

Technological Requirements of Marketing Information System for achieving Competitive Advantage in Sports Clubs

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Abstract:

Sports clubs seek competitiveness that requires working with all possible ways to gain as many advantages and competitive capabilities as possible to dominate a bigger market share through providing high quality sports products with the least possible cost. Competition over a market share in the local market is far fiercer than the international market. This research is trying to evaluate the role of modern technology of the marketing information system in achieving competitive advantage in marketing sports products and services and identifying the need for technological requirements of the marketing information system and how can we invest

them in achieving competitive advantage. The current research aims at identifying the technological requirements needed for a marketing information system to achieve a competitive advantage for sports clubs through measuring the availability of technological requirements of the marketing information system, measuring competitive advantage, identifying the components of the marketing information system, identifying the tools of the marketing information system, identifying the competitive advantage of sports clubs and its types and strategies, and finally identifying the role of technological requirements of the marketing information

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system in achieving competitive advantage. The researchers used the descriptive (survey) approach. Sample was purposefully chosen to include (180) of chairmen, board members, executives, administrators and sports activity managers from several sports clubs. The researchers used interviews and a specially designed questionnaire. The researchers identified the technological requirements needed for a marketing information system to achieve a competitive advantage for sports clubs.

Key words: Technological Requirements - Marketing Information System - Competitive Advantage

Background:

Marketing in our modern age is an approach that is no longer limited to goods and services according to the traditional framework of marketing activities. Instead, in the light of information revolution and major technological advances, it has become an essential and effective tool for marketing ideas and organizations successfully. Dynamism and quick development are the main characteristics of the

marketing approach that enable it to get along with all the quick changes and developments of our contemporary life. This dynamism reflects the vitality of this approach and makes it one of the most prominent administrative sciences in developing basic concepts to be more effective in coping up with various conditions and to find out strategic solutions and alternatives for this ever increasing competitiveness among organizations. In the light of this fierce competition, if an organization is to stay in the market, it should deal with its potentials for customers' retention and customers' acquisition. This is the modern concept of marketing ⁽¹⁾

Service providers play a major role in supporting and establishing the competitive position of their organizations through depending on quality services, quick service delivery and simplifying service performance with proper delivery in the right time and right place. Also, they interact with their customers to gain their confidence in and loyalty to service organizations. Due to the fierce competition in service sector, it is necessary

that these organizations should use distinct methods to distinguish their products from other competitors' products so that it becomes easy for customers to identify it. This branding process is witnessing some development in some sectors like banks, insurance companies and hospitals. But this development is relatively slow in the sports sector. Egyptian sports organizations are still far behind in the process of branding their quality products and services.

The effect of information and communication technologies on organizations is a major challenge in marketing administration. Information technology is not merely collecting data, product selling, direct mail, data bases or even public relations. Instead, it is expected that this technology will have a major effect on how organizations or companies market their products, services and relations⁽²⁾

Information technology means the technological capability to acquire process and share data with the aim of taking effective decisions⁽³⁾. This indicates that information

technology is the integration of PCs, software, data bases and modern communication systems to process, store, recall and share e-data to achieve the organization's objectives and to gain a competitive advantage. Marketing information systems represent a major part of the system needed in organizations and companies and an element in problem solving, planning, monitoring and decision making.

The information system is the sum of resources, capabilities, measures, processes and procedures that insure the regulation of information flow in a given medium or a particular society.

The information system is a set of nested or interacting elements that work on collecting, processing, storing, transmitting and distributing various types of data and information to the beneficiaries in order to support decision-making, coordination and control over the organization or the beneficiary, in addition to analyzing problems and securing closer look on complex subjects. Usually, the system includes adequate data about individuals, places and activities that belong to the

organization and the surrounding environment ⁽⁵⁾.

The marketing information system is a designed set of methods and procedures to ensure the proper flow of accurate information for use in decision-making, rationalization and provide management with current and future facts about the market as well as indicators about the market's response to the project activities and competitors' positions ⁽⁶⁾. This is what makes information a key driver in all administrative operations of all types of economic, political, sports or even other organization. Therefore, organizations work on getting as much information about all parties whether they belong to employees, clients or competitors, regardless of its cost, in order to find out what is inside and outside the organization to stand on solid ground when competing with other organizations.

Organizations and companies can collect competitive advantages from collecting data and communication to increase their awareness of their intellectual rights. Therefore, the internet is a dynamic tool

that created several ways to enable sports organizations to improve their administrative level through categorizing, collecting and storing data electronically. Data may concern athletes or practical and commercial activities related specifically to fans and supporters, as these processes are in continuous development. Most organizations have strong attendance on the internet through websites designed for several reasons. These websites are becoming a very important framework to distribute the administration's messages, in addition to using them in improving public relations with the target audience ⁽⁷⁾.

Sports marketing personnel need to know various ways to use the internet in gaining competitive advantages for their organizations and studying types of beneficiaries to understand the competitive power of the internet. This affects the selection of organization strategies concerning internet benefits directly related to the main objective of an organization. One of the objectives related to value creation inside the sports market is to let beneficiaries

know about events, as this is a major point in the professional trade environment in sports. This can be ideally achieved via the internet as it provides a direct opportunity for direct interaction between the customer and the organization without any mediators. This of course decreases or limits commission and bonus paid to mediators and increases the organization's revenues. This enables the organization to identify sales rate and volume of demand in addition to increasing marketing revenues due to the ever increasing rate of internet users ⁽⁸⁾.

Marketing personnel in sports clubs should respond to technological developments through understanding the capabilities and potentials of the internet and how to use it in marketing activities ⁽⁹⁾.

Derbas & Al-Sabbagh (2001) conducted a study entitled "Effects of Information Technology on Achieving Competitive Advantage in Banking Sector in Jordan: A Case Study of the Arab Bank and the Islamic Bank". Results indicated the banks under investigation use information systems well to achieve a high

competitive value for its services ⁽¹⁰⁾.

Al-Kady, Mohamed B. (2002) conducted a study entitled "The Role of Information Technology in Achieving Competitive Advantage and Supporting General Strategies of the Organization: An Analytical Study". Results indicated that achieving competitive advantage for organizations and maintaining its continuity needs supporting and developing effective strategies with the aid of most recent information technologies ⁽¹¹⁾.

Evans, D. and Smith, A. (2004) conducted a study entitled "Internet sports marketing and competitive advantage for professional sports clubs: bridging the gap between theory and practice". The researchers surveyed 55 sports clubs in the 4 major leagues of Australia. Results indicated the importance of the internet in creating a competitive advantage for major sports clubs. They recommended that major clubs should develop the internet infrastructure they use in services and marketing to create a competitive advantage

for the club in the sports investment arena ⁽¹²⁾.

Shalaby, Saad A. (2006) conducted a study entitled "Marketing and Investment Fields of Egyptian and European Sports Clubs: a Comparative Study". The study tried to identify the major fields of investment and marketing that Egyptian sports clubs depended on. Using reports and documents of Sport & Market Agency, UFA and Al-Ahly Sports Club, the researcher concluded that the State's interference in marketing affects marketing revenues negatively. All major four marketing revenues fields affect each others. European clubs do not consider athletes' marketing as an objective as athletes are among the main inputs of production for all major marketing activities ⁽¹³⁾.

Hawary, M. & Winten, Y. (2007) conducted a study entitled "The Role of Information Systems in Achieving Competitive Advantage: A Study for the Algerian Industrial Sector". Results indicated positive correlations between technological requirements of information systems and achieving competitive

advantage in Algerian industrial organizations, and between information technology and market share that represents an indicator of the competitive advantage in industrial organizations ⁽¹⁴⁾.

Fullerton, Sam and Merz, G. Russell (2008) conducted a study entitled "The Four Domains of Sports Marketing: A Conceptual Framework". The study analyzed the importance of sports marketing through a new framework that is based on two dimensions: product quality and level of integration. Results indicated that products can be categorized into athletic and non-athletic, in addition to distinguishing between traditional strategies and sponsor-based strategies. Four domains of sports marketing were identified: object-based, product-based, consistency-based and strategy-based ⁽¹⁵⁾.

Javadein, S. R. S., Khanlari, A., & Estiri, M. (2008) conducted a study entitled "Customer loyalty in the sport services industry: the role of service quality, customer satisfaction, commitment and trust". The study investigated the applicability of a model about

customers' perceptions about service quality through a survey of (437) service users. Results indicated that customers' loyalty can be explained through customers' perceptions of service quality. Competitive advantage for service providers can be achieved through increasing customers' perceptions of service quality as this will increase customers' loyalty to the service provider brand ⁽¹⁶⁾.

Woolf, J. (2008) conducted a study entitled "Competitive advantage in the health and fitness industry: developing service bundles". The study aimed at examining the interest in physical fitness tests and its supporting services. Results indicated seven different categories of target audience according to demographic and psychological variables. Customers desire various types of supporting services. There are various service bundles that can create competitive advantage for service providers. These results enable service providers to develop service bundles suitable for various categories of customers, in addition to developing marketing

strategies for these bundles to create competitive advantage for health and fitness clubs ⁽¹⁷⁾.

Rady Bahgat Attia Elshreef, Amany Mohamed Mohssen and Abd-el-Kader Ahmad Farouk (2010) conducted a study entitled "The Electronic Marketing and Services Quality in Sports Clubs". The researchers studied the availability of data bases via official websites of sports clubs and the volume of research and developments in e-marketing, in addition to the availability of safe websites and marketing strategies for sports clubs. Results indicated a relation between the availability of marketing data bases and service quality in sports clubs. There is a relationship between research and development and service quality, in addition to relations between marketing strategies and service quality. E-marketing has a notable effect on service quality ⁽¹⁸⁾.

Budzinski, Oliver (2012) conducted a study entitled "The institutional framework for doing sports business: principles of EU competition policy in sports markets". Results indicated that competitive policies of the EU

concentrate on the centralization of marketing for broadcast bundles rights. A list for rules encouraging or discouraging competitiveness can not be concluded ⁽¹⁹⁾.

Affi, Ahmed M. (2013) conducted a study entitled "The Service Marketing Role of Sports Clubs in the 21st Century". Results of this study indicated that most clubs have membership databases. Clubs communicate with other bodies via modern communication technologies and members need more quality services in return of financial revenues for the club ⁽²⁰⁾.

The researchers interviewed some of the personnel in sports clubs as a pilot study for clarifying the current situation of technological requirements in sports clubs and how far they use various information and communication technologies. These interviews indicated various administrative, financial and personal problems that face sports clubs in applying information and communication technologies. Most administrators and sports specialists are not qualified for dealing with such technologies and their computer skills are

limited to typing and issuing membership cards.

Research Problem:

Sports clubs seek competitiveness that requires working with all possible ways to gain as many advantages and competitive capabilities as possible to dominate a bigger market share through providing high quality sports products with the least possible cost. Competition over a market share in the local market is far fiercer than the international market. And here comes a question: in the light of local and international competition in sports marketing and considering service quality as a support for developing a competitive position for the sports club, do sports clubs work on providing technological requirements needed for a marketing information system? What are the technological requirements needed for a marketing information system to achieve a competitive advantage for service marketing in sports clubs? How can we invest these technological requirements to achieve a marketing competitive advantage for sports clubs?

This indicates the importance of identifying the technological requirements needed for a marketing information system to achieve a competitive advantage for sports clubs through measuring the availability of technological requirements of the marketing information system, measuring competitive advantage, identifying the components of the marketing information system, identifying the tools of the marketing information system, identifying the competitive advantage of sports clubs and its types and strategies, and finally identifying the role of technological requirements of the marketing information system in achieving competitive advantage.

Research Importance:

This research is trying to evaluate the role of modern technology of the marketing information system in achieving competitive advantage in marketing sports products and services and identifying the need for technological requirements of the marketing information system and how can we invest them in achieving competitive advantage. The applied

importance of this research is clear in that its results can improve the level and the availability of technological requirements of the marketing information system as these systems can achieve competitive advantage for sports clubs locally and internationally. These systems represent an important economic factor that saves time, effort and money for sports clubs and improves its financial and human capabilities through training administrative personnel and supporting real investments in improving sports marketing personnel.

Aims:

The current research aims at identifying the technological requirements of the marketing information system to achieve competitive advantage for sports clubs through:

1. Measuring the availability of technological requirements in sports clubs
2. Measuring competitive advantage of sports clubs (product and service quality – financial performance – market dominance)
3. Identifying the components of the marketing

information system as these systems in sports clubs (inputs – processes – outputs – feedback)

4. Identifying the tools of the marketing information system as these systems in sports clubs (PCs – intranet – extranet – internet)

5. Identifying the competitive advantage, its types and competitive strategies in sports clubs

6. Identifying the role of the technological requirements of the marketing information system in achieving competitive advantage for sports clubs

Research Questions:

1. How far are technological requirements in sports clubs available?

2. What is the role of competitive advantage of sports clubs (product and service quality – financial performance – market dominance)?

3. What are the components of the marketing information system as these systems in sports clubs (inputs – processes – outputs – feedback)?

4. What are the tools of the marketing information system as these systems in sports clubs

(PCs – intranet – extranet – internet)?

5. What is the competitive advantage and what are its types and competitive strategies in sports clubs?

6. What is the role of the technological requirements of the marketing information system in achieving competitive advantage for sports clubs?

Terminology:

For the purposes of this research, the researchers procedurally identify the following terms:

- **Sports marketing:** it is the key to achieve the sports organization's objectives. It includes identifying market needs and desires and achieving higher degrees of customers' satisfaction, compared to competitors, effectively.

- Marketing Fields:

a) **Marketing with Sport:** this means marketing of sports organizations that do not produce sports products like sponsoring, permissions, ads and residences.

b) **Marketing in Sport:** this can be divided into providing optimum sports services (like marketing for clubs, athletes, teams and

events) and marketing for organizations closely related to sports services (like marketing for equipments, sports medicine, sports tourism and sports wares).

Methods:

Approach:

The researchers used the descriptive (survey) approach.

Subjects: Sample was purposefully chosen to include (180) of chairmen, board members, executives, administrators and sports activity managers from several sports clubs (Al-Ahly – Al-Zamalek – Al-Ettehad – Al-Misry Al-Olymby – Smouha – Sporting – Al-Isameely – Al-Misry – Al-Mansoura – Al-Hewar – Beny Obaid – Tanta – Baladiat Al-Mahally – Ghazl Al-Mahalla – Gomhoriat Shebin – Kafr Al-Shaikh), in addition to sports investors. Sample was divided into (20) for validating the questionnaire, (10) as a pilot sample and (150) as a main sample.

Data collection tools:

The researchers used interviews and a specially designed questionnaire.

Validation of the questionnaire:

The researcher calculated the logical validity of the questionnaire from 22-4-2013 to 19-5-2013 and the internal consistency from 28-5-2013 to 12-6-2013. The researchers used test/re-test procedure and Cronbacj's Alpha for calculating the questionnaire's reliability from 28-5-2013 to 12-6-2013 through applying the questionnaire to the validation sample (n=20). The researchers concluded that the final version of the questionnaire is valid. According to experts' opinions, the researchers used a three-point scale for the questionnaire (yes = 3 – somehow = 2 – no = 1). The total score of the questionnaire is (117) points.

Pilot study:

The researcher conducted the pilot study on a pilot sample (n=10) from 23-6-2013 to 14-7-2013 to identify the following:

- Sample understanding of the items
- Any difficulties that may rise during main application

Results of the pilot study indicated that:

- Sample members understand all items

- Duration of application is 16:20 minutes

Main application:

The researchers applied the questionnaire to the main sample (n=150) from 28-7-2013 to 18-9-2013. After application, questionnaires were corrected and data was recorded to be treated statistically.

Results:

Statistical treatment:

The researchers used SPSS software to calculate the following:

Mean – SD – correlation coefficient – internal consistency – test/re-test – percentage – relative weight – relative importance CHI^2 .

Table (1)
Sample Opinions about the First Axis (The Availability of Technological Requirements in Sports Clubs) (n=150)

Item	Yes		Somehow		No		Relative weight	Relative importance	CHI^2
	F	%	F	%	F	%			
1	118	78.67	25	16.67	7	4.67	672	89.60	141.96*
2	102	68.00	35	23.33	13	8.67	628	83.73	85.96*
3	112	74.67	27	18.00	11	7.33	652	86.93	117.88*
4	124	82.67	23	15.33	3	2.00	692	92.27	168.28*
5	98	65.33	35	23.33	17	11.33	612	81.60	72.36*
6	108	72.00	37	24.67	5	3.33	656	87.47	111.16*
7	107	71.33	35	23.33	8	5.33	648	86.40	104.76*

CHI^2 table value on $P \leq 0.05 = 5.99$

Table (1) indicates statistically significant differences for the

opinions of sample members on the items of the first axis.

Table (2)
Sample Opinions about the Second Axis Competitive Advantage of Sports Clubs (Product and Service Quality – Financial Performance – Market Dominance) (n=150)

Item	Yes	Somehow	No	Relative	Relative	CHI^2
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	F	%	F	%	F	%	weight	importance	
First: Product and Service Quality:									
8	92	61.33	43	28.67	15	10.00	604	80.53	60.76*
9	95	63.33	44	29.33	11	7.33	618	82.40	71.64*
Second: Financial Performance:									
10	96	64.00	35	23.33	19	12.67	604	80.53	66.04*
11	93	62.00	36	24.00	21	14.00	594	79.20	57.72*
12	92	61.33	43	28.67	15	10.00	604	80.53	60.76
13	96	64.00	35	23.33	19	12.67	604	80.53	66.04*
Third: Market Dominance:									
14	100	66.67	37	24.67	13	8.67	624	83.20	80.76*
15	100	66.67	35	23.33	15	10.00	620	82.67	79.00*

CHI² table value on $P \leq 0.05 = 5.99$ opinions of sample members
 Table (2) indicates statistically significant differences for the on the items of the second axis.

Table (3)

Sample Opinions about the Third Axis Components of Marketing Information Systems in Sports Clubs (Inputs – Processes – Outputs - Feedback) (n=150)

Item	Yes		Somehow		No		Relative weight	Relative importance	CHI ²
	F	%	F	%	F	%			
First: Inputs:									
16	135	90.00	14	9.33	1	0.67	718	95.73	218.44*
17	145	96.67	3	2.00	2	1.33	736	98.13	270.76*
18									
18/1	140	93.33	7	4.67	3	2.00	714	96.53	243.16*
18/2	140	93.33	7	4.67	3	2.00	714	96.53	243.16*
18/3	140	93.33	7	4.67	3	2.00	714	96.53	243.16*
18/4	140	93.33	7	4.67	3	2.00	714	96.53	243.16*
18/5	140	93.33	7	4.67	3	2.00	714	96.53	243.16*
19									
A) Internal Sources:									
19/1	147	98.00	2	1.33	1	0.67	742	98.93	282.28*
19/2									
19/2/1	146	97.33	3	2.00	1	0.67	740	98.67	276.52*
19/2/2	146	97.33	3	2.00	1	0.67	740	98.67	276.52*

Follow Table (3)

Sample Opinions about the Third Axis Components of Marketing Information Systems in Sports Clubs (Inputs – Processes – Outputs - Feedback) (n=150)

Item	Yes	Somehow	No	Relative	Relative	CHI ²
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	F	%	F	%	F	%	weight	importance	
19/2/3	146	97.33	3	2.00	1	0.67	740	98.67	276.52*
19/2/4	146	97.33	3	2.00	1	0.67	740	98.67	276.52*
B) External Sources:									
19/3									
19/3/1	147	98.00	3	2.00	0	0.00	744	99.20	282.36*
19/3/2	147	98.00	3	2.00	0	0.00	744	99.20	282.36*
19/3/3	147	98.00	3	2.00	0	0.00	744	99.20	282.36*
19/3/4	147	98.00	3	2.00	0	0.00	744	99.20	282.36*
Second: Processes:									
20	146	97.33	4	2.67	0	0.00	742	98.93	276.64*
21	146	97.33	4	2.67	0	0.00	742	98.93	276.64*
22									
22/1	145	96.67	5	3.23	0	0.00	740	98.67	271.00*
22/2	145	96.67	5	3.23	0	0.00	740	98.67	271.00*
22/3	145	96.67	5	3.23	0	0.00	740	98.67	271.00*
22/4	145	96.67	5	3.23	0	0.00	740	98.67	271.00*
22/5	145	96.67	5	3.23	0	0.00	740	98.67	271.00*
22/6	145	96.67	5	3.23	0	0.00	740	98.67	271.00*
22/7	145	96.67	5	3.23	0	0.00	740	98.67	271.00*
Third: Outputs:									
23	147	98.00	2	1.23	1	0.67	742	98.93	282.28*
24	148	98.67	1	0.67	1	0.67	744	99.20	142.10*
Fourth: Feedback:									
25	145	96.67	3	2.00	2	1.33	736	98.13	270.76*
26	144	96.00	4	2.67	2	1.33	734	97.87	265.12*
27	145	96.67	4	2.67	1	0.67	738	98.40	270.84*

CHI² table value on P≤0.05 = 5.99

Table (3) indicates statistically significant differences for the

opinions of sample members on the items of the third axis.

Table (4)
Sample Opinions about the Fourth Axis Equipments of
Marketing Information Systems in Sports Clubs (Computers –
Intranet – Extranet - Internet) (n=150)

Item	Yes	Somehow	No	Relative	Relative	CHI ²
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	F	%	F	%	F	%	weight	importance	
First: Computers (information technology):									
28	147	98.00	2	1.33	1	0.67	742	98.93	282.28*
29	147	98.00	2	1.33	1	0.67	742	98.93	282.28*
Second: Networks (communication technology):									
30	147	98.00	3	2.00	0	0.00	744	99.20	282.36*
31	147	98.00	3	2.00	0	0.00	744	99.20	282.36*
32	147	98.00	3	2.00	0	0.00	744	99.20	282.36*
33	145	96.67	3	2.00	2	1.33	736	98.13	270.76*
34	144	96.00	4	2.67	2	1.33	736	97.87	265.12*
35	143	95.33	5	3.33	2	1.33	736	97.60	259.56
36	147	98.00	2	1.33	1	0.67	742	98.93	282.28*

CHI² table value on P≤0.05 = 5.99

Table (4) indicates statistically significant differences for the

opinions of sample members on the items of the fourth axis.

Table (5)

Sample Opinions about the Fifth Axis Competitive Advantage of Sports Clubs, its Types and Strategies (n=150)

Item	Yes		Somehow		No		Relative weight	Relative importance	CHI ²
	F	%	F	%	F	%			
First: Competitive Advantage:									
37	143	95.33	5	3.33	2	1.33	732	97.60	259.56*
38	146	97.33	3	2.00	1	0.67	740	98.67	276.52*
39	145	96.67	3	2.00	2	1.33	736	98.13	270.76*
40	144	96.00	4	2.67	2	1.33	734	97.87	265.12*
41	148	98.68	1	0.67	1	0.67	744	99.20	142.10*
42	147	98.00	3	2	0	0.00	744	99.20	282.36*
43	146	97.33	4	2.67	0	0.00	742	98.93	276.64*
44	145	96.67	3	2.00	2	1.33	736	98.13	270.76*
45									
45/1	147	98.00	3	2	0	0.00	744	99.20	282.36*
45/2	147	98.00	3	2	0	0.00	744	99.20	282.36*
45/3	147	98.00	3	2	0	0.00	744	99.20	282.36*
46	145	96.67	4	2.67	1	0.67	738	98.40	270.84*
47	146	97.33	3	2.00	1	0.67	740	98.67	276.52*
48	147	98.00	2	1.33	1	0.67	742	98.93	282.28*

Follow Table (5)

Sample Opinions about the Fifth Axis Competitive Advantage of Sports Clubs, its Types and Strategies (n=150)

Item	Yes		Somehow		No		Relative weight	Relative importance	CHI ²
	F	%	F	%	F	%			

49	148	98.67	1	0.67	1	0.67	744	99.20	142.10*
Second: Types of Competitive Advantage:									
50									
50/1	143	95.33	5	3.33	2	1.33	732	97.60	259.56*
50/2	143	95.33	5	3.33	2	1.33	732	97.60	259.56*
51	147	98.00	3	2	0	0.00	744	99.20	282.36*
52									
52/1	146	97.33	4	2.67	0	0.00	742	98.93	276.64*
52/2	146	97.33	4	2.67	0	0.00	742	98.93	276.64*
52/3	146	97.33	4	2.67	0	0.00	742	98.93	276.64*
53									
53/1	145	96.67	5	3.33	0	0.00	740	98.67	271.00*
53/2	145	96.67	5	3.33	0	0.00	740	98.67	271.00*
54	147	98.00	2	1.33	1	0.67	742	98.93	282.28*
Third: General Competitive Strategies:									
55	146	97.33	3	2.00	1	0.67	740	98.67	276.52*
56									
56/1	147	98.00	3	2	0	0.00	744	99.20	282.36*
56/2									
56/2/1	147	98.00	3	2	0	0.00	744	99.20	282.36*
56/2/2	147	98.00	3	2	0	0.00	744	99.20	282.36*
56/2/3	147	98.00	3	2	0	0.00	744	99.20	282.36*
56/3	147	98.00	3	2	0	0.00	744	99.20	282.36*

CHI² table value on $P \leq 0.05 = 5.99$
Table (5) indicates statistically significant differences for the

opinions of sample members on the items of the fifth axis.

Table (6)
Sample Opinions about the Sixth Axis The Role of Technological Requirements of Marketing Information Systems in Achieving Competitive Advantage for Sports Clubs (n=150)

Item	Yes		Somehow		No		Relative weight	Relative importance	CHI ²
	F	%	F	%	F	%			
57									
57/1	147	98.00	3	2.00	0	0.00	744	99.20	282.36*
57/2	145	96.67	4	2.67	1	0.67	738	98.40	270.74*
57/3	147	98.00	3	2.00	0	0.00	744	99.20	282.36*
57/4	143	95.33	6	4.00	1	0.67	734	97.87	259.72*
57/5	146	97.33	3	2.00	1	0.67	740	98.67	276.52*

CHI² table value on $P \leq 0.05 = 5.99$

Table (6) indicates statistically significant differences for the opinions of sample members on the items of the sixth axis.

Discussion:

First Axis:

Table (1) indicates statistically significant differences for the opinions of

those who chose (yes). This indicates that most sports clubs have equipments and software that help acquiring marketing data for athletic products and services. They also have sufficient databases for all sports activities. Most sports clubs have modern and effective communication network that serve the information system. Equipments and software are updated regularly. Information systems work effectively in storing, categorizing, recalling and updating information. The information system guarantees data flow quickly with the least possible cost for decision making.

Al-Rabady (1998) indicated that modern technologies have direct effects on human life. Human societies can never live away from modern technologies. For example, PCs save time and effort for researchers in the sports field to get data needed quickly. Technology is fact that cannot be ignored due to its major long-term effects on the sports field. We should utilize it effectively to serve sports activities ⁽²¹⁾.

Kent (1997) stated that information technology

includes all technologies used in facilitating communication among companies. This includes e-mail, fax, and internet, bar-coding and electronic media for exchanging data about purchase orders, shipping notices and tracking of shipping operations, billing and payment ⁽²²⁾.

Al-Kady (2002) stated that information technology is the science of gathering, categorizing, transforming, processing and transferring data through integrated activities of computers, information and communication to serve the organization's purposes ⁽¹¹⁾.

Laudon & Price (1998) stated that information technology includes overlapping components for gathering, categorizing, storing and distributing data to facilitate planning, control, coordination, analysis and decision making in organizations ⁽²³⁾.

The researchers think that hundreds of years ago, there was only one way for data processing through manual methods where data recording, storing, analysis, summarization and processing

was through human effort with some limited tools like pens, logs and paper. With the spread of PCs, other more developed methods appeared for data processing that reflects the technological advance. It is therefore necessary to invest and use technology in improving the service, technical and administrative levels of sports clubs and all other sports organizations.

Second Axis:

Table (2) indicates statistically significant differences for the opinions of those who chose (yes). This indicates that the marketing information system used in sports clubs helps improving product quality according to the desires and needs of beneficiaries. It also helps easy access to beneficiaries to fulfill their desires and expectations quickly. By that, competitive advantage of sports clubs, reflected in quality products and services, can be achieved.

Javadein et al (2008) stated that although customer loyalty is important, the relationship between perceived service quality and customer loyalty is still unclear. Related literature indicated problems in the validity and reliability of

measurements of this relation. This limitation is more serious in sport as there are very limited attempts to examine the relationship between service quality and customer loyalty in sport⁽¹⁶⁾.

Results also indicated that the information system used in sports clubs reduces products and services costs for all sports activities and increases revenues. It also improves service and product quality and distribution in addition to supporting the club's promotion abilities. This improves the financial performance of the club, which in turn improves its competitive advantage.

This is in agreement with **Porter & Michel (1985)** who indicated that the main purpose of applying technology is to coordinate the activities of delivery chain and to supports all efforts of achieving competitive advantage like "excellence - modernization - growth – alliances"⁽²⁴⁾.

Results also indicated that the information system used in sports clubs works on promoting the club's status among other organizations. This helps opening new local, regional and international

fields with other organizations which in turn helps improving market dominance and competitive advantage.

The researchers think that sports clubs that invest in technology get more market share and develop quickly in addition to gaining more revenues. This is reflected positively on service quality provided to their target beneficiaries. Therefore, sports clubs have the right to slowly approach modern technologies but they must know that this will hinder its development and gaining more revenues which in turn will affect its ability to possess and deliver high quality sports products in the sports market.

Third Axis:

Table (3) indicates statistically significant differences for the opinions of those who chose (yes). This indicates that good inputs lead to good product. Inputs of marketing information system are data. It is the raw material for generating information. It represents facts and criteria of sports events. But data alone is not valid for decision making as it has no clear significance in addition to being irregular, contradictory and dated.

Samir Ismail (2002)

indicated that data is facts gathered by observation or measurement of events, phenomena or bodies. It can be reused individually or collectively to generate meaningful usable information. Data, in its original form, is not useful as it has no significance without processing⁽²⁵⁾.

Results also indicated that data can be gathered from two main sources; external and internal. Internal sources reflect the reality of the internal environment of sports clubs where the marketing information system works. Data represents outputs of other information systems of the club like financial information, production and services, and human resources, in addition to financial and human resources available. External sources are in the external environment surrounding the club and reflect the nature of organizations interacting with the club as an open system. These organizations include beneficiaries, competitors, governmental organizations and financial organizations related to the club.

Al-Naggar (1998) indicated that a marketing information system includes complex interaction between specialist and machines that guarantee gathering, analyzing and flow of marketing information from internal and external sources to make marketing decisions under various circumstances (full – short – unavailable) to serve marketing personnel in the organization or company providing products and services now and in the future

Abd El-Reheem (1998) stated that marketing information systems are one of the minor information systems in an organization. A well-designed system can sustain fluency of data more quickly, more perfectly and with less cost to be used in decision making. Managers can have regular periodic detailed reports to monitor the behavior of products, markets, salesmen and other marketing fields ⁽²⁷⁾.

Kolter Philip (2000) indicated that marketing information systems represent a complex integrated structure of human, machine and procedures framework. It is designed to gather data from internal and external sources to

generate information that help marketing administration to make good decisions ⁽²⁸⁾.

Results also indicated that processing represents the activities and initiatives the system performs to transfer inputs (data) into outputs (information). Getting the desired outputs requires the system to process data accurately. Marketing information includes the following activities: gathering – filtering – categorizing – reporting – storing – updating – recall.

Baian Harb (1999) indicated that marketing information systems are that formation of individuals, procedures and equipments necessary for facilitating the flow and storage of all data and information from all sources and then analyze and formulate it in a meaningful way periodically for decision makers in the project ⁽²⁹⁾.

Results also indicated that outputs of a marketing information system include strategic, tactical and operational information that was processed to have certain significance. Outputs include providing information with the required specifications.

Afaf Darwish (2009) indicated that a sports administrator uses data and information in initial or stage planning for the sports organization and its various activities like preparing the program and its policies, during resources allocation, in monitoring and evaluation, when making decisions and in predicting the future⁽³⁰⁾.

Indicating the characteristics of information society, **Tarek Abbas (2003)** stated that information is inconsumable, un-transferable and un-crumbling as it is accumulative by nature. It is based on involving in common gathering and use of it by citizens. The value of information is in developing human capabilities of choosing the most effective decisions. Modern technology is base of information age. The increase of information productivity is through mass and public production of information. The infrastructure of information society is a number of networks of databases and information banks⁽³¹⁾

Feedback is the measurement of marketing information system outputs according to certain standards.

It concentrates on comparing marketing information available from the system with target information that is planned to be available. Feedback is of particular importance as it is linked to outputs and decision making which are the main criteria of the system's efficiency.

Al-Maghraby (2002) indicated that information systems are of particular importance for big and complex facilities as they enable the administration to make well-based decisions through providing the right information in the right time and to invest available data to its most. They also work on identifying and measuring the relationships among variables and used in prediction. They should integrate all marketing, production, financial and other data to provide the administration with a full picture. This decreases duplication of information and unifies the source of distribution so that the administration could avoid mistakes of planning, organization and work allocation. This also allows full use of electronic equipments and decreases time of decision

making as decision makers only have necessary information⁽³²⁾.

Atia (2000) indicated that system components are interrelated elements that form the general framework through overlapping relations. These are the recognized concepts and rules for controlling various processes of the information system according to certain rules and regulations to assure that the right information is delivered to the right person at the right time. Each system should have a general objective that affects its structure, policies, procedures and methods. System objectives should be measurable⁽³³⁾.

Al-Ammary (2004) and Farahtia (2005) indicated that components of a marketing information system include four elements:

❖ **Inputs:** These are the base of generating desired outputs for beneficiaries. Data can be gained from two sources:

- Internal sources: the real internal environment of the organization
- External sources: the external environment surrounding the organization,

including all parties the organization interacts with as an open system.

❖ **Processing:** The activities and initiatives a system performs to turn inputs (data) into outputs (information). These include acquisition – filtering – categorization – reporting – storing – updating – recall.

❖ **Outputs:** Strategic, tactical and operational information that the system processed and has become with specific significance.

❖ **Feedback:** A way for measuring outputs according to specific standards. It is of major importance as it is related to outputs and decision making. It is the standard of evaluating the system's efficiency⁽³⁴⁾⁽³⁵⁾.

The researchers think that the main goal of marketing information systems is to provide marketing administration with necessary information through gathering data from internal sources, like minor information systems and organization's departments, and external sources including beneficiaries, share holders, governmental bodies, and economic, social and cooperative organizations in

addition to competitive environment. This data is necessary for supporting the capabilities of marketing administration to achieve its goals represented in identifying and evaluating potential selling opportunities, quick response to changes in marketing conditions, controlling marketing costs, identifying specialties needed for promotion campaigns, predicting the future and forming strategies. To operate a marketing information system, we need certain important material and human requirements. Such systems are characterized by its continuity as marketing activities that provide information are renewable.

Fourth Axis:

Table (4) indicates statistically significant differences for the opinions of those who chose (yes). This indicates that computers are from the best well-known means of information technology as they represent an excellent way for data processing, storing and recall. Computers help dealing with a large sum of data quickly and accurately.

Al-Shetehy, A. (1997) indicated that computer is the core of scientific and technological development as a tool that plays a major role in all fields of science, including physical education. Advantages of computer are represented in storing huge sum of information in a relatively small space and high speed of computation processes in addition to accuracy of information, reports and results ⁽³⁶⁾.

According to its components, **Al-Naggar (2004)** divides information technology into man power (individual trained to used modern technologies, systems, software and administrative processes), materials (tools and equipments used in communicating, storing, presenting and recalling information), systems, programs and application of work and finally policies, rules, regulations and instructions that organize and coordinate work (37)

Results indicated that "Intranet" is a network linking computers inside the organization and works on reducing costs through abandoning paper logs and

workers who deal with such tasks and therefore saves time.

Zindner (2004) defined "intranet" as a website designed specially for the internal use of the organization as it includes information about human resources, policies, procedures, products and sales. Only organization officials are allowed to log into this website. Therefore, it is very effective in communication and cooperation among organization staff. One of the most important applications of the intranet is coordinating marketing and other activities as it helps processing orders, stock, transportation and shipping, in addition to establishing a database about customers, storerooms and orders⁽³⁸⁾

Results also indicated that "Extranet" is a network linking intranet networks of customers, organizations and providers who work together in one project.

Al-Habbouny, E. (2006) indicated that "extranet" is a micro-internet that works via a group of intranet networks of providers, organizations and customers with similar activities. Those are co-workers like providers,

banks and government bodies. Access to this network is limited to co-workers only. Therefore it is secret and private, in addition to being a safe environment for business organizations⁽³⁹⁾.

Furthermore, results indicated that "the internet" is the World Wide Web that relates thousands of local networks and millions of computers all over the world.

Al-Allak, B. (2002) indicated that the concept of a network is linking two or more computer sets through cables or wireless cards so that they can exchange information. It is a group of computers and other devices linked together to allow users to share resources and devices connected to the network like printers, so that data are easy to access and easy to share among all parties with the least possible cost and effort. Networks allow data and information exchange in addition to instant communication among users⁽²⁾.

In sum, networks are groups of computers linked together on the level of one organization, a group of organizations, one country or several countries to allow data transfer and exchange freely.

Effects of this technology should be considered on marketing information systems.

Results indicated that marketing information systems use the internet to gather data about demand on athletic products and services and to facilitate monitoring market forces in remote geographic areas. A marketing information system uses the internet to gather data about competitors and the market, in addition to decreasing costs of gathering data.

This is in agreement with **Al-Habbouny, E. (2006)** in that the internet is among the most efficient marketing tools as it can reach unlimited audience all over the world. Using the internet in marketing enables companies to gather huge sum of information about the market through governmental reports and statistics, in addition to communicating with competitors. Competitors' websites reveal very important information about the competitor company, its staff and its new products⁽³⁹⁾.

Sarhan, A. (2005) indicated that modern communication and information technologies are

the tools for designing information systems as they include the main pillars of the system like equipments, devices, programs and networks that enable decision makers to store, process and exchange information electronically. This reduces time, effort and cost in addition to providing objective information⁽⁴⁰⁾.

Kotler, P. (2001) indicated that e-marketing includes all marketing activities performed via electronic means, networks and the internet. It is an application of a broad chain of information technologies with the aim of reshaping marketing strategies and increasing customer's benefits through effective retail, targeting, excellence and location identification. The internet is one of the most powerful means affecting marketing activities⁽⁴¹⁾.

The researchers think that investing modern communication and information technologies is a must as millions of people connect to the internet every day all over the world. Sports clubs, with various objectives and strategies can use his technology and turn the

internet into an open market for promoting various products and services, in addition to providing information about themselves to increase awareness and create a favorable image for them. This can create a communication channel between clubs and beneficiaries to improve their relations.

Fifth Axis:

Table (5) indicates statistically significant differences for the opinions of those who chose (yes). This indicates that competitive advantage is the critical strategic element that provides the organization with a real opportunity to sustain contiguous revenues compared to its competitors. Its concept differs according to the context. On the level of sports clubs, competitive advantage appears ones the club finds more effective methods than its competitors', on when creativity is promoted. It is strength for sports clubs and can be achieved through following a specific competitive strategy. It is based on difference not similarity. It is long-term as it concerns the future and it is usually geographically-centered.

Woolf, J. (2008)

indicated that integration of supporting services improves the value of basic service being delivered as this creates distinctions and competitive advantage for the organization over the market ⁽¹⁷⁾.

Results also indicated that effective competitive advantage is decisive as it provides advantage and excellence over competitors. It is also continuous as it lasts over the time in addition to being hard to imitate or cancel by the competitor. It reflects the club's ability to provide internationally competitive products and services. On the sector level, competitive advantage is the ability of a specific sports sector, federation or field (administration – recreation – education – training) to achieve continuous success locally or internationally. On the State's level, it is the ability to provide a suitable environment for achieving sustainable high rates of developments. On the club's level, it is the ability to apply strategies that lead the club to a better position compared to other clubs in the same field through investing its resources and capabilities for

the benefits and needs of its customers.

Results also indicated two types of competitive advantage in sports clubs: the less cost and excellence. The less cost is achieved if it is related to the accumulative costs of sports activities, products and services, while excellence is achieved when clubs are more distinguished than competitors as they can survive and win local and international championships. Competitive advantage can be achieved through providing a product or a service that competitors can not beat. Financial, human, administrative and information resources are also sources for achieving excellence. Competitive advantage is closely related to the beneficiary's perceptions that the sports organization value is higher than its competitors'. In addition, sports clubs should make use of its various resources to improve the beneficiary's perceived value as this builds up competitive advantage. Information plays a major role in supporting this perceived value and therefore in achieving a competitive advantage through providing

beneficiaries with necessary information about the products or services a sports club delivers.

Haidar, M. (2002), Porter et al (2004) and Kaddoura, B. (2006) indicated that competitive advantage could be on various levels: the organization, the sector or the State. It can be achieved through following a specific competitive strategy. To be effective, the competitive advantage should be based on several conditions like being decisive, continuous and defendable. They also indicated two types of competitive advantage in sports clubs: the less cost and excellence. Competitive advantage is closely related to beneficiaries' perceived value and the organization's ability to achieve excellence^{(42) (43) (44)}

Results also indicated that when sports clubs apply a specific competitive strategy, they seek to gain competitive advantage for its activities and services. There are three general competitive strategies: cost leading, excellence and focus. Cost leading means decreasing product or service cost. Excellence means achieving sports advantages

under various conditions like: when beneficiaries appreciate the product or service value and its distinction from others; when products and services are numerous and fulfill the beneficiaries' needs and desires and when there are many clubs that follow the same excellence strategy. Focus means specialization to build a competitive advantage of specific products or services.

Several authors indicated that the general competitive strategy represents the core decisions an organization may take to achieve specific goals. Success or failure of the organizations depends on such decisions. The three main general competitive strategies are cost leading, excellence and focus. ^{(10) (11) (14) (45) (46)}

The researchers think that competitive strategy is a very important strategic element in managing sports organizations and all societies, with all its organizations, bodies and individuals should seek technological developments to be able to continue competitively and to dominate sports markets. Developments in information technology increased the

seriousness of information as a strategic resource for those who own it, compared to those who own money. Owning technology paves the way to investing money as money can be easily lost if information for maintaining and investing them correctly are lacking. Therefore, technology has become a major source of competitive advantage and an indicator for clubs' abilities to improve their products' and services' quality.

Sixth Axis:

Table (6) indicates statistically significant differences for the opinions of those who chose (yes). This indicates the role of technological requirements of the marketing information system in achieving competitive advantage for sports clubs through improving products and services, achieving a strategic advantage over local and international competitors and improving product and service quality through decreasing cost, improving quality and achieving creativity.

Sultan, I. (2000) indicated that information systems play a strategic role in organizations as they represent

a strategic resource, an effective means for achieving competitive advantage and a strategic defense against international competitors. Developments in computer and software technologies have led to new tools that help organizations to deal with its environment ⁽⁴⁷⁾.

Al-Barawry & Fahmy (2004) indicated that marketing provides the organization a distinct position in the minds of consumers. Competitive race and continuous imitation of products and services made them indistinguishable. Technological advance and difficulties in broadcasting copy rights made the organization's position in the minds of consumers as the only thing that can not be copied and this is effectively achieved through marketing ⁽⁴⁸⁾.

The researchers think that needs of sports clubs can be categorized into three main types: environmental information including information about the club's environment and how the club affects it, internal information concerning weaknesses, strengths, and resources of the club and finally competitive information to face local and

international competitors which include all available strategic information about competitors to be used in prediction and goal setting. This third type can be categorized into past performance indicators (to evaluate competitors' weaknesses and strengths), current performance indicators and finally future plans for improving competitive advantage through achieving creativity and achievement in products and services.

Conclusions:

In the light of this research results, the researchers concluded the following:

1. Most sports clubs have the most recent information technology equipments with an inclusive database about all sports activities. They have modern and effective communication networks in addition to continuous updating of equipments and software. This provides information fluency with cheap cost to be used in decision making.
2. Marketing information systems help achieving competitive advantage for sports clubs as it improves products' and services' quality according to the desires and

needs of beneficiaries. It also decreases cost and increases revenues. It increases the club's capability to promote its products and services and improves the club's position among other organizations, in addition to opening new local, regional and international markets.

3. Components of marketing information systems include inputs (data acquired from internal and external sources), processes and outputs (strategic, tactical and operational information processed to be with specific significance).

4. Equipments of marketing information systems include computers as a technology for storing, processing and recalling data quickly and accurately to generate necessary information. In addition, it includes intranet, extranet and internet as communication technologies to gather data about competitors and the market with the least possible cost.

5. Competitive advantage of sports clubs is a strategic dynamic element to generate continuous revenues compared to competitors. It refers to the

ability of sports clubs to deliver products and services that pass competitiveness tests internationally through investing its resources and potentials to fulfill its customers' benefits and desires. There are two types of competitive advantage: less cost and excellence. There are three competitive strategies: cost leading, excellence and focus.

6. The role of technological requirements of the marketing information system in achieving competitive advantage for sports clubs is clear through improving products and services, achieving a strategic advantage over local and international competitors and improving product and service quality through decreasing cost, improving quality and achieving creativity

Recommendations:

In the light of this research's conclusions, the researchers recommend the following:

1. All sports clubs should provide the most recent technological requirements, like equipments, software and

information systems, for all its sports activities.

2. All sports clubs should provide the most recent effective communication networks to be used in decision making.

3. All sports clubs should provide marketing information systems to achieve competitive advantage through improving products and services quality according to beneficiaries' needs and desires.

4. All sports clubs should provide marketing information systems to decrease costs and increase revenues.

5. All sports clubs should provide marketing information systems to support its capabilities to promote their products and services in addition to promoting its position and opening new local, regional and international markets.

6. All sports clubs should seek competitive advantage through applying strategies

suitable for their resources and invest their capabilities in fulfilling beneficiaries' needs and desires in addition to increasing revenues.

7. All sports clubs should seek competitive advantage through improving productivity of activities and services and decreasing costs in addition to improving quality and promoting creativity.

8. All sports clubs should seek competitive advantage through developing new products and services in addition to effective sports training methods for all processes.

these recommendations can be realized through:

- Commitment of sports clubs' board members to apply the recommended model (Fig. 1)
- Applying the recommended model through results of the questionnaire. (Appendix 5)

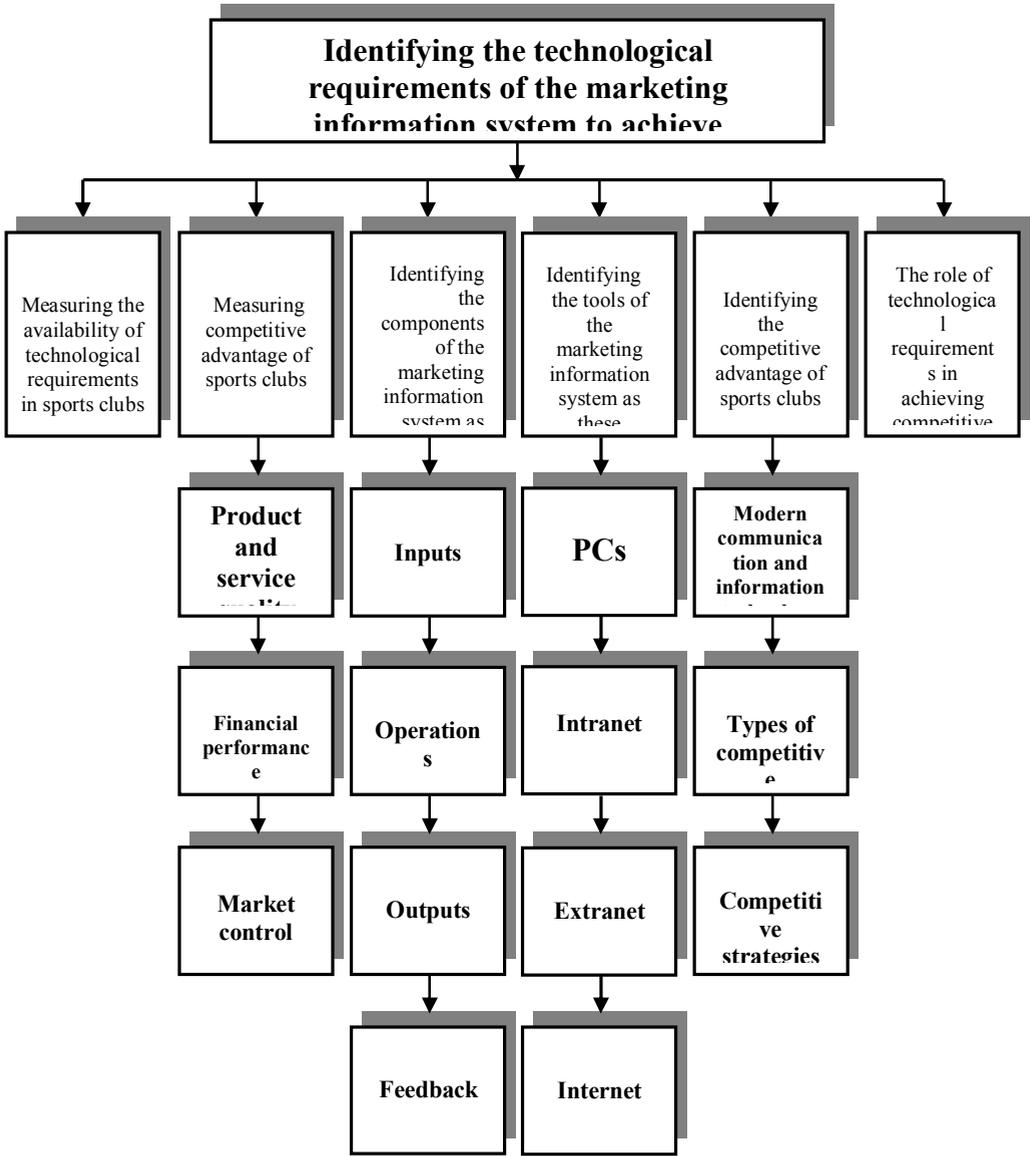


Fig.(1): The Recommended Model for Technological Requirements of the Marketing Information System to Achieve Competitive Advantage of Sports Clubs

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