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## **PALMEIRAS' ECOSYSTEM: THE KEY-ATTRIBUTES WHICH INTERFERE IN THE FANS' JUDGMENTS**

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**ABSTRACT:** *Objective: This article aims to understand and analyse which fans' attributes most interferes with their view concerning the sports ecosystem of the Palmeiras Sports Society for sporting events. Methodology: an exploratory research was carried out comprising 84 topics using the Likert scale to be administered to 309 sports fans in 3 matches between February and March 2017. The analysis procedure followed three steps: (i) calculating the chi-square testes cross tables; (ii) selecting the topics which achieved less than 5% significance; (iii) and identifying that group of fans' attributes that are most similar and most divergent. Findings: monthly salary is the most critical fan attribute. Palmeiras' fans believe that leagues are the critical dimension; club management is the second dimension most divergent. Conclusion: Therefore, all of the 3 hypotheses were confirmed. Palmeiras' managers have invested money and energy to implement the business and marketing principles.*

**KEYWORDS:** Sports Ecosystem; Sports Marketing; Sports Club; Palmeiras Sports Society; Sports Fans.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Since 2000 the marketing concepts have progressed and evolved. Hence, sports marketing is also undergoing profound changes which require new expertise to respond to competitive challenges as well as followers demanding. Two issues need attention: (i) understanding the sport as an entertainment good and its business structure to better approach the marketing potential associated to stakeholders, as events, clubs, partners, media, players, supporters, sports and non-sports organisations, etc.; and (ii) considering sports marketing as an application with certain particularities. These include the relevance and quality of stakeholders, who are critical for organising of the sports offer, the emotional and captivating nature of the sporting performances (Leal & Moutinho, 2008; Norris, Wann & Zapalac, 2014). In general, a sports marketing scope comprises three categories of sports good (Shilbury, 2009): spectator sports, supporters, and organiser of tournaments.

As with all marketing applications, the concept of exchange has important implications in the sports marketing context. Then, when marketers use the expression "exchange", they refer to the idea that people willingly give up something of value to receive something they would rather have. In sports events, supporters-customers give up time, money, physical effort and emotional energy to watch, participate and be involved in sport in some form or another. It is intangible elements of this exchange process that can cause problems for sports marketers, particularly as the expectations and perceptions of the value being exchanged for both parties often are not clear. It is almost impossible to achieve

agreement on how much the emotional energy and team loyalty is worth to a sporting team, tough this is exactly what marketers strive to reach. Thus, the goals of marketing on the sport are: managing of offer, maximising exchanges between sports teams and supporters, minimising divergences between sports teams and supporters, influencing followers by emotional and passion, and managing and positioning the value proposition to supporters.

However, for creating a marketing strategies model is important to overhaul the existing business model of a non-profit sports team entity and modify this into a business marketing-oriented model of a sports structure able of delivering results against the following five components: (i) structuring marketing channels networks (members and actors); (ii) professionalising the sports team (business managers); (iii) establishing good relationship with sports and non-sports actors; (iv) dealing with stakeholders to obtain resources; (v) and managing sports brand reputation, targeting audiences through the use of media. The sports structures have different components or segments that interact to establish and design a sport and several actors in each component. Therefore, the maturity of a sports scheme – structure – may be assessed by the extent of contribution and awareness among actors, within and across several components.

If a sports scheme aims to define the stakeholders' network for creating and employing marketing activities and processes in sports events, "how the sports structure of a sports team from the city of São Paulo is analysed and perceived by its supporters, according to their details"? Consequently, this article aims to understand and analyse the sports scheme of a sports team from the city of São Paulo according to its supporters considering their personal details for describing the opinion and point of view. For this study, this sports team will be named as Green Team to not mention the real name of the team. Concerning the details, four were selected: the incomes, the form of transport, the attendance and gender. It expects to find and understand by the end of this research the sports structure' components that more infer in the supporters' opinion, since their view are crucial to marketers design a marketing-oriented plan for events.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Sports as Entertainment*

For Maltese & Danglade (2014) sport and entertainment converge. While the commercial dynamic of sport and entertainment have overlapped, the two are now closer than ever before. For Masterman (2004), in many cases, sporting entertainment and commercial success are now see as two sides of the same coin. Clark (2015) argues that sport and entertainment events are increasingly being staged together, as a way to enhance the overall experience and extend the length of events, and therefore the time that supporters and viewers stay. There are a few points which are relevant to sports marketing: (a) emerging sports countries offer scope for the development of new commercial opportunities in these territories for both domestic and international sporting events; (b) as sponsors allocate increasing amounts of money to sport, there will be intense pressure for far more sophisticated measurement techniques to demonstrate the return on that investment; (c) sporting associations are increasingly seeking to introduce new relations in an attempt to control the cost base and levels of debts in their sports and leave a sustainable business model for future generations; (d) sporting associations are walking a tightrope, as the attempt to balance increased commercial

demands on their sports, with the often conflicting need to maintain the integrity and unpredictability that makes sporting competitions so exciting and appealing to their supporters.

For Collignon & Sultan (2014), a sports event should be focused on a flow of money. For instance, Super Bowl and Baseball's World Series in the United States, Champions League in Europe, Wimbledon Tennis Championships in England, etc. These events are focused on sports events business, revenues and profits. It is possible to recognise from their research that football (or soccer) events are undoubtedly the leaders, in which the English Premier League, German Bundesliga, Spanish La Liga, French Ligue 1 and Italian Serie A come out top for attendance by supporters in stadia and arenas in Europe. In the North American, it is included Canada and the United States, National Football League (NFL), Major League Baseball (MLB) and National Basketball Association (NBA) come out top for attendance of supporters in stadia and for viewing at home on TV. In effect, a sports event will remain one of the most valuable parts of the media and entertainment industry globally for years to come. Thus, for analysing and reporting their research, these authors propose a sports scheme driven by five critical components for providing revenues to sports club: supporters, media, tournaments, brands and teams.

Rundth & Gottfridsson (2015) argue that attending a sports match has become about more than a just the event itself. It can attract new spectators, such as women and young people. Different options have been developed for buying tickets, meaning customers can buy season tickets, order tickets over the internet, or purchase them via travel companies has increased spectators' possibilities of achieving the venue from surrounding areas for the same price as spectators living in the city where the event is being held. The sports entity may also increase its activities to build partnerships with sponsors and to develop relations with other entities such as non-profit organisations, the community and universities. Rundth & Gottfridsson (2015) believe that in delivering the sports event, there is a complex set of actors who must interact with each other to produce the expected offering. This is clearly in line with the network view in which one of the central thoughts is that a great deal of today's value creating is done between diverse business areas and companies and consumers. Maltese & Dangle (2014) argue that a sports structure based on an entertainment should constitute components of a business action plan for design, developing and delivering an offer to a market made by supporters and spectators.

### ***Sports Structure***

Sports structure aims to guide marketers to propose, design and operate a marketing plan with the purpose of obtaining various sources of financial funding for undertaking marketing strategies for their sports team (Shilbury, 2009). Indeed, a sports structure reveals a stakeholders' network which marketers need to understand the purpose of mobilising these organisations for fitting offers – product and/or service from sports teams – to target demands – supporters, followers and spectators (Rundth & Gottfridsson, 2014). For enchanting, enrapturing and attracting supporters, followers and spectators to sports events and generating more revenues and profits, a sports team requires to understand, analyse and prognosticate their sports structure. In effect, a sports structure examines distinct elements which help to determine a sports event from a list of partner and sponsor for carrying out some activities in the value chain. Thus, a sports structure focuses on four groups of components: supporter's interfaces, actors' network, strategic resources and value chain (Shilbury, 2009).

Then, a sports structure improves the development, operation and optimisation of sports events, however, two aspects are relevant. On the one hand are the supply and the other hand the demand and consumption, then, to satisfy both, the sports structure aims to formalise a scheme required for producing sports events (Maltese & Danglade, 2014). Hence, a sports scheme was designed and organised based on seven components (KPMG Reports, 2014; Maltese & Danglade, 2014; Collignon & Sultan, 2014; Rundh & Gottfridsson, 2015): (i) tournaments perform three relevant roles: organising competitions, creating value events, structuring media rights; (ii) good suppliers are investors and associate their brands with sports team; (iii) supporters' engagement, the sports teams should create a marketing-oriented principle in order to transfer excitations and passions for supporters spending their money; (iv) stadium means facilities, naming rights, etc., and make money using the arena for other events; (v) club administration means applying business strategy in the sports team; (vi) investors are those who assist supporters in sports events; (vii) media are those who are responsible for buying the rights of matches for television and another alternative platform, like cable tv, websites, social networks, etc.

Marketing-driven strategies enable to sports structure to respond better to supporters-clients' needs and to reach even more supporters and spectators (Silva & Las Casas, 2017a). Sports has turned in to be entertainment and economic success in becoming a more central element in sports. Indeed, the sports business has also become increasingly more client-oriented (Norris, Wann & Zapalac, 2014). Game facilities and other service-extensions have evolved; ticket process has increased significantly in recent years, and individual supporters may not be able to afford tickets and corporations are more often ticket-buyers. In fact, technological development has improved sport's availability and experience (McHugh, Bronson & Watters, 2015). Following a certain team or tournament or finding out information about specific sports is constantly easier. Sports has great spectator appeal, which gives sports a chance to gain revenues from many sources like ticket sale, media rights, sponsorships, licensing of products, etc. (Stander & Beer, 2016). The representatives of all different interest groups are naturally client form sports teams' perspective. Then, as several revenue sources exist, sports can employ business and marketing professionals who further develop commercial opportunities. The most important target market for all sports clubs is still game-attending supporters. Due to people's willingness to follow sports performances on site leads to that other clients (sponsor, media, etc.), consider sports goods as an interesting investment target (White & Absher, 2013).

## **METHODOLOGY**

The exploratory research was organised for understanding and analysing the sports scheme of the Green Team according to its supporters looking into their details for describing the opinion and point of view of them. Four variables were defined for addressing their influences regarding the supporters' view about the sports scheme of the team: (1) income, since supporters may be encouraged or discouraged due to their wages; (2) form of transport, because the public system as bus, train and underground; private system (taxi and Uber); and private car (car parking facilities) may determine the supporters' opinion; (3) attendance regarding the number of times that supporters go to the arena; (4) and gender, men or women have different preferences and habits. Moreover, four hypotheses were created to imply the results: (H1) income is the supporter's detail that more infers in the supporters' opinion; (H2) tournament is the sports scheme that produce more conflict among the

supporters; (H3) and club administration since Green Team's marketers have stated that the team has implemented marketing-orientation.

Concerning the data and results reports, a questionnaire with 84 topics/statements, related to the sports structure perspective was organised by these researchers considering five Likert levels (1) totally disagree; (2) partly disagree; (3) I cannot answer; (4) agree; (5) totally agree. Moreover, four personal details were demanded by the supporters in order to know their details: gender, income (with base on the minimum wages in Brazil), attendance to the sports venue and transportation they use to go to the arena (own vehicle, public transport or private transportation, as uber, taxi, etc.). These questions were included on the top of the questionnaire. In sum up, 84 topics were presented in surveys and supporters should select one of the five levels in the rating scale for each statement, spread in seven axes: tournament: 10; stadium: 12; goods suppliers: 13; supporters' engagement: 20; club administration: 12; partnerships and sponsorships: 6; media: 5; an extra component with 6 statements was prepared in order to analyse the prognosis the sporting performance of the Green Team in 2017.

Overall, 309 questionnaires were administered to supporters between February and March 2017. To use the instrument, these researchers selected three games of the Green Team, in which, three criteria were relevant: administered to ordinary supporters; carried out only outside the club arena; and all 84 topics should be answered. The data collection took place outside and around the stadium before the matches and took roughly 3 hours per game. However, only questionnaires were obtained from the Green Team's supporters. The limitation in obtaining all questionnaires answered is because, around 11% of the Green Team's supporters did not want to help us answering them. The administration process was the same in all matches. In other words, 360 instruments were printed to be administered on the day of the three matches. Unfortunately, Green Team had some instruments no answered, according to expectation.

The report of the results followed three stages: (1) a general report using chi-square tests from cross tables between the four groups of supporters' personal details and sports structure topics (78); (2) the selecting process of the statement which reached the significance  $\leq 0,05$ ; (3) observing and settling on which category of each group of supporters' personal detail that tend to agree or disagree concerning the other categories. The analysis and reporting of the findings and results will be depicted in four tables below which were designed respecting the analysis procedure. Throughout the report, relevant sports structure topics are explained as relevant according to supporters' details and their implications for the marketing-oriented principles.

Table 1: General Report

Sports Structure Components	Income			Form of Transport			Attendance			Gender		
	Sig <= 0,05	(\$ IN	A   D	Sig <= 0,05	FT	A   D	Sig <= 0,05	AT	A   D	Sig <= 0,05	M   W	A   D
<b>Leagues &amp; Tournaments</b>												
01. Clear rules							0,000	2-3	A	0,009	W	D
02. Calendars for matches	0,020	1-4	D									
03. Calendars for tv	0,020	1-4	D	0,014	Pri	A				0,010	M	A
04. Quality of games	0,027	5-8	A				0,016	2-3	A	0,000	W	D
05. Balanced teams	0,003	5-8	A									
06. Media coverage	0,047	5-8	A									
07. Tv broadcasting to Europe				0,003	Pub	A	0,001	2-3	D	0,004	W	A
08. 15,000 supporters on average										0,029	W	A
09. Supporter's regular audience				0,002	Pri	D	0,000	1	D	0,000	W	D
10. Cash prizes similar to Europe							0,004	4-6	D	0,013	M	D
<b>Stadium</b>												
11. Point of sale (ticketing)	0,004	5-8	A	0,000	Own	A	0,000	1	D	0,014	W	D
12. Comfortable seats and toilets										0,041	M	D
13. Car parking complex												
14. Snack bar or restaurants												
15. Prioritising supporter-members	0,005	1-4	D	0,029	Own	A				0,009	M	A
16. Space (or area) for the disabled	0,002	5-8	D				0,024	2-3	A			
17. Partnership with public sector	0,031	1-4	D							0,047	M	D
18. Safety for supporters	0,001	5-8	A				0,016	2-3	A			
19. Guides to help supporters				0,006	Pub	D						
20. Expensive tickets				0,007	Own	A				0,025	W	A
21. Kiosks to sell products	0,000	5-8	A									





41. Visiting club website every week									
42. Attending training						0,006	4-6	A	
43. Following social networks						0,030	1	D	
44. Visiting club stores				0,020	Own	A			0,036 W A
45. Having historical T-shirts						0,046	1	D	
46. Attending opponent's arena									
47. Encouraging relatives									
48. Encouraging co-workers	0,008	1-4	A						0,018 W A
49. Wearing T-shirts on game day						0,000	1	D	
50. Seeing T-shirt in another State									
51. Seeing T-shirt in another country	0,000	5-8	A	0,035	Own	A			
52. Mock friends						0,043	2-3	A	
53. Watching sports tv programmes	0,002	Zero	A						0,006 M A
54. Choosing the team in FIFA video game	0,000	5-8	D			0,028	4-6	D	0,015 M A
55. Accessing YouTube to watch the goals	0,003	5-8	D						
<b>Club Administration</b>									
56. Business administration concepts	0,000	5-8	A	0,001	Pub	D	0,001	2-3	A
57. Transparent administration	0,001	1-4	D	0,047	Pub	D			0,009 M D
58. Monetarily responsible concepts	0,009	5-8	A	0,001	Own	A	0,006	2-3	A
59. Client-oriented principles									0,046 W A
60. Paying the bills				0,001	Pub	D			
<b>Sports Structure Components</b>		<b>Income</b>			<b>Form of Transport</b>			<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Gender</b>



	Sig <= 0,05	(\$ IN	A   D	Sig <= 0,05	FT	A   D	Sig <= 0,05	AT	A   D	Sig <= 0,05	M   W	A   D
61. Dealing with partners	0,005	1-4	D	0,007	Own	A	0,042	1	A			
62. Positive image for investors	0,003	1-4	D	0,007	Own	A						
63. Producing own athletes												
64. Receiving criticisms												
65. Social responsibility plan				0,013	Pub	D	0,048	4-6	D	0,023	W	A
66. Relationship with supporters	0,000	1-4	D									
67. Using marketing strategies												
<b>Investors</b>												
68. Making investments in the club												
69. Adding value to club brand							0,025	1	A			
70. Having few incentive policies	0,009	1-4	D									
71. Risk for company's brand	0,026	Zero	A	0,019	Pub	A				0,020	M	A
72. Improving quality of products	0,008	Zero	D									
73. Enhancing relationship with supporters	0,020	5-8	A									
<b>Media</b>												
74. Valuing the national tournament	0,025	5-8	A									
75. Paying well to cover games												
76. Prioritising clubs on media	0,037	1-4	D							0,027	M	A
77. Promoting naming rights on media							0,004	2-3	D			
78. Interfering on tournament calendars.				0,039	Own	A				0,001	M	D
<b>Prognosis for 2017</b>												
79. Investing in a competitive team	0,047	5-8	A	0,043	Own	A	0,001	1	A			

80. Investing in facilities and athletes		0,002	Pri	D			
81. Replacing the coach at least twice						0,004	W D
82. Improving service offerings to fans							
83. Renting the stadium for music concerts							
84. Hiring unknown athletes						0,016	W A

Caption 1: (\$) IN = Income with 3 options: Zero (0), 1 – 4, and 5 – 8 Minimum Income = US\$ 280,00 (roughly).

Caption 2: FT = Form of Transport with 3 options: Pub = Public Transportation; Pri = Private Transportation; Own = Own Vehicle.

Caption 3: AT = Attendance at Stadium with 3 options: 1 time per month; 2 – 3 times per month; and 4 – 6 times per month.

Caption 4: Gender = M: Men; and W = Women.

Caption 5: A = Tending to agree regarding the other 2 groups, and D = Tending to disagree regarding the other 2 groups.

Source: Authors

## FINDINGS

### *Incomes*

The Green Team supporters who took part in this research may be qualified as: more than 50% (men and women) earn between 1 and 4 wages, and 1/3 out of them watch the games in the arena once a month. Regarding the tournaments, those who earn between 5 and 8 incomes agree about the calendars for games on tv, the quality of matches and media coverage. However, those who receive between 1 and 4 wages disagree about calendars for matches in the venue since roughly 50% take public transportation to go to the stadium. In general, the matches fixtures of programmed to begin at 10 pm, on Wednesday, e.g., can inhibit their attendance to the venue in view of the transportation services which stop at 12:30 pm. Hence, the calendars of the leagues in Brazil are much more oriented to the media coverage than to supporters' attendance in the arenas.

As to the sporting venue, the followers who earn between 1 and 4 incomes disagree that the club prioritises members and ensures the safety of supporters within the arena. The group between 5 and 8 wages agrees that the Green Team provides several points of sale for purchasing tickets, guides to assist supporters, kiosks for selling products and getting new members. Although, this group disagrees about space for the disabled. Concerning the goods and souvenirs, students or those who depend on relatives tend to purchase illegal goods. Thus, they do not contribute to increasing the revenues as well as profits.

Perhaps, because the group does not agree that Green Team offers an attractive discount to members, the models and sizes do not meet their expectation or yet, the club does not customise the goods for followers. For this reason, it is up to club and goods supplier to develop a plan to reach this target audience through a new category of goods by means of attractive prices to achieve more profits to the team.

Apropos of club administration, two groups stood out. The group between 5 and 8 wages agree that club has developed business concepts and financial responsibilities. Unlike them those who earn between 1 and 4 wages disagree in four significant statements, as promoting business transparency, dealing with partners, encouraging the positive image to reach commercial investors, and improving the relationship with supporters. For them, these statements have not been organised according to business practices. As to supporters' engagement, the category living on 1 and 4 incomes has two opinions about three aspects. These supporters do not subscribe for pay-tv for watching the games. Nonetheless, they have been in the trophy room at least once, and they have motivated their co-workers to support team. Also, another group living on 5 and 8 wages also agree and disagree on other topics, e.g., these followers read newspapers and books, collect pictures and posters about team's history and have seen someone wearing team's t-shirt abroad. Although, when they play FIFA video game, they do not usually choose Green Team and, still, they do not access social media like YouTube to see the games, goals, and information related to the club.

Concerning media, while the group who earns 1 to 4 wages understands that some media prioritise one club over another when they broadcast information and games on tv, radio or the internet. Supporters who earn between 5 and 8 incomes believe that the media companies in Brazil value the national leagues instead of international leagues. Investors was another dimension analysed, and the group 'Zero' observed that partners and sponsors have not assisted the club, since the sports club performance has not enhanced the companies brand. On the contrary, in their view, the lack of support may even have decreased the 'partners or sponsors' brand value. This group also believes that the current investors have not improved

the quality of goods to achieve followers. Furthermore, when these supporters were asked about their expectations for 2017, the supporters living on 5 and 8 wages was more optimistic about achievements.

### ***Form of Transport***

The tournament component depicts two categories of supporters who have controversial points of view about three topics. In general, the Pri group agrees that calendars are appropriate to watch the games on tv, and that the Brazilian tournaments have been broadcasted to the European continent, but it disagrees about their audience every round on television or in the venue. As to goods and souvenirs, those followers who go to the arena by vehicle have found an assortment of models and sizes in licensed club's stores and in sports stores. It is worth noticing that this group often purchases club's goods and souvenirs to give as a gift to their relatives and friends.

Apropos of the arena, the supporters who use their vehicle believe that Green Team offers a range of options for buying tickets, including physical and virtual ticketing, prioritises members to enhance the relationship with them, and sells expensive tickets for some matches. According to these followers, this last topic stood out in a negative way. Regarding the supporters' engagement, this same group of followers highlighted that they have already seen people wearing the team's t-shirt abroad, and they follow the club on social media. It is worth noticing that Pri group reads newspapers and books about the club and Pub group has not subscribed pay-tv to watch the games on tv. Perhaps, because a tv package is expensive, e.g., an ordinary pay-tv package costs roughly US\$ 45,00 in São Paulo. Still, it can be observed that Pub group believes investors have not invested resources in the team because the performances have not added value to the companies' brand.

The Own group has a positive perception on all statements presented above. Nevertheless, Pub has a negative view, for instance, of the club administration. These supporters believe that business as well as transparency principles have not been carried out. Besides, the team has not paid the bills correctly, nor invested in social responsibility programmes to improve the team's image to reach more investors and members. These followers understand that the media have interfered on the tournament's calendars to fit the games calendars to their grid. As to the future, on the one hand, Own group sees club as a competitive team in 2017. On the other hand, Pri observes that the club has no money to afford a competitive team this season.

### ***Attendance***

Looking into the gender, form of transport, attendance and incomes: 55% of men supporters and 1/3 of women go to the arena once a month, 55% of followers who use their vehicle attend the venue at least once a month, and 95 supporters out of 309 who go to the arena once a month, live on 1 and 4 wages. Concerning the tournament, the group between 2 and 3 presence agrees that the rules are clear, and the games have, at least, a satisfactory quality, but they disagree in relation to the broadcasting of matches to the European continent. Two relevant pieces of information can be noticed: (i) those who go the arena once a month usually do not watch the matches on tv, (ii) and the group between 4 and 6 attendances does not believe that the cash prizes are comparable to the European tournaments. Concerning sporting venue, the group between 2 and 3 attendances is the only one who thinks that team provides seats for the disabled and safety for supporters.

With respect to the goods and souvenirs, two topics stood out: the group between 4 and 6 presences disagrees about the discount for members, and the group between 2 and 3 attendances usually give team's goods as a gift to relatives and followers. The group who goes once a month to the stadia has no pay-tv, does not follow the team on the social media, has no old-fashioned club t-shirts and do not wear t-shirts when they watch the matches on tv or in the venue. The category between 2 and 3 knows the main athletes that perform in most of the matches; besides, they love to mock their friends when Green Team wins an opponent. Also, the group between 4 and 6 has shown their fanaticism for attending training sessions; however, they do not choose Green Team when they play FIFA video game.

Concerning club administration, the group of followers who attend games 2 or 3 times, admit that the managers have developed business and financial techniques for professionalising the team. This group also believes that the media have not promoted team's naming rights. Apropos the investors and prognosis for 2017, the group who goes to the arena once a month states that companies have increased club's value and that these companies will probably assist managers hold a competitive team for winning the leagues and tournaments in 2017.

### *Gender*

Linking gender and the other three details described above, it is worth observing that: only 5 women out of 88 and 24 men out of 221 go to the venue 4 to 6 times, only 11 women and 26 men depend on the relatives, and 10% of men and 20% of women take taxi, Uber, etc., to go to the arena. As to tournament component, women disagree about rules being explicit, about the quality of the games and their audience every round. First, they agree that the national tournaments are not broadcast to European countries. Also, women believe that each match has roughly 15.000 supporters in the stadium. Concerning the stadium, men have no formed opinion if team provides comfortable seats and clean toilets or involves the public sector (e.g. public transportation and guards for protection) to help the followers, but they have noticed that team privileges members to sell tickets.

Both men and women have a balanced opinion about the club administration. Nonetheless, men do not agree that the club has carried out transparent concepts or has monetary responsibility to manage the business and marketing activities. Women, on the other hand, believe that the club has invested money, time and energy to plan and organise activities to meet the supporters' expectations and to improve the club's images through social responsibility programmes. But, an unusual balance was noticed on the topic related to supporters' engagement. This balance is due to the following reasons: women have visited the club trophy room, club's stores, and motivated co-workers to support Green Team, i.e., they are a key element to achieve new followers to the team. Men, in turn, have demonstrated some fanaticism since they know the main players who often perform in the matches, watch sports tv programmes to get updated on news regarding the team, and choose Green Team when they play a video game with friends.

For men, the media has prioritised some teams instead of Green Team on tv, radio, and internet when they usually publish news related to football or broadcast matches on tv. Nevertheless, they do not agree that the media have not interfered in the tournaments' calendars for defining the matches' days and times on tv. This group, also, understands that sponsoring club involves risks for the company's image since team cannot always reach remarkable outcomes in some tournaments. About the future, women are optimists concerning hiring players who have the team's profile in relation to financial viability and sports talents, besides agreeing that team will keep the coach until December 2017.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the sporting market money flows in many directions, from supporters to pay-tv providers, from supporters to ticketing, and from supporters to merchandise. Hence, supporters are fundamental elements for securing revenues and profits to sports teams. Because of that a sports structure requires focus on the supporters' attendance in the sporting venue and spectators of sports who follows sports events on tv, radio and electronic media. Then, sports teams need to rethink the sports as marketing and entertainment for designing and organising a sports scheme from tournaments to media component for implementing a marketing-oriented focused on supporters and revenues. European and North American clubs (in many sports) have been found out that a strong sports team is unfolding of an organised structure by customer-oriented principles. However, the tournaments component is the foundation for sports teams share their motivation on rules, players, images and profits. From tournament is provided all arrange of goods that will be offered to supporters, spectators and media, and doing business with investors as sponsorships for enhancing revenues. It recognises that European and North American tournaments have reached outcome timing games focus on family viewing, television and in-stadium, suitable ticket pricing structure with remarkable offers for family tickets, refurbishment of venue, better viewing angles, spectators friendly game formats, broadcasting in at least two languages (local and in English), marketing involving sports celebrities as heroes, and ambassadors of various teams and engaging with school and colleges by offering student tickets addressed to audience. Moreover, tournaments and sports teams have created supporting infrastructure as facilities like restaurants, bars, fast-food chains, merchandise, book and music stores, etc. Marketers have transformed in-stadium sport in a spot of entertainment and experience unforgettable to supporters and spectators using the sports team brand for commercialising goods for obtaining revenues and profits.

Hence, a sports structure aims to assist the business and marketing strategies in a sports club, since for developing marketing strategies, it is important for marketers to know stakeholders' skills, capacity to provide products and/or services to meet supporters' demands. In general, three elements are approached in a sports structure: sports and non-sports actors, resources and activities. Regarding the goal of the paper, that was understanding and analysing the sports structure of the Green Team according to its supporters, using their personal details for depicting their view, in summary, the research described that: first, the income was the most essential detail for the sports marketers since 39 out of 84 statements had a group of supporters who had divergent opinion from the others, either a positive or negative sense. These 39 divergent topics were spread out into the following components: (9 statements) supporters' engagement, (7) the stadium, (6) goods suppliers and club administration, (4) tournaments as well as investors, (2) the media, and (1) prognosis for 2017. Then, gender was the second most critical attribute with 27 statements, followed by form of transport and attendance with 25 statements. Finally, tournament is the most critical component (19 out of 40 statements = 47,5%), followed by club administration was the second most relevant (21 out of 48 statements = 39,6%), according to supporters. The other axes reached the following results: the arena (19 out of 48 = 39,6%), supporters' engagement (27 out of 80 = 33,8%), the media (6 out of 20 = 30%), investors (7 out of 25 = 29,2%), and goods suppliers (11 out of 52 = 21,2%).

In conclusion, the supporters' details taught us and Green Team's marketers that income is the most relevant information. But, form transport, attendance and gender are equally relevant since these details may be analysed for designing and planning marketing strategies, e.g., women could pay less for a ticket



to watch a match, or supporters who have a regular attendance at the arena could receive some sort of benefit, etc. The same way, the sports scheme depicted that goods suppliers cause less conflict of opinion among supporters than the other six components. Concerning another topic introduced in this research, i.e., the prognosis for 2017, it is interesting to notice that Green Team's supporters are optimistic about having a competitive team in the season 2017. The components approached here (as club administration), allowed to identify that Green Team has invested money in talented players, by means the new philosophy based on business and marketing principles that have been implemented in the club since 2013. The Green Team' structure has been designed to assist marketers to reflect upon when developing new execution plan in view of suiting the goods to supporters in order to ensure their satisfaction in future events in the venue. For some supporters, Green Team has enhanced the interaction and communication among the actors within and across several components to offer a sports entertainment. However, not all supporters have recognised these 'new' practices, yet. Thus, Green Team's marketers have much to undertake.

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