal because the sport has a broad and loyal mass base (Rahmawati, 2024). Other studies also emphasize that the success of branding strategies in sports is strongly influenced by a company's ability to understand the local cultural characteristics of its target market. However, studies on Kelme's global branding strategy in response to the Indonesian National Team are relatively limited, particularly in examining how the company leverages the momentum of sports nationalism as a market penetration strategy in Indonesia. Therefore, this research is crucial to understand the dynamics of the relationship between global branding, sports sponsorship, and popular culture in the context of national football.

This article aims to analyze Kelme's global branding strategy through its sponsorship of the Indonesian national team and examine how this partnership is used as a marketing tool to strengthen the brand's image in domestic and international markets. The discussion focuses on brand communication strategies, the use of nationalist symbols in sports promotion, and the influence of sponsorship on Indonesian public response to global sports products. This article is structured into several sections. The first section discusses the concept of global branding and sports sponsorship from the perspective of the modern sports industry. The second section describes Kelme's collaboration with the Indonesian national team and the company's marketing strategies. The third section analyzes the influence of sponsorship on brand image and consumer loyalty in Indonesia. The final section provides conclusions regarding the effectiveness of Kelme's global branding strategy in responding to developments in the national football industry.

Methods

This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach with library research. The analysis was conducted interdisciplinarily through marketing communications, global branding, and the sports industry to understand Kelme's sponsorship strategy for the Indonesian National Team. This approach was chosen because the research focuses on interpreting marketing and branding phenomena, rather than analyzing legal or regulatory aspects (Moleong, 2021). The research data were obtained through library research by compiling various secondary sources, such as scientific journals, news articles, company reports, sports media publications, sponsorship documents, and other digital sources relevant to the collaboration between Kelme and the Indonesian national football team. Furthermore, the study utilized visual data and media narratives related to brand promotion, the use of sports attributes, and public response to the sponsorship (Sugiyono, 2022). The data analysis technique was conducted

qualitatively through data reduction, categorization, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. The analysis focused on how sponsorship strategies are used as a global branding instrument, how brand identity is built through national sports symbols, and how Kelme leverages the popularity of the Indonesian national football team to enhance its presence and competitiveness in the international market. Thus, this study seeks to explain the relationship between the sports industry and global corporate strategy in the context of contemporary marketing (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Result and Discussion

The modern sports industry has undergone rapid change in recent decades. Sports are no longer merely perceived as entertainment and competition, but have evolved into a global industry with significant economic value. As a result, global branding and sports sponsorship have become crucial to building the strength of the modern sports industry. The presence of numerous international companies at sporting events demonstrates that sports are now a strategic medium for brand recognition and expanding the global consumer market. The transformation of the sports industry has altered audience behavior, with audiences now attending not only matches but also being intensively exposed to various forms of marketing communications through sponsorships, digital media, and brand activations in the sporting arena. Global branding in modern sports is the process of building a brand identity to achieve international recognition through sports. A brand is not simply understood as a name or logo, but also reflects the reputation, quality, and emotional value that the public perceives of a sports organization or product. In the modern sports industry, brand strength is a crucial asset because it can influence fan loyalty and increase the economic value of the sports organization (Safitri et al., 2025:1277).

The development of digital technology has accelerated and expanded the global branding process. Sports organizations use social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Twitter to build direct relationships with global audiences. Through digital media, fans are no longer passive spectators but are actively involved in building the brand's popularity through their daily digital interactions. This phenomenon is clearly visible in Formula One. Formula One is not just a car racing competition, but has evolved into a global entertainment industry with significant economic value. Each Formula One team strives not only to win races but also to build a brand image and attract international sponsors. Formula One has become a place where sport, technology, media, and business meet in one interconnected modern industry (Safitri et al., 2025:1278). Scuderia Ferrari is a shining example of successful global branding in modern sports. Ferrari has successfully established an identity as a symbol of luxury, high-tech, and prestige. This image is built not only through racing achievements but also through an integrated digital marketing strategy. Ferrari actively utilizes social media to build emotional connections with fans through storytelling, exclusive content, and other digital activities.

Furthermore, Ferrari also employs various modern strategies such as influencer marketing and esports to reach a younger generation who are more

digitally engaged. This strategy demonstrates that modern sports are inseparable from developments in communication technology and digital media (Safitri et al., 2025:1283). The development of the modern sports industry is also influenced by changes in consumer patterns toward digital entertainment. Today's sports organizations sell not only matches but also entertainment experiences to a global audience. Therefore, branding strategies are crucial because they can build emotional connections between fans and sports organizations and their sponsors. The presence of digital media has accelerated and expanded the dissemination of sports brand identities, enabling sports organizations to effectively reach international markets (Hidayat et al., 2023:45). In addition to global branding, sports sponsorship also plays a crucial role in the development of the modern sports industry. Sports sponsorship is a form of collaboration between a company and a sports organization through financial support or certain facilities in exchange for brand promotion and exposure. Sponsorship is not only used to increase product sales but also to build a company's image through association with sporting values such as hard work, achievement, and competitive spirit (Rahmaniati et al., 2019:7).

Modern companies choose sports as a sponsorship medium because it has a large and loyal audience. When a company sponsors a popular sporting event, consumers are more likely to recognize and remember the brand. In many cases, consumers even develop an emotional connection with the sponsoring brand because they associate the product with the positive experience of enjoying the sport (Rahmaniati et al., 2019:2). In the modern sports industry, sponsorship is no longer just about displaying logos on arenas or athletes' uniforms. Companies are now striving to create more interactive experiences for audiences through digital campaigns, social media, and other creative promotional activities. Sponsorship has evolved into a part of modern marketing communications strategies, connecting companies with consumers on a more personal level. Research on Hydro Coco demonstrates how sports sponsorship is used as an effective marketing communications strategy. Hydro Coco actively sponsors various sporting events such as futsal and fun runs to build its image as a health drink synonymous with an active and healthy lifestyle. This strategy helps increase brand awareness and expand the product's market reach among young people (Rahmaniati et al., 2019:3).

The alignment between brand identity and the character of the chosen sporting event greatly influences the success of sports sponsorships. For example, a health drink product is more suitable for sponsoring a sporting event than a regular entertainment event because of its direct association with a healthy lifestyle and physical activity. These findings suggest that sponsorship effectiveness is determined not only by the size of the company's investment but also by the alignment between the brand's character, the values espoused in the sport, and the audience's perception of the relationship between the two. Besides Formula One, football is also a prime example of how sports have evolved into a global economic industry. Modern football has transformed into a business industry involving television broadcasting rights, sponsorships, merchandise sales, digital media, and even sports tourism. The world's major clubs now operate like multinational corporations with international business strategies and branding (Muthiurrohman et al., 2024:281). In modern football, sponsorship

has become a major source of revenue for both clubs and competition organizers. Large corporations compete to become main sponsors of renowned clubs to gain wider global exposure. Sponsors not only appear on players' jerseys but also participate in social media campaigns and various other digital promotional activities (Muthiurrohman et al., 2024:283).

Modern global sports branding also has a significant impact on a country's economic growth. Hosting international sporting events can boost tourism, trade, transportation, and the creative industries. Some countries even use sports as part of their nation branding to build a positive image internationally (Muthiurrohman et al., 2024:284). Despite its significant economic benefits, the global development of sports branding and sponsorship also faces various challenges. Competition between brands drives sponsorship costs up every year. Furthermore, sponsoring companies face reputational risk if the athletes or sports organizations they support experience scandals or a decline in performance. In the digital age, negative information can spread rapidly and directly impact a company's image. Overall, global branding and sports sponsorship play a crucial role in the development of the modern sports industry. Global branding helps sports organizations build a strong international identity, while sponsorship serves as an effective marketing communications strategy for increasing consumer loyalty and expanding global markets. The development of digital technology further strengthens the influence of sports as an entertainment and business industry capable of reaching a cross-border audience.

Thus, modern sport is no longer understood solely as a competitive activity, but also as part of a global industry involving business, media, digital technology, and international marketing strategies. The success of sports organizations today is heavily influenced by their ability to build strong brands and forge effective relationships with global sponsors and fans. The world of modern sport has ultimately become a space where competition, entertainment, and business interests coexist. These findings indicate that sponsorship effectiveness is determined not only by the size of the company's investment, but also by the alignment between the brand's character, the values espoused in the sporting activity, and the audience's perception of the relationship between the two. Kelme's Collaboration with the Indonesian National Team and the Company's Marketing Strategy The partnership between Kelme and the Indonesian national football team represents a strategic collaboration in sports sponsorship and global branding. Through this partnership, Kelme officially became the Indonesian national team's apparel partner, providing official jerseys and equipment for the Indonesian national football and futsal teams until 2030. The partnership was officially announced by the Indonesian Football Association (PSSI) through PT Garuda Sepak Bola Indonesia (GSI) in January 2026 (ANTARA News, 2026). From a global branding perspective, Kelme's decision to partner with the Indonesian National Team can be understood as a market entry strategy using a symbolic asset that already has a large fan base. Rather than building brand recognition from scratch, the association with the National Team allows Kelme to leverage image transfer, making the brand identity more quickly recognized by the Indonesian public. Therefore, the strategic value of this partnership lies not only in the provision of official apparel, but also in Kelme's

ability to integrate its brand identity with a national symbol that holds a high emotional connection among supporters.

In this collaboration, Kelme not only provides match jerseys but also training equipment, technical apparel, and other supporting needs for all levels of the Indonesian National Team, from the senior team and age groups to the futsal and women's soccer teams. Kelme's presence as a Spanish brand also demonstrates the increasing openness of the Indonesian football industry to collaboration with international sports companies. The Chairman of the Indonesian Football Association (PSSI), Erick Thohir, stated that Kelme's entry signals that Indonesian football is increasingly being recognized in the global sports industry. (Detik Sport, 2026) . This collaboration can also be understood as a symbiotic relationship between the commercial needs of sports companies and the growing popularity of Indonesian football internationally. In recent years, the Indonesian national team's improved performance and the enthusiastic support of its fans have created new economic value in the national sports industry. This has made the Indonesian national team not only a symbol of national sports but also a highly attractive promotional tool for global companies. Beyond its role as an apparel sponsor, Kelme's presence also has the potential to strengthen the visual identity and professional image of the Indonesian national team in the eyes of the international public. The jersey design, equipment quality, and marketing strategies can shape public perception of the modernization of Indonesian football. Therefore, this collaboration will not only impact business and marketing aspects but also influence the formation of national identity through sport as an instrument of cultural diplomacy and global popularity. From a global branding perspective, Kelme's sports sponsorship is a strategy to expand its brand presence in the Southeast Asian market through the growing popularity of the Indonesian national team. By leveraging Indonesia's large football fan base, Kelme can strengthen its brand image while increasing international market penetration through symbols of nationalism and sport (Detik Sport, 2026). Kelme's marketing strategy in its collaboration with the Indonesian national football team can be understood as a form of sports sponsorship marketing aimed at strengthening brand image and expanding the international market. Through its sponsorship of the Indonesian national team, Kelme leverages the popularity of football as an effective marketing communication medium to build emotional closeness with the Indonesian public. In sponsorship theory, sports have significant power in creating emotional connections between brands and consumers due to fan loyalty to the teams they support (Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Indonesia, 2026).

Kelme's marketing strategy is evident in the company's efforts to place its brand identity directly on official Indonesian national team attributes, such as match jerseys, training apparel, and other technical equipment. This step provides brand exposure that allows Kelme's logo and identity to be continuously visible in international matches, social media, television broadcasts, and supporter activities. According to Meenaghan, sports sponsorship works through the process of goodwill and image transfer, namely the transfer of a positive image from the sponsored object to the sponsoring company. (Meenaghan, 2001). Thus, the image of the spirit of nationalism and enthusiasm of the Indonesian National Team supporters indirectly helps strengthen the Kelme brand image in

the public eye. In addition, Kelme also uses a marketing strategy based on brand image and product quality to build consumer loyalty. In the sports apparel industry, brand image, product quality, and user identity are important factors that influence consumer decisions in choosing sports products (Meenaghan, 2001). Kelme's presence as the official apparel of the Indonesian National Team creates the perception that the product has professional quality and is suitable for use by athletes and the general public. This strategy shows that sponsorship is not only aimed at increasing short-term sales, but also at building brand positioning as part of the modern sports lifestyle.

On the other hand, selecting the Indonesian National Team as a sponsorship partner also demonstrates Kelme's Southeast Asian market expansion strategy. Indonesia's large football fan base makes the national team a promotional medium with broad reach and high emotional engagement. This aligns with the concept of fan involvement in sports sponsorship, which explains that a fan's level of attachment to a team can influence a positive response to the sponsor's brand (Ashari et al., 2025). Therefore, Kelme is not only leveraging football as a commercial promotional space but also as a means of building emotional connections and brand loyalty with Indonesian consumers. In perspective, *Kelme's global branding strategy demonstrates how global companies are attempting to build cross-border brand identities through popular culture and sports approaches.* John Roberts and Julia Cayla argue that global branding isn't just about distributing products to various countries, but also about how brands can create meaning and connect with consumers in local markets through relevant cultural symbols. In this context, Kelme's collaboration with the Indonesian National Team is a strategy that allows the company to build a brand image that is closer to the Indonesian people through national identity and the popularity of football (Roberts & Cayla). Kelme's marketing strategy also demonstrates the global brand's efforts to adapt to the local market. Indonesia, a country with a strong football culture, presents a significant opportunity for sports apparel companies to build emotional connections with the community. By using national symbols like the Indonesian national team jersey, Kelme seeks to position its brand not only as an international sports product but also as part of the identity and pride of Indonesian football fans.

Beyond the promotional aspect, this sponsorship partnership also helps increase Kelme's presence in the competitive global sports apparel industry. By becoming the official sponsor of the Indonesian National Team, Kelme gains extensive exposure through international tournaments, media coverage, and digital activities on social media. This allows the Kelme brand to be more easily recognized internationally, particularly in Southeast Asia, which has a significant sports market that has grown rapidly in recent years. Furthermore, Kelme's sponsorship strategy can be understood as a long-term investment in building consumer loyalty. Football fans generally have a strong emotional attachment to the attributes of the teams they support, including official jerseys and apparel. By leveraging this loyalty, Kelme can create a lasting relationship with consumers through the visual identity of the Indonesian National Team. This strategy demonstrates that sports sponsorship serves not only as a short-term marketing tool but also as an effort to build emotional connections and a lasting brand image. The initial public response to Kelme's presence was also evident in the high level

of public attention on various digital platforms following the announcement of the partnership with the Indonesian Football Association (PSSI). Discussions about jersey design, apparel quality, and comparisons with previous apparel providers indicated that the National Team's visual identity was one aspect that garnered significant attention from supporters. This phenomenon indicates that the value of sports apparel is measured not only by its product functionality but also by its ability to represent national identity and collective pride. Therefore, the success of Kelme's strategy will be largely determined by the company's consistency in maintaining product quality while meeting the expectations of Indonesian fans.

Sports sponsorship has a significant influence on brand image formation and consumer loyalty, particularly in the modern sports industry, which relies heavily on media popularity and emotional attachment to a team. In the context of the collaboration between Kelme and the Indonesian national football team, sponsorship serves not only as a form of commercial cooperation but also as a marketing communication strategy to build positive public perception of the Kelme brand. Through continuous exposure on official jerseys, training equipment, social media, and international matches, Kelme gains extensive promotional space and is able to increase brand awareness among the Indonesian public (Rahmawati, 2024). Brand image is the perception and impression formed in the minds of consumers about a product or company. In sports sponsorship, brand image is built through symbolic associations between the sponsor and the team the public supports. The popularity of the Indonesian national football team, which has a large fan base, allows Kelme to gain emotional benefits through the transfer of a positive image from the national team to their brand. This condition is in accordance with the image transfer theory, which explains that positive values from sponsorship objects can be transferred to the sponsoring company through the emotional involvement of sports fans (Meenaghan, 2001). Thus, the spirit of nationalism, fan loyalty, and public enthusiasm for the Indonesian national team indirectly strengthen Kelme's image as an international sports brand close to the Indonesian people.

Besides enhancing brand image, sports sponsorship also impacts consumer loyalty. Consumer loyalty in the sports industry is influenced not only by product quality but also by an emotional attachment to the symbols and identity of the team they support. Many football fans purchase official jerseys or apparel not solely for functional needs, but also as a form of social identity and support for the national team. In this context, the use of the Kelme logo on the official attributes of the Indonesian National Team creates an emotional connection between consumers and the brand. Consumers who feel pride in the national team are more likely to accept and use products associated with the team (Putri & Ramadhan, 2023). Kelme's sponsorship strategy also demonstrates how global companies leverage popular culture to strengthen loyalty in local markets. Football in Indonesia has a significant social influence and is part of popular culture. Therefore, Kelme's involvement with the Indonesian national team creates a symbolic connection with consumers through national identity and sporting passion. This allows the brand to be seen not merely as a sports apparel manufacturer but also as part of the emotional experience of Indonesian football fans. This strategy demonstrates that consumer loyalty in sports sponsorship is

built through a combination of product quality, cultural identity, and emotional connection with the community (Hidayat, 2022). On the other hand, sports sponsorship also has an impact on increasing brand presence in the international market. The growing popularity of the Indonesian national football team in Asia has given Kelme wider exposure through various international competitions and global media coverage. This strengthens Kelme's position in the competitive international sports apparel industry while expanding its market in Southeast Asia. Thus, sponsorship of the Indonesian national team not only serves to increase product sales but also serves as a global branding tool that can strengthen the company's image and long-term consumer loyalty.

Conclusion

The development of the modern sports industry has transformed sports from a competition-oriented field into an integral part of global business and marketing strategies. This study concludes that sports sponsorship plays a crucial role in strengthening corporate branding, as demonstrated by Kelme's collaboration with the Indonesian National Team, which enables the brand to expand market reach, increase visibility, and build stronger consumer relationships through national sporting identity and symbols. The Indonesian National Team represents a strategically valuable promotional platform due to its large fan base and strong emotional appeal, allowing Kelme to gain extensive exposure, benefit from positive image transfer, and strengthen brand awareness. The findings further indicate that consumer loyalty in the sports industry is shaped not only by product quality but also by emotional attachment, cultural identity, and pride in the supported team, creating a symbolic connection between Kelme and consumers that can contribute to long-term loyalty. Overall, Kelme's sponsorship strategy can be considered effective in strengthening its position in the Indonesian and broader Southeast Asian markets while generating mutual benefits in marketing, brand image development, and sports industry advancement. Future research is recommended to adopt a quantitative approach, particularly through surveys of Indonesian National Team supporters, to empirically and objectively measure the impact of Kelme's sponsorship on brand equity, brand awareness, brand image, and consumer loyalty following its collaboration with the Football Association of Indonesia (PSSI).

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