

## **Sport Marketing and Sponsorship: Case of Turkish Airlines Corporation**

**Spor Pazarlaması ve Sponsorluk:  
Türk Hava Yolları Örneği**

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**Ahmet SARITAŞ<sup>1</sup>**

### **Abstract**

*In previous decades, sport activities were hold only in local and regional areas and they used to attract only a small group of people. These activities were mostly far from professionalism and mainly amateurish. Reaching many people took too much time. After the developments in technology and especially in mass communication systems, all sportive branches have started to reach much more people. Today, sport activities are followed by many people. The sport activities today are not only a sport but also a sector which run millions of dollars. Because of these developments, a concept called as “sport industry” has emerged. Especially football and other specific branches of sports such as basketball, volleyball and baseball have started to reach much more people. Male and female athletes in this industry have become well-known stars. Big companies have signed sponsorship agreements with world-famous stars and teams, and by this way they have started to market their products to the target consumers. Many of old and big companies have realized the positive effect of sport on the people. So, they have tried to introduce themselves in global market through some of sport clubs or organizations.*

*Many old companies in the world have been applying this strategy for marketing. This strategy is getting more popular day by day. By developing technology and globalization, big Turkish companies have tended to provide sport sponsorships. As a typical example, Turkish Airlines Corporation has been trying to increase its brand familiarity and reliability through advertisement for 10 years.*

*In this study in which the sponsorship activities of THY are examined, the explorational research type that is mostly used with case research, has been carried out by deepening the information collected from secondary data. Marketing and sponsorship activities which were used by THY have been analyzed, and material and immaterial values gained by THY by means of these activities have been thoroughly examined.*

**Key words:** Sport Marketing, Sponsorship, Turkish Airlines Corporation (THY)

### **Öz**

*Önceki yıllarda, sportif faaliyetler yalnızca yerel ve bölgesel alanlarda yapılır ve sadece küçük bir toplumun ilgisini çekerdi. Bu faaliyetler çoğunlukla profesyonellikten yoksun ve amatörce idi. Çok sayıda insana ulaşması uzun yıllar aldı. Teknolojide ve özellikle de kitle iletişim sistemlerindeki gelişmelerden sonra, tüm*

<sup>1</sup> Asst. Prof. Dr., Mehmet Akif Ersoy University, Bucak Zeliha Tolunay Applied Technology and Business Management School, International Trade Department, saritas@mehmetakif.edu.tr

*sportif branşlar daha fazla insana ulaşmaya başladı. Bugün sportif faaliyetler birçok insan tarafından takip edilmektedir. Sportif faaliyetler bugün sadece bir spor değil aynı zamanda milyonlarca Doların işlediği bir sektördür. Bu gelişmelerden dolayı, spor endüstrisi adlı bir sektör ortaya çıkmıştır. Özellikle futbol ve basketbol, beysbol ve voleybol gibi diğer spesifik spor branşları çok fazla sayıda insana ulaşmaya başlamıştır. Bu endüstrideki erkek ve kadın sporcular iyi tanınan yıldızlar haline gelmişlerdir. Büyük şirketler, dünyaca ünlü yıldızlar ve takımlarla sponsorluk anlaşmaları imzalamakta ve böylece ürünlerini hedefledikleri tüketici kitlesine pazarlamaktadırlar. Birçok köklü ve büyük şirket, sporun insanlar üzerindeki olumlu etkisinin farkına varmışlardır. Böylece, kendilerini küresel pazarda, bazı spor kulüpleri ve kuruluşları vasıtasıyla tanıtmaya çalışmaktadırlar.*

*Birçok köklü şirket, pazarlama için bu stratejiyi tatbik etmektedirler. Bu strateji gittikçe daha popüler hale gelmektedir. Teknoloji ve küreselleşmenin gelişmesiyle birlikte Türkiye'deki büyük şirketler de spor sponsorlukları sağlama eğilimi göstermişlerdir. Tipik bir örnek olarak Türk Hava Yolları, marka farkındalığı ve güvenilirliğini 10 yıldır reklam yoluyla arttırmaya çalışmaktadır.*

*Türk Hava Yolları'nın spor sponsorluğu faaliyetlerinin ele alındığı bu çalışmada, ikincil verilerden elde edilen bilgileri derinleştirip, daha çok vaka çalışmasıyla yapılan keşifsel araştırma türü kullanılmıştır. THY'nin yürüttüğü pazarlama ve sponsorluk faaliyetleri analiz edilmiş ve bu faaliyetleri sonucunda kazandığı maddi ve manevi değerler derinlemesine incelenmiştir.*

***Anahtar Kelimeler:*** Spor Pazarlaması, Sponsorluk, Türk Hava Yolları (THY)

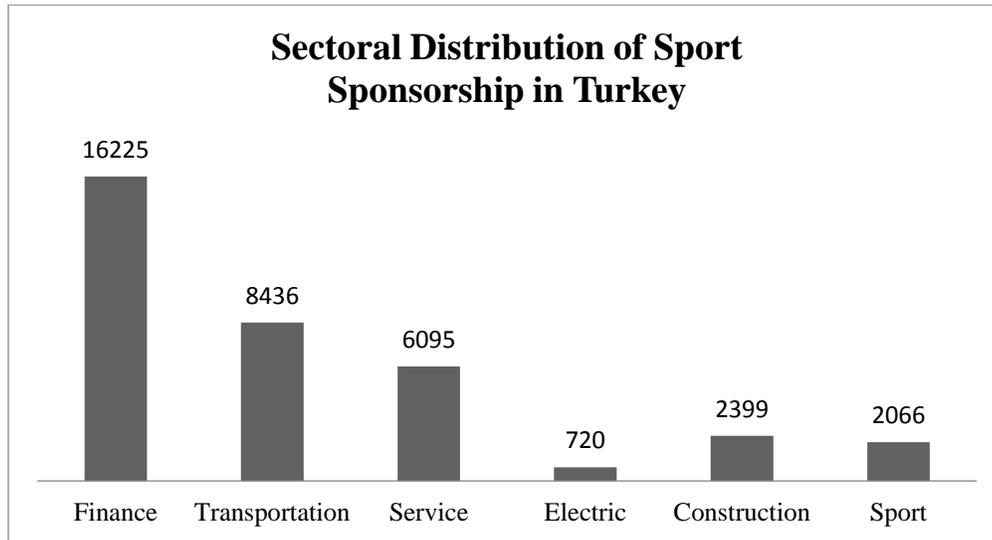
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## **1. TYPES AND SITUATION OF SPONSORSHIP IN SPORT MARKETING**

Sport marketing has become more popular since 2000 and people try to explain it with their own experiences. Sport marketing is considered as a sales activity and mainly football clubs have been applying this activity in recent years. Many football clubs prepare different kinds of products for their fans to make money. However, sport marketing isn't a restricted concept focusing on some kinds of products for profit only. Sport marketing is more comprehensive than sales, advertisement, public relations and social interactions (Gençer, 2001:28).

Although sport marketing is a new field in marketing, sport is either marketed or used as a marketing tool for centuries. But sport marketing concept was used firstly by Advertising Age Magazine in 1978 (Ekmekçi and Ekmekçi, 2009:25). Brands have realized that sport is followed by many people, so they aim to earn money from sponsorship.

Sponsorship is one of the mostly used communication tools for marketing. It is one of the most efficient ways that can be used for reaching target group (Erciş,2012:116). Sponsorship types in sport marketing can be classified as sponsorship of individual sportsmen and sport teams (İnan, 2011, 26) and sponsorship of sport events (Çıyan, 2015: 131; Ulu, 2011: 23). Sponsorship takes place in different platforms and rapidly developing communication technology has forced the companies to be a sponsor to reach their target group. As it can be seen from the news in Haberturk Newspaper, dated 28.09.2015, diversity and taking attention to potential of sectors are discussed.

**Figure 1. Sectoral Distribution of Sport Sponsorship in Turkey**

Source: Haberturk Newspaper, 28.09.2015

## 2. SPORT MARKETING MIX

Production and distribution costs, natural resources, technology, capital factors are emphasized much. Labor factor is mainly understood as salary level. As a result, efficiency and effectiveness condition different management strategies that cannot be understood sufficiently (Güçlü, 2001: 231). All the marketing tools used by the marketers to reach their goals in the being performed market (Ekmekçi and Ekmekçi, 2009:26).

### 2.1. Product

Product is the goods and services that the organization introduces in the target market. Products which were gained in return for some money can be physical and incorporeal. Management's first task is to plan and develop a marketable, reasonable product. Products are the goods and service that can supply consumer and customer requirement (Gençer, 2001: 34). After product definition, it is easy to reveal sport products. According to a definition, sport product is designed to benefit to sport spectators, participants and sponsors (Katırcı and Argan,2012:88).

### 2.2. Price

Price is noteworthy factor in sport marketing. Consumer should accept it to buy a product. Pricing the product groups is important for an organization (Dinç, 2010: 10). Product service pricing decisions and strategies in sport marketing should be clarified (Çakmak, 2015).

### 2.3. Distribution

Place in which sport product will be introduced is a key factor. Sport products can be introduced through indoor & outdoor areas, TV, radio, internet etc. at the same time; sport marketing managers are trying to build efficient interaction between sports and their fans. Some questions as; "where a new stadium will be built and how a complex will be built or how the tickets will be sold efficiently?" are the main distribution subjects that sport marketers face (Ekmekçi and Ekmekçi, 2009:28).

## **2.4. Promotion**

Promotion is introducing positively a product or service, a company, an idea to the target market. So, promotion can be defined as a marketing program which enables communication between consumers and organizations. It also supplies some information to the consumers (Ekmekçi and Ekmekçi, 2009:28). Jackie Joyner Kersee who has won golden medal three times, is the best among the female athletes in the field of heptathlon and long jumping. She has expressed her anxiety about the consumption of sugary drinks which can lead to health problems and obesity. She has used the promotion effect and said “I want to work with a company who gives importance to water consumption. I want to focus on the advantages of drinking water.” We can conclude that this expression can make a great effect on athletes and people who are interested in sports and value of their life (Fidelman,2016).

## **3. ECONOMICAL DIMENSIONS OF SPONSORSHIP AND EFFECTS ON BRAND FAMILIARIZATION**

When we examine the accepted marketing belief and applications, it can be understood that contemporary marketing is a system which consists of strategic, organic and functional factors (Güçlü,2001:230). Sponsorship is among the most popular marketing strategies.

Companies use marketing communication tools such as advertisement, individual sales, sales development to create demand. They also use sponsorship activities to reach inaccessible markets, introduce forbidden products and fulfill social responsibilities. During this process, companies display useful activities and consumers perceive them positively. So, consumers choose sponsor company's products (Çoban, 2003:218).

To create brand addiction of consumers, first of all, brand familiarity should be occupied. Next steps are, creating and carrying on the positive brand image that provides consumers to choose the specific product to the others. Some research say that companies have some reasons to organize sponsorship activities but increasing brand familiarity awareness and creating brand image are the most common elements. Researches show that creating brand awareness is the main reason to start sponsorship activities (Açar, 2014:33).

Sport is now a huge industry in today's world. In order to survive this industry, more organizations should be held for increasing the consumption. The Olympic Games, World Cup and Champions League can be watched live in every part of the world. Countries which will be host of these events, find chance to introduce themselves effectively. Spectators coming to watch events, leave money in that country. Live broadcasts, revenues from sponsorship companies make contribution to that country's economy (Gültekin, 2012:54).

Especially sponsor firms which introduce their products to the consumers through sport teams and organizations should take consumers' feelings and behaviors. Into consideration sponsor firms can define their strategies by realizing that the behaviors affect consumers' choices.

Despite the economic stagnation, top five leagues of Europe (Bundesliga, La Liga, League 1, Premier League, Serie A) have earned 181 million € (2% more). They have reached to 8,6 billion € in total. Football players' salaries have increased about 2%. Footballers' salaries have exceeded 5,6 billion € (Güngör, 2014:19).

## **4. MARKETING AND SPONSORSHIPS OF TURKISH AIRLINES CORPORATION IN SPORT ACTIVITIES**

In this study, Turkish Airlines Corporation (THY) has been chosen as a sample for sponsorship advertisement which is the most efficient section of modern marketing. Compared with traditional marketing, values and advantages of sport sponsorship have been analyzed.

### **4.1. Aim and Importance of Research**

Sport sponsorship's aim is to learn the effects on marketing and revenues that firms get through the sponsorship. Creating an organizational identity and attracting consumers' attention and finding a place in people's minds are too difficult. Because the old brands are aware of this situation, they either compose a unique department in their own organization or they have signed business partnership. The importance of coming first among rivals, creating brand awareness, being different than the rivals, creating emotional bond between consumers, creating brand loyalty and reaching to target group with limited budget is getting more important (İnan, 2011:42).

Purposes of the research are as following,

- To explain the importance of sport sponsorship to the Turkish Airlines Corporation,
- To determine the material and moral earnings of Turkish Airlines Corporation in sponsorship activities,
- To evaluate the sponsorship activities of Turkish Airlines Corporation by explaining the sponsorship activities and comparing them with its local and international rivals.

### **4.2. Research Method**

Exploratory research has been conducted to reach the target of the research. Exploratory research is deepening the information of the subject, undertaking it from different views. In the research, main parts are designed by sub-data and qualitative & quantitative sources have been analyzed.

### **4.3. Findings**

In this part, these following statements will be explained; history of Turkish Airlines Corporation, what kind of investments they have done and what they have earned from these investments.

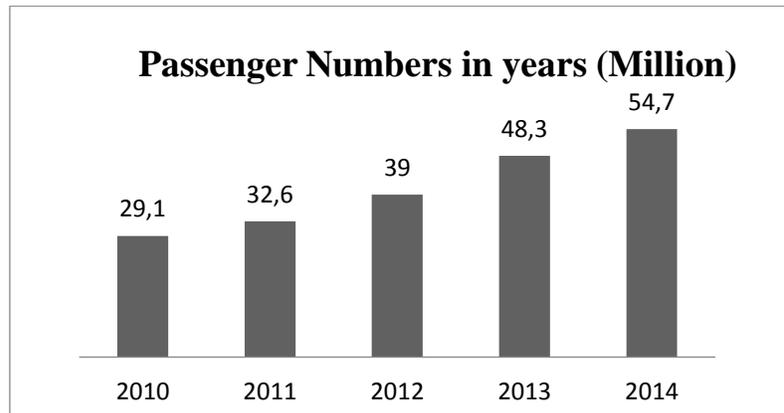
### **4.4. Earnings of Turkish Airlines Corporation in Sport Marketing**

Turkish Airlines Corporation is one of the companies which can use sport marketing efficiently through sponsorship. By signing sponsorship agreements in every part of the world, it has proved its name, quality and value. In this research, earnings of Turkish Airlines Corporation through marketing and its profit will be analyzed. Applied research results show the importance of sponsorship below that Turkish Airlines Corporation considers and its earnings.

#### **4.4.1. Profits from the Development of Company**

Turkish Airlines Corporation has started its sponsorship adventure with Turkish Football Federation in 2005. Afterwards they have sponsored to many tournaments and clubs. So, they have expanded their marketing share.

**Figure 2. Passenger Numbers in Years**



**Source:** Turkish Airlines Corporation 2014 Annual Report.

It is now the only airline which flies to many destinations around the world. Its first abroad destination was Athens in 1947, as now it is flying to 350 destinations according to 2014 records. Its passenger capacity is 150 million of people. Sponsorship activities have played great role on the extensive flying web between those dates.

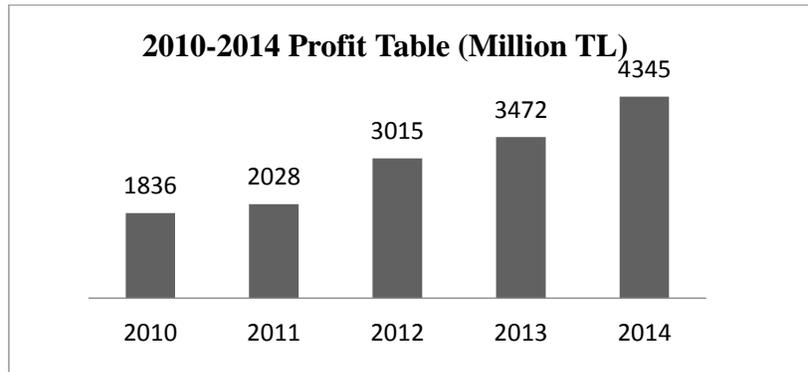
Organizational image of Turkish Airlines Corporation has started to escalate in 2010 and Turkish Airlines Corporation has created brand equality. Brand equality means that emotional relation between consumer and product is created besides product's physical features (Gültekin, 2012: 35). Great agreements signed have contributed to image of Turkish Airlines Corporation and it has earned much from them. Turkish Airlines Corporation has introduced its brand to each continent and got its worth. With the sponsorship to FC Barcelona, Manchester United, FIBA World Basketball Championship and Europe Golf Tournament, Turkish Airlines Corporation has raised its passenger volume 12.1% in 2011, 19.6% in 2012, 23.6% in 2013, 13.3% in 2014 and at the end of 2014 reached to 54.7 million. According to the data of the first 9 months of 2015, passenger volume reached to 46.5 million which meant 12.2% increase, comparing with the last year. In 2012, agreement with the world-famous star of Barcelona, Lionel Messi has made a great role in brand familiarity.

#### **4.4.2. Financial Profits**

All sponsorship agreements signed have contributed to Turkish Airlines Corporation both financially and spiritually. Turkish Airlines Corporation has heavily focused on sponsorship attempts in 2010 and has made great profit according to the figure above.

Football, takes more attention, because it is not only a cultural participation but also a spare time activity. It is also a platform which enables organizations to reach people with capitalist approach (Açak, 2010: 121). Football is the most favorite event of sport in global market. In this scope, Turkish Airlines Corporation has signed important sponsorship agreements. Some of them as mentioned before are Manchester United and Barcelona. Turkish Airlines Corporation has also sponsored Europe's leading football teams such as Borussia Dortmund, AS Roma, Aston Villa, Olympique de Marseille besides its sponsorship to the National Team.

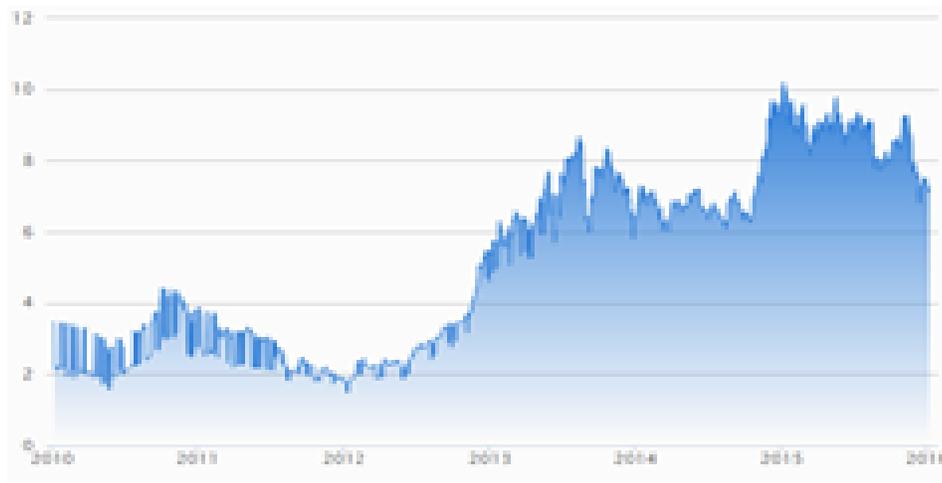
**Figure 3. 2010-2014 Profit Table**



**Source:** Turkish Airlines Corporation 2014 Annual Report

When we look at the profit rate, gross profit of 2010 (1.835.511,431 TL) reached to 2.027.895,455 TL in 2011. 3.015.407,108 TL in 2012, 3.472.128,908 TL in 2013 and 4.345.177,034 TL in 2014. The data explained shows, gross profit of first nine months of 2015 reached to 4.857.117,467 TL. Before reaching the year’s last quarter, last year’s profit has been exceeded. Turkish Airlines Corporation increased sales income from 8.4 billion TL to 24.1 billion TL in 2014. This quantity reached to 21.5 billion TL in the first 9 months of 2015 and it increased 16% being compared to last year.

**Figure 4. Turkish Airlines Corporation Exchange Value**



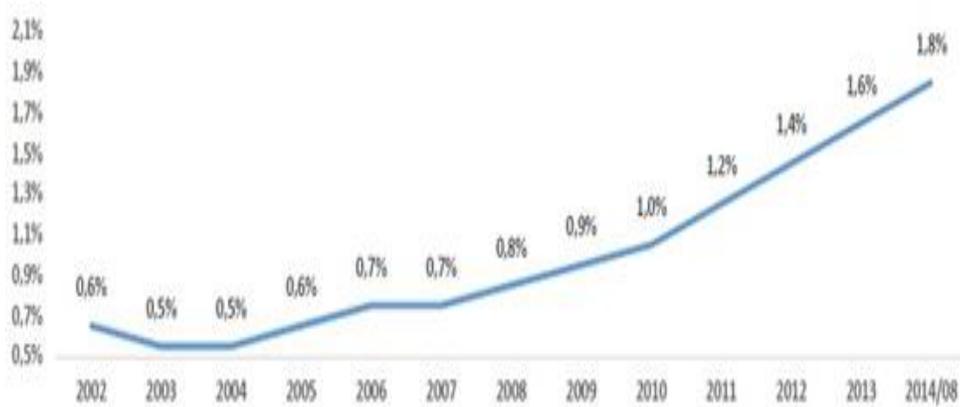
**Source:** <http://borsa.doviz.com/hisseler/THYAO>, (01.01.2016).

When we examine the Turkish Airlines Corporation’s value exchange in recent 6 year-period, despite some fluctuations, it is certain that sponsorship agreements have contributed quite much to the profit.

Sponsorship gained speed in 2010 and has ascended since 2012. Sponsorship wasn’t an instant solution, moreover it decreased between 2011 and 2012. However, it contributed to profit gradually which took attention. Turkish Airlines Corporation has a stable profit mean and succeeded to overcome its rivals who struggled to economic crisis. Sponsorship isn’t the only factor for gained success for sure, however its

contribution is certain. Advantages of sponsorship through advertisement have guided to other local companies.

**Figure 5. THY Global Market Share**



**Source:** Turkish Airlines Corporation 2014 Annual Report

Making great progress in world marketing, Turkish Airlines Corporation has continued to increase marketing share as it can be seen from the figure above. Global marketing share of United Airlines is 4.7% which is the biggest rival of Turkish Airlines Corporation in the world. By looking at the figure, it seems difficult to reach that percentage but approaching to it is foreseen.

If we handle all sponsorship as a whole and examine superficially, Turkish Airlines Corporation has gained a good reputation and reached its goal with the big agreements since 2010. As the time passes, Turkish Airlines Corporation has received some of the returns however defining big plans became inevitable to get a big share in the market.

#### **4.4.3. Prestige and Cultural Gains**

Companies, in their own market, have ingrained symbols and known general concepts in people's mind. So, transmitted messages can be perceived, understood and evaluated by people. As a result, organizations can be accepted by society and get a place in people's mind easily. Organizations use socially known factors in advertisements in order to introduce themselves to the target group and disclose the gap between them and the rivals (Çetin and Sönmez, 2014: 205). In this context, Turkish Airlines Corporation sponsors for uniform and transportation to our football clubs and which represent Turkey in Europe. In 2014-2015 season, Galatasaray and Trabzonspor was sponsored by Turkish Airlines Corporation. So, the players wore uniforms on which "Turkish Airlines Corporation" was printed. In 2015 Turkish Airlines Corporation supported also Fenerbahçe, Galatasaray, Trabzonspor and Başakşehir, all of them represented our country. So, in the sense of social representation, Turkish Airlines Corporation is doing brand positioning effectively.

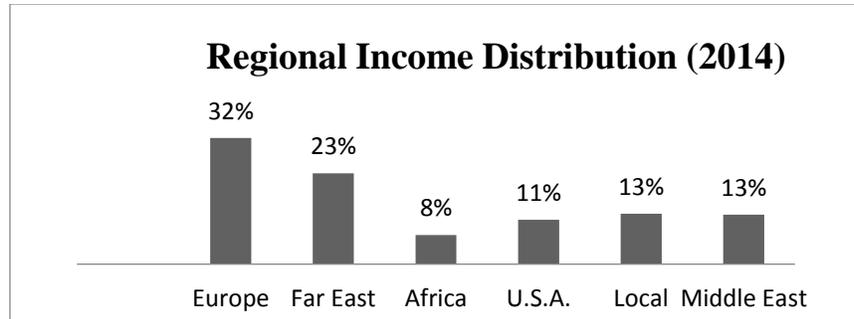
Basketball is one of the leading branches in global sports. Turkish Airlines Corporation has made great agreements in basketball sponsorship and everyone talks about it. Turkish Airlines Corporation is a name sponsorship of Europe Basketball League and it has made great investment on this sport.

Sport is common product which people from different cultures and social status can consume it together. Sport plays a vital role both helping the companies to reach their targets and branding itself as a product. Because of the necessity of being sold and increasing competition, brands hurried up to benefit from

sponsorship. Sport provides great advantages to reach the target group directly and efficiently (Ünal, 2013:63).

With new sponsorship agreements, Turkish Airlines Corporation has reached to the Far East and Japanese Basketball League through agreements. Turkish Airlines Corporation is planning to create brand recognition and increase flight destinations in Far East. At the same time, with Team Rwanda sponsorship, Turkish Airlines Corporation opened a new gate in Africa and became a pretentious company in the world.

**Figure 6. Regional Income Distribution**



**Source:** Turkish Airlines Corporation Annual Report, 2014

As it can be seen from the figure above, sponsorship makes direct effect on income rates. Besides important changes happened between 2013-2014 and between these years, income increased by 10.3% in Europe, 14% in Far East, 13.6% in Africa, 17.7% in the U.S.A., 6.5% in Turkey and 17% in Middle East. It shows sponsorship agreements contribute to profit directly.

People consume brand and fashion which cultures and societies have created. All advertisers and merchants are aware of it. Male and female tennis players are rumored by sport magazines and press. Formula-1 pilots typify bold, spunky knights while golf players typify gentleness. Popular sports make more money than social values for sponsors and market requirements (Atasoy and Kuter, 2005:18).

It can be said that golf has a different place for Turkish Airlines Corporation. Golf is an elite sport and businessmen who prefers comfortable travel always participate in these tournaments. So, sponsoring to golf tournaments is effective introduction way for target group (Turkish Airlines Corporation & TFF application). Creating brand identity by this way makes the consumers feel special and they can perceive the brand as luxury. In this context, Turkish Airlines Corporation is a name sponsorship for female and male Europe Golf Championship for five consecutive years.

Both introduction and entertainment activities should be well-balanced. Some activities as boat racing help for efficient introduction but its fun is limited. Golf can supply both instead (Haywood, 1994:204).

Turkish Airlines Corporation is looking for different alternatives in sport sponsorship. So, it has sponsored to Europe Rugby Championship Cup and Challenge Cup a few months ago. Being sponsor to sport branches which address to different kinds of people, is important for prestige. These kinds of sponsorships are not so challenging like the others. They are effective ways to create brand image in different kinds of people's minds.

Just at the beginning of 2011, Turkish Airlines Corporation was awarded the World Aviation Sector Leadership prize by ATW (Air Transport World) which is world’s reputable aviation magazine (Haywood, 1994:204).

#### 4.4.4. Social Media and Promotion

Turkish Airlines Corporation is one of the biggest brands using social media effectively. It can reach to many customers by social media.

Figure 7. Twitter Followers



Source: [http://www.socialbakers.com/statistics/twitter/profiles/detail/26969502-tk\\_tr](http://www.socialbakers.com/statistics/twitter/profiles/detail/26969502-tk_tr), (01.02.2016)

Turkish Airlines Corporation’s followers are increasing day by day. The figure above supports this claim. Turkish Airlines Corporation has increased its number of followers in different social media sites through sponsorships, advertisements and introduction activities in recent years. Turkish Airlines Corporation has 7.571.949 followers and it comes third in the rank while Facebook has the most followers in the world. Besides, Google+ which is another social media site has 2.195.276 followers and comes 5<sup>th</sup>; Twitter comes 15<sup>th</sup> with its 1.07 million followers. Especially watching rate of official YouTube channel of Turkish Airlines Corporation draws more attention.

Advertisements with famous stars have been watched by 44.154.700 people. They reached to top and they have been watched five times more than Air France which is the most challenging rival of Turkish Airlines Corporation. Sponsorship agreements with famous stars and broadcasted advertisements enable Turkish Airlines Corporation to be watched by so many audiences in YouTube.

Besides the social media activities, Turkish Airlines Corporation pays attention to complaints and suggestions shared through social media. All complaints and suggestions are replied with care by TK\_Helpdesk account in twitter. For example, while serving tea which is one of our culture symbols, with glass service can be requested by some passengers and this request is fulfilled politely. Also, when a passenger complains about the broken entertainment devices during flight, cabin crew thank him for warning them about the problem



and they promise him to solve it. These types of effective communication strengthen the relationship with customers.

Reaching not only to followers but also to many users through twitter, is continued successfully with the help of sponsorship advertisements. So, everyone sees Turkish Airlines Corporation brand.

Social shares which are made almost every day, are important for social media power. Moreover, they address to different areas through different accounts. By creating different accounts for sponsorship, Turkish-English language selections and complaints, Turkish Airlines Corporation gives importance to all kinds of people. It prepares special videos for Wings of Sports account in which sponsorship news are shared. It also writes and publishes the investment news through social media. This account gives unity message to the 25.549 followers. This account doesn't have enough followers. It can be possible that account can take more attention with more efficient shares.

In the scope of sport sponsorship, Turkish Airlines Corporation has made great development by applying individual sportsmen. World famous female tennis player Carolina Wozniacki, NBA star Kobe Bryant, and world's best football player Lionel Messi are the brand representatives of Turkish Airlines Corporation. Signed agreements with them have contributed to recognition of Turkish Airlines Corporation, and broadcasted advertisements have been watched by millions of people around the world. Kobe Bryant and Lionel Messi take part in an advertisement called "Kobe vs. Messi: Legends on Board" in 2012. It has been watched by 111 million people and passed the many of other airlines advertisements. Besides, same stars took part in another advertisement film called "Kobe vs. Messi: The Selfie Shootout" has been watched by 143 million people which was held for the honor of 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of YouTube.

Creating online viral videos, fan sites, special platforms contribute to attract young customers. Especially an advergaming which was created for Euroleague or a different portal, will be edited for official site. It is supposed to increase the effectiveness of sponsorship (Erciş, 2012:112).

Sponsorship has gained speed in 2010 and it has ascended rapidly after 2012. Sponsorship is not an instant solution; moreover, demand to sponsorship fell between 2011-2012 years. But it gained back its popularity later. Having a stable profit, Turkish Airlines Corporation passed many of its rivals who dealt with economic crisis. Sponsorship is not the only factor for all these earnings for sure. But it has undeniable contribution. Advertisement shows progress thanks to sponsorship and it has guided to many local companies.

When we handle all sponsorships together and examine superficially, Turkish Airlines Corporation has gained fame by great agreements since 2010 and reached its aim about introduction by means of sponsorships.

## **CONCLUSION**

Sport, which is entering almost each part of our lives, has become a common point for both firms and individuals. The financial power of sport activities has brought the firms and sport areas together in terms of marketing.

Commercialization of sports has led not only companies but also organizations in the center of sport activities to integrate them with commercial activities. Sports clubs have been maintaining their commercial activities by incorporating to cover their expenses and to create funds for their investments and to gain more financial power (Yavaş, 2005: 1) Sponsorship has gained a great importance in this perspective. Every firm determines a marketing strategy to increase its market share.

Many firms have carried out marketing their history through sport-sponsorship and commercialized the competition of sports. Major firms of the world have put a desk-bound struggle to take on the sponsorship of big clubs, famous sportsmen and sports organizations. While firms which determined right strategies have made big profit, others have failed and lost. However, firms making right investments have made significant profits and showed their presence in the market.

Introducing the conditions of practice and principals of sponsorship in the code of sponsorship of General Directorate of Youth and Sports published in official journal of Turkey on June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2004, natural and legal entities were ensured both to contribute to sports of our country and get tax reduction for their expenses (Soyer and Can, 2010: 1214). It has played an important role in making sport-marketing more effectively. Even so, it could not reach to the desired level in Turkey when compared to other countries. Sport clubs in Turkey which have big fans storming in the country but not achieving success abroad, probably plays an active role in that.

Influence of sportive achievements in media improves the images of firms and uses the great media-power without using extra effort. This is advantageous for sponsor and important for club/sportsman. This is a matter of mutual interest. Therefore, sponsorship has become more common.

In terms of budget, the most powerful branch of sports is football which appears mostly on every media and attracts people and societies. It is the economic scope of sports in which a great deal of money circulates. Therefore, the large part of investments is made in this field. Then, basketball, volleyball, golf and tennis are ranked respectively according to audience.

As a brand of our country, Turkish Airlines Corporation is a firm using sports marketing most effectively. It has aimed to enhance its market share by being sponsor for sport activities abroad. It flies for the sake of increasing the number of its destinations and expanding. It has realized this aim by making famous sportsmen as its brand ambassador and by sponsoring teams in other parts of the world and organizations. It has been successful according to its own objectives and become an airlines company flying to more destinations than any other company. However, it transports 54.7 million passengers although it has a capacity of 150 million.

When compared to its rivals, Turkish Airlines Corporation uses internet which is the biggest mass marketing web, and social media more effectively. By shooting commercial films with sport organizations or individuals it has sponsored, and advertising, it has established a bond with fans and caused a brand addiction. Especially the commercial films with Messi, Drogba and Kobe Bryant have been considered as the most-viewed commercial films. Therefore, it is considered as a good communication channel. The transportability of everywhere in the world by Turkish Airlines Corporation has been emphasized there. Exposing its superiority and reliability, showing that it provides smooth flights, it has communicated with the audience. Its expediting investments on sport-sponsorship and getting what it wanted immediately triggered an interest among other firms and they have chosen sport-marketing by changing their marketing strategies.

Turkish Airlines Corporation which has made quite number of sponsorships has achieved great success in that field. Its logo has been seen in almost every sport branch and organization. However, this situation brings about great expenses as well.

Its sponsorships to teams and sportsmen representing our country are very important for social representation. It has become a prestigious brand not only in Turkey but also in the world, and embedded the idea of representing Turkish people.

Other big firms have changed their marketing strategies and started to be active in sport-marketing. Some of these firms are Beko which is a sponsor of Barcelona, and Lassa which is a sponsor of Barcelona Basketball

Team. In fact, Turkish Airlines Corporation has proved the use of sport-sponsorship is an effective marketing strategy to reach many people.

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