

**Effect of Quality Perception for Psychological Commitment, Identification Levels
Licensed Products on Purchase Intention of the Supporter[®]**

Ömer Kürşad Tüfekci¹, Yunus Emre Bağış²

1. Süleyman Demirel University, Tourism and Hospitality Faculty
2. Süleyman Demirel University, Sport Sciences Faculty

Correspondence with:

Ömer Kürşad Tüfekci

omertufekci@sdu.edu.tr

oktufekci@gmail.com

Suleyman Demirel University

Egirdir Turizm ve Otelcilik Yüksekokulu

Eğirdir, Isparta, Turkey

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Abstract

Expectations of consumers are increasing with each passing day with the development and the change of market dynamics. In return, businesses / organizations are trying to perceive the expectations by constantly staying up to date. This development can be seen very clearly in the field of sports marketing. Because it can be said that the expectations of the sports consumers have not been met over time, they have changed the consumption direction. Therefore, this research was structured by approaching the factors in the integrated structuring and management of sports consumption, including all dimensions of sports management and sports marketing. Within this scope, quality perception for psychological commitment, identification levels and licensed products playing an effective role in the consumptions of sports consumers was evaluated in this study. Research data were collected from the audiences of an international tennis tournament which was held in Singapore and has international prestige and value. In the research, it was aimed to investigate the effects of supporters' psychological commitment, identification levels and quality perception on purchase intention. The obtained data set was analyzed with statistical methods. Reliability and validity analyzes were carried out according to the envisaged models and hypotheses. In this context, regression analysis was used to test the effect of psychological commitment, identification and quality perception on purchase intention. Significant results have been achieved by evaluating the effect of psychological commitment, identification levels and quality perception on purchase intention forming the theoretical structure of the research. According to the findings obtained in the study, it was concluded that beliefs factor from psychological commitment dimensions, partizanship from identification dimensions, and quality perception that gathered in one dimension affected the purchase intention.

Keywords: psychological commitment, identification, quality perception, purchase intention, tennis

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Introduction

Sports' marketing is addressed as a rapidly developing discipline with its interdisciplinary structure. Also, sports marketing contains many sub-disciplines in itself. Adapted from the general marketing definitions, today, sports marketing is defined as "the regulation of all activities in the process of exchange of goods and services in order to meet the needs and demands of sports consumers" (Ekmekçi and Ekmekçi, 2010: 25). Sports marketing should be considered as a concept that covers sales, advertising, public relations and so on. activities by its scope (Argan and Katırcı, 2002: 20-26). According to another definition, sports marketing is a process that involves the organization and implementation of activities required for the production, pricing, distribution and the promotion of a sports good in order to achieve the objectives of the business and to satisfy the demands and needs of the consumers (Pitts and Stotlar, 1996: 74-80).

Sports marketing draws attention by its interdisciplinary structure. Therefore, topics forming the subject of this research which are examined by different disciplines are discussed in this research. In this context, at first, emphasis was put on literature review with regard to topics discussed. Afterwards, sections containing the purpose, method, results and discussions of the research were included.

Literature review

Literature review was grouped under three headings. Firstly, psychological commitment constituting one aspect of the research was described within the context of the relevant literature. Then, identification constituting another aspect of the research was described within the context of the relevant literature. Finally, quality perception was discussed.

Psychological Commitment

Psychological commitment is an attitude that reveals many useful behaviors including loyalty behaviors. In other words, while commitment leads to loyalty, loyalty emerges as a result of the commitment (Beatty et al, 1988: 149-167; Tüfekci and Tüfekci, 2006: 171-175). Consumer commitment has an important role in being able to

develop long-term relationships between the service provider and the customer (Morgan and Hunt, 1994: 20-38; Bowen and Shoemaker, 1998: 12-14). One of the most researched topics in sports marketing literature is the inseparable relationship between commitment and loyalty. The close relationship between loyalty and commitment caused some problems in the definition of these concepts. Lack of a common understanding attracts the attention in clear definition and evaluation of two concepts in question (Pritchard et al, 1992:155-164).

Some researchers assumed that loyalty and commitment had the same meaning and used these concepts interchangeably (Warnick, 1983). Other researchers regarded commitment as part of loyalty. Selin et al (1988) stated that commitment formed the attitudinal component of loyalty. However, some researchers stated that commitment is a variable which is the premise of loyalty and which serves as the messenger of loyalty attitude (Dick and Basu, 1994: 99-113). According to another opinion, commitment is an attitude that reveals many useful behaviors including loyalty behaviors. In other words, while commitment leads to loyalty, loyalty emerges as a result of the commitment (Beatty, Kahle, Homer, 1988:149-167).

It is also possible to understand the logic that makes us to think that commitment occurs before the behaviors expressing loyalty from the behavior patterns of cognition – affect by Fishbein and Ajzen (1973: 59-74) and Ajzen and Fishbein (1977). According to Fishbein and Ajzen, attitudes are the determinants of behaviors. In this process, after consumers structure their beliefs in the properties of the products through cognitive learning, they form their emotional reactions and likes or complaints regarding the product. Finally, previous attitudes lead the purchase behavior intention and the purchase behavior (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1973: 59-74). Many researches assumed commitment as an emotional or psychological attachment. Also, it was revealed that this attachment unveiled an ongoing desire to keep a long term relationship (Jacoby and Kyner, 1973:1-9). Then, many researchers indicated that commitment is an attitude that expresses the desire required to be able to create and to be able to maintain a long-term relationship. Morgan and Hunt (1994: 20-34) believe that loyalty is a consistent re-purchase behavior driven by a deep commitment and is the resistance to behavior modification action formed by reasons such as the situational factors and the marketing efforts of the competitors.

Identification

The first detailed model proposal regarding identification was made by March and Simon in 1958 (Lee, 1971: 218). In 1970s, Porter et al regarded identification as a component of organizational commitment (Riketta, 2005: 359). Brown (1969) stated that identification includes the relationship form between the employee and organization, and that this relationship was the determination and description of an individual's personality.

In addition, Brown (1969) drew attention to the existence of the organization's ability to influence the beliefs of the individual (Edwards, 2005: 209). Patchen (1970) developed a theory of identification that he divided into phases as "similarity", "membership" and "loyalty". These stages ensured Cheney formed the "Organizational Identification Scale" (Gautam et al, 2004: 302). In the 1970s, Hall and Schneider addressed organizational identification as close to each other and pointed out that the individuals achieve their goals and values with the acceptance of the values and goals of the organization (Edwards, 2005: 210).

Ashfort and Mael (1989) suggested that individuals who are identified with their organization categorize themselves effectively with the organization. Thus, they regarded organizational identification as a specific form of social identification (Van Knippenberg and Van Schie, 2000: 138). According to Dutton et al (1994), organizational identification is the congruence of an individual's originality, centralization and continuity beliefs towards the organization presenting in the self of the individual with the individual's originality, centralization and continuity beliefs towards himself.

In brief, organizational identification the organization member's combining and integrating degree of organizational identity of the organization with his/her own identity (Dutton et al, 1994: 242). In this context, Fiol (1991) stated that organizational identity is a basic capability providing a competitive advantage and that identification affects the spread degree of organizational identity.

According to Tajfel (1978) (cited by Boroş, 2008: 9), social identity has three components as cognitive, affective and evaluative. Van Dick et al. (2004) added the behavioral component to the components revealed by Tajfel. In this context, it was suggested that identification relation is established in terms of the self of individual identified in an identification of an individual with a group, that the individual has various emotions for the group and that all components are in a mutual relationship. Finally, it was thought that when the individual has stronger relations towards the group, he/she will evaluate the group in a more positive way and will engage in more activities on

behalf of the group. Kreiner and Ashfort (2004) suggested that organizational identification is only one way of individual's gaining a sense of self according to the organization, however, in fact, individuals can define themselves through organizational relations.

Quality Perception

Quality perception is a factor affecting the consumer satisfaction, purchasing behavior, and the value perceptions. As the perceived quality and purchase decision of consumers are associated with each other, the perceived quality ensures that all marketing programs are more effective and efficient (Bhuiyan, 1997: 217-234). Quality perception is evaluated differently from customer to customer. While some customers regard quality as the physical properties of the product in question, robustness and expediency, some of them regard it as high price (Başanbaş, 2013: 3). Perceived quality is a factor affecting the consumer satisfaction, purchase behavior and perceptions of value (Bhuiyan, 1997: 217-234).

Perceived quality is the total quality perceptions that the consumer achieves in relation to the purpose of the product in comparison with its alternatives. Perceived quality is different from the objective or real quality, product-based quality and the production quality (Aaker, 1991). Objective (actual) quality has been defined as the product's current technical excellence or superiority. Objective quality can be measured according to predetermined standards (Zeithaml, 1998: 2-22). However, the fact that the product produced is of high quality should be perceived by the consumer in order for the product quality provides benefit for the firm. In fact, perceived quality can be defined as the difference between total quality with quality undiscovered.

Methodology

Research was shaped by the emergence of three main questions. These questions;

- 1) Is the psychological commitment of the supporter effective on the purchase intention?
- 2) Is the quality perception of the supporter effective on the purchase intention?
- 3) Is the identification of the supporter effective on the purchase intention?

Hypotheses and research model were developed in order to find the answers of these questions. In this context, tennis supporters were selected as the target group for the testing of research hypotheses and model. However, a tournament which is known and prestigious across the world was selected due to the fact that it was not possible to

reach all tennis supporters. Accordingly, the research was carried out with the supporters in the Women Tennis Association (WTA) held in Singapore. The random sampling method was used in the study.

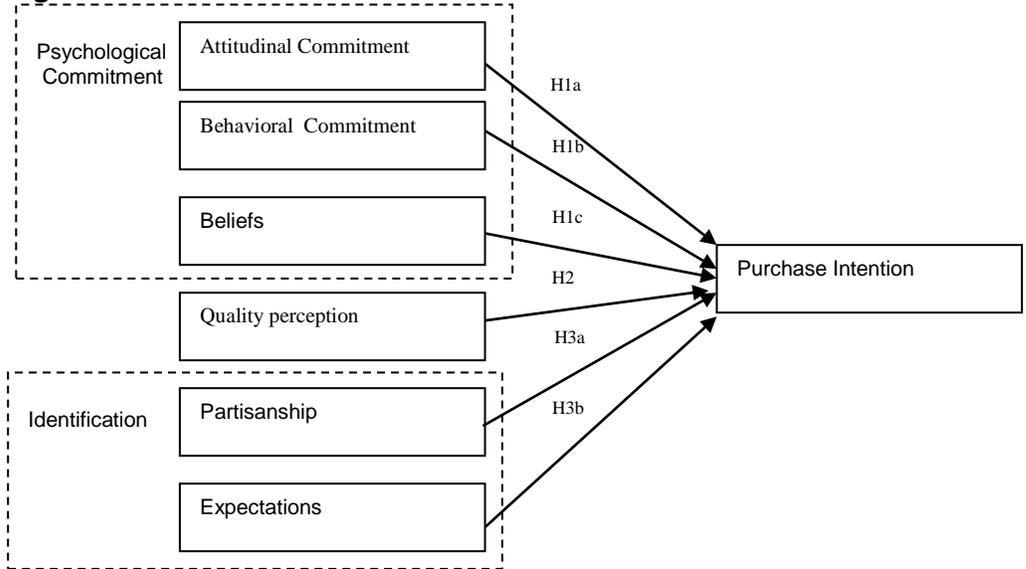
Purpose of the Research

It was aimed to analyze the effect of psychological commitment, identification and quality perception on purchase intention within the research about the effect of quality perception for psychological commitment, identification levels and licensed products on the purchase intention of the supporters.

Research Model and Hypotheses

Research model generated depending on the research purposes is as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Research Model.



According to the proposed model in the research, the resulting hypotheses are formed as follows:

- H1 a: Attitudinal commitment affects the purchase intention.
- H1 b: Behavioral commitment affects the purchase intention.
- H1 c: Beliefs affect the purchase intention.
- H2: Quality perception affects the purchase intention.
- H3 a: Partisanship affects the purchase intention.
- H3 b: Expectations affect the purchase intention.

Questionnaire

Research was carried out with the spectators who participated in the Women Tennis Association (WTA) women's tournament held in Singapore. Before applying the questionnaire forms, supporters were informed about the topic with a brief description.

Research was designed to evaluate the psychological commitment, quality perception, identification and purchase intention. There are many different scales in the literature on these topics. The questionnaire form was formed by combining the scales commonly used in the literature. In this study, Turkish form of 'psychological commitment to the team' scale carried out by Eskiler et al (2001) was used as the psychological commitment scale. In addition to this, 'the effect of the supporter's levels of identification with the team on the quality perception and purchase intention of teams towards licensed products' scales were used, the validity and reliability of which were tested by Torlak et al (2014). Scales were applied to tennis supporters constituting the sample group defined previously for the collection of the data.

In the research, it was found that data were above $p > 0,05$ and showed normal distribution as a result of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test carried out to test the normality.

Findings

In the research, to determine the demographic structure of the scale of the effect of quality perception for psychological commitment, identification levels, licensed products on the purchase intention of the supporters, 'Demographic Assessment' section was created at the end of the questionnaire form. In this section, respondents were asked questions to determine their age, gender, income, education, marital status. As the questionnaire was limited in an international tournament held in Singapore, supporters watching the tournament in Singapore constituted the main mass. Demographic findings obtained in the research are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Information of the participants.

Age	f	%	Educational Status	f	%
between 18-25	117	44,3	Primary education	5	1,3
between 26-35	145	36,3	High school	44	11,0
between 36-45	55	13,8	Graduate School	15	3,8

between 46-55	18	4,5	University	187	46,8
56 and above	5	1,3	Postgraduate	130	32,5
Total	400	100,0	Other	19	4,8
Gender	f	%	Total	400	100,0
Female	186	46,5	Income distribution	f	%
Male	212	53,0	Less than 1500 \$	148	37,0
Not responding	2	0,5	between 1501-2500 \$	50	12,5
Total	400	100,0	between 2501-3500 \$	40	10,0
Marital status	f	%	between 3501-4500 \$	48	12,0
Married	93	23,3	more than 4501 \$	114	28,5
Single	300	75,0	Total	400	100,0
Other	7	1,7			
Total	400	100			

According to the result of the exploratory factor analysis conducted to ensure the validity of the scale, KMO sampling adequacy test and Bartlett's test results are shown in the following table. According to Table 2, for the factor analysis of twenty seven statements, KMO value was calculated as 0,846 and Bartlett test result was calculated as $\chi^2 = 4202,441$ (Psign= 0.000). KMO value is seen to be above 0.80. The fact that the result is above 0,80 is an indicative of a good result for KMO value.

In order to test the suitability of the factors determined by the Explicit Factor Analysis to the factor structures determined by the hypothesis was used to Confirmatory Factor Analysis. Confirmatory Factor Analysis was tested with the AMOS 16 program. When the fit index of the model drawn for the total sample is examined, the results show that; χ^2/df value is acceptable for the fit is less than 3, GFI value of 0.94 is still an acceptable fit, CFI value of 0.93 is a good fit, RMSEA value of 0.04 is a good fit. The

resultant compliance indices show that the model has a good fit. The results of compliance indices for confirmatory factor analysis are shown in Table 3.

Table 2. Factor Analysis Results.

Questionnaire	Attitudinal commitment	Belief	Purchasing intentions	Quality Perception	Supporter	Expectation	Behavioral commitment
It is very important for me to be a fan of my favorite athlete	,747						
I'm a dedicated follower of my favorite athlete	,743						
Nothing can change my loyalty to my favorite athlete	,731						
I have been a fan of my current favorite athlete since I started watching professional tennis.	,523						
My loyalty to my favorite athlete would not change if his trainer was changed	,505						
My favorite athlete remains the same even if my close friends support another athlete	,368						
It is very unlikely of me to be a fan of an athlete other than my favorite one.		,745					
It is very difficult to change my beliefs about my favorite athlete		,769					
It tells a lot about a person if he continues to support an athlete that fails to hit a good performance		,616					
I pay attention to the store where I purchase the products of my favorite athlete			,732				
I would still buy the licensed product used by my favorite athlete even if it was manufactured by another company			,692				
I pay attention to the price while I purchase the licensed products of my favorite athlete			,653				
I would like to purchase the licensed product of my favorite athlete			,638				
Licensed products of my favorite athlete are reliable.				,850			
Licensed products of my favorite athlete are of good quality				,828			
I like the craftsmanship of the licensed products of my favorite athlete				,741			
I pay attention to quality while I purchase the licensed products of my favorite athlete				,391			
It is important for me to be a follower of my favorite athlete					,760		
I attend the competition of my favorite athlete or follow the event via TV, radio, TV news or news throughout the tournament					,693		

I consider myself as a die-hard fan of my favorite athlete						,678	
It is important for me that my favorite athlete wins						,580	
I believe my favorite athlete will be more successful in future tournaments						,695	
I believe my favorite athlete will increase his performance in future tournaments						,683	
If my favorite athlete constantly records bad performance, I would reconsider my loyalty to him							,738
I would reconsider my loyalty if my favorite athlete competes on behalf of other countries							,699
I can be easily persuaded not to be a fan of my favorite athlete							,630
If my favorite athlete is displaying poor performance and if it is not likely that this negative course will change, my attachment to him declines							,438
The total variance explanation rate (%): 65,396 Bartlett's test: 4202,441				KMO: ,846 p: ,000			

Table 3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results.

χ^2	Df	p	χ^2/df	GFI	CFI	RMSEA
110,1	76	0,006	1,449	0,94	0,93	0,04

It was observed that the communality values of scale items used in the research varied between 0,368 and 0,828. Accordingly, it was observed that the eigenvalues of the scale were collected in the seven factors. It was observed that the obtained seven factors explained 65,396% of the total variance. Considering that it is over 60% which is the acceptable amount, it is seen that the seven factors emerged as an important factor in the analysis constituted the majority of the total variance in the items and the variance for the scale.

Regression analysis results according to the purpose of the study and the proposed hypotheses are summarized in Table 4. With H1a hypothesis, it was suggested that the attitudinal commitment affected the purchase intention. H1a hypothesis was not supported according to the data obtained ($\beta=,021$; $p=,704$). With H1b hypothesis, it was suggested that the behavioral commitment affected the purchase intention. According to this result, H1b hypothesis was not supported ($\beta=-,016$; $p=,709$). With H1c hypothesis, it was suggested that the beliefs affected the purchase intention.

According to the regression analysis results, H1c hypothesis was supported ($\beta=,160$; $p=,003$). With H2 hypothesis, it was suggested that the quality perception affected the purchase intention. According to the regression analysis results, H2 hypothesis was supported ($\beta=,319$; $p=,000$). With H3a hypothesis, it was suggested that the partisanship affected the purchase intention. According to the regression analysis results, H3a hypothesis was supported ($\beta=,124$; $p=,023$). With H3b hypothesis, it was suggested that the expectations affected the purchase intention. According to the regression analysis results, H3b hypothesis was not supported ($\beta=,038$; $p=,478$).

Table 4. Regression Analysis Results.

Model	Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig.
(Constant)		5,003	,000
Attitudinal Commitment	,021	,380	,704
Behavioral Commitment	-,016	-,373	,709
Beliefs	,160	3,038	,003
Quality	,319	6,079	,000
Supporter	,124	2,279	,023
Expectations	,038	,711	,478
	Standard Beta	T-value	Significance
Scale		5,003	,000
F value	23,844		
R	,517		
R ²	,267		
corrected R ²	,256		
Significance	,000		

Conclusion and Discussion

Consumer commitment has an important role in developing long-term relationships between the service provider and the customer (Morgan and Hunt, 1994: 20-38). Therefore, commitment has vital importance in terms of both businesses and sports organizations.

Identification is the feeling that the individual perceives himself/herself identified with the organization and feels that the success or failure of the organization as is his own. It is a result of organizational identity as part of an individual's social identity. Organizational identification will take place when employees perceive organizational identity as if their own identity, and identification will not take place when they do not perceive organizational identity as if their own identity (Ravishankar, Shan, 2008: 223).

Identification can be seen as a fundamental prerequisite for sustainability, especially in the sports sector.

Today, the concept of quality concerns all modern businesses as a topic with intense interest. However, the fact that quality is a relative concept, changes according to perceptions, and that its determination and description are difficult indicate that it is also a challenging process. The importance of quality is approached as a field on which all sectors should concentrate in particular due to the fact that it is approached as a complex and complicated problem (Koukhar, 1976: 17-18).

It was stated that purchase behavior is largely induced by emotional motivates, however, beside this, rational motivates are effective in experience phases emerged after the use of the goods and especially the comparison of the goods (Çubukçu, 1999: 81). Purchase behavior can be connected to many different reasons in the sports industry. In this study, purchase behavior has been associated with the above-mentioned commitment, identification and quality perception.

In this context, it was aimed to investigate the effects of quality perception for psychological commitment, identification levels and licensed products on supporter's purchase intention in this research.

In the research, firstly, the effect of attitudinal commitment on purchase intention was tested, and its results were not supported. This result can indicate that the fact that the tennis supporter is fan of the athlete is not an aspect affecting the purchase behavior. Besides, it was stated that tennis supporter's loyalty to the athlete does not have any significance in terms of purchase behavior. This result could be an evidence that tennis supporter was there just to watch that match. Also, it can be shown that the fact that tennis supporter dedicated himself to the athlete is not a factor directing the purchase behavior. Similarly, it could also be an evidence that tennis supporter will not show any change in purchase behavior in the event that the athlete's coach changes. Also, when considered in terms of attitudinal commitment, tennis supporter's loyalty could be evidence that it cannot be associated with the purchase intention.

In the research, secondly, the effect of behavioral commitment on purchase intention was tested, and the test result was not supported. According to this result, it can be said that continuous poor performance of the athlete does not decrease the tennis supporter's loyalty to the athlete and does not affect the purchase intention. However, it can be concluded that the fact that the tennis supporter participate in events on behalf of other countries is not effective on his/her loyalty to the athlete and on

the purchase intention. This result supports that the tennis supporter usually shows competition-oriented purchase intention. Also, it can be mentioned that the tennis supporter does not change purchase intention in the event of poor performance of the athlete.

Thirdly, in the research, the effect of beliefs on purchase intention was tested, and the test result was supported. This result indicates that the possibility that the tennis supporter would support any other athlete apart from the athlete he/she is supporting is very low, and therefore, indicates that belief in the athlete is effective on purchase behavior. Besides, it can be said that tennis supporter's belief about the athlete is associated with the purchase intention. Also, it can be said that the tennis supporter revealed his purchase intention due to his belief in the athlete even if the athlete did not show good performance.

Fourthly, in the research, the effect of quality perception on purchase intention was tested, and the proposed opinion was supported. The effect of quality perception on purchase intention has been proven in almost all sectors. This view is also supported in this research.

It can be said that the fact that the licensed products of the athlete are of high quality, that products are reliable, that the tennis supporter like the craftsmanship of the products, that the tennis supporter pay attention to quality while buying directly affect the purchase intention.

Finally, the effect of the expectations on purchase intention was tested, and the proposed opinion was not supported. This result may lead to the conclusion that tennis supporter's expectation that the athlete will be successful in the next matches does not affect the purchase intention. Moreover, it can be said that the increase in athlete's performance in future tournaments is not a situation affecting the purchase intention of the tennis supporter.

These research results evaluating the effect of quality perception for psychological commitment, identification levels and licensed products on the purchase intention of the supporter show similarity with the validity and reliability study of Turkish version of the psychological commitment to the team scale by Eskiler et al (2011), and with the study on the effect of supporters' the level of identification with their team on the quality perception for the licensed products of the teams and the purchase intention carried out by Torlak et al (2014).

As a result of the study, results indicating that the supporter's quality perception for psychological commitment, identification levels and licensed products had significant effects on the purchase intention of the supporter were obtained.

Regarding the results obtained, findings indicating that the identity levels of supporters with their favorite teams have significant effects on the purchase intention of supporters for the licensed products of their team (athlete) show similarity with the results of study carried out by Harolle et al (2010).

On the other hand, findings about the fact that the quality perception for the licensed products of the favorite team (athlete) has a significant effect on the intention to purchase licensed products of that team support the results of studies in the literature (Boulding et al, 1993; Parasuraman et al, 1998; Tsiotsou, 2006). Also, the research shows similarities with the studies carried out by Demirel et al (2007), Baş (2008), Aycan et al (2009), Dilbaz and Karagün (2014).

Research has some limitations. Generalization cannot be made because the research was carried out with the spectators just in one tournament. Moreover, we cannot give an opinion about the audiences of other branches of sports due to the fact that data were collected just from the tennis spectators. These limitations of the research are the suggestions for possible future studies to be done in this field. Collecting data to cover the audiences of different branches and to include many different tournaments may produce generalizable results especially for researchers to perform in this field. Moreover, opportunity to hold matches between branches and / or among tournaments may also occur.

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