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The Effect of Risk Management on Sustainable Marketing Orientations in Fitness Businesses

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Abstract

This study examines the effects of risk management on sustainable marketing orientation in fitness businesses. The sample of the research consists of 234 (X age=31.36±6.77) employees (81 female and 153 male) working in private fitness businesses in Ağrı and Van provinces. In the data collection part of the study, the 'Personal Information Form' prepared by the researcher, 'Risk Management Scale in Health and Fitness Facilities' developed by Eraslan and Çimen (2022) and 'Sustainable Marketing Orientation Scale' developed by Lučić (2020) and adapted into Turkish by Kara et al. (2023) were used. Pearson correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationship between risk management in fitness businesses and sustainable marketing orientations, and a regression test was used to determine the effect. As a result of the study, a strong positive correlation was found between RMSHFF and SMOS (r=.695, p=<0.001). A strong positive significant relationship was found between RMSHFF and strategic integration (r=.582, p=<0.001), social participation (r=.721, p=<0.001) and ethical abilities (r=.574, p=<0.001) which are sub-dimensions of SMOS. The regression analysis conducted to determine the effect of RMSHFF and SMOS showed that RMSHFF had a significant positive effect on SMOS (R^2=.823; p<0.001). In this case, it can be said that effective risk management to be put forward by fitness businesses for structure design, policy, and member services can pave the way for sustainable marketing orientation by leading to strategic integration and supporting customer participation.
Keywords: Fitness businesses, Risk management, Sustainable marketing

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INTRODUCTION

Fitness businesses, which are among the important institutions that allow individuals to increase their physical health, help stress management, strengthen their social interactions (Heaphy & Dutton, 2008), help individuals improve their social skills, and group classes and activities bring people together and strengthen social ties (Chelladurai & Kim, 2022). Such social interactions increase individuals' motivation and contribute to maintaining their exercise habits (Anshel, 2014). Fitness businesses provide individuals with information about proper nutrition and lifestyle changes (Kiss et al., 2020). Training programs offered by expert trainers and dietitians raise awareness of healthy living and enable individuals to make informed choices (Singh et al., 2022; Thompson, 2024). Although people in Turkey have a more sedentary lifestyle in terms of sports and physical activity compared to those in Europe, it has been observed that participation in fitness centers has started to increase in recent years by raising awareness about health, fitness, and sports mobility (Yildiz et al., 2021).

Risk management, which enables businesses and organizations to effectively identify and manage the uncertainties and potential threats they may face (Miller & Waller, 2003), is of vital importance for both preventing financial losses and protecting organizational reputation (Cardona, 2013). Organizations that have a risk management process provide advantages in terms of sustainability, and businesses that can identify and effectively manage potential risks can achieve long-term success by preventing financial losses (Foerstl, 2010). In sports businesses, risk management is the process of identifying, evaluating, and managing potential threats that organizations may face (Bostock & Breese, 2023). Risks encountered in sports organizations include financial losses, injuries, loss of reputation, natural disasters, and legal problems (Tsai, 2016). While the probability and potential effects of the identified risks are evaluated, determining which risks require more urgent intervention provides a more effective allocation of resources for sports organizations (Caine, 2008). In the last stage, it is argued that the risk management process should be carried out in a continuous cycle and regular reports should be prepared to monitor the effects of identified risks and update strategies when necessary (Tupa et al., 2017). The effectiveness of methods applied with periodic audits should be evaluated and corrective steps should be taken when necessary (Van Greuning & Bratanovic, 2020). In this context, considering their environmental and social responsibilities, businesses' long-term success targets have led to the emergence of a sustainable marketing approach (Rondinelli & Berry, 2000).

Sustainable marketing is a critical strategy that supports the long-term success of sports businesses by bringing together elements such as environmental responsibility, consumer demand, competitive advantage, cost savings, and reputation management (Székely & Knirsch, 2005). Sustainable marketing practices provide sports businesses with a competitive advantage, making environmentally conscious brands more valuable to consumers and positively affecting sales (Walker & Kent, 2009). While sports businesses develop sustainable marketing strategies to reduce their environmental and social impacts, they also identify the risks they may face during this process (Doppelt, 2017). For example, sports equipment manufacturers may offer products made from recycled materials to fitness businesses (Szto & Wilson, 2023). However, the risks they may face in this process include material quality and

safety (Jain et al., 2018). As poor-quality materials can lead to customer dissatisfaction and loss of reputation, it is necessary to develop close cooperation and quality control processes with material suppliers (McAdam & McCormack, 2001).

Consumer interest in environment-friendly and healthy lifestyles is constantly changing. Fitness businesses must respond quickly to such changes (Lockie et al., 2002). However, because making incorrect predictions or ignoring market trends can lead to financial losses, regular market research and customer feedback are important for risk management (Christopher & Lee, 2004). In addition, sustainability risks in fitness businesses include economic fluctuations, high competition, seasonal changes, technological innovations, and personnel problems that affect the success of businesses (Fiksel & Fiksel, 2015). Following the 2008 global economic crisis, it was concluded that the revenues of fitness centers decreased significantly (Jurak et al., 2014), and the increasing popularity of digital platforms has affected the physical memberships of traditional fitness centers (Mathew & George, 2022). In this context, it is thought that fitness businesses should consider the effects of risk management in all aspects in order to create a sustainable market environment. From this perspective, this study examines the effect of risk management on sustainable marketing orientation in fitness businesses.

METHOD

Research Model

In this study, the relational survey model (Karasar, 2006) aims to reflect the rate of difference between two or more variables in quantitative descriptive models. If there was a change, steps were taken to demonstrate its emergence. This study deals with the relationship between variables within the framework of causality and uses multiple regression analysis to determine the level of influence (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). This approach is expected to provide a better understanding of the interactions between variables.

Research groups

The sample of the study was obtained from 252 data points in the first stage from personnel (managers, coaches and workers) working in private fitness businesses in the Ağrı and Van provinces. However, since 18 data points were inconsistent and inaccurate, it was deemed appropriate to remove them from the study, and 81 female and 153 male 234 (X age=31.36±6.77) were collected using a convenience sampling method (Büyüköztürk et al., 2011). This study contributes to our understanding of voluntariness.

Data Collection Tools

In this study, the “Personal Information Form,” “Risk Management Scale in Health and Fitness Facilities, and “Sustainable Marketing Orientation Scale” Sustainable Marketing Orientation Scale were utilized.

Risk Management Scale in Health and Fitness Facilities

The 'Risk Management Scale in Health and Fitness Facilities' developed by Eraslan and Çimen (2022) consists of 24 items in three sub-dimensions: Structure and Design (1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8), Policy (9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16) and Member Services (17,18,19,20,21,22,23,24). The scale is graded according to 5-point Likert-type statements, such as 'strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, and strongly agree.' Cronbach Alpha value of the scale was calculated as 0.91 (Eraslan & Çimen, 2022).

Sustainable Marketing Orientation Scale

The Sustainable Marketing Orientation Scale developed by Lučić (2020) and adapted to Turkish by Kara et al. (2023) was applied between '1 - Strongly Disagree and 5 - Strongly Agree'. As the scores obtained from the scale increased, employees' sustainable marketing orientation increased. The original scale had three dimensions. These were strategic integration (six items), community involvement (five items), and ethical capabilities (four items). There was no reverse coding of this scale. Cronbach's alpha values of the scale sub-dimensions were between 0.82 and 0.85. As the scores obtained from the scale increased, they were interpreted as participants' sustainable marketing orientation (Lučić, 2020).

Ethics Approval

It was decided to be ethically appropriate based on the decision of the Ağrı İbrahim Çeçen University Scientific Research Ethics Committee dated 31/10/2024 and numbered 380.

Collection of Data

The data were administered to the participants online, but 18 were deemed appropriate for removal from the study due to inconsistent and inaccurate data.

Analysis of Data

In this study, gender, age, and educational status of personnel working in private fitness establishments were determined as independent variables, and descriptive statistics, percentages, and frequencies were given in the form of tables. The normality of the distribution of risk management scores of fitness businesses, sustainable marketing orientation scale sub-dimensions, and total scores was analyzed using Skewness and Kurtosis coefficients. The internal consistency coefficients of the scales were determined using the Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis. As the research showed a normal distribution, the Pearson's correlation test was applied to reveal the relationship level of the scores obtained from the scales for each sub-dimension. In this study, regression analysis was used to determine the effect of risk management and sustainable marketing orientation of fitness businesses. All data analyses were performed using SPSS version 24.

FINDINGS

Table 1. Distribution of participants according to demographic characteristics

		f	%	N	X̄	S	Min.	Max.
Gender	Female	81	34.6	234				
	Male	153	65.4	234				
Educational Background	Associate Degree	94	40.2	234				
	Undergraduate	129	55.1	234				
	Master's degree	11	4.7	234				
Age				234	31.36	6.77		
Risk Management Scale in Health and Fitness Facilities				234	107.20	15.92	24.00	120.00
Structure and Design				234	35.96	5.14	8.00	40.00
Politics				234	35.44	5.59	8.00	40.00
Member Services				234	35.79	5.70	8.00	40.00
Sustainable Marketing Orientation Scale				234	67.67	10.05	15.00	75.00
Strategic Integration				234	26.90	4.13	6.00	30.00
Community Engagement				234	22.26	3.64	5.00	25.00
Ethical Capabilities				234	18.50	2.73	4.00	20.00

When the participants were asked the question ‘What is your gender?’ years; 34.6 % were female and 65.4 % were male. When asked about their educational level, 40.2% of the participants stated that they had graduated with an associate degree, 55.1% had an undergraduate degree, and 4.7% had a master’s degree. When asked about their age, the mean age (Xyear=31.36±6.77) was found (Table 1).

Table 2. Internal consistency and normality distribution values of the scales

Variables	Skewness	Kurtosis	Cronbach Alpha
RMSHFF	1.54	0.147	0.973
Structure and Design	1.61	0.165	0.921
Politics	1.03	0.111	0.924
Member Services	1.46	0.129	0.929
SMOS	1.43	0.143	0.965
Strategic Integration	1.26	0.129	0.908
Community Engagement	1.02	0.102	0.905
Ethical Capabilities	1.42	0.147	0.930

RMSHFF: Risk Management Scale in Health and Fitness Facilities; SMOS: Sustainable Marketing Orientation Scale

According to the data above, the Cronbach’s alpha values calculated for the internal consistency coefficient of all scales and sub-dimensions were above 0.60 and at an acceptable level. The analysis performed to determine the normality distribution revealed that the data were normally distributed because the Skewness and Kurtosis coefficients were between -2 and +2 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013) (Table 2).

Table 3. Correlation and significance values between Risk Management and Sustainable Marketing Orientation in Fitness Facilities

		SMOS	Strategic Integration	Community Engagement	Ethical Capabilities
	r	0.695	0.582	0.721	0.574
RMSHFF	p	**0.000*** **	**0.000*** **	**0.000*** **	**0.000*** **
	r	0.626	0.547	0.569	0.584
Structure and Design	p	**0.000*** **	**0.000*** **	**0.000*** **	**0.000*** **
	r	0.647	0.529	0.734	0.487
Politics	p	**0.000*** **	**0.000*** **	**0.000*** **	**0.000*** **
	r	0.661	0.554	0.697	0.537
Member Services	p	**0.000*** **	**0.000*** **	**0.000*** **	**0.000*** **

***p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001;** Weak correlation: |r|<0.3; Moderate correlation: 0.3≤|r|<0.5; Strong correlation: |r|≥0.5 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

According to the Pearson correlation test results, a strong positive significant relationship was found between RMSHFF and SMOS (r=.695, p<0.001). A strong positive correlation was found between the RMSHFF and the SMOS sub-dimensions of strategic integration (r=.582, p<0.001), social participation (r=.721, p<0.001), and ethical capabilities (r=.574, p<0.001). A strong positive significant relationship was found between structural design, one of the sub-dimensions of the RMSHFF, and strategic integration (r=.547, p<0.001), social participation (r=.569, p<0.001), and ethical capabilities (r=.584, p<0.001). A strong positive significant relationship was found between policy, one of the RMSHFF sub-dimensions, strategic integration (r=.529, p=<0.001), community involvement (r=.734, p=<0.001), and ethical capabilities (r=.487, p=<0.001). A strong positive significant relationship was found between member services, one of the sub-dimensions of the RMSHFF, and strategic integration (r=.554, p<0.001), community involvement (r=.697, p<0.001), and ethical capabilities (r=.537, p<0.001) (Table 3).

Table 4. Regression and significance values of risk management and sustainable marketing orientation in fitness facilities

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	R^2	ß	Ss	t	p
RMSHFF	**SMOS**	.823	.907	1.89	3.32	**.000****
RMSHFF	Strategic Integration	.790	.889	.845	2.58	**.000****
	Community Engagement	.770	.877	.781	.971	**.000****
	Ethical Capabilities	.677	.823	.696	4.80	**.000****
Structure and Design	Strategic Integration	.747	.864	.963	2.03	**.000****
	Community Engagement	.722	.850	.889	.723	**.000****
	Ethical Capabilities	.715	.845	.678	3.43	**.000****
Politics	Strategic Integration	.722	.850	.917	5.09	**.000****
	Community Engagement	.753	.868	.761	2.95	**.000****
	Ethical Capabilities	.592	.769	.736	7.00	**.000****
Member Services	Strategic Integration	.754	.868	.855	5.14	**.000****
	Community Engagement	.691	.831	.845	3.87	**.000****
	Ethical Capabilities	.607	.779	.716	7.14	**.000****

***p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001**; RMSHFF: Risk Management Scale in Health and Fitness Facilities, SMOS: Sustainable Marketing Orientation Scale

The According to the results of the regression test, as a result of the regression analysis performed to determine the effect between RMSHFF and SMOS, it was seen that the regression

model established at 5% significance level was significant at p<.05. It was determined that RMSHFF has a significantly positive, high-level effect on the SMOS. The R^2 value, expressed as the explanatory power of the model, was calculated as .823 (R^2=.823; p<0.001). This value shows that 82.3% of the SMOS variable (variance in) was explained by the independent variable in the RMSHFF model. Accordingly, RMSHFF had a significant effect on the SMOS (p<.05. RMSHFF total score (R^2=.790; p<0.001), structural design (R^2=.747; p<0.001), policy (R^2=.722; p<0.001), and member services (R^2=.754; p<0.001) dimensions had significant positive effects on the strategic integration sub-dimension of SMOS. RMSHFF total score (R^2=.770; p<0.001), structural design (R^2=.722; p<0.001), policy (R^2=.753; p<0.001), and member services (R^2=.691; p<0.001) subdimensions were found to have a strong positive significant effect on the social participation subdimension of SMOS. RMSHFF total score (R^2=.677; p<0.001), structural design subdimension (R^2=.715; p<0.001), policy (R^2=.592; p<0.001), and member services (R^2=.607; p<0.001) had significant positive effects on the ethical ability subdimension of the SMOS (Table 4).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The relationship and impact between risk management and sustainable marketing orientations in fitness businesses were analyzed. A strong positive significant relationship was found between the RMSHFF and SMOS (r=.695, p<0.001) (Table 3). Accordingly, as the level of risk management in health and fitness facilities increases, sustainable marketing orientations also increase. A strong significant positive relationship was found between the RMSHFF and the SMOS sub-dimensions of strategic integration (r=.582, p<0.001), community involvement (r=.721, p<0.001), and ethical capabilities (r=.574, p<0.001) (Table 3). Accordingly, as the level of risk management in health and fitness facilities increases, sustainable marketing orientations based on strategic integration, community involvement, and ethical capabilities increase. A strong positive significant relationship was found between structural design, one of the sub-dimensions of the RMSHFF, and strategic integration (r=.547, p<0.001), community involvement (r=.569, p<0.001), and ethical capabilities (r=.584, p<0.001). A strong positive significant relationship was found between the RMSHFF sub-dimensions of policy and strategic integration (r=.529, p<0.001), community involvement (r=.734, p<0.001), and ethical capabilities (r=.487, p<0.001). A strong positive relationship was found between member services, one of the sub-dimensions of the RMSHFF, and strategic integration (r=.554, p<0.001), community involvement (r=.697, p<0.001), and ethical capabilities (r=.537, p<0.001) (Table 3). According to these results, it can be stated that an increase in the risks taken in terms of building design, policy, and member services increases sustainable marketing orientation in terms of strategic integration, community involvement, and ethical capabilities. In general, it can be concluded that effective risk management in health and fitness facilities strengthens sustainable marketing strategies Research on the subject states that the fulfilment of legal obligations of fitness facilities positively affects the public image, and a good risk management practice increases the reputation of the business by preventing legal problems (Eraslan & Çimen, 2022; Rakipi & D'Onza, 2024). When the negative results are evaluated, it

is stated that implementing risk management strategies may incur high costs; expenditures such as training, equipment updates, and insurance can be challenging, especially for small businesses (Duong & Hai Thi Thanh, 2022); risk management processes may be complex and may take the time of business owners; and stages such as identifying, evaluating, and monitoring risks require careful planning (Ganesh & Kalpana, 2022).

Regression analysis results showed that 82.3% of the SMOS variable (variance in) was explained by the independent variable in the RMSHFF model (Table 4). Accordingly, this reveals that if the sustainable marketing orientations of fitness businesses are satisfied, their risk management levels are positively affected. RMSHFF total score (R^2=.790; p<0.001), structural design (R^2=.747; p<0.001), policy (R^2=.722; p<0.001), and member services (R^2=.754; p<0.001) subdimensions were found to have a strong positive significant effect on the strategic integration subdimension of SMOS. RMSHFF total score (R^2=.770; p<0.001), structural design (R^2=.722; p<0.001), policy (R^2=.753; p<0.001), and member services (R^2=.691; p<0.001) sub-dimensions were found to have a strong positive significant effect on the social participation sub-dimension of SMOS. RMSHFF total score (R^2=.677; p<0.001), structure design sub-dimension (R^2=.715; p<0.001), policy (R^2=.592; p<0.001), and member services (R^2=.607; p<0.001) were found to have a strong positive significant effect on the ethical abilities sub-dimension of the SMOS (Table 4). It can be concluded that, as fitness businesses increase their risk management levels, elements such as strategic integration, social participation, and ethical capabilities also improve. This may allow businesses to make their internal processes and marketing strategies more sustainable. It can also be emphasized that fitness businesses should strengthen their risk management practices to increase their sustainable marketing orientation. It can be said that this approach will both increase the competitiveness of businesses and support social benefit. Research on the subject states that effective risk management increases customer safety in fitness facilities, providing a safe environment increases customer satisfaction and leads to customer loyalty (Aznan et al., 2023; Ocakoğlu, 2019), and that customers feeling safe positively affect the reputation of the business (Çobanoğlu & Sevil, 2013; Sadgrove, 2016). Proactive management of risks prevents financial losses and supports long-term success, as fitness businesses can develop a more sustainable business model by controlling costs (Yurtseven, 2021; Wasserbaur et al., 2022). A good risk-management strategy provides businesses with a competitive advantage (Agustian, 2023) and effective risk management strengthens the position of the business in the market and enables the evaluation of new opportunities (Alkaraan et al., 2023). Effective risk-management practices may be misperceived. If businesses exaggerate or ignore risks, both financial losses and losses in customer confidence may occur (Blake, 2022). Constant changes in market conditions and consumer expectations may reduce the effectiveness of risk-management strategies (Ikevuje et al., 2024). It has been revealed that if businesses cannot quickly adapt to these changes, they may lose their competitive advantage (Farida & Setiawan, 2022; Karataş et al., 2017).

In conclusion, the impact of risk management on sustainable marketing trends in fitness businesses includes both positive and negative effects. The positive aspects include customer safety, financial stability, and competitive advantage, whereas the negative aspects include costs and complexity. Successful establishment of this balance is critical for the long-term

sustainability of businesses. The effective integration of risk management practices plays a significant role in increasing customer satisfaction, ensuring financial stability, and gaining competitive advantage. Organizations that can achieve this balance can adapt more easily to changes in the sector and reinforce their long-term success. Increased risk management enables facilities to be more effective in areas such as strategic integration, community engagement, and ethical capabilities, leading to increased orientation towards sustainable marketing. This in turn supports the evolution of the fitness industry, benefiting both businesses and society. In the future, fitness businesses can make their risk-management processes more effective by increasing the use of digitalization and technology. Innovative solutions such as data analytics and artificial intelligence can help assess risks more accurately. Taking into account the traditional lifestyles and habits in the region, fitness centers can be offered for family oriented group workouts and local sports activities. It is thought that improving service quality by considering customer feedback will contribute to strengthening sustainable marketing orientation. In this process, it can be stated that the continuous review and adaptation of sustainability-oriented marketing strategies will support the long-term success of fitness businesses by fulfilling both environmental and social responsibilities.

Conflicts of Interest: There are no personal or financial conflicts of interest to declare within the scope of this study.

Authors' Contribution: Research Design-ÜS, Data Collection- ÜS; MÖ, statistical analysis-ÜS; Preparation of the article-ÜS; MÖ.

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