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Explaining the Price of Talent: Football Player Valuation in the Premier League and La Liga

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Abstract

This paper aims to determine the most important factors which determine the market values of professional footballers, and to compare these factors regarding the two elite football leagues of the world (Premier League and La Liga). The focus of this study will be to look at the physical, demographic, performance and experience-based characteristics of professional footballers that can be measured and compared among leagues. The final data set consisted of 218 players who competed in the Premier League and 117 players who competed in La Liga. Descriptive statistics, independent sample t-tests, and regression analysis were conducted to evaluate the data. The results of this study showed that there is a statistically significant difference in the mean market value between Premier League and La Liga players, as the average market value of Premier League players is higher than the average market value of La Liga players. The findings of the study support that the market value of professional footballers is determined by a combination of specific player attributes and league-specific methods for determining the market value of player assets. The statistical results from the regression demonstrated that there was a statistically significant relationship between age and market value (negative), and between experience and goals/assists per game and market value (positive). In addition, there were different relationships between each of the variables in both the Premier League and La Liga. Experience and top speed had significantly larger coefficients in La Liga, and goals/assists per game had significantly larger coefficients in the Premier League. Overall, these statistics support that market valuation for soccer players is based on past performance, experience, and their physical attributes.

Keywords: *Football player valuation; La Liga; Market value; Performance metrics; Premier League*

1. Introduction

1.1. General Background

In modern football, player valuation has become the ultimate mechanism for recruitment, budgeting, and strategic sporting goals (Cohen & Risk, 2023). Since the football world has transformed

into a multi-billion-dollar global industry, players have become assets to stakeholders at every level of every organisation (Poli, 2010). Valuation has become a necessary part of contract negotiations, squad shuffling, salary requirements, and future investment considerations (Bell et al., 2023). If valuations are inaccurate, clubs run the risk of becoming ineffective in an increasingly governed economic world of football (Prinz & Thiem, 2021). Relative to increasingly modernised observations, clubs can now investigate player performance beyond game-based understandings gained from scouting or watching a player play a single match (Ribeiro et al., 2025). With tracking technology, players' speed and efficiency of passing, interceptions and defensive work, pressing runs and movements off the ball are now quantifiable. Instead of compiling general statistics about a player based on goals and assists only, metrics like expected goals and passing are gained through data-driven analytics (Pappalardo et al., 2019). This technology allows analysts to paint a more detailed picture of reliability, game IQ and projected potential. However, while advanced metrics embody one component of valuation through a quantitative measure, factors like age, position, and experience also affect how much a player is expected to improve or how reliable they will be in the future (Hill et al., 2025). For example, younger players with potential often carry premiums, while older, more experienced players are valued for their leadership qualities; thus, both measurable components, clearly displayed by advanced metrics and unique qualities led by careful player assessments, play an equally important role in valuations (Hill et al., 2025).

Surrounding the projected performance value of players are additional physical, situational, and invisible factors that complicate and contribute to a true valuation of any footballer (Bell et al., 2023). For instance, physical strengths, including speed, stamina, strength, and positional options, impact athletic contributions but also relationship advantages in specific tactical systems and longevity (Modrić et al., 2022). Moreover, situational components like years on contract, club stature, national team and fame, and league stature add to perceived valuation, as factors include reliability, competitive nature and visibility in any prospective market (Bell et al., 2023). Furthermore, factors like media attention, personal branding, international appeal and marketability also play a large role in impacting a player's valuation, as they elevate even the smallest of players to new heights compared to what would normally be expected based solely on performance. In the reality of football today, the present research seeks to define components of player value in an organised manner, whereas in reality, many other factors come into play, which can completely change a player's valuation. Therefore, research finds significant connections between advanced metrics and market valuation.

1.2. Specific Background

The literature provides several examples of studies that have explored what influences the valuation of footballers within markets. In the same area, Antoniades et al. (2021) analysed the determinants of the market value of the elite forwards data. Performance measures, strength of club, age, and goodwill, which included the effect of intangible reputations, were all taken into account as variables of interest. The results of the regression emphasised that performance and team success were major determinants of variation, but reputation and marketability provided a premium to the best forwards. The research has concluded that, in addition to performance, intangibles such as brand value and elite status have a strong impact on the market value of most valuable players in the market. Similarly, with information on La Liga, another paper by He et al. (2015) has examined the relationships between performance metrics and market values on Transfermarkt. Integrating the available data, the authors used the regression and the LASSO technique to select the most predictive attributes. The findings indicated that the playing time, goals, assists and total performance ratings increased market values considerably, but the differences were still noticeable because of the effect of other factors such as age, contract status, and team prestige. The paper concluded that value is a major motivator of performance; however, market values tend to have extra on-field variables.

The above-mentioned studies are consistent with the findings of another study conducted by Válek & Wild (2024). With a particular interest in the transfers of Ekstraklasa in Poland of at least 1 million euros, this research was able to compare how the variables of age, position, achievements, and club finances had an impact on the value of players. Regression analysis revealed that young players, especially those below 21 years, were charged the highest fees, because clubs favored long term growth. Also, increased revenues and wage expenditure by the selling club, as well as higher valuations, were positively correlated with other variables, whereas heavy spending on transfers by clubs was negatively associated with valuations. The results have highlighted that player characteristics and club economics influence transfer fees, but they might not be comparable to those in the Big Five leagues due to differences in market size. Subsequently, a systematic review of the literature undertaken by Bryson et al. (2024) synthesised the evidence from 29 empirical studies and confirmed that the four primary determinants of football player valuation are age, playing position, performance statistics, playing time, club prestige, and popularity. A set of recurrent factors was identified during the review: age (non-linear effect), playing position, performance statistics, playing time, club prestige, and popularity/marketability indicators. It was observed that the contribution of forwards and attackers was always the one that was most identified as having weaknesses in the data comparability, excessive attention to Big Five leagues, and the lack of integration of modern performance analytics, which calls for further, more consistent and comprehensive studies.

From a different perspective, Bell et al. (2023) test whether English football players are overvalued and receive disproportionate wages compared to foreign players in European top leagues. Employing an extensive dataset, the authors conclude that English footballers receive a value premium of approximately 40% and a wage exclusive of 25%, which is mediated by the wealth of the EPL, characteristics of the typical position played by an English player, relative performance, and the limited amount of English players playing abroad. However, some findings, such as the valuation and wages connected with English forwards and midfielders, are not mediated by observable traits. Furthermore, the paper attempts to deduce a series of hypotheses to comprehend this phenomenon, with mixed reception to popular theories. Therefore, it is important to select the most accurate method to estimate the market valuation. To evaluate the same, a research by Jacinto (2025) developed econometric models to estimate a player's transfer value and the probability of a transfer in the Big Five European leagues. The model used information from more than 2,000 previous transfers to include age, length of contract, performance, international status, and club strength, but it excluded rumours as the inputs. Findings indicated that the method was able to predict probable transfer candidates and make realistically accurate valuations; age, contract situation and player performance were among the most effective predictors. This model was also helpful in benchmarking, but odd or tactical transfers were difficult to forecast.

Similarly, another paper presents a new player valuation method for European footballers by applying a combination of financial modelling and network-based performance assessment (Cohen & Risk, 2023). Instead of simply assessing a player’s value through statistics like goals scored or assists, the authors create a performance share for each player through a passing-based Markov chain model that assesses how much time and effort each player puts into possessions resulting in shots. Armed with this performance share, the authors apply it to a financial modelling framework where team revenues and player performance evolve. By approaching player contract valuation with a similar mathematical derivation as financial pricing, this model seeks to provide teams with more accurate understandings of whether a player is overvalued, undervalued or offers rational expected valuations in the first place. Especially valuable for contract negotiations and intelligent comparison across players and transfer options, the in-depth application of the model and study with Premier League players notes how these valuations either align or diverge from reality to situate the model as a better support system for football decision-making.

Moreover, Hill et al. (2025) seek to encompass a comprehensive methodology of valuating footballers stemming from Damodaran's four primary valuation methods (intrinsic, relative, real options, and probabilistic), with a disclaimer that the most practically applicable means of implementation is the one that best fits a nation's current economic and athletic realities. The existing football literature on valuation leaves much to be desired – limited transparency of funding, the disconnect between price and value in the transfer window, and an intangible quality which naturally complicates performance-based valuation – and as such, a united approach to appeal to academics and practitioners, regardless of performance goal and supporting evidence, will help the fragmented findings in other disciplines of finance and render them more relevant here for any researcher depending on their study on their championed performance goal and supporting data, as otherwise, all four are legitimate regardless. More unconventional relative methods used in this field of study expand possibilities for more research to be done in the future.

Specifically for UEFA Champions League matches, Modric et al. (2022) explore the relationship between a team's running performance and its technical-tactical performance. The authors measure distance covered and high-intensity runs, both cumulatively and whilst in possession. Then, they compare teams that ran a lot versus teams that ran little and quantify various technical-tactical outcomes from passes and shots to successful pressing actions and entries into the opponent's box. In results, running volume measures are not significant, but possession-based running performance is strongly and positively related to successful attacking actions, which means more chances generated, passing combinations and an increased rate of pressures induced by those who were running. Therefore, the study concludes that physical performance (work) during attacking phases is indirectly linked to successful attacking phases at the highest levels of competition because running in possession of the ball creates space and opportunities, which encourages more successful phenomena.

Finally, the study by Prinz and Thiem (2021) models football clubs as long-term value-maximising enterprises in which players are not merely production inputs but also financial assets. They argue that clubs that maximise value tend to invest more heavily in talent compared to profit-maximising clubs. When clubs differ in their time goals, with some focusing on long-term profits while others with longer horizons demand more talent, which gives them a competitive edge. Furthermore, the authors find that rising player transfer fees worsen competitive balance within leagues, whereas higher player wages can improve it by encouraging more widespread investment in talent. More highly rewarded, and the defensive contribution was the one that was always under-rewarded.

Although the studies above demonstrated significant predictive power using these types of models, they relied heavily on financial indicators and aggregate performance metrics. Therefore, the studies provided little integration of physical and tactical performance attributes into their models. This suggests there may be a methodological void in the use of valuation models for estimating football player value, and it supports the need for valuation models that include more detailed on-field metrics, along with market-specific dynamics of each football league.

1.3. Literature Gap and Rationale of the Study

There are a few important gaps in the literature that come up in all of the studies mentioned. First, most of the existing research on valuing football players suggests complicated financial or network-based models for pricing players. However, most of these studies still don't include data on players' performance on the pitch at a tactical or physical level, which means that player value is often not connected to the real actions that affect the outcome of a match. Second, current valuation frameworks often treat clubs as separate entities and don't take into account how changing market conditions, like the effect of inflated transfer markets, changes in competitive balance, or clubs' different time horizons and risk preferences,

affect them. This makes existing models less useful in the real world and less accurate at predicting what will happen in the future.

Such research is extremely relevant due to the impact that player valuation has on football club transfer strategy, budget allocation, recruitment efforts, and day-to-day sustainability in an expensive industry. Therefore, this research aims to assess and evaluate various types of factors that influence player valuation, including physical, tactical, commercial, and club-related factors, to provide a more comprehensive and realistic picture of how player valuation evolves in the current football landscape. As data analysis continues to advance and performance tracking becomes more precise, valuable insights into player valuation must also be comprehensive, transparent, and strategically relevant. Therefore, this research will assist with better decision-making in the football market arena, reducing financial risk.

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Research aim and objectives

The study aims to challenge the relevant important factors that contribute to the market valuation of the football players and the extent to which the factors are operating across the Premier League and the La Liga to draw a comparison and contrast between the results. Moreover, the paper will also be useful in determining whether demographic, physical, experience-related and performance-related attributes are useful in creating market value significance and whether there are varying degrees of significance of existing variables between different leagues. For the same, the following research objectives are laid down.

- To identify the key factors that influence the market valuation of football players
- To evaluate the magnitude of the impact of these factors on the market valuation
- To compare the market valuation of players in different leagues, such as the Premier League and La Liga
- To analyse the impact of various factors on the valuation based on the leagues

2.2. Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses assumed for this research are given below.

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the market valuation between the Premier League and La Liga.

Null Hypothesis 2a: There is no significant partial impact of Age on the market valuation of the players.

Null Hypothesis 2b: There is no significant partial impact of Age on the market valuation of the players under the Premier League.

Null Hypothesis 2c: There is no significant partial impact of Age on the market valuation of the players under La Liga.

Null Hypothesis 3a: There is no significant partial impact of Height on the market valuation of the players.

Null Hypothesis 3b: There is no significant partial impact of Height on the market valuation of the players under the Premier League.

Null Hypothesis 3c: There is no significant partial impact of Height on the market valuation of the players under La Liga.

Null Hypothesis 4a: There is no significant partial impact of Experience on the market valuation of the players.

Null Hypothesis 4b: There is no significant partial impact of Experience on the market valuation of the players under the Premier League.

Null Hypothesis 4c: There is no significant partial impact of Experience on the market valuation of the players under La Liga.

2.3. Data and Variables

The study involves secondary data collected at the cross-section of the 2024- 25 Premier League and La Liga professional football players. The leagues were selected for their global financial and economic significance. In addition, they demonstrate high levels of trading activity and volume, as well as substantial interest arising from their competitive and tactical characteristics. Therefore, the similarity between these two leagues is enough (not overly much) to come up with the comparisons. The sample used for this study consists of 218 Premier League players and 117 LaLiga players. The population that was chosen is the one with active roster players, data accessibility and available participation in the 2024-25. This variation arises from differences in squad composition and match participation across teams, resulting in unequal numbers of observations for players within the same league.

From the literature, it has been identified that demographic, experience and performance-related attributes affect market valuation. Hence, indicators such as Age (in years) and Height (in centimetres) are considered for the demographic factors. Moreover, Experience (in years) is assumed to be the measure of experience. Finally, Goals/Assists per game and Top Speed (in km/h) are accounted for the performance attributes. Since this study examines the magnitude of the impact of these drivers on market valuation, the above-stated variables are considered as the independent variables. The dependent variable is simply the current Market Value (in Euros) of the players. Due to the large number of market valuations, the indicator is converted into natural logs. Hence, the final dependent variable is ln (Market Valuation). The data for Market value in this research was obtained from Transfermarkt and Fotmob. The data for Goals/Assists per game was only collected from Transfermarkt. Finally, the data for age, height, experience, and top speed were gathered from Fotmob only. These two are legitimate peer-based sources in the field of professional football and credible with dependable look-alike data by teams and league observational equity.

2.4. Data Analysis Method

Data assessment is carried out based on descriptive and derived statistics. Descriptive statistics are used and assessed to summarise and understand the characteristics of the data. Moreover, to compare these characteristics between the leagues, descriptive statistics will be acquired using the assistance of a mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum and range to ascertain whether the representatives of the leagues are commonly or rather outliers and in what ways.

Additionally, an independent samples t-test was conducted to examine whether market valuations differ significantly across leagues. Prior to the t-test, Levene's test for equality of variances was applied to assess whether the assumption of homogeneity of variances holds. The results of Levene's test determine whether the standard t-test or the variance-adjusted t-test should be used when evaluating the statistical significance of differences in average market valuations.

Finally, a log-linear multiple regression model is applied to review both the magnitude and the inclination of each of the independent variables on the market value of any specific gamer. The regression equation is as follows:

$$Ln\ (Market\_Value) = a_0 + a_1\, Age + a_2\, Height + a_3\, Top\_speed + a_4\, G/A + a_5\, Experience + e$$

Where a_0 is the constant term, implying that when all the independent variables are zero, then the dependent variable is equal to a_0. Furthermore, a_1, a_2, a_3, a_4, and a_5 are the slope coefficients associated with age, height, top speed, G/A, and experience, respectively.

In this model, a natural log of market value (dependent variable) can be expressed as a judgement of age, height, experience, the number of goals per game, the number of assists per game and maximum top speed. A 1-unit change within the independent variables may be expressed as a change in values expressed as percentages. This type of model is useful in interpretability and also in a manner that automatically adjusts the variation in scales across countries and professions where the model is applied with other comparable data.

3. Results

3.1. Descriptive Analysis

Table 1 represents the descriptive statistics of the variables in the research according to the leagues. On the whole, the mean reveals that players of LaLiga are slightly older ($mean_L$= 28.52, $mean_P$= 27.35) and more experienced ($mean_L$= 10.09, $mean_P$= 9.39) as compared to players of the Premier League. Moreover, the data for La Liga has a higher spread for age (SD_L = 4.88, SD_P = 3.44) and experience (SD_L = 4.60, SD_P = 3.49), as there is a wider range of experience of any length among players. Physically, both leagues are virtually the same in terms of average heights, although once again La Liga is more varied in terms of heights (SD_L = 6.08, SD_P = 5.25), so the stature of a player is more spread in La Liga than it is in the Premier League. In terms of goals and assists per game, Premier League players record a higher average contribution to attacking output than La Liga players ($mean_P$ = 0.25, $mean_L$ = 0.19). The standard deviation is also slightly lower for the Premier League (SD_P = 0.13, SD_L = 0.14), indicating that attacking contributions among Premier League players are more concentrated around the mean and less dispersed than those of La Liga players. The same is true of speed, with the fasting of La Liga players higher on average ($mean_L$ =32.64 km/h, $mean_P$ = 31.01 km/h) and the SD substantially less (SD_L = 1.43, SD_P = 3.11), indicating that La Liga players are faster consistently, whereas the Premier League players have a wide distribution of slow and fast players.

Table 1
Descriptive statistics of the variables according to leagues

Variable	League	Frequency	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Range
Age (years)	Premier League	218	27.35	3.44	21	39	18
	La Liga	117	28.52	4.88	17	42	25
Height (cm)	Premier League	218	181.67	5.25	170	198	28
	La Liga	117	180.98	6.08	169	199	30
Experience (years)	Premier League	218	9.39	3.49	3	21	18
	La Liga	117	10.09	4.6	2	22	20

G/A per game	Premier League	218	0.25	0.13	0.01	1.36	1.35
	La Liga	117	0.19	0.14	0.01	0.63	0.62
Top Speed (km/h)	Premier League	218	31.01	3.11	24.5	37.1	12.6
	La Liga	117	32.64	1.43	30	36.5	6.5
Market Value (€)	Premier League	218	40627522.94	23862170.94	5000000	180000000	175000000
	La Liga	117	36213675.21	30254771.37	500000	105000000	104500000

The greatest difference is observed in market value. The premium of players in the Premier League is larger ($mean_P$ = 40.6 millions, $mean_L$ = 36.2 millions) and the standard deviation is less (SD_P = 23.86 millions, SD_L = 30.25 millions), meaning that whereas the Premier League is wealthier as a whole, the players' market values are spread more homogeneously in LaLiga, with greater differences between low-value and high-value players. In total, the Premier League has younger players with more attacking output and a more predictable range of values, whereas La Liga has older and faster players with more variability in terms of age, height, experience, and market value.

3.2. Hypothesis Testing

Table 2
Result of the t-test

Hypotheses	Groups	N	Mean	SD	Levene's test p-value	t-statistic	T-test p-value
$ln(MV_P)$ - $ln(MV_L)$	$ln(MV_P)$	218	17.41	0.62	<.001	4.35	<.001
	$ln(MV_L)$	117	16.88	1.23			

To statistically test the differences between the leagues for market valuation, an independent t-test is conducted. The results for the same have been demonstrated in Table 2. Before the t-test, Levene's test was done to choose between unequal and equal variance. The null hypothesis of Levene's test assumes that there is equal variance for the groups. From the results, it can be seen that the P value (0.001) is less than the 5% significance level, implying rejection of the null hypothesis. Therefore, the P value for unequal variances has been considered for the T test. Subsequenctly t-Test has been conducted to identify the difference in market valuation between Premier League and La Liga players. The null hypothesis for the t-test assumes that there is no difference in market valuation of the players between premier league and La Liga. The P value (0.001) of the t- test is less than 0.01, showing that the null hypothesis is rejected at 1% level of significance. Hence, the market value of the players differs in premier league and La Liga. Moreover, it can be seen from the average value that players from premier league have higher market valuation as compared to player form la liga. Therefore, it is evident from the t-test and the descriptive statistics that the market value of Premier League players is high as compared to the La Liga players.

3.3. Regression Analysis

Table 3 depicts the results of the estimation of three regression models, including the overall model, Premier League, and La Liga. As seen in the table, the p-values for Age with respect to the overall model (<0.001), Premier League (-0.36), and La Liga (-0.08) are at least less than 0.10. Hence, age is significantly impacting the market valuation of the players in all the leagues at least a 10 per cent level of

significance. Therefore, as the age of a player increases by one year, the market valuation of that player will decrease by 26 per cent in the overall model, 8 per cent in the Premier League, and 36 per cent in La Liga. Therefore, age negatively impacts market valuations in both La Liga and Premier League, and at a statistically significant level; however, the effect size is much larger for La Liga than Premier League, indicating greater loss of value due to age, or age-related depreciation, for players in La Liga than those in Premier League.

Table 3
Results of regression estimation according to leagues

Variables	Statistic	Overall	Premier League	La Liga
	Coefficient	-0.26	-0.08	-0.36
	Standard Error	0.04	0.04	0.08
Age	P-value	**<0.001**	**0.068**	**<0.001**
	Coefficient	0.02	0.01	0.03
	Standard Error	0.01	0.01	0.02
Height	P-value	**0.016**	0.246	**0.058**
	Coefficient	0.25	0.05	0.44
	Standard Error	0.04	0.04	0.08
Experience	P-value	**<0.001**	0.181	**<0.001**
	Coefficient	1.11	0.76	0.29
	Standard Error	0.36	0.34	0.7
G/A	P-value	**0.002**	**0.024**	0.678
	Coefficient	0.01	0.02	0.41
	Standard Error	0.02	0.01	0.08
Top Speed	P-value	0.45	0.135	**<0.001**
	Coefficient	17.28	16.24	3.41
	Standard Error	1.77	1.69	4.19
Constant	P-value	<0.001	<0.001	0.418

Subsequently, the p-values for Height with respect to the overall model (0.016), Premier League (0.246), and La Liga (0.058) show that Height is statistically significant only in the overall model at the 10 per cent level of significance. Therefore, Height significantly impacts the market valuation of players overall, but does not have a statistically significant effect in either the Premier League or La Liga individually. In the overall model, as the height of a player increases by one centimetre, the market valuation of that player will increase by 2 per cent. Conclusively, there is little evidence of an influence from Height on the value of players as a whole, and there is no statistically significant influence from Height on the value of players in either league separately, which suggests that Height is not a major factor influencing the valuation of players in either league.

Along with this, the results show that the p-values for Experience with respect to the overall model (<0.001), Premier League (0.181), and La Liga (<0.001) indicate that Experience is statistically significant in the overall model and in La Liga at the 10 per cent level of significance, but not in the Premier League. Therefore, Experience meaningfully impacts the market valuation of players overall and within La Liga, but not within the Premier League. For the significant models, a one-year increase in experience increases market valuation by 25 per cent overall and by 44 per cent in La Liga. Hence, Experience has a positive influence on the market valuation of players, and the positive influence experienced by Experience is much larger in La Liga than it was in the Premier League, which implies that La Liga teams place a higher value on Experience and Tactical Maturity than do Premier League teams.

Moreover, the table shows that the p-values for G/A per game with respect to the overall model (0.002), Premier League (0.024), and La Liga (0.678) show that the variable is statistically significant in the overall model and in the Premier League at the 10 per cent level of significance, but not in La Liga. Therefore, G/A per game has a meaningful influence on player valuation overall and in the Premier League, but it does not significantly impact valuation in La Liga. For the significant models, a one-unit increase in G/A per game increases market valuation by 111 per cent overall and by 76 per cent in the Premier League. Goals and Assists Per Game have a large positive influence on the valuation of players as a whole, and the positive influence experienced by Goals and Assists Per Game is much larger in the Premier League than it was in La Liga, which implies that Premier League teams place a high value on Attacking Productivity and Offensive Contribution.

Finally, the p-values for Top Speed with respect to the overall model (0.45), Premier League (0.135), and La Liga (<0.001) show that Top Speed is statistically significant only in La Liga at the 10 per cent level of significance. Therefore, Top Speed does not significantly impact market valuation overall or within the Premier League, but it does significantly increase market valuation in La Liga. In La Liga, a one km/h increase in Top Speed increases market valuation by 41 per cent. Therefore, the Top Speed of Players does not have a statistically significant influence on their Valuation in the Premier League; however, Top Speed has a large and statistically significant positive influence on the Valuation of Players in La Liga, implying that Physical Pace is valued more in the La Liga Market than in the Premier League Market.

4. Discussion

From the results, it has been seen that age, height, experience, goals per assist, and top speed impact the market valuation for at least one of the regression models. Age has a negative influence on market value in football as clubs look at the long-term investment of a player, and older athletes provide less time (Bryson et al., 2024). Age also decreases output as players lose pace, recovery time and stamina once they pass their mid-20s, which limits the time-value of the players' contributions to the club (Bryson et al., 2024). Systematic reviews of transfer-fee models have replicated this inverted-U shape where fees increase to the mid-20s before falling even with elite output due to the time-value of the player’s future seasons (Bryson et al., 2024).

The chance of injury also increases with age, making older players a riskier investment and falling within the willingness-to-pay model, which demarcates this pattern for both the Premier League and La Liga (Válek & Wild, 2024). Resale value is also another exogenous factor that drives the negative effect of age, as clubs in top leagues look to resell younger players for a profit, older players will devalue by that stage (Antoniades et al., 2021). This investor-like position of clubs mitigates the fee for a player once he has passed his peak “option value” for resale, which reinforces the negative impact of age on fees. This is evident in research that notes how player careers are associated with the market value of a

player; empirical studies have definitively classified age as a negative predictor once performance is controlled for (Bryson et al., 2024).

On the contrary, Height has a marginally positive outcome on market value as taller players win aerial duels and set-pieces for their teams while also winning physical contests with other players, which increases their value for the team and market (Zhang et al., 2024). Clubs in systems that rely on crossing or marking set-piece headers benefit more from height, so systematic reviews of height cite marginal positive effects, especially in positions like centre-backs and target forwards, where the utility provided by height is built into the positions themselves (Bryson et al., 2024). Additionally, Height has a weak effect on players across most positions; however, as many positions favour agility, technical skill or a low centre of gravity over height, which weakens the overall clout of height (Bryson et al., 2024).

Similarly, Experience plays a positive role in market value as it indicates to clubs that players have positional intelligence, tactical awareness and pedigree as they have played more matches or seasons than their counterparts (Válek & Wild, 2024). Players who have superior experience at the highest level of competition tend to be more versatile, better decision makers on and off the pitch, and coaches are prone to trust them more than younger players, making them a less uncertain investment for clubs (Bryson et al., 2024). Empirical studies rank minutes and appearances played as strong predictors for experience, which translates to clout, and systematic reviews show a positive relationship for experience in valuation models (Bryson et al., 2024). This positive link remains after systematic reviews mediate age as experience protects even older players from devaluing since it separates "tried and tested" older players from peers of the same age who may not have had the same experience (Antoniades et al., 2021).

Goals/assists have strong positive effects as directly linked to match outcomes in low-scoring football, marking players as contributors to victories (Zhang et al., 2024). High G/A forwards and attackers are scarce and sought after as valuable commodities for scoring (Gupta et al., 2024). Offensive role studies rank these metrics repeatedly as the highest for linking fees to use on the pitch and commercial value (Bryson et al., 2024). G/A fuels "star power" visibility for sponsorship and branding beyond value added directly, indirectly enhancing market pricing (Zhang et al., 2024). Meta-reviews confirm goals/assists metrics dominate across models as they capture direct utility and marketability in elite transfers (Bryson et al., 2024).

Lastly, Top speed shows weak effects as sprinting ability excels in transition situations and pressing yet requires complementary skills to create value (Birkhäuser et al., 2023). Wingers/fullbacks see value in counterattacking formations, but raw speed rarely marks a player as elite (Birkhäuser et al., 2023). Elite valuation studies show physical metrics use marginally compared to outcome metrics for augmenting valuation power (Bryson et al., 2024). Contextual dependence for valuation explains inconsistencies as tactical systems vary; sprinting ability may be more valued in high pressing teams than role undervaluation of technical players (Birkhäuser et al., 2023). Newer tracking studies recognize high intensity running metrics matter in specific uses, not in generic uses; top speed retains little use (Zhang et al., 2024). Contradictory results include players commanding immense fees in older ages, overriding penalties for age, relying on peak form or previous fame, per case studies (Antoniades et al., 2021).

Overall, it was shown in the results that there are significant differences in valuation drivers across the two leagues. The age of players had an inverse relationship to the market value of those players, with the largest impact being seen in La Liga. The experience of players increased the market value of players primarily in La Liga, which suggests that La Liga places more importance on the ability of a player to understand their role tactically (i.e., to know when and how to perform certain actions). Attacking contribution was the most impactful factor in determining market value for players in the Premier League, indicating that the market for players in this league places a higher priority on players who contribute directly to the goals of their team. In contrast, speed emerged as an important factor in

determining market value only in La Liga, suggesting that there are different preferences among league operators regarding the amount of physical pace a player can bring to the game. In addition, the results showed that while height has some minimal impact, the majority of the factors that influence the valuation of players are related to the technical and performance abilities of those players. These findings further emphasise that the process of valuing players is not universal; it is influenced by both the structural characteristics of the market in each league and the philosophies that govern competition within each league.

5. *Conclusion*

Multiple factors determine a football player's market value, and it is important to understand how these factors influence a team's willingness to spend money on a player and what types of compensation the team can provide to stay competitive. Additionally, knowing the size of a player's worth allows clubs to negotiate the best possible deals in their respective markets. Thus, the overarching objective of this research is to identify the individual elements that influence a football player's value and whether those elements influence value similarly or differently across leagues. Given that the Premier League and La Liga are among the largest and most globally recognised football leagues, both with substantial financial resources, they provide an appropriate and comparable setting for analysis. As these leagues compete in distinct yet overlapping ways, selecting them allows for a focused investigation into the factors influencing football players' market values in the contemporary era of professional football.

One of the main objectives of the study was to find out the player level variables that could individually predict the worth of a player, and to assess whether the variables identified during the first phase of the study would apply similarly across the two competitions. To accomplish this, a collection of secondary cross-sectional data from the 2024-25 season from Transfermarkt (player market value) and FotMob (performance data) was compiled. The datasets contained information concerning 218 players from the Premier League and 117 players from La Liga. Several methods were employed in the study to analyse the data: descriptive statistics to describe the attributes of the players, an independent sample t-test to compare the player market values in the two leagues, and a log-linear regression model to determine the percentage increase in player valuation due to the attributes of the player.

Overall, the results of the study indicated that there were significant and measurable differences in the player market values of the two competitions. On average, the players in the Premier League had a higher player market value than the players in La Liga, and the independent sample t-test demonstrated that the difference in player market values between the two competitions was statistically significant, thereby providing empirical evidence that the player market value premium is at least partially a function of the league in which the player participates. Descriptive statistics were also used to compare player profiles between the two leagues. For instance, La Liga players were significantly older and had significantly more years of experience than Premier League players. The Premier League players, on the other hand, scored and assisted significantly more per game than La Liga players. Additionally, La Liga players also ran at significantly faster speeds over short distances than Premier League players.

The log-linear regression models provided a more detailed description of the variables that contribute to player valuation. Age was statistically significant and negatively related to player valuation in all three models, demonstrating that the market devalues the value of older players. There are a multitude of reasons why this relationship exists, but one reason is that the older player is less attractive to purchase because he is closer to retirement and therefore less likely to produce additional resale value and future performance. Contrarily, Height and experience were positively and statistically significant in the general model and the La Liga model. The significance of the experience variable demonstrates that having a stable, established career and prior playing experience enhances player valuation, especially in competitions where the ability to read the game tactically is highly valued.

Subsequently, Performance contribution (the number of goals and assists per game) was positively related to player valuation in the overall model and in the Premier League model, demonstrating that attacking production is highly rewarded in the Premier League transfer and valuation markets. Moreover, Speed was only statistically significant in the La Liga model, demonstrating that Speed is a unique variable that contributes to player valuation in the La Liga market. For example, La Liga teams place a greater emphasis on utilising quickness to break down opposing defences, or La Liga teams' scouts place a greater emphasis on player speed as part of their evaluation process.

Economic theory and football-specific rationale both support the findings of the study. Player valuation is not merely based on performance; rather, player valuation is influenced by the interaction of performance, player age and expected resale value, player physical attributes, and the prevailing market conditions in the league in which the player competes. Larger player valuations in the Premier League versus La Liga may be due to the larger television rights revenue generated by the Premier League, the larger spending capacity of Premier League clubs, and the increased international demand for Premier League talent, all of which increase player values irrespective of the similarities in the abilities of players in the two leagues. Ultimately, the fact that the variables that explain player valuation, including Speed and Experience, differ in terms of magnitude of association in each league provides further evidence that player valuation is context-based and that clubs operate within league-specific marketplaces.

Overall, the study demonstrates that player market value is influenced by a variety of quantifiable on-field and physical variables and by the market culture of the league in which the player competes. Clubs and analysts will be able to make more objective and informed decisions regarding recruiting and compensation for players once a better understanding of the variables that affect player value is developed. Moreover, the study identifies the necessity of developing league-specific valuation frameworks that reflect the unique marketplace forces in each league and do not assume a universally applicable model.

6. Policy Recommendations and Limitations

The results of this research also have significant implications for football clubs, recruitment departments and analysts involved in the transfer market. Firstly, it would appear that clubs should employ league-specific valuation models as opposed to employing one model throughout all leagues. It was found that there is a much larger premium placed on attacking output in the Premier League than in La Liga; thus, recruitment strategies in the Premier League will need to focus more on offensive contributions when determining player worth and negotiating transfer prices. It appears that clubs in La Liga value physical speed and experience as indicators of player quality more so than those in the Premier League; therefore, recruitment departments in La Liga could consider giving more weight to physical ability and accumulated experience when evaluating players.

Along with this, the results also give insight into how clubs can negotiate transfers and plan financially. Clubs can better predict what they will be paying for players based on their individual attributes and find potential bargains when buying players who are undervalued in other leagues. Analysts and sporting directors can utilise this data to establish more accurate internal valuation standards to prevent clubs from overspending on player transfers and reduce their exposure to the risks associated with player over-investment. Finally, at a wider level, governing bodies and financial regulators can apply the results of this research to gain a deeper understanding of how the structural differences between leagues lead to inflationary pressures on player valuations and create competitive imbalances. Understanding the mechanisms that determine market value may enable governing bodies and regulatory authorities to develop policies and regulations aimed at ensuring financial sustainability and fair play among leagues while accounting for the unique economic characteristics of each league.

The study has some significant limitations despite being an excellent source of knowledge. The first major limitation is that the data used for the study was based solely on secondary information from two well-established resources: Transfermarkt and FotMob. Both of these resources have established credibility and are heavily relied upon by analysts and researchers; however, the way they report valuation and performance statistics may be influenced by unknown methodologies that may negatively impact the accuracy of the results reported in the study. A second limitation of the study is its reliance on cross-sectional data from a single season (2024-25), thus restricting its ability to evaluate how valuations for players change over time, including how development occurs, how quickly players recover from injuries, etc., and how much value increases in response to market conditions. Utilising a panel dataset with multiple seasons of data would provide for much greater causal inference and better insight into valuation trends.

In addition, the study utilises a very limited number of quantitative variables in its regression model. Many other important influences on player value (e.g., length of contract, injury history, total minutes played, number of national team appearances, amount of player's salary, the prestige of the player's current club, the commercial appeal of the player) were not included because of data availability. It is possible that these excluded variables can account for additional variation in the player's valuation that goes beyond the player's performance and physical characteristics. Lastly, the study did not include a measure of "playing position", which could affect the degree to which various variables (i.e., goals scored, speed, height, etc.) are influential. Future studies using positional fixed effects could result in more accurate valuation estimates and improved model precision.

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