

SPONSORSHIP AND SPORT:

A CASE ASSESSING CONSUMER ATTITUDES TO THE SPONSORSHIP OF A NATIONAL SPORTING EVENT.

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ABSTRACT

This case presents data arising from a study that addressed the work of Lee et al. [1] on the development and measurement of consumer attitudinal constructs towards sponsorship. The data provides opportunities to demonstrate how effective use of univariate and multivariate analytical tools, when harnessed with appropriate questionnaire instruments and measurement scales, can lead to the development of synthesising conceptual constructs that help the management of inherent complexity. The case may be used with several purposes in mind. At one level, the case material provides a rich picture of the environmental, analytical and decision complexity facing sponsorship managers working in fast changing environments. At another level, the case provides a rich source of data that allows and requires the development and practice of specific cognitive skills embracing the use of a variety of conceptual and analytical frameworks. Instructors can use this case to provide students with vicarious experience of instrument development and of how effective analysis can help marketing managers assess and distinguish consumer attitudes towards their sponsorship-linked activities. The case may also be used to demonstrate how the framing of analysis can lead to alternative interpretation of results.

INTRODUCTION

Jim Beam was completing his graduate studies in marketing with a research project that linked his interest in sport with his background in marketing and sponsorship. He had become aware of a recent study, where Lee et al [1] attempted to synthesise the work of previous researchers by developing a single comprehensive and coherent definition to build constructs of consumer attitude towards sponsorship as well as to develop scales to measure these constructs. Jim was aware that although they did not seek to conduct a full scale construct validation, the scales and constructs were empirically tested and validated across three global sporting events: the 1992 Winter Olympic Games and Summer Olympic Games (two multi-sport events) and the 1994 World Cup Soccer (a single-sport event). In sport, Jim's interest was rugby union, a sport played in more than one hundred countries world-wide, and whose major competition, the Rugby World Cup, was claimed to rank behind the Olympic Games and the soccer World Cup, in terms of TV viewers and ratings. Jim was hoping that his research would help provide further testing and validation of these constructs in the context of New Zealand's major national sporting event, the annually contested National Provincial Championship (NPC) of rugby. He hoped that his research would give greater insights about sponsorship, and how sponsorship effectiveness could be effected by identifying consumer attitudes that linked to favourable consumer behaviour.

THE NPC STUDY

The Questionnaire Instrument – Measurement Items & Scales

Jim modified the measurement items of Lee et al. to fit the NZ context of the NPC event. They are shown in Table 1. His respondents were asked to indicate the strength of their agreement with each of 20 statements. Responses were limited to a Likert scale ranging from "1" expressing the highest level or strength of agreement to "7" indicating the highest level or strength of disagreement. He decided that it would be appropriate to list the measurement items in a randomised, but alphabetical order, to minimise effects arising from, and/or to disguise the links between items sharing membership of Lee et al's constructs.

Table 1. Measurement Items for the NPC Study of Consumer Attitudes to Sponsorship

Measurement Items		1= Strongly Disagree 4 = Neither A or Disagree 7 = Strongly Agree
I tend to pay more attention to the advertising by official sponsors of the NPC	ATTENTION	
The NPC is an example of rugby sport at its best	BEST	
Official sponsors of the NPC should not try to commercialise it	COMMERCL	
I enjoy following the progress of the NPC	ENJOY	
I like the NPC because of the enthusiasm of players and spectators	ENTHUSIASM	
I am willing to pay somewhat higher prices for products of official sponsors of the NPC	HIGHER PRICES	
The NPC logo should not be used for commercial purposes	LOGO COMM	
When I purchase a product, I look for the NPC logo	LOGO IMPORTANCE	
The NPC is losing its original meaning due to excessive sponsorship	LOST IDENTITY	
Companies that sponsor the NPC are doing it mainly to increase their profits	PROFIT FOCUS	
Advertising an official sponsorship status indicates the company supports NPC just for profit	PROFIT MOTIVES	
I am more likely to buy products from companies that are official sponsors	PURCHASE	
The fact that a company is an official sponsor has no impact on my purchase decisions	PURCHASE IMPACT	
I would recommend products of official sponsors of the NPC to my friends	RECOMMEND	
Sponsorship of an event is not a good way of spending company promotional money	SPEND EFFECT	
The NPC symbolises the New Zealand spirit of competitiveness	SPIRIT	
Instead of spending money on NPC Sponsorship, company should improve product quality	SPONQUAL TRADEOFF	
My purchase decision is more influenced by company sponsorship of the NPC than advertising	SPONS INFLUENCE	
I consider myself a strong supporter of my NPC team	SUPPORT	
I feel that the NPC is too commercialised	TOO COMM	

The NPC Study - Construct Reliability & Validity

Following collection of questionnaires, Jim input the data to an Excel spreadsheet, which was imported into SPSS. Selective output from descriptive univariate and multivariate analysis of the NPC data is presented in Tables 2-4 in tabulated form.

Table 2. Consumer-related Attitudes to Sponsorship Activities – Random Order – Descriptive Stats

Measurement Items	Mean	SD
ATTENTION	4.26	1.90
BEST	2.97	1.84
COMMERCL	4.65	1.75
ENJOY	1.83	1.60
ENTHUSIASM	2.77	1.61
HIGHER PRICES	5.25	1.97
LOGO COMM	5.04	1.73
LOGO IMPORTANCE	5.05	1.96
LOST IDENTITY	4.82	1.79
PROFIT FOCUS	2.86	1.69
PROFIT MOTIVES	4.02	1.87
PURCHASE	3.75	1.88
PURCHASE IMPACT	4.82	2.06
RECOMMEND	4.23	1.85
SPEND EFFECT	5.34	1.88
SPIRIT	2.84	1.76
SPONQUAL TRADEOFF	4.47	1.82
SPONS INFLUENCE	4.30	1.92
SUPPORT	2.23	1.64
TOO COMM	5.10	1.69

Jim's intention in using multivariate analysis was to replicate the findings of Lee et al's (1997) study. His instructors and course-work made him aware of the need to conduct correlation and factor analysis to examine the validity and reliability of the measurement items especially as they may relate to the three consumer-related attitudinal constructs. It also involves testing their measurement scales for validity and reliability using Cronbach's α as a key statistic. Jim attempted to précis the approach to be followed in order to replicate the study. He realised that, first, he needed to consider how univariate analysis may shed light on the questionnaire items, and the strength of agreement that respondents exhibit with statements that comprise the items. Then, seeking to gain insight from a preliminary multivariate analysis, Jim embarked upon exploratory correlation analysis. See Table 3.

Table 3. Correlation Matrix Facilitating the Examination of the Underlying Structure of Consumer-related Attitudes to Sponsorship Activities

	ATTENTION	BEST	COMMERCL	ENJOY	ENTHUSIASM	HIGHERPRICES	LOGOCOMM	LOGOIMPORTANC	LOSTIDENTITY	PROFITFOCUS	PROFITMOTIVE	PURCHASE	PURCHASEIMPACT	RECOMMEND	SPENDEFFECT	SPIRIT	SPONSINFLUENCE	SPONSQUALTRADEOFF	SUPPORT	TOOCOMM
ATTENTION	-	.3	-.1	.0	.1	.2	.1	.5	.0	.0	.0	.6	.4	.5	-.1	.2	.4	.1	.1	-.1
BEST	.3	-	-.1	.4	.5	.3	.1	.2	-.2	-.1	-.1	.3	.2	.3	-.1	.7	.4	.1	.4	.0
COMMERCL	-.1	-.1	-	-.2	-.1	.0	.4	.0	.6	.4	.6	-.1	-.2	-.1	.4	-.2	.1	.2	-.2	.5
ENJOY	.0	.4	-.2	-	.5	.0	.0	.0	-.2	-.1	-.2	.2	.1	.2	-.1	.5	.0	-.1	.8	-.3
ENTHUSIASM	.1	.5	-.1	.5	-	.1	.2	.3	.0	-.1	.0	.3	.1	.3	-.1	.6	.3	.1	.5	-.2
HIGHERPRICES	.2	.3	.0	.0	.1	-	.0	.4	.0	-.2	.0	.4	.2	.4	-.1	.1	.5	-.1	.2	-.1
LOGOCOMM	.1	.1	.4	.0	.2	.0	-	.1	.6	.2	.3	.0	-.4	.0	.3	.0	.1	.4	.0	.5
LOGOIMPORTANCE	.5	.2	.0	.0	.3	.4	.1	-	.1	.2	.1	.7	.3	.6	.1	.1	.6	.3	.3	.0
LOSTIDENTITY	.0	-.2	.6	-.2	.0	.0	.6	.1	-	.4	.4	-.1	-.4	.0	.6	-.2	-.1	.4	-.1	.4
PROFITFOCUS	.0	-.1	.4	-.1	-.1	-.2	.2	.2	.4	-	.6	.1	-.1	.1	.2	.0	-.1	.3	.0	.3
PROFITMOTIVE	.0	-.1	.6	-.2	.0	.0	.3	.1	.4	.6	-	.0	-.1	.1	.2	-.2	.1	.3	-.1	.4
PURCHASE	.6	.3	-.1	.2	.3	.4	.0	.7	-.1	.1	.0	-	.5	.7	-.1	.4	.6	.3	.4	-.2
PURCHASEIMPACT	.4	.2	-.2	.1	.1	.2	-.4	.3	-.4	-.1	-.1	.5	-	.3	-.5	.1	.4	-.1	.2	-.3
RECOMMEND	.5	.3	-.1	.2	.3	.4	.0	.6	.0	.1	.1	.7	.3	-	.0	.2	.5	.1	.5	-.2
SPENDEFFECT	-.1	-.1	.4	-.1	-.1	-.1	.3	.1	.6	.2	.2	-.1	-.5	.0	-	-.1	-.1	.4	-.1	.3
SPIRIT	.2	.7	-.2	.5	.6	.1	.0	.1	-.2	.0	-.2	.4	.1	.2	-.1	-	.2	.0	.4	-.3
SPONSINFLUENCE	.4	.4	.1	.0	.3	.5	.1	.6	-.1	-.1	.1	.6	.4	.5	-.1	.2	-	.1	.2	.0
SPONSQUALTRADEOFF	.1	.1	.2	-.1	.1	-.1	.4	.3	.4	.3	.3	.3	-.1	.1	.4	.0	.1	-	.0	.3
SUPPORT	.1	.4	-.2	.8	.5	.2	.0	.3	-.1	.0	-.1	.4	.2	.5	-.1	.4	.2	.0	-	-.3
TOOCOMM	-.1	.0	.5	-.3	-.2	-.1	.5	.0	.4	.3	.4	-.2	-.3	-.2	.3	-.3	.0	.3	-.3	-

Jim was attempting to make sense of the correlation statistics when he realised that whilst the questionnaire order of the measurement items had been randomised to minimise response bias, that there was no reason why he should not seek to gather the items together in the same groups as had emerged from the Lee et al study. He thought that it would then be easier to check whether the accepted rule of thumb, suggesting that construct item validity requires inter-item correlations to be at least 0.30, had been met [2] [3]. He also recognised that he needed to check on the statistical significance of the correlations and how significance related to the size of sample. Jim knew that strong inter-item correlations within each of Lee et al's extant factor groups would add to his confidence about conducting factor analysis on his NPC data, which, in turn, would hopefully further validate the factorial coherence and validity of the items and scales used. He understood that the purpose of factor analysis was to examine linkages between items/variables in terms of their ability to "explain" variability in the data, when grouped as sub-sets of variables, that is, as factors. He had already felt comfortable with the groupings that emerged from Lee et al's theorising and previous studies. Now, he was hoping that his analysis would surface empirical grouping of items / variables, as "factors" that would again mirror the

theoretically developed construct items, and consequently provide an additional measure of face validity for the constructs. The factor loadings are shown in Table 4. They were derived from principal component factor analysis used with varimax rotation. Jim suddenly felt cold! Faced with a mass of statistics, he was not sure what to do! However, he remembered that interpretation of the factor loadings may be framed initially by focussing on variables with the larger factor loadings (over 0.40). He also realised that the randomised order of variables output from SPSS was not only distracting but unnecessary. He decided that the factor loadings output should be presented by size of loading grouped by order of factor accounting for the most variability. He wondered whether this would clarify matters and ease interpretation. In order to validate Lee et al's groupings he needed to show that the twenty items would divide into the three factor groups. Could he do this? Jim realised that whether or not Lee et al's factor groups were replicated, he still had access to data that would help answer the question of whether favourable intentions are related amongst themselves, as a factor construct group, and/or whether they are associated or correlated with other beliefs and feelings embedded in the other constructs. He had a sense that such a question may be better answered by framing the results of correlation analysis in an appropriate fashion. He looked back at his reframed correlation matrix, where variables had been clustered by factor group and realized that whereas the inter-item correlations within any group were giving one message, the correlations between the behavioural intent items and those variables in other groups were giving different signals.

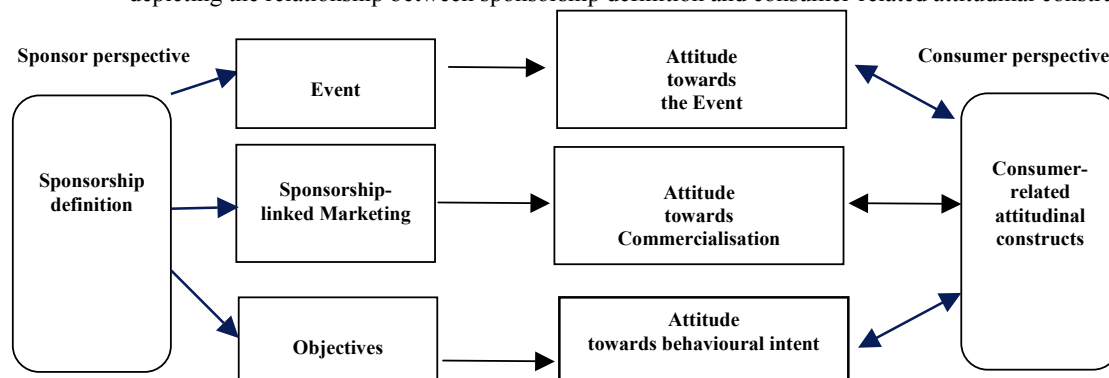
Jim could see that the factor groupings made sense in understanding the overall sponsorship system and its dimensions, but he wanted to know how consumer attitudes were linked to intent, and how he could foster attitudes that would lead to beneficial behavioural intents, and mitigate negative attitudes.

REFERENCES

- [1] Lee M, Sandler D, and Shani D. (1997), "Attitudinal constructs towards sponsorship Scale development using three sporting events", *International Marketing Review*, 14 (3), 124-133.

A full set of references and the Instructors Guide may be obtained from the authors

APPENDIX 1 - LEE, SANDLER AND SHANI'S (1997) CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: depicting the relationship between sponsorship definition and consumer-related attitudinal constructs



"Attitude towards the event" is the first construct. By definition, sponsorship involves a direct tie to an event. Consumers might have varied attitudes towards different events, which, in turn, would impact on the effectiveness of the sponsorship in achieving its objectives. The construct posits that consumer attitude towards an event represents an accumulation of individual experience with that event over time. This attitude could be positive or negative. The construct also relates to consumer enjoyment of the event, their support for it, and their belief that the event manifests high quality of performance.

"Attitude towards commercialization." Most sponsors leverage their association with events through sponsorship-linked marketing activities. This construct reflects how activities which affect consumer attitude towards events and sponsors.

"Attitude towards behavioural intent." Typically, the objectives of sponsors revolve around current and prospective customers (such as increasing corporate awareness or improving brand image). As such, successful sponsorship effort depends on consumers' inclination to act on, or be influenced by the sponsorship status or sponsors' arrangements, manifest in a consumer's willingness to purchase the sponsors' products and/or pay more attention to sponsors' promotional activities.

Table 4. Factors Facilitating the Examination of the Underlying Structure of Consumer-related Attitudes to Sponsorship

Measurement Items		Factor 1 - Attitude towards the event	Factor 2 - Attitude towards commercialisation	Factor 3 - Attitude towards behavioural intent
I tend to pay more attention to the advertising by official sponsors of the NPC	ATTENTION	0.01	0.00	0.72
The NPC is an example of rugby sport at its best	BEST	0.70	-0.01	0.27
Official sponsors of the NPC should not try to commercialise it	COMMERCL	-0.21	0.726	0.01
I enjoy following the progress of the NPC	ENJOY	0.82	-0.18	-0.01
I like the NPC because of the enthusiasm of players and spectators	ENTHUSIASM	0.76	-0.003	0.19
I am willing to pay somewhat higher prices for products of official sponsors of the NPC	HIGHERPRICES	-0.01	-0.01	0.63
When I purchase a product, I look for the NPC logo	LOGOIMPORTANCE	0.01	0.18	0.78
The NPC logo should not be used for commercial purposes	LOGOCOMM	0.20	0.70	-0.00
The NPC is losing its original meaning due to excessive sponsorship	LOSTIDENTITY	-0.01	0.84	-0.01
Advertising an official sponsorship status indicates the company supports NPC just for profit	PROFITMOTIVES	-0.19	0.63	0.12
Companies that sponsor the NPC are doing it mainly to increase their profits	PROFITFOCUS	-0.11	0.62	0.01
I am more likely to buy products from companies that are official sponsors	PURCHASE	0.24	0.01	0.86
The fact that a company is an official sponsor has no impact on my purchase decisions	PURCHASEIMPACT	-0.01	0.44	0.60
I would recommend products of official sponsors of the NPC to my friends	RECOMMEND	0.26	0.00	0.77
Sponsorship of an event is not a good way of spending company promotional money	SPENDEFFECT	-0.00	0.64	-0.00
Instead of spending money on NPC Sponsorship, company should improve product quality	SPONQUALTRADEOFF	0.13	0.60	0.15
My purchase decision is more influenced by company sponsorship of the NPC than advertising	SPONSINFLUENCE	0.16	0.01	0.77
The NPC symbolises the New Zealand spirit of competitiveness	SPIRIT	0.78	-0.11	0.13
I consider myself a strong supporter of my NPC team	SUPPORT	0.74	-0.10	0.24
I feel that the NPC is too commercialised	TOOCOMM	-0.24	0.65	-0.01
% of Variance Explained -		53.2%	19.3%	17.5%
			16.3%	

Notes: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis, Kaiser Normalization and Varimax rotation with convergence in 5 iterations. Interpretation of the final rotated factors focuses on the larger factor loadings over 0.40 (shaded areas)