

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF A GERMAN BUNDESLIGA BASKETBALL CLUB ON THE REGIONAL ECONOMY

El impacto socioeconómico de un club de baloncesto de la Bundesliga alemana en la economía regional

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ABSTRACT: The focus of this research study is to examine the economic and social impact of a German professional basketball club on its regional economy. The Bundesliga basketball club EWE Baskets Oldenburg serves as the basis for this study. The question guiding the research is: What are the supply-side and demand-side effects of the basketball club EWE Baskets Oldenburg on the city of Oldenburg and the region? The data collection was conducted by means of several empirical surveys (online, venue and passer-by surveys) in the period from December 2019 to February 2020. In total, data from 1,093 people was collected, evaluated and analyzed. The results show regional value-added, employment and turnover effects, as well as awareness-raising and image-improving effects (national and international) on the location community of the club considered here.

KEY WORDS: basketball, socio-economic impact, regional economy, sport, image.

RESUMEN: *El objetivo de este estudio de investigación es examinar el impacto económico y social de un club de baloncesto profesional alemán en su economía regional. El club de baloncesto de la Bundesliga EWE Baskets Oldenburg sirve de base para este estudio. La pregunta que guía la investigación es: ¿Cuáles son los efectos de la oferta y la demanda del club de baloncesto EWE Baskets Oldenburg en la ciudad de Oldenburg y en la región? La recopilación de datos se llevó a cabo mediante varias encuestas empíricas (en línea, en el lugar de celebración y entre los transeúntes) en el período comprendido entre diciembre de 2019 y febrero de 2020. En total, se recogieron, evaluaron y analizaron los datos de 1.093 personas. Los resultados muestran efectos regionales de valor añadido, empleo y volumen de negocio, así como efectos de sensibilización y mejora de la imagen (nacional e internacional) en la comunidad de ubicación del club aquí considerado.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: baloncesto, impacto socioeconómico, economía regional, deporte, imagen.

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1. Introduction

First, the relevance of the topic is highlighted and the status of previous research is described. From this, the scientific contribution of this study is derived, which also includes the concrete objectives. Furthermore, a delimitation of the topic is made and the approach is explained.

1.1. Relevance of the topic

Sport is an important economic factor in Germany, as sport influences value creation, employment and consumption. In 2016, sport recorded a gross value added of 62.4 billion euros, which corresponds to a contribution of 2.3% to the total gross domestic product (GDP). The sports-related labor market provided 1,242,000 jobs (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie, 2018). Soccer occupies a special position here, as this sport attracts the most spectators. Thus, 20% of Germans attend a soccer match, while only 2% go to a basketball game (Digel, 2018). Nevertheless, German basketball has recently experienced an upswing in media presence due to sporting successes, and not least because of German NBA stars such as Dirk Nowitzki, Dennis Schröder and Daniel Theis (Deutscher Basketball Bund, 2020). In Germany, the traditional northern German club EWE Baskets Oldenburg, among others, is causing a stir in the German Basketball League (BBL). The team from a town in Lower Saxony played consistently in the top third of the BBL in the 2018/2019 season and finished fourth in the league (easyCredit Basketball Bundesliga, 2019).

1.2. State of research and research question

Sport as an economic factor is of enormous importance in large parts of the world and is therefore also the subject of various research activities. Especially in industrialized nations, there is a trend towards an increase in the leisure activities of the working population. As a result, the number of sporting events on offer is also increasing (Kurscheid, 2009). The social significance of this trend is reflected, above all, in large events, which represent a strong attraction due to the "extraordinary" (Kurscheidt, 2009) experience. The focus is on value creation and consumption, as well as employment on a global scale (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie, 2015).

The USA, as the number one sports nation, is leading the way. The reason for this is that such studies are expanding there. Its research interests encompass various sports, from which no explicit positioning of the research area can be concluded. The studies are devoted, among other things, to the economic investigation of the sports American football (Maennig, 2019; Heuwinkel, 2020; Dermody, Taylor, & Lomanno, 2003) and basketball (Brown, Rascher, Nagel, & McEvoy, 2016; Kaplan, Ramamoorthy, Gupte, Sagar, Premkumar, Wilbur, & Zilberman, 2019; Dinces, 2018; Baade, Baumann, & Matheson, 2011).

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At the European level, there are scientific studies on the economic effects of major events, such as the London 2012 Olympic Games (Deutscher Bundestag, 2014). But the topic of professional soccer is also heavily researched (Aza-Conejo, Baños-Pino, Canal Domínguez & Rodríguez Guerrero, 2007; García & Rodríguez-Guerrero, 2002).

In Germany, research interest is primarily focused on professional soccer. A large number of empirical studies have already dealt with the regional economic effects of soccer clubs in Germany (Hamm, Jäger & Fischer, 2016; Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie, 2015; Sieweck, 2016; Digel, 2018; Behrenbeck, Tacke, Schreiber, Schlappa, Krüger, Frevel, & Beiderbeck, 2020). In addition to professional soccer clubs, there is also a body of literature on major sporting events such as the 2006 World Cup and the NOK bids for the 2012 Summer Olympics (Kurscheid, 2009; Deutscher Bundestag, 2014). Furthermore, the Federal Institute of Sport Sciences (BISp), and the Federal Ministry of Economics and Energy (BMWi), are developing a sports statistics account that provides data on sport consumption in Germany (GWS, 2016).

Professional basketball in Germany has so far only been given a low profile. Only one comparable study, devoted to the Brose Bamberg basketball club, focuses on three aspects of this study (Brose Bamberg, 2017). These embody economic, media-analytical and opinion-forming effects, which are investigated both quantitatively and qualitatively. However, the results of the aforementioned study are not convincing in all respects. On the one hand, they are only published in excerpts on the club's own homepage and date from 2016/2017. On the other hand, the study focuses on a club from a medium-sized city (=a city with at least 20,000 and less than 100,000 inhabitants) with around 77,500 inhabitants (as of 2019). Due to these points, research into the economic factor of basketball in Germany is a desideratum.

Against this background, this case study is intended to clarify the value of EWE Baskets Oldenburg for the municipality in which it is located. The following research question is derived from this: What supply-side and demand-side effects does the German basketball club EWE Baskets Oldenburg have on the city of Oldenburg and the region?

1.3. Scientific contribution and objective

The scientific contribution of this empirical study results from the consideration of regional economic effects that a professionally managed basketball club has on its local community in Germany. The aim is to shed some light on this dark area, which has hardly been taken into account by science so far, which in turn contributes to the generation of knowledge in the research field "Economic and Social Significance of Professional Basketball," and thus strengthens basketball in its role as an important economic factor of a region.

This paper focuses on the northern German Bundesliga club EWE Baskets Oldenburg, which is based in the city of Oldenburg, in Lower Saxony, with a population of around 171,700 (as of 2020). In this study, not only the demand-side effects are analyzed (value added, employment, turnover, etc.), but also the supply-side effects that are triggered via the supply side (awareness, image, etc.). However, these are difficult to quantify in

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monetary terms, which is why they are rarely dealt with in empirical studies. Thus, this study clearly goes beyond the goal of comparable studies and thus generates scientific added value.

This study pursues three objectives: a descriptive, an analytical and a pragmatic objective. The descriptive objective includes, first of all, the presentation of theoretical considerations on the demand and supply side-effects of a professionally run basketball club on its locational municipality. Against this background, the analytical objective comprises the determination of the regional economic value that EWE Baskets Oldenburg embodies for the city of Oldenburg and the region. Finally, the pragmatic objective consists of evaluating the research results and deriving possible transfer rates for the location municipality in order to achieve added value from the results obtained.

1.4. Delimitation

This paper does not focus on the overall economic aspect of sport in Germany, but only on the sport of basketball as an economic factor. The primary aim is to highlight the importance and significance of the northern German basketball club EWE Baskets Oldenburg for the city and region in which the club is based. These statements are mainly based on empirical surveys (online and face-to-face), and consequently the findings of this work are not intended to present a comprehensive picture.

1.5. Procedure

After the relevance of this study has been explained and its scientific contribution has been highlighted, theoretical considerations are first made in section 2. Section 3 then briefly introduces the basketball club EWE Baskets Oldenburg. Section 4 then describes the methodology used to collect and analyze the data. The results obtained are then presented and evaluated in section 5. Finally, section 6 summarizes and concludes the work. This also includes an outlook on the further development of basketball as an economic factor and a critical appraisal.

2. Theoretical framework

The following section lays the theoretical foundations for the regional economic effects of a basketball club. First, the model guiding the research is described, followed by an explanation of the key terms used in the topic.

2.1. Research guiding model

For the present study, the current model by Hamm, Jäger, and Fischer was chosen as the theoretical basis, which is also reflected in the data collection methods applied (Hamm et al., 2016). Hamm, as well as Hamm et al., have been investigating the regional economic (welfare) effects of sports clubs for more than 20 years, focusing primarily on soccer clubs (Hamm, 1998; Hamm, 1999; Hamm et al., 2014; Hamm et al., 2016). In contrast to other studies, which predominantly concentrate on estimating regional turnover, value added and employment effects -- i.e. on determining effects that are triggered via the demand

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side, the model by Hamm et al. on which this study is based -- also includes the aspects that are referred to as supply-side in Figure 1. For these, the term intangible, i.e. not quantifiable in monetary terms, external effects is often used in the relevant literature. (Schwark, 2004; Breuer, Wicker, & Orłowski, 2014) With this extension of the model, Hamm et al. pursue the goal of drawing as comprehensive an overall picture as possible of the regional economic (welfare) effects of a soccer club. Other researchers such as Aza-Conejo et al. (2007) take a different approach. In their study, they use an input-output model to calculate the socio-economic effect of sport on the economy.

Based on the research model by Hamm, Jäger, and Fischer (2016), the present study analyses the demand-side and supply-side effects of a basketball club.

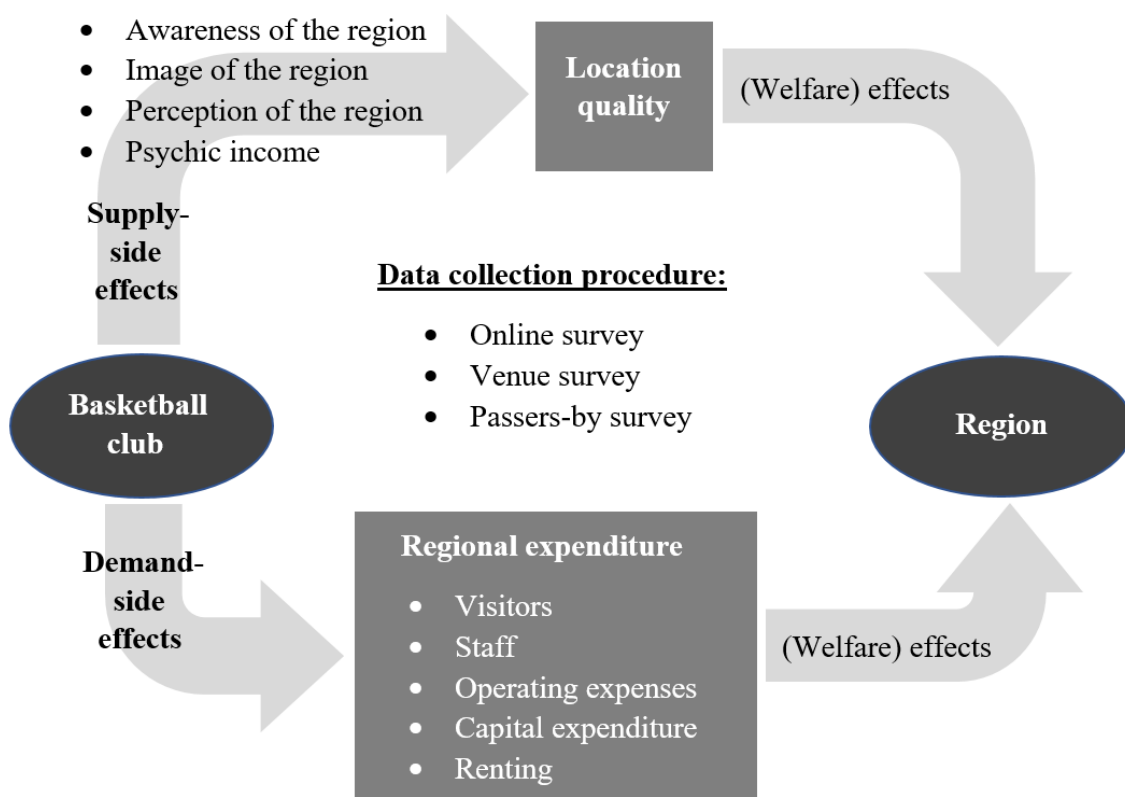


Figure 1. Regional economic effects of a basketball club (based on Hamm et al., 2016)

2.1.1. Demand-side effects

The radius of action of professionally managed basketball clubs has meanwhile become so large that these clubs must be regarded as medium-sized business enterprises. The existence of a national basketball league club can thus trigger noticeable demand-side effects for a city or region in different ways. A professionally run basketball club, for example, needs physical capital to provide its range of services. This includes playing facilities, training facilities and club homes. If companies from the region are commissioned to construct or maintain the buildings and/or facilities, there are demand-side effects for employment and thus the income of their employees. Before building a

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venue, every sports club must also consider the question of the location. The choice of location, therefore, also has demand-side effects, e.g. through bank loans taken out, subsidies/subsidies applied for and sponsorship money raised. A professionally run basketball club also has a need for employees. In addition to the protagonists of a basketball club, the players, the club also needs employees in management, administration, training of players and young talents as well as in various other areas (e.g. catering). A basketball club thus provides jobs in its region and pays its employees a corresponding salary. Furthermore, a basketball club plays home games in its arena, which are often attended by several thousand fans and guests. More of them come from the club's own region, but visitors from distant regions also find their way to the arenas. If the spectators spend money on goods and services at the club location (food, drinks, hotel accommodation, taxi rides, etc.), these are further demand-side effects that can be traced back to the basketball club. For the provision of services, the clubs in turn demand intermediate services. The extent of these demanded inputs may have been rather small originally. However, there is a tendency toward increased consumption here with the expansion of the club's fields of activity (e.g. catering services, sale of fan articles). Insofar as a basketball club obtains the necessary inputs from the region, it also triggers regional income and employment effects (Hamm et al., 2016; Hamm, 1998; Vöpel & Steinhardt, 2008; Siegfried & Zimbalist, 2000).

2.1.2. Supply-side effects

A professionally run basketball club can raise the profile of a city and the entire region beyond the region. In the case of league sports, the positioning of a basketball club can even be seen as evidence of the city's positioning. If a club plays in the first national league, the city also plays in the top league of German cities. And through participation in the national basketball league (BBL) and the European cups, the club, and thus also the name of the city, is present in the media both nationally and internationally. If the club even wins a title or plays in a final, this media presence is even greater. Increased awareness of the region can, in turn, lead to increased tourism. This, then, has the consequence that sectors such as gastronomy and trade can profit from it. The sponsoring of companies and the associated (perimeter) advertising increases the awareness of the sponsors. This, in turn, can lead to new customer orders for the sponsors, which in turn helps to secure jobs. A successful basketball club can also be important for start-ups and company founders when choosing a business location, which means that employment and value creation in the region increase as a result of companies settling here. A successful basketball club can also improve the image of a city and have similar effects. Especially in smaller cities with few top-level sports facilities, a successful basketball club can have an even greater impact than, for example, in large cities such as Berlin, Hamburg or Munich, where there are a large number of nationally renowned sports clubs (Crompton, 2004; Hamm et al., 2016; Hamm, 1998; Vöpel & Steinhardt, 2008; Siegfried & Zimbalist, 2000).

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2.2. Essential terms

2.2.1. Awareness level

Awareness is the percentage of people who know a certain object (product, organization, person or brand). The degree of awareness can be determined on the basis of random samples of a previously defined geographical area. The higher the level of awareness, the more people know about the existence of the object. However, awareness alone does not bring economic success. It can be stated, however, that lack of awareness reduces economic success (Onpulson, 2020).

2.2.2. Image

A person may have a certain image of an object (product, organization, person or brand). This idea is called an image. The image is thus an imaginary picture that is incorporated into the person's perceptual world. An image thus creates the "total impression" of an object, which can be formed by the person's attitudes and/or experiences with the object. Thus, the object-related perception shapes the emotional level of the person and decides whether a negative or positive image is applied to the respective object. For this reason, image is also referred to as mood or opinion. An existing image is very stable and can usually only be changed through a systematic and long-term image policy (Caspers, 2019).

2.2.3. Value added, employment and turnover

The business value added describes the added value of a company created by the combination of production factors in a certain period of time. The factors of production include operating resources, materials and the work performed. If new jobs are created as a direct result of the activities of an enterprise, then one speaks of employment effects. Turnover is the expression for the sum of products and services sold to customers. It records the sales volume of a company in terms of value, i.e. valued with sales prices (Wöhe, Döring, 2020). If you take a look at the literature, there are other methods besides the fan survey that can be used to evaluate input and output. One possibility is the revenue/expenditure table, in which the various revenues (season ticketing, sporting revenues) are compared with the expenditures, such as salaries or player purchases (Aza-Conejo et al., 2007).

3. EWE Baskets Oldenburg

EWE Baskets Oldenburg (official company name: Baskets Oldenburg GmbH & Co. KG) is a professional German basketball club founded in 1954. Since the 2000/01 season, the club has been operating in the highest German division, the easyCredit Basketball Bundesliga. The name EWE Baskets Oldenburg stems from sponsorship. The German electricity supplier EWE is the main sponsor of the basketball club and enjoys the sole naming rights. In the 2018/19 season, EWE Baskets Oldenburg finished third in the league. Their biggest successes, however, were winning the German championship in

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2009 and the German cup in 2015. In the 2019/20 season, EWE Baskets Oldenburg were eliminated in the semi-finals of the final tournament in Munich against the eventual winners ALBA Berlin (easyCredit Basketball Bundesliga, 2020). The EWE Baskets' home games have been played in the EWE Arena in Oldenburg since 2013. The arena capacity was expanded from 6,000 to 6,200 in October 2019. The increase in maximum capacity was due to the strong demand for tickets. The club was able to fill an average of just over 97% of their seats in the past season. With its existing capacity, the club offers the third-largest arena in the easyCredit BBL (easyCredit Basketball Bundesliga).

4. Methodology

The following section describes the sampling method and the data collection. In addition, the survey instrument is presented, and the data analysis explained.

4.1. Sample and data collection

The sampling method was designed to capture an appropriately large and heterogeneous sample for measuring the regional economic effects of the club EWE Baskets Oldenburg. The research team was guided by the model of Hamm et al. (Hamm et al., 2016). Specifically, a sample of a total of 1,093 survey participants (with a wide range in terms of age and gender) was generated, which allows valid statements to be made.

In order to empirically test the supply-side and demand-side effects of EWE Baskets Oldenburg, the instrument of empirical surveys was essentially used. The data collection for the study took place from 18/12/2019 to 15/02/2020 and corresponded to the "Convenience Sampling" procedure. Analogous to the model of Hamm et al., it is based on an ad hoc, online survey, which was supplemented by paper-based venue and passer-by surveys (face-to-face) in order to counteract the limitations of a purely online survey (e.g. the presence of internet access). (Eight interviewers conducted the interviews under the guidance of a project officer.)

- The online survey, which was conducted on the SurveyMonkey platform, was intended to generate as large a sample as possible, including people from more distant regions. For this purpose, the club management made an appeal to participate via the club's communication channels in the social media (Instagram and Face-book). In addition, press articles on the planned survey were published in regional and national newspapers (Nordwest-Zeitung, Oldenburgische Volkszeitung, etc.). A total of 772 respondents were generated via the online survey in the above-mentioned period.
- The paper-based venue survey (face-to-face) was intended to supplement the online survey and serve to ask people with a strong affinity for basketball about the regional economic effects of EWE Baskets Oldenburg. In this survey, the random selection was expanded to include the selection criterion "presence at the venue." A total of 287 home and away fans were interviewed at the EWE Arena during three

home games, two of which were part of the easyCredit Bundesliga and one of which was part of the Basketball Eurocup.

- The paper-based passers-by survey (face-to-face) was intended to open up a further data collection channel in order to investigate demand-side and supply-side effects among the regional population. In this survey, a random selection of passers-by was made who had frequented the city center of Oldenburg in the above-mentioned survey period. A total of 34 passers-by were interviewed face-to-face.

The socio-demographics of the survey participants can be seen in the table below.

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the survey participants

Variable	Categories	Number	%
Type of survey	Online survey	772	70.6
	Venue survey	287	26.3
	Passers-by survey	34	3.1
Age	≤ 18 years	59	5.4
	> 18 und ≤ 50 years	671	61.4
	> 50 years	363	33.2
Average age (years)	Average age	39	-
	Youngest participant	10	-
	Oldest participant	85	-
Gender	Male	738	67.5
	Female	351	32.1
	Diverse	4	0.4
Residence	City of Oldenburg	631	57.7
	From outside of Oldenburg	462	42.3

4.2. Questionnaire

A questionnaire was specially designed for the data collection, which was aimed exclusively at private individuals. At the beginning, the respondent was asked about his or her relationship to the basketball club EWE Baskets Oldenburg. The data collected there serves to classify the person into the category "fan" or "not a fan." The second section of the questionnaire examined the respondent's opinion on the regional economic impact of EWE Baskets Oldenburg on the city and the region. In addition to determining the monetary impact (e.g. consumer behavior on match days), the respondents were also asked about the status of the club and the impact on its image and awareness. The effects of sponsorship (e.g. on purchasing decisions) were explored in the third part of the questionnaire. Questions on socio-demographic characteristics (age, gender, etc.) concluded the questionnaire. The questionnaire comprises a total of 26 (largely closed) questions.

4.3. Data evaluation

The data material was evaluated from March 2020 to July 2020 using descriptive statistics. For the analysis of the demand-side and supply-side effects of EWE Baskets Oldenburg, the entire sample (n=1,093) was evaluated. A smaller sample was not used which, for example, only included the participants of the passer-by or fan survey. This was because there was a fear that a smaller sample could deliver biased results. Therefore, the results of the smaller-sized samples were not taken into account in this study.

5. Results

The following section presents the study results in detail, focusing on both supply-side effects (level of awareness, image) and demand-side effects (value added, employment and turnover).

5.1 Awareness level

First of all, it will be shown whether, or to what extent, the basketball club EWE Baskets Oldenburg increases the national awareness of Oldenburg as a location municipality. Figure 1 shows that two-thirds of the fans surveyed believe that the EWE Baskets Oldenburg club contributes fully to the national profile of the city of Oldenburg. A further 31.2% agree to a large extent. Only 2.6% are of the opinion that the club does not contribute at all, or only negligibly, to the national level of awareness. A similar distribution is found among residents of Oldenburg and season ticket holders. A different picture emerges, however, when non-fans are considered. Here, less than half (47.6%) are of the opinion that the EWE Baskets Oldenburg contribute to the level of awareness of the city of Oldenburg. Just under 43% of non-fans agree with the statement to a large extent and around 10% are of the opinion that the EWE Baskets Oldenburg do not contribute at all, or only negligibly, to national awareness.

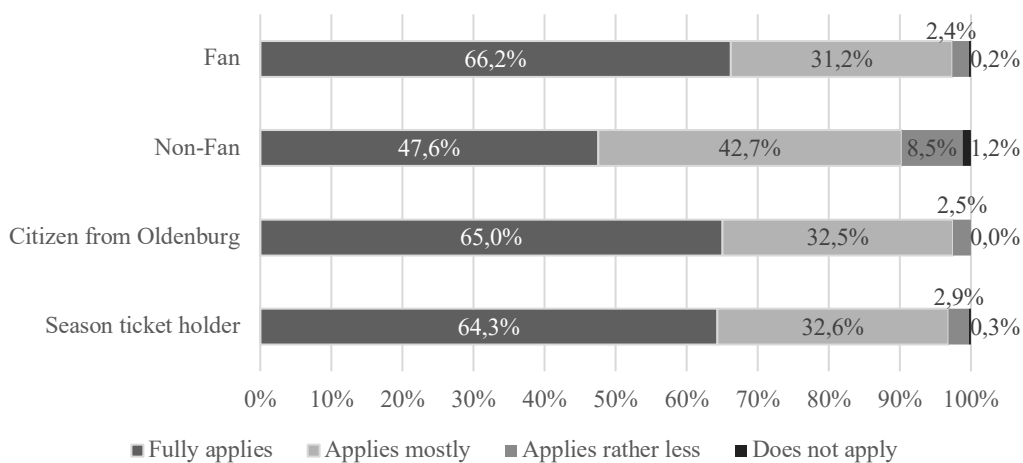


Figure 2. National awareness

Figure 3 shows the contribution of the club EWE Baskets Oldenburg to international awareness. The difference to national awareness quickly becomes clear. This is because only 38.6% of fans now fully agree with the statement that EWE Baskets Oldenburg contributes to the level of awareness of the city abroad. More than 20% of fans are even of the opinion that the basketball club has virtually no effect on the external image of the city of Oldenburg outside Germany. Nevertheless, the overall view allows the assertion that the majority of fans (78.6%) see an increase in the international profile of the city of Oldenburg through the basketball club. The answers of the residents of the city of Oldenburg, as well as the season ticket holders, are -- analogous to the question about the national level of awareness -- almost identical here as well. Among non-fans, more than a third of respondents (34.6%) are of the opinion that EWE Baskets Oldenburg has little or no influence on awareness abroad. However, the overall picture is also positive: Two-thirds of non-fans (65.4%) still believe that the club contributes to the international awareness of the city of Oldenburg.

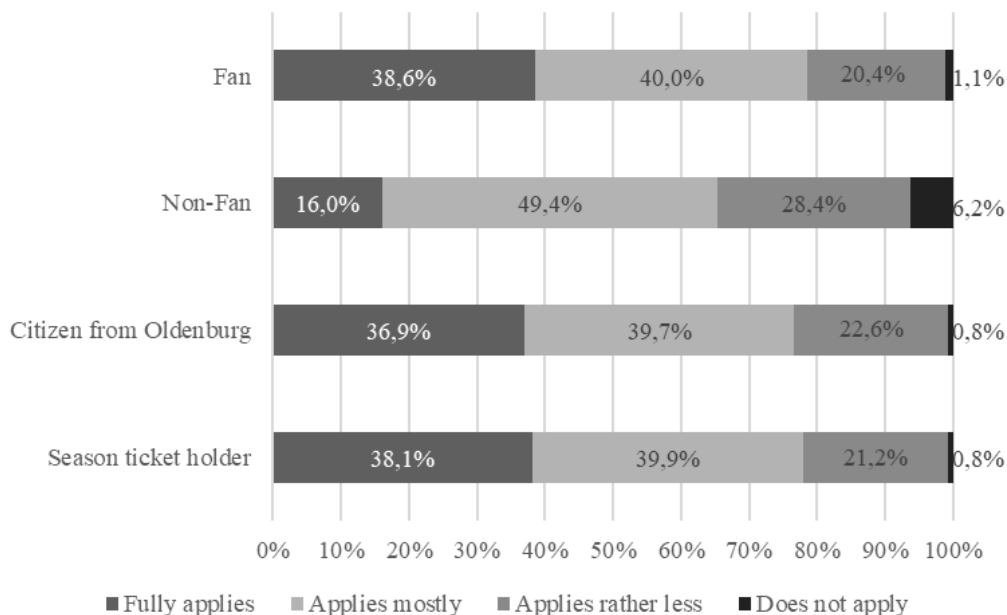


Figure 3. International awareness

When asked to compare the club's importance for the city of Oldenburg, 97% of respondents believe that EWE Baskets Oldenburg has at least a high, if not a very high, importance for the city of Oldenburg. The same applies to the question of whether EWE Baskets Oldenburg acts as an advertising ambassador for their city of Oldenburg. Here, too, 97% are of the opinion that the club takes on this role.

On the other hand, there is no clear picture when it comes to the question of how the respondents rate the roles of EWE Baskets Oldenburg as advertising ambassadors for the city (see Figure 4).

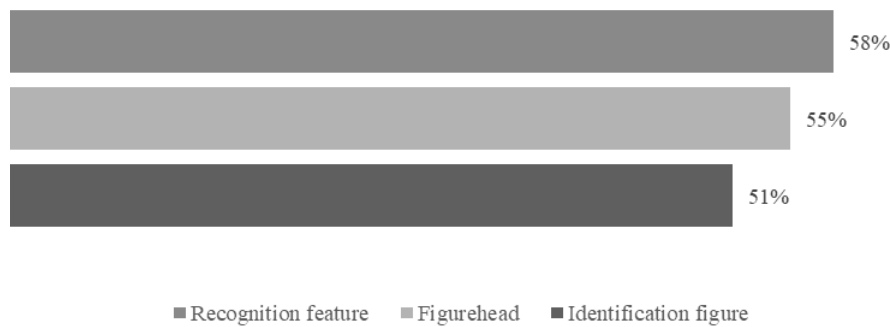


Figure 4. Type of advertising ambassador

Around half of the respondents (51%) see EWE Baskets Oldenburg more as an "identification figure" for the city of Oldenburg. 55% of the survey participants even describe the club as the "figurehead" of the city of Oldenburg. The highest value in this category, 58%, is assigned to the role of "recognition." Multiple answers were possible for this question.

In summary, it can be stated that the EWE Baskets Oldenburg contribute to increasing the level of awareness of the location municipality, both nationally and internationally, although the effect on national awareness is greater than on international awareness. However, the role of the club as an advertising ambassador for the city of Oldenburg is viewed very differently by the respondents.

5.2. Image

This study also looks into the question of what image-building effects EWE Baskets Oldenburg has on the city or region (see Figure 5). 70% of the respondents are of the opinion that EWE Baskets Oldenburg enhances the image of the location municipality; a further 27% state that the club even shapes the image to a great extent. Only 3% of the respondents are of the opinion that EWE Baskets Oldenburg has no effect on the opinion of the city or region. Negative effects, on the other hand, are not seen.

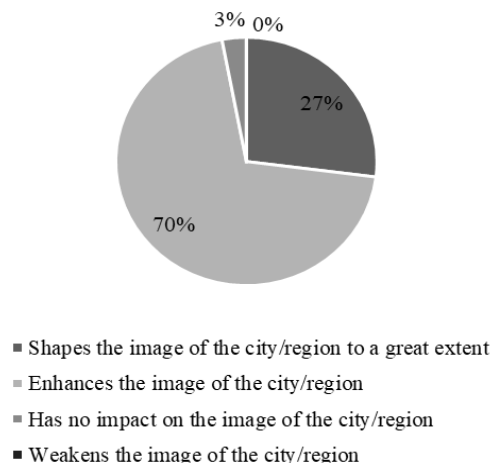


Figure 5. Image effect

In order to explore this area more closely, the respondents were given 12 attributes to rate individually for EWE Baskets Oldenburg. For each attribute, the respondents could choose between the possible answers "Does not apply," "Applies to a lesser extent," "Applies to a large extent," and "Applies completely," which were then evaluated with -2 points, -1 point, 1 point and 2 points.

When looking at the results, it becomes apparent that, according to the respondents, the attribute "Likeable" corresponds most closely to the perception of the club (see Figure 6). 1,570 points reflect the best value here. The attributes "professional" (1,472 points), "close to home" (1,388 points), and "familiar" (1,384 points), also received high approval ratings. The attribute "Innovative" received the least approval with 667 points. The attributes "Traditional" (808 points), and "Socially committed" (1,115 points), also correspond less to the overall impression of the club according to the respondents.

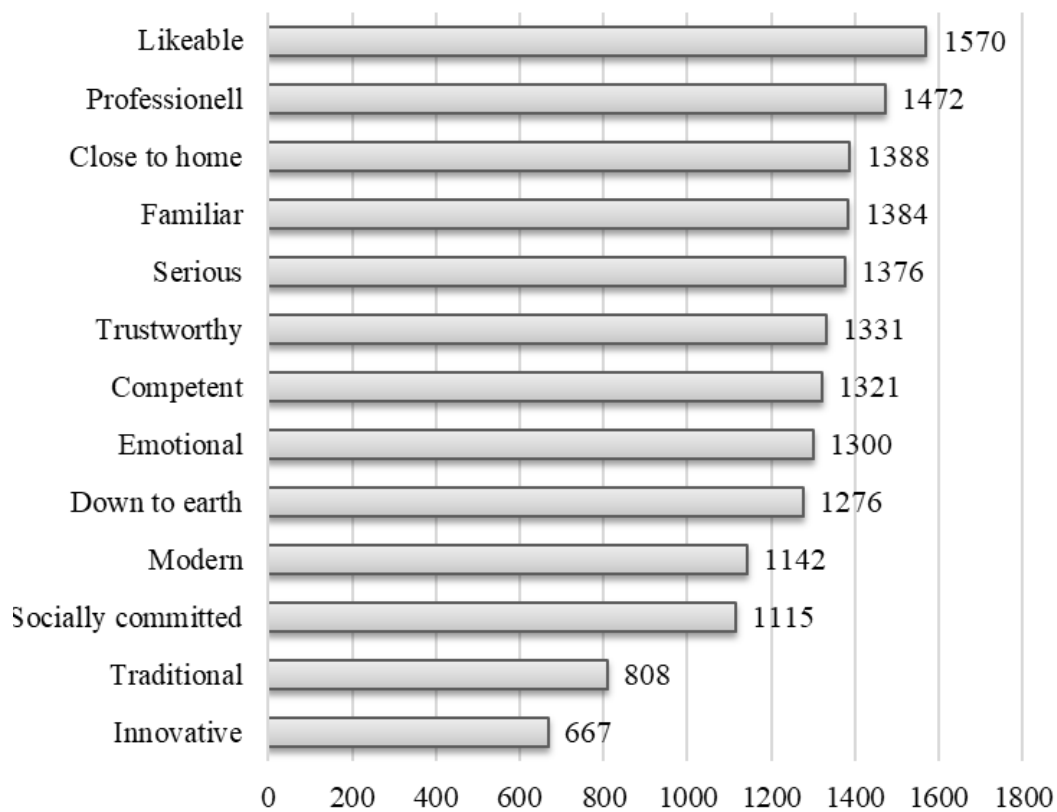


Figure 6. Associated attributes

Overall, however, public opinion of EWE Baskets Oldenburg is very positive. No attribute has negative values, and thus a collective denial of the positive interpretation. Only the attributes "Innovative" and "Traditional" have values that are, on average, below the value of the answer option "Mostly true." Overall, EWE Baskets Oldenburg, therefore, conveys a positive image of the city of Oldenburg and the region.

5.3. Value added, employment and turnover

When considering the economic significance of EWE Baskets Oldenburg for the city and the region, the economic value added can be attributed to demand-side effects. Here, the club's regional expenditure on investments, personnel and operating expenses is considered. In addition, the focus is on visitor spending.

EWE Baskets Oldenburg employed 56 full-time staff (including the basketball players) and 115 part-time employees in the 2019/2020 season. During a home match, an average of 100 employees from service companies are also on duty at the EWE Arena. These are active in the areas of catering, security and press. Due to data protection rules, non-disclosure agreements and the large number of external service providers, it is not possible to give exact figures for total personnel expenditure. However, if - according to the Federal Statistical Office - an average gross salary of € 50,000 per year is assumed for full-time employees in Lower Saxony, (Statista, 2019) the total annual expenditure for the personnel employed amounts to €8.175 million. (56 full-time employees of EWE Baskets Oldenburg á 50,000 €/year + 115 part-time employees of EWE Baskets Oldenburg á 25,000 €/year + 100 employees of service companies á 25,000 €/year (these are treated in the same way as part-time employees of EWE Baskets Oldenburg with regard to their gross earnings))

According to the club, EWE Baskets Oldenburg has a spectator occupancy rate of 97.6% in the Basketball Bundesliga. With a capacity of 6,200 spectators and 17 BBL home games, over 102,800 people visit the EWE Arena each season. This generates income from ticket sales of approx. 2 million euros (incl. VIP hospitality). In addition, there are visitors at play-off matches and international competitions. However, these spectator numbers depend very much on the club's sporting success and can fluctuate greatly each year. Furthermore, visitors spend money on gastronomy (in the arena/city), retail purchases (before/after the games), travel costs (for arrival/departure) or overnight stays. Concrete values were determined with the help of the surveys. According to the responses, visitors spend an average of €21.06 in connection with a visit to a venue (excluding the cost of the ticket). The majority of the expenditure, around €9.22 (approx. 44%), is attributable to gastronomy in the arena, followed by €5.19 (approx. 24%) for gastronomy in the city. Expenditure on travel to and from the venue averages around €4.15 (approx. 20%) per visitor. This low amount suggests that the majority of visitors come from the Oldenburg region and only have a short journey. In addition, the respondents state that they spend €3.49 (approx. 12%) in the regional retail trade. Only €0.59 (approx. 3%) on average is attributable to overnight stays. Here, too, a high proportion of regional visitors can be assumed. Thus, the total expenditure on a match day with a capacity utilization of 97.6% amounts to a little over €123,000. With 17 home games per season, revenues of over €2.1 million are generated accordingly.

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According to the figures, the economic significance of EWE Baskets Oldenburg is therefore quite high, and once again reflects the great added value of the club for the city of Oldenburg and the region.

6. Summary and Conclusion

In the last section, the significance of this study is examined on the basis of the representativeness of the results and the three quality criteria of objectivity, reliability and validity. Finally, there is a concluding assessment, including a critical appraisal.

6.1. Representativeness and quality criteria

It cannot be ruled out 100 per cent that the sampling method used resulted in a non-representative sample. Distortions could have arisen, for example, through "convenience sampling" (selection at random). With this method, the probability of a particular person getting into the sample cannot be stated. The random sample is, therefore, not suitable for deriving inferential statistical statements. In online surveys, for example, there may be an overrepresentation of participants who use the internet and go to the survey site. And in the case of venue or passer-by surveys, there can be an overrepresentation of participants who are at the survey location at the time of the survey. With a mix of different survey forms (online as well as face-to-face) and a large sample size (n=1,093 respondents), the research team attempted to ensure that all characteristics of the population were included in the sample. Thus, persons of all genders, in different age groups, at different locations, and in different ways, were interviewed.

The quality criteria of reliability, validity and objectivity can be regarded as fulfilled -- with minor limitations. Thus, the study actually measured what it was supposed to measure and consequently delivered credible results. In addition, the data was collected and analyzed in such a way that consistent results were achieved. Finally, the researchers themselves did not exert any influence on the research process. In order to fulfil the three quality criteria, a pretest was carried out before the main survey, the data was collected with a standardized questionnaire and the results were analyzed transparently.

The limitations include a personal component (e.g. different competencies of the interviewers or misinterpretation of the statements), a situational component (e.g. distraction of the participants by the game), and a temporal component (e.g. limited observation period). In spite of the marginal limitations, scientifically reliable statements can be made on the guiding research question.

6.2. Conclusion and critical appraisal

This paper has shown that the topic of "Basketball as an Economic Factor in Germany" has received little attention from academia to date. This is particularly evident in the current state of research presented in this paper (section 1.2). The focus of the present study was therefore to shed some light on this dark field that has been neglected by

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academia so far. The question guiding the research was: What supply-side and demand-side effects does the EWE Baskets Oldenburg basketball club have on the city of Oldenburg and the region? The study pursued three objectives: a descriptive, an analytical and a pragmatic objective.

The first questioning included the presentation of theoretical considerations on the demand-side and supply-side effects of a professionally run basketball club on its location municipality. Against this background, the analytical objective comprised the determination of the regional economic value that the club under consideration here, EWE Baskets Oldenburg, embodies for the city and the region.

The first two objectives were achieved through a literature review, as well as through newly-gained insights based on empirical data collection (online, venue and passer-by surveys). In the process, diverse regional economic effects of the basketball club EWE Baskets Oldenburg for the location municipality could be worked out and proven by means of reliable results. The total economic effect of EWE Baskets Oldenburg per season is around €12.3 million (salaries, ticketing, home game editions), providing jobs for around 270 full-time/part-time employees. In addition, EWE Baskets Oldenburg contributes to raising the image and awareness of the local community, both nationally and internationally.

Finally, the pragmatic goal consisted of evaluating the research results and deriving possible approaches for the location municipality, in order to achieve added value from the results achieved. This goal was also achieved -- albeit with minor limitations. After a critical examination of the results (in terms of representativeness and quality criteria), it is possible to make reliable statements on the research question. Among other things, the study results allow the conclusion that EWE Baskets Oldenburg has developed into a significant image carrier for the city and the region. This result is supported, among other things, by a media discussion between two editors of the Nordwest-Zeitung (NWZ) on the topic of "Oldenburg is a basketball city -- isn't it?" NWZ editor Christian Schwarz is quoted here as follows: "Anyone who is 30 years old today knows Oldenburg only: as a city of basketball." And if the positively connoted attributes of the club (likeable, close to home, etc.) can be transferred to the location municipality, Oldenburg as a "brand" could be emotionalized even more in the future (Husmann & Schwarz, 2019).

However, it must be emphasized that, due to the practical research procedure and the study design, it was not possible to obtain a comprehensive picture of the regional economic effects of the basketball club EWE Baskets Oldenburg. Thus, the results are primarily based on quantitative data from empirical surveys, which does not meet the demand for "method pluralism" or the mixed-methods approach raised in the Anglo-American discourse. The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods is therefore reserved for further studies in the research field "Basketball as a Business Factor in Germany." In addition, due to the sampling procedure used, no inferential statistical (generalized estimation) statements can be derived. Possible problems may arise due to

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biases in the direction of the selection mechanism and self-selection. Finally, a critical comparison with comparable studies would also have increased knowledge. Although a large number of studies have already dealt with the regional economic effects of German soccer clubs, there is only one case study for professional basketball in Germany. However, this case study is only published in excerpts, and also focuses on a traditional club from a medium-sized city. Under these circumstances, a comparison of the respective research results -- in the sense of reference values -- is hardly possible.

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