

Can Sports Sponsorship affect Consumers' Motivation for Sports Consumption?

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Most of the ample research literature into the outcomes of sports sponsorship focuses on consequences for the sponsor. Consequences for the sponsor-object, i.e., the sponsored sport, sports event, or team, have generally been ignored. In this paper, we investigate if and how sponsors affect consumers' motivation for sports consumption. Drawing on the literature on sponsorship, branding, and advertisement, we identify three sponsor-related factors and one consumer-related factor that affect this motivation. To test our hypotheses, an online experiment with a sample size of 104 observations was conducted. Using regression analysis, we find that the perceived sincerity of the sponsoring brand and consumers' sports involvement have a significant positive direct effect on motivation for sports consumption. We also identify event-sponsor fit as a moderating variable between attitude towards the sponsoring brand and the motivation for sports consumption. This study contributes to academic research by extending the sponsorship literature to outcomes for the sponsor-object/sponsee. It also has practical implications in that it provides sports managers with information about factors they should consider when they want to choose the right sponsor and avoid potential negative fan reactions (e.g., fan boycotts).

Keywords: sponsorship; sponsee; sport-property; motivation; sport consumption; key factors, sports

Introduction

Sports sponsorship is a marketing vehicle that has been used for more than half a century by many companies from various industry sectors, and it has not yet lost its appeal. Sponsoring has become a billion-dollar business and is expanding. The sector's North American market alone yielded more than 17 billion US-Dollar in 2018, and growth rates were between 2.2 and

5.4 percent from 2014 to 2018. After media rights, sports sponsorship is the second largest growing sports market segment in North America (PwC Sports Outlook, 2019). Starting in 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic hit the sport sponsorship market hard because it restricted public life during 2020 in most Western countries to a minimum. For the U.S., IEG (2020) estimated that \$10 billion sponsorship value “will need to be made up due to the sports and entertainment shutdown”. While it will be interesting to observe whether the sponsorship market can recover to the level reported before the COVID-19 pandemic, the historic values before the pandemic present impressively illustrate the market potential of sport sponsorships deals. For the next 3-5 years, PwC Sports Outlook (2020) expects growth rates of 3.3 percent, compared to the 8.0 percent from the previous 3-5 years.

Multiple definitions for sponsorship exist. We use a broad one that defines sponsorship as “[t]he provision of resources (e.g., money, people, equipment) by an organization directly to an event or activity in exchange for a direct association to the event or activity. The providing organization can then use this direct association to achieve either their corporate, marketing, or media objectives” (Lee, Sandler, & Shani, 1997, p. 161). The organization or company that provides the resources is the sponsor. The receiving event, team or activity is the sponsee, sponsor-object, or sport-property. This paper uses these three terms synonymously because they describe the same party in our research context. However, it is noteworthy that from a legal perspective the sponsor-object (e.g., an event) and the sponsee (e.g., the company receiving the financial benefits of a sponsorship from a sponsor) might be different legal entities.

Sports sponsorship has received rich attention from academic researchers (Cornwell & Kwon, 2020; Cornwell & Maignan, 1998; Johnston & Spais, 2015; Kim, Lee, Magnusen, & Kim, 2015; Spais & Johnston, 2014; Walliser, 2003; Walraven, 2012). In April 2020, Google Scholar found 10,500 results for the search term "Sports Sponsorship". However,

most of that research focuses on sponsorship as a marketing vehicle for a sponsoring firm. Scholars have investigated effects such as brand image transfer from a sponsor-object to the sponsor (Coppetti, Wentzel, Tomczak, & Henkel, 2009; Grohs, Wagner, & Vsetecka, 2004; Gwinner & Eaton, 1999) and effects on consumers' purchasing behaviour towards a sponsor's products (Deitz, Myers, & Stafford, 2012; Koronios, Psiloutsikou, Kriemadis, Zervoulakos, & Leivaditi, 2016; Madrigal, 2000). Besides those classic marketing outcomes, effects of a sports sponsorship on a sponsor's internal resources (Jensen, Cobbs, & Turner, 2016; Khan & Stanton, 2010; Papadimitriou & Apostolopoulou, 2009) and stock prices (Cornwell, Pruitt, & Clark, 2005; Filis & Spais, 2012; Mazodier & Rezaee, 2013) have also been investigated.

Only a relatively small portion of the research has focused on the sponsor-object (e.g., a sport, sports event, or team) perspective (Cornwell & Kwon, 2020; Morgan, Taylor, & Adair, 2020; Toscani & Prendergast, 2018). The sponsee is often only considered as part of the sponsee-related variables in sponsorship research focusing either on outcomes for the sponsor or on the relationship between sponsee and sponsor (Chanavat, Desbordes, & Dickson, 2016; Morgan, Adair, Taylor, & Hermens, 2014; van Rijn, Kristal, & Henseler, 2019) or on fans' intentions to purchase the merchandise of a sports entity (Biscaia, Correia, Rosado, Ross, & Maroco, 2013; Kim & James, 2016; Koronios et al., 2016). While it is common to investigate spectator evaluations of a focal sports event as an outcome variable in general research about sports and event management (Duan, Liu, & He, 2020; Tzetzis, Alexandris, & Kapsampeli, 2014), spectator evaluations have received little attention in research about sports sponsorships. As one of our two anonymous reviewers, whom we both thank for this and many other excellent suggestions, pointed out, Google Scholar provides some results for the keyword "sponsee" in the context of sponsorship. However, we find that most of the related publications focus on sponsor outcomes and can be classified into one of

the sports sponsorship research streams mentioned above. The remaining manuscripts are often unpublished or not publicly accessible (e.g., conference proceedings, working papers). Therefore, we agree with scholars who suggest more research focusing on the sponsee (Cornwell & Kwon, 2020; Morgan et al., 2020; Toscani & Prendergast, 2018).

Picking the right partner is crucial not only for a sponsor but also for the sponsee. Several studies have shown that a sponsor's actions or simply presenting a new sponsor that fans dislike can lead to negative fan reactions (Grohs, Reisinger, & Woisetschläger, 2015; Weimar, Holthoff, & Biscaia, 2020; Woisetschläger, Backhaus, & Cornwell, 2017). In the Bundesliga, the first division in German football, several examples exist of the potential negative effect on a sponsored sport or team. For example, RB Leipzig, a football team founded and sponsored by Red Bull, which had purchased the rights to compete (in the German football system) from a fifth-tier football club in 2009 with the intent of advancing the new club to the German Bundesliga, faced major aversion from local and national football fans. Fans from opposing teams perceived that Red Bull's primary motivation was commercial and boycotted the away matches when their team played in Leipzig. In 2020, RB Leipzig was the second most successful German football team at the international level after Bayern Munich and reached the UEFA Champions League's semi-finals. Still, rival fan hostility towards RB Leipzig continues.

A similar reaction arose against TSG 1899 Hoffenheim, a German football club sponsored by Dietmar Hopp, a billionaire and co-founder of Europe's biggest software company, SAP. Due to the sponsor's investment, the club climbed up from the lower German football leagues into the first division and even competed for the championship. This sponsorship was criticized not only by fans but also by officials such as the managing director of Borussia Dortmund. Until today, fans of opposing teams are boycotting away games against Hoffenheim. Present fans of opposing teams are negatively reacting towards

the club and its sponsor, Dietmar Hopp. In February 2020, FC Bayern Munich's fans almost forced a game against Hoffenheim to be abandoned with their insulting behaviour towards the sponsor. Another example can be seen for the Bundesliga team Werder Bremen. The announcement that the meat and poultry processor Wiesenhof was the team's new main sponsor led to protests by both fans and animal welfare activists. They criticized the poor conditions under which the sponsoring firm held the animals. Several fans proclaimed they would not buy a new shirt from the team as long as Wiesenhof was the main sponsor.

The cases above are examples of a sponsor's potential negative effect on a sponsor-object. However, there could also be positive effects from a sponsor to a sponsor-object. Interestingly, a positive example is also linked to Red Bull. Red Bull Stratos was an event where Austrian skydiver Felix Baumgartner flew into the stratosphere in a helium balloon to freefall and parachute back to earth. The jump was viewed live by over 9 million people. It is doubtful whether the event would have reached this audience size without Red Bull's involvement.

From a sports management perspective, it is highly relevant to understand a potential impact of sponsor choice on consumers' sport consumption. However, to the best of our knowledge, academic literature has not yet assessed this topic. In this paper, we investigate if and how a sponsor can affect consumers' relationships with a sponsor-object, particularly consumers' motivation for sports consumption. Drawing on sponsorship, branding, and advertising literature, we identify four factors affecting this relationship: three sponsor-related factors and one consumer-related one: consumers' general sports involvement. Our research shows which factors are relevant in sponsor choice and thus supports sports managers in making better decisions when choosing a sponsor.

Conceptual Foundations and Hypotheses

Goals of sponsor-objects and relevant performance measures

Sponsors are keenly interested in increasing their brand image, brand awareness, and sales (Kim et al., 2015). Likewise, sponsor-objects can also have multiple goals. In the sports context, the sponsor-objects want to raise awareness for their sport, improve image, increase sales of tickets and merchandise, and reach a larger audience for live broadcasts (Trail, Anderson, & Fink, 2005). While increasing ticket and merchandising sales have direct sales implications, a larger audience makes the brand more interesting for sponsors with a greater marketing budget and allows access to better media deals (Hall, O'Mahony, & Vieceli, 2010).

The sports sponsorship literature provides approaches to investigating how fans engage with a sport, sports event, or team. For instance, Funk and James (2001) developed the Psychological Continuum Model (PCM), a framework for understanding an individual's connection to sports. They distinguish between four hierarchical levels of connection: Awareness, Attraction, Attachment, and Allegiances. There have also been attempts to create a scale to measure an individual's connection to a sport. Examples are the Sport Fan Motivation Scale (Wann, 1995), the Motivation Sport Consumer Scale (Milne & McDonald, 1999), and the Fan Attendance Motivations Scale (Kahle, Kambara, & Rose, 1996). A critical assessment of all these scales can be found in Trail and James (2001).

Addressing shortcomings of the previously mentioned scales regarding content, criteria, and construct validity, Trail and James (2001) developed a new scale, the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC). It originally consisted of 9 dimensions and 27 items. The dimensions were achievement, knowledge, aesthetics, drama, escape, family, physical attraction, physical skills, and social. The family dimension was removed from the scale in a later revision, and the items of the escape sub-scale were reworded (Trail, 2012). We chose to

use the MSSC as the performance measure for this work while recognizing that the focal construct has some weaknesses, such as being developed using a sample of season -ticket holders from an American baseball team and hence, for instance, potentially biased towards team sports. Despite this and other drawbacks, the scale is currently widely adopted and used in sports management research: A Google Scholar search in April 2020 revealed that the original paper by Trail and James (2001) had been cited 996 times. In addition to its general conceptual contribution to sports management research, the MSSC is commonly used as an antecedent as well as an outcome variable in research about spectator behaviour in sports (Bernthal, Koesters, Ballouli, & Brown, 2015; James & Ross, 2004; Kim, Morgan, & Assaker, 2020; Robinson & Trail, 2005) and e-sports (Huettermann, Trail, Pizzo, & Stallone, 2020; Macey, Abarbanel, & Hamari, 2020; Macey, Tyrväinen, Pirkkalainen, & Hamari, 2020; Sjöblom, Macey, & Hamari, 2020).

Sponsorship-related key determinants

Most of the sponsorship research focuses on consequences for the sponsor. Cognitive outcomes such as brand awareness and brand image have become the primary dependent variables in which research and practice are interested (DeGaris, Kwak, & McDaniel, 2017; Grohs et al., 2004; Grohs, 2016; Maanda, Abratt, & Mingione, 2020). Other studies also cover outcomes on affective (e.g., liking, preferences, attitude) and conative levels (e.g., purchase intent, purchase commitment, purchase) in their research (Kim et al., 2015; Koronios et al., 2016; Wolfsteiner, Grohs, & Reisinger, 2019).

Among the most relevant predictor variables used in sponsorship research are fit, brand attitude, brand sincerity, and involvement (Cornwell, Weeks, & Roy, 2005; Dardis, 2009; Pappu & Cornwell, 2014; Walraven, 2012). Speed and Thompson (2000) were the first to simultaneously assess the impact of multiple sport sponsorship determinants on the

sponsorship outcomes interest, favourability, and use. They found that (1) brand attitude, (2) brand sincerity, and (3) sponsor-event fit have the most potent effect on the focal outcome variables. The order of effect size was identical for all outcome types. Event-sponsor fit had the strongest effect, while brand attitude had the weakest effect. However, the relative importance of brand attitude compared to event-sponsor fit increased from one-third for interest to half for favourability and use.

We assume that these three predictor variables (brand attitude, brand sincerity, sponsor-event fit) might also be relevant in sponsorship research that focuses on sponsor-objects. Therefore, we build our first three hypotheses on these variables. Our fourth hypothesis is built on consumers' general sports involvement, which serves as the baseline to assess the relative importance of all variables included. The final two hypotheses relate to potential interaction effects between two of the variables previously introduced.

Attitude towards the sponsoring brand

In the introduction, cases were mentioned in which football sponsorship had led to negative reactions towards a sponsor-object. Negative attitudes towards sponsors can cause reduced interest, boycotting, or even more negative, potentially violent, behaviour towards a sponsor-object. As already mentioned, sponsorship research has identified the importance of consumer attitude towards the sponsoring brand for sponsorship outcomes for the sponsor (Speed & Thompson, 2000).

However, to the best of our knowledge, no research has been conducted on the influence of consumer attitude towards the sponsoring brand on the sponsor-object – here sports. Nevertheless, it is plausible that positive attitudes towards a sponsor might transfer or affect the affective and cognitive components of sports consumption motivation. These arguments lead to our first hypothesis.

H1: Attitude towards the sponsoring brand positively affects motivation for sport consumption.

Perceived Sincerity of the Sponsoring Brand

We have already mentioned the case of Red Bull and the German football club it sponsors. Fans explained their negative reactions towards the sponsored team by attributing Red Bull's commitment to commercial interests. That example is related to consumers' perceived sincerity of the sponsoring brand.

Brand sincerity reflects whether consumers attribute a firm's sponsorship activities more to altruistic motives than to commercial ones. Multiple studies have shown the importance of this construct for sponsorship research. For instance, Speed and Thompson (2000) found that, after sponsor-event fit, perceived sincerity had the second strongest effect on respondents' attitudes and intentions towards a sponsor. D'Astous and Bitz (1995) showed how sponsorships that are perceived as philanthropic have a stronger impact on the sponsor's corporate image than sponsorships that are perceived as commercial.

Research with a focus on the sponsor-object outcomes is rare. The only relevant study we are aware of is by McDaniel and Chalip (2002). They found that viewers who perceived the 1996 Olympic games in Atlanta to be "over-commercialized" reported lower enjoyment of the TV broadcast and ultimately spent less time watching the sports event.

Drawing on previous findings from sponsorship literature and the multiple observations reported from sponsorship practice, we propose that the perceived sincerity of the sponsoring brand will positively affect motivation for sport consumption. To be more precise, when consumers conclude that a sponsorship is less commercially oriented, their motivation to visit and support a sponsor-object might be higher. This reasoning leads to our second hypothesis.

H2: Perceived sincerity of the sponsoring brand positively affects motivation for sport consumption.

Event-Sponsor Fit

Fit refers to consumers' attitude towards the pairing of two objects. Synonyms for fit are similarity, congruence, and relevance (Bergkvist & Zhou, 2016). The concept of fit originates from research on advertising (Bergkvist & Zhou, 2016; Erdogan, 1999) and also gained attention in research on branding (DelVecchio, 2005; Helmig, Huber, & Leeflang, 2008; van der Lans, van den Bergh, & Dieleman, 2014). In the case of sponsorship, the two objects described by event-sponsor fit are the event and the sponsor (Becker-Olsen & Hill, 2006).

Event-sponsor fit has become "the most widely used theoretical concept related to the processing of sponsorship stimuli" (Olson & Thjømmøe, 2011, p. 57) and is considered one of the most relevant sponsee-related factors in a sponsor-sponsee relationship (Cornwell & Kwon, 2020; Toscani & Prendergast, 2018; van Rijn et al., 2019). Sponsorship research has used the concept of fit as an independent variable (Grohs et al., 2004; Grohs & Reisinger, 2014; Koo & Lee, 2019), a moderator (Speed & Thompson, 2000), or a mediator (Gwinner & Bennett, 2008).

Event-sponsor fit can be established on a functional or on an image level (Gwinner, 1997). Functional event-sponsor fit is established when the sponsor and the sponsor-object have high similarity at a functional level: a sports brand such as Adidas sponsoring a sports event (e.g., a football game) will lead to a high perceived functional fit. Image-related event-sponsor fit is established when the sponsor and the sponsor-object have very similar images: a luxury brand such as Rolex sponsoring an exclusive and prestigious golf or tennis tournament will result in high perceived image fit. An example of low functional fit and low perceived image fit would be, for example, the building material manufacturer

LafargeHolcim sponsoring a polo tournament. Overall, most empirical literature on sponsorships finds a significant positive link between event-sponsor fit and sponsorship outcomes such as purchase intention (Gwinner & Bennett, 2008; Olson & Thjømmøe, 2011; Zaharia, Biscaia, Gray, & Stotlar, 2016) or brand loyalty (Mazodier & Merunka, 2012; Tsordia, Papadimitriou, & Parganas, 2018). Speed and Thompson (2000) find that event-sponsor fit is the most important determinant of consumers' responses towards a sponsor.

We argue that the factor event-sponsor fit might also be highly relevant when the outcome variable focuses on the sponsor-object. Think of Red Bull. The brand is associated with extreme sports, being cool, and having fun (Brasel & Gips, 2011). So, if Red Bull announces that it is sponsoring a new event, sports team, or sport, this might raise interest in the sponsor-object among consumers who perceive a good match between Red Bull and this new event, sports team, or sport. This interest will ultimately increase motivation for sport consumption. These arguments lead to our third hypothesis.

H3: Event-sponsor fit positively affects motivation for sport consumption.

Sports Involvement

Consumer involvement is a concept widely adopted in marketing research (Michaelidou & Dibb, 2008). Multiple definitions of consumer involvement exist. They vary depending on the research focus (e.g., product involvement, category involvement, sports involvement). Mitchell (1979, p. 196) defines involvement as "an individual level, state variable that measures the amount of arousal or interest in a stimulus object or situation". The concept of involvement is relevant for multiple marketing areas, for instance, advertising (Macinnis & Park, 1991; Rice, Kelting, & Lutz, 2012; Shavitt, Swan, Lowrey, & Wänke, 1994), branding (Kim, Ko, Xu, & Han, 2012; Maoz & Tybout, 2002; Suh & Youjae, 2006), and relationship marketing (Gordon, McKeage, & Fox, 1998; Varki & Wong, 2003). Most researchers

conceptualize involvement as a multidimensional construct that includes an affective and a cognitive dimension (Michaelidou & Dibb, 2008). The affective dimension refers to hedonic benefits while the cognitive dimension refers to functional benefits.

In this study, we focus on consumers' sports involvement, defined as "the perceived interest in and personal importance of sports to an individual" (Shank & Beasley, 1998, p. 436). Previous research on sponsorship has shown the importance of sports involvement in achieving a sponsor's goals. Grohs et al. (2004) find that, along with event-sponsor fit and exposure, a consumer's event involvement is a dominant determinant of sponsor recall. For the 2006 FIFA World Cup football tournament, Neijens, Smit, and Moorman (2009) find a positive effect of sports involvement on a sponsor's brand image. While involvement is often conceptualized as a moderator (Grohs & Reisinger, 2014; Koo & Lee, 2019), three other papers (Bachleda, Fakhar, & Elouazzani, 2016; Dees, Bennett, & Villegas, 2008; Ko, Kim, Claussen, & Kim, 2008) use sports involvement as an independent variable and find a significant positive effect on the intention to purchase a sponsor's goods. An explanation provided from focus-group studies is that consumers highly involved with a sponsor-object have (1) increased awareness of a sponsor, and (2) face sponsors with greater goodwill and gratitude in return for the support of the sponsor-object (Meenaghan, 2001).

To the best of our knowledge, no sponsorship studies have investigated the impact of sports involvement on motivation for sport consumption except for research on support for mega sport events, which identifies sports involvement as a significant antecedent to motivation (Kim & Kaplanidou, 2019). In this study, we include sports involvement as a benchmark to assess the effect sizes of the sponsor-related antecedents of motivation for sport consumption. Sports involvement should serve as a baseline for the effectiveness of a sponsorship because, in the absence of sponsorships, it is the only factor left in our study that

will affect a consumer's motivation for sports consumption (besides other factors not included in this research, such as the weather).

Attitude towards the sponsoring brand, perceived sincerity of the sponsoring brand, and event-sponsor fit are sponsorship-related factors that depend on the existence of a sponsorship relationship while sports involvement, a consumer-related factor, could also be a relevant determinant for motivation for sports consumption in the absence of any sponsor. In line with the findings of Kim and Kaplanidou (2019) on mega sports events, we assume that people who are more interested in sports, in general, will have a greater motivation to consume any other sport as well. For example, imagine an American sports fan who mainly watches American football games. That person is also likely to know the top teams in basketball or soccer. Every year, sport-involved Europeans stay up late in the night to watch the American Super Bowl, despite the time difference. Usually, these people might watch the European version of football (which Americans call soccer), but they do not want to miss the sports event of the year. This reasoning leads to our fourth hypothesis.

H4: Sports involvement positively affects motivation for sport consumption.

Potential Interactions

Attitude towards the sponsoring brand and event-sponsor-fit

Speed and Thompson (2000) postulated and empirically tested potential interaction between attitude towards the sponsoring brand and event-sponsor fit. They argued that event-sponsor fit enhances the effect of brand attitude on sponsorship outcomes but did not find empirical support for their hypothesis. Unfortunately, they did not discuss their findings in detail.

We argue that, while the interaction between attitude and event-sponsor fit might not be significant in a research setting that focuses on consequences for the sponsor, it might be highly relevant when the consequences of a sports sponsorship for the sponsor-object are

assessed. Research on sports sponsorship outcomes for sponsors has identified a large number and variety of antecedents (Cornwell & Kwon, 2020; Kim et al., 2015; Lee et al., 1997; Walliser, 2003; Walraven, 2012). From a theoretical perspective many antecedents of sponsor outcomes appear irrelevant for the outcomes of the sponsee. In other words, fewer factors should play a role in assessing whether a sponsor-object (i.e., sports event, team, or sport) benefits from a sponsorship compared to whether a sponsor does. Statistically speaking, the fewer relevant factors exist, the higher the likelihood that the few remaining factors (and their interactions) will have a significant impact. Also, effect sizes increase when there are fewer potential factors to share the explained variance.

The interaction between attitude towards the sponsoring brand and event-sponsor fit investigated by Speed and Thompson (2000) was not found to be significant for sponsor outcomes. However, as we argued in the hypotheses about their direct effects, we hypothesize that both factors individually are highly relevant when assessing sponsee outcomes. We conclude that the interaction between both factors is more likely to have consequences for the sponsee than for the sponsor and that this relevance will manifest statistically in a significant interaction effect.

Imagine Airbus, a European multinational aerospace corporation, wants to sponsor an event. The company might benefit (e.g., brand image, brand awareness, brand recall) from sponsorships of sports, art, and social events. However, due to their lack of event-sponsor fit, the chances are low that Airbus as a sponsor would increase consumers' motivation to consume a sport event, even if consumers have a positive attitude towards that brand. In contrast, a high brand attitude towards Red Bull might not motivate consumers to visit an art exhibition or a social event (low event-sponsor fit) sponsored by Red Bull. However, it is extremely likely that a high brand attitude towards Red Bull will motivate consumers to visit

any sports event (high event-sponsor fit) sponsored by Red Bull. Based on this reasoning, we formulate our fifth hypothesis.

H5: The effect of attitude towards the sponsoring brand on motivation for sport consumption is stronger when the event-sponsor fit is perceived as high vs. when it is perceived as low.

Attitude towards the sponsoring brand and sports involvement

Meenaghan (2001) argues that consumers' awareness of sponsor activities is positively associated with their sports involvement. Support for the existence of this relationship is provided by Moorman, Willemsen, Neijens, and Smit (2012), who find that (1) attention to commercials on TV, (2) recall of TV commercials from a game break, and (3) recall of the embedded ads (i.e., sponsoring) in the stadium is higher for spectators who are highly involved with the broadcasted sports event. The authors reason that more involved viewers invest more cognitive capacity into processing an object such as the sponsor of an event.

Similarly, we hypothesize that consumers with higher sports involvement will process more available information about the sponsor. For consumers, one of the most accessible pieces of information about a sponsor is their attitude towards the sponsoring brand. In H1, we hypothesized that attitude towards the sponsoring brand directly affects our dependent variable (DV). Since consumers with higher involvement are more likely to process information about the sponsor, we assume that the attitude towards the sponsoring brand has a much stronger impact on motivation for sports consumption when the consumers themselves are more involved in sports vs. when they are less involved.

H6: The effect of attitude towards the sponsoring brand on motivation for sport consumption is stronger for more involved vs. less involved consumers.

Method

Design

To test our hypotheses, we conducted an online experiment. The experiment used a single-factor between-subjects design (sponsoring brand: well-known brand vs. unknown brand). Depending on the experimental group, participants were informed that a sports event was sponsored by one of two brands. Before the final study, we ran a series of pre-tests to identify a sport and appropriate sponsors.

Pre-test

The pre-test had two goals. First, we wanted to identify a sport that consumers were not familiar with. Second, we wanted to identify two sponsors. One of the sponsoring brands had to be a brand with which consumers were highly familiar with, and the second sponsoring brand should be a brand with which consumers were not familiar. We assumed this combination would ensure a strong effect on the dependent variable 'motivation for sport consumption' in our model. Using unknown or fictitious brands is common in research on branding and advertising. Unknown brands "provide greater experimental control" (Campbell & Keller, 2003, p. 301) and "may even have negative associations due to its unfamiliarity and lack of status" (Simmons, Bickart, & Buchanan, 2000, p. 213). These attributes could apply to the sport as well as to the unfamiliar sponsor we wanted to identify. Opposingly, we wanted the familiar brand to have strong associations that might raise consumer interest in the sponsor-object.

For the pre-test, we recruited 20 participants via a convenience sample. We created a shortlist of eleven different sports we assumed consumers would be relatively unfamiliar with. The respondents rated each sport on a 5-point scale for familiarity with the anchors "no idea what this sport is/never heard of it" and "know a lot about this sport/heard a lot about it".

The least known sport was snow-kiting, an emerging extreme sport in which athletes combine their skis or snowboard with kites they hold in their hands. The kites allow them to reach speeds of 100 km/h, go uphill, and perform spectacular jumps.

Second, respondents were presented with a list of nine industries that commonly sponsor sports events (e.g., beverages, banks, or cars). Using that list, we asked them to name companies that sponsor sports events (unaided recall). The most often mentioned brand was Red Bull.

Hence, we chose snow-kiting as the focal sport in our study and energy drinks as the product category for the sponsoring brand. Snow-kiting should ensure a low initial motivation for sport consumption, and Red Bull should provide relatively high but heterogeneous levels of brand perceptions.

Since we wanted to manipulate the perception of the sponsors by using a well-known and an unknown brand, we looked for an alternative to Red Bull that consumers would be unfamiliar with. We chose Dark Dog as the second brand. Like Red Bull, the brand Dark Dog is an energy drink from Austria. However, its primary markets are Paraguay, Uruguay, Chile, Sweden, Austria, and France. Dark Dog also sponsors different sports such as kite-surfing, cliff diving, skydiving, motorsports, and others. Since the brand is not available in the country where we collected the data, it should face relatively low perception ratings compared to Red Bull.

Sample

Respondents for the main test were students from a Swiss business school. They were recruited using a convenience sample approach and randomly assigned to one of the two experimental groups. Overall, 130 subjects participated in the survey. We removed 25 responses due to missing data and one observation because the subject was familiar with the

unknown-brand. Out of the remaining subjects, all passed the manipulation check and were therefore included in the final sample. Half of the sample was female, the age range was between 23 and 28 years ($M_{\text{Age}} = 25.56$, $SD_{\text{Age}} = 1.43$), and all respondents were students. Group size differed slightly between the experimental groups ($n_{\text{RedBull}} = 50$, $n_{\text{DarkDog}} = 54$). Overall, the group sizes can be considered sufficiently large concerning statistical power (Hair, Babin, Anderson, & Black, 2014, pp. 8–10). Both group sizes significantly exceed the recommended minimum group size of 30 subjects per experimental group (Koschate-Fischer & Schandelmeier, 2014; Sawyer & Ball, 1981). The homogenous sample type also increases experimental control and statistical power (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007, pp. 18–19).

Experimental Procedure

At the start of the online experiment, we assigned respondents randomly to one of the two experimental groups. At the beginning of the online survey, consumers were welcomed and received written instructions on how to participate in the survey. Directly after the welcome page, consumers saw a video that we used to manipulate the information about the sponsor of a sports event. The video was a compilation of athletes performing snow-kiting. Both groups saw an identical video, albeit with different sponsor information.

The video consisted of four sequences. During the first five seconds of the video (0:00 – 0:05), viewers were informed that "the event shown in this video is sponsored by [brand name]". Next, the brand logo of Red Bull (experimental group 1) or a can of a Dark Dog energy drink (experimental group 2) was shown on a black background for another five seconds (00:05 – 00:10). We chose to show a can of Dark Dog instead of just the brand logo to raise awareness for it being an energy drink brand. In the third sequence of the video, a compilation of clips was played, showing athletes during snow-kiting. This sequence lasted 53 seconds (00:10 – 01:03). Again, we manipulated the sponsor information in this sequence:

depending on the experimental group, a small brand logo of one of the two brands was placed in the bottom right corner. Since we had informed consumers in sequence 2 that Dark Dog was an energy drink brand, we used the actual logo of the brand instead of a can during this sequence. Sequence 4 was identical to sequence 2 and lasted 5 seconds (01:03 – 01:08). After the video had been watched, respondents completed the questionnaire.

Measurement

Our dependent variable ‘motivation for sport consumption’ was measured by a second-order construct introduced by Trail and James (2001) and revised by Trail (2012). It consists of eight dimensions with three items each. However, we excluded the drama dimension because it refers mainly to team sports while we used an individual sport in our study. Hence, we used only seven dimensions and a total of 21 items from this scale. To measure attitude towards the sponsoring brand, we adapted the attitude towards the advertiser scale (Muehling & Laczniak, 1988), which is common in sponsoring literature (Kinney & McDaniel, 1996; Parker & Fink, 2010; Roy & Cornwell, 2003). The construct includes five semantic differentials, which we measured on 5-point scales. Perceived sincerity of the sponsoring brand was measured using established scales that contain five items each (Speed & Thompson, 2000). We measured event-sponsor fit using five items from Speed and Thompson (2000). Sports involvement was measured using eight items from Shank and Beasley (1998). Three semantic differentials measured the affective dimension of consumers' general involvement in sports, and five semantic differentials measured the cognitive dimension. All sports involvement items were measured on 7-point scales. The constructs motivation for sport consumption, perceived sincerity of the sponsoring brand, and event-sponsor fit were all measured using 7-point Likert scales.

All variables, items, and their sources are illustrated in the Appendix. For each construct, the standardized Cronbach's alpha value is above the recommended threshold of .7 (Hair et al., 2014, p. 213). Exploratory factor analysis was conducted to determine the factor loadings of each factor's items. The principal factor procedure was used, and the obtained factors were rotated using the varimax method (Hair et al., 2014, p. 137). Factor loadings of individual items range from .61 to .96 and exceed thresholds recommended in the literature (Hair et al., 2014, pp. 114–116). Given our sample size of $n = 104$ and a significance level of .05, all factors' loadings are statistically significant at a power level of 80 percent (Hair et al., 2014, p. 115). Since all items achieved satisfying statistics, we used them all to compute the composite scores of the individual constructs. The composite score of each first-order construct is the mean of its items. To calculate the score of the second-order construct motivation for sport consumption, we conducted two steps. First, we calculated the scores of each first-order construct from the mean of its items. Then, we calculated the composite score of the second-order construct motivation for sport consumption from the mean of all its first-order constructs' composite scores.

Results

Manipulation Check

We indirectly manipulated our independent variables using a well-known brand (Red Bull) and an unknown one (Dark Dog). We assumed that, due to the lack of brand equity and any association with the unfamiliar brand, a well-known brand would score significantly higher on all focal sponsor-related variables, namely, attitude towards the sponsoring brand, perceived sincerity of the sponsoring brand, and event-sponsor fit (Campbell & Keller, 2003; Dawar & Lei, 2009).

To assess whether our indirect manipulation was successful, we asked participants of the main study, “Are you familiar with the brand [brand name]?” on a dichotomous scale with the options *yes* and *no* (Grohs et al., 2004). All participants in the final sample knew Red Bull but none knew Dark Dog. We conducted t-tests to assess whether the focal sponsor-related variables scored higher for Red Bull than for Dark Dog. As expected, this higher score was true for attitude towards the sponsoring brand ($M_{\text{RedBull}} = 3.54$, $SD_{\text{RedBull}} = 1.10$, $M_{\text{DarkDog}} = 2.58$, $SD_{\text{DarkDog}} = .79$, $t(102) = 5.05$, $p < .001$), perceived sincerity of the sponsoring brand ($M_{\text{RedBull}} = 4.45$, $SD_{\text{RedBull}} = 1.35$, $M_{\text{DarkDog}} = 3.60$, $SD_{\text{DarkDog}} = .84$, $t(102) = 3.82$, $p < .001$), and event-sponsor fit ($M_{\text{RedBull}} = 5.39$, $SD_{\text{RedBull}} = 1.17$, $M_{\text{DarkDog}} = 3.41$, $SD_{\text{DarkDog}} = 1.37$, $t(102) = 7.87$, $p < .001$). Hence, we conclude that the indirect manipulations were successful.

Hypothesis Testing

To test our hypotheses, we conducted a multiple regression analysis on motivation for sport consumption using attitude towards the sponsoring brand (A), perceived sincerity of the sponsoring brand (S), event-sponsor fit (F), sports involvement (I), and two interactions (A x F and A x I) as predictor variables. Due to the metric nature of our independent variables, we ran regression analysis and could not use ANOVA. The multiplicative nature of the interaction term might lead to high correlations with its constituents and is a potential source of multicollinearity. To attribute for this, we mean-centred all metric dependent variables (Iacobucci, Schneider, Popovich, & Bakamitsos, 2016, 2017; Irwin & McClelland, 2001). The results of the regression analysis are shown in Table 1. The final model has variance inflation factors (VIFs) of < 2.08 and thus does not exceed the threshold of 10 recommended in the literature (Hair et al., 2014, pp. 200–201). No evidence for autocorrelation was found (Durbin–Watson statistic = 2.02). To test assumptions of normality, linearity, and

homoscedasticity, we plotted the standardized estimated values of the DV against the standardized residuals (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013, pp. 125–128). Analysing the scatterplot in Figure 1, we conclude that those assumptions are met. Descriptive statistics and correlations are reported in Table 2. The correlation matrix indicates that all sponsor-related IVs are significantly positively correlated with the DV and all other IVs. Perceived sincerity displays the strongest correlation with the DV, and event-sponsor fit shows the weakest correlation with motivation for sport consumption. The correlation between the IVs reflects the interdependence found in previous sports sponsorship research. The consumer-related factor sports involvement correlates positively (and at least weakly significant) with all sponsor-related factors but event-sponsor-fit. We also tested whether both experimental groups significantly differed in demographics and psychographics. As illustrated in Table 3, we did not find any significant difference between the two groups in those variables.

<<< Table 1 near here >>>

<<< Figure 1 near here >>>

Overall, a substantial amount of the variance in motivation for sport consumption is explained by the proposed predictor variables ($R^2 = .42$, Adjusted $R^2 = .38$), and the regression model is highly significant ($F(6,103) = 11.56, p < .001$). We assess the statistical power of our regression model by interpolating two datapoints from a table provided by Hair et al. (2014, p. 170). Similar to the information in T-distribution tables, they report critical values of R^2 required to achieve a statistical power of .80 in regression models for varying numbers of IVs and sample sizes at a chosen significance level $\alpha = .05$ (e.g., [1] $R^2_{\min} = .12$ for 5 IVs and $n = 100$, [2] $R^2_{\min} = .15$ for 10 IVs and $n = 100$). From the table, we conclude that our regression analysis with a slightly larger sample size of $n = 104$, 6 IVs, and $R^2 = .42$ achieves significant statistical power of .80 or above. Hypothesis 1 is not supported because we do not find a significant direct effect of attitude towards the sponsoring brand on

motivation for sport consumption ($\beta = .13, t = 1.15, p > .1$). As expected, perceived sincerity of the sponsoring brand ($\beta = .28, t = 2.61, p < .05$) and sports involvement ($\beta = .31, t = 3.57, p < .001$) have positive direct effects on our dependent variable. Hence, hypotheses 2 and 4 are supported. Hypothesis 3 is not supported because we do not find a significant positive effect of event-sponsor fit on motivation for sport consumption ($\beta = .06, t = .53, p > .1$). Hypothesis 5 proposes interactions between attitude towards the sponsoring brand and event-sponsor fit ($\beta = .23, t = 2.54, p < .05$). Hypothesis 6 proposes interactions between attitude towards the sponsoring brand and sports involvement ($\beta = -.04, t = -.39, p > .1$). Our results support Hypothesis 5 but do not support Hypothesis 6.

<<< Table 2 near here >>>

<<< Table 3 near here >>>

Discussion

Our experiment confirms that sponsors can affect consumers' motivation for sport consumption. We found positive direct effects on motivation for sports consumption for perceived sincerity of the sponsoring brand (S) and sports involvement (I). Furthermore, we found an interaction effect between attitude towards the sponsoring brand (A) and event-sponsor fit (F). The interaction means that attitude towards the sponsoring brand has a greater effect on consumers' motivation for sport consumption when the event-sponsor fit is high versus when it is low. Overall, three of our six hypotheses are supported.

General Discussion

Despite multiple calls for research about consequences for the sponsee, research about sports sponsorship mainly focuses on the outcomes for the sponsors (Cornwell & Kwon, 2020; Toscani & Prendergast, 2018). The sponsee is often only included as a sort of supporting actor when researchers investigate the impact of sponsee-related factors on sponsors'

sponsorship outcomes. Our study extends research about sports sponsorship to the sponsee perspective, particularly on potential consequences for the sponsee. We find that a sponsor's perceived sincerity is a crucial antecedent to the motivation for sports consumption and that its effect size is almost equal to the one of consumers' general involvement in sports. We also find that the positive association between attitude towards the sponsor and motivation for sports consumption is stronger when consumers perceive a higher fit between sponsor and event. We hope our paper raises awareness for this gap in sports sponsorship research and motivates our fellow scholars to conduct further research in this field. Our study is just a first step. More qualitative and quantitative research is required to assess sports sponsorships from the sponsees' point-of-view.

Theoretical Contributions

Our first contribution to academic research is that taking another point-of-view in sponsorship research, namely the sponsee perspective, is relevant. Research taking this under-researched perspective can provide new insights. For instance, while we find some overlap between the relevant antecedents of sports sponsorship outcomes between sponsors and sponsees, the importance of the individual seems to differ. Simply applying findings from sports sponsorship research on consequences for sponsors to sponsees might not be theoretically justified and could do more harm than good. Second, we find that a sponsee's choice of sponsor can affect motivation for sports consumption. This is a significant contribution. It means that sponsees' decision-makers should consider more than just simple monetary payouts when selecting between multiple sponsor offers.

Furthermore, we find that, out of three sponsor-related factors, perceived sponsor sincerity has the strongest effect on motivation for sport consumption. This effect is almost as strong as the effect found for the consumer-related factor of sports involvement. The

relationship is in line with findings from McDaniel and Chalip (2002) about the 1996 Olympic games. Those authors found that fans will consume a sports event despite being aware of the sponsors' commercial interests. But if consumers perceive sponsorships to be over-commercialized, their enjoyment of the event decreases, and, eventually, they do not want to watch it (anymore). Our research shows that event-sponsor fit moderates the impact of attitude towards the sponsor on motivation for sport consumption. Hence, the effect of a positive attitude towards the sponsoring brand on motivation for sport consumption is higher when consumers perceive a higher fit between sponsor and event. We conclude that attitude towards the sponsoring brand, perceived sincerity of the sponsoring brand, perceived event-sponsor fit, and sports involvement are essential factors in sponsorship research that focuses on consequences for the sponsee.

Managerial Implications

Our findings imply that decision-makers should consider more than just monetary payouts when selecting a sponsor. At the beginning of the paper, we described authentic examples where sponsor selection led to significant negative fan reactions. We also provided examples of where fan attendance would not have been as high without the sponsor. With this study, we provide the theoretical foundation to help managers make better decisions about sponsor choice. Consumers' perceived sincerity of the sponsoring brand is the strongest sponsor-related driver for their motivation to consume a sport. Its impact is almost on par with their general sports involvement. This is a strong connection. Hence, decision-makers must carefully assess whether fans might perceive a sponsor's involvement as too commercially motivated.

It is essential to understand that consumers do not binarily distinguish between altruistic and commercial sponsors. Every consumer will be aware that events need sponsors

and that sponsors have commercial motives. However, the degree of perceived commercialism is relevant. If consumers perceive that (1) a sponsor's involvement is too driven by commercial interests or that (2) the sponsor is exploiting the sponsorship too much, the sponsor's involvement will backfire not only on the sponsor but also on the sponsee. In a worst-case scenario, the negative consequences could even be equal to or exceed the direct payout from the sponsorship. In such an event, the sponsee would be worse off with such a sponsor than without it.

Suppose managers want to use consumers' existing positive attitudes towards a potential sponsor for the consumption of their sports product (e.g. sell more tickets and merchandise). In that case, they need to know that a high fit between sponsor and sport-property is required to benefit from those attitudes. Positive attitudes towards the sponsoring brand in environments of low event-sponsor fit might not be enough. An excellent example of this claim is probably Red Bull and the Red Bull Stratos event. Imagine Coca Cola would have sponsored this extreme sports event. Overall, consumers might have an above-average positive attitude towards Coca Cola and Red Bull. However, Coca Cola is not associated with extreme sports whereas Red Bull is. Due to the lack of event-sponsor fit, Coca Cola might not have increased consumers' motivation to consume this event as much as Red Bull did.

Limitations and Further Research

Our study is a first step in understanding how sponsor-objects or sport-properties can benefit from sponsors besides direct monetary compensation for the sponsorship. More research is needed to understand the relationship between sponsor and sponsor-object from the sponsee's point-of-view. Below we conclude with some limitations and ideas for further research.

In this study, we used brands on the extreme ends of the brand familiarity continuum. All subjects in our sample knew Red Bull, whereas none knew Dark Dog. Further studies

could use brands with different levels of brand familiarity and include this variable in their analysis.

When we developed hypothesis H5, we argued that a potential effect of positive attitude towards the sponsoring brand on motivation for sports consumption would depend on the event-sponsor fit. We argued that a positive attitude towards the sponsor Red Bull would not increase consumers' motivation to consume any event but only those events with a high fit (art exhibition vs. sports event). We did not manipulate fit directly, only indirectly using a well-known and an unknown brand. Future studies could test this proposition by including events that directly manipulate the perceived event-sponsor fit. Also, both sponsors are from the same product category and industry. Energy drink producers are known to sponsor many extreme sports. Using sponsors from different product categories or other industries is another way to manipulate event-sponsor fit, create additional insights, and increase generalizability.

In our study, we measured the perceived sincerity of the sponsoring brand on a 7-point scale. We did this because we think that sincerity should be measured on a continuum rather than through a binary variable of altruistic vs. commercial interests. We argue that, even when a company has commercial interests in mind, the sponsorship execution determines whether consumers attribute a sponsor's involvement with more altruistic or more commercial motives. Similar results are known from celebrity endorsement literature. Consumers are aware that celebrity endorsements are based on a commercial relationship between a celebrity and the endorsed brand (Tripp, Jensen, & Carlson, 1994). However, celebrities who endorse too many brands cause consumers to attribute the celebrities' involvement to monetary incentives instead of to preference for the advertised product. The result is a diminished effect of the endorsement (Mowen & Brown, 1981; Tripp et al., 1994) or even a negative effect compared to a condition without any endorsement (Reimann,

Wagner, & Reisinger, 2018). Hence, we conclude that further studies could include sponsors who are perceived to act purely altruistically and include other sponsors who appear to have extremely commercial motives.

Our study includes only one relatively unknown sport. Studies in branding (Simonin & Ruth, 1998) and advertising (Till & Busler, 2000) use unknown or fictitious brands because they have no brand equity or prior associations. To achieve the same effect, we use a relatively unknown sport. Hence the positive effects we found on motivation for sport consumption might be relatively strong in comparison to effects for established sponsees. Future studies could investigate whether the same effects exist for established sports, events, or sports teams. For instance, some people might be motivated to consume a sports event directly in the stadium if their favourite beer brand is the exclusive alcoholic beverage sponsor, and it is the only beer served during the event.

In our study, the sport (extreme sport) and both sponsors (energy drinks) have a relatively high fit because energy drink manufacturer brands already sponsor various extreme sports. Future studies could include sports that fit with the sponsoring brand to different degrees.

We use a convenience sample that consists of students between the age of 23 and 28 from a Swiss business school. One of the sample's characteristics is a high average score on sports involvement. This homogenous sample type with a particular bias towards greater involvement in sports limits our findings' generalisability. Results could differ for other age groups, education levels, and consumer segments with lower sports involvement. Future studies and replications could use a more heterogeneous and representative sample or assess different consumer segments.

In our study, we use motivation for sport consumption as the outcome measure of the sponsor-object. This variable only includes affective and cognitive dimensions. Future

research should include conative outcome measures. Direct impact on sales will be highly relevant for practitioners.

While our correlation analysis finds significant positive correlations between all IVs and the DV, our regression model only finds significant positive direct effects for one of the three sponsor-related and for the consumer-related factor. This observation might indicate a more complex interplay between the variables (e.g., mediation), which requires future research.

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Appendix: Variables and Data Sources

Construct	Operationalization	Data Source
Motivation for Sport	I enjoy watching [sport name] because...	Trail and James
Consumption		(2001), Trail (2012)
Vicarious Achievement	It increases my self-esteem. (.96)	
$(\bar{\alpha} = .95)$	It enhances my sense of self-worth (.96)	
	It improves my self-respect. (.93)	
Aesthetics $(\bar{\alpha} = .76)$	I enjoy the artistic value. (.74)	
	I like the beauty and grace of the sport. (.88)	
	It is a form of art. (.84)	
Escape $(\bar{\alpha} = .88)$	It provides me with an opportunity to escape the reality of my daily life for a while. (.91)	
	I can get away from the tension in my life. (.89)	
	It provides me with a distraction from my daily life for a while. (.90)	

Acquisition of Knowledge ($\bar{\alpha} = .84$)	I can increase my knowledge about the activity. (.89)	
	I can increase my understanding of the activity by watching the event. (.86)	
	I can learn about the technical aspects by watching the event. (.86)	
Physical Skills of the Athletes ($\bar{\alpha} = .90$)	I enjoy watching it because of the skills of the athletes. (.94)	
	I enjoy watching it because of the performance of the athletes. (.94)	
	I enjoy watching it because of the athleticism of the athletes. (.86)	
Social Interaction ($\bar{\alpha} = .91$)	I like to socialize with others. (.91)	
	I like having the opportunity to interact with other people. (.94)	
	I enjoy talking to other people. (.90)	
Physical Attractiveness ($\bar{\alpha} = .78$)	I enjoy watching athletes who are physically attractive. (.62)	
	The main reason I watch Snowkiting is because I find the athletes physically attractive. (.93)	
	An individual athlete's "sex appeal" is a big reason why I watch Snowkiting. (.93)	
Attitude towards the Sponsoring Brand ($\bar{\alpha} = .95$)	Thinking about [brand name], please evaluate this company by selecting the point on each scale that best represents your attitude to the company.	Kinney and McDaniel (1996), Parker and
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good / bad (.93) 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pleasant / unpleasant (.94) • favorable / unfavorable (.92) • positive / negative (.86) • reputable / not reputable (.87) 	Fink (2010), Roy and Cornwell (2003)
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Perceived Sincerity of the Sponsoring Brand ($\bar{\alpha} = .77$)	<p>The sport would benefit from this sponsorship at the grassroots level. (.61)</p> <p>The main reason [insert brand name] would be involved in the event is because [brand name] believes the event deserves support. (.80)</p> <p>[brand name] would be likely to have the best interests of the sport at heart. (.85)</p> <p>[brand name] would probably support the event even if it had a much lower profile. (.79)</p>	Speed and Thompson (2000)
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Event-Sponsor Fit ($\bar{\alpha} = .95$)	<p>There is a logical connection between the event and [brand name]. (.89)</p> <p>The image of the event and the image of [brand name] are similar. (.91)</p> <p>[brand name] and the event fit together well. (.95)</p> <p>[brand name] and the event stand for similar things. (.91)</p> <p>It makes sense to me that [brand name] sponsors this event. (.90)</p>	Speed and Thompson (2000)
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Sports Involvement	What is your opinion on sports in general?	Shank and Beasley
Thinking about Sports, please evaluate it by selecting the point on each scale that best represents your attitude to Sports in general.		(1998)
Affective ($\bar{\alpha} = .91$)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • boring / exciting (.89) • uninteresting / interesting (.93) • unappealing / appealing (.93) 	
Cognitive ($\bar{\alpha} = .93$)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • useless / useful (.74) • not needed / needed (.92) • irrelevant / relevant (.90) • unimportant / important (.93) • worthless / valuable (.93) 	

Notes: Motivation for sport consumption, perceived sincerity of the sponsoring brand, event-sponsor fit, and sports involvement were measured on 7-point scales. Attitude towards the sponsoring brand was measured on a 5-point scale.

Table 1: Regression on Motivation for Sport Consumption

Independent Variable	Regression Coefficient		VIF
	Unstandardized	Standardized	
Intercept	4.56		
Attitude towards the Sponsoring Brand (A)	.98 (1.15)	.13	2.08
Perceived Sincerity of the Sponsoring Brand (S)	.19 (2.61)*	.28	1.89
Event-Sponsor Fit (F)	.03 (.53)	.06	2.07
Sports Involvement (I)	.25 (3.57)***	.31	1.26
A x F	.10 (2.54)*	.23	1.34
A x I	-.02 (-.39)	-.04	1.34
R ²	.42		
Adjusted R ²	.38		
F-statistic	11.56***		
Durbin–Watson statistic	2.02		

*** p < .001, ** p < .01, * p < .05.

Notes: The t-statistics in parenthesis, n = 104, VIF = variance inflation factor.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1 Motivation for Sport Consumption	1				
2 Attitude towards the Sponsoring Brand	.40***	1			
3 Perceived Sincerity of the Sponsoring Brand	.53***	.58***	1		
4 Event-Sponsor Fit	.31**	.66***	.53***	1	
5 Sports Involvement	.44***	.18†	.31**	.15	1
Mean	4.67	3.04	4.01	4.36	6.12
SD	.80	1.06	1.19	1.61	1.01

*** p < .001, ** p < .01, * p < .05, † p < .1

Table 3: Comparison of the experimental groups

Variable	Group 1 (Red Bull)		Group 2 (Dark Dog)		t-value	p-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Age	25.54	1.42	25.57	1.46	-.12	.90
Gender (female)	48%	-	52%	-	-.39	.70
Sports Involvement	6.20	.79	6.03	1.17	.85	.40
n	50		54			

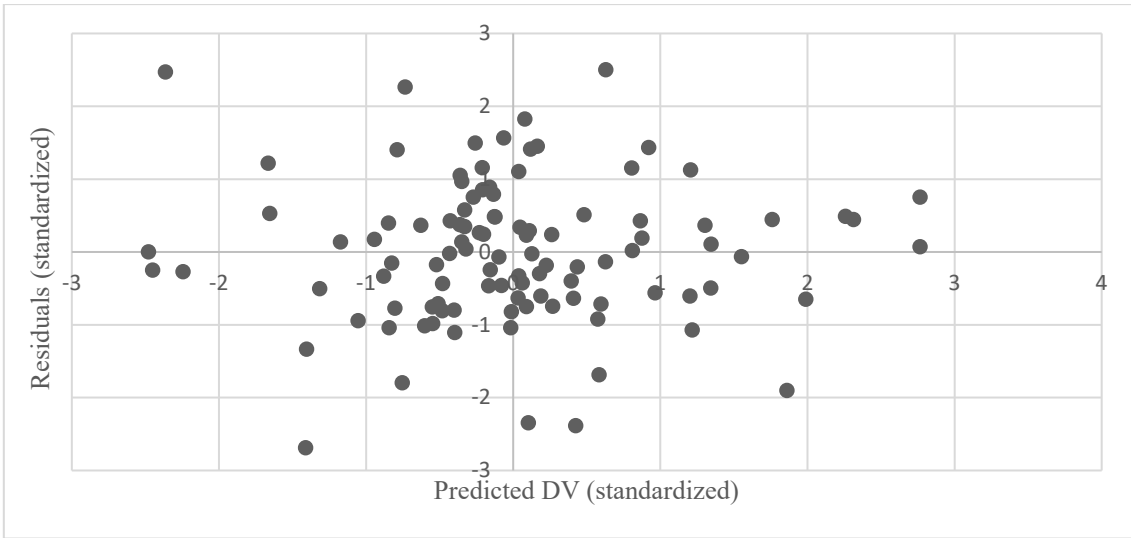


Figure 1: Residuals scatterplot