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## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

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Synopsis:

The aim of this paper is to cover an overlooked area of corporate sponsorship of sports; its impact on organizational commitment of the employees. The results will bring about fruitful insight to both theory and practice.

Abstract:

AIM OF THE PAPER

Drawing from both theory of reasoned action (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) and, signaling theory (Spence, 1973), the aim of this study is to build and test a model for understanding how corporate sponsorship of sports activities leads to positive employee commitment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employees are important stakeholders within the organization service- profit chain model (Heskett et al., 1994), which suggests that there are critical linkages between employee commitment; external service value provided to the customers; and finally customer satisfaction, loyalty, revenue growth, and profit flow. It is important to create employee commitment and loyalty to the organization to ensure their productivity, which would lead to customer satisfaction, retention, sales, and profits in return according to the model. In recent years, corporate sponsorship is viewed by organizations as a marketing tool and means for creating positive attitude towards the organization and maintaining commitment not only for final consumers, but also for the employees (Cornwell et al., 2005).

Based on the attitude-intention-behavior link of the theory of reasoned action, the model proposes that employees' favorable attitude towards the corporate sponsorship of sports (attitude) leads to positive employee commitment

(behavioral intention). The model also posits that corporate sponsorship of sports acts as a signal of external prestige of the organization to its employees, which then leads to their commitment. The drivers of favorable attitude towards the sponsorship are identified as personal liking of the sports event, perceived status of the event, and perceived fit between the sponsor and the sports event, and are driven from Speed and Thompson's (2000) study. It is believed that if employees find the event as attractive and interesting, then their attitudes are favorable towards the sponsorship. Perceived status of the event as of high regards and special also adds to the employee perception of the sponsorship as favorable. Finally, the perceived congruence between the sponsor and the sports event creates a meaning transfer, leading to favorable attitude towards the sponsorship.

## METHODOLOGY

This study applied a descriptive, cross sectional design. It considered a single case, one of the leading airline companies of Turkey and its sponsorship to a global basketball organization. Surveys were completed by 286 employees of the sponsor organization. A CFA will be utilized to assess the psychometric properties of scale items and the proposed model will be tested with SEM. We guarantee that the analysis of the data will be completed and all findings will be presented at the conference.

## DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Findings from this study will shed light on an overlooked aspect of sponsorship. Evaluation of corporate sponsorship from the perspective of employees has both theoretical and practical implications. Since it is an understudied subject, the results of the study is believed to be adding knowledge to the extant literature on the effect of corporate sponsorship from stakeholder relationship management and internal marketing perspectives. The results are also believed to guide the organization's in their choice of sponsorship if they were to think about their employees' commitment as well as their customers'.

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