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Examination of sports consumption behaviors of Football spectators in terms of success and failure criteria

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Abstract

This study aimed to reveal the sports consumption behavior intentions of the spectators of two football teams competing in Turkish Super League, in order to examine whether this behavior changes in cases of success and failure. Besides, the study also attempted to detect any difference between the consumption behaviors of the spectators of the two teams and to reveal the reasons of these differences. Spectators of two different teams competing in Turkish Super League participated in the study on voluntary basis. Totally 678 sports spectators attended the study: 54.30% (N=368) of these spectators supported Eskişehirspor while 45.70% (N=310) supported Bursaspor. To this end, the Sports Consumption Behavior Scale which was developed by Kim *et al.* (2011) and the validity and reliability of the Turkish version of which was tested by Kiremitci *et al.* (2014) was used in the scope of the study. In conclusion, this study examined the consumer behavior intentions of the spectators of two teams competing in Turkish Football Super League (one being more successful and the other less successful according to the results of the first half of the football season) and found that the spectators of the more successful team scored higher marks in "Attendance Intention" and "Licensed Merchandise Consumption Intention" sub-dimensions.

Keywords: Sport Consumption Behaviors; Football Spectators; Turkish Super League

1. Introduction

Sports has started to take an important place in our daily lives. There is an increase in the number of individuals who do sports actively for health and to benefit from many advantages sports provides to them. Being sports spectator has also gained a new dimension in the modern world and the fact of "being a sports spectator" has started to be examined by many disciplines. Management by an effective and professional organization of being a sports spectator and sports-oriented consumptions of these spectators will provide advantage for the sports clubs in competing with their rivals in the developing sports economy and industry.

Various sports marketing studies conducted in the past years centered on sports consumption behaviors and intentions. These studies revealed many factors effective on this intention and behavior. Motivation is known to be one of the most effective of these factors^[1, 2]. Parallel to this, value attached to the team also has significant effect on sports consumption behavior^[3-6]. Individuals showing different behaviors in sports competitions may attach different levels of importance to different values. Similarly, subscribing individuals who watch sporting events in their televisions for a fee and the individuals watching sports events in the tribunes by paying tickets attach different level of importance to different values. Trail *et al.* (2000) attempted to classify consumption behaviors of the sports spectators under six general factors; motives, level of identification, expectancies, confirmation or disconfirmation of expectancies, self-esteem responses, and the affective state of individuals^[7]. They hypothesized that each factor functioned sequentially. Each had either on the factors that followed in the model.

According to Mullin *et al.* (2007), consumer behaviors, feelings and emotions are affected by sports spectators' opinions, sports products and services^[8]. For this reason, previous studies have shown a relationship between the consumer behaviors and identification of the sports spectators^[9-12, 33]. It is a predictable fact that there may be a difference between the consumer behavior shown by a spectator who goes to stadium to watch a match and the consumer behavior shown by the same after the match, on the basis of the criteria of team's winning or losing the game. Sports consumption is a type of hedonic consumption that excitement-seeking consumers desire for its experiential nature^[10] and its emotional arousal such as joy, fear, rage and rapture.

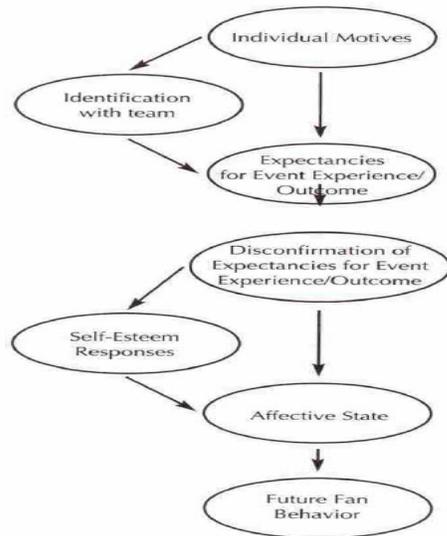


Fig 1: Trail's *et al.*'s (2000) Theoretical Model of Sport Spectator Consumption Behavior

While the purchasing rate of licensed merchandises in the professional sports leagues of the USA was 5.3 billion USD in 1990, this rate increased up to 12.8 billion USD in 2011 [13]. This applies for sportive licensed merchandises not identified with a specific team; while the revenue IOC generated from the licensed merchandises was 66 million USD in 1997-2000; this rate increased to 185 million USD in 2005-2008 [14, 32]. Rapid increase in these rates resulted in examination by the researchers of the behaviors shown by the spectators when buying licensed merchandises [15-18, 31]. Sportive success of the team is one of the factors which drive spectators to purchase products as well as other factors of the level of identification with team, peer effect, affective attachment to the team, atmosphere of the store, joy of shopping, quality of the licensed merchandise and its value for the consumer [14, 19]. This fact which is analyzed by the literature as “core service quality” is related to some values such as general sports performance of the team, the number of matches win and lost, position of the team in the league, presence/absence of a star player in the team, general quality of the team and image and charisma of the trainer [20].

It would be wrong to confine sports consumption to weft, uniform and track suit only. Bayern München, one of football clubs competing in Germany's First Football League “Bundesliga”, offers sleepers bedspreads, dog collars, toasters and food such as mustard in addition to the standard products. Moreover, such products attract the attention of not only male but also female spectators. Nail polishes and bikinis designed for the female spectators in the colors of the team are among the licensed merchandise [21]. In such a wide range of products, sports consumption behavior of sports spectators is not centered on the licensed merchandise only. Sports consumption behavior of sports fans and spectators is made up of three elements namely attendance in sporting events, sports media consumption and licensed merchandise consumption [22]. Understanding of the purchasing behavior of the spectators and developing marketing strategies in this direction by the sports clubs and enterprises producing licensed merchandise is important for the future of sports clubs. Since it is thought that club success increases in parallel with the club revenues and vice versa, it is obvious that these two variables should be

managed well. In this context, this study aimed to reveal the sports consumption behavior intentions of the spectators of two football teams competing in Turkish Super League, in order to examine whether this behavior changes in cases of success and failure. Besides, this study also attempted to detect any difference between the consumption behaviors of the spectators of the two teams and to reveal the reasons of these differences.

2. Methods

2.1 Participants

Spectators of two teams competing in Turkish Super League participated in the study on voluntary basis. Totally 678 sports spectators attended the study: 54.30% (N=368) of these spectators supported Eskişehirspor while 45.70% (N=310) supported Bursaspor. The average age of the spectators was 26 years old (*Mean* = 25.71, *SD* = 10.88). Spectators consisted of 573 (84.5%) males and 105 (15.5%) females. Convenience sampling method was used in the study.

2.2 Measurement tool

The Sports Consumption Behavior Scale which was developed by Kim *et al.* (2011) and the validity and reliability of the Turkish version of which was tested by Kiremitci *et al.* (2014) was used to achieve the goals set by the study [23, 24]. The scale consists of three items for each listed under the sub-dimensions of attendance intention, sport media consumption intention and licensed merchandise consumption intention. Turkish version of the SCB is assessed over a five-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. Mean item scores are used for each sub-dimension. Possible mean score from each sub-dimension changes from 1 to 5.

2.3 Procedure

Study participants were determined via convenience sampling method. Researchers administered the questionnaire to the participants before/after the match at the entrances/exits of the stadium after kindly asking them to ensure filling in of the forms appropriately. Twelve (12) students attending at the School of Physical Education and Sports assisted the researchers in this procedure. There were 120 questionnaires that were disqualified due to having missing values and incomplete information. A total of 678 spectators filled out the questionnaires successfully by face-to-face administration. Questionnaire were administered to the spectators of the both teams in the last home match the teams played at the last week of the first half of 2014-2015 Turkish Super League season.

2.4 Turkish Super League and the Teams

There are 18 teams playing in the Turkish Super League. While the team which became the champion of 2013-2014 season was directly qualified to the UEFA Champions League, the team which came second had to play preliminary match to be qualified to the UEFA Champions League. Teams which came third and fourth had to play elimination matches for qualification to the UEFA Cup. The last three teams of the league dropped to the lower league.

During its history, Eskişehirspor has generally kept a mid-rank position and has dropped to the second league and re-promoted to the upper league for 3-4 times. The biggest league success of the team was achieved 40 years ago when Eskişehirspor came second of the league. Eskişehirspor scored 16 points with 3 wins, 7 draws and 6 losses and took the 13th rank at the end of the first half of in 2014-2015 season. There were only 2

points between Eskişehirspor and the three teams in the dropping pot. The last league match before and after which the questionnaire was administered was lost to Gaziantep 1-3. Like Eskişehirspor, Bursaspor also has generally kept a mid-rank position during its history. However, it has competed better than Eskişehirspor in the league and most seasons it has steadily pushed the upper ranks. It has also achieved one championship in the history of the Turkish Super League. Bursaspor scored 66 points with 7 wins, 5 draws and 4 losses and took the 5th rank at the end of the first half of 2014-2015 season. It had only one point less than the team in the 4th rank. In the last league match before and after which the questionnaire was administered, Bursaspor defeated Akhisar

Belediye Gençlik ve Spor Kulübü (Akhisar Municipality Youth and Sports Club) 3-1, the same score with the match lost by Eskişehirspor to its rival Gaziantepspor.

2.5 Data Analysis

SPSS 21.0 package program was used to analyze study data. Descriptive analysis method was adopted for analyzing general demographical information of the participants. Kolmogorov – Smirnov- Z test was made to test normal distribution of the questionnaire sub-scales, which revealed that not all sub-scales show normal distribution (p<0.05). After this point, Mann Whitney-U test was used to compare the pre-match and post-match opinions of the participants and to compare the teams.

3. Results

Table 1: Inter-team comparison of the SCB sub-scales

	Gender	n	Mean Rank	U	Z	P
Attendance Intention	Eskişehirspor	368	266.32	30.108,50	-10.737	.000*
	Bursaspor	310	426.38			
Media Consumption Intention	Eskişehirspor	368	326.28	52.174,00	-1.933	.053
	Bursaspor	310	355.20			
Licensed Merchandise Consumption Intention	Eskişehirspor	368	246.61	22.857,50	-13.630	.000*
	Bursaspor	310	449.77			

Examination of Table 1 shows statistically significant differences between the attendance intention and licensed merchandise consumption intention of Eskişehirspor and Bursaspor spectators. Mean ranks of Bursaspor spectators were calculated to be higher -at a statistically significant level- than the mean ranks of Eskişehirspor spectators in “Attendance Intention” sub-scale (z=-10.737; p<0.05). Moreover, mean ranks of Bursaspor spectators were found to be higher -at a statistically significant level- than the mean ranks of Eskişehirspor spectators also in “Licensed

Merchandise Consumption Intention” sub-scale (z=-13.630; p<0.05). However, no statistically significant difference was detected between the spectators of the two teams in the “Media Consumption” sub-scale, although Bursaspor spectators were observed to have higher mean ranks than the Eskişehirspor spectators. Bursaspor spectators had higher intentions than Eskişehirspor spectators in three sub-scales of the questionnaire.

Table 2: Comparison between pre-match and post-match SCB sub-scales of Eskişehirspor spectators

	Pre-Match/ Post-Match	n	Mean Rank	U	Z	P
Attendance Intention	Pre-Match	210	202.16	12.882,00	-3.696	.000*
	Post-Match	158	161.03			
Media Consumption Intention	Pre-Match	210	186.26	16.220,50	-.368	.713
	Post-Match	158	182.16			
Licensed Merchandise Consumption Intention	Pre-Match	210	186.13	7.773,50	-.257	.797
	Post-Match	158	183.27			

Table 2 presents the differences between the pre-match and post-match responses given by Eskişehirspor spectators to SCB questionnaire. In this context, the only statistically significant difference between the pre-match and post-match responses of the Eskişehirspor spectators was recorded in the “Attendance Intention” sub-scale (z=-3.696; p<0.05). Post-

match intention of the spectators was found to be lower -at a statistically significant level- than their pre-match intention. No statistically significant difference was revealed in the other three sub-scales (p>0.05). However, post-match mean ranks were observed to be lower than the pre-match mean ranks in all sub-dimensions.

Table 3: Comparison between pre-match and post-match SCB sub-scales of Bursaspor spectators

	Pre-Match/ Post-Match	n	Mean Rank	U	Z	P
Attendance Intention	Pre-Match	180	149.96	10.702,00	-1.339	.181
	Post-Match	130	163.18			
Media Consumption Intention	Pre-Match	180	143.09	11.195,50	-2.909	.004*
	Post-Match	130	172.68			
Licensed Merchandise Consumption Intention	Pre-Match	180	152.02	8.970,50	-.615	.538
	Post-Match	130	158.01			

Table 3 lists the differences between the pre-match and post-match responses given by Bursaspor spectators to the SCB questionnaire. Pre-match and post-match comparison of the Bursaspor spectators produced statistically significant

differences only in “Media Consumption Intention” sub-scale (z=-2.909; p<0.05). Post-match intention of the spectators was recorded to be higher -at a statistically significant level- than their pre-match intention. No statistically significant difference

was observed in the other sub-scales ($p>0.05$). However, post-match mean ranks were recorded to be higher than the pre-match mean ranks in all sub-scales.

4. Discussion

According to the studies conducted by Trail and James (2001), spectator behaviors are based on psychological and social requirements [25]. Understanding the importance of motivation while attending a sporting activity is related to understanding the forms of sports consumption, sports spectators show different tendencies according to their characters. These differences have resulted in different sports consumptions (e.g., attending sporting events, watching sporting events on television, or buying sports merchandise). Most important pillar of a spectator's motivation during a sports activity is closely related to the success to be achieved and the performance to be shown by the team during the game.

Present study compared the levels of attendance intention, media consumption intention and licensed merchandise consumption intention of two teams competing in Turkish Football Super League and found the level of success and match score to be effective on these sub-scales. It was revealed that the spectators of the more successful team showed higher levels of consumption intention compared to the spectators of the less successful team. According to James and Ross (2004), winning or losing a game is one of the factors effective on the consumption behaviors of the spectators of a team [26]. However, no statistically significant difference was reported between the media consumption intention of the team that won and lost a game. The fact that some spectators follow the news about their teams either from TV or printed media, in other words, consumption means which do not require great efforts, might be related to the value they attach to their teams rather than the success and failure of their teams. As a matter of fact, no statistically significant decrease was found in the level of media consumption intention of the spectators following a match lost. Spectators of the winning team were more motivated for media consumption in the post-match period compared to the pre-match period. This can be interpreted as spectators support in the form of watching the away matches on TV and increasing motivation tendency by closely monitoring the already-high team performance.

Considering the general profile of the Turkish audience, the fact of winning and losing is significantly important. Rapid reactions and emotions are shown immediately after a match lost. Although team success or failure effects sports consumption, weakening team performance does not decrease spectator loyalty to the team much [27, 28]. However, the present study suggests that bad course of Turkish teams results in a change in the spectator attitudes towards the team and sports consumption intention. Previous literature studies [14, 29, 30] reported that sports consumption intention of the spectators did not change much according to losing or winning a match and was more related to the level of identification with the team and various value judgments related to the team. Unlike such studies, the presents study offers the following result based on the data obtained in this scope: Intention of a spectator to attend future games decreases, at a statistically significant level, particularly after a lost game.

Future studies may examine identification difficulties between the successful and unsuccessful teams on one hand, and their spectators and consumption intentions on the other and, characteristics differentiating their team from other teams may be questioned according to spectator in order to reveal how these differences affect consumption intentions. Meanwhile,

consumption intentions of the spectators of similar teams competing at the same category might be analyzed in terms of the factors they are most effected by.

In conclusion, this study examined the consumer behavior intentions of the spectators of two teams (one being more successful and the other less successful according to the results of the first half of Turkish Football Super League) and showed that spectators of the more successful team obtained higher scores from the sub-scales of "Attendance Intention" and "Licensed Merchandise Consumption Intention" and that there was no statistically significant difference in terms of "Media Consumption Intention" sub-scale. In addition, it was understood that spectators of the winning team showed a higher post-match attendance intention compared to the pre-match attendance intention, while the spectators of the losing team showed lower post-match media consumption intention compared to the pre-match media intention.

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