

## **SPORTS STRUCTURES FOR DELIVERING SPORTS EVENTS: A REPORT OF SPORTS TEAMS FROM SÃO PAULO**

**Edson Coutinho da Silva**

University Centre FEI, São Bernardo do Campo, Brazil.

Rua Humberto de Alencar Castelo Branco, 3792 – São Bernardo do Campo, São Paulo, Brazil – 09850-901.  
Brazil

**Alexandre Luzzi Las Casas**

Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil; Professor of Marketing at Economics and Administration School., Rua Ministro Godoy, 969 – Perdizes, São Paulo, Brazil – 05015-901.

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**ABSTRACT:** *The sports structure involves a complex set of factors to deliver a sports entertainment. This study aims to analyse the supporters view concerning the sports structure of the three teams from São Paulo and highlighting the similarities and difference among them according to their personal details. By and large, 704 questionnaires were administered in this exploratory study. The data collection was administered in nine matches. The report followed three steps: a report by chi-square tests from cross tables among four personal details; the selecting of the topic which achieved the significance; and mapping the supporters' opinion. The results recognise that: Black Team's supporters have a different view regarding the Green and Red Teams; income is a relevant detail for Black and Green Teams; the form of transport is the second more relevant for Black Team; sports venue is a crucial component for Black Team; and tournaments is a critical dimension.*

**KEYWORDS:** sports structure; sports teams; sports marketing; sports events; supporters.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The sports structure aims to analyse sport as an amusement, because of a sports structure constitutes dimensions of a business action plan for organising, implementing as well as delivering an offer to market made by supporters, for instance, a tournament as a big event comprising matches, which are small events (Collignon, Sultan & Collins, 2011). Sports are entertainments since as events, sports games are a type of collective celebration which brings supporters together to take part in and enjoy a sport and cultural spectacle in one place (Maltese & Danglade, 2014). Sport as entertainment involves gathering and designating tangible and intangible resources to achieve goals and purposes. Consequently, a tournament or a game is good which is prepared, sold and delivered for supporters in a coordinated way to make them happy, cheerful and satisfied about paying for something where they can share their emotion and passion for a sports team. However, to deliver a good to supporters, a sports team requires stakeholders to prepare these in an efficient method (Bradbury & O'Boyle, 2017; Storm, Wagner & Nielsen, 2017).

In general, a sports structure focuses on four categories of components: supporter's interfaces, actors' network, strategic resources and value chain (Shilbury, 2009). Also, a sports team uses marketing activities for offering benefits to supporters. Indeed, for designing goods managers require to select and implement strategic resources to prepare expected outcomes an effectively; also, involve stakeholders from the value chain for delivering better goods to supporters (Clemes, Brush & Collins, 2011; Moore & Levermore, 2012). Henceforth, a sports structure proposes a typology based on resources level considering the stakeholders and the nature interaction among them for organising sports events based on entertainment as a concept and contemplating supporters as clients (Rundh & Gottfridsson, 2015). Therefore, a sports structure assists the marketers to coordinate and manage five sources of revenue or profit of a sports team: supporters, media rights, tournaments, brands and teams (Bradbury & O'Boyle, 2017; Shilbury, 2009).

Under these circumstances, the research question is: how supporters understand and perceive the sports structure of the three more essential sports teams from the city of São Paulo, according to their personal details?

Therefore, this article aims to analyse the supporters' opinion concerning the sports structure of the three more relevant sports teams from the city of São Paulo (Brazil), and to point out the similarities and difference among them according to their personal details. It recognises that these three sports football (or soccer) teams were chosen since they have a relevant number of supporters, there are few studies regarding the sports structure of these teams, and it was possible to coordinate a data collection outside and around of the sports venues. For this study and not identifying these three sports teams, they will be entitled as Black Team, Green Team and Red Team.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### *Sports marketing*

The understanding of sports marketing depends on four conditions. The first condition involves preparing a good based on a sporting event and experience by means a sports team performance and the star athletes and make revenues as well as profits by way of ticketing, the loyalty of supporters and/or memberships, foods and drinks which are sold in the sports venue (Bauer et al, 2008). Second is sponsorship, which includes having a good associated with a team, tournament (or event) and naming rights (Clark, 2015). The third is the media rights fees paid to show sports on broadcast and cable television networks, television stations, radio, satellite radio, the internet and mobile devices (Burden & Li, 2009). Fourth is good commercialisation, which includes the selling of licensed products with a team, and/or tournament logos, player likenesses, or other intellectual property (McHugh, Bronson & Watters, 2015).

Amorim & Almeida (2015) argue that sports teams are using five sources of revenue to finance their clubs: (i) athletes, acquired from South American, Asian or African clubs, as an investment that can be sold later; (ii) ticketing, which means all tickets available for watching a live game on the arena, a sporting venue; (iii) partners and sponsor, who manage all rights for naming the arena, who produce sporting clothing, and other goods; (iv) and media rights, where the media and TV broadcasters pay for broadcasting rights around the world; (v) club membership, where supporters are encouraged to invest in and help to finance clubs in exchange benefits, for example, discounted in tickets, best seats at the sporting venues, etc. According to Silva & Las Casas (2018b), for attracting more supporters and spectators to events and, making more revenues, sports teams depend on reliable, schemed and coordinated tournaments since sports teams are associated to leagues (federation or confederation).

Sports marketing is undergoing profound changes which require new expertise to respond to competitive challenges and the demand of supporters (Masterman, 2004). Two perspectives need a discussion: first, analysing the sports area as an entertainment offer and its business structure to better understand the marketing potential associated with stakeholders, e.g., events, clubs, sponsors, media, players, supporters, public and private companies, etc (McHugh, Bronson & Watters, 2015); then, considering sports marketing as an application with certain specificities. These include the importance and quality of stakeholders, who are critical to the production of the sports offer as well as the emotional and captivating nature of the sporting performances (Leal & Moutinho, 2008; Norris, Wann & Zapalac, 2014). Therefore, a sports marketing scope comprises three categories of sports stakeholders (Maltese & Danglade, 2014; Shilbury, 2009): spectator sports, supporters and organiser of tournaments, cups or sporting goods.

Marketing-driven strategies enable to sports to respond better to supporters-clients' needs and to reach even more supporters and spectators (Silva & Las Casas, 2017a). Sports has turned in to be entertainment and economic success in becoming a more central element in sports. Indeed, the sports business has also become increasingly more client-oriented (Norris, Wann & Zapalac, 2014). Game facilities and other service-extensions have evolved; ticket process has increased significantly in recent years, and individual supporters may not be able to afford tickets and corporations are more often ticket-buyers. In fact, technological development has improved sport's availability and experience (McHugh, Bronson & Watters, 2015). Following a certain team or tournament or finding out information about specific sports is constantly easier. Sports has great spectator

appeal, which gives sports a chance to gain revenues from many sources like ticket sale, media rights, sponsorships, licensing of products, etc. (Stander & Beer, 2016). The representatives of all different interest groups are naturally client form sports teams' perspective. As several revenue sources exist, sports can employ business and marketing professionals who further develop commercial opportunities. The most important target market for all sports clubs is still game-attending supporters. Due to people's willingness to follow sports performances on site leads to that other clients – sponsor, media, etc., – consider sports goods as an interesting investment target (White & Absher, 2013).

### *Sports structure*

Sports structures involve elements or segments that go into designing and organising a sport and various stakeholders in each component. The maturity of a sports structure can be observed by the extent of communication and awareness among partners, within and across various dimensions (Maltese & Dangle, 2014). The levels of transparency and professionalism of the system, coupled with a growing awareness of all stakeholders, decide the extent of sports structures evolution (KPMG Reports, 2014). Sports structure aims to guide managers and marketers to propose, design and operate a marketing plan with the purpose of obtaining several sources of financial funding for undertaking new business strategies for their sports team (Shilbury, 2009). Consequently, a sports structure reveals an actors' network which marketers need to understand the purpose of mobilising these organisations for fitting offers – product and/or service from sports teams – to target demands – supporters and/or spectators (Rundh & Gottfridsson, 2014).

Generally speaking, a sports structure improves the development, operation and optimisation of sports events, however, two aspects are relevant. On the one hand are the supply and the other hand the demand and consumption, then, to satisfy both, the sports structure aims to formalise a scheme required for producing sports events (Maltese & Dangle, 2014). For Collignon & Sultan (2014), a sports structure is based on a flow of money, such as Super Bowl and baseball's World Series in the United States, The Champions League in Europe, and the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in England, etc. In summary, sports events will remain one of the most valuable parts of the media and entertainment industry globally for years to come. Thus, they designed a sports structure driven by five critical components for providing profits to sports teams: supporters, media, brands, tournaments and teams.

Rundh & Gottfridsson (2015) believe that in delivering the sports event, there is a complex set of actors who must interact with each other to produce the expected offering. The actors sharing and combining of resources from several firms create new opportunities for delivering value to the user. Give these points, as argue Bernstein (2015) and Bradbury & O'Boyle (2017), a marketing-oriented model lined up to a sports structure capable the sports team of delivering better products and services to supporters, because of structuring marketing channels networks; professionalising the sports team; defining good relationship with stakeholders; dealing with actors to get resources; and managing brand reputation, targeting audiences through the media. In effect, the sports actors have encouraged the sports teams to become more professional with respect to marketing strategies as a condition for investing resources.

The sports structure requires dimensions to manage and control a sports event for a club. For this reason, we organised a sports structure based on seven components (KPMG Reports, 2014; Maltese & Dangle, 2014; Collignon & Sultan, 2014; Rundh & Gottfridsson, 2015; Shilbury, 2009): (1) tournaments perform three relevant roles: organising competitions, creating value events, structuring media rights; (2) good suppliers are investors as well as associate their brands with sports team; (3) supporters' engagement, the sports teams should create a marketing-oriented principle in order to transfer excitations and passions for supporters spending their money; (4) stadium means facilities, naming rights, etc., and make money using the arena for other events; (5) club administration means applying business strategy in the sports team; (6) investors are those who assist supporters in sports events; (7) media are those who are responsible for buying the rights of matches for television and another alternative platform, like cable tv, websites, social networks, etc.

## METHODOLOGY

The exploratory research was defined in order to analyse the supporters' opinion concerning the sports structure of these three relevant sports teams from the city of São Paulo and to highlight the similarities and difference among them. Four variables were qualified for mapping their influences regarding the supporters' view about the sports structure of their sports teams: (1) income, since supporters may be encouraged or discouraged due to their wages; (2) form of transport, because the public system as bus, train and underground; private system (taxi and Uber); and private car (car parking facilities) may determine the supporters' opinion; (3) attendance regarding the number of times that supporters go to the arena; (4) and gender, men or women have different preferences and habits. Moreover, four hypotheses were created to infer the results. Hypothesis 1: Black Team is the most different than Green Team and Red Team as for the sports structure. Hypothesis 2: Income is the detail which most interferes in the supporters' opinion, in general. Hypothesis 3: Form of transport is the second one. Hypothesis 4: Stadium is the sports structure's component most critical.

Concerning the data and results reports, a questionnaire with 78 topics/statements, related to the sports structure perspective was designed by these researchers considering five Likert levels (1) totally disagree; (2) partly disagree; (3) I cannot answer; (4) agree; (5) totally agree. Moreover, four personal details were demanded by the supporters in order to know their details: gender, income (with base on the minimum wages in Brazil), attendance to the sports venue and transportation they use to go to the arena (own vehicle, public transport or private transportation, as uber, taxi, etc.). These questions were included on the top of the questionnaire. In sum up, 78 topics were presented in surveys and supporters should select one of the five levels in the rating scale for each statement, spread in seven components: tournament: 10; stadium: 12; goods suppliers: 13; supporters' engagement: 20; club administration: 12; partnerships and sponsorships: 6; and media: 5.

Overall, 704 questionnaires were administered to supporters between February and March 2017. To use the instrument, these researchers selected three games of each football sports team, in which, three criteria were relevant: administered to ordinary supporters; carried out only outside the club arena; and all 78 topics should be answered. The data collection took place outside and around the stadium before the matches and took roughly 3 hours per game. Nevertheless, not the same number of questionnaires was obtained from the three clubs: 180 instruments were administered to Black Team's supporters, 309 to Green Team's supporters and 215 to Red Team's followers. As a result, the limitation in obtaining all questionnaires answered is because, on the one hand, Green Team's supporters demonstrated more engagement to answer the questions; on the other hand, Black Team's and Red Team's supporters did not want to help us answering them. The administration process was the same for the three sports teams. In summary, 360 instruments were printed to be administered on the day of the three games for each sports team. Unfortunately, Black Team and Red Team had the fewest instruments answered, according to expectation.

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

## RESULTS

### *Income*

It recognises that Black Team's supporters have a divergent opinion in 66 out of 78 statements, overall (see Table 1). To clarify (i) the group who earns between 5 and 8 incomes tend to agree on the tournaments component; (ii) the supporters who earns between 1 and 4 salaries tend to agree on the goods suppliers, club administration, and investors; (iii) while the group who earns Zero tends to disagree on the media, the one that

earns between 5 and 8 incomes tends to agree. The group of supporters who agree (or disagree) the most is the one who receive between 5 and 8 incomes, 27 out of 66, and they have a distinct view in two specific components: goods suppliers and supporters' engagement.

Table 1: Income

Sports Structure Components	Black Team			Green Team			Red Team		
	Sig <= 0,05	(\$ IN	A   D	Sig <= 0,05	(\$ IN	A   D	Sig <= 0,05	(\$ IN	A   D
<b>Leagues &amp; Tournaments</b>									
01. Clear rules	0,000	5-8	A						
02. Calendars for matches	0,000	5-8	A	0,020	1-4	D			
03. Calendars for tv	0,002	5-8	A	0,020	1-4	D			
04. Quality of games	0,000	1-4	D	0,027	5-8	A			
05. Balanced teams	0,001	1-4	A	0,003	5-8	A			
06. Media coverage	0,001	1-4	D	0,047	5-8	A	0,007	Zero	D
07. Tv broadcasting to Europe	0,000	Zero	D						
08. 15,000 supporters on average									
09. Supporter's regular audience	0,000	1-4	A						
10. Cash prizes similar to Europe	0,000	1-4	A						
<b>Stadium</b>									
11. Point of sale (ticketing)	0,000	1-4	D	0,004	5-8	A	0,011	5-8	A
12. Comfortable seats and toilets	0,001	Zero	A						
13. Car parking complex	0,002	5-8	D						
14. Snack bar or restaurants	0,001	5-8	D						
15. Prioritising supporter-members	0,002	Zero	D	0,005	1-4	D			
16. Space (or area) for the disabled	0,000	Zero	A	0,002	5-8	D			
17. Partnership with public sector	0,000	Zero	D	0,031	1-4	D	0,029	Zero	A
18. Safety for supporters	0,000	5-8	D	0,001	5-8	A	0,017	1-4	D
19. Guides to help supporters	0,001	Zero	D				0,002	Zero	D
20. Expensive tickets	0,000	5-8	A						
21. Kiosks to sell products	0,005	5-8	D	0,000	5-8	A			
22. Kiosks to become members				0,000	5-8	A			
<b>Goods Suppliers</b>									
23. Supporters buy illegal goods	0,000	1-4	A	0,001	Zero	A			
24. Discount to supporter-members	0,000	5-8	D	0,002	Zero	D			
25. Assortment of models and sizes	0,000	1-4	A	0,026	Zero	D			
26. 3 goods per year	0,000	Zero	A						
27. Licensed club stores	0,001	Zero	A						
28. Sports stores	0,000	1-4	A						
29. Few options of goods	0,011	5-8	D						
30. Vintage uniforms	0,018	5-8	A						
31. Sponsor stamped on club goods									
32. Stores in arena	0,000	5-8	A						
33. Celebration uniforms	0,001	Zero	A	0,006	1-4	D			
34. Gifting family and friends	0,006	1-4	A	0,000	5-8	A			
35. Customising goods	0,012	1-4	A	0,001	Zero	D			
<b>Supporters' Engagement</b>									
36. Reading books and newspapers				0,044	5-8	A			
37. Collecting photos and posters				0,008	5-8	A			
38. Pay-tv subscription	0,001	5-8	A	0,000	1-4	D			
39. Visiting the trophy room	0,004	1-4	D	0,017	1-4	A			
40. Main athletes and starting line-up	0,000	5-8	A						
41. Visiting club website every week	0,004	5-8	D				0,026	1-4	D
42. Attending training	0,028	Zero	A						
43. Following social networks	0,001	1-4	A						
44. Visiting club stores	0,000	5-8	D						
45. Having historical T-shirts	0,000	1-4	D						
46. Attending opponent's arena									
47. Encouraging relatives									
48. Encouraging co-workers	0,000	5-8	A	0,008	1-4	A			
49. Wearing T-shirts on game day	0,000	5-8	A						
50. Seeing T-shirt in another State	0,000	5-8	A						
51. Seeing T-shirt in another country	0,024	5-8	D	0,000	5-8	A			
52. Mock friends	0,047	1-4	D				0,043	1-4	D
53. Watching sports tv programmes	0,015	5-8	D	0,002	Zero	A			
54. Choosing the team in FIFA video game				0,000	5-8	D	0,048	Zero	A
55. Accessing YouTube to watch the goals	0,005	Zero	A	0,003	5-8	D	0,037	Zero	A
<b>Club Administration</b>									
56. Business administration concepts				0,000	5-8	A			
57. Transparent administration	0,000	1-4	A	0,001	1-4	D			

58. Monetarily responsible concepts	0,001	Zero	D	0,009	5 – 8	A		
59. Client-oriented principles	0,000	Zero	D					
60. Paying the bills	0,000	1–4	A					
61. Dealing with partners	0,000	1–4	A	0,005	1–4	D		
62. Positive image for investors	0,000	1–4	A	0,003	1–4	D		
63. Producing own athletes	0,000	5–8	A					
64. Receiving criticisms	0,000	Zero	D					
65. Social responsibility plan	0,000	1–4	A					
66. Relationship with supporters	0,024	Zero	A	0,000	1–4	D		
67. Using marketing strategies	0,014	5–8	D					
<b>Investors</b>								
68. Making investments in the club	0,005	1–4	A				0,027	1 - 4 A
69. Adding value to club brand	0,001	5–8	A					
70. Having few incentive policies				0,009	1–4	D	0,013	Zero A
71. Risk for company's brand				0,026	Zero	A		
72. Improving quality of products	0,004	1–4	A	0,008	Zero	D		
73. Enhancing relationship with supporters	0,030	5–8	D	0,020	5–8	A		
<b>Media</b>								
74. Valuing the national tournament	0,000	Zero	D	0,025	5–8	A	0,015	1–4 D
75. Paying well to cover games	0,000	Zero	D				0,042	5–8 D
76. Prioritising clubs on media	0,000	5–8	A	0,037	1–4	D		
77. Promoting naming rights on media								
78. Interfering on tournament calendars.	0,000	5–8	A					

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

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

Source: Authors

Concerning the Green Team, only 39 topics depict a different view from the others regarding the sports structure. The supporters who earn between 5 and 8 salaries can be pointed out in relation to the other two: Zero and 1 - 4, and they tend to disagree only in the components: sports venue and supporters' engagement. Thus, as can be observed in the Black Team, the supporters who have a wage between 5 and 8 has a different stance than others. Apropos of Red Team, only 13 subjects were marked, i.e., Red Team's supporters have an equal judgment about the sports structure, either to agree and disagree regarding their components. The stadium is the dimension which has the most different opinion (4 out of 12 topics). The supporters who depend economically on their relatives are those who most agree or disagree. Then, Red Team's supporters have the same judgment on the sports structure, regardless of their wages.

Nonetheless, what are the common opinion of these supporters concerning the components and topics, in general? Bearing in mind the tournaments, Green Team's supporters believe that the media cover a substantial number of matches on tv, radio, etc., but Black Team's and Red Team's supporters have another opinion. Regarding the arena, the Green Team's and Red Team's supporters, who earn between 1 and 4 salaries agree that there is a sufficient number of points of sale to buy tickets, while Black Team's supporters disagree. Red Team's supporters state that the club has a partnership with the public sector to provide public transportation. Black Team's and Green Team's supporters disagree. Green Team's supporters argue that the club offers safety inside and outside the arena for supporters; however, Black Team's and Red Team's supporters have a distinct view. Apropos of the supporters' engagement dimension, Black Team's and Red Team's supporters who have a zero-income tend to access YouTube to follow their teams, differently from those who support Green Team. As to the media, Black Team's and Red Team's supporters understand that the Brazilian media does not help the national tournament, whereas Green Team's supporters have a distinct perception.

When these three sports teams are gathered, it is noticed that when Black Team's supporters agree or disagree, they are always supported by Green Team's either Red Team's supporters. It seems that the critical component of the sports structure for these three sports teams is the sports venue. Nonetheless, when analysing only the Black Team and Green Team, the investors' dimension may be, also, considered. All of Red Team's supporters have the similar view about goods suppliers and club administration. Black Team's and Green Team's supporters analyse these components as critical for the management process of their sports teams. In sum up, Black Team agree or disagree in some issues with Green Team and Red Team, as well; otherwise, Green Team and Red Team have only one issue where their supporters have the same opinion.

**Form of Transport**

The tournaments dimension depicts a curious aspect: except for an appropriate calendar to watch the games on television, which Black Team and Green Team have a sort of disagreement, on the other topics have no coincidence among them (Table 2). This unique point in common between the Black Team and Green Team was marked by distinct categories of supporters, in which, the former disagrees, and the latter agrees. The stadium is shown one more time as a relevant component in the sports structure. The drawback of having few points of sale and expensive tickets were mentioned by all supporters. For instance, the Pri group of Black Team and the Own group of Green Team agree that the teams provide enough number of box offices to buy a ticket, but the Own group of Red Team disagrees. Besides, the three groups of supporters believe that the tickets are much more expensive than they expect. These supporters use a different form of transport, for example, Black Team's and Red Team's supporters take public transportation; consequently, it can be deduced that their incomes are lower than the other groups, e.g., Own of Green Team. Red Team's supporters pointed out different concerns about some topics in relation to Black Team and Green Team, for instance, only one group has a favourable view concerning comfortable seats and toilets, and space for disabled people.

Table 2: Form of Transport

Sports Structure Components	Black Team			Green Team			Red Team		
	Sig <= 0,05	FT	A   D	Sig <= 0,05	FT	A   D	Sig <= 0,05	FT	A   D
<b>Leagues &amp; Tournaments</b>									
01. Clear rules	0,048	Pub	D						
02. Calendars for matches									
03. Calendars for tv	0,011	Own	D	0,014	Pri	A			
04. Quality of games									
05. Balanced teams									
06. Media coverage	0,037	Pub	D						
07. Tv broadcasting to Europe				0,003	Pub	A			
08. 15,000 supporters on average	0,042	Pri	D						
09. Supporter's regular audience				0,002	Pri	D			
10. Cash prizes similar to Europe							0,031	Own	D
<b>Stadium</b>									
11. Point of sale (ticketing)	0,020	Pri	A	0,000	Own	A	0,020	Own	D
12. Comfortable seats and toilets							0,005	Pub	A
13. Car parking complex	0,009	Pri	D				0,005	Own	D
14. Snack bar or restaurants									
15. Prioritising supporter-members	0,009	Own	A	0,029	Own	A			
16. Space (or area) for the disabled							0,001	Own	A
17. Partnership with public sector									
18. Safety for supporters									
19. Guides to help supporters				0,006	Pub	D			
20. Expensive tickets	0,007	Pub	A	0,007	Own	A	0,044	Pub	A
21. Kiosks to sell products	0,029	Pub	D						
22. Kiosks to become members									
<b>Goods Suppliers</b>									
23. Supporters buy illegal goods									
24. Discount to supporter-members									
25. Assortment of models and sizes				0,001	Own	A	0,000	Pub	A
26. 3 goods per year	0,004	Own	D				0,049	Own	A
27. Licensed club stores									
28. Sports stores	0,009	Pub	A	0,001	Pri	A			
29. Few options of goods									
30. Vintage uniforms									
31. Sponsor stamped on club goods									
32. Stores in arena									
33. Celebration uniforms									
34. Gifting family and friends				0,038	Own	A			
35. Customising goods									
<b>Supporters' Engagement</b>									
36. Reading books and newspapers				0,016	Pri	A			
37. Collecting photos and posters									
38. Pay-tv subscription									
39. Visiting the trophy room	0,008	Own	D	0,006	Pub	D			
40. Main athletes and starting line-up									
41. Visiting club website every week									
42. Attending training									
43. Following social networks	0,048	Pri	A						
44. Visiting club stores				0,020	Own	A			

45. Having historical T-shirts					0,000	Pub	A
46. Attending opponent's arena	0,047	Pri	A				
47. Encouraging relatives							
48. Encouraging co-workers							
49. Wearing T-shirts on game day	0,41	Pub	A		0,015	Own	D
50. Seeing T-shirt in another State							
51. Seeing T-shirt in another country				0,035	Own	A	
52. Mock friends							
53. Watching sports tv programmes					0,020	Pri	D
54. Choosing the team in FIFA video game							
55. Accessing YouTube to watch the goals							
<b>Club Administration</b>							
56. Business administration concepts				0,001	Pub	D	
57. Transparent administration				0,047	Pub	D	
58. Monetarily responsible concepts				0,001	Own	A	0,005
59. Client-oriented principles							Own
60. Paying the bills				0,001	Pub	D	0,001
61. Dealing with partners				0,007	Own	A	Pub
62. Positive image for investors				0,007	Own	A	0,030
63. Producing own athletes							Pub
64. Receiving criticisms							Pub
65. Social responsibility plan				0,013	Pub	D	
66. Relationship with supporters	0,042	Own	D				
67. Using marketing strategies							
<b>Investors</b>							
68. Making investments in the club	0,007	Pub	D				0,003
69. Adding value to club brand							Own
70. Having few incentive policies							D
71. Risk for company's brand	0,031	Pub	A	0,019	Pub	A	
72. Improving quality of products	0,001	Pub	D				
73. Enhancing relationship with supporters	0,024	Pri	D				
<b>Media</b>							
74. Valuing the national tournament	0,009	Pri	D				
75. Paying well to cover games							0,025
76. Prioritising clubs on media	0,022	Own	A				Own
77. Promoting naming rights on media							D
78. Interfering on tournament calendars.				0,039	Own	A	

Caption 1: FT = Form of Transport with 3 options: Pub = Public Transportation; Pri = Private Transportation; Own = Own Vehicle.

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

Source: Authors

As to the goods suppliers, only one group of Green Team's and Red Team's supporters agree about the assortments of models and sizes. A group of Black Team's and Green Team's supporters usually buy the clubs' goods in sports stores, instead of buying at the club's licensed stores. These groups are spending their money on sports stores. Also, the Green Team's supporters who have their vehicle are the only ones who admit giving Green Team's goods as a gift to relatives and friends. Regarding supporters' engagement, Black Team and Green Team have only one group who usually do not sign a cable tv. Curiously, the Black Team's supporters who disagree are the ones who have their vehicle. It means that they are willing to buy a car, but they are not willing to sign up for pay-tv. With regard to wearing a T-shirt on the game day, only one group of Black Team's supporters agree, while just one of Red Team's supporters disagree. Hence, the supporters' engagement had less conflict than expected since this dimension has more topics than the other six components.

Club administration is the component which presented more conflicts between Green Team's and Red Team's supporters. First, Green Team's and Red Team's Own groups have a different opinion concerning monetarily responsible concepts for managing both clubs, while Green Team's supporters agree, Red Team's supporters disagree. But, the opposite situation can be found on the topic paying the bills since the Pub groups are those who disagree. Additionally, Green Team's Pub group disagrees regarding paying the bills, while the Red Team agrees. One group of Green Team's and Red Team's supporters agree as to improving the positive image for investors. Coincidentally, it was possible to observe two unusual aspects apropos of Green Team supporters: those supporters who have their vehicle tend to agree, and those who take public transportation tend to disagree about this dimension. Apropos of the investors, one group of Black Team's and Red Team's supporters oppose as to making investments in the sports teams; likewise, only one group of Black Team and Green Team believe



that making investments in the sports teams might be a risk for a private and a public company. About the media, Black Team Pri group is the only one who disagrees about the media valuing the national tournament, and Green Team Own group agrees regarding the media infer on the league calendars.

It is noticed that the investor is a component which has a more divergent view, while the club administration has less conflict, according to Black Team's supporters. But, the club administration component is the most distinct, investors, and media dimensions are more homogeneous, as stated by Green Team's supporters. For Red Team's supporters, the component which encourages most disagreement is the arena and the one that causes less controversy is the tournament dimension. For this reason, a dimension which might be critical, conflicted and distinct for a sports team, might not necessarily be for another. In addition, the Own is the group of supporters who have an unfamiliar view in relation to the seven components, according to Green Team's and Red Team's supporters. Thus, Black Team is the most different sports team in comparison to the Green Team and Red Team bearing in mind form of transport.

### *Attendance at Sports Venue*

Immediately, it is possible to notice that three components were not marked by Red Team's supporters: the stadium, club administration and investors, see Table 3. The Black Team and Green Team had at least one statement marked on each component. However, Black Team and Green Team do not diverge on any topics, i.e., the topic which produces a conflict of opinion for a group of Black Team's supporters are not the same for Green Team's supporters. Green Team's and Red Team's supporters have a divergent view on two topics. The group of Green Team's supporters who go to the arena once a month disagrees about their regular audience every week (either on tv or in the sports venue) on a tournament, while the group of Red Team's supporters between 2 and 3 times, agrees. Also, the group of these two sports teams who has an attendance between 4 and 6 times, do not share the same opinion about cash prizes for a winning sports team in Brazil being equivalent to Europe's.

Table 3: Attendance

Sports Structure Components	Black Team			Green Team			Red Team		
	Sig <= 0,05	AT	A   D	Sig <= 0,05	AT	A   D	Sig <= 0,05	AT	A   D
<b>Leagues &amp; Tournaments</b>									
01. Clear rules				0,000	2-3	A			
02. Calendars for matches									
03. Calendars for tv	0,021	2-3	A						
04. Quality of games				0,016	2-3	A			
05. Balanced teams	0,002	1	D						
06. Media coverage									
07. Tv broadcasting to Europe				0,001	2-3	D			
08. 15,000 supporters on average	0,034	4-6	A						
09. Supporter's regular audience				0,000	1	D	0,013	2-3	A
10. Cash prizes similar to Europe				0,004	4-6	D	0,023	4-6	A
<b>Stadium</b>									
11. Point of sale (ticketing)	0,007	2-3	D	0,000	1	D			
12. Comfortable seats and toilets									
13. Car parking complex									
14. Snack bar or restaurants	0,012	1	D						
15. Prioritising supporter-members									
16. Space (or area) for the disabled	0,018	1	A	0,024	2-3	A			
17. Partnership with public sector	0,047	4-6	D						
18. Safety for supporters	0,002	1	A	0,016	2-3	A			
19. Guides to help supporters	0,041	1	D						
20. Expensive tickets									
21. Kiosks to sell products									
22. Kiosks to become members									
<b>Goods Suppliers</b>									
23. Supporters buy illegal goods									
24. Discount to supporter-members	0,004	1	D	0,036	4-6	D			
25. Assortment of models and sizes									
26. 3 goods per year	0,000	4-6	A						
27. Licensed club stores							0,042	2-3	A
28. Sports stores							0,031	1	D
29. Few options of goods									

30. Vintage uniforms								
31. Sponsor stamped on club goods								
32. Stores in arena	0,010	2-3	A					
33. Celebration uniforms								
34. Gifting family and friends	0,001	1	A	0,034	2-3	A		
35. Customising goods								
<b>Supporters' Engagement</b>								
36. Reading books and newspapers							0,032	1 D
37. Collecting photos and posters							0,001	1 D
38. Pay-tv subscription				0,000	1	D	0,000	4-6 A
39. Visiting the trophy room								
40. Main athletes and starting line-up				0,002	2-3	A		
41. Visiting club website every week	0,029	4-6	A					
42. Attending training	0,000	4-6	A	0,006	4-6	A		
43. Following social networks	0,007	4-6	A	0,030	1	D		
44. Visiting club stores	0,000	1	D				0,002	1 A
45. Having historical T-shirts				0,046	1	D	0,019	1 D
46. Attending opponent's arena							0,007	1 D
47. Encouraging relatives							0,025	1 A
48. Encouraging co-workers								
49. Wearing T-shirts on game day				0,000	1	D		
50. Seeing T-shirt in another State	0,016	2-3	A					
51. Seeing T-shirt in another country	0,022	2-3	A					
52. Mock friends				0,043	2-3	A		
53. Watching sports tv programmes							0,023	4-6 D
54. Choosing the team in FIFA video game				0,028	4-6	D		
55. Accessing YouTube to watch the goals								
<b>Club Administration</b>								
56. Business administration concepts	0,001	2-3	A	0,001	2-3	A		
57. Transparent administration	0,028	2-3	A					
58. Monetarily responsible concepts				0,006	2-3	A		
59. Client-oriented principles								
60. Paying the bills								
61. Dealing with partners				0,042	1	A		
62. Positive image for investors	0,005	1	D					
63. Producing own athletes								
64. Receiving criticisms								
65. Social responsibility plan				0,048	4-6	D		
66. Relationship with supporters								
67. Using marketing strategies	0,030	4-6	A					
<b>Investors</b>								
68. Making investments in the club								
69. Adding value to club brand				0,025	1	A		
70. Having few incentive policies								
71. Risk for company's brand								
72. Improving quality of products	0,001	2-3	D					
73. Enhancing relationship with supporters								
<b>Media</b>								
74. Valuing the national tournament							0,047	2-3 D
75. Paying well to cover games	0,000	2-3	D					
76. Prioritising clubs on media								
77. Promoting naming rights on media				0,004	2-3	D		
78. Interfering on tournament calendars.	0,001	1	A					

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

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

Source: Authors

Looking into the arena, three topics produce the same sort of divergence for Black Team's and Green Team's supporters in particular: (i) as to the number of point of sales to buy tickets, both sports teams have a group that disagrees; (ii) regarding an area for the disabled; and (iii) safety for supporters inside the sports venue, only one group agrees. A comparable situation happens on the goods suppliers dimension since one group of Black Team, and one of Green Team's supporters disagree about selling a product with a discount to supporters-members, and they agree about giving sports team's products to relatives and friends on a celebration day. It is convenient to point out two pieces of information regarding the goods suppliers: first, only the group of Black Team's supporters between 4 and 6 times a month agree that they buy more than 3 products per year, i.e., the fanaticism awakes the desire of consuming even more club's goods; and second, the group between 2 and 3

times is the only one who agrees about buying products in licenced club stores, probably, the others buy-in sports stores.

The supporters' engagement has some topics which were marked by all supporters, but only a few of them produced any conflict for 2 or 3 sports teams, simultaneously. For instance, Black Team and Green Team have two topics which share the same conflict; Green Team and Red Team has two, as well; however, Black Team and Red Team have none. The group of Black Team's as well as Green Team's supporters between 4 and 6 times usually go to watch the training session. This same group of the Black Team's follow the club on social networks, but the group of Green Team's supporters who less often monitors the club is the one who has an attendance equal to one. Between Green Team and Red Team, the group of Red Team's supporters who is more fanatic is the one that tends to get the pay-subscription, and Green Team's supporters are those who have less attendance in the arena, and they do not watch sports channel on cable tv. Besides, those Green Team's and Red Team's supporters who have one audience do not usually buy old fashioned t-shirts from these clubs. As to the administration of the teams, the same group of Black Team's and Green Team's supporters is the one who goes to the arena between 2 and 3 times a month and tends to agree on the implementation of business concepts to manage these sports teams. The investors and media have no sharing of conflict of opinion among the supporters of the sport.

The analysis also shows that the groups of supporters who go to the stadium once a month are the ones who have a more divergent opinion compared to the other groups. This was observed among Black Team's and Red Team's supporters. Otherwise, the attendance between 2 and 3 times is the most critical one for the Green Team. On the one hand, the Black Team and Red Team are very distinct about the attendance. Green Team shares a conventional conflict in some topics with the Black Team and Red Team, even though the opinion of the groups of supporters is different than expected. Above all, the fanaticism of followers depicted some relevant aspects which marketers should analyse and consider in the sports structure of these sports teams: sports venue, goods suppliers and supporters' engagement dimensions.

### *Gender*

According to Green Team's supporters, the goods suppliers dimensions did not indicate a conflict of opinions, and Red Team had two dimensions, i.e., the arena and investors; the same as Black Team, which had no divergent view about sports venue and media (see Table 4). As to tournaments, Green Team and Red Team have certain similarities, e.g., the women's opinion about the quality of the games is not so good because the most talented players are performing in Europe tournaments, they are not in Brazil, but the men of these same sports teams have a distinctive point of view. Green Team's men supporters state that the cash prizes paid for a winning team in Brazil are not similar to Europe's, unlike Red Team's supporters who do not think the same way. For Green Team's women supporters, the rules of the tournaments are not clear, on the contrary, Red Team men supporters see this from another perspective. Nevertheless, as to the audience of supporters, the women who support these three sports teams, usually, do not watch the games every week.

Table 4: Gender

Sports Structure Components	Black Team			Green Team			Red Team		
	Sig <= 0,05	M   W	A   D	Sig <= 0,05	M   W	A   D	Sig <= 0,05	M   W	A   D
<b>Leagues &amp; Tournaments</b>									
01. Clear rules				0,009	W	D	0,001	M	A
02. Calendars for matches									
03. Calendars for tv				0,010	M	A			
04. Quality of games				0,000	W	D	0,024	W	D
05. Balanced teams	0,003	M	A				0,005	M	A
06. Media coverage									
07. Tv broadcasting to Europe				0,004	W	A			
08. 15,000 supporters on average				0,029	W	A			
09. Supporter's regular audience	0,009	W	D	0,000	W	D	0,024	W	D
10. Cash prizes similar to Europe				0,013	M	D	0,005	M	A
<b>Stadium</b>									
11. Point of sale (ticketing)				0,014	W	D			
12. Comfortable seats and toilets				0,041	M	D			

13. Car parking complex								
14. Snack bar or restaurants								
15. Prioritising supporter-members				0,009	M	A		
16. Space (or area) for the disabled								
17. Partnership with public sector				0,047	M	D		
18. Safety for supporters								
19. Guides to help supporters								
20. Expensive tickets				0,025	W	A		
21. Kiosks to sell products								
22. Kiosks to become members								
<b>Goods Suppliers</b>								
23. Supporters buy illegal goods								
24. Discount to supporter-members							0,006	M D
25. Assortment of models and sizes								
26. 3 goods per year	0,010	W	D					
27. Licensed club stores								
28. Sports stores								
29. Few options of goods								
30. Vintage uniforms							0,016	W D
31. Sponsor stamped on club goods								
32. Stores in arena								
33. Celebration uniforms								
34. Gifting family and friends								
35. Customising goods							0,038	M A
<b>Supporters' Engagement</b>								
36. Reading books and newspapers							0,039	W D
37. Collecting photos and posters								
38. Pay-tv subscription	0,000	W	D					
39. Visiting the trophy room				0,041	W	A		
40. Main athletes and starting line-up	0,005	W	D	0,000	M	A	0,000	W D
41. Visiting club website every week								
42. Attending training								
43. Following social networks								
44. Visiting club stores				0,036	W	A		
45. Having historical T-shirts								
46. Attending opponent's arena								
47. Encouraging relatives								
48. Encouraging co-workers				0,018	W	A		
49. Wearing T-shirts on match day								
50. Seeing T-shirt in another State								
51. Seeing T-shirt in another country								
52. Mock friends							0,009	M A
53. Watching sports tv programmes				0,006	M	A	0,001	M A
54. Choosing the team in FIFA video game				0,015	M	A		
55. Accessing YouTube to watch the goals							0,018	W D
<b>Club Administration</b>								
56. Business administration concepts								
57. Transparent administration				0,009	M	D		
58. Monetarily responsible concepts				0,027	M	D		
59. Client-oriented principles				0,046	W	A		
60. Paying the bills								
61. Dealing with partners								
62. Positive image for investors								
63. Producing own athletes							0,014	W D
64. Receiving criticisms								
65. Social responsibility plan				0,023	W	A		
66. Relationship with supporters	0,030	M	D					
67. Using marketing strategies								
<b>Investors</b>								
68. Making investments in the club								
69. Adding value to club brand								
70. Having few incentive policies								
71. Risk for company's brand				0,020	M	A		
72. Improving quality of products	0,016	M	D					
73. Enhancing relationship with supporters	0,026	W	A					
<b>Media</b>								
74. Valuing the national tournament								
75. Paying well to cover games								
76. Prioritising clubs on media				0,027	M	A	0,012	M A
77. Promoting naming rights on media								
78. Interfering on tournament calendars.				0,001	M	D	0,011	M A

Caption 1: Gender = M: Men; and W = Women.

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

Source: Authors

The arena is a conflict component only for Green Team's supporters, while the goods suppliers dimension has no indication of divergence by them. Regarding supporters' engagement, when asked if they recognise the main players of their teams and know the ones who start playing every game, the women who support Black Team and Red Team do not know, but the men who support Green Team do. Both Green Team's as well as Red Team's men supporters tend to watch sport tv programmes to get updated on the news related to their sports teams. Looking into this dimension, it is possible to recognise that all Black Team's and Red Team's women supporters disagree, while Green Team's supporters, whether they are men or women, tend to agree. Additionally, Red Team's supporters, all men tend to agree and women to disagree.

Concerning the club administration, one aspect draws attention. According to Green Team's men supporters, they do not recognise in the sports team the transparent administration process and the implementation of financially responsible principles. Apropos of the investors, two points can be highlighted in Black Team: (i) men do not agree that partners and sponsors have improved the quality of the goods; (ii) and women tend to agree concerning enhancing the relationship between sports team and supporters. Bearing in mind the media, the men who support the Green Team and Red Team agree that the media are prioritising some clubs when a tv company broadcasts news or matches on tv or the radio. The supporters tend to have a distinct opinion about the interference of the media in the tournament since Green Team's men supporters tend to disagree, and Red Team's men agree. Of course, it was expected, as a whole, that gender could be less polemic than the other (three personal details), but marketers should not neglect and ignore this information because it is relevant knowledge which might be pertinent to enhance business and marketing plans.

### **Final Arguments**

It realises that each football sports team has a sports structure, including its partners, sponsor, investors, suppliers and supporters. In general, a sports entity manages a sports structure with a limited arrange of actors to improve and coordinate essential resources to increase the competitive advantage of a sports team (Silva & Las Casas, 2017a). Hence, a performance of a sports structure includes multiple autonomous companies and individuals interacting with each other to achieve shared objectives such as supporters, investors and media. Three critical assumptions assist in analysing the role of a sports structure: the goal is enhancing the performance in sports events, experiences or entertainments; consists of both companies (sports and non-sports) and individuals; and it does not involve only one purpose in the sporting field. Thus, sports structure approaches 4 elements: supporters interfaces, strategic core, strategic resources and value chain.

In fact, why is it relevant to be acquainted with the supporters' view of a sports structure? To whom will it matter? On the one hand, understanding the sports structure components increases the chances of addressing a sports business and marketing plan lined-up to supporters-client-oriented. On the other hand, it is up to both marketers to approach the supporters as clients to plan, implement and control the value chain using the sports structure components as references to create, implement and improve an appropriate good to supporters focusing on experience, excitation and passion in a game. The sports structure is a tool to guide marketers to do a better job. The role of a sports structure is supporting the sports business as well as marketing strategies in a sports team.

Looking into the four hypotheses proposed to meet by the end of this study, the hypothesis (1) was reached since Black Team is the most different than Green Team as well as Red Team. Equally relevant, Black Team is the sports team which has more disagreement about the sports structure, according to its supporters. The hypothesis (2) was partially achieved in 2 of 3 sports teams, in other words, income is a personal detail which produces more impact on Black Team and Green Team. For Red Team the personal detail more critical is transportation. The hypothesis (3) was recorded only in Black Team since public transportation is the second most pertinent supporter detail, as regards Green Team and Red Team, the second personal detail is gender.

The hypothesis (4) was not met, because of the sports venue is the sports structure's components most critical only for the Black Team. Nonetheless, this component is tied with investors on the first position, followed by tournaments dimension. For Green Team's supporters, the most critical is tournaments, followed by club administration. For Red Team is the media, and on the second position tournaments. The tournaments component was recorded and highlighted, regardless of the position, by all supporters as a critical dimension in the sports structures of these three sports teams.

By and large, usually the media and ordinary people who support the Red Team complain about two aspects of the sports venue: (i) the distance from downtown (roughly 15 kilometres) where there is no appropriate public transportation system available for assisting the supporters; (ii) the comfort of the stadium due to Red Team's arena is older than Black and Green teams. Nonetheless, the stadium was the fourth most critical component marked by Red Team's supporters; also, this dimension was not recorded on the attendance and gender personal details. In summary, this study depicted that: first, the attendance at the sports venue is once per month on average for all sports teams; then, their income is around the US \$ 780,00 per month.; finally, Black Team's supporters usually take public transportation, Green Team's supporters take private transportation, and the Red Team's supporters use their vehicle to go to the sports venue watch the games.

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**Edson Coutinho da Silva**

Biography Summary: Postdoctoral in Marketing from Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo; Postdoc in Marketing, University of São Paulo.

Doctor in Social Science at Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo; and Doctor in Public Health from Federal University of São Paulo.

ORCID: 0000-0002-9595-5963, Phone number: 55 11 4453-2900

E-mail: [dr.edson.coutinho@gmail.com](mailto:dr.edson.coutinho@gmail.com)

**Alexandre Luzzi Las Casas**

Biography Summary: Postdoctoral in Marketing, Portuguese Catholic University, Porto, Portugal.

Doctor of Administration from Getulio Vargas Foundation

ORCID: 0000-0003-2098-0969

Phone number: 55 11 3670-8513, E-mail: [alascasas@terra.com.br](mailto:alascasas@terra.com.br)