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ARTICLE INFO	Alper Özer and Metin Argan (2006). Licensed Team Merchandise Buying Behavior: A Study On Turkish Fans. *Innovative Marketing* , *2*(4)
RELEASED ON	Monday, 11 December 2006
JOURNAL	"Innovative Marketing "
FOUNDER	LLC "Consulting Publishing Company "Business Perspectives"

NUMBER OF REFERENCES	NUMBER OF FIGURES	NUMBER OF TABLES
0	0	0

LICENSED TEAM MERCHANDISE BUYING BEHAVIOR: A STUDY ON TURKISH FANS

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Abstract

Merchandising the licensed sport team merchandises in sport industry is one of the most common and developing issues. Amount for merchandising licensed sport merchandises is explained with billions of dollars recently. Thus, this makes licensing is an effective way to create incentives for consumers to buy a product. Soccer clubs in Turkey have also been aware of this issue and established actual and virtual licensed team merchandise stores.

In this study, determinant factors influencing the purchasing decision of sport teams licensed merchandise are analyzed. Demographic and behavioral variables are considered. To examine the tendencies of the fans in purchasing licensed merchandise, an exploratory investigation was conducted. A questionnaire was conducted in Fenerium Stores that is established by one of the biggest soccer team in Turkey, in order to explain buying behavior of customers. Exploratory factor analysis was used to examine the underlying dimensions of purchase behaviors of the sports fan. To analyze hypothesis between five buying factors and demographics, T-test and One-Way ANOVA were used. Results indicated that among five main factors (sport team identification-support, store atmosphere, friend group, loyalty and shopping enjoyment), fans purchase with their identifications that are affected from being a part of a group. Even though the fans are somewhat similar particularly because of their identity that is influenced by the emotions to the team, there are still differences raised by the demographic variables.

Key words: Licensing, licensed sport team merchandise, sports marketing.

Introduction

In order to have sportive successes in intense competition, approaches of teams should be in close relation with financial success. Teams have realized the importance of this relationship lately and focused on marketing of the licensed sports merchandise. Then, brand has become more important in sports industry (Bauer and Sauer, 2005). Teams now try to direct their consumers through the stores in which they market team related products. Apart from that, the rate of the shopping made from the online stores of the clubs has shown increase in recent years. For these reasons, understanding the interest and the reactions the consumers show in licensed sports merchandise concerns all the other companies aiming to have licenses as well as club managements. This is also important in general for suppliers because of the creation of multiplier effect.

Financial success may be achieved through the implementation of effective sports marketing. Therefore, it is an inevitable fact that, sports clubs and organizations in Turkey, especially the major sports clubs, should recognize the fans purchasing licensed merchandise and determine the factors influencing the purchasing behavior. When it is considered that the researches related to the sports marketing in general and licensed merchandise in particular are limited, the significance of the empirical studies increases.

The purpose of this study is to determine and analyze the various reasons for purchasing of licensed products while the fans actually purchased a licensed team product. Sport consumers can exhibit different characteristics in buying behavior and these characteristics influence purchasing licensed merchandises. To examine the tendencies of the fans in purchasing licensed merchandise, an exploratory investigation was conducted.

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Literature Review

In the view of sports merchandise, license is a very significant field. Between 1990 and 1994, the sales of the licensed sports merchandise have increased from 5.3 billon US$ to 10.35 billion US$. In 1997, the amount of money the Americans spent on licensed sports merchandise is over 15 billion US$ (Kropp *et al.,* 1999). According to the reports of The Licensing Letter (2006), retail sales of licensed merchandise based on sports properties reached an all-time peak with $13.2 billion in 2005 in the U.S. and Canada. In 1997, the total retail sales of the four major leagues and universities/colleges were 11.3 billion US$. These sales numbers contains sports merchandise consisting of millinery products, commercial cards, souvenirs, and clothing. Garments and clothing constitute approximately 60% of all the licensed sports merchandise (Shank, 1999). Licensed sports merchandise has been developing not only in the United States, but also in Europe. For instance, Real Madrid, transferring Zidane, planned to sell 500, 000 "Zidane" uniforms.

In the recent years, an increase has been observed in the sales of the licensed merchandise in Turkey, especially in the soccer field. Galatasaray, Fenerbahçe, and Beşiktaş, which are the biggest teams in Turkey, started merchandise sales both in retail stores and in online stores. The uniforms of the Turkish National Football Team, achieving great success in FIFA 2002 World Cup, were worn by a high number of people. It was also related to success of the national team. The uniform sales reached 1 million units after Turkey made its way to the second tour in FIFA 2002 World Cup. Especially after the quarter and semi finals, there was a real increase in the number of uniform sales. Sponsors were also involved while sales were increasing rapidly. The companies sponsoring the national team distributed more than 500,000 uniforms to the federation. It is estimated that more than 16.000 dollars were spent on uniforms while Turkish National Soccer Team was successful (Hürriyet Newspaper, 2002).

The significance of having a strong trademark is achieved through the licensing of the product of an organization. A license is a written legal agreement between the owners of the trademark and a manufacturer. It is related to a company or an organization's granting its trademark to another company for a certain benefit. In a broader sense, license is a type of agreement that authorizes an organization to use the name of the brand, the patent, the commercial secrets, and other facilities of another organization in exchange for a price or a privilege (Argan and Katırcı, 2002). The branding strategy attained through license gives the organization the authority to use the brand, the name of the brand, the brand logo, or the trademark. An organization having the license of another brand uses this to integrate merchandise, services, or taking on to gain benefits (Sleight, 1989). The implementation of purchasing license rights in sports industry is quite common and developing issue (Parkhouse, 1996). For instance, there are 150 license holders of the NFL (American National Football League). These are related to clothing, sports products, basketball cards, collection products, household fabrics, school products, household electronic instruments, interactive games, video, publishing, toys, gift products, etc.

Sports clubs have started to use licenses as a tool for creating income. For instance, one of the main purposes of the teams transferring star football players is to sell the uniform of the star players to the fans. By doing this, teams consider the main idea of being a fan. The consumers perceive licensed merchandise as an aspect of being a fan (Schaff, 1995) and the sports clubs benefit from this advantage. As long as marketing strategies based on licenses implemented appropriately, the business in sports can be profitable for the organizations and companies. Main reason for this is that the license business in sports carries a great significance for the players, the team, and the leagues.

Factors Affecting the Purchasing of Licensed Sports Merchandises

Purchasing patterns of consumers are well documented in the marketing literature. Even though it is somewhat determined in sports marketing literature, there is a lack of studies on behavior and purchasing patterns of sports fans related to licensed merchandise (Dietz-Uhler, Harrick, End and Jacquemotte, 2000; Wann and Hamlet, 1995). Most of the studies relating to consumption behavior of the spectators are on attendance to the events and little study is performed for spectators'

purchasing behaviors of goods, especially merchandising the goods related to the sports teams. Strong sports brands are able to make the customers put the brand into different moments of their daily lives (Couvelaere, and Richelieu, 2005). This can be explained by the relationship established between the team and the fans while a professional sports team has the potential to build brand equity by establishing relationships with its fans. This is related to emotions that are stronger when generated by sports teams than any company in any industry (Underwood et al., 2001).

Sport spectating is a popular activity in almost all countries. Because of the different behaviors spectators have, compared to general product purchasers, consumption behaviors are also different in making purchasing decisions. In other words, spectators have different behavioral intentions to buy. This is particularly important for companies' profits because the main factors are quality, satisfaction and loyalty (Trail et al., 2005). Oliver et al. (1997) supported this argument in their study by stressing the correlation between positive effect and satisfaction. These factors will differ according to the differences of customers. While licenses have positive impact on buying behavior, it is easier to create brand loyalty for team merchandise. That means that while firms hold licenses, it is likely to attract more loyal customers for their product and the firm itself. So, as long as brand equity is an important factor for firms to reach higher market shares, team merchandises are also important for the teams because they include both the brand name and the level of team identification. Thus, it is necessary for the firms to determine what influence brand loyalty related to licensed merchandises.

Bishop (2001: 25) defines a fan as an individual who follows the exploits of a team or player by attending games, watching games on television, listening to them on the radio and monitoring team and player performance via the mass media. In addition, Bishop (2001) concludes that in the modern era of sports, being a fan also means actively buying a range of goods of the team he/she supports. Main reason is that the logo, for example, on the licensed merchandise is an identifying symbol deployed to represent a professional sports team. Licensed merchandises usually have logos and this is important on buying decisions of the spectators. This is all about the spectators' feelings as Bishop (2001) stresses that brandishing a professional sports team's logo on a product is a sign of allegiance signifying the person's love for the favorite team. Teams promote the licensed merchandise in order to urge the individuals to become part of the team. The color and the other specifying points of the sports team are sufficient to represent the related sports team as fans give great importance to be related to the team.

Purchasing of team-licensed merchandises is related to satisfaction of spectators as consumers of sporting events. Studies show that there is a link between the success of the team and purchasing from the teams' stores where team licensed merchandises are sold (Trail et al., 2005). This mainly raised from the identification of the fans that is high as the team is successful (End, 2001). Madrigal (1995) points out that the factors, namely perceived quality of opponents, level of team identification and confirmation and disconfirmation of expectancies about the event, affecting the satisfaction of sport consumers would have an effect on the mood of the individuals. Supporting this, there are studies examining the relationship between success in sports and economic performance (Ashton et al., 2003; Berument and Yucel, 2005). Success of the team increases the morale and self-esteem of the spectators of a team. Higher self-esteem will lead to higher production due to more social behavior and more efficient decision-making (Berument and Yucel, 2005).

Another reason licensed products are being purchased is gift giving behavior which is related to the brand choice. According to Parsons (2002), when any product is purchased as a gift, behaviors of the customers differ according to some factors, such as gender, age and household income. While we consider licensed sports team merchandise, the findings of Parsons (2002) brought us to the different aspect. His findings suggest that consumers tend to look for brands with greater perceived symbolic benefits when purchasing it. Licensed sport teams merchandise is generally purchased in order to have utilities that only the fans of that team can receive, thus it is related to symbolic utilities. This idea is supported by Bishop (2001) stating that it is a remembrance of the fan's innocent interaction with the team and favorite players.

Approaching to sports team merchandise is related to social identity theory as well. Personal identity is related to categorization of someone according to specific characteristics and social identity is related to defining oneself in terms of various social categories. These categories could be race, age, gender, religious affiliation, political party or membership in a professional organization (Underwood et al., 2001). While an individual feels that he/she belongs to a group, he/she may identify himself with the group and share the group accomplishments. It shows itself with commitment and involvement. Spectators would have commitment and emotional involvement while they feel that they are a part of the group. This is important both for psychological and behavioral identification (Branscombe and Wann, 1991; Madrigal, 1995; Fisher, 1998).

Individuals are likely to become sports consumers when the team they support is successful. This is related to establishing self-esteem and morale due to success in sport events. Social cohesion, according to Berument and Yucel (2005), is used to describe positive characteristic of a society that deals with the relationship among members of the society. This brings us to interaction of people in the same society. They will possibly influence each other in the same society particularly because they have the same expectations and goals in the society. This is also influenced by game participation. Pride of the spectators will be influenced by the game and each time the spectators participate to the game, the pride will be higher.

Social identification is related to belonging to a group and this is related to influence of the individuals. Success of the group will be individuals' success as the team success is considered as their own. Berument and Yucel (2005) point out that being a fan of a soccer team is a specific form of a social identification. Individuals make their moves according to emotions derived from membership (Wann, D.L., and Branscombe, N.R., 1993; Wann et al., 1999). In fact, social interaction influences the reason of watching a game in stadium by group psychology and desire for communication to people (Suher et al., 2005).

As identification with the team is higher, spectators are likely to be happier than those are in lower identification. This positively shows itself in consumption behavior and brand loyalty especially when the team is successful (Trail et al., 2005). Trail et al. (2005) also point out that after a game is won and when the spectators are feeling good, players and coaches should be encouraged to interact with the spectators because this would increase spectators' level of team identification and loyalty.

Studies on costumers' store choice are mainly on multiple store environments, meaning that consumers evaluate the stores, which sell different but alternative products to consumers. However, when considering the stores of licensed merchandise, it should be considered differently because of the purchasing decision and uniqueness of the stores. The stores are owned the team after all. Thus, it is not the real case to consider the competitors. This is the reason for focusing on the factors related to inside of the stores. As environmental psychology theory argues, the most important role of a store is its ability to facilitate the goals of its occupants (Baker et al., 2002). Studies supportingly argue that poorly designed stores have negative impact on the consumers while physical environments influence the customers (Spies et al., 1997). They state that poorly designed store environments may reduce shopping pleasure of the customers and influence customers' moods negatively. Store design will be considered differently when the customers feel different. For example, customers who are eager for shopping would be in different emotions in evaluating the store design. Store employees are also important, as they are the part of the store design. As customers' perceptions of store employees become more favorable, customers will perceive interpersonal service quality to be higher (Bajer et al., 2002; Sivadas and Baker-Prewitt, 2000)

Research Objectives and Hypotheses

Research Objectives

The behavior of purchasing licensed sports merchandise has become widespread in the recent years. However, the researches related to the reason why the consumers purchase licensed sports merchandise are very limited in Turkey. The purpose of this research is to determine the factors of

purchasing licensed team merchandise and to indicate the differences in the licensed merchandise purchase in accordance with the demographic and game following habits of the fans.

Hypotheses

The demographic features of the consumers related to purchasing licensed merchandise may show some differences. In this context:

H1. The factors related to the behavior of purchasing licensed merchandise show differences in accordance with the demographic features of the consumer.

H1a. The factors related to the behavior of purchasing licensed merchandise show differences in accordance with the gender of the consumers.

H1b. The factors related to the behavior of purchasing licensed merchandise show differences in accordance with the age group of the consumers.

H1c. The factors related to the behavior of purchasing licensed merchandise show differences in accordance with the inclination of the consumers.

H1d. The factors related to the behavior of purchasing licensed merchandise show differences in accordance with the average monthly income of the consumers.

H1e. The factors related to the behavior of purchasing licensed merchandise show differences in accordance with the amount of money the consumers spend on licensed merchandise.

The adherence level can be a significant variable in the behavior of purchasing licensed merchandise. In determining the adherence level, the manner the people follow the games can be determining. In this context, the interest of the fans in the team may influence the behavior of purchasing licensed merchandise. Therefore:

H2. The factors related to the behavior of purchasing licensed merchandise show differences in accordance with the manner the consumers follow the games.

Methodology

Research and Questionnaire Design

In accordance with the research purposes, "Descriptive" and "Correlative" research models were used. Descriptive studies are studies targeting to determine any situation in some issue. The correlative research model studies the correlations among the variables and the level of these correlations. The purpose of these research models is to define the problem in question, the conditions related to this problem, the variables, and the correlation among the variables. Since the study model is descriptive and correlative, questionnaire method is used as the most suitable data collection method, in the view of collecting data that are impartial and suitable for statistical analysis. In the developed questionnaire, the five-point Likert Scale consisting of 23 statements was used in order to determine the factors influencing the licensed merchandise purchase. In the development of the scale, the scale used by Kwon and Armstrong (2002) related to the factors influencing the licensed sports team merchandise purchase and the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC) of Trail and James (2001) were used. The questionnaire was implemented via personal interviews. In order to test the comprehensibility of the statements and the other questions used in the questionnaire, a pilot study was made on 24 consumers.

Sample

The sample in this study consisted of fans or customers of Fenerium Store. Fenerium licensed merchandising store belongs to Fenerbahçe football team, which is one of the three biggest teams in Turkish Football Industry. The study carried on 196 customers in Fenerium Store, which is in the Istanbul. In order to complete the questionnaire, trained two interviewers (students in marketing research course) were assigned to special areas in the store. Each researcher approached to the customers, introduced himself and asked to speak with the customers or fans. The researchers ex-

plained the purpose of the study and administered questionnaire to those who agreed to participate. Participation to questionnaire was voluntary. The time to explain the study and complete the questionnaire was approximately 15 minutes. A total of 250 questionnaires were distributed and 196 usable questionnaires were returned with return rate of 78.4 percent.

Analysis of the Data

Since questionnaire method was used as the data collection method, SPSS 11.0 was used in the analysis of the data. Frequency, percentage, averaging and standard deviation were used. In order to evaluate and transform the data set in terms of meaningful factors, factor analysis (Principal Component Factor) was applied. In order to state the correlations between the variables, correlation, t-test, and One-Way ANOVA were implemented.

Findings and Results

Characteristics of the Sample

146 (74.5%) of the 196 fans/consumers participating in the questionnaire were male, 50 (25.5%) were female. 64 (32.7%) of these consumers were married, 128 (65.3%) were single, and 4 (2.0%) were either divorced or widowers. The number of the student forming the majority of the participants in the questionnaire according to occupations or education status was 80 (41.2%), the number of persons of other occupations was 40 (20.6%), and 28 (14.5%) persons were self-employed. According to educational status, 114 (58.7%) persons had undergraduate education, 68 (35.1%) had high school education, and 12 (6.2%) persons had graduate (masters and PhD) education.

96 (49.0%) of the people participating in the questionnaire were in the age group of 21-30, 44 (22.4%) were in the age group of 20 and less, and 40 (20.4%) were in the 31-40 age group. According to the income status, 74 (39.8%) persons participating in the questionnaire had an income of 330 dollars and less, 34 (18.3%) had an income of 1011 dollars and more, 28 (15.0%) had an income of 331-500, and 20 (10.7%) had an income of 671- 840 dollars. When the average spending amount at the Fenerium store was considered, 50 (25.8%) persons spent 13 dollars and less, 50 (25.8%) persons spent dollars, 46 (23.7%) persons spent 28-41 dollars, 30 (15.4%) spent 56 dollars and more, and 18 (9.3%) spent 42-55 dollars.

Table 1

The Demographic Features of the Respondents

	Frequency	%		Frequency	%
Gender			Age		
Male	146	74.5	20 and less	44	22.4
Female	50	25.5	21-30	96	49.0
Civil Status			31-40	40	20.4
Married	64	32.7	41-50	14	7.2
Single	128	65.3	51 and more	2	1.0
Widow/Divorced	4	2.0			
Occupation			Income Status ($)*		
Worker	12	6.2	330 and less	74	39.8
Official	20	10.3	331-500	28	15.0
Student	80	41.2	501- 670	12	6.5
Administrator	14	7.2	671- 840	20	10.7
Self-employment	28	20.6	841-1010	18	9.7
Other	40		1011 and more	34	18.3

Table 1 (continuous)

	Frequency	%		Frequency	%
Education			Average Spending in Fenerium ($)*		
High School	68	35.1	13	50	25.8
Undergraduate	114	58.7	14-27	50	25.8
Graduate	12	6.2	28-41	46	23.7
			42-55	18	9.3
			56 and more	30	15.4

* Income and spending in the questionnaire were asked based on Turkish Currency (Turkish Lira) and converted to Dollars in the study. N= 196

When the licensed products possessed by the fans purchasing licensed merchandise from the Fenerium store are considered, the ratio of the persons having Fenerbahçe team uniform was 78.6%, the ratio of the persons possessing clothing other than team uniform was 50%, the ratio of the persons possessing accessories was 57.4%, the ratio of the persons possessing souvenirs was 37.8%, the ratio of the persons possessing all kinds of Fenerbahçe flags and banners was 73.5%, the ratio of the persons possessing household products (such as rugs, bedclothes, blankets) was 30.6%, and this ratio was 17.3% in children's products.

Table 2

Possession of Licensed Merchandise

Product Category	Yes	No
Team Uniform	154 (78.6%)	42 (21.4%)
Clothing other than uniform	98 (50.0%)	98 (50.0%)
Accessories	112 (57.1%)	84 (42.9%)
Souvenir	74 (37.8%)	122 (62.2%)
Flag/Banners	144 (73.5%)	52 (26.5%)
Household Products	60 (30.6%)	136 (69.4%)
Children's Products	34 (17.3%)	162 (82.7%)
N= 196		

When the online or virtual-medium shopping status of the fans shopping from the store is considered, the ratio of the fans shopping from the online Fenerium store was 14.3% (28 persons), while the ratio of the fans not shopping was 85.7% (168 persons). The ratio of the persons stating that the merchandise with Fenerbahçe license should be advertised in the press was 92.9% (182 persons), while ratio of the persons stating contrary views was 7.1% (14 persons).

Table 3

Online Shopping and Advertisement

Online Shopping from Fenerium	Frequency	%
Yes	28	14.3
No	168	85.7
Total	196	100
Advertisement	Frequency	%
Yes	182	92.9
No	14	7.1
Total	196	100

When the common manner of following the games of the fans shopping from the store is considered, the ratio of the fans watching the games live from the broadcasting organization (Digitürk) was 39.8% (78 persons), and this is followed by the fans watching the games in the stadium with a ratio of 34.7% (68 persons). The ratio of the fans following the games from the summaries in the television channels is 25.5% (50 persons).

Table 4

Manner of Following Games

Manner of Following Games	Frequency	%
Stadium	68	34.7
Broadcast (Live)	78	39.8
Summary in Television Channels	50	25.5
Total	196	100

Factors of Licensed Merchandise Purchase

There are 23 scale items that influence and determine the licensed merchandise purchase of the fans, and in order to group, classify, and transform these variables into the main factors, factor analysis (Principal Component Factor) was applied. The results related to the factor analysis are given in Table 5.

In order to apply factor analysis on the items of licensed merchandise purchase, it was necessary to observe the sampling sufficiency. In order to determine sufficiency, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test was used (Zhang *et al.*, 2003). In this study, KMO was 0.829, and was sufficient from the application of factor analysis. Bartlett Test for Sphericity (BTS) was 3791.643 (p = 0,000) which means, as a matrix determiner, that the variables were rejected by the variance hypothesis and that they fit to implement factor analysis. The eigen-values for all the factors were greater than 1.

Table 5

Factors Influencing Licensed Merchandise Purchase (Varimax Rotation)

Factors	Factor Weight	Eigen-value	% of Stated Variance	Cumulative %	Alpha α
Factor 1: Identification with the Team-Support		9.63	34.42	34.42	90
I am proud to say I support Fenerbahçe	.86				
Shopping in Fenerium is fun	.84				
Shopping in Fenerium is not a waste of time	.82				
It is a nice feeling to purchase a licensed merchandise of Fenerbahçe	.81				
I buy licensed merchandise to support my team	.55				
I spare money to purchase products from Fenerium	.52				
The success of the team is my success	.50				
I am proud to wear the team's uniform	.46				
Every fan should support his team buying a licensed product	.46				
Factor 2: Store Atmosphere		2.98	10.66	45.08	.89
The shelving system in the store is fit for shopping	.84				
I can find everything I want easily in the store	.79				
The store staff make shopping easier	.76				
The store atmosphere makes shopping attractive	.71				

Table 5 (continuous)

Factors	Factor Weight	Eigen-value	% of Stated Variance	Cumulative %	Alpha α
Factor 3: Friend Group		2.12	7.60	52.68	.84
I buy products to be accepted amongst friends	.91				
I buy products to look nice to my friends	.87				
The best way of showing people of my devotion to Fenerbahçe is to buy licensed merchandise	.65				
Factor 4: Devotion		1.81	6.47	59.15	.72
I support my team even if it loses	.53				
I always talk highly of my team	.49				
Factor 5: Shopping		1.68	6.00	65.15	.74
I like to shop in my spare time	.85				
Shopping is one of my favorite activities	.60				

When Table 5 is studied, five factors are observed within the framework of the variables for the fans' licensed merchandise purchase from the Fenerium store. These are "identification with the team-support", "store atmosphere", "friend group", "devotion to the team under any circumstances", and "shopping". The reliability coefficient related to each factor (Cronbach-alpha = α) varies between 0.90 and 0.72, and this situation shows that they are within the "general acceptance limits of reliability (0.70)" proposed by Nunally in 1978 (Kim 2003). It is possible to see that the factor weights related to the five factors are greater than 0.46. It is found that the five factors classified in the table explain 65.15% of the variance. This indicates that the results are reliable in a general frame.

The percentage of the variance explained by each factor indicates the relative significance of the factors (Altunışık *et al.*, 2003). According to this, the first factor, "identification with the team-support", explains a major part of the total variance with a ratio of 34.42%, and it has a greater weight than the sum of the remaining 4 factors. This means that the level of the identification of the fans/consumers with the team and their emotional and financial support are a determining factor in purchasing licensed team merchandise, and indicates that they evaluate the other supporting factors influencing the licensed merchandise purchase at a later stage. When looked at the remaining 4 factors in order, the store atmosphere explains 10.66% of the total variance, acceptance or approval in the friend group explains 7.60% of the total variance, the facts related to the devotion to the team explain 6.47% of the total variance, and, finally, shopping explains 6.00% of the total variance.

Table 6

Correlation Matrix*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Dev.
Identification-Support	1.000					4.3345	.7832
Atmosphere	.539	1.000				4.4073	.8498
Friends	.222	.325	1.000			3.0170	1.3506
Devotion	.649	.364	.034	1.000		4.3903	.9907
Shopping	.179	.183	.036	.123	1.000	3.9235	.9482

* The correlations (p= .000< .01) of all the variables are meaningful.

When the correlation matrix amongst the five factors is analyzed, it is found that there exists a meaningful correlation between the identification-support factor and the remaining four factors (p < .05); that, similarly, there exists a meaningful correlation between the atmosphere factor and the remaining three factors (p < .05); that there exists no meaningful correlation (weak correlation) between the friend factor and the remaining two factors (p > .05), and that, finally, there exists no meaningful correlation (weak correlation) between the devotion and the last factor, shopping (p > .05). The values in Table 6 show the correlation coefficients.

The factors influencing the consumers purchasing licensed merchandise from the Fenerium store are identification with the team-support, store atmosphere, friend group, devotion to the team under any circumstances, and shopping.

When identification with the team is studied as an effective factor in licensed merchandise purchase, the pride of wearing the team's uniform takes the first place with an average of 4.7143, and sparing money for merchandise purchase is in the last place with an average of 3.7245.

In relation with the store atmosphere, while the fact that the store atmosphere makes shopping attractive takes the first place with an average of 4.5102, the suitability of the shelving system is in the last place with an average of 4.4124.

In relation with the friends' influence in purchase, buying products as the best of showing others about the devotion to Fenerbahçe has the highest value with an average of 3.6224, while buying products to look nice to friends has the lowest value with an average of 2.6804.

When the factor of devotion to the team is studied, supporting the team even in times of failure takes the first place with an average of 4.4643, while the fans' speaking highly of the team under any circumstances is at the last place with an average of 4.3163.

Table 7

Variables of the Factors of Purchasing Licensed Merchandise

Identification with the Team-Support (Alpha* = .9026)	N*	Mean	Std. Dev.
I am proud to say I support Fenerbahçe	194	4.5567	1.0378
Shopping in Fenerium is fun	196	4.3265	1.0886
Shopping in Fenerium is not a waste of time	196	4.2857	1.1457
It is a nice feeling to purchase a licensed merchandise of Fenerbahçe	196	4.5102	1.0050
I buy licensed merchandise to support my team	196	4.6224	.7911
I spare money to purchase products from Fenerium	196	3.7245	1.1964
The success of the team is my success	192	3.9583	1.2855
I am proud to wear the team's uniform	196	4.7143	.7578
Every fan should support his team buying a licensed product	194	4.3093	1.0317
Store Atmosphere (Alpha* = .8908)	N*	Mean	Std. Dev
The shelving system in the store is fit for shopping	194	4.4124	.9843
I can find everything I want easily in the store	194	4.3608	1.0499
The store staff make shopping easier	196	4.3571	1.0253
The store atmosphere makes shopping attractive	196	4.5102	.8502
Friends (Alpha* = .8420)	N*	Mean	Std. Dev
I buy products to be accepted amongst friends	194	2.7010	1.5977
I buy products to look nice to my friends	194	2.6804	1.5204
The best way of showing people of my devotion to Fenerbahçe is to buy licensed merchandise	196	3.6224	1.4988
Devotion (Alpha* = .7274)	N*	Mean	Std. Dev
I support my team even if it loses	196	4.4643	1.09252
I always talk highly of my team	196	4.3163	1.14217
Delight in Shopping (Alpha* = .7491)	N*	Mean	Std. Dev
I like to shop in my spare time	196	3.9745	1.0786
Shopping is one of my favorite activities	196	3.8724	1.0422

(5) I definitely agree, ... (1) I do not agree.
* It reflects the reliability analysis of the Likert Scale used. The Alpha value being .70 and more indicates the reliability of the scale used.

When delight of shopping is considered, liking to shop in spare times takes the lead with an average of 3.9745, while shopping's being a favorite activity is in the last place with an average of 3.8724.

The Differentiated Conditions for Factors of Licensed Merchandise Purchase

When the demographic features and the factors that might influence the licensed merchandise purchase (One-Way ANOVA) are correlated, it is seen that the devotion and shopping factors differ depending on the gender (p = .000 < .01). While devotion to the team is higher amond men (4.5377) compared to women (3.9600), delight in shopping is higher amond women (4.3700) compared to men (3.7705). There exist no meaningful correlations between the five factors determining the licensed merchandise preference with age (p > .05).

When income status is considered, the existence of a meaningful correlation among identification with the team-support, atmosphere (p < .01), and devotion to the team (p < .05). In order to find in which income groups the factors having correlations differ, Tukey and Scheffe tests from Post Hoc Tests were implemented. According to Tukey, when identification-support is taken into account, there exists a difference between the consumers having incomes of 330 dollars and less and consumers having incomes between 671-840 dollars (average difference -.6002), and consumers having incomes of 1011 dollars and more (average difference -.4512) (p < .05). According to Tukey and Scheffe, there exists a difference between the consumers having incomes of 331-500 dollars and less (average difference -.7319), consumers having incomes between 671- 840 dollars and consumers having incomes of 1011 dollars and more (average difference -.5829) (p < .05).

When atmosphere is taken as basis, according to Tukey, there exists a difference between the consumers having incomes of 501-670 dollars (average difference -1.0583), consumers having incomes between 671-840 dollars and consumers having incomes of 1011 dollars and more (average difference -.8701) (p < .05). Although the devotion to the team generally differs depending on the income group, according to Tukey and Scheffe Post Hoc test, no meaningful differences amongst the groups were found (p > .05).

Table 8

Factors Influencing the Licensed Merchandise Purchase According to the Demographic Variables

Factors	Gender		Age		Income		Education	
	F	p	F	p	F	p	F	p
Identification-Support	3.024	.084	2.282	.062	4.451	.001**	14.998	.000**
Atmosphere	.015	.903	1.358	.250	3.811	.003**	2.938	.055*
Friends	1.335	.249	.266	.900	.274	.927	.517	.597
Devotion	13.473	.000**	1.720	.147	2.283	.048*	3.441	.034*
Shopping	16.031	.000**	.685	.603	1.094	.365	.438	.646

*p ≤ .05 ; ** < .01

Finally, there exists a meaningful difference between the education status and identification-support (p < .01), atmosphere (p ≤ .05), and devotion to the team (p < .05). When it is considered in which education groups the identification-support factor differ, according to Tukey and Scheffe, there exists a difference between the persons having had high school education (p <. 01), graduate education (average difference -.5654), and graduate education (average difference -.8315) (p<. 05). There exist no meaningful differences between undergraduate educated people and graduate educated persons (p > .05). Although there is a general difference in the evaluation of the store atmosphere depending on the education status, there exist no meaning differences amongst the education groups (p > .01). Finally, according to the Post Hoc (Tukey and Scheffe) tests implemented to determine in which education groups the devotion to the team differs, although there exists a general difference, there is no difference between the groups at the .05 meaningfulness level.

Table 9

Factors Influencing the Licensed Merchandise Purchase According to the Variables of Spending Amount and Following Games

Factors	Watching Style		Spending Amount	
	F	p	F	p
Identification-Support	7.247	001**	6.732	.000**
Atmosphere	1.298	.275	.938	.443
Friends	1.588	.207	4.070	.003**
Devotion	7.616	001**	2.864	.025*
Shopping	1.701	.185	3.272	.013*

*$p \leq .05$; ** $< .01$

Conclusion

In recent years, some studies appeared in the sports marketing literature about licensed sports team merchandise. However there is still lack of studies about licensed sports merchandises. This study focused on the factors influencing licensed sports merchandise purchasing decisions of the fans. Factors analyzed in this research were identification, store atmosphere, friends, devotion and shopping. The results show that these factors have impact on the decisions of fans as the consumers of sports and sports merchandises.

Sportive success is of course important for the teams. Financial success and sportive success are related to each other and while the company has financial success, it is easier to reach the supportive goals of the team. Sustainability of financial success forces teams to operate as professionals. They can only support the continuity of the sportive success with professional approaches. Because of this, sports clubs should give great importance to marketing activities and licensed products are one of the ways that teams can pay necessary attention as a strategy.

When fans and sports teams are considered, identification with the team has the greatest importance compared to other factors in purchasing licensed merchandise. However, fans purchase licensed merchandise not only because they feel like they are part of the team or group, they also feel that it is fun to buy their team's merchandise. This is different than shopping behavior in general. Even though some of the consumers feel enjoyment, enjoyment of shopping is higher when they buy for their team. It is related to team identification.

The increasing of the devotion to the team can be achieved through sportive success and creating or transferring star players. Besides all these, a good design of the store atmosphere where the licensed merchandise sales are implemented may create an effect increasing the purchase rate. It seems an inevitable necessity today that all the sports clubs considering survival should aim at virtual licensed merchandise stores.

Purchasing licensed merchandise has combination effect of all factors. That simply means that they purchase licensed merchandise for supporting their team and at the same time they pay attention to other determinants of purchasing. In other words, it is difficult to distinguish why fans purchase merchandise related to the team they support. It can also be explained by synergy that desire for shopping is higher for licensed merchandises while consumers feel themselves as part of the team or the group.

Teams should work on understanding of how to manage and satisfy spectators' expectations. It is important to determine the values combined by both functional and symbolic benefits that are determining factors for spectators in team identification. Brand loyalty can be achieved by focusing on team identification. However, loyalty and brand equity are still complex issues as the brand name and the name of the team are the same. Thus, the teams should give more efforts to make

consumers buy licensed products from the team stores instead of buying from somewhere else where they cannot have officially licensed merchandises.

Even though the sampling group in the study is limited, it illustrates frames that may be used in deducting results. In the future studies related to the behavior of purchasing licensed merchandise, it should be meaningful to have a larger sampling group. In addition, even though some differences can be explained according to demographic and behavioral variables in this study, it will be useful to conduct studies related to the purchasing licensed merchandise behavior of the fans of the three major sports clubs.

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