

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF BRANDING AS A COMPONENT OF SPORTS MARKETING

Olha Borysova, Andrii Kohut

National University of Ukraine on Physical Education and Sport, Kyiv, Ukraine

Abstract. Branding, as a component of sports marketing, is a complex and multifaceted concept based on a solid theoretical foundation. It covers such concepts as brand equity, brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand associations, etc. By studying these key components, a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics of sports branding is gained, allowing people to appreciate the importance of each element in creating and maintaining a strong, influential sports brand. The objective is to outline the basics of the conceptual and categorical apparatus in the field of sports marketing and branding to create a theoretical basis for further research. The methodology consists of the following: analysis, synthesis, generalization, comparison, and contrast. Results. The article delves into the theoretical foundations of branding as an important component of sports marketing. The paper explores such concepts as sports marketing, sports goods, brands, branding, brand equity, brand management, brand awareness and brand associations. Based on the analysis of scientific papers and Internet sources, a dual approach to the definition of sports marketing is identified, which contributed to the characterization of the cross-categorical concept of "sports product" and a visual representation of its structure. The study compares the concepts of "brand" and "branding," examines in detail the concept of "brand equity" and its relationship with brand loyalty, name recognition, perceived quality and brand associations. By defining and structuring the conceptual and categorical apparatus relevant to this study, this research lays the foundation for understanding the multifaceted nature of branding as a component of sports marketing and creates the basis for developing effective branding strategies. Conclusion. The research conducted has facilitated a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of sports marketing, including a detailed analysis of branding as a key component. The relationships and interactions between the examined concepts have been characterized, thus facilitating a more comprehensive understanding of their interplay and influence. The established terminology provides a foundation for a more profound comprehension of the intricate structure of branding in sports and offers a comprehensive framework for further research in this field.

Keywords: branding, sports marketing, brand equity, brand awareness.

Ольга Борисова, Андрій Когут

ТЕОРЕТИЧНІ ЗАСАДИ БРЕНДИНГУ ЯК КОМПОНЕНТА СПОРТИВНОГО МАРКЕТИНГУ

Анотація. Брендінг як компонент спортивного маркетингу є складним та багатограним концептом, що спирається на міцний теоретичний фундамент. Його понятійний апарат охоплює такі терміни, як «капітал бренду», «пізнаваність бренду», «лояльність до бренду», «асоціації з брендом» та ін. Досліджуючи ці ключові компоненти, ми отримуємо глибше розуміння складної динаміки спортивного брендінгу, що дає змогу оцінити важливість кожного елемента для побудови та підтримки сильного, впливового спортивного бренду. Мета – окреслення основ понятійно-категоріального апарату за напрямом спортивного маркетингу та брендінгу, що створює теоретичне підґрунтя для подальших досліджень. Методи: аналіз, синтез, узагальнення, порівняння та зіставлення. Результати. У статті досліджено теоретичні основи брендінгу як важливого компонента спортивного маркетингу. Розкрито такі поняття, як «спортивний маркетинг», «спортивний продукт», «бренд», «брендінг», «капітал бренду», «бренд-менеджмент», «пізнаваність бренду» та «асоціації з брендом». Аналіз робіт учених та джерел мережі Інтернет виявив дуальний підхід до визначення поняття спортивного маркетингу, надав можливість охарактеризувати міжкатегоріальний термін «спортивний продукт» та візуально зобразити його структуру, порівняти поняття «бренд» та «брендінг», детально дослідити концепцію капіталу бренду, а також характер його взаємозв'язків із лояльністю до бренду, пізнаваністю назви, сприйнятою якістю та асоціаціями з брендом. Визначення та структуризація понятійно-категоріального апарату за темою нашого дослідження забезпечують створення основ для розуміння багатогранної природи брендінгу як компонента спортивного маркетингу. Висновки. Проведене дослідження допомогло сформувати всебічне та глибоке розуміння спортивного маркетингу, включаючи детальний аналіз брендінгу як його ключового компонента. Охарактеризовано зв'язки та взаємодії між розглянутими концептами, що сприяє кращому розумінню їх взаємодії та впливу. Установлене термінологічне підґрунтя надає можливість не лише глибше зрозуміти складну структуру брендінгу в спорті, а й формує потужний інструментарій для проведення подальших досліджень у цій галузі.

Ключові слова: брендінг, спортивний маркетинг, капітал бренду, пізнаваність бренду.

Relevance. The conceptual and categorical framework is essential for developing systematic knowledge about the subject under investigation. Branding and sports marketing are no exceptions, and the theoretical foundations of these terms have been extensively studied by scholars.

An analysis of scientific research reveals that existing studies predominantly address the creation of visual identity for brands [21], the historical development of branding [16], practical steps for creating successful brands [13], bibliometric analysis of the branding in sports research field [1], and the role of branding as a component of marketing in general

[14]. Additionally, some studies have explored sports marketing without focusing on branding [18], addressed branding within the context of advertising campaigns [20], and examined various components of sports marketing through practical cases without delving into the theoretical foundations of branding [4].

Given the fragmented and varied mentions of sports marketing and branding, there is a clear need to systematize and define their theoretical foundations. Establishing these basic principles will support further in-depth and comprehensive research on branding in sports.

Borysova O., Kohut A. Theoretical foundations of branding as a component of sports marketing. *Sport Science Spectrum*. 2024; 2: 3–8
DOI: 10.32782/spectrum/2024-2-1

Борисова О., Когут А. Теоретичні засади брендінгу як компонента спортивного маркетингу. *Sport Science Spectrum*. 2024; 2: 3–8
DOI: 10.32782/spectrum/2024-2-1

Connection of the work to scientific programs, plans, and themes. This research was conducted in accordance with the research plan of the National University of Ukraine on Physical Education and Sport for 2021–2025, under the theme 1.4 «Theoretical and Methodological Foundations for the Development of Professional, Non-Olympic, and Adaptive Sports in Ukraine in the Context of Reforms in the Field of Physical Culture and Sports» (state registration number 0121U108294).

Objective is to outline the basics of the conceptual and categorical apparatus in the direction of sports marketing and branding to create a theoretical basis for further research.

Research results and discussion. Branding as a component of sports marketing is a multifaceted phenomenon grounded in substantial theoretical foundations. It encompasses concepts such as brand identity, consumer behaviour, strategic communication, and other critical elements that form the basis of understanding the subject.

It is essential to first examine the conceptual and categorical apparatus of the broader term «sports marketing» before delving into the specifics of branding in sports. W. Dees and colleagues, in their work, distinguish between two components of sports marketing: the marketing of sport and marketing through sport. The first involves professional teams, while the second is used by entities like breweries or car dealerships. Generally, sports marketing includes all activities aimed at satisfying the desires and needs of sport consumers through exchange processes. Within this concept, scholars identify two directions: the marketing of sports products and services directly to sport consumers, and the marketing of non-sport products and services using partnerships and advertising campaigns involving sports organizations

According to them, sports marketing includes all activities aimed at satisfying the desires and needs of sport consumers through exchange processes. Within this concept, scholars identify two directions: the marketing of sports products and services directly to sport consumers, and the marketing of non-sport products and services using partnerships and advertising campaigns involving sports organizations [19].

Additionally, in their work, scholars Dees, Walsh, McEvoy, and McKelvey identify another concept frequently encountered in sports marketing and branding research: the sports product. This term combines the general scientific definition of a product as any set or combination of qualities, processes, and capabilities (goods, services, or ideas) expected to provide satisfaction to the buyer, with a list of specific characteristics relating to sports. These characteristics include competitiveness, typically in a game format; separation from usual time and space; regulation by special rules; physical skill and training; and specialized facilities and equipment.

In their study, the researchers present a schematic representation of the «sports product» concept (Figure 1) [19]. At its core are the primary benefits offered by the sports product: health, entertainment, communication, and achievement. However, similar benefits can be provided by other products in the market, so it is essential to clarify that consumers choose sports due to the inherent general components depicted in the second circle of the diagram. These manifest through specific sports forms – sports disciplines (located in the third circle of the schematic representation). Additional elements of the sports product do not have a key impact on its essence but provide uniqueness; they are located on the outer circle of the schematic representation.

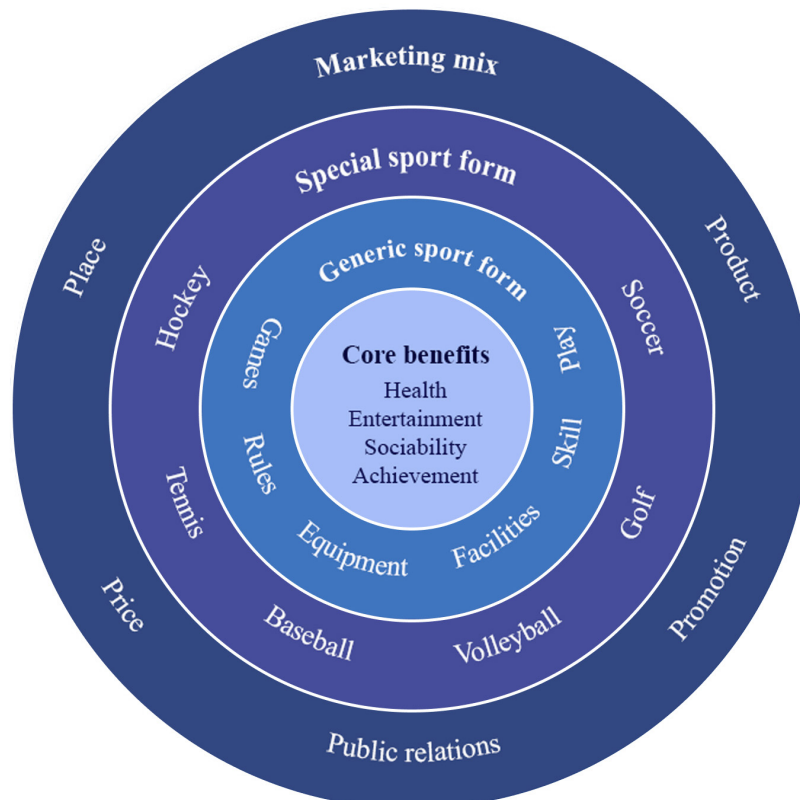


Figure 1. The structure of the «sports product» concept by Dees, Walsh, McEvoy, and McKelvey

Among other authors who have studied sports marketing, Erik C. Schwarz and colleagues stand out. They consider sports marketing as a process of developing and implementing activities related to the production, evaluation, distribution, promotion, and advertising of a sports product. The goal of this process is to satisfy the desires and needs of consumers, achieve the company's goals and objectives in accordance with its philosophy, mission, and vision, and outpace competitors to maximize the potential of their product and company [17].

Characterizing the relationship between marketing and branding, it is essential to emphasize the symbiotic nature of their interaction. Marketing covers numerous activities focused on advertising and selling products or services, while branding offers the emotional engagement and depth needed for enduring customer commitment. To wrap up, I'd like to reference Jonathan Nyembe, who aptly states, «The answer to whether branding is part of marketing is an unequivocal yes. Branding is not only an integral marketing strategy but also operates under the broader domain of marketing activities.» [8].

Transitioning directly to the concept of branding, it is essential to begin with the definition of the term «brand». For this, we turn to the work of renowned marketing expert and one of the founding figures in branding theory, David Aaker. In his book «Aaker on Branding: 20 Principles That Drive Success» [2], he defines a brand not merely as a name or logo but as a promise that a company makes to its customer. Committing to provide a product or service that not only meets functional standards but also delivers emotional satisfaction and allows for self-expression. It is also a journey, a relationship built on the perception and experience that the consumer has every time they interact with the brand.

In his study, Robert Jones delves into the comparison of the concepts of «brand» and «branding.» According to his findings, branding constitutes a series of actions undertaken by a brand owner to establish their brand. While a brand represents the principles one stands for, branding serves as the technique through which a company ensures its product is associated with specific images and standards in the minds of millions of consumers. Thus, «branding» is the activity, and «brand» is the outcome; «branding» is the cause, while «brand» is the effect. Expanding on the concept of branding, Jones asserts that its objective extends beyond altering people's perceptions of a product to modifying their behaviour, often by stimulating increased purchasing. Non-profit organizations, however, may focus more on using branding to achieve social rather than commercial goals. Jones concludes by noting that the task of branding is inherently delicate. It involves the influence on people's thoughts and feelings, the creation or alteration of meanings, and significant decisions regarding how similar or different to be from competitors, varying by country, year, and overall differentiation [9].

Another crucial concept highlighted by scholars is brand identity. It is characterized as what is conveyed to the market; what remains under control, provided the essence and expression of the brand are understood. For instance, Figure 2 by Leo Burnett Brand Consultancy illustrates four dimensions: functions, personality/image, source, and differences. These dimensions collectively shape the essence at the core, and the brand identity remains strong when there is consistency among all components, each supporting the others. If any component is weak or conveys conflicting messages, the final perception of the brand in consumers' minds becomes confused [15].

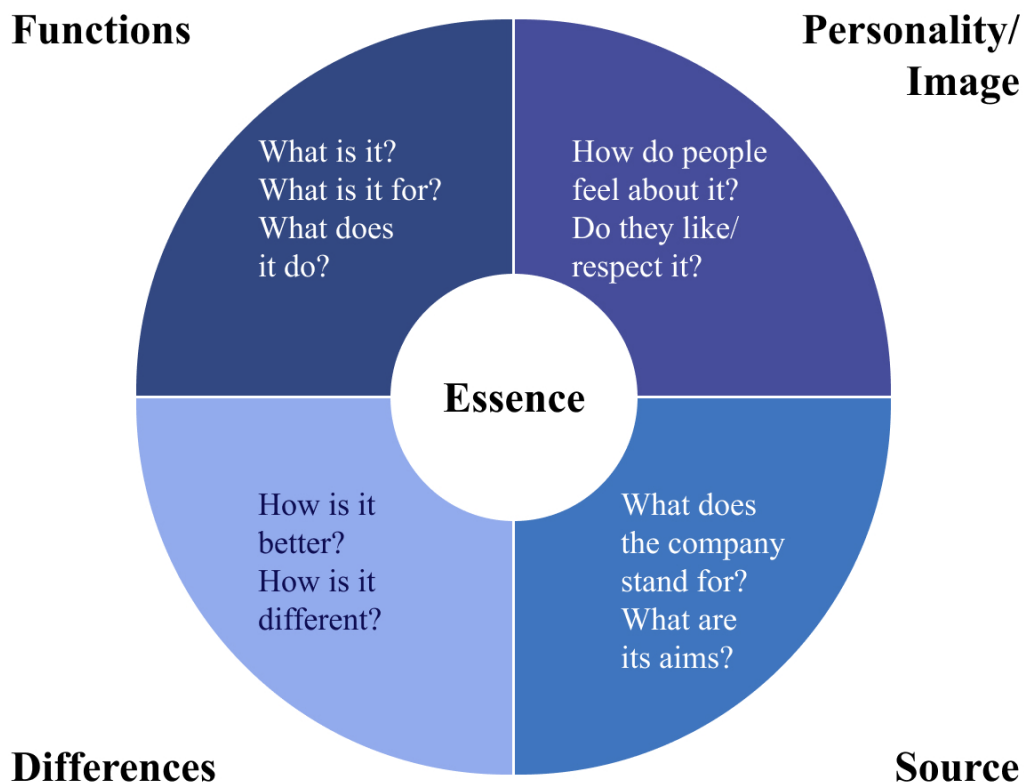


Figure 2. Brand Identity Dimensions Model by Leo Burnett Brand Consultancy

In the context of discussing brand and branding, it is impossible to overlook a term frequently encountered in academic works dedicated to these concepts. This term is «brand equity,» which, according to Jeffrey Randall, emerged from discussions about brand value [15]. When defining this term, the author referred to the work of the aforementioned David Aaker. He defines brand equity as “a set of assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, that add value or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm’s customers” [3]. Additionally, a list of assets and liabilities grouped into five categories is provided, including brand loyalty, name awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and other brand assets such as patents, trademarks, channel relationships, and so on (Figure 3).

In their work «Marketing of Sport» [6], S. Chadwick and J. Beech define a number of concepts under study, characterizing them through the lens of sports competitions, organizations, clubs, and more. To elucidate the term «brand,» they provide a list of its components, such as: name, logo, symbol, and other marks associated with an organization, company, or individual that distinguish them from others in the same category. As examples of sports brands, they mention the National Basketball Association (NBA), football clubs FC Bayern Munich and Maccabi Tel Aviv, the International Olympic Committee (IOC), FIFA, Asics, and David Beckham. Further in their research, the scholars address the concept of «brand management,» which they define, citing Keller [11], as “the

design and implementation of marketing programs and activities to build, measure, and manage brand equity”. They characterize the previously mentioned brand equity as a term «that describes the strength of the brand.» To more fully define this concept, Chadwick and Beech refer to the works of other authors, with P. Farquhar comparing brand equity to the added value that a brand name brings to its product [6], while Boone, Kochunny, and Wilkins [5] consider it as the price difference a buyer is willing to pay for a branded product compared to an identical unbranded one.

From the concepts of «brand,» «brand equity,» and «brand management,» they move on to defining the term «branding,» which they consider broader, encompassing the aforementioned concepts, and also refer to in their work as «brand development.» Using the earlier identification of branding with the process of creating brand equity as a basis, they outline three steps included in this process:

1. Selection of brand elements. For a sports organization seeking to develop its brand, this involves careful selection of the name, logo, colours, other signs, slogan, mascot, etc.
2. Development of marketing programs that adhere to the «four P’s» rule (Product, Price, Place, Promotion): product, price, place (distribution system), and promotion. For example, sports organizations can issue comprehensive ticket packages, place merchandise stores in strategically planned locations, and launch promotional campaigns to attract fans to games.

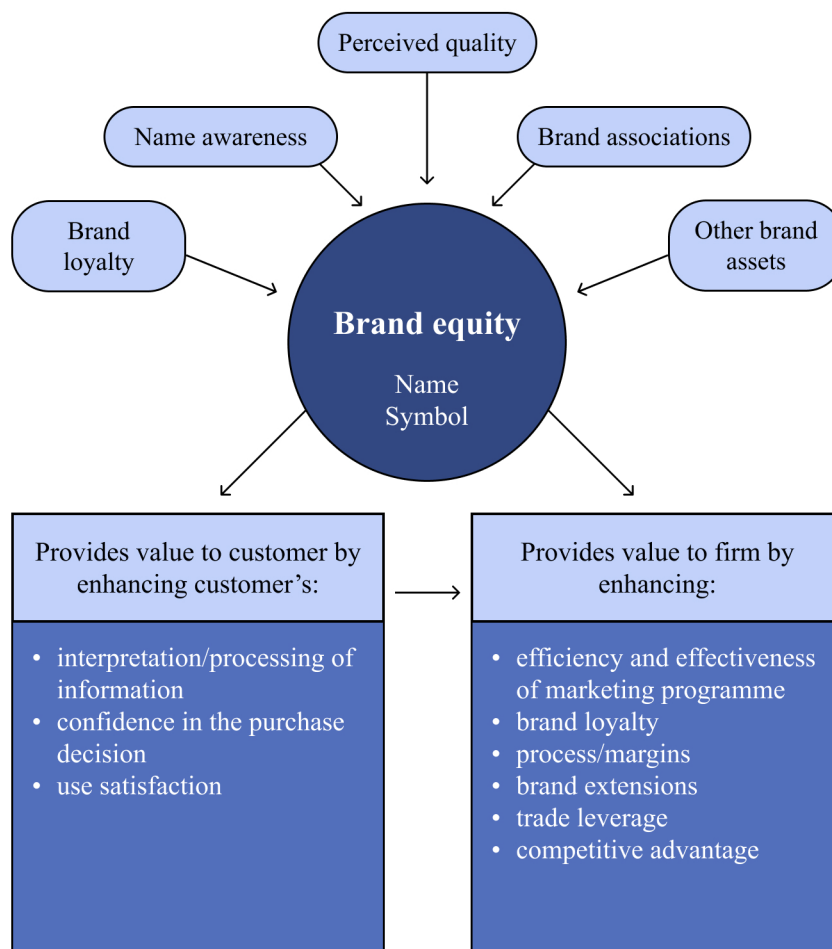


Figure 3. Aaker’s model of brand equity

3. Utilization of the connections that the brand may have with other entities. In a sports context, this could manifest in encouraging a club to participate in the European Cup or Final Four tournaments, establishing brand connections with celebrities, or involving former team players who have retired in working as club spokespeople.

Jason Lee complements the definition of branding in his work «Branded: Branding in Sport Business,» noting that the process of brand development begins with creating brand awareness among consumers, as consumers will not buy a product from a company they do not know exists. Therefore, establishing brand awareness is the initial step toward creating a credible brand image and building brand equity. To clarify, the author provides a definition of brand awareness borrowed from Aaker's work, namely «the ability of a potential buyer to recognize or recall that a brand is a member of a certain product category» [12].

Once brand awareness is established among consumers, the process of establishing brand associations begins. Company marketers must understand the essence of their brand and the ideas and perceptions that surround it. For proper brand management, they must determine the brand's market position and how it is perceived by consumers. Consumer

perception of a brand is based on their associations with it [12]. Keller identified three types of such associations: brand attributes, brand benefits, and brand attitudes. He also emphasized that both favourable and unfavourable perceptions affect brand equity [10].

Conclusion. Through the analysis of literary sources, a conceptual and categorical framework of the researched topic has been established, providing characterization to terms such as «sports marketing», «sports product», «brand», «branding», «brand equity», «brand management», «brand awareness» and «brand associations». This has facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the concept of sports marketing, branding as its component, and other fundamental elements. The relationships and interactions among the discussed concepts have been characterized. The established terminological foundation enables a better comprehension of the complex structure of branding in sports and forms the framework for further research.

Prospects for further research involve studying the evolutionary processes of the emergence and development of branding in sports.

Conflict of Interest. The authors declare there is no conflict of interest.

LITERATURE

1. Когут А., Борисова О. Бібліометричний аналіз дослідницького поля «брендинг у спорті». *Sport Science Spectrum*. 2024; 1:136–143. DOI: 10.32782/spectrum/2024-1-21
2. Aaker D. Aaker on Branding: 20 Principles That Drive Success. Morgan James Publishing, 2014. 220 p.
3. Aaker D.A. Managing Brand Equity. Simon & Schuster, Limited, 2009.
4. A D.J. Sports marketing: Creating long term value. Cheltenham, UK : Edward Elgar, 2013. 387 p.
5. Boone L., Kochunny C., Wilkins D. Applying the brand equity concept to Major League Baseball. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*. 1995. No. 4 (3).
6. Chadwick S. The Marketing of Sport. Pearson Education, 2007. 555 p.
7. Farquhar P.H. Managing Brand Equity. *Marketing Research*. 1989. Vol. 1. P. 24–33.
8. Is Branding Part of Marketing? Explore the Dynamics of Marketing & Branding. Decommerce Community Building White label Solution. URL: <https://www.decommerce.com/is-branding-part-of-marketing> (date of access: 03.06.2024).
9. Jones R. Branding: A Very Short Introduction. Oxford University Press, 2017. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1093/actrade/9780198749912.001.0001> (date of access: 14.06.2024).
10. Keller K.L. Strategic brand management: Building, measuring and managing brand equity. Upper Saddle River, N.J : Prentice Hall, 1998. 635 p.
11. Keller K.L. Understanding brands, branding and brand equity. *Interactive Marketing*. 2003. Vol. 5, no. 1. P. 7–20. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.im.4340213> (date of access: 29.05.2024).
12. Lee J.W. Branded: Branding in sport business. Durham, N.C : Carolina Academic Press, 2010. 341 p.
13. Miller D. Building A Storybrand: Clarify Your Message So Customers Will Listen. Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2017.
14. Principles of Marketing / G. Armstrong et al. Pearson Education, Limited, 2019. 720 p.
15. Randall G. Branding. Crest Publishing House, 2007. 194 p.
16. Sáiz P., Castro R. The Brand and Its History. London : Routledge, 2021. URL: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003255970> (date of access: 9.06.2024).
17. Schwarz E.C., Hunter J.D. Advanced Theory and Practice in Sport Marketing. Third Edition. I New York : Routledge, 2018. : Routledge, 2017. URL: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351667630> (date of access: 18.06.2024).
18. Shank M.D., Lyberger M.R. Sports Marketing: A Strategic Perspective. Taylor & Francis Group, 2021. 696 p.
19. Sport Marketing / P. Walsh et al. Human Kinetics, 2021.
20. Stotlar D.K., Pitts B.G. Fundamentals of Sport Marketing. Fitness Information Technology, Incorporated, 2013.
21. Wheeler A. Designing Brand Identity: An Essential Guide for the Whole Branding Team. Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, John, 2013.

REFERENCES

1. Kohut A., Borysova O. Bibliometrychnyi analiz doslidnytskoho polia «brendynh u sporti» [Bibliometric analysis of the research field «branding in sports»]. *Sport Science Spectrum*. 2024; 1:136–143. DOI: 10.32782/spectrum/2024-1-21
2. Aaker D. Aaker on Branding: 20 Principles That Drive Success. Morgan James Publishing, 2014. 220 p.
3. Aaker D.A. Managing Brand Equity. Simon & Schuster, Limited, 2009.
4. A D.J. Sports marketing: Creating long term value. Cheltenham, UK : Edward Elgar, 2013. 387 p.
5. Boone L., Kochunny C., Wilkins D. Applying the brand equity concept to Major League Baseball. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*. 1995. No. 4 (3).
6. Chadwick S. The Marketing of Sport. Pearson Education, 2007. 555 p.
7. Farquhar P.H. Managing Brand Equity. *Marketing Research*. 1989. Vol. 1. P. 24–33.
8. Is Branding Part of Marketing? Explore the Dynamics of Marketing & Branding. Decommerce Community Building White label Solution. URL: <https://www.decommerce.com/is-branding-part-of-marketing> (date of access: 03.06.2024).
9. Jones R. Branding: A Very Short Introduction. Oxford University Press, 2017. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1093/actrade/9780198749912.001.0001> (date of access: 14.06.2024).
10. Keller K.L. Strategic brand management: Building, measuring and managing brand equity. Upper Saddle River, N.J : Prentice Hall, 1998. 635 p.
11. Keller K.L. Understanding brands, branding and brand equity. *Interactive Marketing*. 2003. Vol. 5, no. 1. P. 7–20. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.im.4340213> (date of access: 29.05.2024).
12. Lee J.W. Branded: Branding in sport business. Durham, N.C : Carolina Academic Press, 2010. 341 p.
13. Miller D. Building A Storybrand: Clarify Your Message So Customers Will Listen. Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2017.
14. Principles of Marketing / G. Armstrong et al. Pearson Education, Limited, 2019. 720 p.

15. Randall G. Branding. Crest Publishing House, 2007. 194 p.
16. Sáiz P., Castro R. The Brand and Its History. London : Routledge, 2021. URL: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003255970> (date of access: 9.06.2024).
17. Schwarz E.C., Hunter J.D. Advanced Theory and Practice in Sport Marketing. Third Edition. I New York : Routledge, 2018. : Routledge, 2017. URL: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351667630> (date of access: 18.06.2024).
18. Shank M.D., Lyberger M.R. Sports Marketing: A Strategic Perspective. Taylor & Francis Group, 2021. 696 p.
19. Sport Marketing / P. Walsh et al. Human Kinetics, 2021.
20. Stotlar D.K., Pitts B.G. Fundamentals of Sport Marketing. Fitness Information Technology, Incorporated, 2013.
21. Wheeler A. Designing Brand Identity: An Essential Guide for the Whole Branding Team. Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, John, 2013.

ІНФОРМАЦІЯ ПРО АВТОРІВ

Борисова Ольга Володимирівна <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2311-1921>, borisova-nupesu@ukr.net

Когут Андрій Віталійович <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-1436-9308>, kohut_andrii@outlook.com

Національний університет фізичного виховання і спорту України,
вул. Фізкультури, 1, м. Київ, 03150, Україна

INFORMATION ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Borysova Olha <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2311-1921>, borisova-nupesu@ukr.net

Kohut Andrii <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-1436-9308>, kohut_andrii@outlook.com

National University of Ukraine on Physical Education and Sport,
Fizkul'tury str., 1, Kyiv, 03150, Ukraine