

Effect of stadium service quality on the club value perceived by the supporter: sample of Konyaspor Büyükşehir Torku Arena

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Abstract

This study, which aims at introducing the relationships between the quality perceived in stadium services and the value the supporters perceive toward the club and how much the value attributed by supporters to the sport club was affected from the stadium service quality perceived by supporters, was designed in the relational scanning model taking place in quantitative study. The data in the study were obtained 679 supporters, determined by the method of randomly sampling, coming to watch the matches of Torku Konyaspor-Akhisar Belediyespor, Torku Konyaspor-Galatasaray, Torku Konyaspor-Mersin İdman Yurdu, and Torku Konyaspor-Gençlerbirliği in the existing eight tribune areas in 2015 -2016 football season. As data collecting instrument, "Personal Information Form", "Scale of Service Quality Perceived in Stadiums", and "Scale of Club Values toward Supporters" were utilized. In the analysis of the data, in order to examine the relationships between the variables, correlation and regression analyses were used. As a conclusion, it was identified that stadium service quality increased the club value perceived by supporter. As a result of regression analysis made, while the linear effects of the dimensions of physical environment quality, interaction quality, and core service quality on the club value, perceived by the spectator was identified, it was found that the dimension, whose the effect of core service quality was the most, was stadium service quality.

Keywords: Club value, stadium marketing, stadium service quality, supporter.

INTRODUCTION

The concept marketing intruded almost every stage of our life has any longer become an important concept, beyond the presentation of goods and services presented, enlarging until marketing the events and spaces. The phenomenon of marketing the product football, one of the activities of the sports clubs in our country, keeps an important place in sports industry. Transporting the basic and sub products forming in the stadiums, in which football play takes place, to consumer stands out the development of marketing strategies specific to sports.

The aim for presenting high quality goods and services in stadiums is presenting a value to supporters and enable them to obtain maximum satisfaction as a result of this value. In this context, sports clubs should consider the quality of the services they present in the form of value perceived by supporters not their own perceptions and

transfer their resources and information in this direction.

In general, in the studies taking place in the literature, some findings were obtained, which are toward that there was a relationship between quality and value (24). In generally acceptable view, quality provides input for value (10,25). If it is necessary to express more clearly, it is stated that service quality is a premise of perceived service value (5). In the value models, it is seen that the effects of quality are studied independently from each other. In the study results, it is seen that quality has a positive effect on value (8). Hence, it can be said that the core service is the leading element enabling the levels of spectator perception toward physical environment and interaction quality to be raised, and opportunity football club supporters to have top level club value

While some part of the different definitions made in the literature is explained the value

perceived by customer with only economic elements or economic value of tangible assets (3,16), the others are explained as a “general perception” in the framework of the benefits obtained and sacrifices, also using the cognitive and emotional elements (33, 37).

The studies on the perceived value can be collected under three titles as (1) value components, (2) instrument-outcome models, and (3) utility-sacrifice models (17). In the studies dealing with value in the framework of utility-sacrifice model, the value perceived by customer is defined as the difference between the perception utility that customer obtains and self-sacrifice made and thus it takes place in this stream. The perceived sacrifices include all costs such as the price, league pass, and participation in the match a supporter faces while buying ticket. It can be said that the perceived utilities cover the benefits related to the participation of supporters in the match such as physical properties and service received and the indicators such as management, technical cadre and satisfaction from new transfers, performance of football team, sponsor firms, and perceived quality. In some studies on marketing literature, the effect of businesses on creating value is theoretically and practically examined and reached the conclusion that a relationship based on the trust and commitment is an important element in creating the value perceived by the customer (2,23,30). However, there are some deficiencies at the point of measuring the effect of service quality on the value perceived by customer and presenting this relationship in applied way. Examination of these points will help for us to understand in detail the relationship between the value perceived by supporter related to sports club in the area of sports marketing and stadium service quality, and will contribute to examining this relationship in more deeply and to that sport clubs use it while developing marketing strategies.

In the light of this information, the aim of the study is to introduce the relationships between the perceived quality in stadium services and the value perceived by supporter toward the club and identify how much the value attributed by supporters to sports club is affected from stadium service quality supporter perceives.

MATERIAL & METHOD

The study was designed in the relational scanning model taking place in quantitative study

paradigms. Relational scanning model, a sort of scanning model, is a study model aiming at the presence and/or degree of co-variation between two or more variables. In the study, the primary data were used and these data were collected by means of questionnaire face to face administered to the spectators coming to watch the matches in Konya “Büyükşehir Torku Arena Stadium” (Stadium of Konya Büyükşehir Torku Arena, in the competition of “The Best Stadiums of the year 2014”, took place the best five stadium of the World.

http://stadiumdb.com/competitions/stadium_of_the_year_2014.

Participants

The participants of the study consist of the supporters, determined by the method of randomly sampling, coming to watch the matches of Torku Konyaspor-Akhisar Belediyespor, Torku Konyaspor-Galatasaray, Torku Konyaspor-Mersin İdman Yurdu, and Torku Konyaspor-Gençlerbirliği in the existing eight tribune areas in 2015-2016 football season. While only 2.7% of 679 supporters participating in the study, whose mean ages are 25.91, consisted of the females, the rate of the male supporters are at the level of 97.3%. 35.5% of the supporters are married; 64.5% of them are single; and majority of them are graduated from high school and university (total. 76.1%). While the majority (60.4%) of the supporters participating in the study have a combined match ticket, they watched 8.72 matches on average. 78 of the supporters watched matches on the East Upper Tribune; 47, on The East Lower Tribune; 17, on the West Upper Tribune; 28, on The West Lower Tribune; 77, on the North Upper Tribune; 198, on the North Lower Tribune; 46, on the South Upper Tribune; and 188, on the South Lower Tribune.

Data Collecting Instruments

Service Quality Scale Perceived in Stadiums

In order to identify service quality perceived by the supporters in Konya Büyükşehir Torku Arena Stadium, “Service Quality Scale Perceived in Stadiums”, whose validity and reliability was tested by Gençer (11), was utilized. Service Quality Scale Perceived in Stadiums” (SQSPS) aims to measure service quality in stadiums (football). SQSPS has 3 sub dimensions, and consists of 42 items. These sub dimensions are Quality of Physical Environment (20 items), Interaction Quality (9 items) and Quality of Core Service (13 items). The scale is of Likert type

and its rating is between 1 (I disagree with) and 5 (I definitely agree with it) in the dimension of perceived service.

Value Scale toward Supporters

In order to identify the viewpoints of the supporters in Konya Büyükşehir Torku Arena Stadium toward the values of club, "Scale of Value toward Supporters" (SVTS), whose validity and reliability were tested by Orçun & Demirtaş (27), were utilized. SVTS has 7 sub dimensions and consists of 18 items Sub dimensions are Physical Properties of Stadium (4 items), League Pass Application (2 items), Price Levels of Tickets and Combined Tickets (2 items), Sales of Licensed Products (3 items), Satisfaction with Management, Technical Cadre, and New Transfers (3 items), Performance of Football Team (2 items), and Sponsors (2 items). In this study, 6 out of 7 sub dimensions were utilized. In the study, since Physical Environment Quality of Stadium was questioned in the scale of perceived service quality, the sub dimension of Physical Properties of Stadium was not used and, in this study, the scale value toward the supporters was evaluated as a single dimension. The scale is of Likert type and its rating is between 1 (I disagree with it at all) and 5 (I definitely agree with it) in the dimension of perceived service.

Collecting Data

The questionnaires were distributed to the supporters and the necessary explanations were made by the researcher and his assistants to each

supporter, and all of scales were administered before the matches began.

Analysis of the Data

The data collected, using SPSS program, were subjected to the correlation and regression analyses.

RESULTS

The results of correlation analysis carried out to identify between Perceived Stadium Service Quality and Perceived Club Value and the mean and standard deviation values of the variables are presented in Table 1. It is seen that correlation coefficients between stadium service quality and perceived club value are statistically important.

When correlation coefficients that turns out significant, it is seen that there is a moderate level, positive, and significant correlation between the dimensions of stadium service quality and perceived club value.

The results of analysis show that the dimensions of Physical Environmental Quality, Interaction Quality and Core Service Quality belonging to stadium service quality affect the club value perceived by supporter in the positive direction and at the significant level. The explanatoriness rate of the model is 38%. According to these results, an increase of one unit forming in stadium service quality causes a significant increase of 0.18 units in the club value perceived by supporter for the dimension of Physical Environmental Quality; 0.19 units for the dimension of Interaction Quality; and 0.33 units for the dimension of Core Service Quality.

Table 1. Correlation Relationships between the Variables (N= 679).

	1	2	3	4	Mean	SD	Alfa Confidence Coefficient
1 Club Value	-				3,61	0.86	0.88
2 Physical Environment Quality	.482**				4,03	0.73	0.91
3 Interaction Quality	.510**	.676**			3,83	0.92	0.87
4 Core Service Quality	.554**	.525**	.558**	-	3,66	0.93	0.92

Table 2. The results of regression analysis regarding the effect of the dimensions of stadium service quality on sports club value.

	R ²	F	β	p
Model	0,38	136,824		0,000
(Constant)			0,924	0,000
Physical Environmental Quality			0,183	0,000
Interaction Quality			0,190	0,000
Core Service Quality			0,332	0,000

Dependent Variable: Club Value Perceived by Supporter

DISCUSSION

Sports has any longer become a product of consumer and is in a position, which can be shaped by marketing strategies like the other consumer products (4) However, when regarded to the marketing structures of clubs, and new trends are also considered, viewing supporter as a customer is in question. The point that is necessary to be forgotten here is in fact that the spectators and supporters are the real financiers and the real owners of football industry (22). Adamson et al. (1) suggest that management of customer relationships of football industry is appropriate for being executed the best; that the service expectations of supporters have especially changed in the recent years; and, depending on this, that clubs should make more customer oriented enterprise. With moving from here, in stadium service market of today, the view that the concept of club and service value perceived by spectator is an important instrument to create competitive advantage forms the basic departure point of this study. The basic assumption was determined in the way that the spectators and supporters of sports clubs maximizing service quality they perceive in stadiums will exhibit an attitude in the direction that they will perceive the sports clubs as valuable. With moving from this assumption, the aim of the study is to introduce the relationships between the perceived quality in stadium services and the value supporter perceives toward club and identify how much the value supporters attribute to sports club are affected from stadium quality supporter perceives.

According to the results of correlation analysis made toward identifying the relationship of perceived club value with the dimensions of service quality (physical environment quality, interaction quality, and core service quality), it was identified that there was a significant and positive directional relationship between the perception of general club value and perception of physical environment quality, interaction quality, and core service quality. In other words, the level of club value perceived by supporters perceiving the stadium service presented to them as high quality also shows increase. This result shows that supporters evaluating the stadium service as high quality also perceive their clubs as valuable. Due to the fact that there is no other studies, with which this study can be directly compared, the findings can only be evaluated by the studies indirectly carried out. This arises from that the concept of perceived value in marketing

literature is perceived as the value of the service presented and that perceived club value is evaluated by the concepts such as brand value and image in the certain points. The findings of the study showing that perceived value is affected from service quality and that there are significant relationships between them (6,7,13) are available. But, although these studies support our study findings, as explained above, the concept of perceived value were evaluated as service value.

As a result of regression analysis applied, it was identified that stadium service quality increases the club value perceived by spectator. In the studies, carried out (18,26,19), although the effect of perceived value on service quality is introduced, as stated above, the concept of perceived value was used in this study as service value. Core Service Quality is the dimension of stadium service, whose effect is the most. In other words, core service quality is the most effective dimension in shaping of club value perceived by the supporters. This dimension of quality is related to service performance promised. Grönroos (14) defined this factor in the form of what remained in the customer, when production process ended. This situation reveals that team performance i.e. core service is a very important element to increase club value; and that it is necessary for better athletes, technical team, and managers to include in structuring the team to raise club value. Funk et al. (2002) supporting our study findings emphasize the importance of core service in terms of spectators and, for being able to increase the perception of core service quality, state that it is necessary for the positive image of the athletes and league, in which the struggle is made, to be created. As a result of this, they suggest that the spectators and supporters will exhibit the positive attitudes toward club. However, from the aspect of the supporters participating in the study, the another reason for the high relationship between club value and service quality may be the possible effects of that the team Torku Konyaspor takes place in the top order of the league. in the period, when the study has been carried out. As a matter of fact 2015-2016 football season, that this team takes place on the third order of score history at the end of the league, following Beşiktaş and Fenerbahçe, may have provided to raise club value of the supporters participating in the study as well as core service quality.

The element affecting perceived club value in the second order is the dimension of stadium service

quality. This is followed by interaction quality and physical environment quality. Since the effect of interaction quality will bring together with it that the people taking office in the stadiums make relation (responding, reliability, informing, and empathy) with the supporters; and that when staff and supporters move together, the benefit they will obtain increases; it is considered that it increases perceived club value. Beside this, it is considered that physical environment quality (auto park, directing, security action, architectural structure, scoreboard, seats, sound systems, and etc.) forming the concrete elements of the stadium increases perceived club value. McDonald et al. (21) and Gladden & Milne (12) stating that controlling sports club about core service quality is difficult (competition performance) emphasize that the powers of football team managers on the core service are weaker than their powers on the elements of interaction and physical environment quality. In addition, Theodorakis et al. (32) suggest that the effect of managers on the core service in sports service marketing is inadequate and that they concentrate on all efforts on the elements of interaction and physical environment. When these studies are evaluated, the perceptions of the supporters regarding interaction quality and physical environment quality also include the meaning that Konya Büyükşehir Torku Arena Stadium recently comes into service and reaches quality criteria as much as possible. This also increases perceived club value. However, the dimension affecting perceived club value in the last order is physical environment quality is highly thought-provoking. Although physical environment quality forming the concrete elements of stadium affects club value in the rate that cannot be underrated, it can be said that Konya Büyükşehir Torku Arena Stadium, built with the different quality standards such as UEFA criteria that can be deemed as new, does not predict the perception of club value of Torku Konyaspor Football Club at the expected level. The expected result is that a newly built stadium can have a contribution to club value. This case can arise from that the performance of Torku Konyaspor (core service quality) in the mentioned times shades in the perception of new stadium (physical environment quality). In addition, it can also result from, among the strategies of sports marketing, providing high quality sports environment as well as the deficiencies of services toward providing high quality entertainment experience (15).

It was revealed in many studies that physical environment quality of stadiums was as important as at least core service quality (20,21,28,29,31,34,36). The most basic reason for that physical environment quality was important to professional football clubs was that interaction quality was being affected from physical environment quality (35). Beside this, physical environment is an area, in which the core service is produced and presented. Hence, it is a stubborn fact that the physical service quality, core service quality and service quality have important effects on perceived service quality

As a result, it was identified that physical service quality increased club value perceived by the supporters. As a result of regression analysis carried out, while the linear effects of the dimensions of physical environment quality, interaction quality, and core service quality on club value, perceived by the supporter, were identified, it was found that the dimension, whose core service quality is the most, was stadium service quality.

The findings of this study include some messages worth to consider for sports clubs presenting sports services. That stadium service quality affects club value perceived by supporter in the positive direction points out that the serious steps should be taken toward increasing stadium quality. Sports clubs that can realize improvements in stadium service quality can gain an important competitive advantage and this advantage can bring high rate supporter satisfaction, word of mouth communication, high rate prestige and profitability.

As in every study this study also contains some constraints. First of all, the study is limited with four matches the team of Torku Konyaspor played in Konya Büyükşehir Torku Arena Stadium in 2015-2016 Football Seasons. Beside this, several regulative variables can be in question, which can affect the linear relationships tested in stadium marketing but these are not included in the study. For example, considering that sports is a service, adding more 3P (process, person, and physical quality) (34) to four main elements of marketing (product, promotion, presentation, and pricing) can be effective on the perception of both club value and service quality. In addition, since the relationships tested can show difference according to the branch or the size of sports club, it is suggested that the model is tested in the different branches and sport clubs with different sizes. Finally, although response rate among the supporters of Torku Konyaspor is sufficient, when studied with a larger volume of sample, in which

the supporters of the different sports clubs are included, the different results can be obtained. In this case, the suggested effect of the dimensions of stadium service quality on the value of sport club perceived by supporters can be generalized.

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