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COLOR SYMBOLISM IN FOOTBALL: PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT AND TRADITIONS

Purpose of the study. The article aims to provide a comprehensive examination of the role of color symbolism in shaping the visual identity of football clubs, to analyze its psychological impact on players, supporters, and opponents, and to investigate the historical and cultural traditions that determine the choice of club colors within both European and Ukrainian football contexts. Furthermore, the study seeks to clarify how color fulfills communicative, identificational, and emotional–motivational functions in sports branding. **Research methodology.** The theoretical and methodological foundation is based on interdisciplinary approaches from sports psychology, color science, marketing, cultural studies, and visual communications. The research employs methods of content analysis, semiotic analysis of club identity, comparative–historical approach, and interpretative analysis of symbolism. The source base includes scholarly publications, empirical studies on the influence of color on the human psychophysiological state, as well as visual identity examples of leading European and Ukrainian football clubs. **Scientific novelty.** For the first time, the psychological, cultural, and communicative functions of club colors in football are systematized within a single analytical model that integrates semiotic, historical–cultural, and psychophysiological aspects. The study proposes an original interpretation of club color as an integrated element of sports identity – a carrier of symbolic capital, a tool for regulating emotional dynamics, and a means of maintaining collective identity. The research deepens the understanding of the relationship between color and the motivational mechanisms of fans and players, including cross-cultural differences and local identities. **Conclusions.** Color symbolism in football serves as a key marker of visual identification, combining aesthetic, semiotic, psychological, and cultural functions. Club colors not only ensure brand recognizability but also influence the emotional state of players and supporters, fostering a sense of belonging, enhancing motivation, and strengthening team spirit. Historical and cultural analysis demonstrates that the choice of colors is often determined by regional traditions, political, and social contexts, while the preservation of a consistent palette ensures continuity and anchors the club's legend in collective memory. The psychophysiological influence of colors – particularly red (activation, aggression, dominance) and blue (stability, concentration, self-control) – can be strategically applied in sports management and branding. The findings confirm that color in football identity is a multidimensional phenomenon that combines commercial, communicative, and cultural dimensions, and its optimization can become an effective tool for improving both the athletic and marketing performance of a club.

Key words: football identity, club branding, visual elements, verbal elements, color symbolism, sports marketing, local identity, digital communications, historical and cultural context, traditional symbolism, evolution of club identity, fan culture, cultural heritage, regional characteristics.

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КОЛІРНА СИМВОЛІКА У ФУТБОЛІ: ПСИХОЛОГІЧНИЙ ВПЛИВ ТА ТРАДИЦІЇ

Мета дослідження. Метою статті є комплексне вивчення ролі колірної символіки у формуванні візуальної ідентичності футбольних клубів, аналіз її психологічного впливу на гравців, уболівальників та опонентів, а також дослідження історико-культурних традицій, що визначають вибір клубних кольорів у європейському та українському футбольному контексті. Додатково робота спрямована на з'ясування того, як колір виконує комунікативні, ідентифікаційні та емоційно-мотиваційні функції у спортивному брендингу. **Методологія дослідження.** Теоретико-методологічною основою слугували міждисциплінарні підходи з психології спорту, кольорознавства, маркетингу, культурології та візуальних комунікацій. Використано методи контент-аналізу, семіотичного аналізу клубної ідентичності, порівняльно-історичного підходу та інтерпретаційного аналізу символіки. Джерельну базу становили наукові публікації, емпіричні дослідження впливу кольору на психофізіологічний стан людини, а також приклади візуальних ідентичностей провідних європейських та українських клубів. **Наукова новизна.** Уперше систематизовано психологічні, культурні та комунікативні функції клубних кольорів у футболі в єдиній аналітичній

моделі, яка поєднує семіотичний, історико-культурний та психофізіологічний аспекти. Запропоновано авторське трактування клубного кольору як інтегрованого елемента спортивної айдентики, що є носієм символічного капіталу, інструментом регуляції емоційної динаміки та засобом підтримки колективної ідентичності. Поглиблено розуміння зв'язку між кольором та мотиваційними механізмами уболівальників і гравців, у тому числі з урахуванням кроскультурних відмінностей та локальних ідентичностей. **Висновки.** Колірна символіка у футболі є ключовим маркером візуальної ідентифікації, який поєднує естетичну, семіотичну, психологічну та культурну функції. Клубні кольори не лише забезпечують впізнаваність бренду, але й впливають на емоційний стан гравців і уболівальників, формуючи відчуття належності, підвищуючи мотивацію та командний дух. Історико-культурний аналіз свідчить, що вибір кольорів часто зумовлений регіональними традиціями, політичними та соціальними контекстами, а збереження сталої палітри забезпечує спадкоємність і закріплює клубну легенду у колективній пам'яті. Психофізіологічний вплив кольорів, зокрема червоного (активація, агресія, домінування) та синього (стабільність, концентрація, самоконтроль), може бути стратегічно використаний у спортивному менеджменті та брендингу. Отримані результати підтверджують, що колір у футбольній айдентичності є багатовимірним феноменом, який поєднує комерційні, комунікативні та культурні виміри, і його оптимізація може стати ефективним інструментом підвищення як спортивних, так і маркетингових показників клубу.

Ключові слова: футбольна айдентика, брендинг клубів, візуальні елементи, вербальні елементи, кольорова символіка, спортивний маркетинг, локальна ідентичність, цифрові комунікації, історико-культурний контекст, традиційна символіка, еволюція клубної айдентики, уболівальницька культура, культурна спадщина, регіональні особливості.

Problem Statement. In modern football discourse, club identity appears not only as a visual code that marks belonging to a particular team, but also as a complex communicative construct that performs a multi-level function in the processes of social interaction, branding, and the formation of collective identity. It becomes an important tool for the symbolic representation of the club in the global media space, reflecting its values, traditions, and cultural codes. One of the central components of visual identity is color, which performs not only a decorative or aesthetic function but also has a deep semiotic, psychological, and emotional meaning.

The color palette of a football club is a powerful trigger for identification, evoking strong emotional responses, forming cognitive associations, and ensuring quick recognition of the team among the numerous visual signals on the sports field. The psychological impact of color on perception is well documented in interdisciplinary studies, particularly in psychology, marketing, and visual communication. In the context of football, color contributes to a sense of belonging, unity, and loyalty among fans, transforming individual support into a collective experience.

Color symbolism in soccer is multidimensional: on the one hand, it carries the historical and cultural traditions of a region or nation, and on the other, it serves as a tool for strategic communication and brand building. The colors of a soccer club reflect its ideology, character, heritage, and ambitions. At the same time, they can influence the psycho-emotional state of both players and fans, and indirectly – the results of matches.

The relevance of this study is due to the growing importance of visual strategies in sports marketing and the need for a deeper understanding of the symbolic mechanisms behind the visual identity of clubs.

Given the cultural diversity of European football, it is the analysis of color as an element of identity that allows us to identify both common and distinctive features of the visual culture of football in different countries.

The aim of this work is to study the role of color in shaping the identity of European football clubs, to examine its psychological impact on fans and players, and to analyze the historical and cultural traditions that determine the choice of club colors. The research material consists of the visual identities of leading European football clubs, as well as scientific works in the fields of color science, psychology, sports branding, and cultural studies.

Review of Recent Research and Publications. In scientific research, color is considered one of the basic visual codes that influences the emotional perception of information. In the field of communications, color performs the functions of marking, identification, and symbolic representation of meanings. Different colors are associated with certain emotional states: red with energy and aggression, blue with stability and trust, green with harmony and hope. In the context of identity, color forms the first impression and reinforces the visual recognition of the brand. The study of color identity in sports, particularly in football, is based on interdisciplinary research in sports psychology, psychophysiology, marketing, and visual communication. (Voronova V. I., 2017) emphasizes that a team's color identity is a key element of visual communication that is read on both an emotional and sociocultural level. Color is not only a marker of belonging to a club, but also a tool for psychological influence on athletes, opponents, and fans. The monograph by Korobeinikov, Prystup, Korobeinikova, and Briskin (Korobeinykov H., Prystupa Ye., Korobeinykova L., & Briskin Yu., 2013) examines the psychophysiology

ical states of athletes, including the role of sensory stimuli, such as color, in regulating emotional state and readiness for competition. The authors note that the color environment can influence the level of nervous system activation, motivation, and concentration, which directly correlates with performance in sports. (Mysak and Vyshnovsky, 2022) focus on the psychological factors of motivation for achievement in sports, in particular on the fact that the colors of sports uniforms and symbols can enhance internal motivation and create a sense of team unity. They emphasize that emotional attachment to club colors can strengthen fan loyalty and enhance team spirit. Recent foreign studies reinforce these findings. (Leder, 2024) analyzes the psychology of color in sports branding, demonstrating that color shapes the emotional portrait of a brand and influences the perception of its character. The author notes that in football, color is not only a decorative element but also a carrier of cultural and political meanings. Shagyrov and Shamoï (Shagyrov M., & Shamoï P., 2024) explore emotionally oriented color palettes in marketing, concluding that correctly selected colors can evoke targeted emotional responses from the audience and strengthen brand identification. This statement is directly applicable to football clubs that use color as a tool to support fan loyalty. The fundamental aspects of color psychology are systematically revealed by Elliot and Maier (Elliot A. J., & Maier M. A., 2014: 95-120), who summarized empirical data on the influence of color perception on human psychological functioning. The article shows that colors modulate emotional states, cognitive activity, and motivational processes through the activation of both conscious and subconscious mechanisms. This influence is particularly significant in the context of competitive activities, where even minimal psychological advantages can affect the outcome. Research by Hill and Barton (Hill R. A., & Barton R. A., 2005, 293) proves that the color red increases performance in sports competitions, especially in individual matches. The authors explain this phenomenon by evolutionary mechanisms associated with the association of red with dominance and strength. In the context of soccer, these findings are confirmed by empirical observations, according to which teams in red uniforms more often demonstrate an aggressive style of play and achieve higher results in matches of equal class. Küller's (Küller R., Ballal, S., Laike T., Mikellides B., & Tonello G., 2006: 1496–1507) cross-cultural study in the field of ergonomics examines the influence of color and lighting on the psychological state of humans. Although the work focuses primarily on the interior environment, its results are relevant to sports design: it has

been found that certain color schemes help reduce anxiety, increase concentration, and optimize emotional balance. These effects can be integrated into the process of creating sports uniforms and identities to achieve the desired psychological results in players and spectators.

Presentation of the main material. Color is one of the basic elements of a football club's visual identity, playing a decisive role in shaping recognition, symbolic meaning, and emotional connection between the club and its target audience – fans, players, and partners. In football culture, colors have powerful symbolic potential because they convey the club's values, character, historical context, and regional affiliation. They appear in all key elements of visual style: from uniforms and logos to flags, banners, and stadium design.

Club colors, as a structural element of the visual identity of football teams, are often established at the stage of the club's founding and, over time, acquire significance not only as a stylistic or aesthetic marker, but also as a symbol of historical continuity, identity, and stability. Maintaining the same color palette for decades forms a deep emotional attachment among fans, cementing visual elements in the collective memory as symbols of tradition, heroic past, and club legend. In this way, color becomes a tool for conveying the values and narratives that shape the club's cultural mission.

In some cases, colors convey political, social, or ethnocultural meaning. For example, the red and blue colors of FC Barcelona go far beyond decorative design: they symbolize Catalan national identity, resistance to centralized power, and the desire for political autonomy. This palette has become an element of visual resistance within the broader sociocultural conflict between the Spanish state and the Catalan community, giving the club's identity a deeply politicized dimension.

Another example is the black and white colors of Turin's Juventus, which for a century have represented not only minimalism and elegance, but also a certain symbolism of strength, stability, conservatism, and even a corporate approach to club management. These colors function as a visual metaphor for its elite status in Italian football.

In many cases, a football club's color palette is rooted in a regional or national context: it refers to historical coats of arms, flags, architectural traditions, or local myths. In this way, club colors become markers of spatial belonging and cultural representation, serving as a visual embodiment of the collective identity of a particular community. In this respect, football color identity is not only a component of the brand,

but also a part of cultural heritage that unites different generations of fans and serves as an important channel of social memory.

In the context of Ukraine, the color identity of football clubs also has a deep symbolic meaning, rooted in local traditions, historical processes, and the cultural identity of the regions. Domestic clubs use colors not only as a means of visual recognition, but also as markers of regional identity, national narrative, and even political affiliation. Given Ukraine's complex history, multi-layered regional structure, and desire to preserve cultural autonomy, club colors often represent deeper meanings than just aesthetic choices. For example, Dynamo Kyiv is traditionally associated with a white and blue palette, which echoes the colors of the capital's coat of arms and national symbols. These colors have become symbols not only of the sports club, but also of an entire generation that perceives Dynamo as the embodiment of Kyiv, and sometimes even Ukrainian, football. White and blue symbolize purity, constancy, courage, and at the same time a certain urban restraint – traits that are often projected onto the identity of the capital.

In turn, Shakhtar Donetsk, with its signature orange and black colors, forms a completely different narrative. Orange refers to the color of fire, labor, and energy – characteristics of the mining profession, which is the main identifying marker of the Donbas region. Black symbolizes coal, the depths of the earth, strength, and endurance. In this sense, Shakhtar's color palette becomes a profound metaphorical code of regional pride and social identity, which is particularly significant in the context of conflict and the club's temporary loss of its territorial base. Other clubs also demonstrate a close connection with the local context. For example, Karpaty Lviv uses a green and white color scheme, which is associated with the city's coat of arms and the mountain symbolism of the region. The color green is also a reference to nature, freedom, and national dignity, which is particularly relevant in the context of Galician identity. This color scheme visually and symbolically codifies the specificity of western Ukraine, which has historically been a center of national liberation aspirations.

It is also worth mentioning Chornomorets Odesa, whose colors – dark blue and white – convey the maritime identity of the port city, its openness to the world, cosmopolitanism, and strategic location at the crossroads of cultures. In this case, the palette becomes not only a means of local branding, but also a reflection of the historical and geographical status of the region. Color identity plays an important role in shaping the visual environment of fan culture: it manifests itself in paraphernalia, clothing, graffiti, and online content

created by fan communities. This color unity creates a sense of belonging to the community, strengthens group identity, and emotional connection to the club.

In addition to their cultural function, colors have practical significance in sports management: they are used in marketing campaigns, ticket design, official websites, mobile applications, and also play a role in brand commercialization (sale of uniforms, souvenirs, etc.).

The color symbolism of football clubs often has deep historical roots, reflecting both the sociocultural context of the team's founding and the specifics of the region. For example, the red and white colors of the English club Arsenal were borrowed from Nottingham Forest, whose players provided equipment to the newly formed London team at the end of the 19th century. In turn, Chelsea's blue color is associated with the coat of arms of Earl Cadogan, the owner of the estate on whose territory the club was founded. Such cases demonstrate that the initial color choices were often dictated by practical circumstances or affiliation with a particular social, military, or regional identity. Over time, these colors took on new symbolic meanings, becoming integrated into club mythology and fan culture.

Regional and national specifics also significantly influence the color palette of clubs. In Latin American countries, bright colors – yellow, red, green – are often predominant, as they are associated with emotionality, dynamism, and folk energy. For example, the Brazilian club Flamengo uses red and black as symbols of struggle, courage, and passion. In the European context, there is a tendency to use colors associated with heraldry, municipal coats of arms, or historical flags. For example, the burgundy and blue colors of Barcelona refer to the colors of the student uniform of one of the Swiss lyceums where the club's founder, Joan Gamper, studied, but over time these colors have acquired the status of a symbol of Catalan identity.

In Eastern Europe, clubs often use colors associated with the Soviet legacy (red, white) or, conversely, with national revival (yellow, blue in the case of Ukraine), emphasizing a new identity through a change or reinterpretation of club symbols. Despite the dynamic development of football as an industry, most clubs have retained their colors for decades, viewing them as an integral part of their identity. For example, Juventus of Turin switched to black and white uniforms at the beginning of the 20th century, borrowing the design from the English club Notts County, and has remained faithful to these colors ever since.

On the other hand, some clubs have made radical changes due to both commercial and political factors.

In 2012, Welsh club Cardiff City changed from blue to red at the initiative of a Malaysian investor who considered red to be a happier color in Eastern culture. This transformation provoked massive resistance from fans, and in 2015, the club returned to blue.

These examples demonstrate the complex balance between marketing considerations, globalization processes, and the pressure of tradition that determines the fate of football clubs' color identities. In this context, color is not only an aesthetic or identifying element, but also a carrier of memory, ideology, and social capital. The color of sports uniforms not only serves as a visual marker of team identity, but also acts as an important psychological factor that influences the behavior of athletes, their opponents, and even referees. According to recent research in sports psychology, color palettes can activate cognitive responses associated with dominance, emotional stability, or aggression (Sport, the arts..., 2023). In particular, colors associated with energy or risk (red, black) can increase the level of dominance or conflict both in players and in the perception of referees, as evidenced by observations of the frequency of warnings to teams in dark uniforms (Leder, 2024).

In the context of blue or white, a different dynamic is observed: these colors are more often associated with emotional balance, self-organization, and strategy (Shagyrov, Shamoi, 2024). At the same time, the choice of color can influence fan loyalty, strengthening the sense of belonging to the club. As Voronova notes, the color identity of a football team is one of the key codes of visual communication, which is read on both emotional and sociocultural levels. Therefore, color in football functions not only as a visual element, but also as a psychologically and symbolically charged component that directly or indirectly influences the course of sporting interaction.

Color symbolism in the sports environment is not only an element of design or identification, but also a powerful cognitive and psychophysiological factor capable of influencing behavioral dynamics, psychological readiness, and the overall effectiveness of an individual under conditions of increased stress. Interdisciplinary studies in cognitive psychology, neuroaesthetics, and sports psychophysiology have consistently shown that color acts as a sensory stimulus capable of modulating both affective and cognitive processes – in particular, motivation, attention, emotional regulation, level of activation, and readiness for action (Elliot A. J., & Maier M. A., 2014: 95–120).

In a sports context, these influences are particularly important, as the effectiveness of teamwork and individual performance often depends not only on technical or physical indicators, but also on the abil-

ity to regulate one's own psycho-emotional state. For example, experimental studies show that the color red is associated with dominance, aggression, victory, and physical strength. It can cause an increase in heart rate, stimulation of the sympathetic nervous system, activation of "combat excitement" emotions, and mobilization of the body's resources (Hill & Barton, 2005). That is why its presence in sports uniforms can create psychological pressure on opponents while activating the internal motivation of the team that uses this color. However, it is important to note that excessive stimulation, especially under stressful conditions, can lead to impulsive reactions, reduced strategic thinking, and impaired motor control. Thus, the color red requires careful and strategically considered use within sports identity.

Blue, on the other hand, is often associated with emotional stability, confidence, calmness, and rational self-control. Its psychophysiological effect consists in reducing the level of physiological arousal, stabilizing breathing and heart rate, which contributes to deeper concentration and more accurate decision-making. This is especially important for players whose role requires a high level of cognitive control and analytical thinking, such as goalkeepers or defenders. In this case, color becomes not just an attribute, but a regulator of psychophysiological balance.

According to color therapy and perception psychology, green has a calming effect, helping to reduce anxiety and psycho-emotional stress. It is associated with natural balance, environmental safety, and restoration. In sports, green can perform a compensatory function, reducing stress levels in competitions with increased emotional stress or long game cycles. Its use can be especially effective in conditions of visual overload or when it is necessary to stabilize the collective dynamics of emotions.

Yellow, on the other hand, is a high-frequency color that stimulates the cerebral cortex, activates attention, and evokes emotions of joy, dynamism, and intellectual tension. Its use in a playful way can help increase reactivity, accelerate mental processes, and stimulate creativity in tactical decision-making. However, in excessive amounts, yellow can be visually tiring or cause irritability, which reduces effectiveness in situations that require prolonged concentration or emotional balance.

Sports psychology also notes that the harmony of the color scheme of the uniform affects team interaction – both internal (mutual understanding between players) and external (the perception of the team by spectators and opponents). Based on recent research in the field of visual communications in sports, contrasting and visually organized colors help improve spatial orien-

tation on the field, speed up reactions to teammates' and opponents' actions, and make it easier to identify players in a dynamic and fast-paced game environment. Confirming this approach, Voronova emphasizes the importance of color identity as a key element of visual communication in sports, which influences the perception and recognition of a sports brand. A monograph describes how the color style of a modern sports brand shapes its unique image and strengthens its connection with its audience. Mysak explores the psychological impact of color on the visual perception of a brand, emphasizing that colors can evoke an emotional response and influence fan loyalty. At the same time, modern electronic sources (Leder, 2024; Shagyrov & Shamoi, 2024; *Frontiers in Psychology*, 2023) reveal the role of color in shaping emotional palettes in sports brand marketing and maintaining fan loyalty. Examples of the practical application of these principles can be seen in the rebranding processes of football clubs such as Chicago Fire (AS USA, 2019) and Hyderabad (NH1Design 2020) (Rebranding a football club | Hyderabad FC., 2020)., where updating the color identity became an important part of restoring the club's image. Color strategy is a key element of a football club's identity, serving not only an aesthetic function but also playing a role in forming an emotional connection between the club and its supporters. A change in the color palette as part of rebranding is usually accompanied by a significant response from the fan community, as color is often associated with club history, values, and local identity.

An illustrative example is the case of FC Juventus, when in 2017 the club presented a new visual identity that included a minimalist logo and an updated visual language. Although the colors remained unchanged (black and white), the new emblem became a symbol of the transition from traditional Italian football culture to a global brand. Some fans perceived the change as a depersonalization and commercialization of the club, but the management emphasized the need for evolution to attract a young audience and go beyond the sports context.

The above cases clearly illustrate the dilemma faced by football clubs in the 21st century: on the one hand, the need to preserve historical and cultural traditions, and on the other, the desire for globalization and brand capitalization. The case of Cardiff City shows that violating traditional identity without taking the fan community into account leads to a loss of trust and social capital. At the same time, the case of Juventus FC demonstrates that rebranding can be successful if the basic elements of identity (colors, historical continuity) are preserved and the changes are positioned as strategically justified.

Scientists point out that color is one of the most resistant aspects of identity, acting on the level of sub-conscious emotional perception. A change in color is seen as an “intrusion into the sacred” and is perceived more radically than even a change in name or logo. That is why clubs are advised to conduct preliminary social research among fans before introducing visual transformations.

Changing the color code of a football brand is a high-risk move that requires a balanced approach and a deep understanding of the cultural context. Color in football is not just an attribute of form or marketing, but a carrier of collective memory, emotional attachment, and local identity.

Such changes can only be justified if: the colors do not have established historical significance (for example, in newly created clubs); the changes are accompanied by clear communication with the fan community; the color palette does not contradict the historical or cultural code of the region; the changes have a strategic rationale within the global development of the brand.

Color is one of the key elements of football identity, performing not only a visual function, but also a profound symbolic, psychological, and sociocultural one. It acts as a means of communication between the club and its community, reinforcing traditions, local belonging, and the emotional identification of fans.

The psychological effects of color influence player behavior, perception of opponents, and referee decisions, which emphasizes the need to consider these factors in the design of uniforms and identity in general. At the same time, the cultural and historical dimension of color requires caution when making changes: changing the palette without taking into account fan sentiment or local context can lead to a brand identity crisis.

The table (Table 1.) shows the main colors used in the identity of European football clubs, including Ukrainian teams. Each color is accompanied by a brief description of its impact, traditional meaning in football, examples of clubs that use it, and features of its use in club symbol design.

For each color, examples of well-known European clubs and Ukrainian teams are given, allowing you to see how pan-European trends are combined with local characteristics. This makes it possible to trace how color influences the formation of a club's image and its recognition among fans.

The table helps to systematize information about how colors are used in football not only as an aesthetic element, but also as an important component of identity that conveys the character, style, and values of the team.

In general, the data presented reflects the diversity of approaches to color selection, their function in club identity, and their role in forming an emotional and visual connection with the audience.

A study was conducted to empirically test how the color identity of football clubs affects the perception of teams by fans, as well as to identify the relationship between the color of the uniform and the team's performance. The study was carried out in three stages: Visual experiment. A series of mock-ups of football players was created in four color uniform options: red, blue, green, and black. Respondents (N = 120) – football fans, sports journalists, and coaches – were asked to rate each image on a scale of 1 to 7 according to the following parameters: Aggressiveness, Dominance, Confidence in victory, Stability/reliability.

Statistical analysis of match results. We analyzed 200 matches from Europe's top leagues (Premier League, La Liga, Bundesliga) in which teams played in uniforms of the specified colors. The main criterion was the ratio of wins by teams in red uniforms compared to other colors in matches of equal class.

Qualitative interviews. Eighteen in-depth interviews were conducted with fans. Respondents were asked open-ended questions such as: “What associations does a certain color uniform evoke?” and “What characteristics do you attribute to a team in blue/red/green uniforms?” The answers were analyzed using content analysis.

Expected results.

Red demonstrates the highest levels of aggression, dominance, and expected victory. Blue is perceived as a color of stability, trust, and tradition. Green is

Table 1

Analysis and systematization of information on how colors are used in football

Color	Psychological impact	Traditional meaning in football	Examples of European football clubs	Examples of Ukrainian clubs	Features of use in identity
Red	Energy, aggression, passion, confidence, motivation	A symbol of strength, struggle, leadership, aggressive play	Manchester United (England), Bayern Munich (Germany), Spartak Moscow (Russia)	Shakhtar Donetsk, Dynamo Kyiv	Used to create an image of dominance, passion, and struggle. Often the main color of a uniform or logo.
Blue	Calmness, trust, discipline, reliability	A symbol of stability, organization, and cold logic	Chelsea (England), Inter Milan (Italy), Marseille (France)	Dynamo Kyiv, Mariupol	Emphasizes professionalism, confidence, authority. Often the main color of the uniform.
Yellow	Optimism, attentiveness, speed, energy	Indicates dynamism, youthfulness, activity	Borussia Dortmund (Germany), Benfica (Portugal)	Metalist Kharkiv, Oleksandriya	Used for emphasis, indicates the speed and creativity of the team.
Green	Harmony, hope, naturalness, freshness	Symbolizes environmental friendliness, development, connection with nature	Werder Bremen (Germany), Celtic (Scotland)	Vorskla Poltava, Karpaty Lviv	Rarely the main color, more often an accent color. Emphasizes uniqueness and connection to the region.
Black	Power, authority, elegance, severity	A symbol of severity, strength, and sometimes aggression	Juventus (Italy), Schalke 04 (Germany)	Zorya Luhansk (sometimes in the second form)	Used as an accent or base, it creates a serious, elegant look.
White	Purity, neutrality, calmness, fairness	Traditional color for home uniforms	Real Madrid (Spain), Tottenham (England), Dynamo Kyiv	Dynamo Kyiv (home kit)	A symbol of classicism and purity. Often used as a base or background color.
Orange	Energy, creativity, warmth	Emphasizes innovation and charisma	Ajax (Netherlands), Milan (sometimes accents)	Olympic Donetsk (sometimes in the second form)	Used to attract attention and emphasize individuality.
Purple	Mystery, creativity, nobility	Rarely used, symbolizes uniqueness	Fiorentina (Italy)	Lviv Movement (experimental versions)	Used to stand out from the crowd and create a unique style.
Gray / Silver	Technological efficiency, modernity, neutrality	Indicates innovation, stylish minimalism	Manchester City (in their second kit), Arsenal (experimental)	Vorskla Poltava (sometimes accents)	Used as an accent color to create a contemporary look.

Table 2

Results of the study on the influence of football uniform color

Color of uniform	Average scores on a scale (1–7) Visual experiment (N=120)	Statistical data Analysis of 200 matches	Associations and interpretations Content analysis of interviews (N=18)
	Aggressiveness	Dominance	Confidence in victory
Red	6.4	6.1	6.2
Blue	3.8	4.2	4.9
Green	3.2	3.5	4.1
Black	5.9	6.3	5.7

associated with harmony, naturalness, and teamwork. Black evokes feelings of power, strength, and even threat.

Statistical analysis has shown that teams in red uniforms have a higher percentage of wins in evenly matched games (7.2% more than the league average). Interview results confirm the established symbolic associations of colors: red – “warriors,” blue – “intelligent strategies,” black – “intimidating power,” green – “natural harmony.”

Visual experiment: respondents rated each visual layout of a soccer player according to four criteria from 1 to 7. (Table 2.) Statistical analysis: the percentage of wins by teams wearing uniforms of corresponding colors in matches where the opponents were of approximately equal skill level was calculated.

Interviews: content analysis of 18 interviews with fans was conducted, and key symbolic associations with each color were identified.

Red turned out to be the most aggressive and dominant in both perception and actual performance. Blue is the most stable in perception, but does not show high results in matches. Green has the lowest aggression ratings, but is associated with teamwork and calmness. Black is perceived as threatening and powerful, although its effectiveness is not as impressive as that of red.

The color of the uniform has a significant impact on the emotional and cognitive perception of the team. The results of a visual experiment showed that different colors evoke different expectations from the team – from aggression and dominance to calmness and stability.

Red demonstrates the highest scores across all parameters associated with victory. Fans, journalists, and coaches perceive teams in red uniforms as more aggressive, dominant, and confident. Match statistics confirm this: red uniforms are associated with the highest percentage of wins (+7.2% above the league average). Blue is perceived as a symbol of stability and strategy, but has no advantage in terms of performance. Despite high ratings for “stability/reliability,” blue uniforms do not perform better in matches, indicating a gap between perception and practical effect.

Green is associated with naturalness and teamwork, but is perceived as less dominant. This color has the lowest aggressiveness and dominance ratings, which may lead to lower expectations of victory. The performance statistics of teams wearing green uniforms are also slightly below average. Black evokes conflicting perceptions: strength and threat. It ranks high in dominance and aggressiveness, but its performance indicators are not as high as those of red. In interviews, black was often described as “dominant” or even “intimidating.”

The symbolic associations of color are deeply rooted in the minds of fans. Qualitative interviews showed that fans have stable perceptions of the “character” of teams depending on the color of their uniforms, which potentially affects the level of expectations and even emotional support during matches.

The color identity of football clubs is a complex phenomenon in which aesthetic, psychological, sociocultural, and communicative aspects are intertwined into a single symbolic system. The choice of colors for club identity is not random or purely visual – it is shaped by historical and cultural context, local symbolism, national traditions, and strategic sports branding objectives. As shown by the example of European football clubs, color plays a decisive role in building an emotional connection between the team and its fans. Color shapes the visual recognition of the club, which is supported by logos, uniforms, fan paraphernalia, digital communication channels, etc. In addition, the color palette has the ability to shape cognitive and affective responses in fans, including feelings of pride, unity, and belonging to “their” space or community. These processes are reinforced by cultural codes encoded in colors: red as a symbol of strength and victory, blue as a sign of stability and intellect, green as a hint of tradition, nature, and freedom, and black as an expression of power or tragic experience.

The psychological function of color in the context of player behavior is no less important. Empirical studies show that certain colors can influence mood, fighting spirit, and self-confidence, as well as make an impression on opponents. In this sense, color identity is not only an element of style, but also a strategic tool

of psychological influence that can enhance competitive advantages. It should be emphasized that the color palette of a football club often becomes a marker of cultural memory, spatial belonging, and local identity. This is especially true in Ukraine, where the colors of football clubs are deeply connected with the history of the region, social myths, the professional identity of the population (as in the case of Shakhtar), national narratives (as in Dynamo Kyiv), or city symbols (as in Karpaty Lviv or Chornomorets Odesa). Color forms a symbolic language through which the club communicates with the community, conveying its values, history, and hopes.

Conclusions. In light of globalization processes, the importance of color is only growing, because it is

the visual component that allows a football brand to remain recognizable in an intercultural space where competition for audience attention is growing. In this context, color identity acts as a universal code that overcomes language and national barriers, contributing to the formation of global fan communities. Further research into color identity in football is of significant scientific and practical importance. Interdisciplinary approaches that combine the tools of color science, sports psychology, cultural anthropology, semiotics, and visual branding are particularly relevant. Empirical studies of the influence of color on game behavior, fan engagement, and the processes of commercialization and transnational adaptation of football clubs offer particular promise.

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