

Original Article

Comparative study between marketing conducted in two volleyball clubs

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Abstract

The case study presented aims to identify the volleyball consumer's typology and, in particular, to compare the differences in consumer behavior in two cities - Târgoviște and Bucharest. Conclusions and information can be an important step in the marketing of volleyball clubs in the two cities because the purpose of the investigation is to realize the needs and motivations of volleyball spectators and to identify the extent to which the culture of a city influences sports consumption habits. The choice of the theme was determined by the personal observation of the lack of a sport-driven activity in volleyball clubs. The notion of marketing is entirely missing from the majority of volleyball clubs in Romania, where the whole activity is accidental and is carried out by people in leadership. Volleyball is a relatively important sport for both sports cultures, with the difference that Bucharest is the highest level.

Research methods used: studying the literature; the case study, which is based on several methods: personal observation (direct contact with volleyball activity determined the choice of theme and introduction of personal notes), comparative method, the method of centralizing the information table, observation; graphic representation

Research results: The results obtained confirmed in most cases the assumptions and outlined the characteristics of a consumer who is not at the first volleyball meeting and who is deeply interested in sports. The volleyball player is part of a small community, but quite homogeneous in terms of his or her interest in sports. Most consumers are trained by supporters of the two teams; we identify the individual's desire to have a purpose, to attach emotionally to a team, and to integrate, even if only figuratively, into a large family.

Conclusion: volleyball requires a restructuring of the infrastructure coordinated by national federations. Promotion must start from school sports clubs, from junior groups and from recruiters. I propose hiring more people and preparing them in advance to attract more children.

Key words: volleyball team, marketing survey, study case

Introduction

Volleyball is a loving and exciting sport, but its poor promotion leads to a low number of consumers, especially in areas where this sport has no tradition.

From personal information sources I found out that in other countries, such as Germany, Italy, Poland, where sports culture includes volleyball, clubs invest time, patience and finance in sports marketing.

From a volleyball point of view, volunteer organizations should channel marketing to promote this sport, as the number of spectators is gradually decreasing and young people refuse to practice this sport. I suggest in the cases given the transmission of matches from the domestic championship and from the international competitions in order to stimulate the interest and the desire of the public to watch the volleyball competitions. Centralizing the media promotion campaign on television does not mean ignoring the importance of other channels; the current society tends towards maximum technology. Once aware of the consumer's need to receive rapid information, sports clubs and sports organizations must create sites to meet these needs. Moreover, today there is the possibility to create personal pages on different social platforms whose efficiency should not be disregarded: Facebook, Twitter, etc. In the case of Romania, the greatest impact is the promotion of outdoor and viral. Promotional campaigns can exploit these opportunities and can distribute posters of different sizes, brochures, competitive calendars in all areas with heavy pedestrian traffic or in collaborative institutions. Marketers must keep in mind the organization of the information that stimuli are strongly felt by the consumer and those he associates with (the promotion must focus on presenting the most spectacular volleyball events).

It was sometimes referred to volleyball as the most beautiful sport, not only through the spectacularity and dynamism of the playing phases, but also in terms of the physical aspect of the players. The physical traits of some players can recommend them as protagonists of TV spots promoting volleyball or other sporting goods (endorsement). The equipment must also be part of the marketing props: the color combination must represent the sports club and value the players' physical strengths.

The sportsman is becoming more and more pretentious, he is bored quickly and must be stimulated at all times. The other sports have already turned to various entertaining teams (dance / cheerleaders, music, 2274

pantomime, etc.) to keep the audience's attention. A volleyball game is fragmented by technical scheduling and time-outs, short moments that must keep the attention of the spectators. Unfortunately, volleyball requires a restructuring of the infrastructure coordinated by national federations.

Material and Methods

The purpose of the paper -the purpose of the research is to understand the behavior of the volleyball consumer. The research focuses on the behavior of the volleyball consumer in two cities, Targoviste and Bucharest, identifying differences and similarities.

We believe that if we use marketing research in the leadership of the sporting organization, then we will determine the profile of the direct volleyball consumer, capable of achieving the objectives of the sporting organization in a quality and efficiency, as well as its development on the sports market.

In order to investigate the volleyball consumer's typology, the multiple self-administered questionnaire was used as a tool, with a field representative to provide explanations. It was distributed in early May of 2016 in both cities.

The analysis of the obtained results was made using the Platform Extraction option www.esurveyspro.com. The survey was attended by 94 people, of which 50 in Bucharest, 44 in Targoviste. The results were highlighted with graphs, and the differences were noted in their basements. To highlight the volleyball consumer's typology, we centralized the highest percentage of questions and answers into a table.

Question	Targoviște	Bucharest
1. Are you a supporter of a volleyball team?	30 YES	38 YES
2 You are a supporter:	16 supporters of the host	38supporters of the host
3 Is it the first time you participate in a volleyball game?	40 No	43 No
4. With whom do you generally participate in volleyball?	23 family	21family
5. Do you think volleyball is an attractive sport?	29 attractive	23 atractive
6. Prefer to watch volleyball matches: in or out of town.	23 both	19 both
7. How often do you come to the hall to watch your favorite team matches?	18 most matches	26 most matches
8. That makes you be a spectator this evening?	7 are interested in volleyball	6 are interested in volleyball, 6 support the team
9. What misfortune do you encounter when playing a volleyball game?	16 the noise, 16 bad languages	17 lack of comfort
10. Do you like the music you play during the warm-up and the match?	29 satisfied	25 satisfied
11. Consider that the entrance ticket is:...	42 avarege price	37 avarage price
12. To what extent are you satisfied with the organization?	38 largely satisfied	38 medium satisfied
13. What is your opinion, in general, about your favorite team?	22 satisfied	25 very satisfied
14. Will you participate in other volleyball matches in the future?	27 yes	29 yes
15. What is the souvenir you want to buy / buy when you participate in a volleyball competition?	16 T-shirt	13official ball of volleyball
16. How did you find out about this match?	27 word of mouth	21 word of mouth
17. How would you prefer to promote volleyball?	20 televised	11 televised, 11 online
18. How important are the following changes for you to participate in volleyball matches ?	9 setting up a café within the gym	9 creating a wider range of souvenirs
19. Your age is in the range of: 13	13 are between 41-55 years old	10 are between 41-55years old
20. What is your civil status?	30 merried	26 merried
21. You are a parent:	22 parents	21 parents
22. What is the age of your children?	12 have children aged 13-17 years	11 have children aged 13-17
23. Your sex:	27 females	24 females
24. What is your professional status?	23 emploies	20 emploies
25. In what category does your monthly income fall?	14 between 1500-2000 lei	18 between 2000-4000 lei

Methods

Studying the literature; the case study, which is based on several methods: personal observation (direct contact with volleyball activity determined the choice of theme and introduction of personal notes), comparative method, the method of centralizing the information table, observation; graphic representation.

Results

a. Supporters. In the first question establishing if the respondent was a supporter or not, it turned out, as no surprise, that 98% of participants were fans of a volleyball team. In Bucharest, most respondents (43) were supporters of a team. Out of these, 37 were supporters of the host team, and only 6 of the guest team.

b. Experience. Most supporters turned out to be familiar with the sports phenomenon. The authorities in Targoviste put a lot of effort into promoting volleyball and the sports event; the city is relatively small, and the news traveled fast. The percentage of people who watched for the first time a volleyball game was higher (5%); in Bucharest, volleyball is a sport in which the attendance is made up exclusively of connoisseurs and people with volleyball experience (100%).

c. Company. Question 3 attempts to determine the manner in which the volleyball consumer prefers attending the games. A percentage of 43.16% of respondents prefer watching the volleyball games in the company of family, 33.68% were accompanied by friends, 13.68% of consumers prefer watching the game by themselves, and 9.47% come accompanied by their partners, boyfriends, and girlfriends.

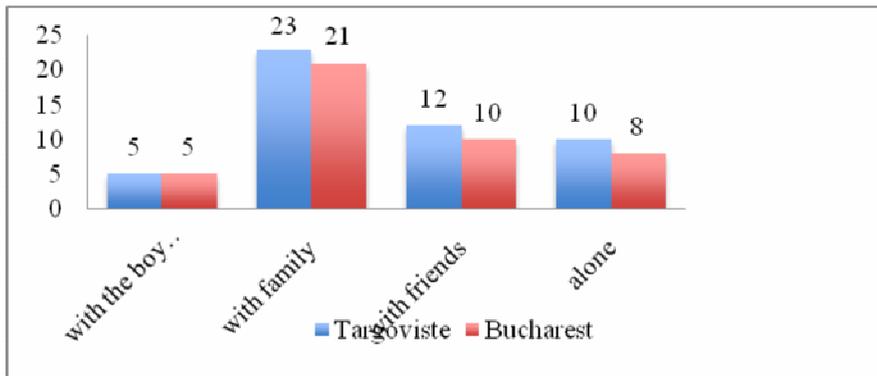


Fig. 1 How do the consumers participate in volleyball matches

This shows that the comparative results point out to the same preferences for the Bucharest and Targoviste consumers. The results obtained indicate the extrovert characteristic of the volleyball consumer and his permanent need to socialize; the volleyball games are a possibility to spend time with family. The number of couples who participate in volleyball matches is low, as it is not exactly a romantic activity. According to the interpretation, all respondents who prefer to come as a couple are males and are involved in the sports activity or practice this sport.

d. Attractiveness. I have summarized the answer to this question with the help of a scale (of semantic differentiation) on five levels, from very attractive to very disagreeable, marked mathematically from 5 to 1. I have calculated the weighted arithmetical mean so as to synthesize the respondents' opinions. The increased homogeneity of responses and the high value of means (in Bucharest 4, 59 and in Targoviste 4, 44) indicates a large number of positive answers and favorable opinions of consumers toward volleyball.

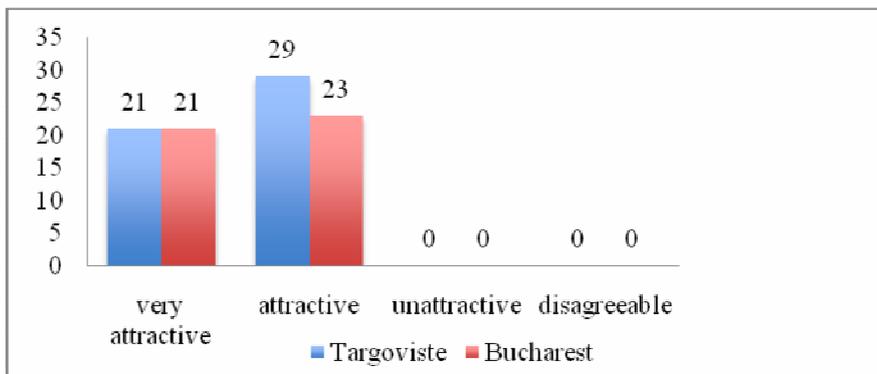


Fig. 2 Attractiveness of volleyball in volleyball consumers' opinion

The results are positive and, as expected, the persons who attend the gym to watch a volleyball match are interested in this activity and think of volleyball as very attractive (55.56%) and very attractive (44.44%).

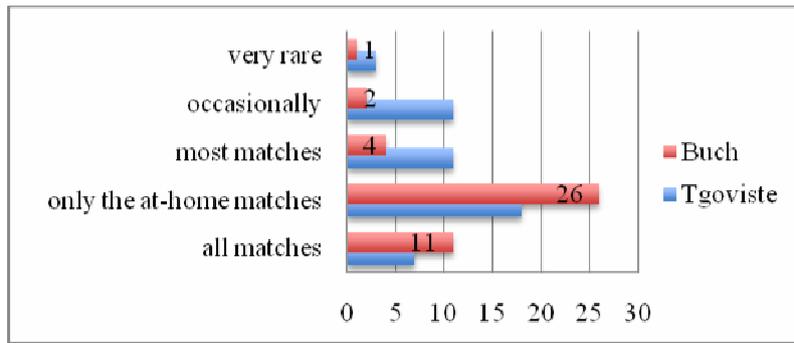


Fig. 3 Participation frequency

The high frequency with which volleyball consumers attend the matches indicates a great deal of interest on their behalf. The fact that the matches take place during weekends, in the time span 20-22 p.m. allows consumers to participate frequently in the volleyball matches, so that 50.79% of respondents are present at most of the matches, 22.22% attend all the matches of their favorite team. Bucharest tend to be more loyal spectators than Targoviste, as they are aware of the need to have free time and to spend it in a relaxing way. Moreover, sport is a priority in Bucharest culture.

g. Reasons to participate. Finding the volleyball consumer’s motivation is a key point in the practical implications of the research. I have tried to construct the response variants, covering a broader area of an individual’s needs: psychological, physiological, social.

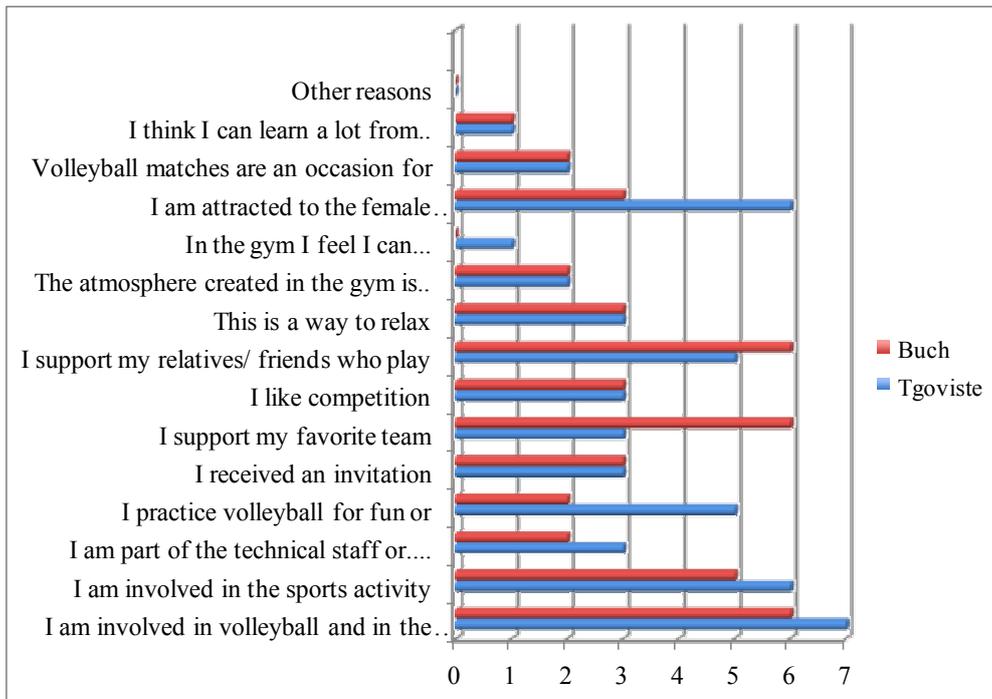


Fig. 4 Reason for participation

The percentages are close in terms of value, but the Bucharest volleyball consumer is more strongly motivated by the desire to support his favorite team (as compared with the 3 respondents in Targoviste). At the same time, I have learned that the Targoviste spectator is more attracted to women volleyball players (6) as compared with the Bucharest one (only 3 persons). The results obtained represent useful information for the marketing team or for the sports clubs management in the two cities, as they determine the strengths and opportunities of a possible SWOT analysis.

Conclusions

The results obtained have confirmed, for most of the cases, the assumptions made and have shaped the features of a consumer who is not at his *first encounter* with volleyball and who is deeply interested in sport. The volleyball consumer is part of a limited community, but sufficiently homogenous by the increased interest in sport. Most consumers are made up of supporters of the two teams; thus, it is identified an individual’s desire to have a purpose, to get emotionally attached to a team and to fit in, even if only figuratively, in a numerous family.

The reasons which lead volleyball consumers to attend matches are various, but most of them are influenced by their involvement in the sports activity and in the increased interest in this sport. Volleyball is not

a contact sport, but is extremely entertaining, unpredictable and competitive. Sadly, the poor propagation through the media of women's volleyball and the monopoly of other sports diminishes the number of participants in matches. Also, women's volleyball is acknowledged as an attractive sport, in particular through female players' looks and their equipment. A large part of consumers confirm they are attracted to the female volleyball players. The heterogeneity of their age indicates various desires and needs; music is a sensitive element from this point of view, as it cannot please all tastes.

Attendance to volleyball matches is an occasion for most consumers to spend time in the company of friends or family. If in Bucharest there is a family setting, where supporters interact with the other consumers and with the team, in Targoviste the consumer does not have the same privileges. The Targoviste volleyball consumer is as specialized, is familiar with the phenomenon and with results, but generally interacts only with the persons accompanying him or whom he knows. The in-house teams are exclusively professional, while in the Bucharest matches there are professional and amateur players alike. I think this aspect, corroborated with the voluble attitude of the Bucharest volleyball consumer, creates a family-like setting which determines the supporters' attachment to the team.

The volleyball consumer is interested in the show offered by the two teams on the court and, in particular, in his favorite team's success. The presence of spectators to the volleyball matches is determined by the desire to identify with a team. The respondents wish memorabilia that would remind them of the volleyball experience they had. To identify with the team or with the player he likes, the consumer wants first a match worn t-shirt or a volley ball.

Due to the fact that volleyball is poorly propagated through the media (except in countries like Italy, Poland, and Brazil) the most effective and at the same time simple method of promotion is the viral one (buzzwords).

Interpretation of results is essential under the conditions in which they can influence decisions and future strategies of volleyball clubs. Knowledge of the volleyball consumer typology, his needs and interests are an advantage to the managerial team of volleyball teams. The conclusions made constitute a material to think over in order to draw-up a sports marketing plan which aims to satisfy the needs and desires of volleyball consumers.

Suggestions and recommendations

Personally, I find the manner of organization flawed from several points of view: lack of comfort in the sport gyms, lack of facilities, lack of extra-volleyball show, the need to promote the sport first locally, the lack of interest of the management in attracting a larger number of sponsors and in creating an incendiary atmosphere in any match, etc. On the other side, the main discomfort experienced by consumers is lack of comfort in the gym. The chairs are small, crowded due to the lack of space, and movement is hardened. In this matter, the marketing strategy should aim at renovating and refurbishing the matches hall. I dare create a similarity between the situation of cinemas in the 90's and current status, when most localities invested in the furnishing and renovation of cinemas. Nowadays, going to the cinema is a serious option to spend free time. I think that renovation of the gym halls and furnishing of a space in which both spectators, and athletes feel welcome is an opportunity to attract a larger number of volleyball consumers. In Romania, in particular in small cities, the number of volleyball consumer is higher, because the options to spend free time are not very numerous. There are many such organizational aspects which should guide the sports marketing activity, but which lack completely from the clubs cultural baggage. Moreover, volleyball clubs in Romania do not have a specific marketing department: the ignorance of the sports organisational culture thinks the marketing activity may be carried out by team managers who, in most of the cases, are the main sponsors or are preoccupied with their own business.

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