The Effect of Team Support and Attitude Towards the Sponsor on Purchase Intention in Sports Club Sponsorship

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Abstract

Considering that the sponsorship relations between brands and sports clubs are based on a win-win model, it is inevitable for the parties to consider some variables based on their target groups in their sponsorship agreements. The most important motivation of brands in sponsorship agreements is to increase brand awareness, strengthen brand image, and increase sales of products and services. This study investigates how fans' team support affects their purchase intention for sponsor brand products directly and indirectly through attitude towards the brand. Accordingly, in this study, the effect of sports team sponsorship on consumer behavior is explored in terms of the impact of fans' team support and attitudes towards the sponsor brand on purchase intention. Data collected from surveys conducted with 448 Fenerbahçe Football A Team supporters were analyzed using SPSS-AMOS and SPSS PROCESS Macro. The validity and reliability of the research model were evaluated with confirmatory factor analysis. The results indicate that the support of the fans' team support has a statistically significant and positive effect on the purchasing intention of the sponsor brand. In addition, according to the result of the analysis made with SPSS PROCESS Macro Model-4, the positive attitude towards the sponsor brand mediated the effect of team support on the purchase intention of the fans. Therefore, it could be said that the supporters who identify themselves with their team and support their team in all circumstances, regardless of whether they win or lose, are more likely to purchase the products and services of the brand with which the sports club has a sponsorship agreement. It is also observed that a positive fan attitude toward the sponsor strengthens the statistical relationship between team support and purchase intention.
Keywords: Sports sponsorship, Purchase intention, Team support

Spor Kulüpleri Sponsorluğunda Takım Desteği ve Sponsora Karşı Tutumun Satın Alma Niyetine Etkisi

Öz

Markalar ve spor kulüpleri arasındaki sponsorluk ilişkilerinin kazan-kazan modeline dayandığı düşünüldüğünde tarafların sponsorluk anlaşmalarında kendi hedef kitleri bazında bir takım değişkenleri göz önünde bulundurmaları kaçınılmazdır. Sponsorluk anlaşmalarında markaların en önemli motivasyonu marka farkındalığın artması, marka imajının güçlenmesi ve ürün ve hizmetlerinin satışların artmasıdır. Bu çalışmanın amacı taraftarların takım desteğinin sponsor marka ürünlerine yönelik satın alma niyetini doğrudan ve markaya yönelik tutum aracılığı ile dolaylı olarak nasıl etkilediğini araştırmaktır. Buna göre çalışmada spor takımı sponsorluğunun tüketici davranışı üzerindeki etkisi taraftarların takım desteği ve sponsor markaya yönelik tutumlarının satın alma niyeti üzerindeki etkisi açısından incelenmektedir. 448 Fenerbahçe Futbol Takımı taraftarından anket yoluyla toplanan veriler SPSS-AMOS ve SPSS PROCESS Macro kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Araştırma modelinin geçerlilik ve güvenilirliği doğrulayıcı faktör analizi ile değerlendirilmiştir. Elde edilen sonuçlar taraftarların takım desteklerinin sponsor markaya yönelik satın alma niyetini istatiksel olarak anlamlı şekilde ve pozitif olarak etkilediğini göstermektedir. İlaveten, SPSS PROCESS Makro Model-4 ile yapılan analiz sonucunda taraftarların takım desteğinin satın alma niyeti üzerindeki etkisine sponsor markaya yönelik olumlu tutumun aracılık ettiği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Buna göre takımla özdeşlemiş, takımın kazanması ya da kaybetmesinden bağımsız olarak her koşulda destekleyen tarafların spor kulübünün sponsorluk anlaşması yaptığı markanın ürün ve hizmetlerini satın alma ihtimallerin daha fazla olduğu söylenebilir. İlgili markaya yönelik mevcut bir olumlu tutumun varlığı ise, takım desteği ile satın alma niyeti arasındaki istatistiksel ilişkiyi güçlendirdiği görülmektedir.
Anahtar kelimeler: Spor sponsorluğu, Satın alma niyeti, takım desteği

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INTRODUCTION

Sports sponsorship is an important marketing activity that many organizations from various sectors have been using as an indirect marketing tool for many years. The total value of the global sports sponsorship market in 2022 is approximately 66 billion dollars and is expected to continue its growth trend in the coming years as the number of sports events around the world increases, sponsorships have a wider reach compared to traditional marketing activities such as advertising and sales promotions, and they are associated with the enthusiasm and passion of the individual for sports. The global sports market is anticipated to reach $108 billion by 2030 (Gough, 2023).

With the rapid growth of sponsorship activities, evaluating the effectiveness of sports sponsorships has become crucial, which also made it increasingly important to understand the effect of sponsorship agreements on consumer behavior, to investigate consumer perception of and reaction to the sponsor brand, and to reveal the contribution of sponsorship activities to the brands (Koronios et al., 2022). Regarding sponsor brands, the most critical indicator of sponsorship events is the effect of consumers' purchase intention on future sales (Nguyen & Vu, 2022). However, according to some researchers, the studies conducted so far on the effects of sponsorship activities on consumers and brands have not been satisfactory enough (Hsiao et al., 2021; Nguyen & Vu, 2022). The primary method to boost sports and sports organizations is to encourage sponsors capable of providing substantial financial support to participate in sports events (Jaberi & Barkhordar, 2022). For this, it is essential to understand the contributions of sponsorship activities both to sponsors and sports clubs. Companies will remain reluctant to sponsor unless they realize the importance of sponsorship in terms of the sport's contribution to brand equity and revenue growth. So, exploring the relations of sports fans with sports and sponsors is considered a critical approach in developing cooperation between sports and sponsor companies (Jaberi & Barkhordar, 2022).

The literature on consumer behavior in sports is developing with an interdisciplinary perspective, with the contribution of different disciplines such as sports sciences, social psychology, marketing, and communication (Ko et al., 2023). This study aimed to investigate the effects of related variables on the intention to purchase sponsor brand products by examining consumer behaviors in sports, supporters' support for the team, and current attitudes towards the sponsor company.

Revealing the direct and indirect effects of supporters' attitudes towards the brand on the effect of sponsorship agreements on consumers' purchase intention expands the existing knowledge on consumer behavior in sports. This new information will contribute significantly to the literature, as it is seen as one of the determinants of the success of the a sponsorship agreement in terms of both the potential sponsors and the sports clubs. Companies can evaluate the general public attitude towards their brands by studying the fan group in the sports events they plan to sponsor or in the sponsorship of various sports clubs. As for the sports clubs, it should be noted that the fans' positive or negative brand attitude towards the sponsor brand can also affect their attitude towards the club.

The findings obtained in this study contribute to the sports sponsorship literature by revealing that the presence of a fan base that identifies itself with the team and supports their team

whether they win or lose increases the positive fan attitude of the sponsors and the fans' strong support for their team positively affects their intention to buy sponsor products.

Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

Sports sponsorship is an indirect form of marketing in which the company promotes its products and services by associating the brand with a sports event, unlike the direct advertisements of branded products and services to the target audience (Dixon et al., 2019). As a matter of fact, today's sponsorship activities expand beyond one-way advertising and promotion, adopting two-way interaction and real-time campaign forms (Dreisbach et al., 2021).

Sports events aimed to entertain large audiences are sponsors' most preferred sporting activity. (Baş, 2008; Koronios et al., 2022). Sponsorship in sports comprises three main types: individual athlete sponsorship, sports team sponsorship, and sports events sponsorship (Baş, 2008). Sports events need corporate sponsorship to continue and grow their activities. Sponsorships are an essential source of revenue for organizations in the sports industry. So, without the financial support by sponsors, we could say that many sports events, from the minor local leagues to the Olympics, would not be possible (Cornwell et al., 2023). For this reason, it is vital to examine and evaluate the results of sports sponsorship from different perspectives (Thomas et al., 2022). Sports sponsorships are attractive for brands in many aspects, including providing various advantages to brands in reaching their target audiences effectively, creating a positive perception of the brand or changing the negative perception to a positive one, supporting the brand image with the success and positive features of sports events, and establishing emotional bonds with the target audience through the excitement and dynamism of sports (Amis et al., 1999; Copeland et al., 1996; Mason, 2005).

Cornwell (2005) summarizes the basic mechanism of sponsorship from a corporate perspective in three steps: (1) with sponsorship, consumers are more exposed to the brand, thus increasing brand awareness and appreciation; (2)) the good match between the sponsor and the events allows consumers to easily remember the sponsor brand's name and place the brand on their cognitive map; (3) the articulation formed through the association of the sponsor and the sponsee enables the brand to have a permanent place in consumer's memory.

Besides, the more individuals identify themselves with sports, the more likely they are to develop a positive attitude toward brands associated with the sports club (Dixon et al., 2019). Fans' identification with the team they support expresses their intense feelings of the parties towards their favorite team and the culture of solidarity. This identification and team support is an antecedent to the fans' emotional, behavioral, and cognitive reactions (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). In their study, Korinos et al. (2022) concluded that team commitment affects the attitude toward and the awareness of the sponsor. In the context of sponsorship, the sponsor company, which is interested in the team and its performance and provides substantial funds to the club, will be seen as an ally by the fans who strongly identify themselves with the team (Silva, 2022).

Team Spoort and Attitudes Towards the Sponsor Brands

Many studies reveal the positive contribution of sports sponsorship to brands. Previous research indicates that consumer attitude towards the sponsor's brand affects their approach to sponsorship agreements (Schönberner & Woratschek, 2023). Brand attitude refers to the learned predispositions based on consumers' favorable or unfavorable personal evaluation of the relevant brand, which is relatively stable but can change over time with new information (McFadden, 1998; Spears & Singh, 2004). Many studies support that attitudes are antecedents of behavioral intentions, such as purchase intention (Ajzen, 1991; Schönberner & Woratschek, 2023; Tsai et al., 2015). Wakefield et al. (2020) state that consumer attitude towards and perception of the sponsor company are vital to the success of sponsorship. A global study focusing only on football fans concluded that global brands sponsoring sports activities make the brand more attractive in the eyes of consumers (Gough, 2023).

Sports sponsorship potentially increases fans' familiarity with the brand and keeps brand associations in their memory. It is claimed that increasing brand familiarity through exposure can improve attitudes towards the sponsor brand. Fans are repeatedly exposed to the brand name and logo during the relevant sporting event. In addition, a brand's interest in sports and providing financial support to sports can help develop a positive attitude towards sports (Levin et al., 2001).

Sponsor fit, defined as a logical connection between the sponsor brand and the team, emerges as an essential factor in sponsorship success. (Parganas et al., 2017). In addition, a strong team support that is ready to support their team under any circumstances is essential in developing a positive attitude towards the sponsor brand. The teams can create a positive brand attitude towards the sponsor companies that support their teams with their commitment and support to the team and reward the sponsors with their attitude towards the brand and purchasing intentions (Angell et al., 2016). In light of this information, the following hypothesis has been formalized:

H_1: Team support of the fans positively affects their attitude towards the sponsor brand.

Attitudes Towards the Sponsor Brands and Purchase Intention

Two factors are reasonably accepted in the literature as antecedents of consumers' purchase intentions: a positive attitude towards the brand and brand exposure or familiarity from previous experiences (Smith et al., 2008). One of the main goals of sports sponsorship is to increase brand awareness and strengthen the brand image. Accordingly, it is accepted that familiarity, awareness, and attitudes toward the sponsor brand affect consumption behaviors and intentions (Levin et al., 2001).

Raising brand awareness, sponsor-team match, helping fans develop a positive attitude towards the brand, and strengthening word-of-mouth marketing are among the crucial criteria in evaluating the effectiveness of sponsorship activities for the sponsor. Also, increasing the behavioral intentions to purchase branded products is seen as the main driving force behind the sponsorship activities of the companies. Therefore, the effects of sponsorship on consumers' purchase intention are considered a typical representative criterion in sponsorship activities (Koronios et al, 2021). Accordingly, it is thought that positive consumer attitudes toward the

sponsor positively affect purchasing intentions and behaviors (Parganas et al., 2017). In addition, purchase intention is an important indicator that legitimizes the relationship between sports institutions and sponsor brands (Nguyen & Vu, 2022). Certainly, purchase intention and actual purchasing behavior are not the same, but there is a reasonable consensus in the literature regarding the positive effect of intentions on driving behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Nguyen & Vu, 2022). Moreover, considering the experiential and hedonistic nature of sports consumption, it is thought that emotional attachment to sports teams affects the purchasing intentions of the parties through the positive attitude towards the sponsor brand (Lee et al., 2018).

In the light of this information in the literature, the following hypotheses have been developed:

H$_2$: There is a positive relationship between the fans' attitudes towards the sponsor brand and their intention to purchase the sponsor brand.
H$_3$: The fans' attitudes towards the sponsor brand mediate the relationship between team support and purchase intention.

METHODS

Research Model
The research model in Figure 1 examines the direct effect of football fans' support for their team on their purchase intention and the indirect effect of their attitude towards the sponsor brand (the mediating role of brand attitude) on their purchase intention.
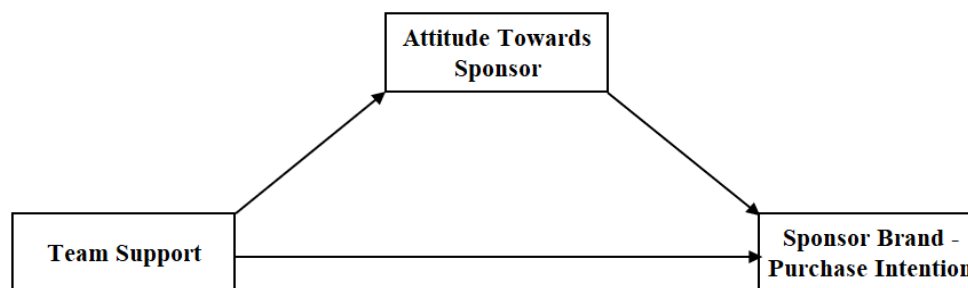
Figure 1. Research Model

Research Group
Considering this study's financial and time constraints, surveys were conducted with Fenerbahçe football team fans to test the hypotheses constructed in the research model. Accordingly, Fenarbahçe football team fans aged 18 and above served as the research group for this study. The data were collected by convenience sampling method. Given the size of the population, the convenience sampling method was considered the most appropriate technique. Under these conditions, 448 Fenerbahçe fans participated in the study.

Ethics Approval
Before the research, approval was obtained from the Academic Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Istanbul Topkapı University with the decision number E-49846378-050.01.04-2300009941.

Data Collection Tools

The data were collected through an online survey based on a convenience sampling method, which the users completed after reading the participant information sheet. Afterward, participants were asked screening questions to ensure their suitability as the target audience. In the second part of the survey, team support, attitude towards the sponsor, and purchase intention were measured with a 7-point Likert scale (1= Strongly disagree, 7= Strongly agree). Ülker brand, the name sponsor of the Fenerbahçe Football A Team facility, was chosen to measure the attitude towards the sponsor brand and the intention to purchase the sponsor's products.

Data Collection

To ensure whether participants were suitable as the target audience, the study's purpose and scope were explained to them before starting the survey, and the name of the football team they support was asked as the first screening question. As the second screening question, users were asked whether they consume Ülker brand products. Based on their answer, the survey continued with the participants who support the Fenerbahçe football team and had previously purchased Ülker products. In all survey questions regarding the sponsor brand, the questions were asked directly through the Ülker brand. Surveys have been designed to be sent when all questions are answered. Therefore, there is no missing data. To increase the possibility of reaching the fans with strong team support, Fenerbahçe fan group pages were asked to share the survey link with their followers on social media. In this context, data were collected from 448 fans. Table 1 below shows the demographic data of the participants.

Tablo 1. Descriptive statistics of the sample

Category		Frequency	Percentage (%)	Category		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	284	63.4	Education Level	Primary education	53	11.8
	Female	164	36.6		High school	90	20.1
	18-24	86	19.2		University	248	55.4
	25-34	114	25.4		Post-graduate or above	57	12.7
Age	35-44	139	31.0		<11,440	49	10.9
	45-54	55	12.3		11,401 – 25,000	228	50.9
	55-64	30	6.7	Income (per month – TRY)	25,001 – 45,000	107	23.9
	≥ 65	24	5.7		45,001 – 70,000	31	6.9
Marital Status	Single	240	53.6		≥ 70,001	33	7.4
	Married	208	46.4				

Data Analysis and Interpretation

SPSS-AMOS and SPSS PROCESS Macro programs were used to analyze the data. The validity and reliability analysis of the research model were evaluated by a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using the AMOS. Before CFA, the skewness and kurtosis values of the data were examined. Table 2 shows that the skewness and kurtosis values of the data are in the range of +1/-1 and are in accordance with the normal distribution (Hair et al., 2014). In variance and covariance-based analyses, the critical value of multiple kurtosis was examined since it is more important that the data not be kurtosis. Table 2 shows that the multiple normality index is 10.78. Although this value is expected to be below 10 in the literature, it is reported that it does not

constitute a problem that would violate the normal distribution unless it exceeds 20 (Gürbüz, 2019a, p. 30). SPSS PROCESS Macro Model-4 was used to test the hypotheses developed as part of the research model.

Tablo 2. Skewness and Kurtosis values for variables

Code	Skewness	Kurtosis
STN1	-.694	-.074
STN2	-.491	-.302
STN3	-.575	-.114
MTUT1	-.477	-.110
MTUT2	-.681	.523
MTUT3	-.476	-.250
MTUT4	-.627	.378
TDES1	-.444	.450
TDES2	-.275	.003
TDES3	-.290	-.109
TDES4	-.427	.098
Multivariate		10.783

The scales used in the research model consist of scales with validity and reliability previously tested in the relevant literature. A study by Smith et al. (2008) was used for the scale of team support, and Özer (2011) was used for the scale of attitude and purchase intention. The English scales were translated into Turkish by the author(s) and checked by two experts in the field, one in English Language and Literature and the other in Marketing.

FINDINGS

A confirmatory factor analysis was performed with the SPSS-AMOS tool to confirm the scales for the variables previously used in the current literature with the data collected in this study. DFA analysis results are presented in Figure 2.
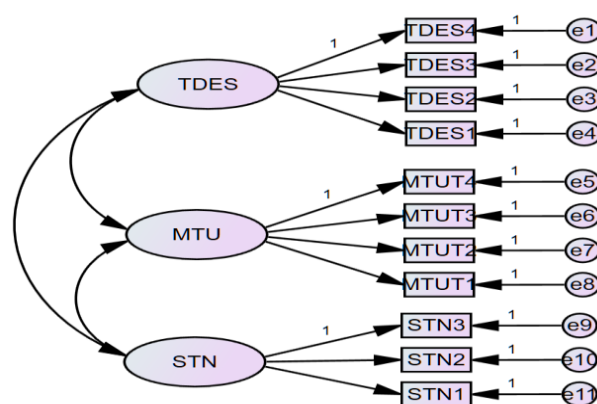
Figure 2. Research Model DFA analysis results

The factor loadings and Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of the variables are provided in Table 3. Accordingly, all items are loaded on the relevant factor in a statistically significant manner.

The same table shows that all Cronbach Alpha coefficients of the factors are above .80 (Acceptable limit: .70). The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient above .80 expresses the appropriateness of the internal consistency and relevancy among the questions in the scale (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2017).

Table 3. Factor loading of variables and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient.

Variables	Factor loading	Cronbach's Alpha	AVE	CR
Team Support		0,88	0,66	0,88
I passionately support the Fenerbahçe football team.	0,885			
I love the Fenerbahçe team and the club	0,907			
Win or lose, I always support Fenerbahçe in a positive manner.	0,806			
I always talk positively about Fenerbahçe.				
Attitude Towards Sponsor		0,86	0,61	0,86
I have positive thoughts about the Ülker brand, the sponsor of Fenerbahçe	0,701			
I like the Ülker brand.	0,759			
I am satisfied with the Ülker products.	0,818			
My thoughts on Ülker are positive.	0,857			
Sponsor Brand – Purchase Intention		0,82	0,60	0,82
Ülker's sponsorship of Fenerbahçe might increase my likelihood of buying Ülker products.	0,769			
Ülker's sponsorship of Fenerbahçe might increase the probability of me purchasing Ülker products in my next purchase.	0,823			
I will more likely buy Ülker's products due to Ülker's sponsorship.	0,705			

The goodness-of-fit values obtained by DFA and recommended threshold values for related values are reported in Table 4 (Recommended values were compiled from the study of Kaur and Sohal (2022). Accordingly, when the model goodness-of-fit values are examined, it is seen that the GFI, AGFI, RMSEA, and SRMR values are within the accepted threshold values, and the CMIN/df value is quite close to the threshold of ≤3. The results show that the theoretical structure of the model is confirmed by the data collected in the study.

Tablo 4. Model fit indices

Fit Indices	CMIN/df	GFI	AGFI	RMSEA	SRMR
Observed values	3.26	.95	.92	.07	.51
Recommended values	≤ 3	≥ .90	≥ .90	≤ .08	< 1
Reference	(Kline, 2005)	(Hu & Bentler, 1999)	(Hooper et al., 2008)	(MacCallum et al., 1996)	(Byrne, 1998)

A regression analysis based on the bootstrap method was conducted to analyze the direct effect of fans' team support on the purchase intention towards the sponsor brand and the indirect effect on the purchase intention through the fan attitudes towards the sponsor brand. 5000 resampling options were preferred in the analyses. This technique generates random new samples from the observations in the original dataset (Efron, 1987). Analyzes were made using SPSS PROCESS

Macro, developed by Hayes (2018), using model number 4. Calculating the indirect effect in the mediation model analysis and evaluating the relationship between the variables and the mediating role of the related variable over this indirect effect are accepted as a contemporary approach in mediation analysis (Gürbüz, 2019b).

Regression analysis results are provided in Table 5 and Figure 3 as a statistical diagram. Accordingly, team support has a statistically significant positive effect on the fans' attitudes toward the sponsoring brand (a= .209 %95 CI [.135 - .283], t= 5.571, p< .001), which supports the hypothesis H_1.

Team support explains about 7% (R^2=.07) of the change in perceived attitude towards the sponsor brand. The fans' attitudes towards the sponsor brand affect the purchase intention in a statistically significant and positive way (b= .763 %95 CI [.651 - .875], t= 13.378, p< .001), confirming the hypothesis H_2. Accordingly, it is estimated that two fans with the same team support perception, whose attitudes towards the sponsor brand differ by one unit, will show a difference of .763 units in their purchase intention. Based on the results in the same table, it is seen that the fans' support affects the purchase intention in a statistically significant and positive way (c'= .110 %95 CI [.186 - .202], t= 2.364, p<.05). In consequence, team support and perceived attitude towards the sponsor explain approximately 33% (R^2= .325) of the change in purchase intention.

Tablo 5. Regression analysis results for mediation Test (N=448)

		Consequent						
		M (Attitude Towards Sponsor)				Y (Purchase Intention)		
Antecedent		*Coeff.*	*SE*	*p*		*Coeff.*	*SE*	*p*
X (Team Support)	a	.209	.038	< .001	c'	.110	.048	< .05
M (Attitude Towards Sponsor)		-	-	-	b	.763	.057	< .001
Constant	i_M	4.652	.185	< .001	i_Y	.211	.347	.543
		R^2= .065				R^2= .325		
		$F (1; 446) = 31.036, p= < ,001$				$F (2; 445) = 107.329, p= < .001$		

Note: Unstandardised regression coefficients are reported, SE = Standard Error.

Figure 3. Statistical diagram for direct and indirect effect

The mediating role of the attitude towards the sponsor brand in the effect of team support on purchase intention is indicated in Figure 3 and Table 6. The total effect of team support on purchase intention is the sum of the direct and indirect effects (c= c' +ab= .110 + .159 = .270). As seen in the results in Table 6, the confidence interval for the indirect effect (ab= .159) is above zero (.097 to .227), which supports the hypothesis H_3. The supporters' attitude towards the sponsor brand mediates the relationship between team support and purchase intention.

Tablo 6. The mediating role of the attitude toward the sponsor

	ab	SE	%95 CI	
			LL	UL
Attitude Towards Sponsor	.159	.033	.097	.227

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study has three primary purposes: (1) to investigate the effect of fans' support for their team on their attitudes towards the sponsor of the club, (2) to examine the effect of the fans' current attitudes towards the sponsor on their purchase intention, (3) to test the mediating role of the current fan attitude towards the sponsor in the relationship between team support and purchase intention.

First, the SPSS-AMOS modeling tool was used to run a confirmatory factor analysis of 448 data from surveys completed by Fenarbahçe football team fans. The analysis revealed that, as Gürbüz (2019a) suggested, all factor loads were statistically and significantly above .50. Then, the model goodness-of-fit values were examined. The recommended values table compiled by Kaur and Sohal (2022), which is the most widely accepted one in the literature, was used to evaluate the model goodness-of-fit values. It was accordingly observed that all values of the model were found to be compatible with the recommended threshold values.

SPSS PROCESS Macro tool was used to test the hypotheses. In line with the existing literature (Gwinner & Swanson, 2003; Smith et al., 2008), the findings brought the conclusion that fans' support for their team positively affects their attitudes towards the sponsor company and their intention to purchase the sponsor branded products. The findings are also important in terms of revealing the tangible benefit that sponsorship will bring to the company when sponsoring a sports club with a massive fan base strongly identifying themselves with their team and never stopping supporting their team regardless of the circumstances. Considering that the existence of sports activities and events largely depend on sponsors in terms of being the main suppliers of finance to clubs, revealing the potential advantages of being a sponsor would further encourage the organizations' willingness for sponsorship. Numerous studies show that a positive attitude toward a brand positively affects purchase intention and behavior (Ghorban, 2012; Jung & Seock, 2016). The findings of this study as well confirm that the attitudes of the fans towards the sponsoring brand affect their purchase intentions in a statistically significant and positive manner. Furthermore, this study has tested the mediating role of fans' attitudes towards the sponsoring brand in the effect of team support on purchase intentions.

The findings obtained by calculating the indirect effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable, which is accepted as a contemporary approach in mediation analysis

(Gürbüz, 2019b), show that the attitudes of the fans towards the sponsor brand mediate the effect of team support on the purchase intention. Accordingly, as explained in the findings section, it was concluded that among the fans who showed an equal amount of team support for their team, fans who have a more positive attitude towards the sponsor statistically tend to have stronger intentions to purchase its products.

Some of the limitations of this study may be useful for future research. The first limitation concerns Fenerbahçe football team fans, chosen as the population and the sample to help analyze the variables related to the research model developed as part of this study. In future studies, the research population and sample can be expanded to include other sports clubs and different sports branches, and comparative analyses can be made between various sports clubs and sports categories. Another limitation of the research is related to the brand chosen to measure the attitude toward the sponsor. In this case, it was Ülker, the facility name sponsor of the Fenerbahçe football team. In the future, by measuring the attitude toward the sponsor brand, a classification can be made based on convenience, shopping, and specialty goods in brand selection and comparative analyses of the relevant brands. Both this study and the sponsorship literature have focused mainly on the potential benefits of sponsorship for companies and brands. Future research can evaluate the risks and potential negative consequences of sponsorship (e.g., sponsor boycott by fans).

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares that he has no conflict of interest.

Authors' Contribution: Research design, Data collection, Statistical analysis, Preparation of the article, BG.

Ethical Approval
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