

Social perceptions of the Chilean National Soccer Team as a brand

Percepciones sociales de la Selección Chilena de Fútbol como marca

Percepções sociais da Seleção Chilena de Futebol como marca

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ARTICLE



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Abstract

The sporting successes achieved by the Chilean National Soccer Team in 2015 and 2016 allow us to distinguish the changes in the perceptions of Chileans regarding La Roja. Based on the consideration of this team as a brand, it was concluded that it has a high symbolic degree in terms of a unifying element of Chilean society, which is considered fragmented. For this study, 2,410 face to face surveys were conducted in Santiago de Chile with people between 10 and 80 years of age, which were segmented based on the socioeconomic groups of the country.

KEYWORDS

Chile, National Soccer Team, Brand, Perceptions, Aaker.

Resumen

Los éxitos deportivos alcanzados por la Selección Nacional de Fútbol de Chile en los años 2015 y 2016 permiten distinguir los cambios en las percepciones de los chilenos respecto a La Roja. A partir de la consideración de este equipo como una marca, se concluyó que posee un alto grado simbólico en cuanto a elemento de unión de la sociedad chilena, a la que se considera como fragmentada. Para este estudio se

realizaron 2.410 encuestas cara a cara en Santiago de Chile a personas de entre 10 y 80 años, que fueron segmentadas a partir de los grupos socioeconómicos que conforman el país.

PALABRAS CLAVE:

Chile, Selección Nacional de Fútbol, Marca, Percepciones, Aaker.

Resumo

Os sucessos esportivos alcançados pela Seleção Chilena de Futebol em 2015 e 2016 permitem distinguir as mudanças nas percepções dos chilenos em relação a La Roja. A partir da consideração desta equipe como marca, concluiu-se que ela possui um alto grau simbólico em termos de um elemento unificador da sociedade chilena, que é considerada fragmentada. Para este estudo, foram realizadas 2.410 pesquisas presenciais em Santiago do Chile com pessoas entre 10 e 80 anos, as quais foram segmentadas com base nos grupos socioeconômicos que compõem o país.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Chile, Seleção Nacional de Futebol, Marca, Percepções, Aaker.

1. INTRODUCTION

Chile's qualification for the 2014 World Cup in Brazil marked a milestone in national sport. For the first time in history it was possible to attend a World Cup consecutively without having the advantage of being the host. In this way, an insurmountable barrier was broken for the Chilean team. This historical fact not only encompassed a sports dimension, but also attracted a high degree of attention in Chilean society. Thus, the degree of engagement, a relationship built on the basis of a series of attributes and positive experiences that allow the development of strong ties of commitment (Belair-Gagnon et al., 2019) and loyalty towards a product or services (Brodie et al., 2013), transformed it into one of the most recognized brands in the country (Tapia, 2019).

According to the statistics of the South American Football Confederation¹, La Roja (as the national team is called locally), was the team that brought the most public to the stadiums during the last qualifying rounds with 351,440 spectators. An average of 43,930 people per match left behind the figures of Colombia, Uruguay and Argentina in the ranking. This social phenomenon that has awakened the Chilean team in the country has been studied from different perspectives and dimensions. Some authors studied it from nationalism (Santa Cruz, 2010), others from politics (Hite, 2004; Matamala, 2001), others from marketing (Feller Villanueva, 2006), and even from an economic point of view (Sertsios, 2007).

This research studies the different public perceptions regarding the sporting successes achieved by the national team between 2015 and 2016, the most successful time in its his-

tory. This period offers the possibility of distinguishing and recognizing different age and socio-economic impressions regarding the personality of this brand. It is also interesting to study this successful national team as a symbol of cohesion between the different socioeconomic groups in a Chilean society that, despite the notable advances in recent decades in poverty reduction, is considered unequal both socially and economically (UNDP, 2017) and with a deep discomfort towards the elites (CEP, 2016; Peña, 2020).

For this, 2,410 people belonging to the different age and socioeconomic segments of the country were surveyed face to face. All this, a few months after La Roja won the Copa América Centenario championship held in the United States of America, a tournament that was held to celebrate 100 years of this competition and in which the best teams on the continent participated.

2. LA ROJA AS A BRAND

As Anderson (1993) points out, nations are imaginary communities united by ties that give their citizens a sense of belonging and identity and make them feel part of a whole. As Santos (2003) and Alabarces (2003) confirmed, one of the generators of such ties in Latin America is the national soccer teams.

Soccer, the stadium, the game itself and everything that happens around it before, during and after the moment of competition generally takes on a ritualistic and, according to some, almost religious meaning (Acuña & Acuña, 2016). As Villena (2003, p.26) points out, soccer "acts as a public arena" in the process of building social and cultural identities of different origins and levels.

¹ <https://www.foxsports.com.mx/news/125153-la-roja-la-que-llevo-mas-publico>

For this reason, a range of dimensions is opened by which a national team of a country can be studied, one of them being to understand it as a brand.

The personality of the brand plays a fundamental role when making a choice (Hernández et al. 2018) and can be vital in the success or failure of a product, service or entertainment activity, since it allows consumers to connect and build ideally long-lasting relationships that are difficult to break (Doyle, 1990; Rather et al., 2018).

One of the first researchers to study the importance of the brand from the psychological point of view was Allport (1961), who made a parallel between a brand and a person. Thus, the characteristics of the brand and its behaviors could be easily recognized by consumers. The relationship between the two would depend on the identification that they were able to establish over time. Aaker and Biel (1993), along the same lines, affirm that an organization can have and maintain good relationships with its clients if it manages to work its personality well with the aim of gradually improving its valuation and recognition in the market. Blackett (2009) goes a step further by arguing that the most powerful brands are those built from the foundation of trust that comes from the consumer experience.

For Plummer (2000), the personality of the brand is not something purely physical or functional, but rather that brands can represent values and acquire characteristics of human personality. They can then be described as young, close, modern, etc. Even authors such as Sundar and Noseworthy (2016) establish that these characteristics of the brand personality can positively affect different aspects of the consumer.

This situation is relevant in the case of sport and, especially, in football, the essence of which

depends to a large extent on intangible feelings. These sensations at the same time are associated with a series of symbols, names and people that represent a country or a certain team (Gladden et al., 1998). Furthermore, the relationship between fans and their favorite teams or clubs is based on identity and belonging (Boyle & Magnusson, 2007). That is, many of them describe themselves as belonging to the community due to their participation in the group (Demiray & Burnaz, 2019). This means being part of a crowd that seeks the same goals and results, but it also means differentiating themselves from a simple spectator (Groeppe-Klein et al., 2008), since becoming a fan is having deeper connections with the team of choice (Gray & Wert-Gray, 2012; Zillmann & Paulus, 1993).

One of the greatest exponents in the field of brand personality is Aaker (1997), who developed a theoretical frame of reference in which he determined the number and nature of the dimensions of a brand that would be valid to compare, study and analyze its effects in a methodical and scientific way. Currently, there are more than 7,500 academic papers that have used this methodology in different products and services around the world.

The instrument of Aaker (1997) allows to identify five dimensions (sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness), which group a series of features (Figure 1) that make it possible to establish the interaction between the brand and the consumer through the attribution of personality features (Escobar & Mateluna, 2016). Furthermore, the model of Aaker (1997) highlights the importance of building powerful brands based on identity and how it can be developed.

This list of variables makes it possible to measure different aspects in a systematic way and

allows to determine the correlations between personality, preference and use by consumers. Study the emotions that a certain brand evokes in people allows to know, for example, if the levels of trust and loyalty increase or decrease (Chernatony, 1997; Fournier, 1994).

According to Aaker (1997) this learning would contribute to a general understanding of the symbolic use of brands, since it would provide a vision of the variables that influence the personality of the brand (Escobar & Mateluna, 2016).

A study by Carlson et al. (2009) on sports brands discovered that the dimensions associated with health and success are associated with the identification that people have with their team, since once the consumer is recognized as part of a team, the associated expenses (i.e. merchandising) tend to increase. While Pan and Phua (2020) confirmed that the good performance of the team produced positive effects on the trust and loyalty of the club's sponsoring brand.

last qualifying matches for the 2018 World Cup, which Chile finally did not qualify for.

After applying the conceptual framework of Aaker (1997), Braunstein and Ross (2010) reached the conclusion that knowing the personality of the brand allows sports organizations to establish differentiating strategies from competitors and, in this way, allocate resources towards promotion in those dimensions that need changes or strengthening of certain aspects. Likewise, it allows to know if the sponsorships to which the sports organization intends to associate have the desired connection.

Lee & Cho (2009) explored which brands and sporting events fit the best. The results included nearly 400 people and showed that the brand pairing of "honesty" and "diligence" produced the best relationship between the brand, the event and the consumers. While Karjaluoto et al., (2016) established that the identification of ice hockey fans is related to loyalty and years of relationship. In fewer years, the personality of the brand becomes more relevant.

Kin et al., (2012) after studying brands and sports concluded that a better understanding of brand personality allows sports organizations to more successfully monitor their effectiveness and market positioning in order to know how consumers evolve and in that way move with them. Förster (2011) highlights the importance of this union because it is the only way to create a solid identity that allows it to be recognized by people, with the challenge that the fans of that team or club get actively involved with the brand (Tsordia et al., 2018).

Couvelaere and Richelieu (2005) conclude that the development and implementation of a brand strategy in the case of soccer teams are correlated with the sporting results they obtain, but that variables such as proximity and engagement are also relevant. For this reason, thouthou-

Figure 1

Brand Personality Model



Note: Aaker (1997)

The same happens with the transmission of events that achieve a larger audience. This can be clearly observed in Chile, given that when the National Soccer Team plays, the television channels manage to obtain their highest ratings. During the last Confederations Cup played in Russia in 2017, the broadcasts were around 60 points (Time Ibope) as well as the

sands of fans can be seen in football stadiums cheering on their team regardless of whether it is losing or not at the top of the standings.

3. CHILE AND ITS SOCIAL REALITY

With the opening of the economy and since the return of democracy in the early 1990s, Chile has experienced remarkable development with a GDP per capita that is the highest in Latin America and exceeds USD 20,000 (World Bank, 2019). This has allowed a notable decrease in poverty, which currently reaches 10% of Chileans, with only Uruguay being the country in the region that shows the best results in this area (ECLAC, 2019).

At the institutional level and according to Freedom House (2018), Chile not only ranks as one of the Latin American countries with the greatest political and civil freedom, but also, and according to Transparency International (2019), is the second country in the region after Uruguay with the lowest perception of corruption, positioning it among the 30 nations with the best results worldwide in this regard. Chile joined the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 2010, considered as the body that groups developed countries, being the first South American nation to do so.

These achievements at the economic and institutional level must be contrasted with the high levels of socioeconomic inequality that still persist in Chilean society (World Bank, 2019). As UNDP (2017) points out on inequality in Chile:

In Chile, saying that the country is unequal is obvious. Inequality is part of its historical physiognomy, a structural feature of the social order from its beginnings to the present day. For the inhabitants it is an essential element

of how they understand the country where they live and the position they occupy in society. (UNDP, 2017, p. 17)

These differences translate, for example, into the fact that 77% of Chileans believe that the conflict between rich and poor is strong or very strong; 77% indicate that they do not trust other people (Latinobarómetro, 2017). As the report by the Centro de Estudios Públicos (2016) explains, this inequality has resulted in constant discomfort among the population, not only with the country's institutions, but also among Chileans.

4. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research is to investigate what perceptions Chileans have regarding their national team and what explains the great interest and connection that the public had immediately after they won the two Copa América titles. Likewise, the symbolism of La Roja was analyzed as a unifying element of Chilean society, which is considered as fragmented.

Through a survey designed and based on the personality model of Aaker (1997), it was sought to identify and evaluate the attributes with which the Chilean public recognized the national team in its period of greatest sporting success. This research is based on the following questions:

Q1: The image of the Chilean soccer team is better than the image of the country.

Q2: The lower socioeconomic groups feel more represented by the Chilean soccer team.

Q3: Children and young people are more optimistic that the Chilean soccer team will always have better results.

In this way, 2,410 people between 10 and 80 years of age located in the Metropolitan Region and belonging to different socioeconomic segments according to AIM distribution were surveyed face-to-face. This number was weighted according to the specific weight of each segment in the population (see Table 1 and 2).

Table 1

Population by age in the Metropolitan Region

Age group		Man	Woman
Children	13-18	287.968	278.790
Youngsters	19-25	393.930	381.997
Young adult	26-40	854.643	858.526
Adult	41-65	1.056.156	970.897
Elderly	66-70	111.436	305.517
		2.704.133	2.795.727

Note: Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas (2018)

Table 2

Segmentation by commune

Communes representative of the socioeconomic segment		% of total population
ABC1	Prov - LC - Vitacura	9%
C2	La Florida - Maipú - San Miguel	20%
C3	San Bernardo - Est. Central - Cerrillos	33%
D	Prov - Ñuñoa	32%
E	La Pintana	6%

Note: AIM

Participation in this study was voluntary and it was not necessary for people to provide their personal or contact information. Therefore, it was impossible to later identify or individualize their responses. Neither was any payment made. The participation of minors was in the presence of their parents and/or an adult.

Only the researchers in charge had access to the data and the results were kept on a compu-

ter with a password to which no one who was not part of this project had access.

The interviewers asked their questions using mobile devices that were loaded with software that allowed the information to be stored directly in a data cloud, which could only be accessed with a specific username and password in order to protect the confidentiality of these and to avoid later errors in the tabulation process.

The people who carried out the survey received training on how to handle the devices and the software. In addition, this program had a tutorial that could be consulted online.

Before starting the survey, it was piloted among university students to corroborate the understanding of the questions, that the objectives were met and that the technical process was adequate and worked correctly.

The questionnaire based on the dimensions of Aaker (1997) and that has been used in different investigations in Spanish (Martínez et al., 2005; Petroll et al., 2008), consisted of 20 questions with a Likert scale from 1 to 7. This scale facilitates responses in Chile because it is the same scale that is used for grades in school and higher education (university and technical).

5. RESULTS

The results presented below must be understood from the fact that there is a high identification of the sample with the Chilean team. Over 70% of all socioeconomic groups and more than 80% in group D indicated that they felt represented with the soccer team (Table 3).

Table 3

"When the National Team plays, do you feel represented?"
Affirmative answers.

Socioeconomic group	
ABC1	71%
C2	71%
C3	73%
D	84%
E	73%

This same representation also occurs according to age ranges. From children to older adults, they showed an important identification with the national team in all cases in more than 70% (Table 4).

Table 4

"When the National Team plays, do you feel represented?" Affirmative answers.

Age group	%
Adulto mayor	76
Adulto	75
Adulto joven	78
Jóvenes	78
Niños	79

It is this high identification, both of the socioeconomic and age groups, which allows establishing certain associations between the country and the National Team. Successful, efficient, hard-working, authentic, leader, strong and tough were the main features, of the 15 that the Aaker (1997) model contemplates, with which the total sample identified Chile and La Roja (Table 5).

In general, it can be seen that the image of the country and the national team are similar, but there is a stronger brand recognition in the national team. In addition, it can be established that although the images are similar, a difference of 24 percentage points is found with respect to honesty. Something similar happens between the image of Chile and the Chilean team with the adjectives successful, leader and efficient with 28, 18 and 17 points of difference, respectively.

This information answers the question posed regarding the image of the Chilean soccer team being better than that of the country. This is reflected, as mentioned above, in the massive attendance at soccer matches and in the high rating of the match broadcasts. In contrast, the image of the country has become more unstable in recent years. Since 2013, there has been a significant decline in those who believe that the country is progressing (UC-GFK, 2018) (Figure 2).

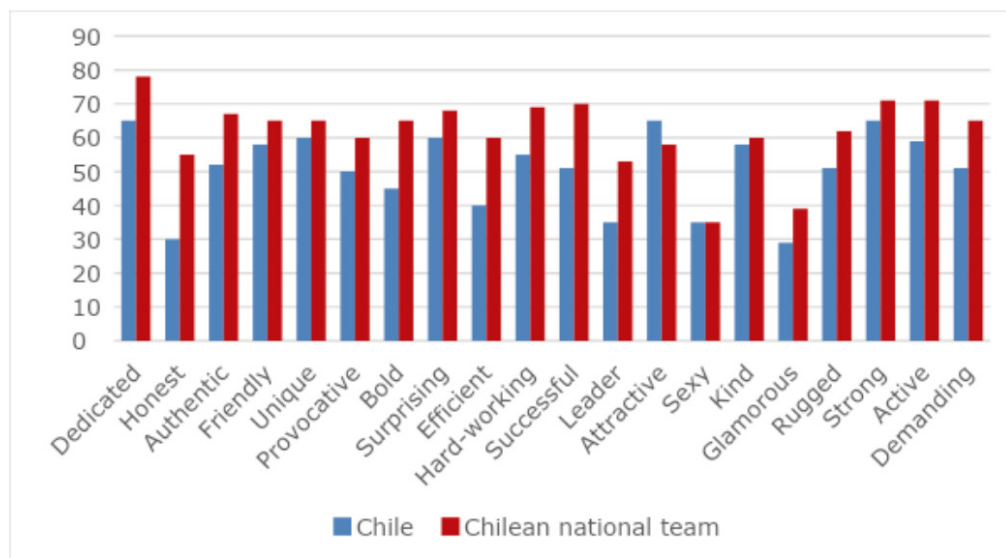
Table 5

Main personality traits of Aaker applied to Chile and their national team

	ABC1	C2	C3	D	E
Country Personality	Successful	Efficient	Hard-working	Hard-working	Strong
	Leader	Authentic	Dedicated	Successful	Rugged
National Team Personality	Dedicated	Efficient	Efficient	Hard-working	Successful
	Leader	Leader	Leader	Leader	Leader

Figure 2

Country image vs. Chilean soccer team image



Among the different socioeconomic groups there was consensus in characterizing the national team as a leader, a feature that only the ABC1 group considered also applied to Chile. This could be related to the fact that this segment identified its socioeconomic situation with the sporting successes of the national team. This is also the case with the appreciation of the C2 group, who considered both the country and the team efficient.

On the other hand, it can be noted that the lower income socioeconomic group used characteristics typical of an adversity environment to rate the country, although it maintained an appreciation of the national team as successful. Different was what happened with group D, which characterized both Chile and the team as "hard-working".

A Chi-squared test was performed for each pair of variables from Chile and the Chilean national team, the result was significant in each of the cases.

Another personality trait consulted was with which animal the soccer team was identified. There was agreement that the dog better represented the qualities of La Roja. The choice of this animal can have a double explanation. The first, regarding the fact that one of the most important players on the team, and who has a biography of self-improvement, is nicknamed The Pitbull. The second, and also plausible, is the symbolism of the stray dog that must manage daily to survive and is commonly called as *quiltro*, which means dog in *Mapudungún*. Other animals that also stood out were two of the fiercest predators in nature, the lion and the tiger.

It can be established that these personality traits associated with the national team are a reflection of its sports performance in recent years. Thus, groups such as ABC1 and C3 believe

that the national team will always win (Table 6).

Table 6

"When the national team plays we think that it will always win." Affirmative answers.

Segment	%
ABC1	56
C2	38
C3	52
D	38
E	48

This is because current Chilean society is more optimistic about this team than others in the past, especially the new generations. According to Table 6, the children of all socioeconomic groups are the most optimistic with the current national team, which can be explained by the fact that they did not experience the defeats of previous periods (Table 7).

This optimism translates into the groups that have only lived through this winning stage of the national team were the most confident that the team would reach the final of the 2018 World Cup (Table 7). Children and young people, with 31% and 22% respectively, had more favorable expectations about the future results of the team, while adults and elderly, with 16% and 19% respectively, had lower confidence.

Figure 3

"Are you more optimistic today than before about the performance of the national soccer team?" Percentage of affirmative answers according to socioeconomic group and age.

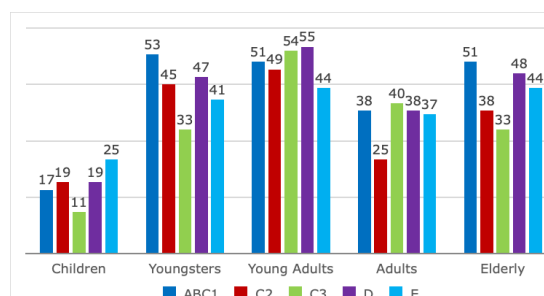
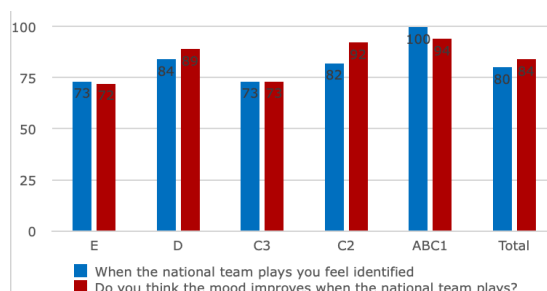


Table 7*Expectations of the national team for the World Cup.*

	Does not classify	First round	Round of 16	Quarter finals	Semi-final	Final
Elderly	25%	29%	24%	20%	20%	19%
Adult	19%	24%	18%	21%	16%	16%
Young adult	10%	10%	9%	13%	15%	12%
Youngster	22%	22%	23%	27%	25%	22%
Children	24%	15%	26%	18%	24%	31%

Regarding the second research question, if the lower socioeconomic groups feel more represented by the Chilean soccer team, this showed negative results. The highest socioeconomic group is the one that feels more represented by the national team, followed by group D and those that feel less represented are groups E and C3 (Figure 4). In general, it can be seen that all socioeconomic groups claim to feel represented by the national team. The same trend occurs on whether they believe that the mood improves when the national team plays. Again, the ABC1 group is the one that agrees most with this statement (Figure 4). When performing a Chi-squared test, it can be seen that for both questions the differences are statistically significant at 95% confidence ($p < 0.05$).

Figure 4*Representation and mood by socioeconomic group*

When analyzing the third research question on whether children and young people are more optimistic that the Chilean soccer team will always have better results, it can be verified through the following results.

Children and youngsters, with 41% and 45% respectively, are the ones who most considered that the 2015 Copa América champion team has been the best in the history of Chilean football. It should be noted that older adults also considered the team that ranked third in the 1962 World Cup, which was held in the country, as one of the best (Table 8).

When asked when the Chilean team plays, you have the same answer, the rival will always win. It was found that people's expectations are statistically different depending on age ($P < 0.05$, $T = -2.019$). The youngest have higher expectations about the national team than the older ones. When we consulted them about optimism compared to their parents, it was found that the differences were not statistically significant ($P > 0.05$, $T = -0.228$), that is, there are no statistically significant differences according to the age of the people when faced with the phrase "Your parents were more optimistic than you".

Table 8*"What has been the best soccer team in Chile?"*

	1962 World Cup	1974 World Cup	1982 World Cup	1987 Copa Amé- rica	1998 World Cup	2010 World Cup	2014 World Cup	2015 Copa Amé- rica	2016 Copa Amé- rica
Elderly	27%	2%	4%	2%	7%	9%	8%	29%	12%
Adult	10%	4%	6%	1%	4%	8%	11%	36%	23%
Young adult	7%	2%	3%	1%	5%	7%	15%	42%	18%
Youngs- ters	4%	1%	2%	2%	4%	8%	16%	45%	18%
Children	4%	2%	1%	1%	3%	13%	14%	41%	21%

Table 9*"Do you think that when the Chilean team plays, it does not matter the rival, they will always win?"*

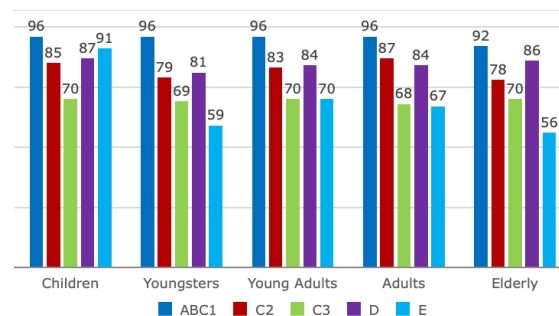
		N	Mean	Standard deviation
Age	Sí	1036	34,8	20,3
	No	1374	36,5	20,4

Table 10*"Were your parents more optimistic than you?"*

		N	Mean	Standard deviation
Age	Sí	970	35,7	20,3
	No	1439	35,9	20,4

This sporting confidence regarding the national team can be taken to social levels, considering that it serves as a bond between the different socioeconomic and age groups. 79% of those consulted answered yes to the question of whether "the national team unites us as a country". However, there was a considerable difference between the more distant socioeconomic groups. In all the age ranges of the ABC1 group, it was considered that national team unites us by more than 90%, while in group E the percentages were lower, reaching less than

60% in young people and older adults, except in children who exhibited a percentage similar to ABC1.

Figure 5*"Does the national soccer team unite us as a country?" Percentage of affirmative answers.*

70% of the sample estimated that the national team allows to put aside social differences. When crossing the socioeconomic groups with the age ranges, the result was that ABC1 was the segment that believed the most that the national team allows to set aside social differences at all ages. While the adults in group D had a more negative position regarding this question (Figure 6).

Figure 6

"Does the national soccer team put aside social differences?" Percentage of affirmative answers.

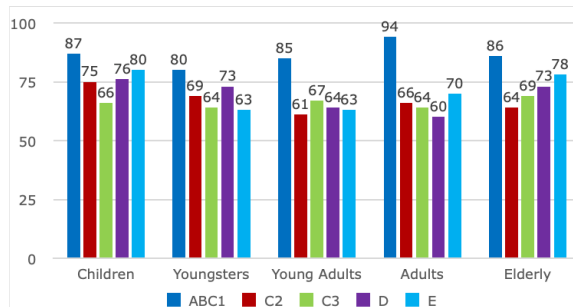
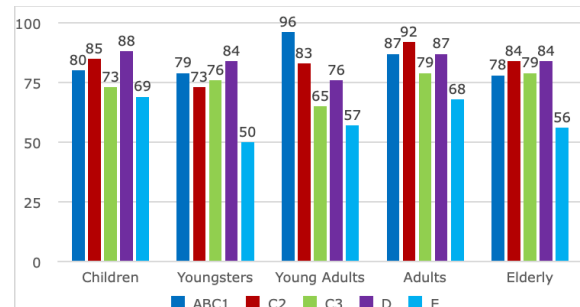


Figure 7

"Does the national soccer team put aside social differences?" Percentage of affirmative answers.



It is important to note that both in the question of whether the national team unites the country and in the one that asks if it leaves aside social differences, it was the ABC1 group in all age ranges that showed a greater positive trend, while in the others groups was lower despite the fact that there was significant approval of these items.

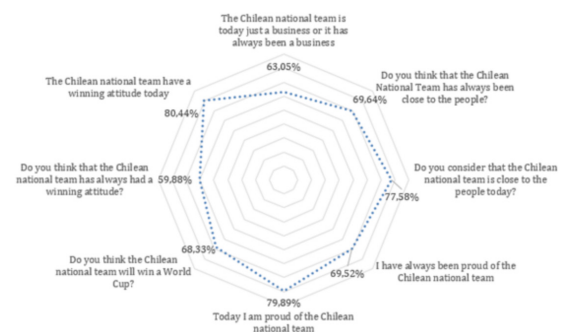
The social importance of the national team also leads to symbolic aspects related to the identity of the country being associated with it. Generally, the teams of the national soccer teams sing the national anthem before starting the game. 79% of those surveyed answered yes to the question of whether this produces emotion. However, when crossing the answers of socioeconomic groups with the age range, group E at all ages indicated less emotionality with this song, reaching only 50% in young people. Among the different causes that could explain this last piece of information, for example, could be the youth's detachment from tradition, an issue that does not properly concern this research (Figure 7).

Regarding a series of attitudes and according to the total sample, it was possible to notice that the soccer team has generated positive attitudes towards it. Chileans feel prouder of La Roja and consider it closer to the people than before. Likewise, the national team was consi-

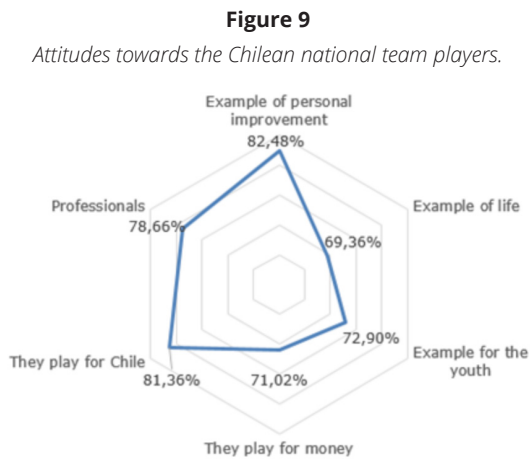
dered more successful than the previous ones: 80% considered it more successful today, while 59% indicated that it had always been successful. This optimistic vision of the national team is reflected in the fact that 68% believe that one day they will win the Soccer World Cup. The negative aspect was that a high percentage, as in the past, still consider it as a business.

Figure 8

Attitudes towards the Chilean national team.



By personalizing the National Team in its players, the appreciation of the total sample was positive. Thus, 72% considered them as role models for the youth, 82% considered them as examples of self-improvement and 81% believed that they play for the country. On the other hand, although 71% considered that they play for money, 78% say that they are professionals.



In a high, but lower proportion, 69% see them as examples of life.

Two variables were created when investigating the sensations generated by the Chilean soccer team. The positive variable is the sum of the variables: passion, happiness, pleasure, love for the country, trust and admiration. The negative variable is the sum of the variables: anger, discontent, sadness, fear, shame, and nerves. This adds the values on the scale from 1 to 5, that is, if a person strongly disagrees with the 6 adjectives, he will have a sum of 6 in the created variable. On the contrary, if a person strongly agrees with all the adjectives, he will have a sum of 30. In the minimum and maximum we see that there are people who strongly disagreed with all the adjectives (they summed 6) and others who strongly agreed with all (they summed 30). The mean for the positives is 22.3 and for the negatives 17.6. This means that the people surveyed

affirm that the national team produces more positive adjectives than negative adjectives be-

Table 11

Sensations generated by the Chilean soccer team

	N	Mini-mum	Maxi-mum	Mean	Standard deviation
Posi-tive	2331	6	30	22,3	4,8
Nega-tive	2339	6	30	17,6	4,4

cause the closer the average is to 30, the more people agreed with the adjectives.

Table 12 shows the correlation between the variables created and age. We see that in both cases the correlation between the variables is negative, however, it is very weak as it is close to 0. When observing the significance we see that it is greater than 0.05, therefore we fail to reject

Table 12

Sensations by age

		Age	Posi-tive	Nega-tive
Age	Pearson correlation coefficient	1	-,032	-,035
	Significant. (bilateral)		,122	,088

our null hypothesis and we see that there is not a linear relationship between the positive and negative variables with age.

6. DISCUSSION

The results obtained in this research reveal the strength as a brand that had the most successful national team of all time among Chileans. Although there are some differences between socioeconomic groups and age groups, the general evaluation of La Roja and the emotions it arouses is enormously positive, which differs

from the image that most of those surveyed have about the country. This is demonstrated by what is stated by Blackket (2009), which establishes that the most powerful brands are those that are built on the basis of trust and experience.

As mentioned, Chile was the country that proportionally brought the most audience to the stadium. It can be said that the high demand and interest in living the experience of seeing the national team live goes hand in hand with the results obtained in this research.

The fervor generated by the Chilean soccer team and the positive aspects and feelings demonstrated in this research could explain why different social and commercial actors seek to associate with this brand. An example of this is the millionaire contract signed in 2017 to acquire their commercial rights, for which 20% more was paid compared to the previous agreement signed five years earlier (Contreras, 2017).

In particular, the study revealed that each socioeconomic level identified the national soccer team and the values it promotes from its particular place of origin, making its positive significance something flexible that corresponds to the reality of each group.

Regarding the age ranges, it was possible to observe that the optimism of each cohort is related to the negative or positive previous experiences. It is for this reason that children and young people are more optimistic, since they have seen and experienced almost exclusively favorable results from the national team. The same does not happen with the older generations, who saw La Roja fail again and again in different competitions (qualifiers, world championships, Copa América, etc.).

Likewise, it was possible to verify that the national team unites Chileans and is a rare element

of social cohesion in today's coexistence. In this sense, and taking into account the high levels of inequality and mistrust in Chile, La Roja must be understood not only in what concerns merely sports, but as a brand that promotes good coexistence and is a bond between classes, social and age groups of the country.

These favorable attributes carry over to the players as well as they are perceived as role models. The meritocratic aspects of their lives are highlighted, this dimension being a relevant aspect for Chilean society since meritocracy has been established as a relevant aspect for social cohesion (Siles, 2018).

7. CONCLUSIONS AND PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

From the research questions on which this research was based, it is concluded:

1. It is possible to establish that the image of the country and the national team are similar, but there is a stronger brand recognition in the team. This can be explained, on the one hand, by the successes of La Roja between the years 2014 to 2016, and on the other, to the negative views of the country and its progress in recent years.
2. Although the difference is small, it is the higher socioeconomic groups that feel most represented by the national team. This could be explained by a kind of assimilation of the team's success with that of their own financial achievements.
3. Children and youngsters are more optimistic about the national team and its triumphs. This is because the new generations have only witnessed the achievements of this team without having in mind the de-

feats of the past teams, as it happens with the older groups.

Undoubtedly, specifying the perceptions of the Chilean population regarding the most popular soccer team in the country allows establishing a series of practical applications:

1. Regarding public policies, understanding the perceptions that La Roja generates in society opens the door to use it to promote or develop proposals in sports or healthy living, among other areas. In this sense, the study allows targeting these future policies according to age range and socioeconomic level, improving their precision.
2. Regarding brand, the sponsors of the national team will have access to a more limited profile of the perceptions generated by the team, being able to orient their advertising campaigns in order to achieve greater impact. From the inverse perspective of the national team as an institution, having knowledge of its scope in the age and socioeconomic groups allows it to know its value as a brand.
3. Regarding social phenomenon, for countries with high degrees of economic inequality and distrust such as Chile, having symbols

of union such as the soccer team allows them to generate socio-cultural policies aimed at improving coexistence and trust among citizens.

In future research and as part of its limitations, the sample of participants could be expanded to more regions of the country to verify if the feelings generated by La Roja are similar in other cities. Likewise, a comparison could be generated of whether the perception changes when the team is sportingly successful to when it is no longer so. The sample can also be extended to local soccer teams, to find out if the attributes of these individual brands are similar to those of the so-called “everyone’s team”.

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