Symbolic Purchase in Sports Marketing: The Effect of Perceived Quality and Self-image Congruity on Intention to Purchase; A Field Study in Turkey

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Abstract: Modern life urges people to meet their needs for communication faster and more effective than ever. As a result of this fact people spend more and more time in front of the computer and other means of communication. Thus, mankind moves less and the need to keep fit becomes more important. So, people involve much more in sports facilities and this means consumption of sports equipment and other tools of sports marketing.

The present study aims to investigate the effect of self-image congruity and perceived quality on the purchase intentions of Turkish football fans. In order to do so, a questionnaire which is adapted from the former studies is applied to the supporters of the teams which involve in Spor Toto Super League.

In order to analyze 316 responses, descriptive statistics, reliability, correlations, factor analysis, structural equation modelling and linear regression analysis are applied. The tests approved that a valid and reliable data set is acquired. Also the theory of the research validated in the data. Hence, the hypothesis test revealed that the data doesn't fit with the research model. Nevertheless,it is statistically proved that perceived quality has effect on purchase intentions of the randomly selected sample.

Keywords: *Sports Marketing, Symbolic Purchase, Self-Image Congruity, Purchase Intention*

SporPazarlamasındaSembolik Satın Alma: AlgılananKaliteileBenlikİmajıÖrtüşmesinin Satın Alma EğilimineEtkisi; Türkiye'deBir Alan Çalışması

Öz: Çağdaş yaşam insanların iletişim ihtiyaçlarını her zaman olduğundan daha hızlı ve etkili bir şekilde gerçekleştirmeleri için zorlamaktadır. Bu gerçekten hareketle insanlar bilgisayar ve diğer iletişim araçlarının önünde daha çok vakit geçirmektedir. Böylece insanlar daha az hareket etmekte ve fit bir vücuda sahip kalmak önem arz etmektedir. Bu yüzden insanlar spor ile ilgili etkinliklerde daha fazla rol almakta ve bu da spor pazarlaması ile sunulan ekipmanların ve aletlerin daha çok tüketilmesi anlamına gelmektedir.

Mevcut çalışma Türk futbol taraftarlarının benlik imajı örtüşmesi ile kalite algılarının satın alma niyetleri üzerinde bir etkisinin olup olmadığını araştırmayı amaçlar. Bunu gerçekleştirebilmek için önceki çalışmalardan uyarlanan bir anket Spor Toto Süper Ligi'nde oynayan takımların taraftarlarına uygulanmıştır.

316 cevabın analiz edilmesinde tanımsal istatistikler, güvenirlik, korelasyonlar, faktör analizi, yapısal eşitlik modeli ve doğrusal regresyon kullanılmıştır. Bu testler geçerli ve güvenilir bir verinin elde edildiğini göstermiştir. Bunun yanında araştırmanın teorisinin veriye tam olarak yansıdığı tespit edilmiştir. Ancak, hipotez testi verinin modele tam olarak uymadığını göstermiştir. Yine de kalite algısı rastsal yöntemlerle seçilmiş olan örneklemin satın alma eğilimleri üzerinde etkili olduğuna yönelik istatistiki olarak kanıtlanmış bulgular elde edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Spor Pazarlaması, Sembolik Satın Alma, Benlik İmajı Örtüşmesi, Satın alma Eğilimi*

INTRODUCTION

In the global world, marketing is not a matter of just the exchange of the goods and services (Schaff, 1995). The concept has a broader index including the people, places, organizations, events and even ideas. Sport is another concept which gains more importance not only with its place in the life styles of the modern people but also the size of the sports industry. Many different factors, such as the differentiation of the customer needs, globalization and the development of new marketing processes might have some effects on this

situation. The detection of these factors is only possible by the identification and the analysis of the target market and the purchase habits of the customers in this market i.e. the observation of the behavior of customers.

In psychology behavior is defined as the response of the human metabolism to a stimulus(Greenberg &Gray, 1996). It is asserted that the former attitudes of people are effective in the occurrence of the behavior (Salisbury, Pearson, Pearson and Miller, 2001). In Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) claim that the attitudes among the stimulus might be effective on the behavior of people. In a glance through the glasses of marketing to this situation, the purchase behavior of people would also be affected by the former attitudes of the people. So, it can be asserted that the individual should reflect a kind of symbolic purchase.

In symbolic purchase the purchase behavior of the individual is bound to the belonging emotion rather than meeting a need. Developed by the improvement of relational marketing, symbolic purchase is a concept which includes self-image congruity as a reflection of id and perceived quality as a reflection of ego (Bee &Kahle, 2006; Kwak& Kang, 2009). As in the personality of the individual, these two concepts struggle in meeting the needs of id and the restriction of the ego (Crimmins and Horn, 1996).

Self-image congruity reflects in what aspects the ego perception of the individual has congruence with a situation (Bosnjak, Sirgy, Hellriegel& Maurer, 2010). The perception of the individual is bound to the wish if the person where to see him/herself in the society. It is statistically proved that the self-image congruity has effect on their purchase habits in the former studies (Sirgy, Grewall&Mangleburg, 2000). With a glance in the underpinnings of such kind of a behavior, it is obvious that the person perceives the product as a suitable tool for joining a group of people who uses the same product. On the other hand the individual has a perception of quality on whether it is worthy to purchase such an item.

As a result of the mentioned congruence and perception, the individual will afford the item or not. The present study is conducted in order to see whether these mentioned concepts are effective on people's purchase behavior. Kwak& Hang's (2009) findings will also be compared.

In order to do so, via a social network the supporters of the teams which involve in Turkish Spor Toto Super League (which is the highest soccer league) are asked to fill in an online questionnaire which is adapted from the former pieces of literature. The obtained results are combined as a data set and initial analyses are conducted. According to the findings of the initial analysis it is observed that the data set has a valid reliability and the size of the sample is enough to make factor analysis. The statistical analyses have proved that self-image congruity has no significant effect on purchase intention but perceived

quality has positive effects on purchase intentions of the individuals and this result is reflected as a Structural Equation Model (SEM).

As a result, in the present study, which aims to put forth whether there is a relationship between the self-image congruity and perceived quality and intention to purchase, it is found out that there is a positive relationship between these three concepts.

Theoretical Background (Concepts, Variables and Hypotheses)

Business enterprises have evolved throughout history. The points of view of the former ones are completely different from the latter ones by means of marketing. Especially by the second half of the 18th century, it has become more difficult to differentiate products because of the correspondence of production processes (Bee &Kahle, 2006). As a result of this fact, they have started to search for new markets and try to analyze the needs of the customer in order to meet them in the optimum degree. So, marketing has become a popular field of study in literature.

Marketing is defined as the process of producing, pricing, distributing and promoting ideas, goods and services in order to reach personal and organizational goals (McDaniel & Gates, 1998: 3). The biggest source of income of football clubs are broadcasting rights, sponsorship agreements and the sales of tickets and licensed team merchandise. Since they have big sums of expenses such as transportation, accommodation, transfer fares and rent for the stadiums, it is notable for them to generate and apply effective marketing strategies. It is observed that the more the team is financially strong the better they achieve in sports facilities.

For obtaining better results it is substantial to understand how marketing process is being conducted. Initially the teams need supporters who will willingly afford licensed merchandise for just the sake of their team. Then, explanation of the key concepts in the relationship which inspired this research is essential for a better understanding of the theoretical underpinnings. Only by this way it will be possible to set hypotheses and define variables.

Concepts

The aim of this study is to put forth whether symbolic purchase affect the intention to purchase, so it is thought that it should be better to identify sports marketing initially and then symbolic purchase is handled.

Sports Marketing

Sports marketing is a set of actions, plans and facilities which aim to meet the needs of the sports fans (Mullin, Hardy and Sutton, 2007). The concept emerged after it is first uttered in Advertising Age in 1978 (Estri, Aghazadeh, Rayej and Raoufi, 2010; Karademir, Devecioğlu and Özmaden, 2010; Ekmekçi&Ekmekçi, 2010; Altunbaş, 2007). It includes social responsibility, the sales of licensed merchandise, tickets, organizations…etc. Throughout the history the concept gained much more importancewhile there have beenimprovements in the sports industry. Throughout the history the concept enlarged by means of the facilities done by promoting sports in fields and products which are not very familiar with sports.

There are plenty of former researches on sports marketing. Mostly the researches deal with sponsorship (Bal &Plewa, 2010; McDaniel & Mason, 1999; Cornwell and Maignon, 1998; Lough and Irwin, 2001; Thwaites, 1993; Meenaghan& Shipley, 1999; Olkkonen, Tikkanen&Alajoutsijaèrvi, 2000; Ordish, 2005). There are researches which aim to investigate the group dynamics in sports marketing (Dionı´sio, Leal &Moutinho, 2008; Bush, Bush, Clark & Bush, 2005; Lawrence &Moberg, 2009; Özer&Argan, 2006; Mitchell &Imrie, 2011). There are researches on franchising (Kelley, Hoffman & Carter, 1999; Mason, 1999).

These kinds of marketing actions are very common in advertising. For example, a globally known sportsman is introduced as s/he is successful just because that s/he uses the promoted product. The formula of the success and the secrets of the beauty are revealed everyday but there are still a number of people who can bend it like Beckham or hit the ball as Kournikova does. The question here is, as they have the power of promoting a certain product, how can business enterprises use this power? So, the process of sports marketing should be checked out.

As mentioned before marketing is a set of actions to produce, price, distribute and promote a certain kind of product or service and all of these actions must be conducted due to a plan (Mason, 1999). This plan should act as a road map to the manager of the enterprise and it is best to cope with such a process as it is a system (Thorne, Wright & Jones, 2001).

The systems have got inputs and outputs. If we evaluate the process of sports marketing as a system, the preparations done accordingly with the release of the product will be the inputs and the sales numbers and the revenue gained by these sales will be the outputs.

More specifically the inputs of sports marketing process are;
- Defining the needs of the customer
- Defining the product or the service which is aimed to meet the demand.

- Pricing the product or the service
- Distributing the product

On the other hand the outputs of the sports marketing system are;
- Promoting the product
- Selling the product

The timing of all these steps is utmost important for the success of the product in the market. If a person tries to sell products for the final of the Champions League of the previous season at the very moment, it would make no sense. It is reported that products increase the excitement of the event (Schaff, 1995) and promotion can flourish the revenue of the event (McDonald &Rascher, 2000) and also a large sum of money is paid in order to set more effective ways for the distribution of these goods (Miller, 1999) and lastly there are regulations for the pricing of the goods as inconceivable sum of money (Oehser, 2000) is being paid for them (Thorne et. al., 2001).

So, it can be asserted that the elements of sports marketing are the same asthetraditional marketing processes. First of all, the products in the context of sports marketing are tickets, sponsorship agreements, licensed team merchandise, advertisements and broadcasting rights. The life cycles of these products are very short. Teams change their uniforms every season in order to promote consumption of the goods. Fans try their best to purchase these new items. Price is the sum that the customer is ready to pay for a specific product or service and within this context the amount of money which is paid by the fans to the goods is the price. Distribution of the goods and services are held by stadiums and stores and the most common way of distributing sports marketing products is to establish stores which are very close to the stadium. The promotion in sports marketing is done by advertising of the goods and services by the use of the sportsmen.

Symbolic purchase

Symbolic purchase or symbolic consumption is a kind of purchase behavior in which the individual prefers to afford a good or a service not because of the qualities and specifications of the product or the service but just because of sharing the feeling of owning the same thing or having the same experience with other buyers(Zukin, 2004: 153; Kwak&Kang, 2009). Generally other buyersbelong to a group and the individual perceives the product as the key to enter that group of people.

There is a very limited number of former study in this field (Schouten, 1991; Banister & Hogg, 2004; Kwak& Kang, 2009; Wymer&Samu, 2002;

Cova, 1997). This is why it is hoped that the present study should do a contribution to the literature.

Symbolic purchase includes two concepts. The first concept that symbolic purchase include is self-image congruity. This is the perception in what extend the self-image of the individual correspond to a specific situation. The situation might be a product, an event or even a person.

Perceived quality is the other concept that symbolic purchase includes and it depicts in what extend the individual appraises a product or service. Previous research asserts that consumers' sense of quality have effect on their purchase habits (Tsiotsou, 2006). This perception might have two dimensions. The first dimension is that the individual perceives the product as qualified just because that s/he thinks that the people whom already purchased the item have a sense of quality that they don't buy simple products. The second dimension is that the individual weights the sum that s/he will pay with the product and decides to afford the demanded amount because s/he thinks that it is worthy to buy.

The philosophy of constructing and conducting business enterprises is to produce goods and services in order to meet the needs of the consumers (Temin, 1991:2). At present this is a real challenge for them because of the inevitable change in the needs of the customers.

There seems to be a conflict on the needs of consumers. The ones in the underdeveloped districts of the world are happy to find water and food daily, and they would starve although they live on the riches under the ground. The ones in the developing parts of the world have two characteristics. The ones who are limited in number but keep the riches in hand have enthusiastic hobbies such as breeding camels with helicopters. On the other hand the rest has the lowest needs in Maslow's (1970)hierarchy. In the developed parts of the world people have the right to choose what to purchase and most of the production is being done on the analysis of these people because they are the richest and the widest group in consuming.

As mentioned before the individual shows purchasing behavior just because of the fact that s/he wants to belong to a group of people. The perception of the individual is that it is the key to be accepted to that group of people and as we all know there are locksmiths. If one can observe that one in two people in a university campus (which has nearly 10000 students) wears a "highly promoted" product which is on sale with €500 as the lowest price, this means that nearly €2.500.000 is spent on this particular product or the locksmiths have great sales numbers.

The situation mentioned in this example is a consequence of symbolic purchase and it can be a nice topic for further researches. Other consequences of symbolic purchase can be summarized as imitating the frontiers of the society,

preferring to buy the things that people around does, choosing the products which are perceived as familiar to a political party…etc.

In brief, symbolic purchase is the consequence of the individual's self-image congruity and perceived quality on a particular product. If the person considers the product as a key to join a group of people and perceives the product as qualified, s/he might reflect such a purchase behavior.

Variables and Hypotheses

Making contribution to the literature is a hard challenge. First of all, the researcher should be aware of the former studies as they have investigated the topic in detail. Secondly, the researcher should be able to set a research model in order to investigate the aims of the research. A good model means that having effective variables. The variables should be defined well in order to adapt or generate a good tool for measurement. In this part of the research the variables will be revised as they are going to be used in a model.

Self-Image Congruence

Individuals form an identity for themselves in a society. This occurs only when they are in contact with other people. They feel mutual belonging feelings and they act in a social environment. The process of socialization encourages the individual to set relationships with others and also share the same beliefs and attitudes (Moutinho, Dionisio& Leal, 2007). These beliefs and attitudes shape the personality and the individual feels a congruity between his/her self-image and the situation. This conformance enhances the birth of the self-image (Bearden,Netemeyer& Teel, 1989). Self-image congruence refers to the match between consumers' self-concept and the image of users of a given brand of consumer goods, services, store, organization or a destination (Bosnjak et. al., 2010). The roots of the congruence theory go back to the Roger's (1951) self-theory. According to this theory the behavior of the individual is shaped by the self-image perception. Most of the literature is shaped by the studies of Sirgy (1982). He asserted four kinds of self-image congruity; actual self-congruity, ideal self-congruity, social self-congruity and lastly ideal social self-congruity (Sirgy& Su, 2000).

The actual self-congruity is the match in what extend the individual feels the congruence between his/her personality and the product. Ideal self-image congruity is the concept what is perceived when somebody pronounces customer and what kind of actions are being expected from that social role.

Social self-congruity is the perception of the society on the purchasers of a particular product. Lastly, ideal social self-image congruity is the match between the way that the purchaser wants to be perceived and the sellers' customer image. Many studies have been done on its effect on the behavior of the consumers (Bellenger, Steinberg and Stanton 1976; Sirgy and Danes 1982; Hughes and Guerrero 1971). The gist of these researches is; there is congruence between the purchased item and the self-image.

It is possible to observe these congruence types in a store in which the licensed merchandise of a club is being sold. The reason why the individual is there is a consequence of his/her actual self-congruity. As all other people in the store our party is expected to make shopping activities such as trying on items, looking at the goods etc. The warnings in the stores project the expectations of the store from the consumers. And this reflects the ideal self-image congruity. Although the content of the package is generally completely different, people sometimes carry the bags of well-respected stores and this pictures the social self-congruity. The mutual degree of congruence between the behalf and the store reverberate the ideal social self-image congruity.

In short, self-image congruence reflects the match in what extend the expectations of the people and also the expectations of the store are overlapped. There are studies which claim that former attitudes upon a product can affect the purchase behavior of the person (Bal, Quester &Plewa, 2010: Bush et al., 2005). So, it can be derived that;

H1: "Intention to purchase is being affected by self-mage congruity."

Perceived Quality

It is the subjective evaluation of a product whether it is worthy to purchase by an individual (Zeithaml, 1998). The concept is derived from the protracted researches of Parasuraman and Zeithaml on service quality (Narang, 2010). In many studies it is reported that the perceived quality is different from the original quality (Kwak& Kang, 2009). A great number of researches have been studied in this field (Aaker & Jacobson, 1994; Yo&Donthu, 2001; Bhatti, Bouch&Kuchinsky, 2000; Supphellen&Rittenburg, 2001; Narang, 2010).

In most of the previous studies this concept is measured by asking the respondent to evaluate the product or the service. Generally this variable is positively related to intention to purchase the item and also there is evidence on the relation of the level of self-congruity and perceived quality (Chebat, Sirgy& St-James, 2006; Kwak& Kang, 2009; Aaker & Jacobson, 1994; Yoo&Donthu, 2001).

Thus it is hypothesized that;

H2: "Intention to purchase is being affected by perceived quality."

H3: "Perceived quality and self-image congruity are related positively."

Intention to Purchase

Purchase intention is the attitude of the individual on whether to buy the product and it is essential to identify this intention before releasing a product to the market (Souder & Sherman, 1994:58). This attitude, as in the present study, is being used as a consequence of other variables (Vaidyanathan, Aggarval, Stem, Muehling&Umesh, 2000; Creyer& Ross, 1997; Li, Daugherty &Biocca, 2002; Chang & Chan, 2008: Salisbury et al., 2001). The literature is rich in the studies which aim to investigate purchase intentions. Although different measurement tools are used according to the specific aims of the studies, they are mostly adapted or derived from Morrison's (1979) model. As there is evidence on reliability and validity of this scale (Kalwani& Silk, 1982), this scale is widely being used in this kind of studies. For instance Creyer& Ross (1997) found statistically significant results in their research in which they investigate whether the companies' ethical values affect the purchase intention of the consumers. Moreover, the mean of the people who are willing to praise the company which has ethical attitudes is rather high and vice versa. Li et al. (2002) reports respectively high correlations about the attitude on the product and intention to purchase in the context of 3D advertising, but the "t" values of the variables are comparably low. Salisbury*et. al.* (2001) came up to the decision of customers are more willing to purchase items on web sites which grant security. They obtained high regression weights although they used only 3 items for measurement. Chang & Chen (2008) also contributed the literature in a very similar context. They claim that the perceived risk and trust are also important in the trade on the internet.

As a result it is statistically proved that purchase intention of the individual is being affected by many different factors. But the topic of the present study has not been on the list of researchers much (Kwak& Kang, 2009; Ekin, 2010). So, it can be hypothesized that;

H4: "Purchase intention is being affected by symbolic purchase."

Analysis

The former parts of the present study aims to clarify the conceptual framework in order to have a better understanding of the topic. However, it is not efficient to depict whether there is a relationship between these concepts. The research applies the phases of scientific research methodology. In order to

do so, the problem is defined. Conceptual framework is set. Hypothesis development is utilized.

In order to test these hypotheses, a questionnaire adapted from literature is applied to a randomly defined sample in a field study concept. It is thought that receiving direct information from supporters should be better (O'Cass& Grace, 2008). By this way the authors were able to analyze the field in detail (Olkkonenet.al., 2000). The analysis included preliminary analysis (descriptive statistics, reliability, correlations, factor analysis, structural equation modelling and linear regression).

Measure Development

The variables of the study are searched in the related literature one by one. It is observed that they are measured in very different scales in many different kinds of researches. As the former studies had many different reasons for measuring these variables the variety in scales is normal. So, the researchers decided to adapt the scales of former studies, which have strong reliability scores, for the specific purposes of the study. Thus, the purchase intention of the sample is measured by five items (Xu, Luo, Carroll &Rosson, 2010; Dodds, Monroe & Grewal, 1991; Hill &Paphitis, 2011). Perceived quality is also measured with five items (Dodds et. al., 1991; Aeker, 1991). Again, self-image congruity is measured by five items (Kang, Hong & Lee, 2008; Bosnjak et. al., 2010; O'Cass& Grace, 2008).

Because of the fact that the survey is related to the sports, it is thought that it should make sense if it is applied to the people who involve in sports facilities. Then, the researchers got into contact with fan groups of the 18 team which involve in Spor Toto Super League in 2013-2014 season. By the use of a commonly used social network, the supporters of the clubs are invited to fill in an online questionnaire form. Thus, the questionnaire is applied to 316 randomly selected people who support different football clubs in Turkey. Data obtained from İstanbul, Ankara, Konya, Eskişehir, Antalya, Gaziantep, Kahramanmaraş, Bursa and Sivas cities. With the help of the internet site, the results of the questionnaire is obtained as a data set. As data is collected online, it prevented much of the paper work, also the delays caused by posting and the reluctance of the sample to fill in the questionnaire form.

Descriptive Statistics

The sample of the study consists of 316 people mostly from, Fenerbahçe (%26,9), Beşiktaş(%25) and Galatasaray (%23,7) supporters and males (%83) dominate the group. The average age of the group is 34 and most

of them are graduates of high school (%40,2), primary school (%29,1) and university (%16,5).

Preliminary Analyses

The Cronbach Alpha score of the items of the questionnaire is %70,1 and this result depicts that the items haveavalidreliability. Then an explanatory factor analysis is applied to the data set in order to handle with more limited number of factors. As a result, the score of KMO measure of sampling adequacy is 0,701 and this reflects that the size of the sample is adequate to proceed the analysis. Also Barlett's test of sphericity is statistically significant and this result demonstrates that there should be statistically significant relations between the variables. The rotated component matrix is depicted in Table 1.

Table 1.Rotated Component Matrix

	Component		
	1	2	3
The people who purchase licensed merchandise depicts who they are(SIC1)	-,058	**,695**	,037
The others who buys licensed merchandise are like me(SIC2)	-,101	**,792**	,069
Everybody admires me because of my purchase habits(SIC3)	,062	**,740**	,101
Everybody insults me if I don't purchase those items**(R)**(SIC4)	,303	**,580**	-,070
The others who use these products are like me(SIC5)	,408	**,518**	-,076
The licensed merchandise is good in quality(PQ1)	**,691**	,235	-,077
People wouldn't purchase them if they were not good in quality(PQ2)	**,764**	,060	-,042
These merchandise have excellent features(PQ3)	**,776**	,124	-,020
They are more durable when compared to the others(PQ4)	**,636**	-,096	,285
I trust the quality of these merchandise(PQ5)	**,522**	-,111	,335
I would like to buy the products of my team(IP1)	,286	-,114	**,572**
People should purchase the products of their team(IP2)	,070	,017	**,634**
I would feel guilty if I don't buy it(IP3)	-,023	-,044	**,659**

Adds were effective in my purchase of this product(IP4)	-,059	,082	**,663**
I can imagine the product on myself(IP5)	,002	,119	**,480**

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations. (the values in bold are the highest factor loads)

Table 1 indicates that the factor loads of some items are convergent although they are expected to be divergent. It should be difficult to proceed the analysis with these kinds of variables in the data set so, the authors decided to omit SIC4, SIC5, PQ4 and PQ5 from the data set. The means of the self-image congruity related items and perceived quality and also intention to purchase are obtained as "SICmean", "PQmean" and "IPmean". Thus it should be possible to look for the correlations between the variables. Table 2 depicts the one-tailed correlations between these variables.

Table 2. Correlations between the variables

| Correlations		SICmean	PQmean
PQmean	Pearson Correlation	,175**	
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,001	
IPmean	Pearson Correlation	,035	,141**
	Sig. (1-tailed)	,268	,006
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.SICmean=Self-image congruity, PQmean=Perceived quality, IPmean= Intention to purchase			

The results of the correlation analysis show that self-image congruence and perceived quality is correlated positively (p<0,01) but there is no correlation between self-image congruence and intention to purchase. However, there is a significant (p<0,01) correlation between perceived quality and intention to purchase. The correlations show that Turkish football fans purchase items according to the products' quality and they also have a sense of quality which is bound to their self-image congruity. This may be caused by comparably low reliability of the questionnaire items and maybe because of the low literacy of the sample. But these results are not the final contribution of this research

because there may be different kinds of relations in SEM as it has got more detailed path diagrams (Hair, Babin& Anderson, 1998).

Main Analysis

To this extend the descriptive statistics and preliminary analyses of the research are conducted. In order to test the hypothesis of the research the researchers decided to apply a SEM in order to investigate the relationships between symbolic purchase and intention to purchase and again symbolic purchase and self-image congruence and perceived quality. In the model symbolic purchase is stimulated as the consequence of both self-image congruity and perceived quality. By this way it is thought that, it should be possible to go the underpinnings of symbolic purchase. As mentioned before people tend to reflect this kind of a purchase behavior as a consequence of their self-image congruity and also their sense of quality. Two of the variables were omitted from the data set because they had divergent factor features. The remaining part of the data set is used in order to establish the SEM. For self-image congruity three items are set in the model whose Cronbach alpha score is 0,729. Perceived quality is measured by three items (Cronbach alpha=0,768). Purchase intention of the sample is measured by the use of five items whose Cronbach alpha score is 0,607.

Figure 1: Theory of the model
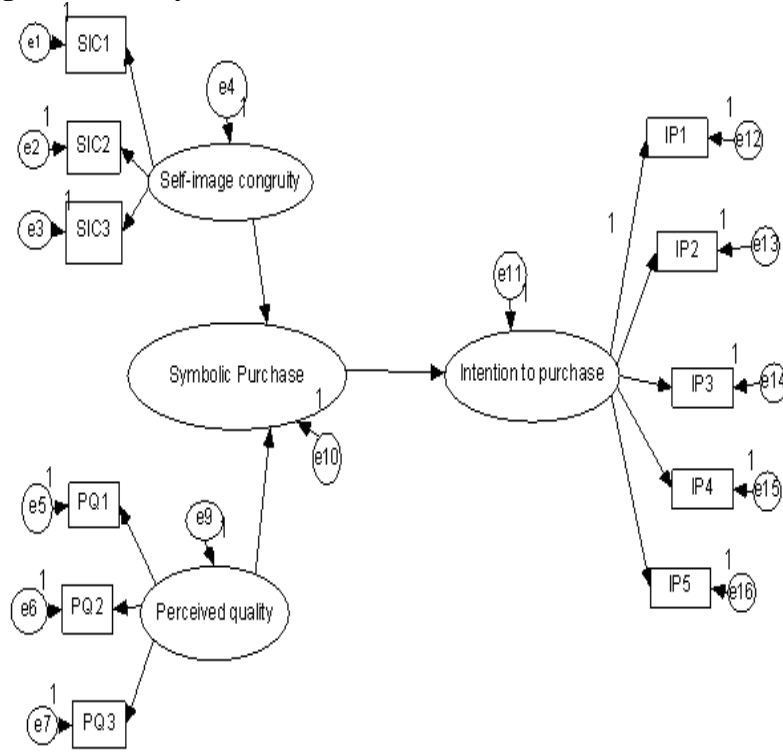
As displayed in Figure 1, the theory of the research consists of many complex relationships which can only be figured out by the use of the simulated SEM. Basically the model was tested by the use of SPSS Amos program. By this way it will be possible to test the hypothesis of the research. The results of the structural model indicate that the model doesn't fit the model exactly (χ^2=162,660, df=99, p<0.01, CMIN/df=1,643; CFI=0,941; NFI=0,866; RMSE=0,069). However the results show that analysis can be further sustained because only the χ^2 value is out of the acceptable levels and this may result from the sample's size. The estimates of the variables are depicted in Table 3.

Table 3. The regression coefficients of the variables in the model

			Estimate	Std. Dv.	t	P
SIC1	<---	Self-image congruity	,552	,105	5,265	,000
SIC2	<---	Self-image congruity	,262	,079	3,321	,000
SIC3	<---	Self-image congruity	,259	,089	2,906	,004
Symbolic purchase	<---	Self-image congruity	,008	,109	,071	,943
Symbolic purchase	<---	Perceived quality	,251	,143	1,758	,000
PQ1	<---	Perceived quality	1,000			
PQ2	<---	Perceived quality	,901	,130	6,947	,000
PQ3	<---	Perceived quality	,527	,104	5,075	,000
Intention to purchase	<---	Symbolic purchase	,967	,113	8,560	,000
IP1	<---	Intention to purchase	1,138	,115	9,881	,000
IP2	<---	Intention to purchase	1,032	,108	9,591	,000

		Estimate	Std. Dv.	t	P
IP3	Intention to purchase <---	1,000			
IP4	Intention to purchase <---	,813	,095	8,543	,000
IP5	Intention to purchase <---	,631	,100	6,305	,000

The test of the model showstherelations between some of the variables.The results indicate that there is no statistically significant relationship between symbolic purchase and self-image congruity. The relationship between perceived quality and symbolic purchase (,251; p<0.01) and the relationship between symbolic purchase and intention to purchase (,967; p<0.01) indicate that the results of this study is partly significant. *H1* is denied because it is proved in both correlations and SEM that intention to purchase is not being affected by self-image congruity. *H2* is accepted because the values show that purchase intentions of the sample is being affected by quality perceptions. *H3* is also accepted as the correlation result shoe that perceived quality and self-image congruity is positively related to each other (,175; p<0.01). Lastly *H4* is accepted as purchase intentions of the sample are highly being affected by symbolic purchase. In conclusion most of the hypotheses of the research are accepted except for one. It may be caused by the fact that the estimates of regression analysis related to the items (SIC1, SIC2 and SIC3) of self-image congruity are comparably low.

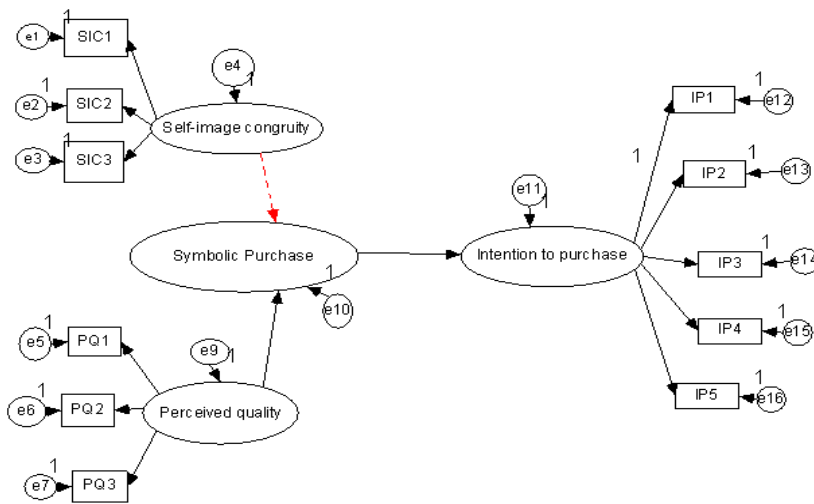So, the model should be modified as it is shown on Figure 2.

Figure 2. The modified model

As the model failed in fit indices, linear regression is applied to the data in order to see whether the situation is the same or not with SEM. Intention to purchase is defined as the dependent and self-image congruity and perceived quality were the independent variable. Durbin Watson statistics value was 1,990 and this indicate that there is no auto-correlation. The model fit as R square reported to be ,142. This means that the results of the analysis includes only %14,2 of the sample. The Beta coefficient in self-image congruity was insignificant (,851) while perceived quality had significant ,140 value (0,015). These results support the results of the SEM in hypothesis testing.

Conclusion

The purpose of the current study was to define whether there are significant relationships between self-image congruity and intention to purchase and also between perceived quality and respectively symbolic purchase. The authors of the study expect the findings of this study to make contribution to the sports marketing literature.

In order to do so, the researchers adapted a questionnaire from literature and applied it to the supporters of the clubs in Spor Toto Super League (the highest soccer league in Turkey). Due to the ubiquitous nature of internet the survey is conducted online. With the analysis of the data set the authors have come up to the result that self-image congruence is not significantly related to intention to purchase. This result opposes the former literature (Sirgy& Su, 2000; Graeff, 1996; Hughes & Guerrero, 1971). However perceived quality is significantly related to symbolic purchase and also symbolic purchase is significantly related to the purchase intention of the sample. These findings are parallel to the former literature (Hausman&Siekpe, 2009; Korzaan, 2003; Kwak& Kang, 2009; Yo&Donthu, 2001; Creyer& Ross, 1997; Xu, Oh &Teo, 2009; Bolton and Drew, 1988; Chang & Chen, 2008).

In brief the findings of the present study are notable as they indicate the existence of a relationship between symbolic purchase and perceived quality and purchase intentions. As sports is becoming a greater industry it is expected that there will be more research on this topic.

Limitations and ideas for future research

The initial limitation of this study is the size of the sample (N=316). Football clubs in Turkey have millions of supporters and it is really hard to generalize the findings of the present study. Also χ^2 value of the model is significant $p < 0.01$ which means that the sample is not big enough to fit the model. Then, it can be derived that although the data set has acceptable KMO measure of sampling adequacy test result (,701) the model might require more.

This research can be expanded to globe as there are other people who are eagerly interested in sports; especially football. Comparative studies might be contributive and they may help to understand cultural differences as well.

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