

TENNIS PERCEPTION, TENNIS SPONSORSHIPS IN TURKEY AND  
THE ROLE OF TEB BNP PARIBAS IN TENNIS SPONSORSHIP

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Tennis Perception, Tennis Sponsorships In Turkey and  
The Role of TEB BNP Paribas In Tennis Sponsorship

Türkiye’de Tenis Algısı, Tenis Sponsorlukları ve  
TEB BNP Paribas’ın Tenis Sponsorluğundaki Rolü



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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

TEB: Türk Ekonomi Bankası

et al.: and other people or things



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## ABSTRACT

Although such sport branches as football and basketball have been followed closely by large masses for years in Turkey, tennis has still some way to go in order to reach the same level. Having said that, it is also an undeniable fact that thanks to the level tennis has reached since the beginning of 2000s and the successful tennis players, the interest in and the popularity of this sport has been increasing day by day.

One of the most basic features that distinguishes tennis from many other sport branches is its individual nature. Because of insufficient numbers of tennis clubs and inadequate amount of support given to young tennis players, many players who cannot find any opportunity for any kind of investment and support for their development has to bear all or most of their expenses themselves. In order to reach to professional level or somehow improve himself, a tennis player needs to allocate a considerable amount of budget periodically for such professional tennis equipments as tennis shoes, racquets, and tennis wear. He also is supposed to pay for reserving a tennis court in order to exercise regularly under the supervision of a trainer and to participate in many national and global tennis tournaments. This is why for players, sponsorships are of greater importance than it is for some other sport branches. However, the support given to tennis has yet not reached to the desired level in Turkey. There are quite a many brands waiting for young athletes to become successful tennis players and make a name in order to support these players individually. This situation influence the development of tennis to a great extent.

The aim of this paper is to review the general perspective for tennis in Turkey and to understand the expectations of professional tennis players from sponsors. Being among the main sponsors for tennis, TEB BNP Paribas has been sponsoring for many tournaments in Turkey in parallel to its global strategies. The sponsorship by TEB BNP Paribas is also covered and analyzed to see to which extent it meets the expectations and to put forward the areas of development for the sponsorship by TEB BNP Paribas.

The research is undertaken as in-depth interviews with eight participants who are composed of professional tennis players, non-professional players without any license and those not playing but following tennis. Each and every single answer to all research questions is analyzed in detail.

In conclusion, it is shown that in spite of the increase in the interest in and support given to tennis, it still has some way to go in order to reach to the desired levels and it is very important for tennis players to be supported individually in order to be successful in international platforms. The support given by TEB BNP Paribas is well appreciated without any question but it is also put forward that if TEB BNP Paribas allocates some of its sources also to supporting players individually, the Group will make greater contributions to the development of tennis.

## ÖZET

Türkiye’de futbol ve basketbol gibi bazı spor dalları uzun yıllardır büyük kitleler tarafından yakından takip edilse de tenis sporunun aynı seviyeye gelebilmesi için daha kat etmesi gereken yolları bulunmaktadır. Öte yandan 2000’lerin başından bu yana tenisin kat ettiği yol ve çıkardığı başarılı sporcular, bu spora olan ilgiyi ve tenisin popülaritesini günden güne artırmaktadır.

Tenisi diğer birçok spordan ayıran en önemli özelliklerinden biri bireysel bir spor olmasıdır. Yeterli kulüpleşmenin olmaması ve genç oyunculara verilen desteklerin yetersiz olması nedeniyle kendisine yatırım ve destek bulamayan birçok oyuncu, maliyetlerin tamamını ya da çoğunu kendisi karşılamaktadır. Bir oyuncu profesyonel seviyeye gelebilmek ya da seviyesini geliştirebilmek için tenis ayakkabısı, tenis raketi, tenis kıyafetleri gibi profesyonel tenis ekipmanlarına düzenli olarak bütçe ayırmak, saha kiralayarak bir antrenör eşliğinde düzenli antrenman yapmak, birçok ulusal ve uluslararası maça katılmak durumundadır. İşte tüm bu nedenlerle sporcular için sponsorluk destekleri, pek çok spor dalında olduğundan çok daha büyük bir önem taşımaktadır. Fakat Türkiye’de tenise verilen destekler hala istenen seviyelere ulaşmamıştır. Oyuncuların bireysel sponsorluklardan faydalanabilmeleri için birçok marka, genç sporcuların başarılı bir raket haline gelip isim yapmasını beklemektedir. Bu durum da tenisin gelişimine çokça etki etmektedir.

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye’de tenise genel bakış açısını incelerken profesyonel oyuncuların sponsordan beklentilerini anlamak ve global stratejisinin bir parçası olarak tenisin önde gelen sponsorları arasında yer alan ve Türkiye’deki çeşitli turnuvaların sponsorluğunu üstlenen TEB BNP Paribas’ının, bu beklentileri ne düzeyde karşıladığını ve bu sponsorluğun gelişim noktalarını ortaya koymaktır.

Bu araştırma esnasında profesyonel oyuncular, lisansı olmayan amatör oyuncular ve tenis oynamayıp tenisi takip eden sekiz farklı katılımcıyla derinlemesine görüşmeler yapılmış ve her bir araştırma sorusuna verilen cevap ayrıntılarıyla ele alınmıştır.

Sonuç olarak, tenise verilen destek ve ilginin son yıllarda artmasına rağmen hala istenen düzeyde olmadığı, uluslararası platformlarda başarılı tenis oyuncularının ortaya çıkabilmesi için bireysel olarak destek almalarının büyük önemi anlaşılmıştır. TEB BNP Paribas'nın turnuvalara sağladığı katkıların öneminin tartışmasız çok büyük olduğu görülmüş, ancak bireysel sponsorluklara da yönelmelerinin tenisin gelişimine daha da büyük artılar sağlayacağı ifade edilmiştir.



## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The increase of the interest in and visibility of sporting events have led sports to be an important sector in many aspects. This increase has not only made the way for business in sports equipments and services, but also contributed to the arousal of interest of private companies and installations from various sectors in sports (Karademir, Devecioğlu, Çoban, Açak, and Kafkas, 2009). As a result of the increase in the interest in sports, the idea of “sponsorship” has evolved. Today there are many sponsors supporting a professional sports team, event or individual.

Sponsors aim to create a positive image in the minds of the target audience by benefiting from the relationship between teams and fans of these teams. For fans, brand personality plays a primary role in selecting the team to support, which means individuals prefer to establish a bond with the team having good matches with their own personality. In a natural flow, this bond is transferred to the sponsoring brand (Dees, Bennett & Ferreira, 2010; Gwinner & Bennet, 2008). If this bond is transferred in a successful way, the product, brand and corporate image of the sponsor is also positively impacted. Literature in sports sponsorship and brand personality both support this phenomenon (d’Astous & Bitz, 1995; Cornwell, Humphreys, Maguire, Weeks & Tellegen, 2006; Cornwell & Maignan, 1998; Carlson, Donovan & Cumiskey, 2009; Ko & Kim, 2014).

Sponsorship is a significant marketing communication tool in today’s world of brands. Therefore, managers and researchers need to have a more systematic and integrative comprehension of the key elements influencing sponsorship outcomes.

The purpose of this study is to cover the existing literature about sports sponsorship and identify the determinants of consumers’ perceptions and attitudes toward sponsors and sponsorships. After the literature review, where the historical background of sponsorships, the place of sponsorships in today’s world and several

models on the effectiveness of sponsorships are undertaken, the study aims to specifically review the current situation of tennis sponsorship in Turkey and the perceptions of people being somewhat involved in tennis about tennis sponsorships. After the sections on literature and research, the study will try to understand the role of the leading tennis sponsor Türk Ekonomi Bankası (TEB) BNP Paribas in Turkey.

The study makes use of the conceptual model created by Speed and Thompson (2000). This conceptual model covers:

- a) consumers' perceptions of the sponsored item which can be property, event or team;
- b) consumers' perceptions of the sponsor;
- c) consumers' perceptions of relevance of the sponsorship including the congruence between the sponsor and sponsee.

According to the effectiveness model created by Speed and Thompson (2000), there are three consecutive steps in order for a sponsorship to be effective.

First, consumers get exposed to the sponsorship. Secondly, consumers start to have perceptions about the sponsorship. Last but not least, consumers respond to the sponsorship.

In this model, the elements determining consumers' perceptions include personal liking for the event; prominence, prevalence and sincerity of the sponsor; and the congruence between the sponsor and sponsee.

The findings of this study are discussed through the light shed by the effectiveness model by Speed and Thompson (2000). First, the perceptions of the respondents about tennis and the place of tennis in Turkey are covered. Then, the perceptions of the respondents about TEB BNP Paribas are discussed and after these two steps taken, respondents' perceptions of relevance of the sponsorship and the congruence between the the sponsor and sponsee are analyzed.

After the discussion of the results, some potential directions for future studies are suggested.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SPONSORSHIPS

With changing competitive conditions, corporations are also trying different ways and channels of communication with their consumers. One of these new methods of communication is sponsorship. The history of sponsorship dates back to 70s BC, when Gaius Clinjus Maecenas would bestow his support to arts and craftsmen. In current sense, the first sponsorship deal is the one made by an Australian company called Spears and Bond (Kalender & Fidan, 2008) in 1861. Also in 1861, a company called John Wisden made a cricket sponsorship contract (Kalender & Fidan, 2008).

In NASCAR history, for example, corporate sponsorship dates back to 1971, when RJR Tobacco Company made an investment of \$100.000 in Junior Johnson's car in NASCAR circuit. This particular sponsorship case was the beginning of the corporate sponsorship in today's NASCAR. Also during this period, Ford Motor Co. And General Motors Corp. started to use the motto "Win on Sunday; Sell on Monday" in their advertisements. From 1971 onwards up to today, corporate sponsorship has become indispensably important as a way of creating fund for NASCAR teams and drivers.

By sport sponsorship, sponsoring corporations aim to create or enhance their brand awareness, boost their brand image and establish an emotional and cognitive bond with fans (Cornwell and Maignan, 1998).

The benefits sponsoring companies aim to achieve can be gathered under three points (Tsiotsou, Alexandris and Cornwell, 2014). The first point is perceptual, meaning creation of a positive image. The second point is attitudinal and it helps sponsoring companies to create among the target audience positive attitude towards themselves. Last but not least, it is cognitive. It means consumers assess the information they have about the sponsor in a positive way.

A sponsorship is usually defined to be a long-term investment of resources by a sponsor. The aim is to make the target segment recognize and have trust in the sincerity in the sponsorship (Amis, Slack, and Berrett 1999; Crimmins and Horn 1996). It can also be described as “an investment, in cash or in kind, in an activity, in return for access to the exploitable commercial potential associated with that activity” (Meenaghan, 1991, p. 36).

Over the past three decades, corporate sponsorship has gained more and more interest worldwide and has become an important tool and a lucrative business investment among marketing strategies of huge corporations. In the late 1980s, the worldwide spending on sponsorship was around \$1 billion. Nowadays, however, corporate sponsorship is something more than just corporate donation. It is a key element in leveraging brand value and competitive advantage (Henseler, Wilson, & Westberg, 2011).

In his analysis of the development of commercial sponsorship and its place in marketing in “The role of sponsorship in the marketing communications mix” (1991), Tony Meenaghan puts forward several main reasons of why sponsorship has developed so much in the last decades. One of them is tobacco and alcohol policies of governments. Tobacco and alcohol producers were led to search for alternative communication and promotion methods with the changing government policies on related products. Another reason is the increasing cost of advertising on traditional channels like TV. The escalating expenditures of the use of media has led advertisers to seek for alternative and more cost-effective communication methods. Also, the proven positive returns of sponsorship in attaining marketing targets has been a good motivator in its rise. Increased leisure-consciousness is also another reason for the increase in commercial sponsorship. Increased allocation of media coverage on such sponsorship activities as sports and cultural events is also a good reason for the development of sponsorship. Additionally, shortages of traditional media has also been one of the main reasons for why sponsorship deals have increased. The need of sponsors to escape the inefficiencies of traditional media like zapping has led brands to focus more on sponsorship activities.

## 2.2 THE SCOPE AND PROPORTION OF SPONSORSHIP MARKET

In the last decades, sponsorship market has seen quite a big development and increase in share. The value of world-wide sponsorship expenditure in 1987 was estimated to be 4.1 billion dollars (ISL Marketing, 1988), while it was 18,1 billion dollar in 1997 (Çoban, 2003). In spite of crises in many different countries and sectors, sponsorship spendings have continued to increase since 2008 (Ko & Kim, 2014). In 2011, sponsorship spending worldwide was estimated to reach \$48.6 billion, in which almost 68% was allocated to sports categories (IEG, 2012). In 2013, the sponsorship market worldwide summed up to an estimated \$53.1 billion (IEG Sponsorship Report, 2014).

As sponsorship has gained a special emphasis in marketing communication, the research and studies focusing on sponsorship effectiveness have also increased (Copeland, Frisby, & McCarville, 1996; Cornwell & Maignan, 1998; Ko, Kim, Claussen, & Kim, 2008; Meenaghan, 2001).

Gwinner and Eaton (1999) describe the influence of sponsorship on a sponsoring brand and company as an image transfer. They suggest that through sports sponsorship, the good image of the sports team, person or event is transferred to the product, brand or the company.

There are mutual advantages in the relation between a sponsor and a sponsee (Farrelly, Quester, & Greyser, 2005; Henseler et al., 2011). A sponsor supports a sport entity monetarily and/or provide in-kind facilities required to leverage team performance, operational stuff and managerial functions of the entity. In return, the sponsor is entitled to be identified and connected with the sport entity (Chen & Zhang, 2011; Yang, Sparks, & Li, 2008). In return for supporting sports events, teams or individuals, corporate sponsors expect intangible or tangible benefits like image improvement and boost in sales by increasing awareness and consumer loyalty (Cornwell & Coote, 2005; Madrigal, 2000). Thus the corporate sponsors and sport properties have a mutual interest in optimizing the effectiveness of the sponsorship relations in order to create favourable attitudes and stimulate buying intentions of consumers (McDaniel, 1999).

In sports sponsorship, the corporations might aim at various goals. The aim can be enhancing brand awareness, getting known in new markets, improving sales performance and market share by reinforcing brand loyalty, making a move against competitors, and/or leveraging brand image (Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou, 2004). Sometimes the objective can even be to get through cultural difficulties (Cousens, Babiak, & Bradish, 2006). Sponsorship programs can also be adopted by sponsors for motivational reasons like increasing the motivation of employees (Barros & Silvestre, 2006). Whatever the starting point might be, the ultimate goal is to create and enhance the preference for sponsor service and products; that is, to boost sales (Barros & Silvestre, 2006). The primary goal of sponsorship is to reinforce brand loyalty and recognition, by bringing together purchase decisions in the end (Sirgy et al., 2008). This is why it is quite important and useful to study long-term effects of sponsorships (Pope, Brown, and Voges, 2009).

Cornwell, Weeks, and Roy (2005) propose that it is the type of sponsorship, projected results, and the characteristics of the target segment that form consumer processing of sponsorship.

### **2.3 SPONSORSHIP AWARENESS**

Many studies show that sponsor awareness is a key element for the effectiveness of a sponsorship (Miloch & Lambrecht, 2006; Walsh, Kim, & Ross, 2008). In order for the brand equity to increase, it is essential that the sponsor has awareness (Keller, 1993). For brand awareness, it is important to identify and recognize the brand in many different situations and to recall the brand (Keller, 1993).

Associative memory model created by Cornwell, Weeks, and Roy (2005) demands some cognitive processing. This suggests that awareness of the sponsorship is required for any kind of evaluation of the impact of the sponsorship. It is only after this first step that a higher-level processing (Johar, Pham, and Wakefield 2006; Wakefield and Bennett 2010) including an image transfer between the sponsor and sponsee (Gwinner and Eaton 1999), a more favourable approach to the sponsor

(Speed and Thompson 2000) and a tendency to purchase the products of the sponsor (Ko et al. 2008), occur.

Bennett (1999), Herrmann, Walliser, Kacha (2011), Olson and Thjomoe (2003), on the other hand, suggest “the mere exposure effect”, which is a favourable response to the sponsor even without any awareness of the sponsorship.

Associative memory model, however, is a more commonly held assumption (Cornwell, Weeks and Roy 2005), which proposes that it is essential for the evaluation of the effectiveness of sponsorship that consumers have awareness of the sponsorship. This awareness is prerequisite for a higher-level processing (Johar, Pham, and Wakefield 2006; Wakefield and Bennett 2010). This aforementioned higher-level processing has some forms like an image transfer between the sponsee and the sponsor (Gwinner and Eaton 1999), the development of a more affirmative response to the sponsor (Speed and Thompson 2000), and more tendency to purchase the products of the sponsor (Ko et al. 2008).

The studies by Crompton (2004) supports this view, too. Sponsorship awareness is prerequisite for the sponsorship to become beneficial for the sponsor (Crompton, 2004). If there is not enough awareness of the sponsor and sponsorship, then the expected effectiveness will not be reached (Farrelly et al. 2005). Sponsorship awareness is one of the key factors orienting fans to purchase sponsoring brands’ products (Ko et al., 2008; Schlesinger & Güngerich, 2011).

Nowadays, it is all revealed by the research that sponsorship awareness is not taken for granted since the consumers are not so sure about how to identify official sponsors (Johar, Pham, and Wakefield 2006). For this reason, studies have examined the factors behind the sponsorship awareness and categorized the important ones into three parts:

- (1) heuristics in the memory
- (2) the features of the sponsorship
- (3) the features of consumers

**i. Heuristics:**

Consumers tend to memorize sponsor-sponsee relation by heuristics<sup>1</sup> (Pham and Johar 2001; Wakefield and Bennett 2010). When the sponsor is a highly known brand, it is more common for consumers to remember the sponsor than the case when the sponsor is a less known brand. Also, when the relationship between the sponsor and the sponsee is considered to be linked, it is again more likely for consumers to evoke the sponsor.

**ii. Sponsorship characteristics**

The degree of sponsorship awareness is influenced by sponsorship characteristics. (Johar, Pham, and Wakefield 2006; Wakefield, Becker-Olsen, and Cornwell 2007). The level of exposure to the sponsorship linkage is influential in the memorization and recall of the sponsorship (Meenaghan 2005). This information makes investment in leveraging the sponsorship and marketing actions important to increase the degree of sponsorship awareness (Crimmins and Horn 1996; Wakefield, Becker-Olsen, and Cornwell 2007).

**iii. Consumer characteristics**

In sponsorship awareness, consumer characteristics have also some effect. If the consumers are familiar with the sponsoring brand, then the chances are that the sponsorship awareness is increased (Cornwell, Weeks, and Roy 2005). So it can be proposed that there is a positive relationship between the consumption of the products of the sponsoring brand and the sponsorship awareness. Also, demographics is an important factor influencing sponsorship awareness. Gender, age and the level of education influence awareness in an important degree. Men versus women and more educated versus less educated people match and remember the sponsor and sponsee at higher levels (Kinney, McDaniel, and DeGaris 2008). A younger person can better recall the link between the sponsor and sponsee than an older person (Kinney, McDaniel, and DeGaris 2008; Walliser 2003). It is demonstrated in later research that also sponsorship duration has an effect upon sponsorship awareness.

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<sup>1</sup> Heuristics means “a method of solving problems by finding practical ways of dealing with them, learning from past experience” as defined in [www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com](http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com)

Braun-LaTour and LaTour (2004, p. 50) posit that the knowledge consumers have about a brand is constructed over time. So the repetition of a sponsorship increases its awareness. As described by McAlister and colleagues (2012), long-term sponsorship has a positive correlation with sponsorship awareness. Accordingly, if the sponsorship exposure level continues, the awareness remains the same even if it doesn't increase.

Individual involvement also makes a difference in sponsorship awareness, in that, if the individual interest is higher or distraction level is lower, then recall and recognition level is increased (Leigh and Menon 1987).

As described by Shank and Beasley (1998, p. 436), individual involvement and interest in sports increases the time spent reading or watching sports games on TV or participating in sports events. This means the more an individual is interested in a particular sport, the more he sees and probably remembers sponsorship messages. Pham (1992) proposes that when an individual is involved with a sponsored sport event, he pays higher attention to sponsorship messages. Moorman and colleagues (2012) argue that higher involvement with a soccer game relates to higher attention and recognition of the commercials embedded through the match. As posited by Wakefield, Becker-Olsen, and Cornwell (2007), the desire to process information and learn the link between the sponsor and the sponsee increases when the individual is highly involved.

As put by Simmons and Becker-Olsen in 2006, the level of cohesiveness between a sponsor and sponsee and the degree they share images alike are quite of an importance for a sponsorship relationship that can be easily understood and justified by consumers.

Studies suggest that when involved in sports events, fans feel an emotional bond (Biscaia, Correia, Rosado, Maroco, & Ross, 2012; Kwak, Kim, & Hirt, 2011; Madrigal, 2003). This is this emotional impact that brands aim to make use of to access and make contact with the consumers (Santomier, 2008).

Meenaghan (2001) contend that the monetary support a sponsor puts in professional sport clubs is appreciated by fans and is very influential in their attitudes

to the sponsor. Parker and Fink (2010) suggest that once the bond between a sponsor and team is founded, the sponsor is very welcome in club and become a member from then on.

As can be seen in various studies, well-organized sponsorships have a positive impact on consumer awareness & recall (Cornwell, Weeks, & Roy, 2005; Javalgi, Traylor, Gorss, & Lampman, 1994; Lardinoit & Derbaix, 2001), the image and prestige of sponsors and sponsors' products (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Javalgi et al., 1994), and attitudes and behaviours towards the sponsor (Nicholls, Roslow, & Laskey, 1994; Ruth & Simonin, 2003; Speed & Thompson, 2000).

Previous research shows that sponsor brands desire to be exposed to the same affirmative and favourable attitudes fans have toward their team (Madrigal, 2001; Shaw & McDonald, 2006). Nowadays, we see, however, that fans' reactions may differ, meaning that however much they feel positive emotions for their teams, their attitude towards a sponsor may either be positive or negative (Roy & Cornwell, 2004). Speed and Thompson (2000) suggest that sincerity is a key factor in determining fans' reactions towards a sponsorship. Wakefield and Bennett (2010) propose that the prominence and prestige of a brand in the market and its relevance with the sponsored event or team are determining factors for fans' way of response towards the sponsorship.

In sports, psychological bond to a team leads to loyalty. Psychological connection brings together unchanging and regular positive attitudes and behaviours to a team (Funk & James, 2001).

Many scholars agree upon the idea that for loyalty, reactions should be reflected in both attitudes and behaviours (Bauer et al., 2008; Bee & Havitz, 2010; Bodet & Bernache-Assolant, 2011; Kaynak et al., 2008). Attitudinal loyalty refers to the commitment towards a team. It is more of a psychological process (Bauer et al. 2008; Kaynak et al., 2008). Behavioral loyalty, on the other hand, is the buying behaviour towards the team products or services (Stevens & Rosenberger, 2012). The number of game tickets bought within a period, purchasing team products or

following the games and news of the team in the media can be included under behavioral loyalty (Bodet & Bernache-Assollant, 2011).

Ko et al. (2008) suggest that the higher a person's involvement with the sport, the higher their purchase tendency to sponsor products. Lee et al. (2011) suggest that when a person following a specific branch of sports has a higher attendance frequency, then the chances are higher for them to purchase sponsor products. The core idea underlying the research undertaken by Ko et al. and Lee et al. is that when the sense of connection with the team is higher, the chances are that the fans feel they should buy sponsors products in order to pay back to the sponsors for backing their team up (Crimmins & Horn, 1996).

Beliefs of a person about an object impact his/her attitudes towards that object (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). So in the assessment of a sponsorship, the attitude towards the sponsor is indispensably important (Keller, 2003). Not surprisingly, affirmative attitude towards the sponsor must be aimed for the sake of the effectiveness of the sponsorship (Alexandris, Tsaousi, & James, 2007; Chen & Zhang, 2011; Speed & Thompson, 2000). Sponsoring brands expect to see the same favourable feelings from the consumers toward their team (Shaw & McDonald, 2006). And actually if sport consumers believe that the sponsorship is vital for their team, then they have the tendency to have positive attitudes towards the sponsoring brand (Madrigal, 2001; Cornwell, Humphresys, Maguire, Weeks, & Tellegen, 2006).

## **2.4 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A SPONSORSHIP**

Chadwick & Thwaites (2004) suggest that setting objectives for sponsorship is important for evaluating the effectiveness of it and for the management of related events. The results of a sponsorship are generally gathered under two main categories: awareness and image (Cornwell et al., 2005).

When measuring the effectiveness of a sponsorship, the most frequently used factor is awareness. Various means are used to measure awareness. However, though

it is very important in analyzing the outcome, it is obvious that awareness by itself is not complete in sponsorship effectiveness. Meenaghan suggests that sponsorship is especially effective when it can benefit from the consumers' very special relationship with a sponsored property (2001). Because it is this relationship with that property that influences consumers' feelings, perceptions, attitudes and behaviours about the sponsor.

From sponsors' point of view, sponsorship effectiveness can be measured with the purchase intention of consumers and the impact of the sponsorship on brand sales (Crompton, 2004). Surely, intention does not mean actually doing something; that's to say, intending to purchase a product doesn't necessarily mean actually buying that stuff. But intention is essential in motivating behaviours (Ajzen, 2001). The study by Spears and Singh (2004) suggests the idea that buying intention means deliberately making plans to attempt to purchase a brand. Similarly the research by Dees, Bennett, and Villegas (2008) contend that purchase intention is an important sign of a person's motivation to really purchase a product. But it is important to remember that before purchase intention, fans should become aware of the sponsor as a first step. Then comes the purchase intention and finally purchase behaviour (Meenaghan, 2001). As can be expected, when fans are aware of sponsors, their attitude towards sponsors also become more favourable and ultimately they have positive intentions to purchase the products of the sponsoring brand (Schlesinger & Güngerich, 2011). As put forward by Parker & Fink in 2010, the awareness of the sponsorship may lead the fans believe that now that this specific brand supports their team, then they may be willing to purchase sponsoring brand's products as a way to pay back as a sign of gratitude in return for the sponsoring brand's generosity. Madrigal suggests that when consumers identify themselves with the sponsored property and the level of engagement is higher, feelings of gratitude are more likely to emerge (2001).

In sponsorship effectiveness, prestige can also have an important influence since when the sponsorship property is prestigious, then the media exposure is also greater (Gwinner & Swanson, 2003; Keller, 1993).

In the studies of Cornwell et al. (2005), it is displayed that the National Basketball Association (NBA), Major League Baseball (MLB), the National Hockey League (NHL) and the Professional Golfers Association (PGA), sponsorships raised the stock prices of the companies sponsoring. Pruitt et al. (2004) put forward that even the declaration of a sponsorship deal for a NASCAR team boosts the stock prices of the sponsoring firms. Research by Mahar et al. (2005) shows that NASCAR sponsors offering products and services directly to end consumers witness a favourable link between winning in the races and increase in their stock prices. Durr et al. (2009) contend that sponsoring NASCAR is a sign of positive financial conditions of a sponsoring company.

Besides very good effects on the brand and sponsored entity, sponsorship might sometimes have detrimental effects for either the sponsor or the sponsored item. Sometimes there occur incidents where athletes involved in the sponsorship may be reflected in a scandal in the media. The results of these scandals become destructive for both the careers of the related athletes and sponsors (Wilson, Stavros, & Westberg, 2008). There has been, for example, a positive correlation between the sports person image and stock prices. In 2009, the things Tiger Woods experienced in his private life drew reaction and his sponsors' stock value and stock prices at that time were highly lowered (Knittel and Stango, 2010).

In some cases, the aggression created by a few team members can be detrimental for the reputation and credibility of an entire team and network (Hughes and Shank, 2005), and these scandals can have unfavorable reflections upon sponsors, too (Wilson et al., 2008).

According to Hughes and Shank (2005), sport scandal is composed of incidents which are "either illegal or unethical, involve multiple parties over a sustained period of time, and whose impact affects the integrity of the sport with which they are associated" (p. 214).

Celebrity endorsement is also an issue deserving high level of attention for the sponsoring brand. The study by Till and Shimp's (1998) puts forward that

unfavorable publicity of a celebrity could have unfavorable association of the brand under some conditions.

According to the research carried out by Pope, Voges, and Brown (2009), unfavorable publicity about the performance of sponsored team has detrimental effects upon the quality of the products of the sponsor, too.

Another tricky aspect of sport sponsorship is that the object to be supported should be chosen carefully in that an object having favorable associations for a group of people might have unfavorable associations for another. Sometimes, being a fan of a team goes hand in hand with unfavorable feelings of the main rival team. The online experiment conducted by Anders Oksnes and Thomas Dyer in 2013 on 151 fans of the football team of Manchester United showed that the favorable sponsorship impacts on the fans of the sponsored team can well be turned upside down for rival teams fans. Avoiding this rivalry problem is a big challenge for brands desiring to be a sponsor for only one of the rival teams.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **TENNIS IN THE WORLD AND TENNIS IN TURKEY**

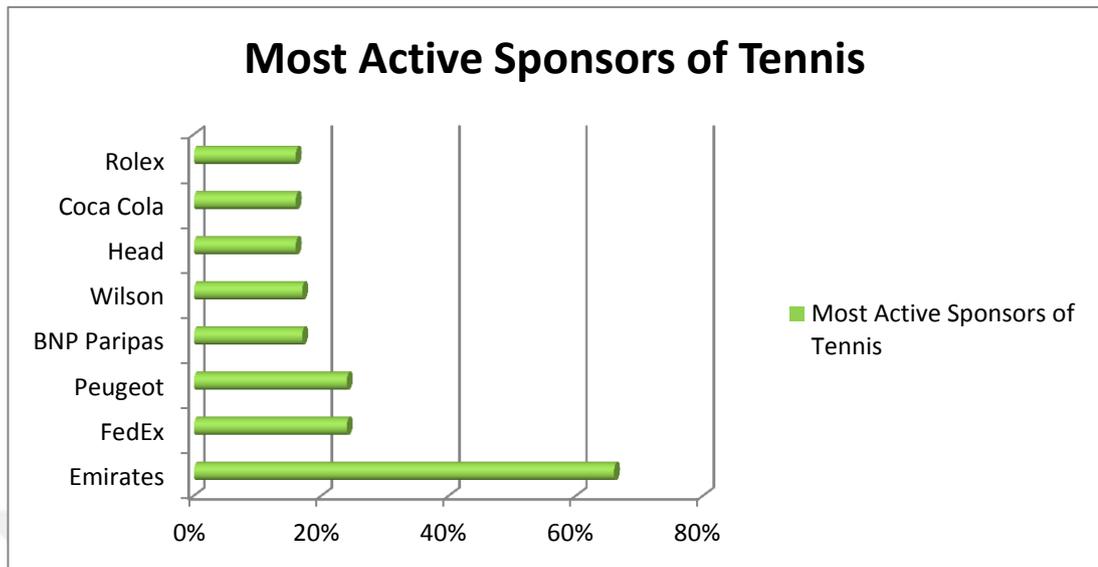
#### **3.1 TENNIS IN THE WORLD**

Tennis has long been a popular and prestigious individual sport all around the world. It is known to develop as a royal sport since it used to be played by the kings and nobles. The interest of the European royal families in tennis has become an important factor in its development. Additionally, the increase of international tennis tournaments like Australian Open, Wimbledon, French Open, US Open etc. has had an accelerator effect in its development and access to the masses (Pattullo, 2002). The interest in tennis was formerly more prevalent among especially the group of people with high-income. In today's world, tennis is still a kind of sport requiring more money when compared to many other sport branches but it is now played more commonly and it is more popular than it used to be (İmamoğlu, 2009).

Tennis is one of the rising stars for sponsors all around the world. According to the research by IEG, world-wide spending on professional and non-professional tennis leagues and tournaments is forecasted to sum up to \$801 million in 2016, which is 4.2 percent higher than the spending in 2015.

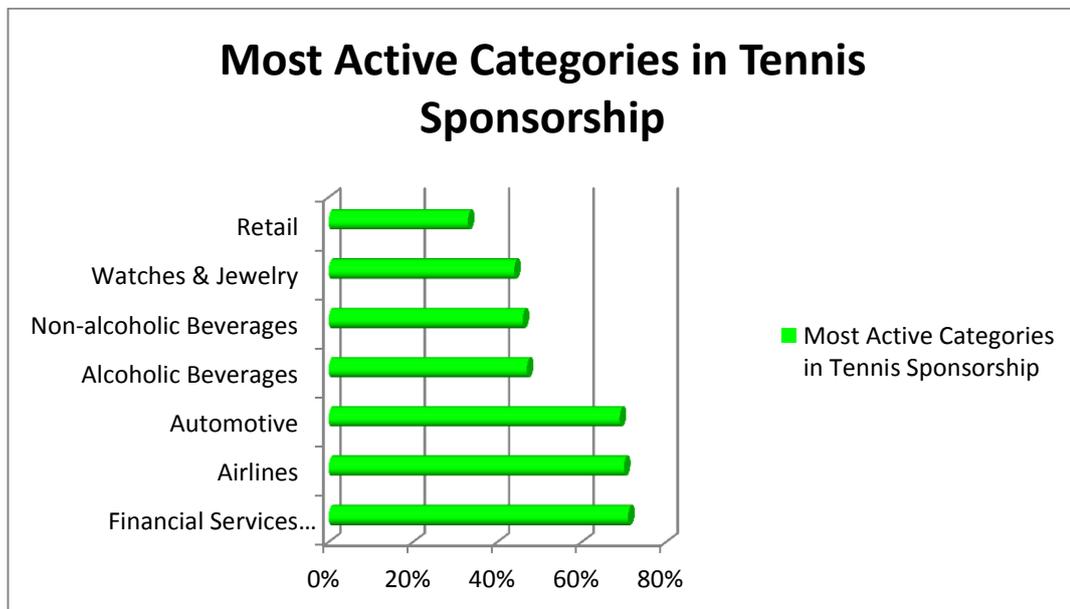
According to the 2016 IEG data, most active sponsoring companies in tennis are Emirates, FedEx, Peugeot, BNP Paribas, Wilson, Head, Coca Cola, and Rolex in order of spending, as can also be seen in Figure 1. Most Active Sponsors of Tennis.

**Figure 1. Most Active Sponsors of Tennis\***



As can be seen in the Figure 2. Most Active Categories in Tennis Sponsorship, 71 percent of tennis entities and properties declare that they have a partnership with a financial corporation like a bank and/or credit card company, in accordance with the data shared by IEG in 2016.

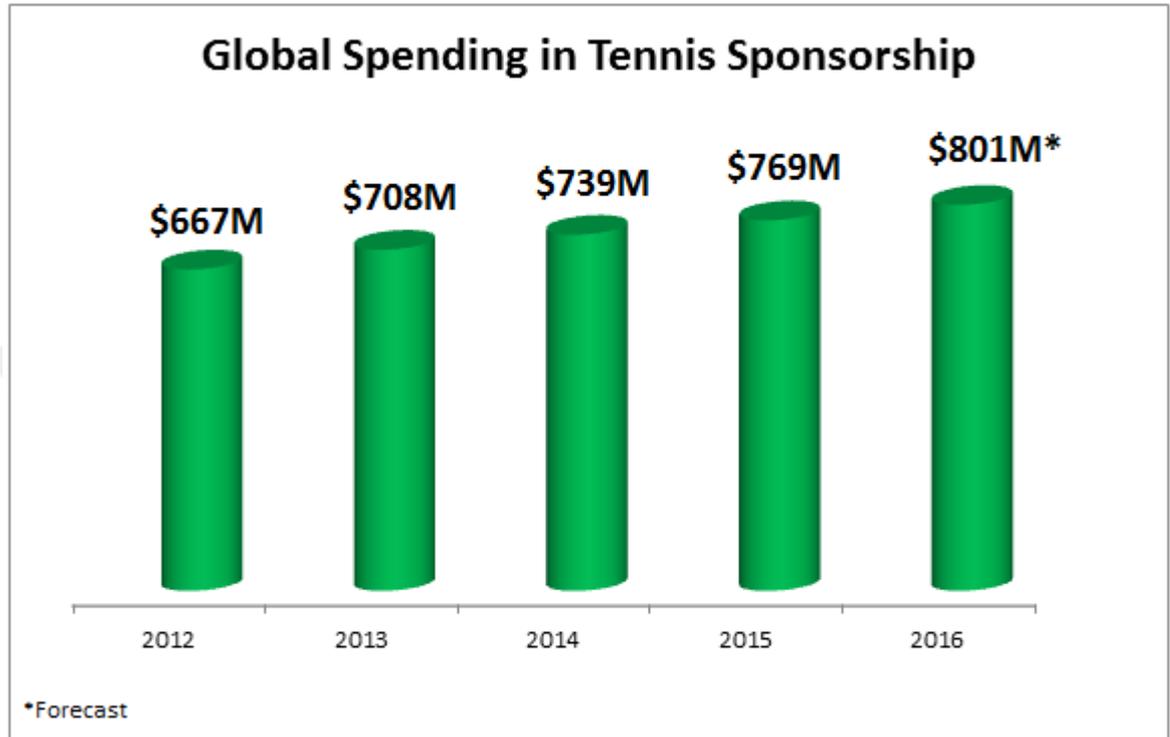
**Figure 2. Most Active Categories in Tennis Sponsorship\***



The data in Figure 3. Global Spending in Tennis Sponsorship show that global spending in tennis sponsorship is increasing as declared in 2016 IEG analysis.

This increase in the global spending in tennis sponsorship shows that tennis is increasingly becoming more popular globally.

**Figure 3.** Global Spending in Tennis Sponsorship\*<sup>2</sup>



### 3.2 TENNIS IN TURKEY

In Turkey, too, tennis has been trying to find a proper place among masses since 1900s. Tennis was introduced to Turkey by English diplomats. In 1905, it was played by English citizens in İzmir. It was in 1915 that Turkish people first played tennis. From then on, tennis became one of the sports played in American colleges in Turkey. Fuat Hüsni Kayacan became the first person in Turkey starting the initiation for tennis with the foundation of a tennis club in Fenerbahçe. The first international tournament Turkish players took place was Balkan Championship in 1930, where Sedat Erkoğlu and Vahram Şirinyan ranked first in double player category. Turkish

<sup>2</sup> The data shared in Figure-1-2-3 are the projection published in Sep, 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016 on IEG website: <http://www.sponsorship.com/iegsr/2016/09/12/Global-Spending-On-Tennis-To-Grow-4-2-Percent-In-2.aspx>

Tennis Federation was founded in 1923. Turkish national players participated in Davis Cup in 1948 for the first time.

Tennis started to be played in Turkey hundreds of years after it was played in Europe. Although tennis still has quite a lot of way to go in Turkey, it has shown great improvement in terms of involvement of people, increase of tennis courts, and access to tennis equipments. Today there are 216 tennis courts and 39.347 tennis players recorded in the list of Turkish Tennis Federation as detailed in the federation's official website.

For years, there have been many sponsors for tennis tournaments and professionals in Turkey, contributing with miscellaneous dimensions. Hürriyet, Vitra, Turkcell, Nike, Crate & Barrel, Dođtař, Spor Toto, Acıbadem, Peugeot Turkey, TEB BNP Paribas, Garanti Koza, Babolat Turkey, Wilson, Turkish Tennis Federation, Lotto, Intercity, Rolex, Borusan Otomotiv and Rado have been among the sponsors of tennis in Turkey. However, the number and level of tennis sponsorships have always been very small when compared to the sponsors of football or basketball in Turkey.

In their studies upon the underlying reasons remarked by some tennis players in Turkey for starting to play tennis and their expectations, Yücel Yıldırım and Hakan Sunay (2009) show that family effect is crucial in becoming a tennis player. But other factors also have a crucial place. Young players are well motivated with the idea of becoming a national player, winning a scholarship abroad, and visiting other countries through the tournaments. In the same study, Yıldırım and Sunay (2009) put forward that to increase the popularity and consolidate the place of tennis, it is quite important to increase the visibility of tennis in the media, to publish news about the tournaments, and to make TV programs on tennis.

### **3.3 ABOUT TEB BNP PARIBAS**

#### **3.3.1 About BNP Paribas**

BNP Paribas is a corporation providing service in banking and finance. It is one of the top 15 banks in the world and has more than 189.000 employees<sup>3</sup>. The bank has visibility in 74 countries and has a presence all around Europe, has a revenue of €42.9 billion and net profit of €6.7 billion. The Group reinforced its presence in Turkey by partnering with a local bank, TEB (Türk Ekonomi Bankası) in 2011. It functions mainly in three activities which are Corporate & Investment Banking, Retail Banking and Investment Solutions. The bank has a large visibility in the western USA and growing fast in Asia. BNP Paribas ranks first in Euro zone in terms of profit and total market value.

#### **3.3.2 About Türk Ekonomi Bankası (TEB)**

Türk Ekonomi Bankası (TEB) was established in 1927 and has expanded its network of branches since its establishment. In February 2005, world's giant BNP Paribas became a partner of TEB. Through this partnership, BNP Paribas had a share in TEB Investment, TEB Leasing, TEB Factoring, TEB Insurance, TEB Portfolio Management and TEB NV. As of October 2016, TEB BNP Paribas has 521 branches and 1698 ATMs in Turkey.

In accordance with the 2013 assessment report published by TEB BNP Paribas, the bank had a net profit of TRY535 million and 544 branches in Turkey as of December, 2013. In the same report, it is stated that TEB BNP Paribas assets increased by 23%, the number of ATMs increased by 41% reaching to 1.477 all around Turkey, and the number of customers increased by 17% in 2013.

In accordance with the 2014 assessment report published by TEB BNP Paribas, the bank had a net profit of TRY622,6 million with an increase of 16%. The

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<sup>3</sup> \*BNP Paribas rated AA on a scale of 22 by Standard & Poor's.

bank had 551 branches in Turkey as of December, 2014. In the same report, it is stated that TEB BNP Paribas assets increased by 37%, the number of ATMs reached to 1.635 all around Turkey. The number of customers increased by 17% in 2014.

In accordance with the 2015 assessment report published by TEB BNP Paribas, the bank had a net profit of TRY882.5 million with an increase of 42%. The number of branches decreased to 532 in Turkey as of December, 2015. In the same report, it is stated that TEB BNP Paribas assets increased by 14%, the number of ATMs reached to almost 1.700 all around Turkey, and the number of customers increased by 9% in 2015 with 190.000 customers. The bank had 9.927 employees.

It can clearly be seen in these assessment reports published by TEB BNP Paribas that the bank has been showing a growing tendency for the last three years.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **TENNIS AND TEB BNP PARIBAS RELATIONSHIP**

BNP Paribas first started to support tennis in 1973 by officially sponsoring the French Open at Roland Garros. Ever since that time, BNP Paribas has been one of the leading partners for tennis. The Group supports not only international tournaments at amateur and professional levels, but also university events, local activities, and events for both able-bodied and disabled players. The reason for why BNP Paribas supports tennis is clearly explained in the Group's website. The tennis activities supported by BNP Paribas make it possible for the Group to meet their current and prospective customers all around the world. Also this sponsorship gives the Group the opportunity to meet new cultures and make true extraordinary human experiences.

BNP Paribas has become one of the top sponsors in world tennis. The Group has been the official sponsor of Roland Garros since 1973. Since 1986, the bank has been the sponsor of five ATP Masters 1000 events called the BNP Paribas Masters. Since 2005, it has been the sponsor of Monte Carlo Masters. Since 2006, it has been the sponsor of Internazionali BNL d'Italia in Rome. Since 2009, it has been the sponsor of BNP Paribas Open in Indian Wells. Since 2010, it has been the sponsor of the Shanghai Masters. It has been holding also the title sponsorship of the two very important tournaments, Davis Cup by BNP Paribas since 2001 and the Fed Cup by BNP Paribas since 2005. The Group also enjoys the official partnership of International Wheelchair Tennis. The Group is the title sponsor of BNP Paribas World Team Cup, which is the wheelchair tennis equivalent of the Davis Cup and Fed Cup.

BNP Paribas encourages the masses to join and enjoy tennis by sponsoring and supporting more than 2000 clubs, 550 non-professional tournaments and 20 national tennis associations. They also globally help social programmes and schools. The Group created the slogan "We Are Tennis" in 2015 and launched a website "wearetennis.com" totally focusing on tennis news all around the world. In the

website, there is a constant flow of information regarding tournament calendars, game results, information about players and statistics. The concept of “We Are Tennis” was followed by “We are Tennis Fan Academy”, which was created to have more enthusiastic and ardent audience in the stadiums.

Partnering with the giant BNP Paribas, TEB started its support for tennis as TEB BNP Paribas in 2011 with its title sponsorship for WTA Championships, which started to be called as TEB BNP Paribas WTA Championships. The contract covered a three-year period of 2011, 2012 and 2013, so the championships were held in Istanbul for three consecutive years. To briefly explain, the WTA Tour Championships (WTA Finals) is an annual tennis tournament played among the top-ranking players on Women’s Tennis Association (WTA) tour. After the four Grand Slams, the tournament is accepted to be the fifth most important and prominent tennis event on the women’s tour. Also, after the four Grand Slams, WTA Finals are the set of events offering the highest amount of prize money. With this sponsorship, the bank was globally under the spotlight through the branding on the courts, media-coverages and digital and social media exposure. The event was followed by 818 million people on TV and 70 thousand people on site. In 2012, Istanbul hosted the highest number of people in the last 13 years in the tournaments.

In 2011, 2012 and 2013, WTA Championships were held under the title sponsorship of TEB BNP Paribas in Istanbul.

Then, in 2014, one of the 63 WTA tournaments, Istanbul Cup became the first tennis tournament to be organized in Turkey under the sponsorship of TEB BNP Paribas. The name of the tournament became TEB BNP Paribas Istanbul Cup. The tournament was held in Istanbul in 2015, too, as TEB BNP Paribas Istanbul Cup.

After supporting women tennis, TEB BNP Paribas decided also to support male professionals in 2015. With the title sponsorship of TEB BNP Paribas for Istanbul Open in 2015, TEB BNP Paribas Istanbul Open was organized in Istanbul for the first time as part of the ATP (Association of Tennis Professionals) 250 Series and a legendary player Roger Federer was hosted in the game.

So the tournaments TEB BNP Paribas has sponsored so far are summarized below:

- TEB BNP Paribas WTA Championchips (2011-2012-2013)
- TEB BNP Paribas Istanbul Cup (2014-2015-2016)
- TEB BNP Paribas Istanbul Open (2015-2016)

The support given to tennis by TEB BNP Paribas is not limited to tournament sponsorships. Zeynep Demirkol, Brand and Communication Director of TEB, tells that the reason why they support tennis, before all, is to make investment in the future of Turkey. They aim to make great contribution to train young players to be world-wide known tennis professionals, to support global tennis organizations by title sponsorships, to increase Turkey's brand value with tennis, and to help Turkey to gain more and more through the sport market and economy. Zeynep Demirkol explains that in order to make tennis reach the masses they have put the project of "Street Tennis" into practice as a social responsibility project. The aim underneath is to change the perception of "the sport played only by the rich" about tennis, to make it a sport that can also be played by the common people in the street and to make it a sport not only watched on TVs but also played by the masses. Through Street Tennis project, TEB BNP Paribas turns the streets, squares and shopping centers in all the 81 cities of Turkey into a tennis court and invites everybody without any exception to play tennis. In 2015, in Batman, Gaziantep, Ankara and Istanbul Eminönü, Street Tennis activities were carried out and the project will be going on in different locations.

As for the question of whether tennis sponsorship was useful for TEB BNP Paribas after the 3-year sponsorship of WTA Championships, TEB Holding Member of Board Varol Civil said that tennis sponsorship gave TEB BNP Paribas back with interest. The sponsorship became quite successful in terms of the increase in their brand awareness. And before all, tennis became a much more known and popular sport in Turkey and it is an honor for TEB BNP Paribas to see more children participating in tennis after this sponsorship. Civil also emphasized that while the brand awareness of TEB was 80% in 2011, after the WTA Championships, in 2013, it increased to 93%. Civil's explanations correspond to the idea that in today's world

corporate sponsorship is not just corporate donation, but instead it is a key element in leveraging brand value and competitive advantage (Henseler, Wilson, & Westberg, 2011).



## **CHAPTER 5**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The data presented in the study were gathered by both face to face and remote in-depth interviews made with 8 people at different ages and mostly having different connections with tennis. The face to face interviews were carried out in a comfortable place like a cafe or restaurant which was both quite enough to talk and record the interview and cozy enough for the respondents to feel relaxed. As for the remote interviews carried out on PC, they were made on Skype and did not lack the comfort of face to face interviews. The sound quality and the audibility were quite acceptable and appropriate. The interviews lasted on average 90 minutes.

In total, there are 18 questions, the first 15 of which are upon the perception of sports sponsorships and specifically tennis sponsorships. These first 15 questions were asked to all participants with no exception. The remaining 3 questions, on the other hand, were only posed to professional players and those involved in tennis investment.

All through the research, the grounded theory method developed by Kathy Charmaz has been of great support. Constructivist grounded theory has come into light as an approach between postmodernism and positivism assuming that there are quite a lot of realities existing rather than “one and only real reality”. To shed more light on the background of this research and understand better what grounded theory method is, the essence of the theory is explained in more detail.

Such researchers as Glaser and Strauss worked upon a grounded theory which was separated from the observer. Charmaz, however, mentions grounded theories – very much like the world – as constructed by subjects themselves. It is the interactions between the people participating in the research process that influence the construction of grounded theories. The social constructivist assumptions of Charmaz suggest that grounded theories are the interpretations of the studied world and not the exact copy of it. The methodology of grounded theory is regarded as

systematic but flexible set of instructions for gathering and analyzing data. When examining the data, the researcher questions what is happening in the specific environment and what kinds of lives the participants have. The researcher also tries to see what the participants understand from their own statements and actions and what is the analytic interpretation of it all. In grounded theory, it is the data that builds all the codes and analysis. The analytic categories are not deduced from ungrounded theory. When assessing a research drafting upon grounded theory methodology, such important principles as reliability, originality, resonance and practicality are evaluated. Charmaz emphasizes that in order for advanced knowledge to be generated it is crucially important for the researcher to be open, curious, passionate and caring. Charmaz suggests that the essence of grounded theory lies both in the engagement of the researcher and the constant comparative method. In Charmaz' perspective, there are different tools for collecting data. The methods on which there is a great focus and discussions in relation to grounded theory are ethnographic methods, intensive interviewing, and textual analysis. Charmaz emphasizes that before embarking on data collection, there are some questions that should be answered. These questions are:

- What is the subject matter that we would like to study?
- What is the research problem we should discuss?
- Which tools can we benefit from?
- How do we collect rich data?

Rich data follows what is beneath the surface. Therefore Charmaz assumes that rich data can provide the researcher with required materials for constructing a significant analysis. Charmaz suggests that once the researcher embarks on collecting data, the grounded theory process starts, too. The researcher then takes one more step with a few tools and concepts. After this first step, a grounded theory journey may follow several different ways depending on the route the researcher would like to pursue and the route the study takes him/her. According to Charmaz, “qualitative” researchers are ahead of the game in at least one respect when compared to “quantitative” researchers. In qualitative research, the researcher can well add brand-new pieces to the study while collecting data or even in a later phase of the analysis.

The qualitative research is flexible, which allows the researcher to pursue the leads emerging while gathering and analyzing data. Charmaz emphasizes that all through the data collection and analysis processes, it is essential that the researcher adds his/her view. Charmaz underlines: “By studying your methods, you will improve both your methodological skills and the quality of data. Subsequently, your scrutiny may lead you to realize later that collecting another kind of data with a different method may answer questions in your emerging analysis. For large projects such as theses, several data-gathering approaches may be necessary in order to answer the research questions raised” (Kathy Charmaz, 2006, p. 35). Charmaz explains the target of coding in grounded theory practice as discovering the underlining in the theoretical meanings of data. Coding for theoretical meaning shows a clear difference from coding in grounded theory. The essence of theoretical meaning available in data can be pictured by coding data incident-by-incident or line-by-line. Charmaz emphasizes that critical thinking and questioning does not mean being critical of respondents. This only means questioning and being critical of data. The researcher should be posing analytical questions while trying to receive data and simultaneously should have the handicraft of speed and spontaneity. Charmaz suggests researchers following grounded theory to be open-minded when reviewing data. Charmaz also recommends that the researcher should not be afraid of preconceptions but instead the preconceptions should help the researcher as a starting point for reviewing data. Charmaz also implies that researchers do not have any information about what others think. But a grounded theorist pays more attention to and is more interested in the context of a statement of an informant than the statement itself. While coding, a researcher should question why an informant utter a certain remark in a certain context. Once the researcher can explain the meaning and purpose of why an informant share specific information, then s/he can shed light on the implicit meaning. According to Charmaz, memo-writing is highly important in building a grounded theory. Charmaz attaches a great importance to writing memos all through the research process. Charmaz considers memo-writing a critical step between data gathering and the draft. The moment the researcher comes up with an idea, s/he should stop and write a memo: “It prompts you to analyze your data and codes early in the research process” (p. 72). Charmaz recommends grounded

theorists to generate their memos in a spontaneous and not in a mechanical way. In grounded theory, memos should be written in unofficial language totally for personal use of the researcher to analyze the data. Charmaz explains this idea in her book, “I wrote the memo to catch my fleeting ideas about the code and to probe data, not to share with you” (p. 80). Charmaz explains that theoretical sampling is “more than follow up intriguing earlier codes”. She means that the researcher can have an effect on the directions in theoretical sampling. The interests and understanding of the researcher have a critical role in deciding the directions. Therefore, the grounded theory researcher should explicitly describe the decisions taken. The purpose of a grounded theory research is to produce a theory and “the potential strength of grounded theory lies in its analytic power to theorize how meanings, actions, and social structures are constructed” (p. 151). Charmaz explains that in the perspective of constructivist grounded theory, a theory should stress more of understanding than explanation. The theory depends on the understanding and interpretation of the data by the researcher. Charmaz explains that “writing qualitative research is an ambiguous process” (p. 153). According to Charmaz, it is essential to write, and and rewrite in qualitative research. It is important to create drafts composed of many components and try to see later how to use them. Charmaz recommends that sections with materials and discovered theories should be written first and the researcher writes an introduction and conclusion afterwards in order to be able to broad-minded. While writing the researcher should try to aim to find arguments for his/her theory. The arguments listed should both arouse the interest of the reader and make him/her agree with the researcher. The draft paper of the researcher should also have a literature review inside. Charmaz also suggests that the researcher is not separate from what s/he examines and that in the essence of the grounded theory lies making use of the constant comparative method and the engagement of the researcher. According to Charmaz, the leading feature of grounded theory method is that it is flexible. Charmaz suggests that researchers can make use of grounded theory methods as a tool “without subscribing to a prescribed theory of knowledge or view of reality” (p. 178).

As suggested by Charmaz, in this research the interaction between the researcher and the respondents was of the greatest importance. The researcher asked

many questions in different ways in order to unveil the hidden data. As for the answers to the questions required to be asked before embarking on data collection according to Charmaz, they are also shared below:

- What is the subject matter that we would like to study?

The subject matter selected for the study covers tennis in Turkey in terms of several aspects. The research is supposed to study the perception of tennis in Turkey, the support and sponsorships for tennis and the actual practises of sponsorships in Turkey, and it aims to understand whether the investments made by sponsors in tennis, and especially by one of the leading sponsors TEB BNP Paribas, are in desired levels.

- What is the research problem we should discuss?

The research problem that needs to be discussed is to understand the perception people in Turkey have about tennis and to grasp whether tennis can take the real support and investments it deserves. The study also attaches special attention to the tennis sponsorship of TEB BNP Paribas in order to understand whether this sponsorship has areas of development to better meet the requirements of players.

- Which tools can we benefit from?

In agreement with Charmaz, this study believes that “qualitative” researchers are ahead of the game in some respects when compared to “quantitative” researchers. Based on this understanding focusing on the advantages of the qualitative research, this study makes use of in-depth interviews as a method of research. During the pre-research phase, a source of people related with tennis were formed. Among this pool were professional players, parents of players, non-professionals and those from the administrative organs like federation. Selected from this pool of people, a certain number of respondents were requested to participate in the in-depth interviews. The flexible nature of qualitative research which requires critical thinking and questioning of data has been of a great use all through the research, in that new pieces have been added and re-structured in all phases of the research. As suggested by Charmaz, in this study, too, the respondents have been posed with not only

analytical but also spontaneous questions with a skillful speed. Last but not least, many kinds of sources online and offline have been of great use.

- How do we collect rich data?

As suggested by Charmaz, rich data pursues the data beneath the surface. In order to reach what is beneath, the study makes use of reframing of questions so that the researcher can make sure of the meaning of the statements of respondents. Also the questions never takes the short-cut, but instead they elaborately challenges the respondents for each and every detail that might be of concern in the research. The data gathered are interpreted into a meaningful total to present significant insights.

While analyzing data, as suggested by Charmaz, special attention was paid in order not to copy the statements of the respondents, but to make interpretations. Not only the words, but also the worlds, context and specific environments of the respondents were questioned while examining and making the analytical interpretation of the data. All through the research, the principles of being open, curious, passionate and caring were followed. The flexibility of the qualitative research allowed us to pursue the paths emerging while gathering and analyzing data, as also suggested by Charmaz, and it was a great advantage. In the research, being critical of data, not the respondents, was another useful approach. Throughout the research, as suggested by Charmaz, memo-writing was indispensably important. It was an important step between data gathering and the draft.

## CHAPTER 6

### RESEARCH DESIGN

#### 6.1 RESEARCH

This study started with the recap of the existing literature about sports sponsorship and identified the determinants of perceptions and attitudes toward sponsors and sponsorships. After the literature review, the place of sponsorships in today's world and several models on the sponsorship effectiveness were taken in hand. Also the place of tennis sponsorship in the world, the biggest actors in the arena of tennis sponsorship and the evolution of tennis sponsorships were discovered together with the situation in Turkey. In this part of the study, basically the place and perception of tennis in Turkey and the results of the tennis sponsorship by TEB BNP Paribas will be undertaken.

By the questions posed to the respondents, the first aim was to try to understand the attitude to the support given to any sports branch by sponsors and to see whether there is any difference in the brand perception before and after the sponsorship. To analyze this part, several real examples from different kinds of sponsorships were addressed and the participants were asked to share their perception regarding both the sponsorship and the match between the sponsored branch and the sponsor. There were also tennis-specific questions trying to understand the perspective on tennis as a branch of sport. Last but not least, the questions tried to answer whether there is any sponsorship for tennis in Turkey, whether the investments made could meet the needs of the sector and the players, and whether the brands sponsoring tennis - no matter it is a tournament or player - could benefit from this support and investment. The analysis of the interviews made by merging the answers under common groups and all through the study, wide literature support was taken.

Herebelow are the brief descriptions of the respondents, who are encoded as Mr. or Ms. and with numbers.

## 6.2 RESPONDENTS

**Mr. One;** male, 29 years old, working in private sector as a marketing specialist for 6 years, a licensed tennis player, currently interested in tennis non-professionally but deeply, has been playing tennis since childhood, follows and watches tennis games, participates in several tennis tournaments.

**Mr. Two;** male, 29 years old, has been working in private sector as a social media specialist for 7 years, used to be a licensed tennis player, currently interested in tennis non-professionally but deeply, used to be a tennis trainer for non-professional new-learners, has been playing tennis since childhood, follows and watches tennis games.

**Mr. Three;** male, 54 years old, is closely and professionally interested in several sports like volleyball and tennis, newspaper columnist writing articles on especially tennis, has also business connections with Garanti Koza, one of the main tennis investors.

**Mr. Four;** male, 29 years old, has been professionally interested in tennis for 10 years, a tennis trainer making his living only from tennis, a licensed tennis player who used to play in Boğaziçi University tennis team, follows any news, games, investments etc. related, has a large network in tennis community.

**Mr. Five;** male, 34 years old, has always been so much involved in tennis all his life that it wouldn't be wrong to say he was almost born in a tennis court, his father used to be a national tennis player and **Mr. Five** himself used to be a licensed tennis player until he was 20, has been working as a tournament director and general coordinator in many tennis tournaments for more than 10 years, has been a member of board of directors in Turkish Tennis Federation for 7 years, also involved in tennis academically.

**Mr. Six;** male, around 50 years old, studied in sports academy, currently works as a general sports coordinator in a tennis coaching center, is also involved in tennis as a

parent since his son is a national tennis player, has participated in many international tennis tournaments as an audience, plays tennis non-professionally.

**Ms. Seven;** female, 20 years old, started to play tennis at 4 and has been playing tennis professionally for 16 years, currently a national tennis player, plays in around 20 professional tournaments in a year, her sister is also a professional tennis player.

**Ms. Eight;** female, 29 years old, started to play tennis at 8 and has been a licensed tennis player for almost 20 years in TED, a national tennis player, has been playing in many international tennis tournaments for years.



## CHAPTER 7

### DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

#### 7.1 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

##### 7.1.1 Any Kind of Sponsorship in Sports is Valuable

It is an undeniably strong result of this research that sport sponsorship is quite valuable for the team/event/sports individual and brand in many cases. All participants believe that sports unify people and set up a common language. Since very old times, sport has been one of the best tools used in the “development process” and to control subaltern people in order to increase their level of wealth. This is especially true in countries with lower income levels (Guttmann 1994; MacKenzie 1984; Maguire 1999; Wagg 1995). This link between sport and development has grown even stronger especially since 2005, which was the year when the United Nations declared as “Year of Development and Peace through Sport and Physical Education”. So today it is more important for brands, too, to be involved in sports and sponsorships. Also the need for brands as sponsors is bigger. As a parent meeting all kinds of sporting expenses of his son, **Mr. Six**, for example, makes a special emphasis on the importance of sponsorships in tennis. He says: “The clothing expenses in tennis are very high. My son’s brand-new tennis shoes sometimes wear off in only one week. Thinking that the cost for a pair of tennis shoes is around 500 TRY, it is a huge expense for us. Individual sponsorship is a very challenging work. In tennis, any kind of contribution, small or big, is important. Without any sponsorship, individual sports like tennis cannot make any progress.” Professional, female, 29 year-old tennis player, **Ms. Eight** emphasizes that when she compares her feelings and perceptions about a sponsoring brand before and after the sponsorship, she feels much more intimate with the brand. Another professional, female player **Ms. Seven**, too, agrees and says that “Especially in tennis, the more the support is given, the more players can attend tournaments.”

### 7.1.2 Brands Sponsoring Sport are More Favorable

About the questions of “what is the first brand that you can think of as sponsoring sport and what is your perception and feeling about this brand”, the answers differ among the participants.

THY, Arçelik, Vodafone, Beko, Coca Cola, Adidas, Nike and Ülker were among the brands that first come to the minds of the participants as sponsoring brands for a branch of sport. All participants agree upon the fact that they feel and show more appreciation and approval for the brands sponsoring sport and they feel more intimate to those brands when compared to the pre-sponsorship period. This idea can also be found in the studies undertaken by Meenaghan (2001), who suggests that the monetary support a sponsor puts in professional sport clubs is appreciated by fans and is very influential in their attitudes to the sponsor. The same link can also be found in the research of Parker and Fink (2010), where the two researchers contend that once the bond between a sponsor and team is founded, the sponsor is very welcome in club and become a member from then on.

Most of the participants of this research view football as the main sport followed in Turkey, and some express their dissatisfaction and discontent about this situation. This is why, for example, **Ms. Seven** appreciates the national female basketball team sponsorship undertaken by Turkcell. She says that “the sponsorships other than football make me really happy. I appreciate Turkcell very much due to their sponsorship for the national female basketball team. Their support for female sport also makes me feel happy.” This is also how **Mr. Two**, 29 years old male non-professional tennis player almost feels like. **Mr. Two** says that “football has already reached a certain level of popularity. The brands should sponsor other branches and this way popularize them among children and teenagers.” He also expresses that even basketball has reached a saturation point in terms of popularity, and therefore brands should focus their support on other branches.

These ideas match with the strategy TEB BNP Paribas is following as explained by Zeynep Demirkol, Brand and Communication Director of TEB BNP Paribas. When talking about the reason why they are giving support to tennis instead

of any other sport, Demirkol explains that “despite being a sport that has evolved a lot in the last ten years, tennis is a branch that has yet not been discovered by other competitor brands” (<http://thebrandage.com/teb-bnp-paribas-istanbul-cup-ile-tenis-markalasiyor>, 2016). Demirkol’s explanations can find a basis in the research by Henseler, Wilson, & Westberg. The researchers take corporate sponsorship as something more than just corporate donation. It is a key element in leveraging brand value and competitive advantage (Henseler, Wilson, & Westberg, 2011). So TEB BNP Paribas is meeting the expectations and gaining the appreciation of some of the respondents of this research by supporting tennis instead of football or basketball.

### **7.1.3 Congruence Between Sponsor and Sponsee is Critical**

One of the remarkable outputs of this research is the importance of relevance between the sponsor and the sponsored event or team. As part of this current study, the question “what do you think about Turkish Airlines’ official sponsorship for Euro League 2016” was addressed to the participants. 7 out of 8 participants express that they think this sponsorship has added value to and boosted the image of Turkish Airlines. Being a global company with global targets, Turkish Airlines is well appreciated with this sponsorship, which is considered to be quite a proper and relevant way to publicise the brand and make it popular. Even this one question is a good way to see how critical the relevance between the sponsor and sponsee is. People want to see a connection or congruence when a brand sponsors an event, team or player. The effectiveness model created by Speed and Thompson (2000) also supports the importance of the idea of “congruence”. According to Speed and Thompson, the elements determining consumers’ perceptions include the congruence between the sponsor and sponsee together with personal liking for the event and prominence, prevalence and sincerity of the sponsor. Wakefield and Bennett (2010), too, suggest that it is not only the prominence and prestige of a brand in the market but also its relevance with the sponsored event or team that determines the way of response towards the sponsorship. Other studies also show the importance of congruence in a different way. Research shows that consumers are inclined to memorize sponsor-sponsee relation by heuristics (Pham and Johar 2001; Wakefield

and Bennett 2010). Therefore, when the connection between the sponsor and the sponsored item is regarded as linked, it is more likely for consumers to remember the sponsor. So congruence between the sponsor and sponsored item makes a difference in sponsorship.

#### **7.1.4 The Way of Communication in Sponsorship Makes a Difference**

Another outstanding output of the research is the importance of the way of communication chosen. All participants totally agree that Garanti Bank has been quite successful in their support for the national male basketball team (12 Giantmen) as the main sponsor. **Mr. Three**, male sports columnist and intimate follower of tennis, points out that the secret of the success of Garanti Bankası lies in several things. First of all, General Manager of the time, Ergun Ozen, was a basketball player himself, which had a crucial impact in the success and energy put into the sponsorship. Secondly, Garanti Bank was clever enough to create a motto like 12 Giantmen. This motto not only increased the level of awareness towards basketball among the public and made it more prominent, but also increased the energy of the players. Last but not least, the jingle composed and the music group Athena highly attracted the interest of the public, which was one of the basic reasons for the success of this sponsorship. In addition to all these points shared by **Mr. Three**, 34 year-old **Mr. Five** remarks that the TV commercials of Garanti Bank at that time were very successful since the real basketball players were acting.

According to Emet Gürel from the Faculty of Communication Department of Public Relations and Publicity in Ege University (2006), the success of Garanti Bank's sponsorship for A National Basketball Team and national sponsorship for the 2001 European Basketball Championship lies basically under the appropriate and professional management of the sponsorship. The Bank's clever decision in creating the "12 Giant Men" slogan for drawing public support to the tournament in Turkey was even carried one step further by the advertising films.

### **7.1.5 Tennis is a Sport With Unique Characteristics. It is an Elite and Expensive Individual Sport**

When asked what kind of a sport tennis is and in which points it differs from and resembles to other branches, all participants first explain that tennis is an individual sport. A tennis player has to manage everything needed in the court by himself. It is not a team sport. A player is alone both physically and mentally and is the only decision-maker for any kind of issue. 20 year-old professional player **Ms. Seven** mentions some difficulties like being away and abroad most of the time, not being able to see family frequently, and travelling alone from one country to another. Two professional tennis players, **Ms. Seven and Ms. Eight**, share the same views about the financial burdens of tennis. **Ms. Seven** states that tennis has many prerequisites like having a pair of good-quality tennis shoes which you need to change bi-monthly or sometimes even earlier. The higher levels you reach, the more the costs increase in tennis. The most expensive items include flight, hotel and tennis equipment. **Ms. Eight**, who started to play tennis when she was 8 and who is a national tennis player playing in many international tennis tournaments for years, highlights that in football the game finishes within 90 minutes but in tennis the game might last 30 minutes or 3 hours, players can't estimate the exact duration of a game beforehand. Players are supposed to play in five consecutive matches if the game goes on, which is one of the reasons why this sport is so difficult physically and mentally. And although it has been more popular in the last decade, tennis cannot be in demand as much as football in the nearest future. Football has become like Turkish ancestral sport, adds **Ms. Eight** and, also emphasizes the financial burden tennis brings together. She underlines that for tournaments where a tennis player needs to participate with her trainer, the player has to bear all the expenses also for the trainer. 29 year-old, male tennis trainer, **Mr. Four** metaphorically defines tennis as a sport played behind high walls. The people out do not have the faintest idea about tennis, but once you are on the other part of the wall where you can play tennis, you understand that it is a luxurious world and that tennis is a very expensive sport. One can play football barefoot in the neighbourhood and so anybody can play football no matter he is rich or not. In a country like Turkey where the minimum wage is around 1300 TRY, however, it is not possible to expand this sport to the

large masses. And what's more, some people playing tennis or somehow involved in this sport do not want tennis to be extended to the large masses. After all, tennis was born as a royal sport. **Mr Six**, who works as a general sports coordinator in a tennis coaching center, remarks that tennis is different from team sports in that one can play tennis at any age and doesn't have to wait for a whole team to come together to play. Tennis is a very aesthetic sport which also needs a lot of intelligence. **Mr Six** also refers to the individual characteristics of tennis. Players cannot bring their parents or trainers with them into the court. The rule is: You are by yourself and the only decision-maker. This is why tennis-playing children grow mature earlier compared to their peers. **Mr. Two**, who is a social media specialist and has been playing tennis since childhood, points out that successful tennis players like İpek Soyulu and Çağla Büyükakçay encourage families to motivate their children to start playing tennis. **Mr. Two** also agrees with **Ms. Eight** in that tennis can never exceed the popularity of football or basketball. It is the healthy living concept in today's world that encourages many people to play tennis. And this is why **Mr. Two** believes that the number of licensed players and tennis audience will exceed those of volleyball in the future. **Mr. Three**, who is professionally interested in several sports like volleyball and tennis and a newspaper columnist writing articles on especially tennis, thinks that tennis has a special culture that needs to be perceived with all aspects. There is no sport branch other than tennis that needs players to warm their competitor up before starting the game. In tennis, however, the two players prepare each other physically for the match. Tennis is a gentile sport in which players should be respectful and kind to each other. In youth tournaments hosting players between the ages 10 to 16, there is no referees. Instead, there is only a supervisor who is selected among the players themselves. In football, however, one cannot even think of a game played without the control of a referee. In tennis, there is a special care and attention for gentlemanly conducts. The players are expected to enter the court together, and no matter who wins or loses the game, the players are supposed to celebrate each other after the match. Therefore, self-confidence is very important in tennis. When compared to the situation several years ago in Turkey, tennis is much more popular and favourable.

From these answers, it can easily be deduced that tennis is an expensive sport that needs a lot of travelling, good-quality equipments and well-preserved physical and mental conditions.

#### **7.1.6 Tennis Sponsorship is Well Appreciated in Turkey. But the Support Given is Not Sufficient**

About the question “what is your point of view about a brand’s sponsorship for tennis?”, all participants agree that they would be very happy and appreciate the brand for its contribution to tennis”. **Mr. Three**, who is not only a sports columnist but also has business connections with Garanti Koza, additionally thinks that if a brand intends to undertake tennis sponsorship, this means that this brand has very good-quality products or services, is very confident about these products or services, and plans to reach its target segment through tennis sponsorship. This is also what **Mr. Five**, a member of board of directors in tennis federation, feels like. 34-year-old **Mr. Five** suggests that when a brand decides to take on tennis sponsorship, this means the brand is positioned in a certain level and status and it aims to benefit from the high level perception tennis already has. This is described as an “image transfer” by Gwinner and Eaton (1999) while explaining the influence of sponsorship on a sponsoring brand and company. Based on his perceptions about the nature of tennis and the sponsors abroad, **Mr. One** has the opinion that a brand sponsoring tennis is preferred for luxury and is quite expensive. He adds that he appreciates a brand investing in tennis and the sponsorships boost his overall perception of the brand. He puts it with an example based on his own experience: “The company I used to work at had an agreement with TEB BNP Paribas and therefore I became the customer of the bank. I had some bad experience and had a negative perception until I heard about the tennis sponsorship undertaken by TEB BNP Paribas. With this sponsorship, my perception about TEB BNP Paribas changed and became more positive. With the help of such sponsorship, famous players like Federer started to come to Turkey. This is also what makes me happy with these investments in tennis.” The ideas of **Mr. One** correspond with those of many researchers. By

sponsorships, sponsors aim to have a favorable perception in the minds of the target audience by benefiting from the relationship between the sponsored item and fans. **Mr. One's** answer shows that the image he has about tennis is transferred to the sponsor in a natural flow, as desired and aimed by the sponsor (Dees, Bennett & Ferreira, 2010; Gwinner & Bennet, 2008). It is already known that when the bond between the sponsored item and the sponsor is transferred in a successful way, the product, brand and corporate image of the sponsor are also positively impacted. (d'Astous & Bitz, 1995; Cornwell, Humphreys, Maguire, Weeks & Tellegen, 2006; Cornwell & Maignan, 1998; Carlson, Donovan & Cumiskey, 2009; Ko & Kim, 2014). **Mr. One's** point of view also supports the study by Madrigal, who suggests that when consumers identify themselves with the sponsored item and when the level of engagement is higher, feelings of gratitude are more likely to emerge (2001). Despite the unpleasant experience **Mr. One** had with TEB BNP Paribas in the past, his appreciation of the bank for tennis sponsorship and his confirmation that he had a better perception of the bank after hearing about the sponsorship shows how much he attaches importance to this sponsorship. 50-year-old sports coordinator **Mr. Six** and 29-year-old tennis trainer **Mr. Four** also agree with **Mr. One** in that tennis sponsors target a wealthier and niche segment. And they both have a better perception of the sponsoring brands after the sponsorship. This idea supports the suggestion made by Madrigal, who proposes that when people identify themselves with the sponsored property and when the level of engagement is higher, feelings of gratitude are more likely to emerge (2001). The research by Leigh and Menon (1987) also suggest that individual involvement makes a difference in sponsorship awareness, in that, if the individual interest is higher or distraction level is lower, then recall and recognition level is increased (Leigh and Menon 1987). Considering all the respondents are interested in tennis in either professional or non-professional level, it is not surprising to see that all respondents very welcome and have the feelings of appreciation for brands supporting tennis.

The two professional and national tennis players **Ms. Seven and Ms. Eight** agree upon the critical importance of support for individual tennis players. **Ms. Seven** explains that in tennis as the level of the player increases, the costs increase, too, and playing tennis becomes more and more expensive for the player and the

family. As a player who doesn't have any clothing and shoes sponsor, she mentions the difficulties of bearing all these expenses. Therefore, sponsors for individual players make it possible for players to attend international tournaments. Sponsoring for organizations and tournaments is also quite valuable, she adds, considering that when Turkey hosts a tennis event, then the players take the advantage of being supported and playing at home. **Ms. Eight**, too, believes that in tennis, giving support to both individual players and tournaments is of critical importance. Tournament sponsorship is indispensable thinking that without any tournaments, tennis matches cannot be organized and so players cannot play tennis. Sometimes tennis clubs intend to organize tournaments but due to the lack of relevant budget, they cannot. Sponsors lend a helping hand in such situations. Individual sponsorship is essential in tennis since tennis is a sport with lots of expenses and the more a player is supported financially, the more he can participate in tennis camps and tournaments, which ultimately boosts the performance of the player. **Mr. Five** expresses that the expenses the clubs have to bear today are much higher than they were 50 years ago. Nowadays, a tennis club has to pay 80K TRY on average monthly for all kinds of expenditures. So sponsorships support clubs for higher service quality. He believes that sponsorship in tennis contributes to the development of the tennis sport, too. A marketing specialist in private sector and a tennis player since childhood, **Mr. One** regards tennis as a classy sport played by the elite class.

29-year-old, social media specialist **Mr. Two**, who is a non-professional tennis player, suggests that any support given to encourage children to be involved in a branch of sport is valuable since sport is a very important tool in personal growth, decision-making, and such skills as cooperation and helping each other. Making investments in sport and helping children to benefit from these investments also contribute a lot to the families and the society. Sport has a unifying power and creates a common language between people of different ages and income levels. With the help of all investments in sport, children are prevented from acquiring bad habits. For all these reasons, **Mr. Two** says that he is positively affected by sport sponsorships whether it is for tennis or not. But he says he feels football long ago reached the saturation point in terms of support and investments and now it is turn for other sports.

### **7.1.7 TEB BNP Paribas Stands Out Among the Sponsors of Tennis in Turkey**

After understanding the nature and challenges of tennis and the place it has in Turkey, the next questions follows: “What are the brands sponsoring tennis?” In the world, there are many brands sponsoring leading successful individual tennis players like Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal, Novak Djokovic, Maria Sharapova and Serena Williams. Some of these brands are Nike, Adidas, Wilson, Babolat, Head, Rolex, Richard Mille, Credit Suisse, Mercedes-Benz, Porsche, Peugeot, Kia, Gillette, Moët&Chandon, NetJets, Sunrise, Uniqlo, Jacob’s Creek, Seiko, Tommy Hilfiger, Telefonica, Mapfre, Avon, Evian, Samsung, TagHeuer, and Pepsi. Every year, this record-breaking title-holders earn millions of dollars out of sponsorships. There are fewer sponsors in tennis when compared especially to football and basketball in Turkey. In the official website of Turkish Football Federation, there seem to be seven main sponsors for football, not including secondary and official sponsors. In the website of Turkish Tennis Federation (<http://www.ttf.org.tr/sponsorlar>), on the other hand, there is no such part as main or official sponsors, but instead, on the main page of “sponsors” section, there are only three sponsor logos (Spor Toto, Acıbadem and TEB). Even this very simple analysis between the two websites shows the big difference in the number of sponsors for football and tennis. Apart from these three brands, also Garanti Koza, Lassa, Adidas, Babolat, Head, Yonex, Wilson, Spor Toto, Dunlop, Peugeot, and Ares are among the collaborators.

The research shows that the number one brand that is named as the sponsor for tennis is TEB BNP Paribas; that’s to say, the recall rate for TEB BNP Paribas as a tennis sponsor is by far higher than any other brand. There is no one single respondent that doesn’t remember TEB BNP Paribas as a sponsor. Moreover, most of the respondents remember TEB BNP Paribas as a brand with significant contributions to the awareness and popularity of tennis. TEB BNP Paribas stands out as a sponsor for some tennis tournaments, not as a sponsor for individual players. Considering the effectiveness model by Speed and Thompson, it is quite natural that TEB BNP Paribas’s rate of recall as one of the leading sponsors of tennis is higher than other brands in this research. According to the model developed by Speed and

Thompson, the prominence and prevalence of the sponsor is of a great importance for a sponsorship to be effective and successful. Thinking that TEB's partner BNP Paribas has been a worldwide sponsor for tennis since 1973, the brand has been the most prevalent and prominent brand ever supporting tennis so far. Cornwell et al. gather the results of a sponsorship under two main categories which are awareness and image (2005). Meenaghan proposes that before all, it is "awareness" that a sponsor needs. Then come other attitudes or behaviours like purchase intention (2001). Also, it is possible to say that TEB BNP Paribas has been successfully benefiting from the exposure effect Speed and Thompson (2000) talks about. In accordance with the effectiveness model by Speed and Thompson (2000), the first step in order for a sponsorship to be effective is to make people get exposed to the related sponsorship. These research results are a sign of the fact that the high level of awareness of TEB BNP Paribas as one of the leading sponsors for tennis is an important step leading the success of the brand. TEB BNP Paribas also seems to be benefiting from the perceptual advantage of tennis, which fits with the studies of Tsiotsou, Alexandris and Cornwell (2014), who support that the aim of a sponsor can be gathered in three points. The first is positive image creation. The second is positive attitude creation and the third is cognitive.

The Federation, Head, Wilson, Babolat and Hülya Avşar are also among the other sponsors according to the respondents. Hülya Avşar is a Turkish actress and pop folk singer, who is also a tennis player. Hülya Avşar has pioneered Hulya Cup, which is a tennis tournament organized in between 2001-2013. The tournament was a part of a long-termed social responsibility project, at the end of which all the revenues were transferred as a scholarship to successful children playing tennis. Hülya Avşar herself expresses her perspective in this sponsorship in the official website of Hulya Cup <http://www.hulyacup.com/HulyaAvsar>: "I view supporting sport as social responsibility. I have been playing tennis since 1992 and take pride of organizing Hulya Cup tennis tournament since 2001 and providing scholarship to young and successful players." This explains why **Mr. One** considers Hülya Avşar as one of the leading sponsors and promoters of tennis.

### **7.1.8 TEB BNP Paribas and Garanti Koza Are Very Important Actors With Different Approaches In Tennis**

The opinions about the biggest investor and supporter of tennis differ among the participants. The answers to the supporters of tennis are Garanti Koza, TEB BNP Paribas, Turkish Tennis Federation, Wilson, Babolat, Head, Adidas, and Hülya Avşar. Although it is Garanti Koza and TEB on the top of the recall list, the two brands are walking in different paths.

TEB BNP Paribas is literally a sponsor for tennis. The Group provides financial support and in return, takes the right of title and visibility in many tournaments. Additionally, TEB BNP Paribas has been making investments in advertisements, which increases the visibility and popularity of tennis, in return. These international tournament sponsorships are helping tennis to be better known and played by larger masses in Turkey. TEB BNP Paribas has also recently been undertaking new projects to make tennis a more popular and accessible sport. However, the Group still neglects to give individual support to tennis players while this kind of a support is crucial for their improvement, according to the opinions of professional tennis players themselves.

Garanti Koza, on the other hand, makes an investment in tennis and hosts two very important tournaments, which are WTA and ATP. The company has also built Garanti Koza Arena, the biggest tennis and sports academy in the world, with 63 courts and capacity of 8 thousand people. A construction company since 1948, Garanti Koza, comes to the forefront with its supports for individual tennis players and constructions of tennis facilities. Its financial support for meeting the costs of especially flight, accommodation and court has been appreciated by many tennis players. Its matchless support is believed to be indispensable in terms of both size and form. Considering all their contributions, Garanti Koza can be regarded as more like an investor and a supporter. Garanti Koza considers its support for tennis as a social responsibility as defined in its official website. Supporting tennis and its stakeholders is also a form of investment for Garanti Koza. It makes deals for bringing international tournaments to Turkey and builds the biggest tennis facilities of Europe for hosting tennis audience and international players in Istanbul. As a

company of construction, it has been developing a prestigious network thanks to its support for tennis. It is of no coincidence that the son of the main owner of Garanti Koza, Cem Ilkel, is himself a national tennis player. The interest of Ilkel family in tennis has been a driving force for their support for tennis and tennis stakeholders.

About the level of contributions to tennis by Garanti Koza and TEB BNP Paribas, the answers of the respondents differ a little. Most of the participants think that the contributions of both brands are indispensable. As for the level of contribution, Garanti Koza seems to have been taking great responsibility with their support for tennis financially, physically and mentally since 2005, when the company first stepped into tennis world and spent 5 billion dollars for the publicity of Istanbul and tennis. In the same year, for the promotion of WTA tournament organized in Istanbul, a world-wide famous tennis player Venus Williams came to Turkey and played tennis with national Turkish tennis player İpek Şenoğlu on the Bosphorus Bridge. The organization and financing of the organization were undertaken by Garanti Koza. A professional and national tennis player **Ms. Seven** regards Garanti Koza as a critical supporter and says that Garanti Koza has been a sponsor for her for 3 years and that she is grateful to Garanti Koza for all their support, which includes covering the expenses for the most costly items like accommodation, flight and food. **Ms. Seven** emphasizes that there are many tennis players who had to stop playing tennis because of financial difficulties and lack of sponsors. In Turkey, it is not very easy to find sponsors without first being successful in international tournaments. For example, tyre producer Lassa has undertaken the sponsorship for İpek Soylu, only after she has been the first Turkish player to win the Grand Slam Cup. **Ms. Seven** also refers to the contributions of the federation and refers to Babolat as her tennis racquet sponsor. She complains about the lack of sponsors in clothing or shoes. Considering she has to replace her shoes bi-monthly at the latest, the sum she has to pay can sometimes amount to 3000 TRY in a month and this doesn't include any clothing. She thinks the contribution of Garanti Koza is also indispensable since the company has built the sports facilities and made agreements for the organization of important international tournaments in Turkey. Having said that, she also suggests that TEB's support in sponsoring the tournaments brought by Garanti Koza is crucially important. **Ms. Eight**, too, agrees upon the importance of the investments

made by Garanti Koza. “The sport facility built by Garanti Koza is the most comprehensive and biggest complex I have ever seen. When the construction of the total structure is completed, the facility will be the largest tennis complex all around the world. This construction means a lot for the development of tennis. The only thing Garanti Koza wants for the time being is to contribute, not to earn money. But I am sure in the long term they are going to reap the fruits of this investment. As for the contributions by TEB BNP Paribas, for sure, by sponsoring the tournaments they make a certain amount of investment in tennis.” **Mr. Three** sees the investment made by Garanti Koza as praiseworthy. He believes that without the contributions of Garanti Koza, some of the most successful players of Turkey wouldn’t have had the same success. Garanti Koza not only brings world-wide known tournaments to Turkey but also makes a great effort by raising and training players. He also thinks that TEB BNP Paribas’s support in tennis is very important and valuable but he considers TEB BNP Paribas as a financial supporter. And this is the difference between Garanti Koza and TEB BNP Paribas. This is why he believes the investment of Garanti Koza is priceless. **Mr. Two** metaphorically describes Garanti Koza as a player passing the ball and TEB BNP Paribas as a player scoring the goal. And he believes it is more important to pass the ball since this creates real value. He assumes it is Garanti Koza that has been endeavouring for the development of tennis, but it is TEB BNP Paribas that has made tennis popular. Having said that, he adds without Garanti Koza, TEB BNP Paribas wouldn’t be able to make a gain out of the tennis sponsorship. **Mr. Six**, too, appreciates the contributions and investments made by Garanti Koza, which has created a value by undertaking one of the biggest tennis facility projects in the world. TEB BNP Paribas, on the other hand, acts as a financial provider. **Mr. Six** thinks the support given by both brands is of great importance and contributes a lot to the development of tennis.

So to sum up this part, both TEB BNP Paribas and Garanti Koza do great things in tennis. But both brands have some way to go to increase their contribution to tennis and to reap more benefit out of their contribution.

### **7.1.9 Sponsoring Sports Is Not Only Financing It But Shouldering Responsibility For Its Improvement**

As understood from the interviews with the respondents for this specific study, although sport sponsorship seems to be a way of communication chosen by many brands, it should be handled with a special attention. As suggested by **Mr. Three**, male sports columnist and intimate follower of tennis, sponsorships should be treated with a special focus by special sponsorship departments created under the related departments of sponsoring companies. Nowadays, there are some agencies specifically working upon sports sponsorships and **Mr. Three** suggests companies to work in collaboration with these agencies to conduct more professional sponsorship deals and activities.

As understood from the interviews with the two national professional players taking part in this research, sponsorship should not solely mean providing financial support and then going back. But instead, it becomes more powerful and influential for both the players and the development of the sport when the sponsor generates clever solutions for the requirements of the players, teams and clubs like developing sports schools, training children interested in sports, creating audience to watch the sports games, paying a real and sincere care for the improvement of players etc. As inferred from this research, in tennis, a sponsorship should go hand in hand with individual support and for players it is more meaningful and memorable when the sponsor supports individual players even if they are not yet in the top rank. Garanti Koza is somewhat successful in this kind of support. The company helps players with such costs as training, flight, and accommodation. It is the special individual care provided by Garanti Koza that differentiates the company from many others and that creates a place in the hearts of the players for the company. TEB BNP Paribas, on the other hand, has a way to go in this respect. The Group isn't sufficiently making the players feel its individual support. It gives its name to tournaments but the players cannot feel the same human touch Garanti Koza makes them feel. Playing under difficult conditions, far away from family, friends and hometown, and with little financial and moral support is a big deal. Garanti Koza is a source of gratitude for many players, while TEB BNP Paribas is more like a financial provider, which

doesn't provide financial support to players but to tournament. This is the real part TEB BNP Paribas should be working on in order to make better contributions to the improvement of tennis, since it is understood out of this research that sponsoring sports is not only financing it but shouldering other kinds of responsibilities for its improvement and in tennis sponsorship financial and moral support to individual players is crucially important.



## 7.2 CONCLUSION

In Turkey, football takes a big share of the sponsorship cake. Football, which was started to be played in Turkey in the last period of the Ottoman Empire, is like a national sport for Turkish people. But the irony is that football had to pass through steep hills historically to have the place it has today. It was denied and isolated by Muslim populations and seen as an expression of foreign and unwanted culture. So this development from zero to the top can be regarded as a motivation for other branches of sports, too.

It is not surprising that when asked “what is the first brand that you can think of as sponsoring a sport branch, mostly the brands the respondents can recall in the first place are those supporting either football or basketball. This has a meaning. In Turkey, if it is a matter of sponsoring any sport, brands supporting football and basketball comes to mind in the first place, even for people involved intimately in tennis. So this finding supports the results obtained by Yıldırım and Sunay in their study. Yıldırım and Sunay (2009) propose that to increase the popularity and strengthen the place of tennis, it is quite important to increase the visibility of tennis in the media, to publish news about the tournaments, and to make TV programs on tennis. Considering the popularity of football in Turkey, it is quite normal for people to remember in the first place the brands supporting football.

In Turkey, tennis has evolved a lot in the last decade in both popularity and visibility. Some of the world-wide known tournaments have been played in Turkey, which has contributed a lot to the awareness of tennis among Turkish people.

In individual sports like tennis, it is somewhat difficult to get sponsorship since players are expected to make a name first. However, many players believe that in order to increase their performance, play better and make a name, it is critical for them to receive financial support. So it is like a vicious circle. One of the most critical results of this research is that none of the respondents believe that the sponsorship allocated for tennis is sufficient for either the development of this sport or the training of the players. As explained in the chapters above, tennis is an individual sport with high costs when compared to football or basketball. There are

no team members that can share the costs. There are clubs that can host only a certain number of successful players under their umbrella and meet only some part of the expenses of the players. Tennis is improving each day all around Turkey but it has reached to the desired level in terms of necessary opportunities in only some big cities of Turkey. So if a young person desires to be a professional tennis player, he has to live in a big city like Istanbul, which means he needs his family's financial, physical and mental support. The players need to travel all around the world all the time to attend international tournaments and increase their world ranking. For all these reasons, it can clearly be seen that sponsorship for tennis is indispensably important. However, all respondents agree on the idea that the finance allocated to tennis is not enough in Turkey. TEB BNP Paribas has been doing a great job by financing the tournaments with their title sponsorships, making tennis a popular and visible sport by creating such projects as Street Tennis, hosting world-wide popular tennis players like Roger Federer in Turkey, making commercials for the Group's tennis sponsorships to make tennis reach many homes and create press coverage for tennis. These are all moves not only elevating the awareness and image of tennis but also making contribution to the sponsor's awareness. It is clearly explained in literature that when sport consumers believe a sponsorship is vital for the sponsored item, then they tend to have favorable attitudes towards the sponsoring brand (Madrigal, 2001; Cornwell, Humphresys, Maguire, Weeks, & Tellegen, 2006). The positive tendency TEB BNP Paribas has been experiencing as shown in the assessment reports can be regarded as supporting the related points shared in literature. Supporting players individually, however, is another issue important in order to make tennis become a much more popular and successful sport both in Turkey and in the world rank. TEB BNP Paribas's effort seems to be more on the progress of the sport and the tournaments, which is a huge job. But players also need individual support. General Manager of TEB BNP Paribas Ümit Leblebici explains their investment in tennis as an investment in the future of Turkey and contribution to the society. Considering this target of investing in the future of the country, individual support is also critically important since unlike many other sports, tennis is a branch that can evolve and move further only if the individual players can play better. In order for the players to play better, they need real support in many aspects. In this point, it seems

to be possible to say that Garanti Koza is filling some of this gap by supporting many players financially and building necessary facilities to them. The respondents are very happy about the support provided by Garanti Koza. Although not mentioned in answers of a few respondents, Garanti Koza has been investing in and contributing to not only the players but also tennis itself. The company has been sending many players to tournaments abroad, giving financial support to them and establishing suitable facilities for the players and the audience.

In general, TEB BNP Paribas seems to have reached to its targets by this sponsorship. Brand directors and top management of TEB BNP Paribas emphasize their satisfaction with this sponsorship on every occasion. The financial assessment reports, too, show an upward trend in many numbers. It must be pleasing for TEB BNP Paribas to see an increase in the number of branches and customers in line with the period of the tennis sponsorship. As put by Cornwell & Coote in 2005 and Madrigal in 2000, in return for supporting sponsored items, corporate sponsors expect intangible or tangible benefits. Also respondents think that TEB BNP Paribas has reached to their targets by having a great visibility, reaching the masses and making connections with an important network. Braun-LaTour and LaTour (2004, p. 50) suggest that the knowledge consumers have about a brand does not emerge overnight, but is constructed over time. So the repetition of a sponsorship has a positive impact on its awareness. As described by McAlister and colleagues (2012), long-term sponsorship has a positive correlation with sponsorship awareness. Accordingly, if the sponsorship exposure level continues, the awareness remains the same even if it doesn't increase. This might be a key element in the success of TEB BNP Paribas's sponsorship for tennis, thinking that the Group has been globally sponsoring tennis for more than 40 years. This shows why it is quite important and useful to study long-term effects of sponsorships (Pope, Brown, and Voges, 2009). TEB BNP Paribas also takes an advantage of familiarity of BNP Paribas around the world. If the consumers are familiar with the sponsor, then it is more likely that the sponsorship awareness is increased (Cornwell, Weeks, and Roy 2005).

Garanti Koza, on the other hand, does not attract as much attention as TEB BNP Paribas does among the masses. Only people involved deeply in tennis knows Garanti Koza as a key investor in tennis.

## CHAPTER 8

### FUTURE SUGGESTIONS FOR TEB BNP PARIBAS

All through the research, one of the greatest emphases made by the respondents, and especially by professional players, was the importance of financially supporting tennis players individually. Sponsoring for tournaments and special tennis events are undoubtedly of quite importance and make a great contribution to the awareness and evolution of tennis. But without supporting individual tennis players, they cannot improve their skills and as a result this sport cannot progress. Parents whose children are interested in tennis have a big problem. There are only a limited number of tennis clubs for registered players and most of these clubs are in Istanbul. TEB seems to have been quite successful in supporting tennis by their tournament sponsorships and social responsibility projects. And the bank has added a real value both to its brand and to tennis by sponsorships. However, in order to take a step further, TEB can add more value by giving financial support directly to players and by founding a tennis club as Efes, Vakıfbank, Eczacıbaşı and Arkas did. It is a great honor to see, for example, Eczacıbaşı Women's Volleyball Team won the World Championship both in 2015 and 2016. And the team became the first in the history of the FIVB Club World Championships to win the championship for two years in a row. Behind the success of this team, the support of Eczacıbaşı is undeniably important. In order to train world-wide known tennis players and to provide players required opportunities they need for perfection, TEB is suggested in this paper to enhance their sponsorships to embrace individual players and a special tennis club.

## CHAPTER 9

### LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE SUGGESTIONS FOR RELATED STUDIES

Undoubtedly, the study provides deep insight and useful implications about the tennis perception and the approach for tennis sponsorship in Turkey. But all the same, there are several limitations that can be taken into consideration. First of all, the research method chosen for this study is based on in-depth interviews made through direct connection with the respondents. It is for sure every research method has its own strengths and limitations. Surveys can measure quantitative data but it doesn't give the whole scenario about qualitative details and it is vice versa for in-depth interviews. Additionally, it is not always very easy to generalize out of the data received from the respondents in in-depth interviews. Therefore, in current study, the research questions were selected with special attention in pre-research processes and during the interviews, the respondents were always challenged for further information and details with curiosity and passion as suggested by Charmaz. Also, the questions were reframed in different forms in order to reach the real data. No matter how long and detailed the interviews were, the data received could be supported with different research methods in the next related studies.

Another limitation is related with the content of the study. There are many academic studies in Turkey focusing especially on football and basketball from many different angles. Tennis is one of those domains that needs more attention and focus in terms of academic research. After examining all the literature on sports sponsorship, the current study mainly focuses on the perception of tennis among other sport branches from the perspective of people in Turkey and the current situation of tennis sponsorship in Turkey. Future research focusing on tennis sponsorship in Turkey can also involve socio-cultural, political, territorial and historical factors affecting the perception and development of tennis in Turkey. For many academic studies, it is quite important to analyze the background and history of the related subject matter in order to fully grasp the whole picture. Therefore, for future tennis sponsorship studies, it would be quite important to study and analyze when and how tennis started to be played in Turkey, what were the elements affecting its development process, whether it is progressing in the same level in all

regions of Turkey and if not, what kind of socio-cultural reasons might be underlying, and whether it takes the same government support as other sport branches, etc. All these points will help with understanding the reason for the amount and level of sponsorship for tennis in Turkey, and this understanding is actually a crucial step for making further suggestions to help tennis receive more sponsorship and to guide brands thinking to support tennis.



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## APPENDIX

### Research Questions

The questions addressed to the participants of the interviews are shared below:

- 1- How do you feel when brands sponsor and support sports?
- 2- What is the first brand that you can think of as sponsoring sports?
- 3- What is your perception and what do you feel about this brand?
- 4- Is there any difference in your perception about this brand before and after the sponsorship?
- 5- What do you think about the sponsorship agreement between Besiktas and Vodafone, which has become the main sponsor of the football team? How does this sponsorship influence your perception?
- 6- What do you think about Turkcell's official communication sponsorship of Spor Toto Süper League?
- 7- What do you think about Turkcell's sponsorship of national female basketball team in all categories?
- 8- What do you think about the Turkish Airlines' official sponsorship of Euro League 2016?
- 9- What do you think about Garanti Bank's main sponsorship of 12 Giant Men - National Male Basketball Team?
- 10- What do you think about tennis as a sports? What kind of a sports do you think it is? Could you compare the place tennis occupies among other sports branches in Turkey?
- 11- What are the brands sponsoring tennis?
- 12- What's your point of view about the sponsorship of a brand for tennis?
- 13- Do you know the brand investing the largest amount in tennis in Turkey?
- 14- What do you think the support given in tennis by Garanti Koza? Has this support made any contribution to the development and increase of awareness of tennis in Turkey?

- 15- What do you think the support given in tennis by TEB? Has this support made any contribution to the development and increase of awareness of tennis in Turkey?
- 16- Has the sponsorship in tennis provided any kind of benefits for Garanti Koza? What kind of benefits are they?
- 17- Has the sponsorship in tennis provided any kind of benefits for TEB? What kind of benefits are they?
- 18- As a professional tennis player, what do you expect from brands and companies undertaking the sponsorship for tennis? Do Garanti Koza and TEB meet your expectations?

