Keti Ventura [1], Ayla Dedeoğlu [1]

[1]Ege University, İzmir-Turkey

keti.ventura@ege.edu.tr

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

DO MARKETING PROGRAMS OF TURKISH FOOTBALL TEAMS REALLY AFFECT THE CUSTOMER MINDSET?

Abstract

The present study represents an attempt to find out the impact of the marketing programs of Turkish football teams on customer mindset. Besides, the moderating influences of program multipliers and fan-identification are analyzed and tested by structural equation modeling with AMOS 6.0. A field methodology is used as a data collection method. The conceptual framework for the empirical research was based on the constructs of brand equity in the experiential services context of spectator sports. The findings revealed that the spectator-based brand equity of Turkish football teams is strong. By and large, it is built around the team venue, star players and the achievements of the team respectively. Furthermore, it can be proposed that marketing programs of Turkish football teams affect customer mindset to a certain level; the positive mindset in terms of awareness, associations, attitudes and attachment did not satisfactorily result in positive customer activity in terms of ticket and licensed merchandise purchase.

Key Words: Spectator-based brand equity, customer mindset, program multipliers, fan-identification

Özet

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türk futbol takımlarının pazarlama programlarının, müşteri zihniyeti (mindset) üzerindeki etkilerinin ortaya konmasıdır. Ayrıca, pazarlama programı çarpanlarının ve kişilerin kendilerini taraftar olarak tanımlama düzeylerinin moderator etkileri yapısal eşitlik modeli ile AMOS 6.0 yazılımı ile test edilmiştir. Çalışmada very toplama yöntemi olarak anket tekniği kullanılmıştır. Gösteri sporlarında hizmet deneyimi yaratmaya dayalı marka değerinin temelleri bu ampirik çalışmanın kavramsal çerçevesini oluşturmaktadır. Elde edilen bulgulara gore, Türk futbol takımlarının izleyici-temelli marka değeri oldukça güçlüdür. Bunun temelinde sırasıyla stadyum, yıldız oyuncular ve takımın başarıları bulunmaktadır. Ayrıca bulgular, Türk futbol takımlarının pazarlama programlarının müşteri zihniyetini belirli bir düzeye kadar etkilediğini ancak, marka farkındalığı, marka çağrışımları, marka tutumları ve marka bağlılığı kavramlarının bilet ve lisanslı ürünlerin satın alınması üzerinde olumlu bir etkisinin bulunmadığını göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İzleyici temelli marka değeri, müşteri zihniyeti, pazarlama program çarpanları, taraftarlık düzeyi

16

INTRODUCTION

Sport is a universal phenomenon that crosses all social, religious, and language barriers. It is a common denominator that appeals to the masses (Graham, et.al.,2001), and thus, in addition to being a common life theme, it is also practiced in marketplaces where a great deal of economic activities take place. Today especially, in sports industry, stocks of many sports companies are exchanged in stock exchange markets. Being subjected to the rules capitalist economy same as other companies; sport teams appreciate the importance of developing their own brands as well. Pursuing sustainable competitive advantage in current hypercompetitive and turbulent market environment necessitates some degree of differentiation of the offers of teams. Differentiating the offer based on the core product, i.e. sports, is obviously the best trajectory of long-term success. Nevertheless, communicating the distinctive offer to the market and developing valuable brand are of great importance as well. The sport teams that can develop brand equity by offering fans a unique experience have the chance to remain competitive in the marketplace (Rein, Kotler, Ryan, 2006). Yet, the teams that cannot associate their marketing and branding programs to their sportive performance cannot exploit the outcomes in terms financially. Although spectators may be involved in the team's sportive activity, they may not be committed customers and develop satisfactorily favorable customer mindset.

In recent years, with investments made in the field of sports, and the growing importance placed by the State on sports policy, sports in Turkey, predominantly football (Turkish Cultural Foundation 2011), became a well-liked and attention-grabbing event both as a performance sport and for the utilization of leisure time of spectators. Reminding that football has an almost perfect association with the more general term 'sports' in Turkey and it became the most commonly shared public concern and a life-style among spectators, Berument and Yucel (2005) contended that it can be regarded as a marketable mass-media commodity. Katırcı (2011) revealed that the Turkish football industry has developed rapidly after 1980's; it reached to a total revenue of 342 million Euros in 2008-2009 football season and with this level of revenues it took place among the top ten of the European football industry. Gürel (2000) proposed that football can be regarded as an industry rather than a sport branch only; attracting the most spectators in Turkey and in the world, it became a rather important area that marketing actions of companies from several industries take place. Football teams have also realized the growth of the industry and begun to exploit the public attention by, for instance, trading stocks of their associated companies at stock exchange

17

market and launching licensed team merchandise. Özer and Argan (2006) observed that sales of team jerseys reached to 1 million units after Turkey made its way to the second tour in FIFA 2002 World Cup and corporate sponsors were also involved while sales were increasing rapidly.

Despite being at a premature stage, management of brand equity of football teams effectively has gaining further importance among football community, in general, and football team managers in particular. In order to develop effective marketing programs, managers, first, need to find out whether their marketing programs affect the mindset of their spectators.

The present study represents an attempt to find out the impact of the marketing programs of Turkish football teams on customer mindset. Besides, the moderating influences of the quality of the marketing programs and fans' social identification with the team are analyzed and tested by structural equation modeling. Being motivated to discover these associations, the conceptual framework for the empirical research was based on the constructs of brand equity in the experiential services context of spectator sports. In the first section, the concept of brand equity is discussed. After discussing how brand equity differs in the experiential services context of spectator sports, the research design and the results of the study are presented. The study is concluded by outlining the implications of the findings, limitations of the study, and opportunities for further research.

Building Brand Equity through Marketing Programs

As Erdem, Swait and Valenzuela (2006: 34) remarked, brands play many roles in consumer decision making that can materialize through multiple mechanisms, such as psychological (e.g., associative network memory), sociological (e.g., brand communities), and economic (e.g., brands as signals under uncertainty) processes. Asserting that brand can be seen as a global ideoscape, Askegaard (2006) argued that brands can to be seen as a central historical and institutional force that has profound impacts on the perception of the marketplace and the consumer as social categories and branding is becoming central to the structuring of commercial and economic activities in still larger parts of the world.

According to Keller (2003), a brand is something that resides in the minds of consumers. Consumer brand knowledge is defined in terms of the personal meaning about a brand stored in consumer memory, that is, all descriptive and evaluative brand-related information (Keller 2003). Looking through a psychological lens, Strebinger et al. (1998) defined it as a schema or a semantic network which the consumer has acquired through a

process of learning. Acquiring abstract imagery-related and performance-related associations in memory, consumers assign meanings to the product.

Brand equity is commonly regarded as being largely attitudinal in nature, composed of consumers' beliefs, affects, conations, such as subjective experiences, about the actual offers of the product (Punj and Hillyer 2004). Aaker (1996) identified brand equity as the sum of four dimensions of brand assets: brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. Brand equity (Keller and Lehmann 2003, Keller and Lehmann 2006) is regarded as consisting of awareness, associations, attitudes, attachments, and activities including purchase and consumption frequency and involvement with the marketing program. Consumers, who are aware of the brand, can develop brand judgments based on brand performance and brand feelings based on brand imagery (Keller 2003). While brand awareness can range from recognition to recall, associations encompass product-related, non-product-related, cognitive, and affective brand considerations (Keller and Lehmann 2006). Attachment is customers' felt commitment to the relationship with the brand (Thomson, MacInnis, Park 2005) and ranges from loyalty to addiction. Using Keller and Lehmann's (2003 and 2006) Customer-Based Brand Equity framework, Tolba and Hassan (2009) identified three dimensions; knowledge equity, attitudinal equity, and relationship equity. They referred brand awareness to knowledge equity, attitudes and attachments to attitudinal equity and relationship equity respectively. While attitudinal equity is based on affects and perceived quality, relationship equity includes perceived value, satisfaction and attitudinal loyalty.

Acknowledging the importance of brand equity, Thompson, Rindfleisch, and Arsel (2006) draw attention to the emotional branding activities; they defined emotional branding as a consumer-centric, relational, participatory, sensory, and story-driven approach to building deep and lasting affective bonds between consumers and brands. Rather than attracting customers only through rational arguments about tangible benefits and market norms (Ariely 2008), developing meaningful relationships based on social norms (Ariely 2008) by means of narratives and tactics that demonstrate an empathetic understanding of customers' aspirations, life themes and memories is seen a useful way in building brand equity. Ariely (2008) indicated that social norms are not only cheaper, but often more effective in building customer preferences and loyalty. Emotional branding is based on developing emotional attachments that relates to the commitment of the customer to brand. Commitment is defined as the degree to which an individual views the relationship from a long-term perspective and has a

19

willingness to stay with the relationship even when things are difficult (Thomson, MacInnis and Park 2005).

Keller (2003, 2008) remarked that brand knowledge structures depend on the initial choices for the brand elements, the supporting marketing program and the manner by which the brand is integrated into it and other associations indirectly transferred to the brand by linking it to some other entities. Aaker (1991) asserted that brand equity provides value to a company through its impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of marketing programs. Marketing program consists decisions of marketing expenditures, marketing mix and allocation of resources (Kotler,2000). Supporting marketing mix, including product, pricing, communication and channel strategies, should be designed to enhance awareness and establish desired brand associations. Erdem, Swait and Valenzuela (2006) suggested that what sets brands apart from the individual marketing-mix elements as credible signals is that the former embody the cumulative effect of prior marketing-mix strategies and activities. Pursuing the aim to build strong brands, companies need to design credible and consistent marketing mix (product, pricing, channel and communication) strategies in an integrative and holistic approach and that ensures customer satisfaction.

According to Kotler and Keller (2006), holistic marketers emphasize three important new themes in designing brand-building marketing programs: personalization, integration, and internalization. While integration includes mixing and matching marketing activities so that they build synergy and collectively realizes the branding goals, internalization is about considering activities and processes that help to inform and inspire employees and marketing partners (Kotler and Keller 2006). Personalization includes personalized brand experiences to create stronger consumer bonds. Considering the suggestion that power of a brand lies in what consumers have learned, felt, seen, and heard about the brand as a result of their experiences over time (Keller 2003), developing customer experiences through favorable thoughts, feelings, images, perceptions and attitudes is the way to build brand equity. The types of customer experiences is classified by Schmitt (1999) as sense experiences involving sensory perception, feel experiences involving affect and emotions, think experiences which are creative and cognitive, act experiences involving physical behavior and relate experiences that result from connecting with a reference group or culture.

To assess the sources and outcomes of brand equity and how marketing programs result in brand equity, Keller and Lehmann (2003) developed Brand Value Chain approach.

20

According to this approach, company initiates brand value creation process by making investments in a marketing program that includes, for instance, product design and development; pricing, channel design and distribution activities, and marketing communications. These activities, both quantitatively and qualitatively, affect what customers think and feel, i.e. their mindset, about the brand. Customer mindset consists of brand awareness, associations, attitudes, attachments, and activities and has its outcomes in what customers do, i.e. whether they prefer and purchase the product repeatedly or not. Brand performance in the marketplace naturally influence brand value in particular and shareholder value in general.

The approach also includes three sets of moderators; the program multiplier, the customer multiplier, and the market multiplier (Keller and Lehmann 2003). The program multiplier is about the quality of the marketing program and includes factors, such as the clarity, relevance, distinctiveness, and consistency of the marketing program, both over time and across (Keller and Lehmann 2006). It moderates the effect of the marketing program investments on customer mindset. The customer multiplier moderates the influence customer mindset on brand's market performance. For instance, channel and other intermediary support, a customer multiplier, can influence customer choice at the point of purchase. The market multiplier, such as risk profile, moderates the effect of brand's market performance on shareholder value.

Service Experiences of Spectators and Spectator-Based Brand Equity

As Ross, Russell and Bang (2008) indicated there are few studies in the branding literature that approached brand equity from a sport perspective. Since majority of the brand equity frameworks (e.g., Aaker, 1996; Keller and Lehmann 2003, 2006) examines the marketplaces of physical goods, they might not be appropriate for sport services in which the core product is intangible, inconsistent, perishable, and experiential in nature (Ross 2006). Relying on the exact brand equity models without considering intangible, inconsistent, perishable, and experiential nature of spectator sport may draw theoretical limitations.

The spectator sport has the distinguishing characteristics of services; production and consumption process are simultaneous and inseparable. Since customers are present during the service encounter, the interaction between spectators and constituents of sport organizations is considered as part of the product (Kim and Trail 2011). Furthermore, providing services with consistent quality is not possible; the service offered to the consumer

21

is experiential and emotional and can fluctuate from game to game (Ross 2006). The benefits that spectator sport provides are symbolic, perishable and intangible as it is, in fact, a leisure activity (Gladden and Funk 2002).

In addition to its services nature, spectator sport is also experiential in nature (Gladden, Irwin and Sutton 2001, Ross 2006). Spectators experience all kind of experiences described by Schmitt (1999); spectator sports provide sensations that correspond all senses. The valence of affect and emotions that spectators experience sometimes reach to a hooliganism level. It also provides act and think experiences involving viewing the game in the specific physical environment and relates experiences that result from connecting with the team reference group and culture. Ross (2006) asserted that sport spectatorship is created by subjective attitudes, individual perspectives, feelings, values, and past personal experiences.

The core product is the sport competition on the field of play (Fullerton and Merz 2008). It can be consumed by spectators in a venue, through a variety of media alternatives and after it is staged as it has a news value and is discussed in media long after the actual game (Gladden and Funk 2002). Since the core product is unpredictable and beyond managerial control (Yoshida and James 2010), managing brand equity is challenging. Keller (2003) contended that the brand associations that consumer have in their minds and use to form a general meaning of the product, reflect characteristics of the products not restricted to the product itself. Consistently, in spectator sport context, despite the core product is the actual game, wining enhances brand equity greatly and consistent losing detract deteriorates it, brand equity does not rely on success solely (Boyle and Magnusson 2007, Bradbury and Catley 2007, Gladden and Milne 1999). In addition the team success, other antecedents of brand equity are defined and categorized by Gladden and Milne (1999) as team-related, organization-related and market-related factors. Team related factors include the team's record of success, the head coach and the presence of star players. Organization-related antecedents consist of the history and reputation of the organization, league affiliation, core product delivery (delivery of exciting, entertaining and enjoyable games), brand elements, such as trade dress (colors that are strongly associated with a corporation, for which the company may have exclusive rights for their use) and brand logo, and home venue (stadium, arena). Market-related antecedents comprise the media coverage, geographic location, competitive forces and team support (Gladden and Milne 1999). Alternatively, Ross (2006) proposed organization, market and experience-induced factors as three categories of antecedents. He combined Gladden and Milne's (1999) the team and organization-related

22

antecedents into organization-induced ones and took market-related antecedents as it is. By emphasizing the experiential nature of spectator sport, he proposed that there are experience-induced factors that affect brand awareness and associations. Gladden and Funk (2002) proposed that all these antecedents can be identified as product attributes. In addition to the attributes, product benefits and consumer attitudes comprise other brand association categories (Keller 2003). Benefits may be diverse; for instance, a spectator may consume the game for social identification (Boyle and Magnusson 2007, Ross, Russell and Bang 2008), i.e. the emotional connection between the consumer and the team brand or for peer group acceptance. Attitudes are general lasting evaluations of people, objects, advertisements, or issues. An attitude has three basic components: affect, behavior, and cognition (Solomon 2011). In the spectator sport context, attitude importance (psychological significance a consumer attaches to a team), knowledge and affective reactions are studied as attitude components (Gladden and Funk 2002).

These antecedents result in brand awareness and brand associations, which in turn shape consumer's overall evaluations, i.e. attitudes, and perceptions of quality. Positive evaluations and perceptions drive emotional attachment to the brand and consumer's activity that includes purchase and consumption frequency and involvement with the marketing program (Keller and Lehmann 2003, Keller and Lehmann 2006).

The hypotheses tested in the model (Figure 1) are developed so as to investigate both direct and indirect influences;

H1a/b: There is a relationship between brand awareness of football teams and (a) brand attitudes (b) the perceived quality of their merchandised products

H2a/b: There is a relationship between brand associations of football teams and (a) brand attitudes (b) the perceived quality of their merchandised products

H3a/b: There is a relationship between brand attitudes and (a) attachments of the fans to the brand (b) fans' activity (in terms of ticket sales and merchandise sales)

H4a/b: There is a relationship between perceived quality of products and (a) attachments of the fans to the brand (b) fans' activity (in terms of ticket sales and merchandise sales)

H5a/b: Fan identification moderates the relationship between brand associations and (a) brand attitudes (b) the perceived quality of their merchandised products.

H6a/b: Program multipliers moderate the relationship between brand attitudes and (a) brand attachment, and (b) activity of spectators as consumers (in terms of ticket sales and merchandise sales)

H7a/b: Program multipliers moderate the relationship between perceived quality of products and (a) brand attachments, and (b) activity of spectators as consumers (in terms of ticket sales and merchandise sales)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study represents an attempt to find out the impact of the marketing programs of Turkish sport teams on customer mindset. It is also aimed to study whether the quality of the marketing programs and fans' social identification with the team have moderating influences in this relationship. For these purposes, a field study is conducted. The procedure, data collection method, participants and measures are explained in the following section.

Procedure and Data Collection

A survey study is conducted in May 2011. Gladden, Irwin and Sutton (2001) remarked that while corporations, rather than individuals, purchase the majority of in-stadium tickets, the individual sport fan is still vitally important to the team's brand equity. The nature of the demand of the spectator sport is derived, thus individual fans are the final customers. Individual football fans are contacted via an online-questionnaire in a quest to reach to fans all over to Turkey. Yet, being unable to reach significant amount of usable questionnaires, additional data are also collected via face-to-face contacts in Izmir. Due to these limitations, 426 usable questionnaires consisting of 135 online, 291 face to face were collected. The questionnaire included statements about the respondents' perceptions of marketing program and customer mindset created by the sports team that they attached.

Measures

Scales that aim to measure the overall evaluations and perceptions of marketing program and its multiplier of their sport team were adapted from (Yoo, Donthu, 2001; Keller, 2003; Schiffman, Kanuk, 2000). 5-point Likert scale of ranging from (1)' 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree (5) was utilized. The statements are translated to Turkish and adapted to the Turkish football teams. The internal consistency reliability coefficient Cronbach's alphas of

24

the each dimension of the customer mindset (brand awareness, brand association, brand attitude, brand attachment and brand activity) scale range from 0.65 to 0.88.

RESULTS

Majority of the respondents have high level of self-identification as fan (32.3%) while 18% of the respondents identify themselves as a fanatics. They are mostly buying their team jersey (58.5 %), apparel (51.2 %) and accessories (45.3 %) respectively. The demographic profiles of the respondents appear in Table 1. In order to find out the respondents' general evaluations, one-sample t-test was conducted (Table 2). The findings reveal that the respondents are very well aware of the team venue, i.e. stadium, the star players and the coach of their team.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Gender	N	Valid Percent	Marital Status	N	Valid Percent
Male	260	63.4	Married	77	18.8
Female	150	36.6	Single	333	81.2
Total	426	100	Total	410	100
Missing	16		Missing	16	
Age Mean=26,19 Std.dev.=6,91			**Occupation**		
15-21	95	23.7	Manager	13	3.3
22-28	226	52.7	Private sector employee	67	16.9
29-35	53	12.8	Public sector employee	15	3.8
36-42	32	7.8	Professional	44	11.2
43-49	7	1.6	Small-scale trader	12	3.0
50-56	6	1.4	Large-scale trader	4	1.0
Total	409	100	Student	222	56.3
Missing	17		Sportsman/Artist	3	0.8
			Retired	1	0.3
			Housewife	2	0.5
			Farmer	1	0.3
			Unemployed	8	2.1
			Other	2	0.5
			Total	394	100
			Missing	32	
Income			**Education**		
Lower	171	44.2	Primary School	3	0.7
Medium	148	38.3	Secondary	3	0.7
Upper	68	17.5	High School	121	29.6
Total	387	100	Undergraduate	211	51.6
Missing	39		Graduate +	71	17.4
			Total	409	100
			Missing	17	
Level of Attachment Mean= 6,12 std.dev.= 2,98			**Merchandise Sales**		
None	4	1.0	Combined Ticket	47	4
Very Low	43	10.5	Apparel	218	19
Low	62	15.2	Jersey	249	22
Medium	94	23.0	Stamp	9	1
High	182	32.3	Coin	7	1
Very High (Fanatic)	74	18.0	Computer equipment	26	2
Total	409	100	Mobile phone equipment	32	3
Missing	17		Home textiles	73	6
			Glassware	48	4
			Stationery	90	8
			Decoration	132	12
			Accessories	193	17
			Other	7	1

The awareness of stores and licensed merchandise is only above average. Although, respondents have favorable associations in general, the most favorable associations they have about their team are venue and star players. Respondents believe that the team venue and star players are unique. Despite, star players, stadium, achievements of their team and the coach come to their minds first, the uniqueness of these are not so strong. The finding that the star players hold the strongest association, and the achievements of the team hold third rank indicates that brand associations are built around star players and team venue, in addition to the achievements. The weakest association is about administrators (Friedman χ^2_6=372.018 p<0.05). Although respondents have positive attitudes and high level of attachment (for instance they are happy to be a fan, follow the news about their team, consider their team as a part of their extended self and never think to switch to another team), their willingness to buy their team's merchandise, now and in the future, are simply at moderate level (Table 2). Moreover, they do not see any problem in buying unlicensed merchandise and knock-offs and not see a strong relationship between buying licensed merchandise and sharing team spirit, yet, this tendency is not so strong. These findings reveal that although respondents have high level of brand awareness, favorable, unique and strong brand associations, positive attitudes and high level of attachment, their activity is not fully aligned with the goals of marketing programs of sport teams.

Table 2. Statistics about customer mindset

Statements*	Mean	Std. Dev.	t	df	Sig.	Cronbach Alpha
Brand Awareness (Mean score=4.08)						
I know all the achievements of my team.	3.57	1.249	9.316	414	0.000	
I know the coach of my team.	4.29	1.094	24.154	418	0.000	
I know the star players of my team.	4.33	0.988	27.584	417	0.000	0.88
I know the stadium of my team.	4.57	0.825	38.921	419	0.000	
I am aware of the stores of my team.	3.94	1.216	15.778	414	0.000	
I am aware of the licensed merchandise of my team.	3.83	1.208	14.084	415	0.000	
Brand Associations (Favorability-Mean score=3.88)						
I like the administrators of my team.	3.46	1.015	9.148	405	0.000	
I like the coach of my team.	3.78	1.049	15.119	409	0.000	
I like the star players of my team	3.97	0.913	21.560	410	0.000	0.82
I like the stadium of my team	4.29	0.963	27.125	412	0.000	
I like the stores of my team	3.89	0.972	18.554	409	0.000	
I like the licensed merchandize of my team	3.90	0.955	19.033	407	0.000	
Brand Associations (Uniqueness- Mean score=3.61)*						
Administrators	3.24	1.088	4.442	402	0.000	
Coach	3.62	1.088	11.436	396	0.000	
Star players	3.70	1.050	13.332	399	0.000	0.88
Stadium	4.03	1.105	18.779	401	0.000	
Stores	3.52	1.157	8.946	391	0.000	
Licensed Merchandise	3.57	1.131	9.893	389	0.000	

Brand Associations (Strength- Mean score=2.42)**						
Administrators	3.19	1.398	2.790	409	0.000	
Achievements	2.33	1.347	-10.121	412	0.000	
Coach	2.45	1.319	-8.501	409	0.000	0.72
Star players	2.00	1.238	-16.461	412	0.000	
Stadium	2.14	1.365	-12.676	408	0.000	
Attitude (Mean score=3.78)						
I'm very happy to be a fan.	4.52	0.813	37.449	399	0.000	
I always follow the news about my team.	3.88	1.203	14.604	398	0.000	
I seek out all the activities of my team.	3.50	1.305	7.634	398	0.000	0.88
I always talk about my team with my friends.	3.44	1.305	6.673	398	0.000	
To support my team, I buy the licensed merchandise.	3.58	1.256	9.186	393	0.000	
Attachment (Mean score=3.93)						
I never consider switching to another team	4.67	0.706	47.232	398	0.000	
I try to convince my friends to be a fan of my team.	3.26	1.441	3.617	397	0.000	
My team is a part of me	3.80	1.248	12.769	398	0.000	0.80
I'm emotionally devoted to my team.	3.98	1.186	16.422	396	0.000	
Activity(Mean score=3.01)						
I always go to the plays of my team.	2.46	1.311	-8.167	395	0.000	
I support the team spirit by buying the licensed merchandise.	3.37	1.332	5.502	396	0.000	
I think there is a relationship between buying licensed merchandise and sharing team spirit.	2.85	1.410	-2.064	396	0.040	0.65
I will buy the licensed merchandise of my team in the future.	3.58	1.239	9.328	395	0.000	
I think it is not OK to buy the merchandise that has the colors of my team, but that is not legally licensed by the team.	2.82	1.421	-2.485	392	0.013	

Notes: (1) Test value for one sample t-test was 3:Neither agree nor disagree. (2) [+] indicates insignificant results
 *(1= completely unique   5= completely similiar)
 **(1= come to my mind firstly   5= come to my mind lastly)

Model Estimations

Being motivated to by the research question above, the theoretical framework is based on Keller (2003) and Keller and Lehmann (2003 and 2006)'s Customer-Based Brand Equity model. So as to apply the model to the spectator sport context, Gladden and Milne's (1999), Gladden and Funk's (2002), Ross' (2006) and Ross, Russell and Bang's (2008) conceptualizations of brand equity are taken into consideration. In an attempt to test the significance of associations between the variables of awareness, associations, attitudes, perceived quality, attachment, activity, fan identification and program multipliers (Keller 2003) and reveal the causal structures, path analysis is used.

Figure 1. Research Model
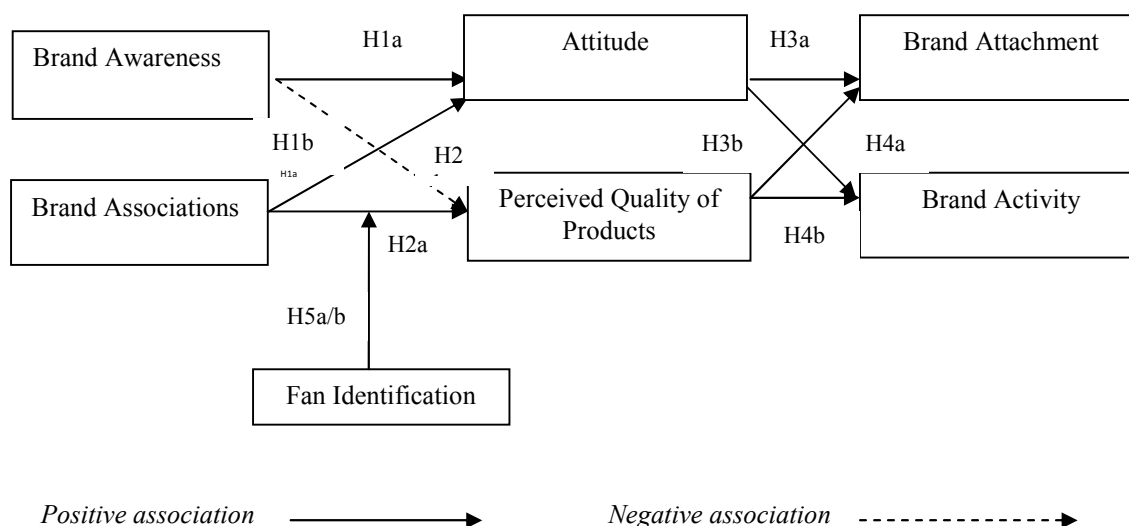
For the aim to develop a structural model, the direct and indirect influences between the variables of awareness, associations, attitudes and perceived quality are tested. The moderating influence of fan identification variable between brand associations and attitudes are also analyzed via structural equation modeling. The model explains the associations between the variables of brand awareness, associations, attitudes, perceived quality, attachment, activities of spectators as consumers. The results reveal that the majority of the hypotheses are supported. Model fit is satisfactory (χ^2_4 =3.441 p=0.487 CFI=1 RFI=0.983 RMSEA= 0.000) with 0.645 construct reliability which shows an acceptable convergent validity. Increasing levels of brand awareness strengthen the brand attitudes (H1a supported, p <0.05) and perceived quality of products (H1b supported, p <0.05). Similarly, brand associations positively influence brand attitudes (H2a supported, p <0.05) and perceived quality of products (H2b supported, p <0.05). In order to analyze the moderating influences, interaction variables are added to the structural model. The moderating influences of fan identification in the relations between brand association and perceived quality of products increases the chi-square by 60 percent (χ^2_4 =8.690 p=0.069 CFI=0.997 RFI=0.975 RMSEA= 0.053) which constitutes a better fit (Table 3). The final structural model can be seen in Figure 2. Thus, fan identification significantly moderates the relation between brand association and perceived quality of products (H5b supported, p <0.05) with a change in R^2 from 0.219 to 0.255. However, it does not moderate the relation between brand association and the brand

28

attitudes (H5a not supported, p >0.05). The data provide support for H3a and H3b; brand attitude directly and significantly influences brand attachment (H3a supported, p <0.05), and activities of spectators as consumers (H3b supported, p <0.05). Higher levels of quality perception leads to higher levels of attachment (H4a supported p<0.05), and higher, but insignificant, levels of activity (H4b not supported, p>0.05). The last finding supports the previous argument that although respondents have high level of brand awareness, favorable, unique and strong brand associations, positive attitudes and high level of attachment, their activity is not fully aligned with the goals of marketing programs of sport teams.

Table 3. Path analysis effects

		Independent Variables			
		Fan –identification x brand awareness	Fan –identification x brand associations	Attitude	Program quality
Dependent Variables	Attitude	0.756	0.042^+	0.000	0.000
		0.756	0.042	0.000	0.000
		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Program Quality	-0.670	1.024	0.000	0.000
		-0.670	1.024	0.000	0.000
		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Attachment	0.542	0.112	0.785	0.078
		0.000	0.000	0.785	0.078
		0.542	0.112	0.000	0.000
	Activity	0.436	0.104	0.643	0.075^+
		0.000	0.000	0.643	0.075
		0.436	0.104	0.000	0.000

Notes: (1) The rows show total, direct, and indirect effects respectively. (2) $^+$ indicates insignificant results

Figure 2. Final Structural Model
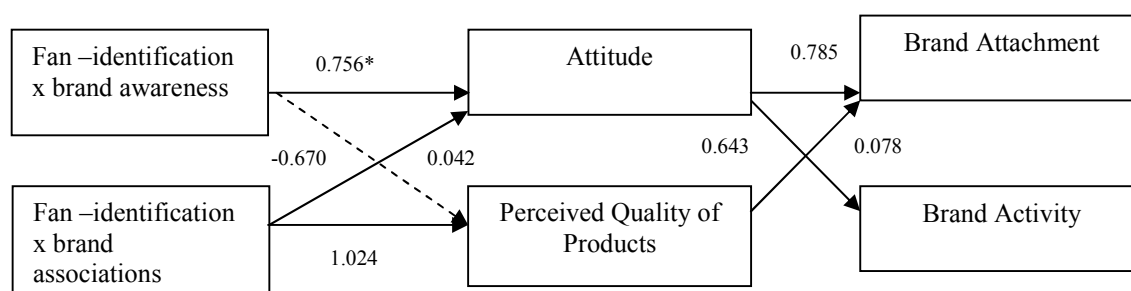
χ^2_4 **=8.690 p=0.069 CFI=0.997 RFI=0.975 RMSEA= 0.053**

Positive association ⟶   *Negative association* ⇢

*Standardized regression coefficients

Analysis of Program Multipliers

One sample t-test results (Table 4) reveal that marketing programs of the sport teams are seen as clear, relevant, distinctive and consistent by respondents. For instance, respondents think that the licensed merchandise is associated with their team's main job, reflects their team ideally, differentiate it from other teams and represents it ideally ever since the past. They also think that pricing, promotion and distribution policies are more creative than others, are not confusing and have been the same ever since the past.

Table 4: Statistics about customer mindset

Statements*	Mean	Std. dev.	t	df	Sig.
Clarity (Mean score= 3.42; Cronbach's alpha=0.64)					
I think the licensed merchandise reflects my team ideally.	3.85	0.964	17.386	387	0.000
The pricing policies of licensed merchandise are confusing.	3.28	1.035	5.269	384	0.000
The promotional activities of merchandise is confusing	2.70	1.019	-5.674	381	0.000
The sales points of the licensed merchandise are clear for everyone.	3.84	0.921	17.866	384	0.000
Relevance (Mean score=3.66; Cronbach's alpha=0.84)					
I think the licensed merchandise is associated with my team's main job.	3.62	1.015	11.967	383	0.000
The prices of my team's merchandise are associated with the quality of my team.	3.80	1.061	14.757	381	0.000
The promotions of my team's merchandise are associated with the quality of my team.	3.72	1.065	13.109	373	0.000
The location of the team stores are associated with my team's main job.	3.48	1.100	8.485	379	0.000
Distinctiveness (Mean score=3.41; Cronbach's alpha=0.86)					
My team's merchandise differentiate it from others.	3.68	1.123	11.741	376	0.000
The prices of my team's merchandise differentiate it from the others.	3.28	1.124	4.829	380	0.000
The promotional activities of my team's merchandise are more creative than the others.	3.29	1.094	5.078	377	0.000
The sores of my team differentiate it from the others.	3.40	1.129	6.834	377	0.000
Consistency (Mean score =3.55; Cronbach's alpha=0.83)					
My team's merchandise represents it ideally ever since the past.	3.66	1.048	12.135	376	0.000
The pricing policies of my team's merchandise have been the same ever since the past.	3.49	0.955	9.937	375	0.000
The promotion policies of my team's merchandise have been the same ever since the past.	3.52	1.007	10.047	374	0.000
The distribution policies of my team's merchandise have been the same ever since the past.	3.53	0.962	10.588	373	0.000

Notes: (1) Test value for one sample t-test was 3:Neither agree nor disagree

In order to analyze the moderating influences of program multipliers (clarity, relevance, distinctiveness, consistency) in the relationships between attitudes, perceived quality of the program, brand attachment and activity of spectators as consumers, moderated hierarchical regression analysis is conducted (Table 5). The hypotheses tested are as follows;

The results of the regression analysis reveal that the interaction effect variables for both brand attachment and activity dependent variables are insignificant. So, it can be proposed that, although marketing programs of the sport teams are seen as clear, relevant, distinctive and consistent by respondents, these qualities of marketing programs of the sports

30

teams does not significantly moderate the relationship between brand attitudes and (a) brand attachment and (b) activity of spectators as consumers (in terms of ticket sales and merchandise sales) (H6a/b not supported, p>0.05). Moreover, clarity, relevance, distinctiveness and consistency of marketing programs of the sports teams does not significantly moderate the relationship between perceived quality of products and (a) brand attachment and (b) activity of spectators as consumers (in terms of ticket sales and merchandise sales), as well (H7a/b not supported, p>0.05). Considering these findings, it can be proposed that even though marketing programs are perceived as clear, relevant, distinctive and consistent by respondents, their favorable perceptions does not result in favorable brand attachments and purchase activities.

Table 5: Moderated hierarchical regression analysis of program multiplier

Model	Independent Variables		Beta*	t	α	Independent Variables		Beta*	t	α
1	Constant			5.962	0.000	Constant			5.567	0.000
	Attitude		0.773	23.085	0.000	Attitude		0.630	14.736	0.000
	Perceived quality		0.078	2.345	0.020	Perceived quality		0.077	1.804	0.072
2	Constant			1.155	0.249	Constant			0.513	0.608
	Attitude		0.742	3.846	0.000	Attitude		0.776	3.273	0.001
	Perceived quality	Brand Attachment	0.136	0.870	0.385	Perceived quality	Brand Activity	-0.022	-0.117	0.907
	Program multiplier		0.044	0.283	0.778	Program multiplier		0.177	0.920	0.359
	Attitude*P. Multiplier		*-0.107*	*-0.424*	*0.672*	Attitude*P. Multiplier		*-0.280*	*-0.732*	*0.465*
	Perc. Quality*P.Multiplier		*0.033*	*0.106*	*0.915*	Perc. Quality*P.Multiplier		*0.111*	*0.360*	*0.719*
			F	α	Adj.R^{2*}			F	α	Adj.R^{2*}
1			326.559	**0.000**	0.645			137.289	**0.000**	0.435
2			108.872	**0.000**	0.634			50.678	**0.000**	0.440

Standardized coefficients

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Suggesting that spectators may be involved in the team's sportive activity, yet, may not be committed customers and develop satisfactorily favorable customer mindset, the present study represents an attempt to find out how spectator, i.e. customer, mindset is shaped in Turkish football market context and if the marketing programs have influenced the customer mindset so far. Besides, the moderating influences of the quality of the marketing programs and fans' social identification with the team are analyzed and tested by structural

equation modeling. The conceptual framework for the empirical research is based on the constructs of brand equity in the experiential services context of spectator sports.

The findings of the survey reveal that the respondents are very well aware of the team venue, i.e. stadium, the star players and the coach of their team. Although, respondents have favorable, strong and unique associations of team venue and star players. Respondents believe that the team venue and star players are unique. The finding that the star players hold the strongest association, and the achievements of the team hold third rank indicates that brand associations are built around star players and team venue, in addition to the achievements. The findings reveal that although respondents have high level of brand awareness, favorable, unique and strong brand associations, positive attitudes and high level of attachment, their activity is not fully aligned with the goals of marketing programs of sport teams.

The structural model demonstrates that brand awareness and brand associations strengthen the brand attitudes and perceived quality of products. Moreover, fan identification moderates the relation between brand association and perceived quality of products. Brand attitude influences brand attachment and activities of spectators as consumers. Higher levels of quality perception lead higher levels of attachment and higher, but insignificant, levels of activity. Furthermore, considering the findings about the program multipliers, it can be proposed that even though marketing programs are perceived as clear, relevant, distinctive and consistent by respondents, their favorable perceptions does not result in favorable brand attachments and purchase activities.

It can be proposed that the spectator-based brand equity of Turkish football teams is strong. By and large, it is built around the team venue, star players and the achievements of the team respectively. Moreover, it can be proposed that marketing programs of Turkish football teams affected customer mindset only to a certain level; the positive mindset in terms of awareness, associations, attitudes, and attachment does not satisfactorily motivate spectators to buy ticket and licensed merchandise.

The findings of the present study may assist Turkish football clubs and their administrators in understanding the current view of spectators about the marketing program of the sports teams. Thus, they can reshape their marketing program and implement new strategies in order to motivate spectators to engage in brand related behaviors. One of the strategies to increase the brand-related activities can be to strengthen the relationship between the management of the football clubs and the spectators and support the activities of online

32

and offline team communities. By this way, brand identification can be achieved and brand-related activities such as buying tickets and licensed merchandise will be increased.

Despite its limitations, especially in composition and size of the research sample, this study may form the basis for an expanded research effort with a more representative sample of the Turkish football spectators. The effect of marketing program and customer mindset on brand (team) identification with a wider sample can be investigated in future studies.

REFERENCES

Aaker, D. (1991). *Managing Brand Equity*. New York: Free Press.

Aaker, D. A. (1996). *Building Strong Brands*. New York: Free Press.

Askegaard, S. (2006). *Brands As A Global Ideoscape, in Brand Culture*, Jonathan E.Schroeder and Miriam Salzer-Mörling (eds.). New York: Routledge.

Berument, H. and Yucel, E. M. (2005). Long live Fenerbahce: The Production Boosting Effects of Football. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 26 (6): 842-861. doi:10.1016/j.joep.2005.04.002

Boyle, A. B. and Magnusson, P (2007). Social Identity and Brand Equity Formation: A Comparative Study of Collegiate Sports Fans. *Journal of Sport Management*, 21: 497-520.

Bradbury, T. and Catley, B. (2007). Committing Regicide: Rebranding The Football Kingz. *International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship*, October: 11-22.

Erdem, T., Swait, J., and Valenzuela, A. (2006). Brands As Signals: A Cross-Country Validation Study. *Journal of Marketing*, 70 (January): 34-49.

Fullerton, S. and Merz, G. R. (2008). The Four Domains of Sports Marketing: A Conceptual Framework. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 17: 90-108.

Gladden, J. M. and Milne, G. (1999). Examining The Importance of Brand Equity In Professional Sports. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 8: 21-29.

Gladden, J. M. and Funk, D. C. (2002). Developing An Understanding of Brand Associations In Team Sport: Empirical Evidence From Consumers of Professional Sport. *Journal of Sport Management*, 16 (1): 54–81.

Gladden, J. M., Irwin., R. L., and Sutton, W. A. (2001). Managing North American Major Professional Sport Team in The New Millenium: A Focus on Building Brand Associations Equity. *Journal of Sport Management*, 15: 297-317.

Graham, S., Goldblatt, J. J., and Neirotti, L. D. (2001). *Ultimate Guide to Sports Marketing*, 2nd Edition, Blacklick, OH. USA: McGraw-Hill.

Gürel, E. (2000). Relation Between Football, Communication and Marketing, *International Sports and Media Symposium*. Conference Proceedings.

Katırcı, H. (2011). Central Figures of Sports Market In Turkey: Three Biggest and Their Marketing Operations. *Pamukkale Journal of Sport Sciences*, 2 (2): 28-40.

Keller, K. K. (2003). Brand Synthesis: The Multidimensionality of Brand Knowledge. *Journal Of Consumer Research*, 29 (March 2003): 595-600.

Keller, K. L. and Lehmann D. R. (2006). Brands and Branding: Research Findings and Future Priorities. *Marketing Science*, 25(6): 740–759. doi: 10.1287/mksc.1050.0153

Keller, K. L. and Lehmann, D. R. (2003). How do brands create value?. *Marketing Management*, 12(3): 26.

Keller, K. L. (2003). *Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring and Managing Brand Equity*. USA: Pearson International Edition.

Keller, K. L. and Don Lehmann, D. R. (2003). How Do Brands Create Value. *Marketing Management*, (May/June): 27-31.

Kim, Y. K. and Trail, G. (2011). A Conceptual Framework for Understanding Relationships Between Sport Consumers and Sport Organizations: A Relationship Quality Approach. *Journal of Sport Management*, 25(1): 57-69.

Kotler, P. (2000). *Marketing Management Analysis, Planning, Implementation and Control*. USA: Prentice Hall International Edition.

Özer, A. and Argan, M. (2006). Licensed Team Merchandise Buying Behavior: A Study on Turkish Fans. *Innovative Marketing*, 2(4): 117-130.

Kotler, P. and Keller, K. L. (2006). *Marketing Management*, 12th Edition, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Punj, G. N. and Hillyer, C. L. (2004). A Cognitive Model of Customer-Based Brand Equity for Frequently Purchased Products: Conceptual Framework and Empirical Results. *Journal Of Consumer Psychology*, 14 (1&2): 124–131. doi: 10.1207/s15327663jcp1401&2_14

Rein, I., Kotler, P. and Shields, B. E. (2006) The Elusive Fan: Reinventing Sports in a Crowded Marketplace. USA: McGraw – Hill.

Ross, S. D., Keith C. Russell, K. C. and Bang, H. (2008). An Empirical Assessment of Spectator-Based Brand Equity. *Journal of Sport Management*, 22: 322-337.

Ross, S. D. (2006). A Conceptual Framework for Understanding Spectator-Based Brand Equity. *Journal of Sport Management*, 20: 22-38.

Schiffman, L. and Kanuk L. L. (2000). *Consumer Behaviour*, 7th Edition, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Schmitt, B. H. (1999). *Experiential Marketing: How to Get Customers to Sense Feel, Think, Act and Relate to Your Company and Brands*. New York: Free Press.

34

Solomon, M. R. (2011). *Consumer Behavior, Buying, Having and Being*, 9th Edition, USA: Prentice Hall.

Strebinger, A., Schweiger, G., and Otter, T. (1998). Brand Equity and Consumer Information Processing: A Proposed Model, *AMA's Marketing Exchange Colloquium*, Vienna.

Thompson, C. J., Aric Rindfleisch, A., and Arsel, Z. (2006). Emotional Branding and The Strategic Value of the Doppelgänger Brand Image. *Journal of Marketing*, (January), 70: 50–64.

Thomson, M., MacInnis, D. J., and Park C. W. (2005). The Ties That Bind: Measuring the Strength of Consumers' Emotional Attachments to Brands. *Journal Of Consumer Psychology*, 15 (1): 77–91. doi: 10.1207/s15327663jcp1501_10

Tolba, A. H. and. Hassan, S. S. (2009). Linking Customer-Based Brand Equity With Brand Market Performance: A Managerial Approach. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 18(5): 356–366. doi: 10.1108/10610420910981837

Yoo, B. and Donthu, N. (2001). Developing and Validating A Multidimensional Consumer-Based Brand Equity Scale. *Journal of Business Research*, 52 (1): 1-14. doi: 10.1016/S0148-2963(99)00098-3

Yoshida, M. and James J. D. (2010). Customer Satisfaction With Game and Service Experiences: Antecedents and Consequences. *Journal of Sport Management*, 24: 338-361.