

Away Games: Evaluating the Travel Behaviour of Soccer Fans

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Abstract | Soccer is a global sport played all around the world. Also, soccer is the most watched sport in the world. Soccer fans are attending a soccer match passively and they support their teams. Fans attend to soccer matches in two ways as home-game and away-game. While home-game is played in the soccer club's own stadium, the away-game includes matches of the soccer club's in the other stadiums. The aim of this research is to reveal the visit intentions and travel patterns of soccer fans. For this purpose, we held face to face interviews with 28 Fenerbahce fans who participated in the Manchester United-Fenerbahce UEFA (Union of Europa Football Association) Europa League match. As a result of the research, it was concluded that soccer fans prefer to the Manchester destination to just watch the soccer match and also, they organized their travel relatively individually. In addition, it revealed that expenditure items of soccer fans are match tickets, flight tickets, accommodation, food and beverages, souvenirs, and special items of soccer teams such as a scarf and team jersey. Lastly, the soccer fans had no intention of revisiting the Manchester destination and they would visit the destination only if there was another match.

Keywords | Fan Behaviour, Soccer Fans, Soccer Match, Travel Patterns, Visit Intention

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1. Introduction

Sports tourism, a type of the special interest tourism, is the fastest growing segment of the tourism industry since the 1980s (Gibson, 1998a; Hinch & Higham, 2001); and is considered as an essential niche market (Getz, 2003). There are different perspectives to define sports tourism. Gibson (1998a, p. 10) identifies sports tourism as “leisure-based travel that takes individuals temporarily outside of their home communities to play (active sports tourism), watch physical activities (event sports tourism) or venerate attractions associated with these activities (nostalgia sports tourism)”.

Sports events are the major components of sport tourism activities and they have great potential to attract visitors to the destinations. Many visitors travel to different countries to watch sports events and support their favorite teams. For instance, Global Sports Impact Report 2017 highlighted that 54,392,673 spectators attended sports events in 2016 (GSI Report, 2017). Moreover, more than three million soccer fans watched the 2018 FIFA World Cup Football Championships in Russia (FIFA, 2018). 6.2 million tickets were sold in the summer Olympics in 2016 (IOC, 2016).

European soccer events are, which organized by UEFA essential sports events in the world. UEFA organizes three large-scale tournaments. These are European Champions for national teams and Champions League and European League for soccer clubs. The European Champions Tournament is held with the participation of 24 national teams every four years. The Last tournament was held in 2016 with 2,427,303 attendances (GSI Report, 2017). The Champions League is held annually with the participation of 79 clubs from 55 different countries. Also, The European League is held annually with the participation of 213 clubs from 55 different countries. A total of 732 soccer matches are played in a year. 213 of them are played in The Champions League Tournament and

519 of them are played in The European League tournament (UEFA, 2017a; UEFA, 2017b).

The vast majority of sports tourism research in the literature focuses on the contributions of sport-related events to the social-economic environment. For instance; the economic opportunities contribute to the host destination, revenue growth, new business opportunities, contribution to the local community and the behaviour of the local people (Daniels, Norman & Henry, 2004; Fourie & Santana-Gallego, 2011; Gibson, 2007; Homafar, Honari, Heidary, Heidary & Emami, 2011; Kim, Jun, Walker & Drane, 2015; Ritchie & Aitken, 1985). However, the studies on the fans who participate in the away soccer matches evaluated in sports tourism are quite limited (Chen, 2006; Gibson, Kaplanidou & Kang, 2012, Wann, 1995). Also, there is little attention to the issue of travel patterns of fans on their away trips (Gibson, Willmington & Holdnak, 2003; Irwin & Sandler, 1998).

For these reasons, the main purpose of this research is to reveal the travel behaviours of soccer fans who go to the UEFA Europa League soccer match between Manchester United FC® and Fenerbahçe SC® on 20 October 2016, Manchester, England. The research was conducted by using qualitative research method in order to learn thoughts of soccer fans in depth. In light of this point, the purpose of this research concentrates on four main factors: (1) explore visit intention of the fans to come to the destination of the soccer match, (2) how the fans arrange their travel planning, (3) what are the possible expenditure items in travel to a soccer match, and (4) reveal revisit intention of soccer fans to the destination. Lastly, the research will consider significant implications for practitioners and also could be useful for sports tourism, event management, and special interest tourism courses.

The research begins with an introduction. This section explains what are the gaps in the soccer fans in the literature and why this research topic was chosen. In the second section, topics of sports

tourism and travel behaviour of soccer fans are given in detail. In the third section, the method used in the research is explained. Also, in this section, the qualitative research method was used to identify how the data was collected. In the fourth section, the data collected in the study were interpreted using descriptive analysis technique. The last section, findings of the research were compared the findings in the literature and specific findings of this research were included.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Sport Tourism

Sport tourism activities comprise sporting events held in any destination at any time. Bull & Weed (2004) defined sports events as tourism where the prime purpose of the trip is to take part in, either as a participant or a spectator. Scholars offer a broad categorization about sports events (Ritchie, 1984; Getz, 2003). Typology of sports events can vary regarding focus i.e. event venue, time, types of attendance or purposes (Higham & Hinch, 2003). Getz (2003) classified sports events into five groups. Those are listed as active and passive participants (professional or amateur, spectators), event venue (indoor or outdoor), time schedule (league play, plus playoffs or championships or one-time exhibition or friendly matches), scope of the event (local, regional, national or international) and number of the events (single or multi-sport events).

Gibson (1998b) divided sports tourism according to type of participation into three categories as active, passive and nostalgia. Active sports tourism comprises of participants who are actively involved in sports activities, such as golf, ski tennis, fishing, mountain biking and scuba diving (Hall, 1992). Nostalgia sports tourism includes places of historical and symbolic importance that are many sports events and culture or heritage

(Fairley, 2003; Ritchie & Adair, 2002). Passive sports tourism refers to travel for watching sport events (Gibson, 1998b; Ritchie, Shipway & Cleeve, 2009).

Tourists travel to attend the sport events either actively or passively (Deery, Jago & Fredline, 2004). Sports tourist defined by Nogawa, Yamaguchi & Hagi (1996, p.47) as *“a temporary visitor staying at least 24 hours in the event area and whose primary purpose is to participate in a sports event, with the area, visited being a secondary attraction”*. Cassidy (2005, p.3) identified sports tourists as *“who is traveling to a destination to watch a particular sporting event at a particular time”*. Also, Gibson (1998a) defined sport tourist as people who travel to attend for sports competitions.

Sports tourists are traveling one city to another to actively play soccer, golf, and scuba diving or doing another sporting activity passively such as attendance and watch soccer matches. The early efforts to travel for active (take in part) or passive (watch) sports activities were based on 900 BC the Greek times. The Games has emerged as the world’s most significant sporting event during that period. The first game as touristic sports event was the Olympic Games in Athens, 1896 (Chalkley & Essex, 1999). Nowadays, soccer fans as sports tourists are willing to travel for supporting their city and team away from home (Bull & Weed, 2004).

Ritchie (1984) identifies sports events according to the size of the organization with four categories. These categories named as mega sports events, hallmark events, significant events, and local events. While the Olympic Games, the Euro Cup the Commonwealth Games and the World Cup can be counted as mega-events, London Marathon and Tour de France fall within hallmark events. Furthermore, some events are not destination specific like as UEFA Cup whereas some of them are special for some regions –i.e., Premier League. However, regardless of the scope or size

of the event, all events will attract both active and passive participants named as spectators (Jackson & Weed, 2003).

Olympic Games, FIFA World Cup Football Championships, UEFA Champions League and Europa League are the most known sporting events and attracting the spectators. Hosting these large scale sporting events are very essential for host communities. Because, these events provide lots of positive effects to the host community regarding of economic, social, environmental and cultural issues in the short term or long term (Chalip, Green & Vander-Velden, 1998). Also, these activities have positive impacts on destination marketing strategies that one of the important tools in triggering the number of tourists arriving at a destination (Higham & Hinch, 2003).

Soccer spectators as a sports tourist that categorized in many ways. Amongst these groups, Guilianotti (2005) defined categories of spectators as supports, followers, fans, and flaneurs. Heinilä (2000) recognized five different types of spectators. Those categories named as fans, experts, hooligans, accidental spectators (Heinilä, 2000). In this research, fans' behavioral issues have been taken the consideration.

2.2. Soccer Fans Travel Behaviour

The word 'fan' has been rooted in fanatic. Fanatic derives from the Latin "fanatics" which means "a temple servant, a devotee." It also refers to people "inspired by orgiastic rites and enthusiastic frenzy" (Jenkins, 1992). Sports fandom is differentiated from spectatorship and sports tourist regarding the level of substantial emotional commitment with supported teams (Higham & Hinch, 2003). Especially, soccer fans have strong personal identification with group behaviors, and there is a significant effort to being a member of fan groups (Jones, 2001). Moreover, the sport fandom activities have seen as a member of serious leisure

activity in the permanent literature (Abercrombie & Longhurst, 1998). According to Jones's (2001) research, sport fandom behaviors meet the standards of Stebbins's (1996) serious leisure categorization. The longevity of support, long-term career path, strong identification with the leisure activity, developing group norms and significant personal effort for enhancing personal knowledge and skills may vary as some specific attributes of the behavior (Jones, 2001).

Hunt, Bristol & Bashaw (1999) made a classification for soccer fans with five categories. These can be listed as temporary fan who support irregular events such as Olympic Games, (Hunt et al., 1999), local fan which is drawn in to support through identification with a geographic area, devoted fan has an emotional attachment with a team and some players, fanatical fan whose identification with a team and/or player is very close to the centre of the self and dysfunctional fan whose fanaticism is of core importance to their self-identification. Richardson & Turley (2008) describe two groups of fans support are 'passionate partisans,' who may be described as 'core,' and 'hardcore' supporters. Passionate partisans called soccer supporters as club members. Those fans attend games regularly. Hardcore supporters create a personal identity through subculture membership. There is an emotional tie with the team and the person who maintains the belief even when the team is performing poorly (Hunt et al., 1999). Regarding the change of ability to move away from home, there is an increasing level of traveling fans away from home (Hinch & Higham, 2005). The fans of soccer teams exclusively travel long-haul distances to watch their favorite soccer clubs' away matches. For this type of spectators, travel and sport are the secondary motivation for attending to sporting events.

There is any common agreement in the current literature on factors that explain the motives of active or passive spectators. There is some research that tries to explore these factors (Gibson,

1998a; McDonnell, Allen & O'Toole, 1999; Trail, Anderson & Fink, 2000; Wann, 1995). The most majority of motivational factors are based on individual parameters. The destination of the sports event is the secondary reason for the motivation of sports fans. Also, the travel behavior of sports fans has been widely affected by essential motivational differences like as travel bodies (family, individual, friends, and others), age groups and genders, and racial, ethnic, or cultural groups (Getz, 2003). In addition, McDonnell et al. (1999) proposed four types of motives to travel for supporting team away from home and named as social motives, organizational motives, physiological motives, and personal motives. While social motives include the social interaction during the sports event, status or prestige related to the events, such as the Olympic Games, is another motivation to attend. The motivation group is physiological motives. It includes relaxation and or exercise. The personal motives are the last motivation group. The personal motives could include the need to seek new experiences from every day. Wann (1995) developed a motivation scale for fans to watch sports events. Eight primary motives are named as self-esteem enhancement, a diversion from everyday life, eustress, entertainment, aesthetic value, economic value, family ties and need for affiliation.

The researcher highlight that those motives are basic needs for fans. Moreover, the findings of Neale & Funk (2006) research results show that five factors determine attendance or travel for sporting events which are a vicarious achievement, player interest, entertainment value, drama, and socialization. Stewart (2001) proposed a range of motivation factors as pull and pushed to travel away-games from fans. Push factors can be listed as a release from everyday life, the search for camaraderie, the need to develop friendships and a sense of belonging, emotional release and the opportunity to do things that cannot be done at home. On the other hand, pull factors include atmosphere related issues. Also, Bull & Weed (2004) indicate

that travel motivation can be grouped with three types. Their categories are physical, interpersonal and status and prestige. Status and prestige are often also important for fan groups. A soccer fan may travel to soccer games which are away from home to support the football club to increase belonging to the group.

As a perspective of travel behavior of fans, Chen (2006) defined the relation between fans and teams as 'love' that affected three antecedents of loyalty: commitment, psychological attachment, and personal involvement. Gibson et al. (2003) found in their research that the home team tends to participate in a few non-sport tourist activities while visiting the town. However, sports tourists identifying with the 'visiting team' might behave more like 'typical tourists' in a destination (Higham & Hinch, 2003). Higham & Hinch's (2003) research indicate that the fans engage in touristic activities at a destination is influenced by two main factors. These can be listed as travel profile of the visitors (e.g., travel distances, length of stay and mode of transport) and travel experience at the destination (e.g., standard of the performance and scheduling of the sport).

People are more likely to repeat an activity if they are satisfied and have positive experience (Um, Chon & Ro, 2006). Carmichael & Murphy's (1996) research explore visitor origin, length of stay, expenditure patterns, numbers of accompanying participants and their intentions to revisit the destination. Kaplanidou & Vogt (2007) revealed that the destination image and past experiences have essential effects on the revisiting of sports tourists to the destination. Also, Chen & Funk (2010) inferred that positive destination image have a positive impact on sports fans to revisit destination, and negative destination image may change the travel plans of sports fans. However, sports fans visit destinations to participate and watch a sports game. However, destination image is not a crucial term for fans. Because, fans are tending to revisit the destination if they have po-

sitive travel experience. Therefore, the reasons for the fans to revisit the destination constitute one of the questions of this research.

3. Methodology

This research aims to investigate the travel behavior of soccer fans regarding visit intentions, travel arrangements, expenditures (before and during the sports event) and re-visit intentions to host destination after the soccer match. We started with a literature review to achieve main arguments guiding our aim. We examined studies about sports tourism (Gibson, 1998a; Gibson, 1998b; Higham & Hinch, 2003), sports fans motivation (McDonnell et al., 1999; Wann, 1995) sports fans behavior (Gibson et al., 2003; Chen, 2006), and revisit intention of sport tourist (Chen & Funk, 2010). As a result of the investigations of two researchers who are experts in the field of research questions, we formed our research questions as at below:

1. What are the main reasons soccer fans visit Manchester?
2. How do soccer fans make their travel arrangements for away soccer games?
3. How much do soccer fans budget for travel away soccer games?
4. Would soccer fans like to revisit Manchester?

In order to collect and analyse the primary data used in the study, the reliability model developed by Guba (1981) within the framework of the criterion of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability was taken as the basis. In this direction, some questions were asked again in order to verify the authenticity of the answers given by the participants, and expert opinion was consulted

before and after the interviews (Shenton, 2004).

Since our research aim is to investigate an issue in a depth way qualitatively, we used a purposeful sampling method (Creswell, 1998; Hemmington, 1999). First, we define the proper soccer fans to interview. To gain a deeper understanding of a subject and comprehensively identify its elements (Patton, 2002), the semi-structured interview questions prepared according to the existing literature. Although the researcher in the semi-structured interviews has prepared a list of predetermined questions, it appears in the form of a speech that gives participants the opportunity to discover what they think is important (Longhurst, 2003).

We collected the research data with soccer team fans via face to face interviews at the event venue on 20/10/2016 before the UEFA Europe League soccer match Manchester United FC® vs. Fenerbahce FC® in Manchester. During the interviews, the researcher first introduced himself and stated the purpose of the research and started to discuss. However, possibilities for organizing or conducting in-depth interviews proved limited given that many supporters stayed in various cities and hotels apart from during the match hours, we wear team uniform which symbolizes Fenerbahce fans.

We held interviews with 28 away soccer fans in total and each interview last 20-45 minutes. After the answers obtained during the interview, the saturation point was reached and the interviews were stopped (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Also, some researchers indicate that between 5 and 25 interviews will be sufficient with maximum diversity in qualitative studies (Creswell 1998; Guest, Bunce & Johnson, 2006; Kuzel, 1992). During the interview, interviews were made with the voice recorder with the permission of the participants. The voice recordings were then analysed by turning into text on the computer. We gave pseudonyms for soccer fans: F1 to F28.

Given the explorative nature of our study, we

try to reveal soccer fans' responses with semantic content analysis (Krippendorff, 2004). In analyzing transcripts, each researcher examined the data independently a few times, took personal notes and use a color scale for separating texted response to the related themes. Then, three evaluation sessions have been held by the participation of all researchers. During these sessions, the researchers compared their codes and resolved the differences through discussion. Each session continued until the researchers have a consensus on the codes. Finally, we determined four themes: the visit intention of soccer fans, travel arrangement of soccer fans, the expenditure of soccer fans and re-visit intention of soccer fans.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive Information

Table 1 shows that demographic information of interviews. The interviews are conducted with 24 males and four females. The results of the demographic questions conclude that ages of participants are between 18 and 59 years. Residences of participants are different countries in Europe. Although fans of the away team are from Turkey, there are just 6 (Istanbul (5) and Ankara (1)) participants.

Table 1 | Demographic Information of Interviews

Gender	Age	Occupation	Residence	Length of Stay	Number of Match
Male	49	Owner	Istanbul (Turkey)	2 Days	12-13
Male	59	Owner	Istanbul (Turkey)	3 Days	7
Male	55	Retired	Istanbul (Turkey)	3 Days	5
Male	25	Dyer	Basel (Switzerland)	3 Days	7
Male	28	Insurer	Basel (Switzerland)	3 Days	8
Male	18	Student	Lausanne (Switzerland)	3 Days	1
Male	19	Student	Lausanne(Switzerland)	3 Days	4
Male	19	Student	Lausanne(Switzerland)	3 Days	4
Male	55	Retired	Brussels (Belgium)	3 Days	18-20
Male	51	Employee	Brussels (Belgium)	3 Days	18-20
Male	52	Employee	Brussels (Belgium)	3 Days	18-20
Male	33	Marketing	Stockholm (Sweden)	One Day	15-16
Male	32	Finance	Stockholm (Sweden)	One Day	1
Male	22	Pre-school assistant	Basel (Switzerland)	5 Days	10
Female	30	Student	Ankara (Turkey)	5 Days	1
Male	19	Student	Basel (Switzerland)	5 Days	10
Male	22	Student	Metz (France)	One Day	4
Male	31	Finance	Haarlem (Holland)	One Day	8
Male	30	Employee	Haarlem (Holland)	One Day	3
Male	41	Security Officer	Köln (Germany)	4 Days	15-16
Male	26	Employee	Innsbruck(Austria)	One Day	18-20
Male	36	Taxi Driver	Innsbruck(Austria)	One Day	18-20
Male	28	Employee	Innsbruck(Austria)	One Day	18-20
Male	52	Employee	Malmö (Sweden)	4 Days	8
Male	30	Employee	Brussels (Belgium)	3 Days	18-20
Male	56	Retired	Brussels (Belgium)	3 Days	18-20
Female	20	Student	Istanbul (Turkey)	2 Days	1
Female	20	Student	London (Turkey)	2 Days	1

The finding shows that the soccer fans are from Switzerland (Lausanne and Basel) (7), Belgium (Brussels) (5), Austria (Innsbruck) (3), Sweden (Stockholm, Malmö) (3), Holland (Harlem) (2),

France (Metz) (1) and Germany (Köln) (1). Most of the interviewees have accommodated in Manchester for two days and one night. Some of the participants have accommodated more than three days in Manchester. Female participants are joined first time for away-soccer match; while male participants are joined approximately 4-20 different soccer matches except where they live.

Findings revealed that the majority of soccer fans have stayed in hotels for 2 to 5 nights, although the soccer game has taken for one day. It means that soccer fans tend to extend their stay apart from the event.

4.2. Visit Intention of Soccer Fans

The visit intention of fans is the fundamental aspects of the research. The results show that the primary reason or motivation of fans to visit Manchester is supporting their teams at away. It is seen that there is a strong emotional attachment to the soccer club. This finding shows similarity with the results of Hunt et al.'s (1999) previous research. Moreover, the majority of the fans think that they would not visit Manchester if it is not an organized soccer match in the city. Also, most of the fans highlighted that reason to visit Manchester was attending the soccer match and they do not want to leave their team alone. Interpersonal factors are often highlighted in passive sports tourism such as soccer spectatorship. Crawford (2004) found in his research that the game and supporting team are the most essential factors to attend a sports event. As one of the fan's comment is as follows: "It is difficult to say we visit Manchester without soccer match. The soccer match was the only most important factor to visit destination. We just came here for the soccer match and supporting our team at away." (F3b).

Moreover, soccer fans are passionately addicted to watching their soccer team's matches. They have already been many soccer matches, especi-

ally in a different place in Europe where the soccer matches of their teams have occurred. Also, they try to attend almost all of the matches in their home country while some of them tend to participate in soccer matches which are away games. According to a fan, attending a soccer match is the fundamental motivation to travel: "There is nowhere left to go to Europe for vacation. I have visited Europe for only soccer matches. I have been in France, German, Holland, and Austria for soccer matches. I usually try to go to all soccer matches organized away from my home." (F5a).

The critical point that the venues of soccer games are not much significant for the event time and day. Therefore, soccer fans are willing to go to secondary places before or after the event. Also, they are likely to extend their stay and travel to visit secondary destinations, if they have enough time and budget. One of the fans states that: "I do not think to visit Manchester, but I was want to come to London. I just came to Manchester for this match. We were London yesterday, and we came back to Manchester for the soccer match." (F2a).

Kim & Chalip (2004) pointed out the importance of the destination and justified that international visitors or fans tend to prefer touristic destinations to stay more in. Similar to this study our findings reveal that soccer fans prefer to accommodate more touristic destinations than Manchester. Because they want to visit more destination at the same travel. Also, some of the fans remarked that popular destinations like London would be preferable to visit. Moreover, they desire to visit special places in a popular destination. One of the fans mentioned about popular destinations and visit intentions: "I did not stay Manchester at nights. When I drove from London, I did not have a night time trip anyway. Tonight I will return to London. After the soccer game finishes, I will visit Paris, and I will have a trip to Geneva." (F1a).

4.3. Travel Arrangements

The arrangement of travel of soccer fans is other essential aspects of the research. The main issue is soccer fans' travel planning process begin (first phase) with getting soccer match ticket and then planning accommodation, place. In the destination, transportation and food and beverage expenditures comes at the second phase. Most of the soccer fans tend to arrange their travel individually. They prefer to organize all issues via online channels. One of the fans' comment is as follows: "We booked our accommodation from via online channels. We preferred this hotel because of it is new and clean. Also, the location of the hotel was an important factor to get around the city center and to find the subway." (F14a).

Armstrong (2008) examined factors influencing the sport's attendance, and he dedicated that ticket price, accessibility to the event venue, facilities and event program are the main factors affecting attendance. In our research, lower prices and easy accessibility are the most affective factors to choose the accommodation place and flight. Also, soccer fans arrange their flight via online channels, and they pay attention to find the cheapest flights. Along with that, centre location and cleaning of the hotels are the most effective factors on soccer fans' preference for accommodation. They try to arrange their accommodations in the city centre and easy accessibility to the stadium. One of the fans comments are as follows: "We wanted to make it clear that we were nearby the city center so that we could have a place to go. We thought we would be easier than here. So we preferred this hotel." (F5a).

On the other hand, team association directly affects soccer fans on the arrangement of travel. Some group of soccer fans tend to act together with their team association because they want to be together with their team fans. For this case, the team association organized travel to this soccer match for two days and one night. Therefore,

they do not accommodate (or stay one-night) in the destination where the soccer match has occurred. According to one of the fan: "We organized our travel with team association, that is why we accommodate here one night, and we will leave tomorrow. However, we stay 3-4 days when we organize our travel." (F9b).

In this study, it is essential to the point that soccer fans arrange their travel with team association because of team association can book flight and accommodation cheaper than individual arrangement. Some of the soccer fans also comment that team association arranges their all travel. Therefore, they do not have to deal with any situation during their travel. One of the fans remarked as follows: "We are a member of the soccer team association. We are going to all soccer matches with team association. It is arranging match tickets for us, and we book our flight tickets and accommodations when the match schedule is pronounced." (F13a). Moreover, team association can quickly reach the match tickets. Fans who live away from the soccer team's official ticket sale point have to provide their tickets from team association.

4.4. Expenditure Patterns of Soccer Fans

Expenditure patterns may vary according to the profile of the soccer fans. Since, disposable income, age, marital status, visitor origin, trip activities, and trip duration are the distinctive factors that determine the degree of ability to get tickets, to purchase a team membership, or to travel for attending in passively or actively in a sports event (Funk, 2008).

Nogawa et al. (1996) studied participants at Japanese sporting events, and they found that sports tourists differed from traditional tourists regarding event size and spending patterns. The economic factor is one of the essential subjects of this research.

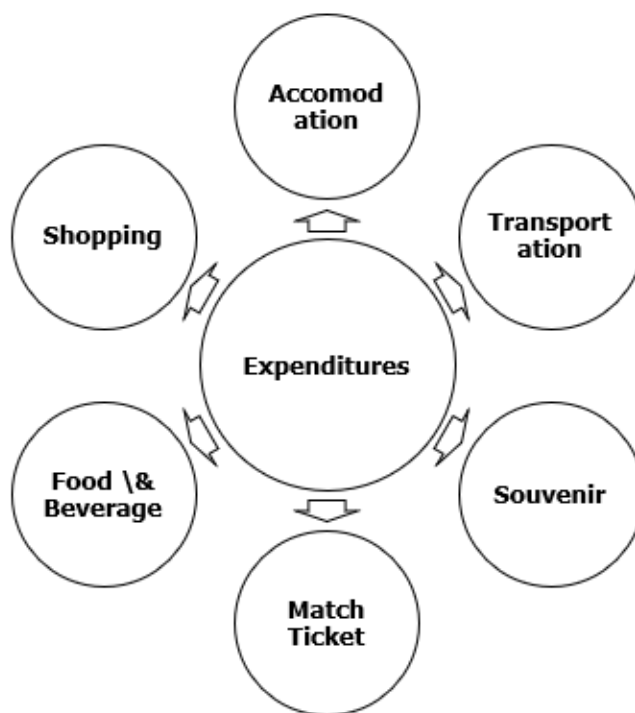


Figure 1 | Types of Expenditures

When we asked the interviewees “how much money did you spend for this travel?” most of the soccer fans explained that their travel budget is about 1000-1500 Euro for this travel. The expenditure items are accommodation, transportation (e.g., flight ticket, local transportation), shopping, food and beverage, souvenir and soccer match ticket (See Figure 1). According to interviews, while the hotel, food and beverage costs depend on the length of the stay, soccer fans spend the most on the flight ticket. Fans also spend at least on match tickets. One of the fans states is as follows: “We spent almost all budget on flights tickets, then accommodation and food and beverage.” (F10a).

On one hand, some of the soccer fans think differently from other fans because they have spent more money on accommodation than flight tickets. One of the fans explained: “We expend accommodation. It is sometimes 60-70.€ Then it has a cost city tour and food and beverage, we expense money to them. We get flight tickets via cheap airlines company. However, accommodation is the

most expensive.” (F7c).

Cannon & Ford’s (2002) research indicates that sports visitors stay longer and spend more per day. The findings of the research revealed that soccer fans spend money for multiple reasons. In this research, the primary reason is attending to the soccer match and buying soccer game ticket while the secondary factors are buying souvenirs, organize a tour plan, getting a high-speed train ticket, renting a car, doing shopping as same with other types of tourists’ purchasing behavior. According to one of the fans: “When I go somewhere, I buy some souvenirs for my children. I am always free of charge. Apart from that, I try to look at the traditional taste of the local culture. I tend to taste different drinks.” (F1b).

Team association also another factor that affects the expenditure behaviors of fans’. Some of the fans who organize their travel with team association expense just for transportation and match ticket, because team association makes arrangement only for the event day. Also, while they vi-

sit the destination just for the event, they do not have time for shopping or souvenir. However, they expensed the money around the stadium for food and beverage and unique craft of the soccer match (e.g., special waders, team jersey). One of the soccer fans explained: "We will not accommodate in Manchester. We came here with soccer team association, and they arranged travel for one day. We will not shop for anything because we do not have time. Maybe we can expense for food and beverage around the stadium." (F8a).

4.5. Revisit Intention of Soccer Fans

Lee & Taylor (2005) found that sports fans had fulfilled the expectations of their travel and they might be a desire to revisit to the event venue. However, revisit intention highly influenced by the host destination image and destination attractiveness lead to an increasing tendency of the tourists' travel desires (Chen & Funk, 2010).

According to interviews, almost all of the soccer fans do not want to revisit Manchester. Because they find Manchester as a small city and it does not have touristic attractions. They also think that it is a scarce city regarding infrastructure and superstructure. Besides, soccer fans consider that they do not hear anything about Manchester and they do not find the city worth to see. One of the fans comments as follows: "I will never come again here, even if there is a soccer match. I did not like here. The streets are dirt and dusty. It is not clean. Manchester is a very sloppy city. I do not want to come again." (F12a).

On one hand, even if most of the soccer fans do not want to revisit Manchester, they think that they may come to Manchester for attending another soccer match. Although Manchester is not an attractive city for soccer fans, a soccer match can be attractive for them to come back to Manchester. One of the soccer fans states: "I will never come here again because there is not

attractive anything here. Maybe I can visit here again another soccer match otherwise I do not think come here again." (F11b) While another remarked "Although one of my friends live the Manchester, I did not visit Manchester before. I knew that Manchester is not an attractive city. I came to Manchester for this soccer match. Maybe I can come here for another soccer match." (F14a).

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The objective of this study was to examine travel and expenditure behaviours, visit and revisit intentions of soccer fans'. The results show that the first reason to visits Manchester attending the soccer match. Hinch & Higham (2001) attributed this reason to the adherent and loyalty of fans to their teams. Hunt et al. (1999) also state that there is a strong commitment between players/team and fans. Jones (2001) emphasizes that it is important for fans to support their teams with a strong identity and to be part of the soccer fan group. Similar to these studies, Fenerbahce fans have come to Manchester because of their commitment and loyalty to the team. For this reason, it does not matter where the match is played for fans. If the match would play in a destination other than Manchester, Fenerbahce fans would go to this destination in order to support their teams. In addition, Ritchie et al. (2009) imply that sports fans' primary motivation is to watch the sporting competition. Similarly, in this research, it is revealed that the primary goal and travel motivation for fans are to participate in the soccer match and support their teams by not leaving them alone.

Stewart (2001) implies that fans visit a destination where sports events occur to the reason for pull and push factors. According to pull factors, soccer fans visit Manchester in line with loyalty and affiliation to their soccer teams. As the pushing factors, it was concluded that they came to Manchester because of the experience of

the atmosphere of the stadium and being together with the fan group.

Another significant question that the research is trying to find is the travel planning of soccer fans. The results conclude that soccer fans tend to arrange their travel individually and prefer to organize all issues via online channels. Similar to Armstrong's (2008) study, it was found that fans made reservations for flights and accommodation via online channels for visiting to Manchester. It was revealed that they preferred airlines that are more economical and cheaper. The most important condition for the accommodation was the proximity to the city centre. The reason for choosing hotels which are close to the city centre but not near the stadium is to gather as a group in the city centre and to go to the stadium in a collective manner. In addition, the hotel's cleanliness and cheapness are also other important reasons to choose accommodation.

The number of nights the soccer fans spent in Manchester was largely limited to one night. Most of the fans have arranged their travel plans to follow the match and take a short tour of the city centre. Kim & Chalip (2004) stated that fans determined their leisure time according to the destination where a sports event occurs. In destinations with relatively more tourist attractions, fans can watch games and participate in other tourist activities. Also, destinations can attract many visitors by hosting sports events (Chalip et al., 1998; Gibson, 1998a). Similar to this research, it is concluded that the soccer fans who want to experience the attractiveness of the destination made more accommodation in Manchester. Moreover, soccer fans also acknowledge the secondary issues mostly like visiting secondary destinations. In particular, they tend to visit important tourist destinations near the destination where sports events occur. For this reason, it revealed that the soccer fans who came to Manchester to watch a soccer match tend to go to London, which is relatively an important tourist destination, and they extended

their travels. In fact, it was found that some of the fans arrived in Manchester only to watch the soccer match, however, they had accommodation and other tourist activities in London.

In this research, the expenditure behaviours show that fans spent the most on lodging sector and retail shopping. It is similar to the results of Irwin & Sandler's (1998) research. Also, the results suggested that fans contribute economically to the host community through their use of food services, accommodations, and shopping related activities (Gibson et al., 2003). The results conclude that fans spend money for multiple reasons. The primary reason is attending to the soccer match and buying soccer game ticket while the secondary factors are buying souvenirs, participate a tour plan, getting a high-speed train ticket, renting a car, doing shopping, etc. as same with other types of tourists' purchasing behavior (Daniels et al., 2004). The research reveals that the majority of participants have stayed in hotels between two and five nights. While the soccer game has gone on only one day, participants willing to stay more than one day. This result corroborates the findings of studies reporting that length of stay is average 2.03 nights (Gibson et al., 2012). Event spectators may do not want to stay at the same destination as the event venue. If there is a must sight-seeing destination around the host destination, the soccer fans may prefer to accommodate at these locations. Moreover, they would participate in this kind of events as a chance to visit diverse places. That is the reason, municipalities should work to extend the length of fans' stays. They can organize some attractive tours within the destination and near cities.

Although the soccer fans are not focused on where they are traveling for a soccer match, they are carrying out the tourism phenomenon because they go out temporarily their home-city. Higham & Hinch (2003) stated that people traveling to participate and/or watch sports events have similar behaviours as typical tourists. Also, Gibson et al.

(2003) infers that soccer fans have little to participate in activities other than sports in their home games. In this research, soccer fans who came to Manchester to participate in sports activities, also they did shopping activities have emerged. Soccer fans, although they come to Manchester to watch the soccer match, taking souvenirs or shopping for their friends and relatives. In addition, they buy their team jersey and scarf.

The last main topic of research is to revisit intention of soccer fans to Manchester. Satisfaction, positive destination image and destination attribute positively trigger the behavioral intentions to revisit a destination to participate in sport tourism activities (Kaplanidou & Vogt, 2007). The positive performance perceived in the destination has an impact on the intention to revisit (Chen & Funk, 2010). Also, positive experience in sporting activities affects participation in the activity again (Um et al., 2006). The results in this research were different from the above studies. The findings summarized that soccer fans are not aiming to revisit Manchester. They are willing to travel a destination which is touristic and has much attractiveness. We can conclude that supporting and commitment to the team is the determinant factor to visit the destination. However, the revisit intention might be affected by destination attractiveness and satisfaction level.

Limitations and Future Directions

The findings of the research should be interpreted within the context of specific limitations. The study was conducted for only one soccer game, which indicates that it needs contextual expansion to enhance validity. However, the event venue is problematic for gathering data. Because the fans do not have enough time and do not want to participate in the research. Therefore, 28 interviewed was conducted in the research and more interviews could be conducted with soccer fans to do a face-

face interview.

There is a slight difference between self-organized travel and association organized travel in the manner of expenditure and arrangement of travel. This situation was underestimated in the research. Therefore, the results reveal that these differences have an impact on fans' expenditure and their travel behaviour. Also, soccer fans have very high loyalty for their teams. Fans desire to travel with their teams regardless of where the soccer match will be. Moreover, many Fenerbahce fans come from various cities in Europe to watch the match in this research. Conversely, the number of fans came to Manchester to watch this match from Turkey were observed to be very low. Although some of the reasons can be considered as visa constraints and foreign exchange differences, we have not conducted any research. In further research, these issues could be taken into consideration. Moreover, the research carries practical implications for managers of destinations/host venues and event organizations. First, destination management properties may find an efficient way to extent tourists' length of stay at the host destination (like as enhancing the diversity of attractions). Second, marketing actions should develop a better understanding of consumer decision-making before any strategies are developed. Thirdly, some tour operator can be focus on this niche market segment. They can organize tours for fans of soccer teams. That's the reason, it is crucial to explore the soccer fans behaviours and needs. Moreover, destination management parties should develop different strategies to attract more fans to the destinations.

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