

The Influence of Consumer Feedback on the Purchase Intention of Official Product Sponsors in Sports Event Sponsorship

Longfei Ma ^a, Thanaphon Ratchatakulpat ^{*}, Gumporn Supasettaysa ^b

Faculty of Business Administration, Rajamangala University of Technology Phra Nakhon (RMUTP), Bangkok, 10300, Thailand

^{*} Corresponding Author Email: thanaphon.r@rmutp.ac.th, ^alongfei-m@rmutp.ac.th, ^bGumporn.s@rmutp.ac.th

Abstract. Sports event sponsorship has emerged as a vital marketing strategy for modern enterprises, with its effectiveness fundamentally determined by how consumer feedback translates into concrete purchasing actions. As the sports industry continues to thrive, sponsors now prioritize measurable commercial returns over mere brand exposure. This study examines how consumer feedback influences purchasing decisions among official product sponsors in sports sponsorship through market practices, aiming to provide theoretical foundations for developing actionable marketing strategies.

Keywords: Sports event, consumer, feedback, official product, purchase intention.

1. Introduction

Sports event sponsorship stands as a powerful modern marketing strategy, with its strategic value gaining significant academic attention. In the digital age where consumer resistance to ads has intensified, sports sponsorship capitalizes on emotional connections and natural brand integration to address psychological needs, establishing itself as a vital marketing approach. Research reveals that audience responses to sponsorships aren't simple linear interactions but are influenced by multiple factors: sponsorship type compatibility, brand personality traits, and individual psychological differences. As sports evolve toward digitalization and smart technologies, evaluation of sponsorship effectiveness has shifted from exposure metrics to in-depth analysis of consumer feedback. This evolution underscores the critical importance of understanding how audience reactions impact official sponsors purchasing decisions in sports sponsorship programs.

2. The Psychological Mechanism and Emotional Driving Strategy of Consumer Feedback

The feedback of consumers on sports event sponsorship is essentially a process of psychological attitude formation and change. This process should be based on the special cognitive-emotional laws as the main principle. A comprehensive analysis of internal strategies can help sports event sponsors formulate feasible marketing strategies, transforming positive consumer feedback into concrete purchasing behaviors.

2.1. Cognitive and Emotional Bidirectional Pathway Model

Guided by the refined processing potential model, consumer groups adopt two approaches to acquiring sports event sponsorship information: the central pathway and peripheral pathway. When consumers develop strong interest in sports events, they can smoothly navigate through the central pathway to access sponsorship information about enterprises, such as expert evaluations of brand-sport compatibility and product functionalities. Meanwhile, low-involvement consumers must continue peripheral exploration, including examining sponsor logos and celebrity endorsements to make informed decisions. This demonstrates that sports event sponsors should adapt to diverse public

perceptions by enhancing core sports expertise and comprehensive capabilities, thereby delivering more impactful visual experiences for general sports enthusiasts.

2.2. Emotional Transfer Effect Model

The emotional transfer effect is fully demonstrated in sports event sponsorship. Sports events can ignite public passion for competition, foster teamwork spirit, and cultivate national pride, thereby building emotional connections with sponsoring companies. Taking the Scottish Premier League (SPL) as an example, successful sporting events can enhance people's affection for their hometown cities. This positive emotional perception positively impacts brand sponsors, increasing consumers' willingness to make purchases. However, three key factors influence consumer emotional transfer: the inherent emotional appeal of sports events, the alignment between sponsor brands and event emotions, and the emotional resonance generated through sponsor activation activities.

2.3. Social Identity Mechanism Model

Social identity mechanism is also an inexhaustible source of feedback from consumer groups, which is pointed out in social identity theory [1]. Consumers increasingly choose to support specific sports teams or events as a way to demonstrate social status and strengthen group identity. When sponsoring companies are recognized as the “official” partners of these groups, fans feel compelled to prioritize purchasing branded products to maintain group cohesion. Take the SPL as an example: fans buy city-specific jerseys, wristbands, badges, and other merchandise to show support for different teams. This consumption behavior primarily reflects collective identity expression. By implementing marketing strategies like “officially designated” branding and exclusive group symbol designs, sponsors can effectively boost consumer willingness to purchase.

2.4. Psychological Modelling Model

As a vital mechanism for modern consumer feedback, sports event sponsorship demonstrates its value through creative scenario-based imagination. When consumers witness athletes competing in branded gear, they naturally envision using similar products themselves. The stronger this psychological simulation effect, the higher the purchase intention becomes. A common practice in sports sponsorship—running shoe showcases—essentially serves as a functional psychological simulation exercise by sponsors. By organizing fan experience events, companies can enhance emotional simulations among consumers, ultimately achieving greater economic returns.

3. The Adjustment Mechanism of Sponsorship Type and Brand Characteristics

The effectiveness of sports sponsorship isn't a one-size-fits-all solution—it hinges on how sponsorship formats synergize with a brand's unique attribute. Identifying these key factors is crucial for sports event sponsors to develop sponsorship strategies that align with their organizational goals. Research findings indicate that [2] for sports events with the same sponsorship investment and different brand characteristics, it is easy to affect consumer feedback and business return effect, which is the core obstacle that causes the formation of differences in sports sponsorship decisions.

3.1. Brand Recognition and Matching Efficiency of Sponsorship Forms

Studies indicate that [3] when lesser-known brands collaborate with multiple sponsors to submit sponsorship proposals, their brand influence reaches its peak, while consumer attitudes and purchasing intentions also increase accordingly. This “newcomer momentum” effect first emerged when low-profile brands partnered with established players to create indirect credibility endorsements. In contrast, brands with higher recognition can leverage exclusive sponsorships to showcase their core positioning and avoid brand confusion. For instance, in top-tier Olympic sports events, industry leaders compete for exclusive sponsorship rights, whereas emerging companies prefer cost-effective participation through multi-sponsor partnerships. These contrasting marketing strategies demonstrate

how sponsorship formats align with brand market positions, offering fresh insights for sports event sponsors.

3.2. The Moderating Effect of Industry Relevance

In scenarios involving multi-industry sports event sponsorships, the regulatory efficacy of industry relevance becomes evident. When brands from different sectors collaborate, consumers tend to show higher enthusiasm for lesser-known sponsors. However, multiple sponsorships within the same industry may dilute brand distinctiveness. To address this, event organizers should develop diversified sponsorship portfolios that balance funding needs with differentiated market positioning for various brands. The Paris Olympics exemplified this approach by attracting over 80 official sponsors across consumer goods, technology, and financial sectors. This differentiated marketing strategy effectively minimized competition among sponsors while creating lasting brand impressions among audiences.

3.3. Psychological Impact of Sponsorship Hierarchy

Consumer groups are adept at discerning distinctions in corporate tiers such as “Global Partners”, “Official Sponsors”, and “Designated Suppliers” through their titles, which serves as a key indicator of brand strength. Companies at higher tiers demonstrate stronger comprehensive capabilities and generate more positive consumer feedback. Take Mengniu as an example: its recognition as an “Official Global Sponsor” has significantly amplified the influence of its brand communication. When budgets allow, sponsors securing higher-tier status can leverage consumers hierarchical perception psychology to maximize promotional impact through distinctive marketing campaigns, thereby gaining substantial consumer engagement.

3.4. Product and Event Matching Impact

Product and sports event matching degree is one of the important factors affecting sponsorship efficiency [4]. When consumers understand the intrinsic connection between sponsoring companies and sporting events, it enhances brand credibility and stimulates purchasing intent. This alignment can be categorized into two types: functional fit and image matching. Notably, even with low initial compatibility, sponsors can employ the “sponsorship relationship explanation” strategy to clarify the logic to target audiences, thereby improving perceived alignment. For instance, when tech companies sponsor sports events, they highlight how their technologies support event operations or enhance spectator experiences, helping build cognitive associations among consumers.

4. The Principle of Individual Consumer Differences and Group Influence

The audience for sports events is highly diverse, with different consumers providing varying feedback on the same sponsorship campaign. This phenomenon primarily stems from inherent individual characteristics and social group dynamics. Only by fully understanding these differences can sponsoring companies transform extensive promotion into targeted influence, effectively channeling limited marketing resources to high-potential audiences to enhance ROI.

4.1. Sport Engagement

The core dimension of sports engagement to form the feedback difference of consumer groups. Engagement specifically refers to the specific embodiment of sports-related interests, hobbies and knowledge participation of consumers. Relevant research findings [5] show that consumers with higher engagement levels demonstrate deeper processing of sponsorship information, stronger brand impressions, and more intense emotional responses. This differentiation is specifically manifested in three aspects: High-engagement consumers can accurately identify official sponsors, fully endorse the brand motivations behind sponsorship activities, and channel their enthusiasm toward the sponsored enterprises. In contrast, low-engagement consumers develop only vague brand perceptions

and exhibit superficial feedback attitudes. To evaluate sponsorship effectiveness, companies should analyze consumer engagement patterns and determine exposure strategies for low-engagement audiences. To address this practical disparity, sponsoring enterprises should implement tiered communication strategies: repeatedly emphasizing technical expertise to core fan bases while explaining corporate emotional appeals to general audiences.

4.2. Cultural Values

Cultural values are a deep level of psychology [6]. This phenomenon significantly influences consumers' interpretation of sports sponsorship, deeply rooted in collectivist culture. Consumers with strong collectivist values prioritize the social contributions of sponsorships, fostering a consumption tendency that emphasizes group belonging. Conversely, individualistic consumers focus more on the self-expression and benefits demonstrated by sponsoring companies. Taking the SPL as an example, its ability to mobilize viewers' strong sense of regional cultural identity demonstrates how collective identity powerfully supports consumer behavior. Therefore, multinational sponsors should enhance their understanding of cultural misunderstandings, as Western markets favor heroic sponsorship narratives. For domestic markets, they need to adjust sponsorship strategies by emphasizing unity, cooperation, and community development.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, research on consumer feedback and purchase intent in sports sponsorship has conclusively demonstrated the complex interplay of psychological mechanisms including emotional engagement, social identification, and mental simulation. Through in-depth analysis, it is evident that successful sports sponsorship transcends mere brand exposure, requiring deeper emotional connections and value resonance. In the new era, sports sponsorship has evolved from a traditional "attention economy" to a "participation economy." By establishing robust evaluation systems, cultivating top-tier sports marketing professionals, and optimizing decision-making frameworks, sponsoring companies can achieve positive returns on investment and ensure sustainable growth.

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