

Image-Analysis and Sponsoring-Fit on Woman Soccer in Germany – Empirical Findings of a Representative Survey among Six German World Cup Cities in 2011

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Keywords: Women Soccer, Image analysis, Sponsoring-Fit, Fifa World Cup 2011

Abstract

Women's soccer in Germany has been developed impressively in the last few years. Since the 1970's women's soccer has become an important part of all activities of the German Football Association ("DFB"). The great success of the women's national team has pushed the demand for women's soccer. As a consequence the official number of female members of the DFB in Germany exceeded the 1 Million mark in 2008 whereof 700,000 girls and women are playing soccer actively (DFB, 2008).

Therefore in regard to the upcoming FIFA Women's World Cup 2011 in Germany a great interest exists in acquiring more knowledge about the market of women's soccer from both a scientific and a practical point of view.

Hence the University of Mainz and the University of Bayreuth have done a representative survey in cooperation with a communication agency in six selected German cities which will be official world cup locations in 2011. The aim of the study was to detect a wide spectrum of opinions about the current standing of women's soccer in Germany including media coverage, general demand for women's soccer, attributes of women's soccer and aided/unaided sponsoring recognition.

Based on a literature review, mainly focused on sport management related journals, studies were collected to find current results about women's soccer in general. Unfortunately only a very limited number of articles had focused marketing contents about women's soccer. Only two studies have published their findings about women's soccer in Germany (Sport & Markt 2007, p. 1-14, Klein & Minter 2007, p. 1-33).

Due to these results we have expanded our research to specific online platforms and online communities concerning women's soccer. In particular we focused on discussions about prejudices in women's soccer.

These findings have been complemented by group discussions of sport management students from the University of Mainz.

Finally we could fall back on an existing survey which was accomplished by the University of Mainz and the "DFB" during the Confederations-Cup 2005 in Germany. Next to general items regarding the confederations cup, the questionnaire included two questions about women's soccer. On the one hand Data was evaluated about the demand for women's soccer and on the other hand the attributes regarding soccer itself were collected taking men's and women's soccer into consideration independently.

The questionnaire was complemented by sponsoring related questions which were submitted by the cooperating consulting agency.

All in all 70 students accompanied the data collection which took place from May 15th to 25th 2008. 40 students from Mainz and 30 students from Bayreuth were sent to Augsburg, Dresden, Essen, Frankfurt, Sinsheim and Wolfsburg. Every student was advised to reach 50 respondents in public places. Finally 3082 questionnaires had been collected and every city was well covered.

Data was initially analysed in a descriptive way followed by an inference analysis.

The most apparent result is that the demand for the women's national team is significantly higher than for the women's Bundesliga or the women's national Cup. About 25% are interested in the women's national team and only 12% are interested in the Bundesliga or in the cup.

In particular the respondents who actively play or used to play soccer valued women's soccer significantly higher than inactive respondents. Additionally clear differences could be found in between the categorical age groups. The older the respondents were the more positive the valuation of women's soccer was.

The most recognized Brands included Rexona and H&M and the most preferred branches were Apparel and Non-Alcoholic Drinks.

The media coverage clearly lacked a huge amount of quality. Only 4.8% of all respondents are satisfied with the media coverage in Germany!

Finally the analyzed prejudices resulted in some very interesting facts. Only 12% of all respondents think that the women's national team is accepted by men, although 50% confirm that the women's national team is professional. Moreover one third confirmed the statement that "the women's Bundesliga is sneered at by men".

Due to the amount and quality of data material assembled a lot of significant differences could be found. These need to be taken into account for future research. The results of our research combined with other very important influences need to be considered when applying the traditional marketing tools to women's soccer in Germany. For example: Why do people not want to attend a sport which is more likeable, fairer and more honest than men's soccer? So, new aspects have to be considered when managing women's soccer to achieve a sustainable market success.

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