

Determinants of consumer attitude toward corporate sponsors: A comparison between a profit and non-profit sport event sponsorship

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Abstract

The purposes of the present study were to identify key attributes of sponsors that positively influence consumers' attitude formation and to examine the moderator role of sport event types (nonprofit vs. profit). Based on the theories of range and selective attention, we hypothesized that consumers weigh differently on particular sponsorship attributes depending on event type (i.e., profit vs. nonprofit) in constructing their attitude. The study utilized multi-group structural equation modeling on data collected by questionnaire survey from a total of 505 spectators of college sport event ($n = 303$) and FIFA World Cup ($n = 202$). Results of structural equation modeling test indicate that prominence of sponsors is an important predictor of consumer attitude in both events, while sincerity of sponsors was found to be important in local and amateur college sport event sponsorship. From a theoretical perspective, the current study sheds light on sponsorship study, particularly the importance of examining sponsor characteristics in predicting consumer attitude and the event type as a moderating variable. A key practical implication is that sport managers should carefully examine consumers' perceptions toward sponsor characteristics in making their event sponsorship decisions.

In the past three decades, sponsorships have evolved into a major standalone global industry and commercial investment opportunity (Wallister, 2003). This is attributed to the advantages corporate sponsorships offer for both sponsor and sport properties, and to the increased recognition of sponsorship as a valuable form of corporate communication and business-to-business activity (Dolphin, 2003; Crompton, 2004). Worldwide sponsorship spending had reached \$51.1bn in 2012 and was projected to reach \$60.2bn in 2016 despite the economic difficulties (IEG, 2016). Even though the sponsorship market continues to grow, they are being focused on several markets such as sports, entertainment, causes, arts, and festivals. The primary recipient of sponsorship spending is sport properties, with approximately 70 per cent of all sponsorship spending being directed to sports (IEG, 2016).

A considerable amount of literature on sponsorship effectiveness supports the contention that sport sponsorship helps enhance corporate image and creates sales opportunities through increased awareness and loyalty among target consumers (Cornwell and Coote,

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