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The impact of the effectiveness of sponsorship on image and memorizing: Role of congruence and relational proximity

Leila Chebli\textsuperscript{a*}, Abderrazak Gharbi\textsuperscript{b}

\textsuperscript{a}PhD student, Faculty of Economic Sciences and Management of Tunis, BP N°248 El Manar II, 2092 Tunis, Tunisia
\textsuperscript{b}Professor, Faculty of Economic Sciences and Management of Tunis, BP N°248 El Manar II, 2092 Tunis, Tunisia

Abstract

This research is devoted to the study of sponsorship, a concept that is in expansion in the present advertising landscape to study its relevance and importance in corporate communication. The object of this communication is to contribute to the comprehension of operation sponsorship effectiveness. We propose an abstract model to establish a direct connection between exposure and the variables that measure the effectiveness of a campaign of sponsorship. We examine the role of congruence between the event and the sponsor, and we analyze the role of relational proximity between the brand and the individual on these variables. The review of the literature of this present research demonstrates that the effectiveness of the sponsorship will be analyzed through image and memorizing.

Keywords: Effectiveness, Sponsorship, Image, Memorizing;

1. Introduction

To date, sponsorship or sponsorship (sponsorship and sponsorship will be used as a single word) is no longer a communication tool amateurism and opportunism. It becomes an important policy tool and a complex internal and external benefit for the business user concept (Brown et al. 2003). This is a tool that is part of the communication mix with the ultimate aim to sell. In this method, which is more subtle branding, the reputation of the company does not interfere with the participant or consumer, but creates a special relation without appeal to the latter’s conscience. Sponsorship allows targeted actions and helps to better position the brand and its image (Derbaix and Lardinoit, 2001). Sponsorship role is to customize and brand to define a given character to build or develop a brand image (Deimel and Zentes, 1991).

Indeed, branding, for example, a telecommunication company combines its image; a football or tennis does not have the same objectives and guidelines (Harvey, 2001). Football reflects an image of popular sport accessible to everyone; on the contrary, tennis reflects an elitist and finer image.

However, the sponsorship can achieve a single objective measure of its effectiveness as all communication techniques already established. Therefore, sponsorship cannot exist alone; it is a new...
process that complements other elements of the communications mix. It is therefore difficult for a sponsor to convey a clear message about the sponsorship (Cornwell et al. 2001). Sponsorship allows companies to communicate solely on appearances and logos not on product presentations, apart from a few exceptions especially when launching a new product. The message is indirect and subtle and conveys that only the consumer can decrypt their own way, for example, by increasing the likeability of a brand, sharing interests or rewarding as raising its connotations of a need to belong (Hickman et al. 2005). In addition, many organizations today include sponsorship in their communication strategy. It becomes a major communication in companies (Westphalen, 2005). Studies have shown that companies, to obtain a favorable change in the attitude toward the brand, should enhance their brand image by the transfer of positive associations that sponsored the event and, to increase and improve their awareness, use more sponsorship which these objectives have been proven (Pitts and Slattery, 2004). In addition, there are two types of exposure to a sponsorship deal (Anne and Cheron, 1991): the direct audience grouping individuals after the event at the location of the hearing process and its indirect grouping individuals following the event through media (Chandon and Mazoyer, 2004).

In this context, it is to understand the role of sponsorship in corporate communication and highlight the relation between exposure and the variables that determine the effectiveness of a sponsorship deal.

Our goal is to work and then measure the influence of exposure (direct and indirect) on image and memorizing. This research proposes to answer the following: What is the relation between exposure and the effectiveness of a sponsorship campaign? What is the impact of the exposure variables that measure the effectiveness of sponsorship?

The answer to these questions is a priority for any business seeking to include sponsorship in its communication policy and to understand the mechanisms of the sponsorship and their influence on the image and memorizing, variables that measure the effectiveness of a sponsorship campaign. In this way, our research in this context is of major concern for businesses seeking to understand the consumer behavior of this communication technique.

2. Theoretical Framework: Conceptual model and research hypotheses

The conceptual framework of this work is primarily based on the definition of the concept of sponsorship and its integration into the communication strategy of the company, as well as the analysis and study of the relation between exposure and sponsorship.

We present successively thereafter variables in our conceptual model and research hypotheses. We postulate that the effectiveness of a sponsorship campaign will be measured through the image and memorization.

We aim to know the extent of the influence of the exposure variables being studied to explain and analyze the relevance of a sponsorship deal. We measure the direct relation between exposure and these variables. It is expected that exposure positively influences these variables.

2.1. Definition of sponsorship

Sponsorship appeared initially during the early 70s in England in sports and other industries. It subsequently developed in Western countries in the early 90s, experiencing a real boom. Thus, a new term has emerged: sponsorship (sponsorship in French).

Several definitions and studies have been published on the definition of sponsorship. We will retain some work on this term like (Meenaghan, 1991; Derbaix et al. 1994).

Indeed to define the word sponsorship (sponsorship and sponsorship will be used as a single term), it is therefore necessary to study precisely the work (Meenaghan, 1991).
It defines sponsorship as a financial investment or materials on an activity, person, or event and having access to a potential communication associated with this activity, person, or event.

Derbaix et al. (1994) indicate that this technique is to create an event or independent support and assimilate to the event through the media, to achieve marketing objectives.

Used as a means of communication beyond media, sponsorship led to a commercial return for the sponsor (Allen et al. 2005). In most cases, sponsorship involves three actors: the sponsor, agency events, and consumers.

The sponsor provides financial support, equipment, or know-how; in return, the event organizer will help provide an image and awareness, promoting its event space for the sponsor.

Sponsorship is considered an indirect form of communication quality objectives in terms of awareness and image (Burton et al. 1998; Derbaix et al. 1994).

For businesses, the benefits of sponsorship lie mainly in the fact that it is a means of two-way communication (Harrison and O'Reilly, 2005).

2.2. The integration of sponsorship into the corporate communication strategy

Sponsoring companies use more communication strategies, and 85% of companies see sponsorship as part of their marketing strategy. Sponsorship has become one of the most important factors in the marketing communications business.

According to Boistel (2004), sponsorship is either the communication strategy of the brand product or of the corporate strategy of the company.

In reality, it is something else; in terms of effect in marketing departments, marketing manager exerts pressure on managers in their decision making sponsorship and, therefore, integration of sponsorship into the mix communicative.

This view of finding a strategy that integrates marketing communications companies is moving today (called IMC [Integrated Marketing Communication]).

Indeed, according to Tripodi (2001), sponsorship is an integral part of business communication. For a more interesting impact, sponsorship must be integrated with other elements of the communication mix.

Indeed, it cannot replace other methods of marketing communication, such as advertising, sales promotion, public relations, or communications by the event, but it is a tool that complements them.

Other studies have shown that sponsorship, used in conjunction with other communication tools, such as classic institutional advertising (Quester and Thompson, 2001), promote awareness and purchase intent.

Farrelly and Quester (1998) go further in its analysis, even claiming that the performance of sponsorship will be going to a link with marketing and public relations.

Moreover, Walliser (2003) adds that the isolated sponsoring operations have little influence on visibility, even if they fall over time. Sponsorship remains, first and foremost, complementary media, which only allows passing a message to a given target. It cannot, replace other traditional communication techniques that have a better assessment to measure their efficiencies.

Sponsorship alone is limited; the process requires the synergy of communication that can make it interesting (Cornwell et al. 2006). The synergy between the drive and the media is necessary for the success of a good communication plan (Trendel and Warlop, 2004).

2.3. Research hypotheses

2.3.1. The relation between exposure and image

Branding is defined as the set of perceptions and representations that consumers may have about the brand and are reflected in all brand associations and certain values (Keller, 1993).
Different types of associations may be present in the minds of consumers: functional and abstract. They can be classified into three categories: intrinsic and extrinsic attributes (that characterize a product or service), benefits (personal or cultural values that consumers attach to the attributes of the product or service), and attitudes toward the brand.

Branding is all the associations that are connected with the brand. The consumer must establish the association between positive image transferred to the sponsoring brand at the event (Bednall et al. 2003). When managers are asked about their targets in sponsoring, the majority classify the value of their brand as a priority (Grohs, 2004).

This recovery can be done only through the image transfer between the sponsor and the sponsored entity. Indeed, one of the objectives of advertisers through sponsorship operation is to improve the image. According to Desbordes et al. (2001), to give a good image and shine, it should not only match the identity desired by the target, that is, close representations of consumers, but also have some credibility, that is, not too far from reality. It must also have personality based on originality.

Finally, it must be sustainable; it must be part of the time while trying to rejuvenate permanently (Basil and Basil, 2003). Thus, the company will stand out from its competitors and thus influence consumers in their choice. By partnering with an event, the sponsor hopes engender in the minds of target values of transfer activity to its brand (Didellon and Ganassali, 1996).

Several studies have shown that the image of the event can be transferred to the sponsor brands in an event (Fleck-Dousteyssier, 2004).

The image of an event is based on three variables: the type of event (sports, arts, culture ...), its characteristics (size, number of participants, their status, location ...), and individual factors (personal experience and personal perceptions of the image of the event) (Brown et al. 2003).

Sporting events or cultural events have the same characteristics. Thus, the term “image transfer” defines the transfer of these associations to the brand or company to sponsor (Eaton and Gwinner, 1999). The aim is to arouse emotions and attitudes toward the sponsor, linking it to the values of the event.

The merger was completed in presenting sponsor simultaneously with the event. Thus, the image of the event appears to be linked with the sponsoring company.

According to Grohs (2004), image transfer takes place if the image of a sponsored event positively affects the image when the image sponsor. Event established, the interest of the sponsor will be brought on the requirements to transfer this file to its own brand and then transfer back to the internal and external audience.

It will therefore seek to establish the mechanisms of image transfer. According to Fleck-Dousteysier (2004), there are four variables that perform the transfer of the image to the brand of the sponsor: the perceived similarity between the event and the sponsor, the sponsor's involvement, the frequency of the event, and the nature of the product.

The goal of the sponsors is to target their transfer values. Housed in a favorable environment, sponsorship would be a valuable tool for the development and enhancement of brand equity (Chien et al. 2005) and pose the following status: "sponsorship can help to associate a brand with a specific event or experience, allowing it to transcend its physical attributes and install new definitions and values".

These reasons allow the formulation of our first hypothesis:

**H1: "Exposure campaign sponsorship has a positive effect on the image of the sponsors."**

2.3.2. The relation between exposure and memorizing

Awareness is the construction and changing of the brand. These vectors are estimated from the remembrance and recognition of the brand (Derbaix and Lardinois, 2001; Laborde and Leases, 2000; Cornwell et al. 2006).
However, for the same brand, the values transferred may differ depending on the nature of the event and thus have an impact on any awareness (Meena ghan, 2001). We study the different approaches that take awareness into account.

The brand awareness is defined as knowledge that has the public in general and its prospects in particular (Desbordes, 1999). The objective of the firm is to know and do about the brand a more targeted person. The motivation of the company through increased awareness is to ensure that the audience can remember the brand; it is able to retain its name, and thus, it is present in its mind as long as possible.

Three conditions are essential to ensure the objective of awareness (Walliser, 1994): the sponsored event must be highly publicized, it is necessary to ensure the visibility of the sponsor and co sponsor the limit, which can create confusion among spectators.

Research has been conducted to examine the effects post event in terms of memorizing and recognition ("recall and recognition"). Awareness of the brand and the name of the sponsored association or organization are often cited by the prospect and are indicators of the effectiveness of sponsorship.

The first approach, studied by Walliser (2003), takes into account the individual, the inclusion of sponsors for the hearing, the identification of factors that have an impact on the memorizing, and analysis memorizing processes. Regarding the factors that have an impact on memorizing, they can be classified into five groups:

- **Exposure conditions**: In particular, this is the duration of exposure of sponsors and enhancement of the sponsor on the venue. This is the time of exposure to the message. The exposure time plays an important role in the memorizing of brands participating in an event communication. (Anne and Cheron, 1991).

- **Characteristics of the brand**: More precisely, the sponsor has previous or not certain awareness. Awareness prior affects the awareness after exposure. It also affects the memorizing (Anne, 1992; Walliser, 1994).

- **Characteristics of the message**: A short and well built message has a greater impact on the memorizing of the audience through a quickly identifiable stimulus. Short names that differ from competitors are better than memorizing. For this event, companies use short and therefore identifiable messages (Anne and Cheron 1991). However, there is a negative impact of emotion on memorizing the names of sponsors (Walliser, 1996).

- **Individual characteristics of spectators**: Sociodemographic variables, such as age or interest of the audience toward the activity, show that the level of participation plays an undeniable role in memorizing. Several demographic variables including age, sex, and sociodemography play an important role in memorizing the message, emphasizing the interest and involvement of the target event (Anne and Cheron, 1991). Moreover, because of the emotion, involvement has a negative impact on memorizing and brand recognition (Walliser, 1996).

- **The integration of sponsorship in the mix of communicative**: Increased awareness will be established if the action is sponsoring weapon or other tools as in other advertising. Awareness improves if the company integrates sponsorship simultaneously, integrating visual sponsorship, sponsorship field, and sponsorship advertising. It is shown that a firm memorizing effect increases before and during the event. Subsequently, he returned to the initial stage of awareness unless to consolidate through institutional communication campaigns (Walliser, 2003). This approach suggests that each brand obtains a certain amount of awareness, more or less, to be increased shortly after or during the event and then decreased again close to its initial rate, a few weeks after the event.

Fuchs (2006) has other factors that could have an impact on memorizing in an action of sponsorship such as the emotion felt during the event, the degree of involvement or sustainable situation during the event, the influence of group norms, other individual characteristics such as sex or the general attitude toward sponsorship and also occupied position on the market in the product category.

Following these findings, we propose our second hypothesis:
H2: "Exposure to an operation sponsorship has a positive impact on memorizing of the sponsors."

2.3.3. The moderating role of congruence: The relation between exposure, congruence event/sponsor and image of the sponsors

One of the conditions for successful operation of sponsorship is to perceive a logical connection between the couple and relevant sponsor/sponsored entity (Fleck-Dousteyssier et al. 2005).

If there is congruence between the event and the sponsor brand, that is to say, the link will be more highly of them more the image transfer will take place: the image of the event to the sponsor brand image. In this case, we speak of transfer at the cognitive level.

More consumers will perceive that congruence, appropriateness, and compatibility between the sponsor and sponsored entity are relevant as it will have a positive attitude toward sponsorship (Eaton and Gwinner, 1999). We can say that the greater degree of congruence is stronger.

There will be significant awareness and image of an impact event sponsorship, thereafter, and it will also influence the intention to purchase (Speed and Thompson, 2000). Hence, the level of perceived congruence must have some meaning and be strong.

According to Meenaghan (2001), it is the consumer who perceives the similarity between two entities and that through their own level of knowledge about the two entity sponsor and sponsored event.

To determine the perception of the congruence by the consumer, it must be able to establish a logical correlation between these two entities. Congruence can be done through several criteria, such as industry sponsor of the correlations in terms of image, the demographics of the target audience, and the relation created by the actions of communication (Speed and Thompson, 2000; Louis, 2004).

Other dimensions come into play such as appearance, the views of the target values generated by the brand or lifestyle (Tribou, 2004).

Sponsorship branding impact should work specifically (Fleck-Dousteyssier et al. 2005) on the effects of congruence in sponsorship.

The lesson from the study that the impact on the brand image will be higher in the case of a moderate incongruence (torque sponsor/sponsored relevant but not expected) compared with a strong congruence (couple relevant and expected) or low congruence (torque not relevant and not expected).

Indeed, at a moderate incongruence, unexpected side torque should stimulate attention and curiosity of the viewer and make him want to process the message more intensively (Choi et al. 2004).

The more the torque (sponsor/sponsored entity) is perceived as relevant, the more it will improve the brand image. This is due to the transfer of positive images caused by the operation and will favorably alter the attitude toward the sponsor (Jagre et al. 2001).

In light of the foregoing, our third hypothesis is proposed:

H3: "The congruence event/sponsor has a moderating role between exposure and image toward sponsors."

2.3.4. The mediating role of relational proximity: The relation between exposure, relational proximity brand/individual, and memorizing of the sponsors

Actors who interact in an event can be distinguished according to three poles. The first one includes the event and the sponsor, the sponsor and the second relates to the individual, and the third binds the individual and the event (Fuchs, 2006). The close relation to the link between sponsorship sponsors and the audience present at the site of the event.
The proximity of the elements of the cluster brand/individual is assessed mainly through the commercial relation that characterizes them, whereas the second largest event/individual will be evaluated according to the geographical distance that separates them.

The close-in torque-client sponsor: assuming that mark regularly informs its customers of events it supports, the client sponsor will certainly be exposed to non client posts.

Thus, the client should cite this brand more than the non client or, even primarily, because of their proximity. It will thus have a certain reputation. Three statutes were considered: brand/support, brand/customer, and brand/employee (Fuchs, 2007; Hickman et al. 2005).

The proximity-in-event individual torque: Similarly, the relation between the event and the place of residence of the person has not been studied quite advanced by subject matter experts (Korchia, 2000).

Yet, still within the framework of the communication being done by the sponsors to make their commitment, we note that some of them focus their efforts particularly in the region where the event takes place (Knoben and Oerlemans, 2006).

Individuals residing in this region will therefore be more easily exposed to messages from sponsors than those living outside it logically. They will therefore have knowledge of the event.

An individual living near the site of the event should be remembered more easily sponsors of the event than a person who does not live there (Fuchs, 2006).

So you can see that one of the major wishes of business is to get as close as possible to the individual, creating a close relation between him and the brand (Lardinoit, 2001).

Everything will then develop relation marketing. Sponsorship is considered as a tool to get closer to consumers, while sharing their passions, their ideas, and their emotions, which will create a relation of trust and an emotional connection between the brand and the target consumer (Johar and Pham, 2001).

Thus, relational proximity is considered as having an influence on the level of memorizing; it helps to increase the number of exposure sponsorship messages (Fuchs, 2007).

Indeed, it may explain the effectiveness of sponsorship in terms of memorizing sponsors, hence the importance of close relations and its influence on memorizing for the adequacy of a sponsorship campaign.

Thus, we propose to formulate our fourth hypothesis:

**H4: "The relational proximity brand/individual has a mediating role between exposure to sponsorship operation and memorizing of the sponsors."**
2.4. Model search

The literature review presented allows proposing a conceptual model of variables that may be involved in the direct relation between exposure and the determinants of the effectiveness of a campaign sponsorship. This model summarizes all the assumptions made in the previous paragraphs.

The involvement of each of these variables inserted is specified, and its introduction into our research is warranted. Our research the effectiveness of a sponsorship campaign in terms of image and memorizing that are our dependent variables.

These variables allow us to assess the relevance of a sponsorship deal. The independent variable in our model is the exposure to an event sponsorship.

According to previous research, the congruence event/sponsor influences the effectiveness and appropriateness of a sponsorship campaign at least at the level of the image, which is why we have introduced this variable in our conceptual model as a variable moderator. Relational proximity brand/individual has an influence on the level of memorizing sponsors.

Indeed, this variable explains in part the effectiveness of sponsorship in terms of memorizing, which is Why we have introduced this in our conceptual model as a mediating variable.

2.5. Figure

Relations studied in this research are depicted in the figure below:

![Diagram](image)

Figure1. The impact of the effectiveness of sponsorship on image and memorizing: Role of congruence and relational proximity
3. Conclusion, Implications, and Future Research Way

Sponsorship is one of the most effective marketing tools to increase the value of the company's image, awareness, and its impact on the visibility and location of the event (Laborde and Leases, 2000). However, with the proliferation of events and sponsors also present, memorizing and the impact desired by sponsors are diluted among the other partners.

Initiatives can be taken as the creation of a specific event or sponsoring exclusive sponsorship to prevent ambush marketing operations (ambush marketing) events sponsored by competitors (Fuchs, 2009). Involvement in the duration and extent to sponsor events is the key to successful sponsorship operations (Cameron et al. 2001).

The main objective for this study is to propose a structural model to better explain the relation between exposure to event sponsorship and efficacy variable campaign sponsorship, namely, the image and memorizing. Trying to integrate the moderator variable congruence event/sponsor involved in the relation between exposure and the mediating variable image and relational proximity brand/person involved in the relation between exposure and memorizing, our goal is to enrich the theory of modeling consumer behavior.

The literature has shown that it is important for the sponsor to sponsor an event that shares its values and where the degree of congruence is acceptable and thus closer to its target (Becker-Olsen and Simmons, 2002).

We have also seen that the sponsorship is part of the corporate communications mix; a synergy of efforts for optimum investment advice is for integrated communication approach. Advertising is an essential complement to the success of the sponsorship (Pope and Voges, 2000).

However, the main challenge lies in businesses assessing the effectiveness of sponsorship because few tools enable them to carry out this task (Dean, 1999).

Some companies calculate efficiency by simply relying on the number of exposures of the brand or using the same tools as in traditional advertising. Marketers have a real need to legitimize their financial investment to justify and convince new direction for a new operation sponsorship (Cornwell et al. 2006).

The real future challenge is to find the real measurement tools to assess the impact of sponsorship. It has been theoretically demonstrated that exposure during an operation sponsorship influences the variables that measure the effectiveness of sponsorship including image and memorizing (Dubois and Jolibert, 2005).

Henceforth, this work will allow us to establish a direct relation between exposure and these variables. This research would also allow us to study the impact of exposure on these variables and to better understand and target consumers to identify their different expectations.

This study opens broad avenues of research. We will remember them:
- Conduct an empirical study to verify the validity of the theory to apply it to other fields in marketing.
- Make a qualitative study to include advantages and to know how the consumer behavior accurately addresses this communication technique by collecting their opinions and attitudes about the practice of this kind of concept.
References


