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Using sport marketing to reach consumers

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Abstract

Sport marketing, especially sponsorship is of great importance since it is a part of a promotional mix that supports the interest of the company by associating it with a specific player, team or event. Moreover, sponsorship may be the major or only marketing effort for some companies whereby it is important to consider it as a powerful option when deciding upon marketing tools. The purpose of this thesis is therefore to provide a better understanding of sport marketing with great focus on sport sponsorship. In order to reach this purpose, the study provide a better understanding of sport marketing mix and a sport sponsorship as a most effective and most used tool.

Theoretical part of the study is based on existing academic publications about sport marketing mix, promotion of sport marketing and sports sponsorship. This study was investigated by conducting a various research strategies in the course of compiling a final research document. These strategies included sending out by electronic way questionnaires to a wide number of random people in order to get as much different opinions is possible. The analysis of the data was performed through quantitative data analysis methods.

The research provided the framework to investigate the effect of sponsorship awareness, corporate image and intention to purchase sponsor products. The main findings of the research are that sport sponsorship has a positive effect on sponsorship awareness and on corporate image. However, no significant positive effect was found of sport sponsorship on customer intention to purchase sponsor product.

Abstrato

No Marketing desportivo, o patrocínio assume um papel de extrema importância, uma vez que é uma parte de um "mix" promocional que suporta o interesse da empresa em associar-se a um determinado clube, jogador ou evento. Além disso, o patrocínio pode ser o maior ou o único esforço de marketing para algumas empresas, pelo que é ainda mais importante considerá-lo como uma forte opção ao decidir sobre ferramentas de marketing. O objetivo deste trabalho é, portanto, proporcionar um melhor entendimento do marketing desportivo, com grande foco no patrocínio desportivo. Para alcançar este objetivo, o trabalho procura explanar uma melhor compreensão sobre o marketing desportivo e o patrocínio desportivo como a ferramenta mais usada e mais eficaz.

A parte teórica do trabalho é baseada em publicações académicas existentes sobre marketing desportivo, promoções de marketing desportivo e patrocínios desportivos. Este estudo foi feito através da realização de várias estratégias de pesquisa com o propósito da elaboração de um documento final de pesquisa. Estas estratégias incluíram o envio de questionários eletrónicos para um grande número de pessoas aleatórias, a fim de obter o máximo possível de respostas diferentes. A análise dos dados foi realizada através de métodos de análise de dados quantitativos.

A pesquisa forneceu a estrutura para o estudo do efeito da perceção do patrocínio, a imagem corporativa e a intenção de comprar produtos de patrocinadores.

As principais conclusões do estudo provam que o patrocínio desportivo esta positivamente correlacionado com a perceção do cliente sobre o respetivo patrocínio e na imagem da empresa. No entanto, nenhum efeito positivo significativo foi encontrado sobre a intenção de compra de produtos do patrocinador pelo cliente.

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INDEX

Sumário Executivo

A indústria do desporto é um dos setores em maior expansão. Todos nós somos testemunhas das transferências inacreditáveis que decorrem nos dias de hoje no mundo do futebol e de todas as ações promovidas pelas organizações desportivas com o propósito de serem bem sucedidas e reconhecidas. A chegada de investidores oriundos do Oriente aos grandes clubes europeus de futebol e o gasto de quantias astronómicas de dinheiro tornaram-se uma tendência nos últimos anos. Com todos aqueles "jogadores" em volta, o marketing de desporto está a ficar saturado e as empresas e marcas estão a procurar outras maneiras criativas e inovadoras de chegar aos seus consumidores. Também, responsáveis de marketing enfrentam cada vez mais dificuldades ao tentar implementar novas estratégias em novos mercados por causa de todas as diferenças socias e culturais entre pessoas em todo o mundo. O principal problema das empresas atualmente consiste em encontrar algo único, original e diferente que consiga atrair a atenção do consumidor numa área já cheia de inovações. Isto representa um grande desafio para os "marketers" que têm de ter em atenção cada passo que dão se quiserem ser bem sucedidos e aceites pelo público alvo. Com o objetivo de valorizar o seu negócio muitas empresas recentemente envolveram-se em patrocínio do desporto por inúmeros objetivos. O patrocínio do desporto tem ganho quota de mercado nos gastos gerais de marketing tendo nos últimos anos alcançado a liderança como a ferramenta mais utilizada.

A tese estabelece assim, uma visão geral do marketing do desporto com uma profunda explicação do patrocínio desportivo como uma ferramenta e o efeito que o patrocínio tem sobre o cliente (o reconhecimento do patrocinador e a intenção de comprar produtos do patrocinador).

A definição de marketing desportivo é a aplicação de conceitos de marketing a produtos e serviços de desporto e o marketing de produtos não relacionados com desporto a uma associação ao desporto (C.T. Smith.2008).

O patrocínio é uma forma de promoção onde os objetivos devem ligar-se ao mais amplo processo de planeamento promocional e seus objetivos. Estes objetivos servem para atingir os mais altos objetivos de marketing que por sua vez originam os objetivos da organização. Objetivos corporativos relacionados, objetivos de marketing, objetivos de meios de comunicação e objetivos pessoais são quatro objetivos comuns no processo de patrocínio do desporto. Cada um destes objetivos inclui um certo número de sub-objetivos que são

explicados detalhadamente na revisão da tese. Depois de definidos os objetivos as empresas precisam de decidir qual modalidade desportiva irão patrocinar. Sendo esta uma escolha adequada à marca da empresa, relacionando-se com os seus atributos, benefícios ou com a sua imagem numa forma natural. A escolha deste patrocínio desportivo deve estar estreitamente relacionado com os interesses do mercado-alvo. A última etapa do programa de patrocínio desportivo é o cálculo da eficácia do mesmo. Nesta altura, as empresas devem medir o retorno do programa investido.

Além disso, foi realizada uma pesquisa, um questionário foi enviado por via eletrónica para uma grande número de pessoas aleatórias na finalidade de obter o máximo possível de opiniões diferentes. As unidades de análise, foram pessoas da Croácia, que responderam com vista a dois objetivos. Classificarem a eficácia do patrocínio desportivo na decisão de compra e descobrir a opinião dos mesmos em relação ao patrocínio desportivo no seu todo.

Após os resultados demográficos serem apresentados, os resultados dos dados analisados, mostram-nos o efeito do patrocínio desportivo no reconhecimento da marca. Tabelas de tabulação cruzada irão nos fornecer a informação sobre a inter-relação entre, o reconhecimento da marca, a idade do entrevistado e o posicionamento do patrocinador. Os resultados mostram-nos que a maioria dos entrevistados sabe quem é o patrocinador do seu desporto/clube preferido e dizem-nos que a colocação do patrocinador é muito importante em relação à perceção da marca.

Além disso, o efeito do patrocínio na intenção de compra de produtos de patrocinadores foi investigado. Aqui a pesquisa quis mostrar se o "amor" por um clube/jogador/desporto pode afetar a sua decisão de comprar um produto de um patrocinador do seu clube/jogador/desporto favorito. Esta é a razão porque as empresas usam clubes/jogadores como uma ferramenta para atrair clientes, pois que melhor maneira de comprar um produto do que o relacionar com o clube/jogador favorito?

Os resultados que esta pesquisa fornece não são muito satisfatórios, se olharmos do ponto de vista das empresas patrocinadoras. Os resultados ainda nos mostram que o patrocínio nao parece ter qualquer efeito na decisão final de compra dos productos do patrocinador e por isso mesmo o patrocínio nao tem sentido e nao traz ao patrocinador fundos adicionais. Há algumas razões que nos explicam esta situação e uma delas é a má situação da indústria do desporto croata. Visto que a maioria dos entrevistados são cidadãos croatas deve-se ter em consideração esta razão como a causa principal deste mesmo resultado.

Na última parte do questionário, os entrevistados deram a sua opinião sobre as empresas investigadas, aí os resultados mostraram-nos uma opinião extremamente positiva em relação ao patrocínio desportivo em geral e aos seus respetivos patrocinadores. Os entrevistados têm uma opinião positiva sobre as marcas patrocinadoras e a sua maioria apoia as empresas patrocinadoras do seu clube/jogador preferido.

Olhando para estes resultados, podemos ver que o patrocínio desportivo é um método bastante eficaz no que respeita à notoriedade da marca e da sua imagem. No entanto, em relação ao efeito do patrocínio na intenção do cliente comprar produtos da marca do patrocinador, podemos ver uma queda significativa.

1. Background

Sport, the so-called "first secondary thing in every man life" has a universal reach. It is a type of entertainment that can be accessed and understood by everyone. Most importantly, sport connects people emotionally. Marketers have been using this emotional connection to market their brands for over a 100 years. Brands are linked with sports to get better attention from potential customers. With the growth of sport marketing expenditures, and partly as a result of it, sport has developed from just a way for people to spend their free time, into an enormous industry. It has been claimed that as sport is ultimately a way for all people to satisfy a variety of deep human needs, it provides an attracting means for international corporations to reach wide audiences. In addition to its commercial potential, sport is a tempting target for marketing because it is inextricably part of people's lives and the level of emotion is high when it comes to people's relationship with sport. Therefore, by linking their product to a well-known athlete or team by the means of sports marketing, companies aim to transfer associations from the sponsored property to their own brand. It is hoped that the goodwill that people feel toward the sports property will rub off on firms' brands leading to favorable attitudinal change.

1.1. Extent of sport marketing

Roman patriarchs often sponsored gladiator games for political reasons (Sandler and Shani 1993). The public administration that followed support of such gladiator games helped to protect the fortunes of the sponsoring families and increase their popularity. The games were initially stage a way of celebrating military triumphs, however officials soon realized that they could be useful to gain popularity. In 65 BC Caesar put together a massive "troop" to stage the biggest gladiatorial games ever, in memory of his recently deceased father. The size of the enormous troop scared political leaders and they agreed on legislation against the formation of large groups. Political candidates were forbidden from sponsoring such events (Sandler and Shani 1993). This example clearly defines the sport marketing, which is the minimum cost for the most benefits, in order to get notoriety and to have a positive impact on the population so as to reach a brand recall.

Sport marketing as it is today, first came in the 1870s in the form of Tobacco cards that featured the baseball players of that era. In 1939 for the first time, a major Baseball League match was broadcasted on television that helped Babe Ruth to become the first 6-figure

athlete in the world of professional sport. The actual and considerable growth in sports marketing was in 1971, when the US government banned cigarette advertising on TV and radio. Sports marketing, particularly sponsorship of auto racing and tennis, presented a means of keeping cigarette brand names in front of the spectators and television viewers through broadcasted coverage of sponsored events (Shannon 1999).

Sponsorship has gotten more and more important over the last years. In 1985, worldwide investment in sponsorship was estimated at more than US $ 3.6 billion, in 2002 US $ 24 billion, 2006 US $ 33.7 billion and in year 2013 to $53.3 billion (IEG, 2002.2006.2013.). However, sports sponsorship dominates the sponsorship activities and it amounts to 67% of the total spending of sponsorship companies (Mullin, Hardy and Sutton 2000). This is explained by the attraction and the impact that sports have on the audience (Copeland, 1996). Augmented attention put on sports has continued this focus of sport as big business. With payrolls in multimillion dollar range newer and more extravagant facilities, as well as the cost of sports franchises escalating up to hundreds of millions of dollars sport is undoubtedly a true business venture (Shannon 1999).

1.2. Need for Sports' Marketing

The sports fan pays a price for the right to enjoy an emotional experience with others. The fan goes to the game to be with others to share the experience in this social exchange. More broadly speaking, unlike most other retail settings, large crowds have positive psychological effects. Consumers' awareness level is lowered and perceived surroundings are not scrutinized to the extent, by the rigorous intellectual filter. Positive emotional affections are associated with everything that is perceived in the environment. These settings provide a unique opportunity for marketer to 'sell' its marketing mix.

Sponsorship is, among all the marketing mix available – including new media – probably the best medium to reach people's emotion and interest. Brands can build their own equity and awareness by leveraging off the equity of sports events and teams. Sponsoring sports allows brands to create activation campaigns that allow consumers to take part and interact with the brand, further increasing that emotional connection. Sponsorship activation in this way is a more powerful way of communicating than a passive message in, for example, a TV commercial. It enables stronger, more measurable marketing effectiveness.

Red Bull is one great example of a brand successfully marketing through sports. As well as sponsoring sports and tapping into some of the most important attributes of successful sports people – fast reactions, concentration and endurance – Red Bull has also created new unique sports properties ostensibly to sell more of its product. Another example for representing the concept of marketing through sports would be the case of the Spanish bank, BBVA Bancomer, and the Spanish Football league, or Turkish Airlines who established a well-planned sports marketing strategy through several sports categories with highly reputed teams, celebrity players and sport associations including FC Barcelona, top star NBA player Kobe Bryant, Turkish Top Football Teams, Turkey National Football Team and others. All this stands to show the broad area of opportunities for companies to position themselves through sports marketing and thus highlighting the importance of that field.

1.3.   Definition of Sports' Marketing

Today's consumers have higher expectations than ever before. Dramatic improvements in media, communication and transport have made the world's economy more connected. Products developed in one country have become increasingly attractive in other parts of the world. However, entering markets in other parts of the world is not an easy task. Entrants face many different challenges as they try to develop their brand profile. This is especially evident in mature markets like European and US markets. These markets have a number of long established brands. The awareness and brand loyalty that exists for established brands form a barrier to entry for new organizations.

Sports' marketing is defined by the application of marketing concepts to sports products and services and the marketing of non-sport products through an association to sport (C.T. Smith. 2008). Sports' marketing, therefore, has two key features. First, it is the application of general marketing practices to sport-related products and services. Second, it is the marketing of other consumer and industrial products or services through sport. Like any form of marketing, sports marketing seeks to fulfill the needs and wants of consumers. It achieves this by providing sports services and sport-related products to consumers. However, sports' marketing is unlike conventional marketing in that it also has the ability to encourage the consumption of non-sport products and services by association. It is important to understand that sports' marketing means the marketing of sport as well as the use of sport as a tool to

market other products and services (C.T.Smith. 2008). In other words, sports' marketing involves the marketing of sport and marketing through sport. For example, the marketing of sports products and services directly to sports consumers could include sporting equipment, professional competitions, sports events and local clubs. Other simple examples include team advertising, designing a publicity stunt to promote an athlete, selling season tickets, and developing licensed apparel for sale. In contrast, marketing through sport happens when a non-sport product is marketed through an association to sport. Some examples could include a professional athlete endorsing a breakfast cereal, a corporation sponsoring a sport event, or even a beer company arranging to have exclusive rights to provide beer at a sport venue or event (C.T.Smith. 2008).

2. Literature review

The purpose of this literature review is to provide an overview of the literature regarding the topics of sports' marketing mix and sports' sponsorship as the most used sports' marketing mix tool. The chapter is divided into two parts. Firstly, sports' marketing mix is discussed in general as a marketing communications instrument. Secondly, sports' sponsorship as the biggest and most used tool is detailed explained with its objectives, measurements and a conceptual framework is provided.
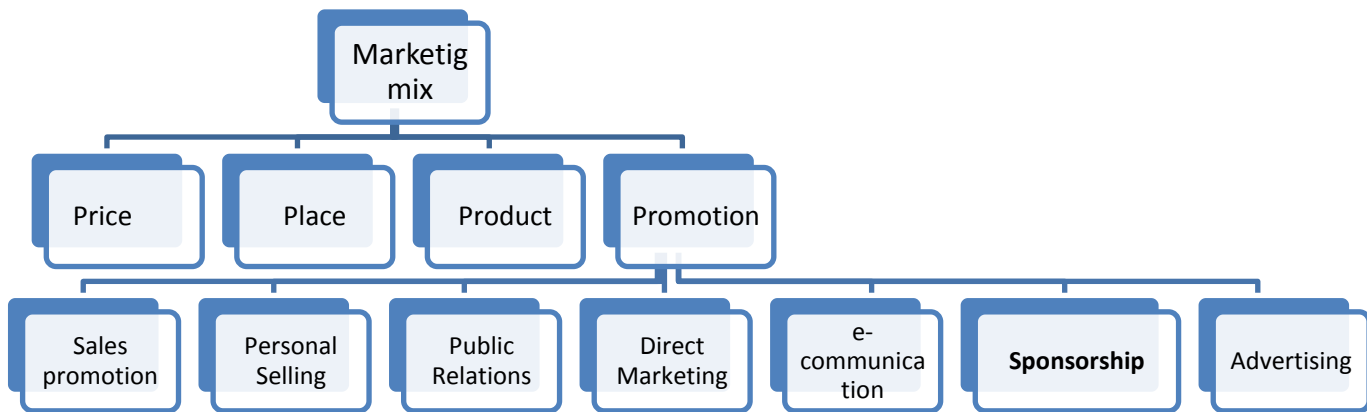
2.1. The Sports' marketing mix

Schwarz and Hunter (2008) say that the heart of the sports market is the sports marketing mix. Central to understanding of the sports marketing mix are three areas of marketing analysis – the consumer, the company, and the competition. These areas must be understood so that the marketing mix can be controlled, coordinated, and implemented within the overall marketing effort.

When components of a sports market are understood the next step is the elements of the marketing mix. Randall (2001) defines the marketing mix as "the mixture of the marketing variables which we can control, and more precisely the amount of which we choose for a particular situation". Marketing mix has come to be known as the 4Ps, introduced by McCarthy in 1975. The 4Ps comprise product, price, place, and promotion. Promotion translates to the communications of the firm to its different stakeholders, marketing communications or communications mix, whose implicit purpose is "the stimulation of market demand" (Meenaghan, 1983).

Promotion has typically been further divided into advertising, public relations, sales promotions and personal selling (Pickton& Broderick, 2001). Sponsorship has classically been included under the general heading of public relations (Randall, 2001) but more current texts place it under promotion as its own entity alongside the traditional as well as other contemporary elements of the communications mix (De Pelsmacker, 2007, Kitchen & De Pelsmacker, 2004).

Figure 1. : Sport Marketing mix

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   │ Price  │ │ Place  │ │ Product │ │ Promotion │
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| Sales promotion | Personal Selling | Public Relations | Direct Marketing | e-communication | **Sponsorship** | Advertising |

Source: Adapted from De Pelsmacker (2007) and Kitchen & De Pelsmacker (2004)

2.2. Promotion of Sports Marketing

According to C.T.Smith (2008), in sports marketing the word promotion covers a range of interrelated activities. All of these activities are designed to attract attention, stimulate the interest and awareness of consumers and encourage them to purchase a sports product. Promotion is about communicating with and educating consumers. Promotion involves all forms of communication with consumers. It is best-seen as the way that sports marketers communicate with consumers to inform, persuade and remind them about a product. The aim of promotion is to encourage consumers to develop a favorable opinion about a sports product which is aligned to a predetermined positioning strategy, and then to stimulate consumers to try the sports product.

There are a number of approaches to promotion that are open to organizations. Mainly they are divided into two groups, above-the-line promotion and below-the-line promotion. Terms 'Above The Line' and 'Below The Line' came into existence way back in 1954 with the company Proctor and Gamble paying their advertising agencies a different rate and separately from the agencies who took on the other promotional activities (J.Baker 2003).

Above-the-line promotions use mass media methods. This type of promotion focuses on advertising to a large audience. It includes print, online media, television and cinema advertising. Above-the-line activities include adverts in the press. Companies also produce online banner advertisements, place advertisements on billboards and use their websites to meet the needs of their consumers. It should be mentioned that Above-the-line promotion

over the years is less used tool since it is very difficult to tailor a promotion to a specific group of consumers through above-the-line promotions. This is because it is viewed by a mass audience with different tastes and needs. Above-the-line promotion is also very expensive.

Below-the-line methods are very specific, memorable activities focused on targeted groups of consumers. They are under the control of the organization. Companies use these techniques to target clearly defined consumer groups rather than a mass audience like its above-the-line activity. Companies also support a variety of environmental issues, shown through below-the-line promotions. Partnership with charity and social responsible organizations companies show their social responsible side and create social cohesion through inspiring people to do social responsible actions as for example plant and love trees. Environmental issues are especially high on the public agenda. Partnerships like these are an important way for companies to demonstrate its commitment to supporting public concerns. These channels include blogs and social networking sites such as Facebook. Companies also have its own YouTube channel to emphasize its brand presence amongst target consumers. This enables them to develop CRM, allowing companies to collect data from customers and use it in a variety of ways for interaction. It also helps to create the basis for viral marketing. This is when messages are so widely received that they are passed on either electronically or by word of mouth to other customers.

The purpose of these activities has been to develop the brand by creating awareness and building a brand profile.

Below-the-line methods include:

- **Sponsorship**

- Sales promotions

- Public relations

- Personal selling

- Direct marketing

Tools that have most significant role in sports promotion are advertising and sponsorship. In decades past, advertising executives could buy vast quantities of commercial airtime on network television and bombard viewers with ads with the clear goal– whoever spent more, won. According to Forbes magazine (2013) advertising nowadays starts to be an old form of communication and it is a well-known promotional tool, and in recent time consumers have been over-saturated with advertisement both on television and on the print media and majority cannot recall most of the commercials they come across. Consumers also watch less live television and the selection of viewing options has increased exponentially, brands are forced to shift advertising spend to find new ways of engaging potential customers and clients. Forbes magazine (2013) stated also that as advertising and marketing strategy has evolved over the last 30 years, no one tactic that companies and organizations use to reach consumers has undergone more transformation than sponsorship. Sponsorship has gone from in many ways a mere novelty in which brands paid to be associated with "cool" properties in sports, arts, and entertainment, to arguably the most important weapon in the more than $100 billion world of advertising (Forbes,2013.). Sponsorships have helped a lot of companies to raise their profile amongst key target markets. Traditional press releases work alongside newer forms of marketing. Sponsorship involves positioning and matching brands together. It develops a relationship that is both comfortable and positive for both businesses.

As indicated, the popularity of sponsorship as a marketing communications tool has been constantly increasing. Compared to other instruments of marketing communications, a North American study (IEG, 2013) reports that the growth rate of sponsorship has been ahead of the pace experienced by advertising and sales promotion in most years during the past two decades and a similar trend is also likely to continue. For instance, in 2012 the average annual growth rate of sponsorship spending in North America was 4.4%; the same rates for advertising and sales promotion were only 3.5% and 3.2%. For 2013 IEG projected average annual growth rate of sponsorship of 5.5% and for advertising and sale promotion 2.6% respectively 3.0%.

2.3. Sport Sponsorship

Sponsorship can be defined as a corporate or commercial method of communication implemented by an organization which aims at establishing - among different target publics - a privileged link between the institution, its brands or products, and a vehicle (often sporty or cultural) in return of support provided to this vehicle The sporting organization can then exploit this link to achieve corporate or marketing objectives (Pham, 1992).

Meenaghan(1991) states that the typical progression of a sponsoring firm is illustrated by the stages of sponsorship goals and participation. The first level is simply a donor giving money to the sponsor to gain attention without more sophisticated goals and sponsor-objective selection criteria. In the next level, the sponsor develops more specific goals and becomes more interested in receiving a return on investment. On the third level, the firm assumes the role of an 'impressario', energetically involved in controlling activities (Bronn, 2002). As firms move up the progression, their sponsorship goal setting, coordination and effect measurements should allow increasing sophistication of incorporating sponsorship within their marketing strategies.

Pope (1998) is more specific about exactly what can be sponsored and about the various types of objectives sponsorship can achieve in his definition. He defines sponsorship as "the provision of resources (money, people, equipment) by an organization (the sponsor) directly to an individual, authority or body (the sponsee), to enable the latter to pursue some activity in return for benefits contemplated in terms of the sponsor's promotion strategy, and which can be expressed in terms of corporate, marketing or media objectives." In his definition, Pope eludes to the fact that both parties benefit from a sponsorship. The idea of creating mutually beneficial relationships has become a major theme in sports marketing thought. Authorities in the industry continuously stress the importance of creating a "win-win" situation for sponsor and sponsee.

2.3.1. Objectives of Sports Sponsorship

When designing a sponsorship program the first stage is to carefully outline the sponsorship objectives (Meenaghan. 1991, Olkkonen. 1999, Shank. 1999). Due to the different range of definitions and classifications of sponsorship, the concept of sponsorship also offers several objectives which can be utilized in different kinds of situations (Olkkonen. 1999). Olkkonen (1999) and Shank (1999) state that sponsorship is one form of promotion where the sponsorship objectives should be linked to the broader promotional planning process and its objectives. These objectives serve in order to achieve the higher marketing goals which in turn originate from the objectives of the organization.

Meenaghan (1991) states also that a company has an extensive variety of audience with whom it wishes to communicate, such as the internal public, the key decision-makers and the company's target markets. Meenaghan also explains that sponsorship play major roles in encouraging staff pride, rewarding effort and in communicating the values of the organization to its staff. In addition, Shank (1999) and Meenaghan (1991) state that when considering the key decision-makers, sponsorship also has the ability to create goodwill among opinion-formers and decision-makers as sponsorship most commonly is built around a particular event and has moreover the ability to offer corporate hospitality to the guests of the occurrence.

As sponsorship is a part of the promotional mix, the sponsorship objectives must be linked to the objectives of the promotional planning process. The promotional objectives help to accomplish the marketing goals, which in turn must originate from the organizational goals. Sponsorship objectives can be divided into two groups, namely direct or indirect objectives. Direct sponsorship objectives pay attention to sales increase and have a short term influence on customer attitude. Indirect sponsorship objectives are, on the other hand, objectives that ultimately result in the desired goal of increasing sales, such as for example to meet competition, build relations, create awareness, improve the image, as well as to get in touch with new target markets.(Shank, 1999)

Pope (1998) and Dolphin (2003) state that media objectives, corporate objectives, marketing objectives and personal objectives are four broad categories of sponsorship objectives that generally are acknowledged and accepted in the literature of sport marketing.

Table 1: Sponsorship objectives

Corporate objectives	Marketing objectives	Media objectives	Personal objectives
Public awareness	Business relations	Generate visibility	Management interest
Public perception	Reach target market	Generate publicity	
Corporate image	Brand positioning	Enhance ad campaign	
Community involvement	Increase sales	Avoid clutter	
Financial relations	Sampling	Target specificity	
Government relations			
Client entertainment			
Employee relations			
Competition			

Source: Adapted from Pope (1998)

The most basic objective with sponsorship is to generate awareness. Enhancing awareness and recognition of the brand among customers often is the main objectives of sponsorship (Dolphin 2003, Meenaghan 1991). Firms usual confirm their market leadership or increase awareness of their new products with the help of sponsorship. According to Olkkonen (1999), sponsorship may be of particular value in the development of brand awareness whereas its direct impact on purchase intention may be more modest. Brand awareness can be compared with a path from which a customer must pass in a chronological order, from unawareness to purchase. The end goal of creating awareness is to create a positive atmosphere around the audience and the sponsoring company so later companies can easily locate prospective consumers. Great example is the London Olympics 2012 where Nike pulled off one of their most successful marketing strategies. Rivals Adidas were one of the official sponsors of the games but even so Nike launched their "find greatness" campaign through Twitter. Many giant billboards featuring images of people involved in sports with the words 'find greatness' were placed around London. Adidas had a similar campaign featuring Team GB Athletes on billboards with the words "take the stage". Data from Social baker's Cheer Meter revealed that between 27th of July to 2nd August there were over 16,000 tweets associating the keyword Olympic with Nike while Adidas received 9,295 tweets in the same period. Adidas gained over 80,000 new Facebook fans during the Olympics compared to more than 166,000 for Nike.

Public perception of a company is an important objective for companies' sponsorship involvement. A company can take advantage of the specific personality attributes of that sponsorship in order to achieve a desired image (Meenaghan, 1983). Company can benefit from image association by connecting itself to a specific product or event like currently Nissan and PlayStation are doing with Champions League. Sponsored action can help to change consumers' perception on companies profile or it can also help to reinforce companies' image.

Shank (1999) claims that it is important to build relationships with the community when sponsoring a sporting event. To position the company, to be respected and have well-known publicity, is one more objective companies have with their sports sponsorship involvement. Through sponsorship, the company shows its consciousness for local concern in order to influence potential customers, as well as local social and governmental agencies. Very often we can see companies involved in charity services helping community with time, material, resources and finance donations in order to improve their living.

The opportunity to host clients at an event sometimes pays for the entire sponsorship. Hospitality is used by firms to encourage their clients to increase the product utilization and consumption, but also to renew or sign new agreements. It is moreover used to reward the company's personnel. The firm gains exclusive opportunities that most often are unavailable in the marketplace, such as hard to obtain tickets in prime locations for sports events that, as a result, are distributed among their clients. Hospitality is very common in European sponsorship programs and makes up as much as 25 percent of the corporate partner expenditure.

The era of the mass audience is gone. Instead, companies are narrowcasting, tailoring specific messages to small, targeted segments. Sponsorship is an effective vehicle for this type of individualized communication. Opportunities are divisible by age, income, geography and gender. They segment markets along geographic, ethnic, psychographic and demographic lines. Sponsorship allows companies to hone in on a niche market without any waste.

The main aim of marketing objective with sports sponsorship is to reach target markets. Sports sponsorship has the capacity to reach people that share a mutual interest sports. The opportunities for sponsors are to target disabled people and women that participate in sports (Shank. 1999).

Abratt, Clayton and Pitt (1987) underline the fact that "an increase of sale is always the ultimate objective of a sponsoring company". However, Meenaghan (1991) derives from these statements and states that the increase of sales is not a major short term objective. As for Olkkonen (1999) and Shank (1999), they accept the theory according to which the increase of sales is a part of the reached objectives, but points out that it is only a secondary aim by far leaded by the desire of awareness increase and image improvement. If we look in general, increase of sale is the most used objective for sport sponsorship programs, since organizations certainly would not spend money to lend their names to stadiums or events if they did not know that they would get something in return for their investment. Meenaghan (1983) claims that a sponsorship can be extended to most elements of the marketing communication mix, with the ability to assist the movement of the buyer towards the point of an actual sale. Sponsorship, therefore, has an important role when purchasing is seen as a multi-stage, multi-influence activity, in the same way as it may influence sales in a more direct manner. Regardless of the various sponsorship objectives, organizations must evaluate how the sponsorship will help them achieve their unique marketing objectives, whereby increased sales of the sponsorship activity is the most comprehensible method for the measurement (Olkkonen. 1999: Shank. 1999). Meenaghan (1983) additionally state that the use of sponsorship in order to create public awareness of the company, further may assist the prospecting and selling tasks of the sales force.

The achievement of media coverage is also an important objective for companies who are involved in sponsorship. This objective is especially of great importance in the tobacco and drinks industry since they use sponsorship as an access to media cover. Moreover, the coverage of an event is extremely important, particularly for companies who consider brand awareness and company awareness as the main reason for entering into the sponsorship (Meenaghan. 1983). Sponsorship also provides various opportunities of creating publicity in the news media. World-wide events such as major golf, football and tennis tournaments supply the platform for global media coverage. The publicity opportunities of a sponsorship can promote a superior awareness shift.

Sponsorship has the capacity of delivering personal satisfaction that no other marketing communication tool can offer. It has been shown that the delivery of personal satisfaction is of significant importance (Meenaghan, 1983). Meenaghan (1983) found also that among Irish sponsors, one-third of the decision-makers had strong personal interest, or participated in the sponsored event.

For the consumer, it is hard to avoid seeing for example sports team logo since those are present in media and in sports event. However, consumers react differently to sports team logo than to company advertisement. Sports team logo subconsciously reminds and creates feelings. With these subconscious, positive feelings and memories, sponsors try to affect consumer's image and feelings of their company brand and image of their product (Meenaghan. 1991).

2.3.2. Selecting a specific sports sponsorship

Fact that sponsorship today involves huge sum of money (Meenaghan. 1999) it is of high importance for companies to utilize some kind of systematic selection process in order to find a right partner with which to establish a functioning relationship. Selecting an appropriate choice is about matching the brand to a choice that is related to the brand's attributes, benefits, or image in a natural way. Choice of sports sponsorship should be closely related to the interests of the target market.

Shank (1999) states that in order to understand the evaluation and selection of sponsorship opportunities, a conceptual model of the corporate decision making-process of sports sponsorship acquisition is commonly used by sponsoring companies. When specific firms want to enter in sport sponsorship activities, first they must decide whether to sponsor a sport, league or a team, an athlete or an event (Shank. 1999).

Sport, league – Companies can further choose to sponsor sports or leagues in addition to sponsoring teams. General Motors has for example chosen to sponsor the WNBA, with the advantage that few companies are sponsoring women's sports or leagues, and that those that do so create a unique position in order to differentiate themselves. Thus, leagues have lately been trying to organize themselves in order to be attractive to sponsors. (Shank. 1999)

Team - Companies can also start their activities on teams at any level of competition, on professional, University, high school or small league teams.

Athlete - Some athletes have considerable credibility with the target market. Thus, they can create a direct association between themselves and the sponsor or its brand. Also, many companies may also use individual athletes in their promotion only to boast.

Event –Events are the athletic platform most commonly associated with sports marketing. Since events as an athletic platform provide advantages as increasing awareness and enhance the image of the sponsor. Moreover, an event often allows the consumer a forum to purchase the products. Disadvantages, like other athletic platforms, are although the sponsorship clutter, sponsors competing with other sponsors of the attention of the target audience. A way to go beyond this problem is thus to become the official sponsor (the title sponsor) of an event. (Shank. 1999)

When an appropriate platform is selected, more specific selection is needed. Companies must be very careful by choosing the right platform for the right company. Shank (1999) presented few questions for selecting a sponsorship:

- Does the sponsorship offer the correct positioning?
- Does the sponsorship provide a connection to the brand?
- Is the sponsorship difficult for competitors to imitate?
- Does the sponsorship reach the right audience?
- Does the sponsorship appeal to the target lifestyle, personality, and values?
- In what ways does the sponsorship merge into current corporate goals and strategies?
- Can the sponsorship be used for hospitality to embrace important potential and current customers?
- Can employees be involved in the sponsorship?
- How will the sponsorship effectiveness be evaluated?
- Is the sponsorship affordable?
- How easy will it be to plan the sponsorship annually?
- Is the sponsorship a complement to the current promotion mix?

According to Meenaghan (1983) once the decisions regarding the choice of sponsorship and the specific athletic platform is made, a marketer should carefully consider the choices of sponsorship before moving on. Meenaghan (1983) has presented 14 criteria questions that are in most of the cases part of the selection process when companies select a specific sponsorship.

- The ability to fulfill objectives
- Image association potential of the particular sponsorship
- Sponsorship Choice and Company/Product Compatibility
- Media Coverage Potential
- The Funding Requirement
- Target Audience Coverage
- The Opportunities for Guest Hospitality
- Executive Preference
- Geographical Coverage of the defined Audience
- Staff Knowledge of the Proposed Sponsorship
- Sponsorship type
- Solus Position
- The Possibility for Adverse Publicity
- The Organization of the Sponsored Activity

Meenaghan (1991) states also that the ability to fulfill objectives, coverage of the defined target audience, the level of coverage of the target audience, and the costs associated with the sponsorship program is a classification of sponsorship criteria that are generally used as a ground to the selection decisions of individual companies.

The ability to fulfill objectives - Events can help companies gain more than one of their goals. It is essential to rank the objectives by order of importance, but also to consider the link between certain objectives.

Coverage of the defined target audience - It is of significance to match the sponsorship activity with the defined target market. The matching process includes demographic, geographic and lifestyle variables and three types of audience that can be considered: the immediate event audience, the extended media audience and immediate audience.

The level of coverage of the target audience - The amount of exposure, as well as the size of the audience likely exposed to the companies' message, is further important determinants in the selection process. The potentially exposed audience can be measured in terms of participants, on-site fans and media coverage depending on the sponsoring activity being proposed. Media coverage also represents a useful bonus for companies seeking corporate hospitality, or a basis of involvement for branded goods companies.

The costs associated with the sponsorship program - The cost of the actual sponsorship activity is by nature a key criterion when selecting sponsorships. The cost of leveraging a sponsorship program includes the additional effort, largely promotional which must be invested by title sponsor in order to make use of tile opportunity provided as a result of securing title rights of a particular sponsorship.

IEG (2008) posted an interesting article about why companies sponsor. They state that companies do not use sponsorship to replace advertising, public relations or sales promotion campaigns. The main benefits sponsorship offers are different and the medium works best as part of an integrated marketing communications effort that includes the use of all marketing methods.

IEG further presented most common reason why companies sponsor:

Increase brand loyalty - Loyal customers are a company's most valuable asset. The absence of tangible differences among products in every category has a simple but inescapable consequence: emotional logic is the single most important business driver. Without emotion, a product or service is just like every other product or service.

Create awareness & visibility - The wide exposure properties enjoy in both electronic and print media provides sponsors with vast publicity opportunities.

Change/reinforce image - Sponsorship can create, change or reinforce a brand image.

Drive retail traffic - Companies use the assets of their sponsorships to create traffic-building promotions.

Showcase community responsibility - Customers are speaking, and they are saying they are willing to reward or punish companies with their wallets based on corporate citizenship. In

some countries, social responsibility is one of the most important – more even than brand quality or business fundamentals.

Drive sales - Companies use sponsorship as a hook to drive sales and in some cases sales can also come directly from the property.

Sample/display brand attributes - Sponsorship allows companies to showcase product benefits.

Entertain clients - Properties' hospitality components can be highly relevant to companies that value the opportunity to spend a few hours with clients and prospects and solidify business relationships.

Narrowcasting - Sponsorship allows companies to hone in on a niche market without any waste.

Recruit/retain employees - Sponsorships are also considering for their ability to provide incentives for a company's workforce.

Merchandising opportunities - Point-of-purchase promotions themed to a sport, event or cause can bring excitement, color and uniqueness to in-store displays. Sponsorship also gives longevity to merchandising programs. Marketers can promote their tie weeks or months in advance.

Differentiate product from competitors - This objective is what is driving much of the sponsorship by service industries like banking, insurance and telecommunications. Sponsorship provides companies a competitive selling advantage because it offers opportunities for category exclusivity and can be used as a platform for creating currency with customers. Sponsors take the rights associated with their properties and make them work for the customer to help achieve their needs and objectives. It is a value-added promotion that the competition cannot duplicate.

Combat larger ad budgets of competitors - The cost-effectiveness of sponsorship relative to traditional media advertising allows smaller companies to compete with the giants of their industry.

Achievement of multiple objectives - Sponsorship offers the possibility of achieving several goals at once; most companies expect the medium to deliver a combination of the above benefits.

2.3.3. Measuring the sports sponsorship effectiveness

According to Shank (1999) the return of sport sponsorship can be measured, where the explanation is based on defining the objectives, establishing a pre-sponsorship benchmark against which to measure, as well as maintaining consistent levels of promotion and advertising so it is possible to differentiate the effect of sponsorship only problem is lack of a universal method for measuring sponsorship, not because of missing measurement value, but because no one has actually measured the value. The absences of a single standardized measurement an opportunity as it means sponsors can tailor their measurement systems to determine their specific objectives.

In order to measure the effectiveness of a sport sponsorship activity, Shank (1999) has outlined three types of strategic control in the strategic sports marketing process: planning-assumption control, process control and contingency control.

Figure 2: Types of strategic control
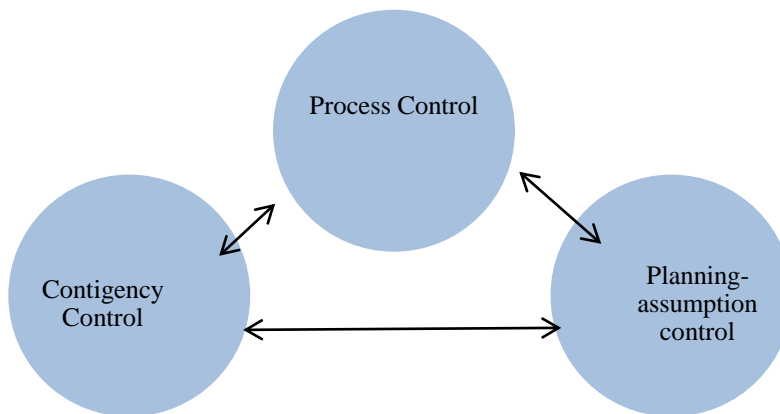
Source: Adapted from Shank (1999)

Shank (1999) explains that for planning-assumption control often is necessary during the planning phase to make assumptions about future events or contingencies about which there are no complete information, since individual planners may perceive and interpret data differently.

Shank (1999) continues by stating that the process control measures and evaluates the effects of actions that already have been taken in an effort to execute the plan. The benefit of this control is that marketers may minimize the allocation of resources into a strategic plan, or leading implementation process to achievements of objectives and goals deemed important by the sports organization. Monitoring strategic thrusts, receiving milestones and financial analysis are measures commonly used during tile process control phase.

The third form of control, contingency control, is according to Shank (1999) based on the assumption that sports marketers operate in an uncertain and unpredictable surrounding and that the constantly changing internal and external environments may lead to the need to reevaluate of strategic choices. The goal of contingency control is thus: to constantly scan the relevant environments for internal and external contingencies that could affect the marketing planning process

Meenaghan (1991) states that once the sponsorship has been chosen and implemented, it is of high importance to evaluate the sponsorship program. Meenaghan (1991) further suggests that the evaluation can take place during three stages in a sponsoring program.

- **At the outset:** to determine the company's present position in terms of awareness and image among the target audience.

- **Interim tracking:** detect movement on the chosen dimension of awareness: image and market attitude.

- **Final evaluation:** when the sponsorship is completed the performance should be compared to stated objectives.

Meenaghan (1991) also mentions five main methods in which the results of a sponsorship's effectiveness can be measured:

1. Measuring the level of media coverage gained

Sponsors often use the level media coverage gained from sponsorship involvement as an indicator of performance, mostly because it is practical. The evaluation of this could be measured in: the duration of television coverage, monitored radio coverage, and the extent of

press coverage in terms of single column inches. What is important to recognize by using this method is that the level of media coverage only indicates the extent of the publicity gained from a particular sponsorship. Thus, it does not measure the effectiveness of the gained exposure (Meenaghan. 1991).

2. Measuring the communications effectiveness of sponsorship involvement

There is a tendency among sponsors to evaluate the results in communication since sponsorship is used to achieve basic communication objectives such as awareness and image. The level of awareness achieved, attitudes created, perceptions changed or associations suggested are measured against stated objectives. There are also some sponsors that attempt to measure the results from a sponsorship by focusing on the degree by which respondents associate the company or the product with the sponsored activity (Meenaghan. 1991).

3. Measuring the sales effectiveness of sponsorship

Sponsorship is faced with the same problem as in the case of advertising or all other marketing communications in general, that of keying sales results to given expenditures. This is due to a variety of reasons:

- The simultaneous usage of other marketing inputs

- The carry-over effect of previous marketing communications efforts

- Uncontrollable variables in the business environment such as competitor activity or changing economic conditions

However, many sponsors use sales results as evidence of a sponsorship investment, even if conclusive proof of this effect is hard to measure (Meenaghan. 1991).

4. Monitoring guest feedback

In the case where guest hospitality is stated as an objective in sponsorship, monitoring guest feedback can provide a good measurement of a sponsorship impact. Furthermore, guest feedback can also be considered a useful measure of effectiveness where the company's staff or local communities are being targeted. Other sources of feedback can be derived from participants, spectators and activity organizers, as well as the company's own sales force (Meenaghan. 1991).

5. Cost-benefit analysis

When companies have more philanthropic than commercial motives towards their sponsorship then the companies should go beyond the traditional marketing measurement when evaluating the effects. In this kind of situation, it might be necessary to view the collective opinions of the senior management as a basis for evaluation (Meenaghan.1991).

3. Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework exp1ains the major things to be studied such as the key factors, constructs or variables, as well as a conceptual framework explains the presumed relationship between them. (Miles & Huberman. 1994)

The theories chosen for the study are based on the three integrated parts of sponsorship. This can be explained as the effectiveness evaluation is linked to the objectives since an evaluation without clearly stated objectives is difficult. In the same way, the objectives are connected with the selection process, given that when objectives are well defined a company may find it easier to select a particular sponsorship. Moreover, when evaluating the effectiveness of a sponsorship, measurement can be done on the chosen sponsorship selection criteria.

3.1. Sport marketing mix

Regarding the Sport marketing mix, we are basing our conceptualization stated by(De Pelsmacker, 2007, Kitchen & De Pelsmacker, 2004) where sponsorship is placed under promotion as its own entity alongside the traditional as well as other contemporary elements of the communications mix.

Sports marketing mix:

- Place
- Product
- Price
- Promotion (sales promotion, personal selling, public relations, direct marketing, e-communication, advertising, **sponsorship**)

3.2. Objectives of Sports Sponsorship

Regarding the sponsorship objectives, we will use objectives presented by Pope (1998) since they summarize the most common objectives of sports sponsorship. Pope and other authors brought up in our literature review section such as Meenaghan, Shank, Dolphin and Oikkonen.

Corporate objectives

- Public awareness
- Public perception
- Corporate image
- Community involvement
- Financial relations
- Government relations
- Client entertainment
- Employee relations
- Competitions

Marketing objectives

- Business relations
- Reach target markets
- Brand positioning
- Increase sales
- Sampling

Media objectives

- Generate visibility
- Generate publicity
- Enhance ad campaign
- Avoid clutter
- Target specification

Personal objectives

- Management interest

3.3. Selecting a Specific Sports Sponsorship

In order to explain how organizations select the specific sport sponsorship first we introduced the selection of sport sponsorship opportunities, where Shank (1999) state that when specific firms want to enter in sport sponsorship activities, first they must decide whether to sponsor a **sport**, **league**, **team** an **athlete** or an **event.**

After the platform is selected Shank (1999) presents a few questions for selecting a sponsorship:

- Does the sponsorship offer the correct positioning?
- Does the sponsorship provide a connection to the brand?
- Is the sponsorship difficult for competitors to imitate?
- Does the sponsorship reach the right audience?
- Does the sponsorship appeal to the target lifestyle, personality, and values?
- In what ways does the sponsorship merge into current corporate goals and strategies?
- Can the sponsorship be used for hospitality to embrace important potential and current customers?
- Can employees be involved in the sponsorship?
- How will the sponsorship effectiveness be evaluated?
- Is the sponsorship affordable?
- How easy will it be to plan the sponsorship annually?
- Is the sponsorship a complement to the current promotion mix?

In order to make this study more extensive, conceptualization on Meenaghan's (1983) 14 criteria was presented. This was found to be the most extensive list of considerations and they are shown in the list below.

- The ability to fulfill objectives

- Image association potential of the particular sponsorship
- Sponsorship Choice and Company Product Compatibility
    - Product usage, product image, company image
- Media Coverage Potential
    - Matching the audience profile of an event with the company's target market
- The Funding Requirement
    - Enough funds to properly engage in a sponsorship
    - Cost considerations taken in terms of physical resources, staff time and talent
- Target Audience Coverage
- The Opportunities for Guest Hospitality
- Executive Preference
- Geographical Coverage of the defined Audience
- Staff Knowledge of the Proposed Sponsorship
- Sponsorship Type
    - A new or established event
    - One time event activity or repeated commitment
    - The sea seasonality
- Solus Position
    - Sponsor exclusivity or co-sponsored event
- The Possibility for Adverse Publicity
- The Organization of the Sponsored Activity

3.4. Measuring the Sports Sponsorship Effectiveness

In order to measure the effectiveness of a sport sponsorship activity, Shank (1999) has outlined three types of strategic control in the strategic sports marketing process: planning-assumption control, process control and contingency control.

Meenaghan (1991) present three steps crucial for the sponsor to consider in order evaluating the effects of a sports sponsorship program. Meenaghan (1991) present three steps crucial for the sponsor to consider in order evaluating the effects of a sport sponsorship program.

- At the outset
    - awareness levels and attitudes to brand among the target audience
- Tracking process
    - how the sponsorship activity is going, and if there are anything to adjust or change
- Final evaluation
    - If the objectives have been met, and how these have been evaluated and measured

Furthermore, Meenaghan (1991) presents five main methods in which the results of a sponsorship's effectiveness can be measured:

- Measuring the level of media coverage gained
- Measuring the communications effectiveness of sponsorship involvement
- Measuring the sales effectiveness of sponsorship
- Monitoring guest feedback
- Cost-benefit analysis

4. Methodology

The chosen research method for the present study is described and validated in this chapter. Consequently, a brief discussion on the choice of descriptive research method follows first. Then, the selection of research approaches is outlined, followed by an examination of the collection of data, precisely questionnaires. The description of the data analysis process is also included, and the chapter ends with a discussion on the reliability and validity of the research.

4.1.   Research purpose

According to Saunders (2009), the purpose of developing an academic research may be exploratory, descriptive and explanatory.

Exploratory studies consist on investigations whose primary objective is to discover new insights on specific themes or measure phenomena in innovative ways. This research method is developed to be flexible and adjustable in order to allow researchers to change their research approach when new data or insights arise (Saunders, 2009).

Explanatory studies generate theory that may be used to clarify the empirical generalizations that emerged in the descriptive phase, giving place to the construction, testing and reformulation of a certain theory (Foster, 1998).

 Descriptive studies are the construction of careful descriptions of models originated from exploratory research, being that these studies may have the purpose of developing empirical generalizations (Foster, 1998). These empirical generalizations may lead according to Foster (1998) to long-term theory development leading to the previously referred exploratory stage.

The main objective, as quoted by Miles and Huberman (1994) "making complicated things understandable by reducing them to their component parts".

In this thesis, we can find parts of all three of these. We are exploring the sponsorship relation on both sides in order to gain a deeper understanding of our research area, describing when we discuss what the objectives are, how to the select the right sports entity to sponsor and how to measure the effect of the sponsorship and explaining when we are answering our research questions. However, although we have parts of all three, this thesis is mainly descriptive.

4.2. Research approaches

Quantitative research

In research methodology there are two main approaches, one is quantitative and the other is qualitative research. The chosen research method depends on the kind of information studied. The qualitative method consists of transforming what is observed, reported or registered into words. Most generally the qualitative method results in interviews, observations, pictures. The main purpose of this method is to get a better understanding of a problem area but also to gain a deeper insight (Saunders 2009).

The quantitative approach differs from the qualitative one because it is both structured and formal. Using quantitative methods means that information from each object is collected when several objects are studied, which makes is possible to draw conclusions. With a quantitative approach, the main purpose is to explain a phenomenon with numbers to get a result.

The quantitative technique which is often used in studies is a questionnaire where the analysis of data is often done with graphs, statistics, and plots. Quantitative data will be used in this research since this questionnaire will hand out the answers that will generate numbers that will be analyzed.

As mentioned, for this thesis, the author has chosen a quantitative approach. Reason for this choice is the explanation of the elements that influence brand recall, corporate image, and intention to buy sponsor products.

It needs to be mentioned also the statement of Johns and Lee Ross (1998) who state that a quantitative data should never be accepted as the truth because the results simply depend on too many variables. The result can give us an overview, but the result may vary depending on which organization conducted the research, which sponsors were active, what is the interpretation of the conclusions and the way the questions were posed.

Deductive approach

Saunders (2009) implies that deductive approach is the case when researcher uses already existing theories and investigates these empirically by using different methods. The existing theory or model is the foundation for deciding what information should be selected, how it should be understood and finally how to relate the results to the theory. Saunders (2009) suggests that a researcher should select a deductive approach if there exist, extensive literature within the problem area. Also Saunders (2009) state that deductive studies starts with a general theory and ends with a specific conclusion.

The deductive approach is a highly structured methodology and it insures the reliability of the research. This method is often compared with the inductive approach. An inductive approach includes the analysis of qualitative data in order to reach new conclusions and thus form new theories. The deductive research approach was used in this thesis since the study is based on already existing theories and models which will it later be compared with reality.

4.3. Research strategy

According to Yin (2008), the strategy to be used can be determined by looking at three conditions. These conditions are: the type of the research question posed, the extent of control an investigator has over behavioral events and the degree of focus on contemporary events as opposed to historical events.

Table 2: Relevant situations for different research strategies

Strategy	For of research questions	Requires control over behavioral events	Focuses on contemporary events
Experiment	How, why	YES	YES
Survey	Who, what, where, how many, how much	NO	YES
Archival analysis	Who, what, where, how many, how much	NO	YES/NO
Case study	How, why	NO	YES
History	How, why	NO	NO

Source: Yin (2008)

On the first look at the research questions of this study and applying these to Yin's reasoning, it is apparent that all the strategies could be more or less applicable for this thesis. But since the study does not require any control over behavioral events, "experiments" is not a relevant strategy for the thesis. We may also rule out history as our research is based on contemporary events. The strategies that are left are consequent: survey, archival analysis and case study.

Case studies focus on one or small number of research units. According to Yin (2008) a single case study is appropriate in order to test a well-formulated theory. In other words, the single case can be used to determine if a theory's propositions are correct or if some other explanation might be more appropriate. Case studies mean to investigate few objects thoroughly. It is the most suitable research strategy if the objective is to achieve detailed understanding about deferent kinds of processes in few objects (Saunders, 2009).

According to Tull and Hawkins (1990) survey research is the systematic gathering of information from respondents in order to understand and or predict some aspect of the behavior of the population of interest, generally in the form of a questionnaire.

Archival analysis involves collecting secondary data already collected by someone else for another purpose. The fact that the data has been gathered for a different purpose than one's owns can imply problems, but, on the other hand, archival analysis is a relatively simple and cheap research strategy.

Since this thesis is focusing on contemporary events and the fact that research questions are formulated in Yin's opinion to survey strategy research questions, a survey research strategy is the most suitable method for a problem like this one according to Yin (2008).

4.4. Data collection method

Questionnaires are one of the most used data collection techniques in the survey strategy (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2000). There are many aspects that have the potential to affect how well the survey or the questionnaire is likely to accomplish its goals.

Quantitative research is more formalized and has strict boundaries. The research method for this research study will be an electronic questionnaire hosted by Qualtrics.com. Link of the actual electronic questionnaire was emailed and messaged to the wide number of people who are mostly Croatian citizens. Assessment of the feedback was done in a timely manner to ensure a sufficient number of respondents were achieved.

4.5. Population

A population according to Zikmund (2003), is any complete group of people, companies hospitals, stores, college students or the like that share the same characteristics. A population is the total collection of elements about which the researcher wishes to make inferences. The population for this research was classified as all people in Croatia. Croatia is a small country, but is well known in the world by it sports successes (football, handball, water polo) and football supporters.

Zikmund (2003) states that the unit of analysis specifies the level of the investigation focus. The units of analysis were Croatian people measuring the sports sponsorship effectiveness on customers buying decision and identifying people's opinion towards sports sponsorship in global.

4.6. Sample

Zikmund (2003) defined a sample as the representative subset of the population. The sample for this research was 377 respondents.

The sampling frame comprised the list of elements from which a sample can be drawn and it also provides the list that can be utilized operationally (Zikmund, 2003). The sampling frame for this research was made on respondents between 27th of March until 12th of April.

Convenience sampling was used to draw units from the sampling frame as it involved simply including respondents that were the easiest to access. This method of non-profitability sampling was used to obtain a large number of completed questionnaires quickly and economically. The target response rate was 72%. For most academic research, a response rate of 35% is considered good (Saunders et al., 2009).

4.7. Validity and reliability

- Validity

Validity refers to the extent to which the conclusions that are drawn from the experiment are true; it establishes a correct operational measure for the concepts being studied. There are two types of validity, the internal validity and external validity. Internal validity it is when establishing a casual relationship, whereby certain conditions are shown to lead to other conditions, as distinguished from spurious relationships (Yin 2008). There are different threats to internal validity such as the interaction of treatment with history, selection, testing, and treatment exposures (Hair and Bush, 2009).

In order to achieve the highest validity as possible it was chosen a random selection of subjects from a heterogeneous population.

External validity concerns establishing the domain to which a study's findings can be generalized (Yin 2008).

In order to increase the external validity of a study, Yin (2008) emphasizes the importance of using replication logic in multiple-case studies He further states that a theory must be tested through replication of the findings in similar surroundings, where the theory has specified that the same results should occur. Once such replication is made, the findings can be generalized to a greater number of surroundings. Since this study is not a multiple-case study, the considerations regarding external validity in this thesis are irrelevant and should not be taken in concern.

- Reliability

According to Yin (2008), the reliability is when you demonstrate that questions of a study can be repeated with the same result. Saunders (2009) mentions four different threats to reliability: subject or participant error, subject or participant bias, observer error, and observer bias.

4.8.   Questionnaire

Questionnaires can be designed in many different ways, depending on how it should be administered. According to Hair and Bush, (2009) a questionnaire can be administered electronically, with the help of the internet. In this research the study was conducted over the internet, mostly through social networks, emails and forums. Respondents received and email or message where they have been kindly asked to fill up the questionnaire and to share the questionnaire further to its associates, family, friends…. That way, the author could get different points of view, but also a very diverse sample of respondent in order to not distort the result.

The questionnaire in this research was designed in order to help the author to see how sport sponsorship effects on peoples purchase decision and what are the people's opinions about sponsorship globally. The author divided questionnaire into three parts, so that it could be answered by a sports fan and a person that is not so involved in sports.

The first part consisted of seven questions where in order to avoid the interviewer evaluation apprehension and to give the respondent control the primary data are close questions. The goal of these questions was to get the personal characteristics of the respondent with their gender, age and their highest education completed. Respondents were also after asked if they consider themselves a sports fan and how often do they watch sports per month, to have an idea about how often the respondent goes to watch sports and is he a true sports fan.

The second part consisted of the sixteen questions about the feelings and involvement of respondents with the specific club or player. Since not all respondents have some involvement or feelings with some specific club or player, the questionnaire was programmed to skip a question in the case of a negative answer. At question seven, where the respondents were asked if they own some special feelings towards come club or player, if the respondents answer was negative the respondent was transferred to the question twenty four where starts the third part of the questionnaire which consist of six questions about respondent's opinion of sport sponsorship globally.

5. Results

This chapter gives an explanation of the findings in relation to the questions asked and illustrates the findings from the data collected through the research questionnaires. The aim of this study is to see how sports' marketing is reaching its consumers and how it affects its purchase. The questionnaire measured the individuals' level of commitment to the sport, level of loyalty to specific team or player and the sport sponsorship effect on buying decision of an individual who gain some feelings towards specific team or player.

5.1. Response rate

The primary data was supported by demographic information that covered age, gender and if the respondents consider themselves as a sports fans. According to (Zikmund, 2003), it is critical to look at the response rate of any survey research in order to fair1y judge its effectiveness. A total of 379 respondents started the questionnaire with the total of 272 respondents who done the whole questionnaire which give us the response rate of 72%.

5.2. Description of the respondents

 The next few sections provide a description of the demographics of the sample population surveyed. The demographic characteristics are gender, age and highest education completed.

Figure 3 demonstrates that there were 199 male respondents and 175 female respondents. In terms of a percentage, 53% of respondents were male and 47% of respondents were female. It was expected to be higher number of males in comparison to females but this is a good view to see what kind connection sport and sport marketing have with females since it is well-known that females gain less passion to sport.

Regarding the age of the respondents, figure 4 shows that 90%t of the respondents belong to the first two age groups, from 18-25 and from 26-36. This data was expected since the questionnaire was distributed only through internet and the majority of internet users belong to those two groups.

The level of highest education completed among the respondents with high school, bachelor and master degree is quite balanced. Figure 5 show that there is an equal number of respondents with high school and bachelor degree which is followed with respondents with

master degree and in a small numbers are respondents with education lower than high school and with a PHD title..
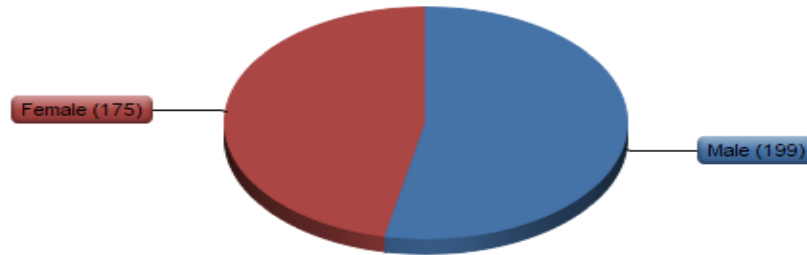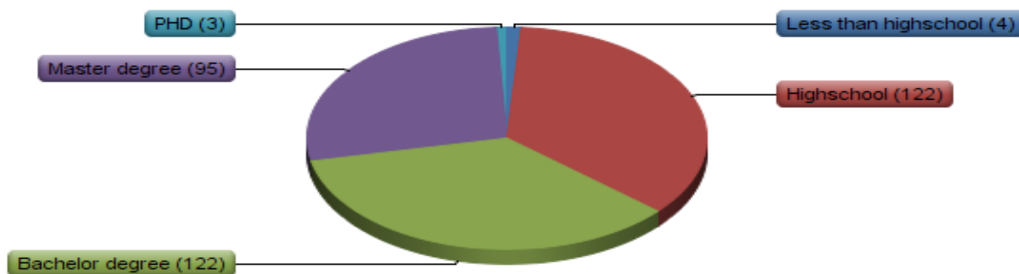
Figure 3: Gender
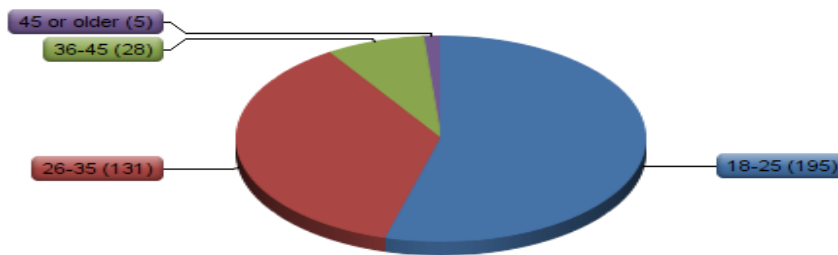
Figure 4: Age

Figure 5: Highest education completed

5.3.   Gender/age with brand awareness comparison

Brand awareness is practically the main point of companies to sponsor a sports team or an individual player. It is the extent to which a brand is recognized by potential consumers in a targeted market segment. Usually, brand awareness is the main objective of an early months or years product or service introduction to the targeted market. Through the sponsorship, consumers are more likely to recognize the brand and thus buy its products or services. Sports fans tend to relate to their favorite sports team or player, analyzing their lifestyle, and therefore trying at least at one point to be like their "hero/es".

In this section gender and age of the respondents is compared with questions related to brand awareness. The cross-over data will help to determine if the respondents are aware of the brand which sponsors their favorite team or player. In addition, it will give further insight into the brand strategy helping to determine if the brand is more recognizable because of the color of the kit, brand name/logo, notoriety of the sponsor, size of the sponsor, place of the sponsor on the kit or with the place of the sponsor in the stadium. Also, with fans being aware of the sponsor of their favorite sport team or player, it is crucial to know if their buying decision will be mostly related to the brand which sponsors their favorite team or player. This way it will be useful to see if the sponsorship is paying off, in other words, if it has at least some effect on not only consumers buying decision, but also on their consciousness.
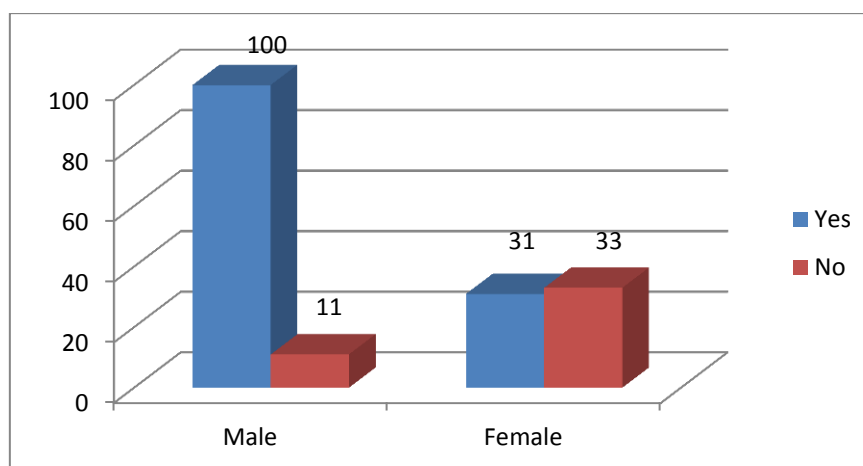
Figure 6: Crossover data between gender and brand sponsorship on the kit

A total of 175 respondents answered the question "I know which company sponsor the kit of my favorite team/player", of which 111 are male and 64 are female (in terms of percentages 64% are male and 36% are female). The results are much as expected. Men follow sports

more than women in general. Thus, they tend to pay more attention to details in sports. Nonetheless, the brand awareness with this crossover comparison is more than satisfying. A total of 131, or 75%, of the respondents, know what brand sponsors their favorite sports team or player. 57.14% of those are male respondents and 42.86% female. The gap between male respondents who are aware of the brand and the ones that are not is anticipated. However, the gap between female fans that are aware of the brand and the ones that are not is pretty impressive considering the following of sports in the female population. 48.43% of the female have brand awareness and 51.56% are not. Figure 7 below shows the crossover between age and the question stated above. Respondents aged between 18 to 25, having 75 votes (43%) are the most aware fans of the brand of their favorite team or player, and respondents aged between 26 to 35, with 48 votes (28%), are second ranked. Respondents of age 45 and older did not participate in the survey.
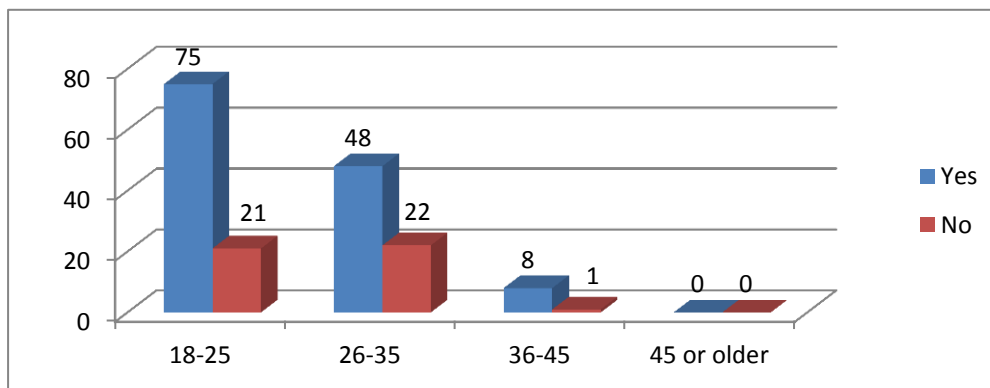
Figure 7: Crossover data between age and brand sponsorship on the kit

Brand name was the result with most positive answers to the question "How do you recall sponsor of your team/player? Which of following factors help you identify?". The respondents had a variety of attributes to choose and rate them as: unlikely, undecided, likely and very likely. A total of 163 respondents, 106 (65%) male and 57 (35%) female, decided that the brand name is the most recognizable attribute for a sports team or player. The results for a brand company are more than satisfactory as the main point of sponsorship is for the consumers to remember its brand name, and thus recognize it when going to purchase a product or service that the company is selling. Between other possible outcomes, it is noteworthy the color of the kit. 40.60% of male and 25% of female respondents is very likely to recognize the brand through the color of the kit. These results indicate that the combination between visual colors with the brand name is the most powerful tool for brand awareness in sports marketing. In addition, there were 5 more attributes to choose for the identification of the sponsor in a team or an individual player: notoriety of the sponsor, size of the sponsor,

place of the sponsor on the kit, place of the sponsor in the stadium. As for the age crossover data comparison, respondents aged between 18-25 have more brand awareness than the rest. 41.70% of 91 respondents aged between 18-25 have chosen the brand name as the most recognizable attribute for a sports team or player and 35% of them have chosen the color of the kit. Respondents aged between 26-35 are second ranked for the brand identification, having a 36% for the brand name and 37.5% for the color of the kit. As for the results for respondents aged between 36-45 and 45 and more are not noteworthy as there were only 8 respondents for the age between 36-45 and none for the 45 and more.
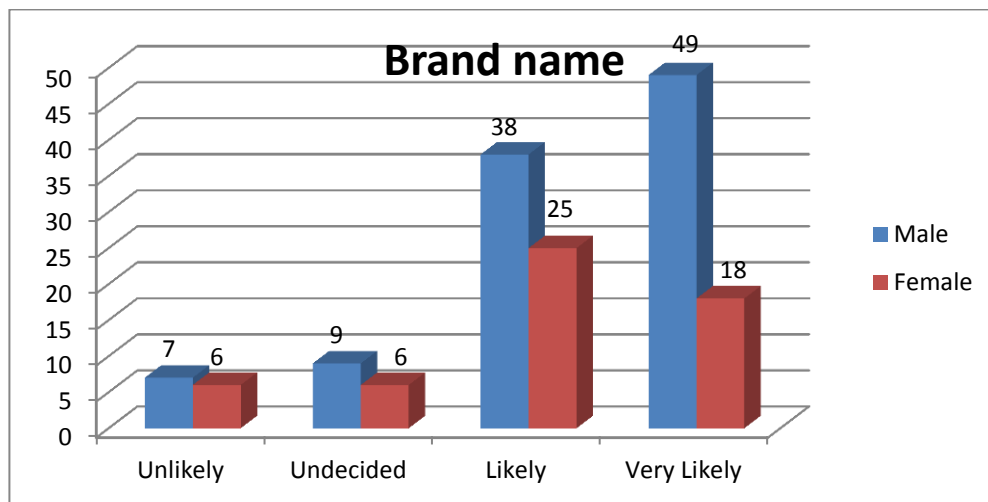
Figure 8: Crossover data between gender and brand name awareness

Furthermore, it is important to analyze the effectiveness of sponsor placement if advertising on the kit of a team/player has more impact on the fans then the advertising on the stadium. The results came as expected. 63 (39%) respondents out of 163 have chosen that the "place of the sponsor on the kit" has "likely" more impact on their team/player identification, while 32 (20%) of the respondents have chosen the answer "very likely" advertising decision. "Place of the sponsor in the stadium" has less impact on the team/player recognition, nonetheless, it is still noteworthy. 57 (35%) out of 163 respondents have chosen the "likely" answer on the sponsor influence on them via stadium advertising while 22 of them have chosen the "very likely answer". These results could also relate to the fact that fans mostly watch sports games of their favorite team/player via television. Therefore, the stadium advertisement is less noticeable since the team/player is in the spotlight during the entire game. In addition, companies tend to advertise their products through commercials and billboards using famous sports players to have a greater influence on consumer's behavior. As mentioned before,

consumers are of the opinion "if it is good for them/him/her it must be good for me". The placement of the sponsor results is better shown in the figures 9 and 10 below.
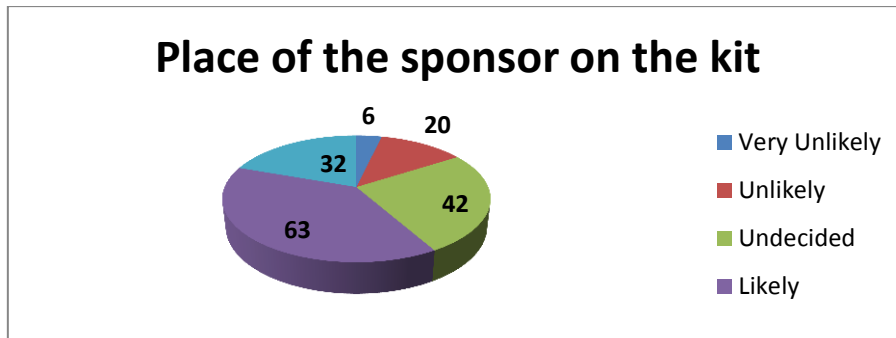

Figure 9: Place of the sponsor on the kit is a factor that will help me identify it
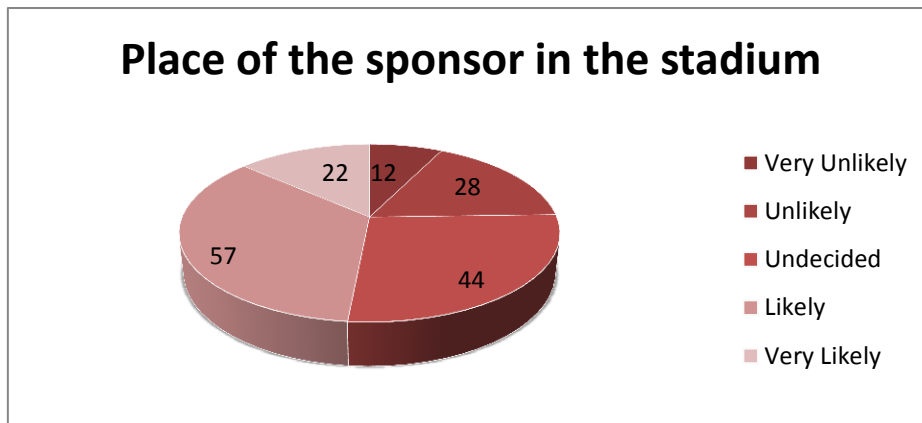

Figure 10: Place of the sponsor on the stadium will help me identify it

5.4. Gender/age comparison with brand purchase decision

In the previous section, the results revealed that sports fans are aware of the brand that sponsors their favorite team/player. However, brand awareness alone will not bring profit to the brand company. Brand awareness is only an early step to make consumers want, need and purchase products or services from the brand company. Therefore, in this section it will be analyzed if such an advertising strategy through favorite sports team/player has effect on consumers purchase decision.

The next step after brand awareness is consumer purchase decision. A company's goal is to advertise through a sports team/player and attract new customers. Recently, customers tend to purchase their familiar brand, in other words, they are brand loyal. Therefore, "if businesses want to defeat their competitors, they have to make consumers love to buy their products and brands" (Dr. Hsin Kuang Chi, Dr. Huery RenYeh and Ya Ting Yang: 2009). This is the reason company's use sport teams/players as a tool to attract customers, because what better way to purchase a product then to relate with your favorite team/player which/who already has one.
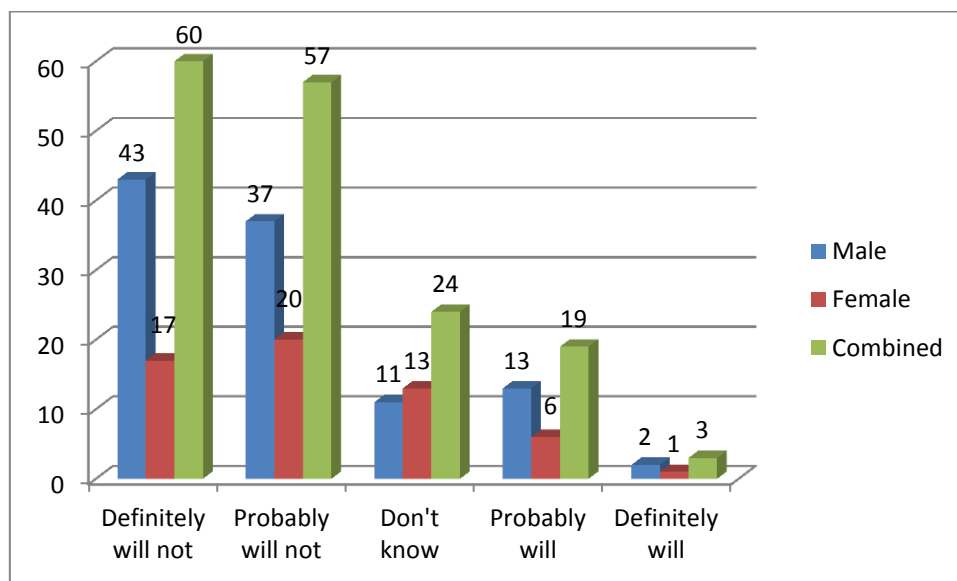
Figure 11: Crossover data between gender and purchase decision

Figure 11 above shows the answers of the respondents to the question "My buying decision will be very much based on whether it is the sponsor of my favorite team/player or not". As it can be seen from the figure 11 respondents had 5 options to choose to easily deduct if brand awareness has a great or a small impact on consumers purchase decision. The results are not

supportive to the brand awareness theory. A total of 163 respondents answered the question, from whom 106 (65%) are male and 57 (35%) are female. Gender comparison does not seem to affect the purchase decision of the consumers. 60 (37%) of the respondents have chosen the answer that their purchase decision "definitely will not" be based on whether it is the sponsor of the respondents favorite team/player. 57 (35%) have chosen the answer "probably will not" which combined makes 72% of the respondents who are not affected of the brand advertising through their favorite team/player. 13.5% of the respondents seem to be affected of the advertising strategy, however this is only a small amount that could not be taken into account for a serious customer approach strategy from a brand company. 14.7% of the respondents were abstain.

In addition, respondents aged 18 to 25 and 26 to 35 were the ones that have mostly chosen the answer that their purchase decision "definitely will not" be based on whether it is the sponsor of the respondents favorite team/player. Only 3 respondents, 2 aged 18 to 25 and 1 respondent 26 to 35 years old, have chosen the answer "definitely will".
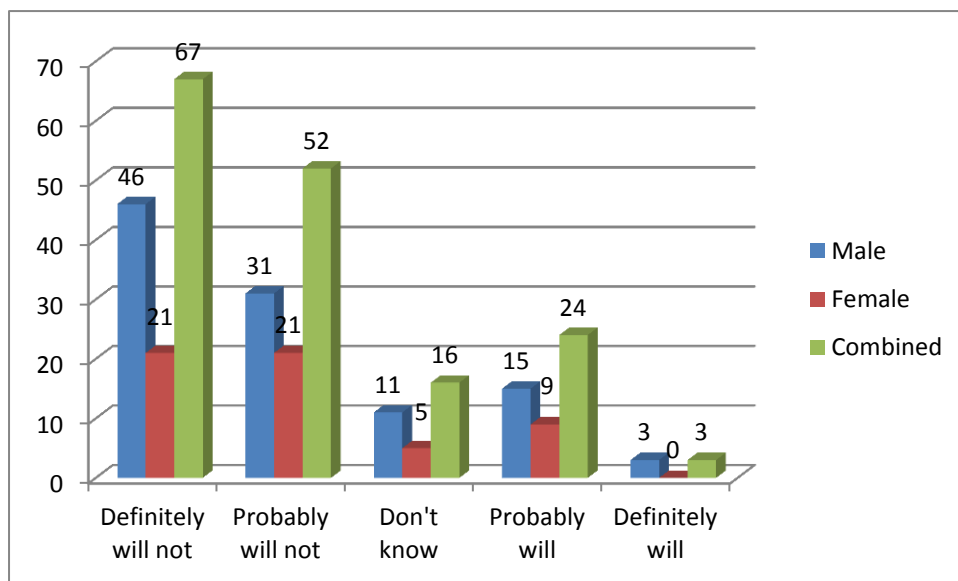
Figure 12: Crossover data between gender and purchase decision

The question "When I shop for product and services, I will purposely look for those sold by sponsor of my favorite team/player", was used on the respondents to deduct if they go shopping purposely to purchase products or services of their favorite team/player in general. The results are somewhat similar to the previous one. There are a little bit more respondents who have chosen the answer "probably will", however it is irrelevant in relation to 73% of the respondents who do not think of their favorite team/player when they intend to go shopping.
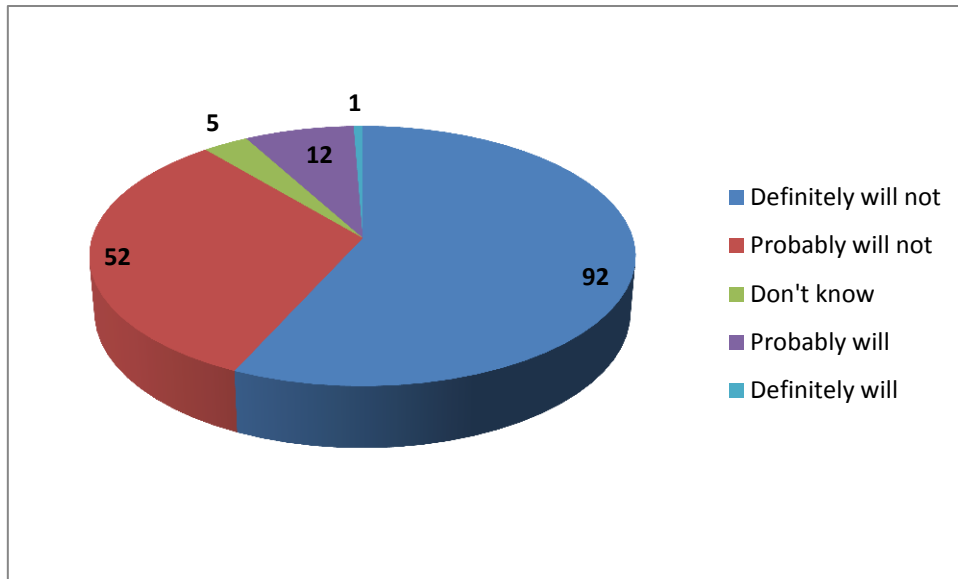
Figure 13: Crossover data between gender and purchase decision

Figure 13 above shows the total combined results, male and female, to the question "If my favorite team/player change sponsor it would affect my purchase decisions". Considering the results of the previous two questions, this one is much expected. It seems that brand awareness and also brand advertising through the favorite sports team/player has no effect on the consumers purchase decision. 92 or 57% of the respondents will definitely not be affected with this advertising strategy and 52 or 32% of them will probably not be affected.

Furthermore, two more questions were used to analyze consumers purchase decision in relation to their favorite team/player: "If my favorite team/player change sponsor it would affect my purchase decisions" and "I would never buy a product from the sponsor of my rival team/player". The results came as expected in relation to the previous questions posted for the consumer purchase decision. The results are shown in the figures 14 and 15 below.
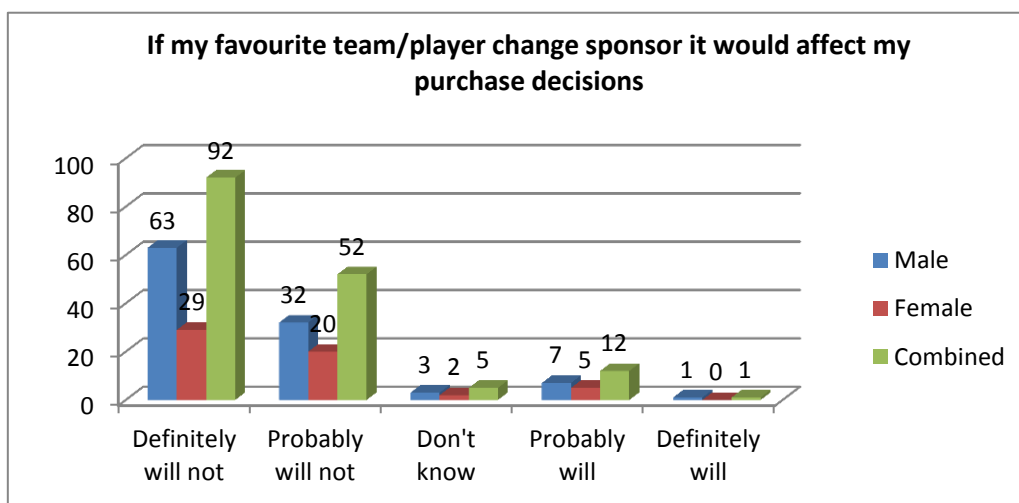
Figure 14: If my favorite team/player changes sponsor it would affect my purchase decisions
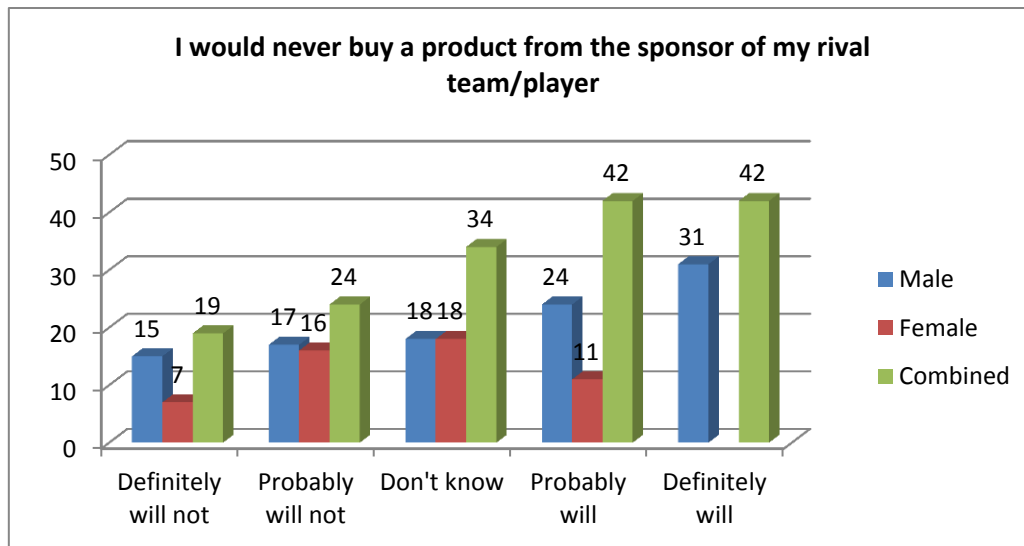
Figure 15: I would never buy a product from the sponsor of my rival team/player

However, it is worth mentioning that for the question "I would never buy a product from the sponsor of my rival team/player" the respondents were somewhat of the different opinion. The results still indicate that most of the respondents purchase decision would not be affected from the rivalry of two sports teams/players. Nonetheless, 43 (27%) of 161 total respondents definitely or probably would be affected by the purchase decision. In addition, 21% of the respondents were abstaining. This indicates that direct or indirect rivalry in sports affects consumers purchase decision of the sponsor company products or services.

In addition, this relation could also be analyzed through age and educational comparison. Rivalry seems to affect mostly respondents aged 18 to 25 whom 25 (15%) out of 161 respondents definitely or probably would not purchase a product or service from a rival company brand. As for education, respondents with maximum high school educational level, 15% of them, also tend to have more rivalry spirit in them. However, the trend in age and educational comparison with rival brands purchase decision seems to vanish slowly as age and educational level rises. These results suggest that consumers tend to compare price and quality as their purchase decision base and not which brand company advertises which team or player. Therefore, in the next section rivalry will be compared with both price and quality to see how those 3 combinations affect consumers purchase decision.
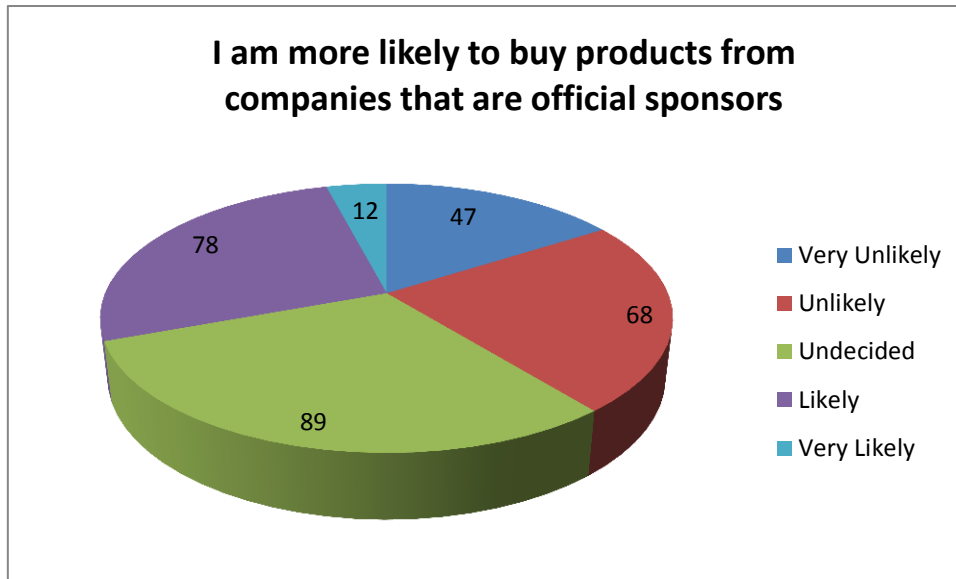
Figure 16: Sponsorship on purchase decision

Regarding the general purchase decision, the respondents were asked to answer the question "I am more likely to buy products from companies that are official sponsors". As the questions before, respondents had between five answers to choose: "very unlikely", "unlikely", "undecided", "likely" and "very likely". A total of 294 respondents answered these questions, which of those 166 are male and 128 are female. 31% of the respondents are likely and very likely to buy products from companies that are official sponsors. However, 39% of the respondents are unlikely and very unlikely to purchase the same products. As it can be seen from the previous answers to purchase decision questions, sports marketing does not affect consumers purchase decision, 30% of the respondents were undecided.

As for the male and female comparison for the same question, male respondents are more affected by sports sponsorship than female. 34% of male respondents are likely and very likely to purchase a product from a company that is an official sponsor. On the other hand, only 25% of female respondents would purchase the same product. Nonetheless, the majority of the respondents purchase decision is not affected by sports sponsorship.
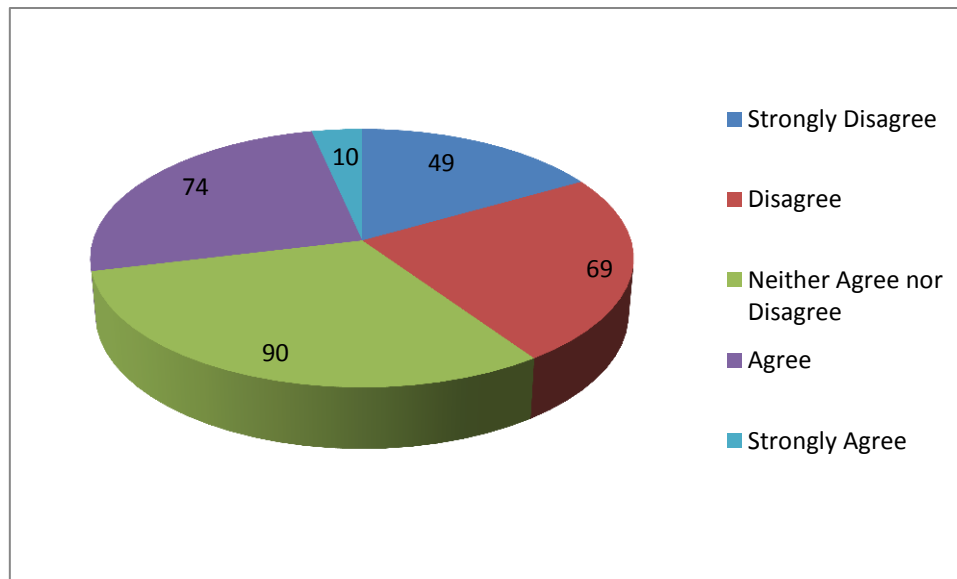
Figure 17: Sponsorship on consumers' thoughts when purchasing sport products

Figure 17 above demonstrates an insight on consumers thoughts when purchasing sports products, specifically, it shows the results for the question "The sponsorship allows me to think of the sponsor next time I go buy sports products". The results are presented with combined male and female gender. A number of 90 respondents (31%), of total 292 respondents are undecided on the matter as they have chosen the answer "neither agree nor disagree". Nonetheless, the results show that respondents do not think of their favorite team/player sponsor company when they plan to buy sport products as the majority, 118 respondents or 41%, of the respondents "strongly disagree" and "disagree" regarding the same question. Only 28% of the respondents think of the sponsor company when planning to purchase a sports product.

5.5. Price and quality affecting the purchase decision

It is a well-known fact that the price of a product or service affects the most consumers purchase decision. However, in relation to sports marketing and favorite team/player advertisement it is favorable to have an insight if rivalries could provide a better price and quality in the purchase decision.

"Suppose that you were choosing between two brands that are alike in terms of price and quality. One of them you recall is a sponsor of yours rival team/player and one is not. Which brand would you choose?" was the question on which a total of 161 respondents had to choose between 3 answers: "rivals team/player brand", "the other brand" and "either one, it doesn't matter". With this simple question, it can be deducted if consumers are affected by sports marketing of rival teams/players.
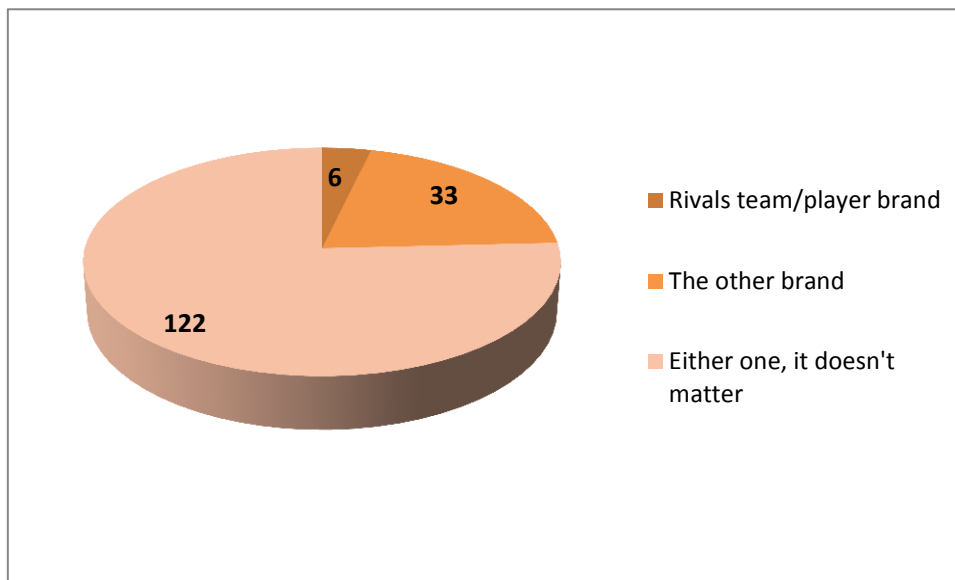
Figure 18: Rivalry affected by price and quality

As it can be seen from the figure 18 above, two products with the same price and quality, one from the rival team/player and the other brand have no effect on consumers purchase decision. 122 or 76% of the respondents are not affected by the rivalry in the sports advertisement. The results suggest that brand awareness through advertising a fans favorite team or player have no effect on consumers purchase decision.

5.6.   Respondent's attitude towards sponsor company

Results from previous section indicated that sport sponsorship does not affect a consumer's purchase decision. However, in these section consumers feelings towards sponsor company and sport sponsorship in general will be analyzed.
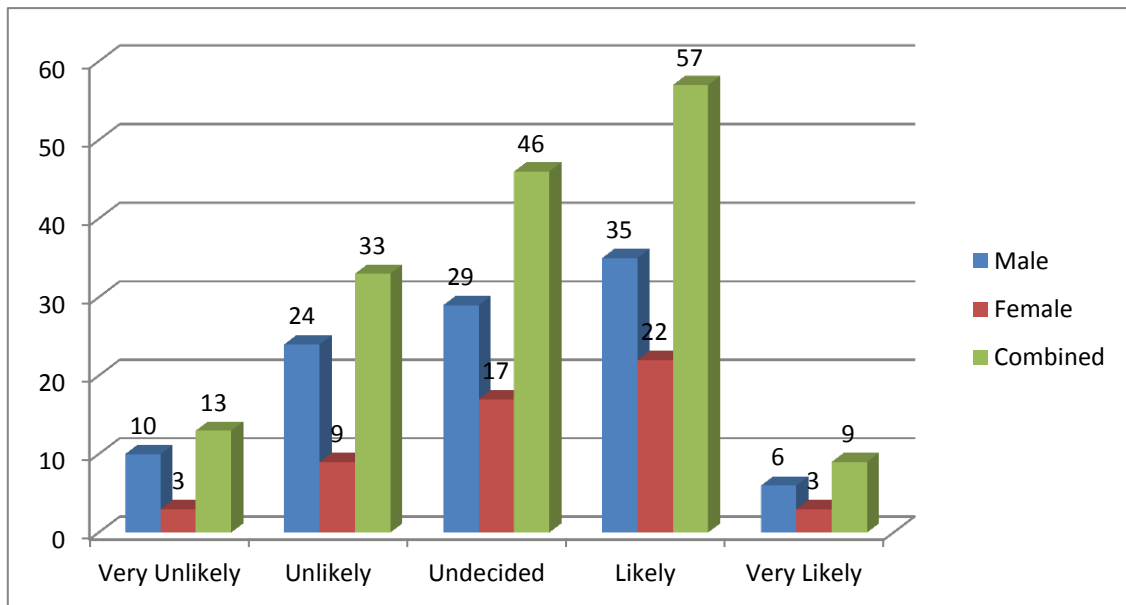

Figure 19: Through the sponsorship of my team/player, I am more positive towards the sponsor

Figure 19 above shows the results to the question "Through the sponsorship of my team/player, I am more positive towards the sponsor". A total of 158 respondents answered these questions, out of which 104 were male and 54 were female. The results indicate that respondents have positive feelings or thoughts towards the sponsor company of their favorite team/player. 57 (36%) male and female respondents chose the answer "likely". In addition, female respondents appear to be more positive towards the sponsor company than male. Only 22% of female respondents have negative feelings towards the favorite team/player sponsor company, while on the other hand 33% of male respondents feel the same way. The results from previous purchase decision questions and this one suggest that respondents are aware of the sponsor company and have positive feelings towards it. However, it also suggest that with the sponsorship alone consumers would not purchase products from the sponsor company, which is its final goal. A different approach has to be made to alter a sports fan purchase decision.
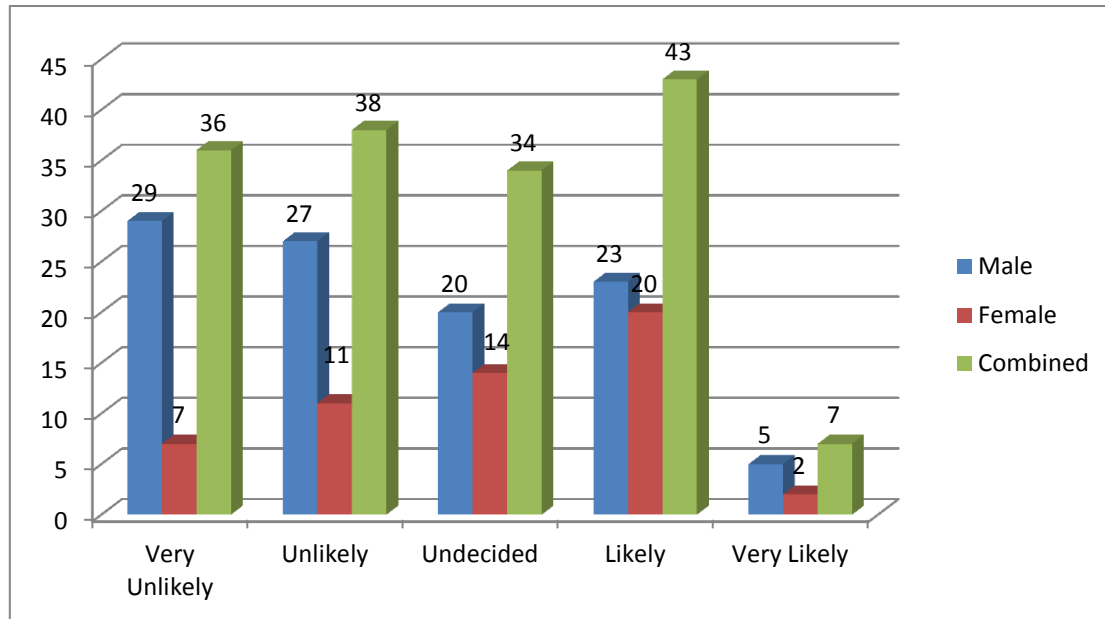
Figure 20: Attention to other marketing activities of the sponsor company

A total of 158 respondents, which 104 (66%) of those are male and 54 (34%) are female, answered to the question "The sponsorship of the team/player makes me pay more attention to marketing activities of the sponsor". The results are shown in the figure 20 above. By observing the answers separately, the results indicate that with sponsorship of a respondent favorite team/player makes them pay more attention to other marketing activities of the sponsor company. As the answer "likely" was the one that was chosen the most, 43 out of 158 which makes a 27% of the total outcome. However, this is not the case as only 7 (4%) of the respondents chose the answer "very likely". The combination of the two answers gives only a 31% of the respondents' opinion. These two answers mark if other marketing activities from the favorite team/player sponsor company are positively perceived by the fans. In addition, answers "very unlikely" and "unlikely" have a 47% vote of the respondents which make it the majority of the vote. This indicates that regardless of the favorite team/player sponsorship, other marketing activities from the same company have no effect on the fans. 34 or 21% of the respondents were indecisive regarding the same matter.

Furthermore, 41% of female respondents pay more attention to other marketing activities of the favorite team/player sponsor company, which is the majority as 25% of them were indecisive, in comparison to only 27% of male respondents, 19% of them being indecisive.
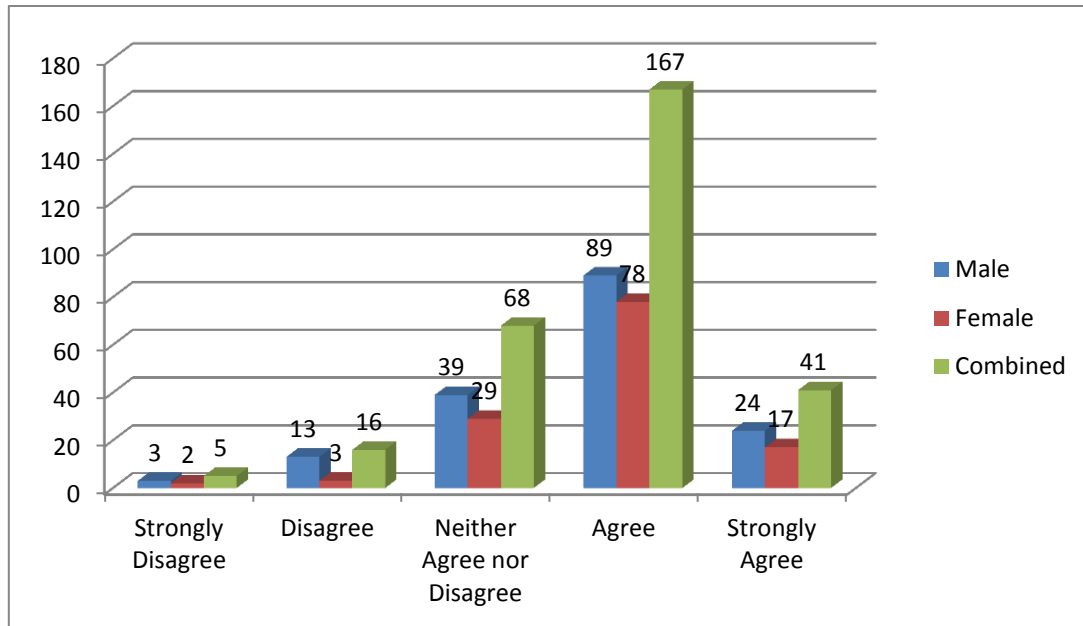
Figure 21: Sponsorship being a good method of supporting a team/player.

A total of 297 respondents answered positively to the question "I think sponsorship is a good method of supporting a team/player", which 168 of those were male and 129 were female. Surprisingly enough, a combination of 208 respondents, which makes 70% of total respondents' number, agree or strongly agree that sponsorship is a good method of supporting a team/player. 67% of male respondents answered the same way as well as 74% of female respondents. In addition, only 7% of male and female respondents chose the answers "strongly disagree" and "disagree". These results indicate that sports sponsorship is well-perceived in the field of marketing and especially in brand awareness.

Many sports teams/players do not have the means to support their sports activities throughout their career. It is a well-known fact that sports teams or players need an extensive amount of financial resources, more at the beginning of their career than after, to succeed in their field of sport. Therefore, the positive attitude towards sports sponsorship may well be present because sponsor companies tend to finance a team/player if their good in their field of sport, to promote the brand name. This business process is perceived in the field of marketing as a "win-win" situation.

5.7. Sponsorship recognition, factors and connection with consumers

One of the main dilemmas for sponsor companies is what type of sponsorship would or will have more impact on consumers. Five types of sponsorship are noteworthy nowadays: stadium naming rights, tournament sponsorship, broadcast sponsorship, team sponsorship, and stadium internal activities. 277 respondents have graded the five sponsorship types according to their effectiveness: very ineffective, ineffective, neither effective nor ineffective, effective and very effective.
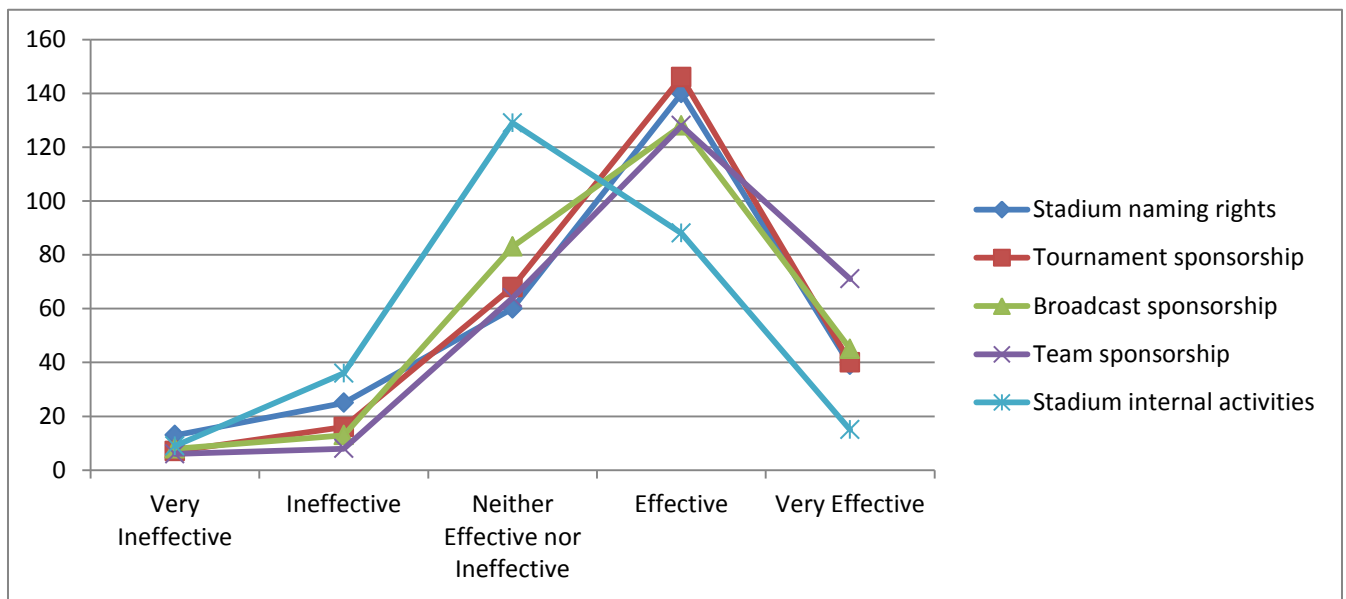

Figure 22: Sponsorship recognition

Figure 22 above shows the results, both male and female respondents, to the sponsorship recognition question. The peak of 146 respondents, that being 53% of the total 277 respondents, is reached by tournament sponsorship. Tournaments are globally perceived as a way of making it at the top of the designated sport. As such, they are the most followed event in the field of sports and, therefore, official sponsors of a tournament get the most attention from the sport/tournament fans. Nowadays, sponsor companies cannot afford to be the only official sponsor of a larger tournament. For example, for the 2014 FIFA World Cup the official sponsors were; Adidas, Coca-Cola, Hyundai-Kia motors, Emirates, Sony and Visa. With such a strategy, sponsor companies can cut their sponsorship and marketing expenses. They can still alter a consumer's way of purchase and brand awareness as long as they do not directly compete with each other.

The second most effective way of sponsorship, according to the results, is the stadium naming rights. A number of 140 respondents, 50% of the total 277 respondents, have chosen that naming a stadium of a sports team or a stadium for individual players has a great impact on consumers behavior. Sports fans tend to think of the stadium of their favorite sports team/player as a fortress, where they feel at home and undefeated. Sponsor companies saw this trend in the consumers' way of thinking and already started to finance stadium naming rights. For example, Heinz Field stadium named after H.J. Heinz Company for the American football team Pittsburgh Steelers and the Emirates stadium named after Fly Emirates Company for the Arsenal Football Club. By knowing the name of the stadium of their favorite sports team/player, consumers can easily relate to the sponsor company and think of it as their best choice of designated purchase decision.

However, this kind of sponsorship strategies can be a "double-edged sword". If after the sponsorship agreement is signed the sports team starts to lose their ground against their opponents, the sponsor company will be perceived by the consumers as negative. Nonetheless, extensive financial investment that, usually, comes with the stadium naming rights can reorganize and reestablish the sports team to be even more effective in their field of sport. That way, sports teams are perceived more positively from their sports fans and, therefore, the sponsor company as well.

Further on, broadcast and team sponsorship share somewhat the same position in the sponsorship recognition dilemma. For the broadcast sponsorship a total of 173 (62%) respondents have chosen the answers "effective" and "very effective". As for the team sponsorship, a total of 199 respondents (72%) have chosen the same answers and, therefore, team sponsorship is at the third place of the sponsorship recognition, according to the respondents. Stadium internal activities are at the last place with most of the respondents being undecided regarding its effectiveness on sponsorship recognition.

Nowadays there are various sponsorship methods available for companies to attract consumers' attention. However, the problem lays what method or type of sponsorship has the most impact on consumers' behavior. 273 respondents were asked to evaluate the impact of five methods, those are media and television, opportunities with branding, increase in fan base, development of sports teams and financial benefits for both parties.
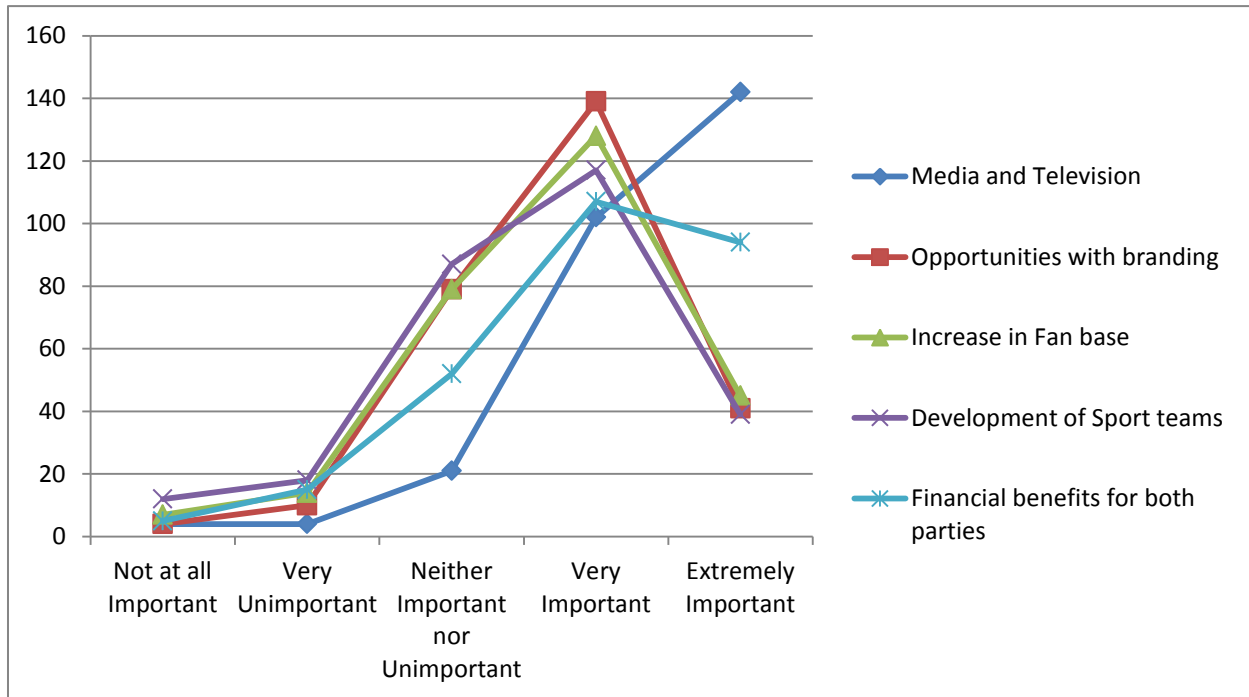

Figure 23: Major factor for the increase in sponsorship in sports

Ever since the existence of television sporting events have developed into a whole different level. "There's no denying it, the sporting world has never been so illuminated under the media spotlight"(BBC, 2010). With the help of media, sport is globally available with just a click of the mouse or TV remote. In addition, going to stadium matches has become expensive for sports fans, therefore, is easier and cheaper to watch sports on, for example, television. These are the reason respondents have chosen "Media and Television" as the major factor for the increase in sponsorship in sports. 244 (90%) of the respondents have graded media and television as "very important" and "extremely important" as the factor of the sponsorship increase in sports. The result did not come as a surprise since commercial breaks between sports matches have become expensive than ever before. For example, only a 30 second commercial in the period of the American Football final game, Super Bowl, is worth $4 million in 2014. Naturally, the price of the commercial is mostly affected by the importance of the sports event. Super Bowl was the most watched event in USA in 2013 with 108 million viewers (Forbes, 2014). Most of the fans are of the opinion that the investment in

such a sponsorship strategy is not worth it. However, no one can deny the fact that if a sponsor company invests into a 30 second commercial while Super Bowl is on TV, the brand name of the company will be viewed by 108 million sport fans. In some way this is playing it safe, the marketing analyst from Siltanen& Partners, Rob Siltanen says.

Other factors affecting the increase of sponsorship in sports have almost the same outcome according to the respondents. Opportunities with branding may well be ranked second as 139 (51%) of the respondents have graded it "very important". Indeed, there are vast options for sponsor companies to attract consumers' attention via sports sponsorship. One of them is as mentioned earlier, media and television. However, the most common way to advertise a brand name in sports is through; uniform branding, stadium advertisement, radio advertisement, sport celebrity endorsements and tournament naming rights. Interesting enough, the sports celebrity endorsement does not seem to have the anticipated effect on consumers' behavior. A study conducted by Alan J. Bush, Craig A. Martin and Victoria D. Bush, based on the opinion of 218 adolescents, suggest that "there is no significant relationship between athlete role models and complaining behavior or product switching"(Behavioral targeting blog, 2012). Therefore, the idea "if it is good enough for them/him/her it is good enough for me" does not hold anymore. This may also be because such advertising comes with a lot of risks because of the constant flow of scandals coming from the world of sport.

Regarding other factors, increase in fan base was ranked third with 46% of the respondents grading it "very important". Financial benefits for both parties still are considered one of the major factors as 34% of the respondents gave it the "extremely important" grade. This is also one of the main reasons why sports teams/players sign contracts with various sports companies. Sponsorship companies get to attract more consumers and thus increase in revenue and sports teams/players get financial benefits.

Further on, connection between the sponsor company and its consumers is the reason why marketing exists. Through marketing strategies, sponsor companies are trying to show to the consumers that they can satisfy their every need. Thus, consumer satisfaction is the base point of the sponsor company profit.
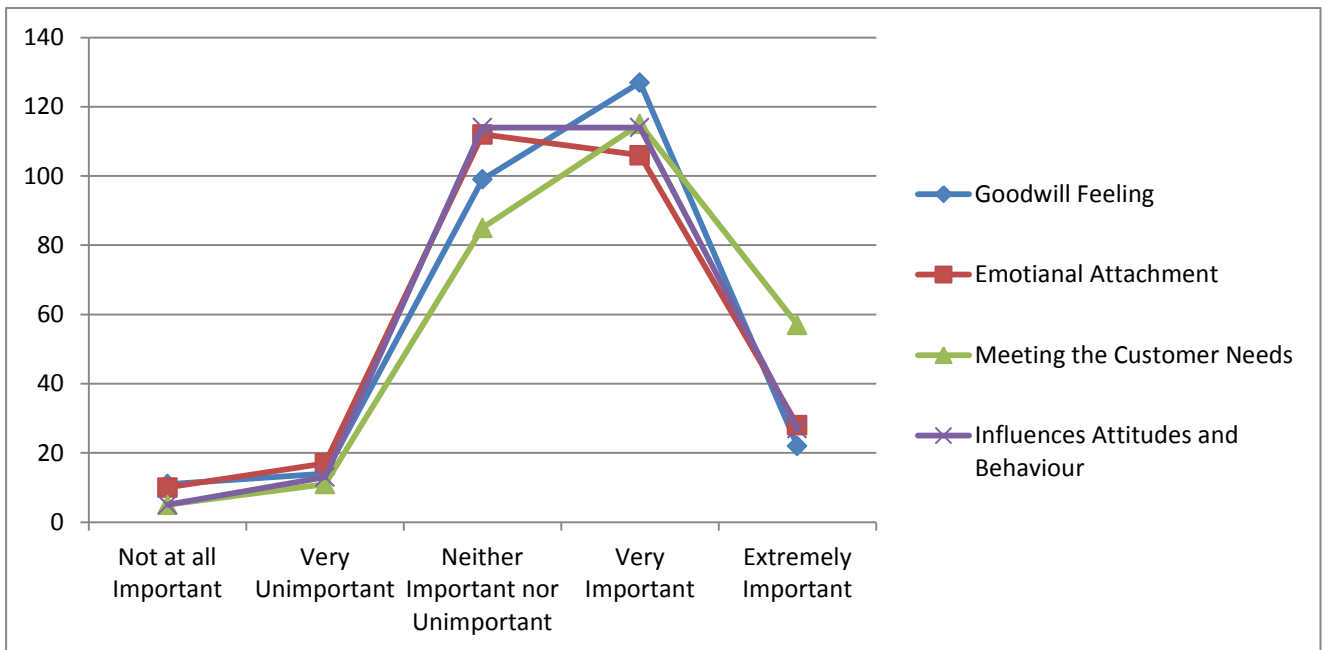
Figure 24: Connection between a consumer and a sponsor

Figure 24 above shows the results to the question "What in your opinion is the main reason that a connection between a consumer and a sponsor is successful?". Respondents had four choices to choose from and grade them on a scale from 1 (Not at all important) to 5 (Extremely important). The four connecting factors are goodwill feeling, emotional attachment, meeting customer needs and influences attitudes and behavior.

As expected, 172 (61%) respondents, of a total of 273, have graded "Meeting customer needs" as the most crucial factor impacting the connection between a sponsor company and its customers. Ross Beard, a contributor to the Client Heartbeat Blog (2014), clarifies in a simple matter of six reasons why customer satisfaction is crucial for sponsor companies:

1) It is a leading indicator of consumer repurchases intentions and loyalty

2) It is a point of differentiation

3) It reduces customer churn

4) It increases customer lifetime value

5) It reduces negative word of mouth

6) It is cheaper to retain customers than acquire new ones

Furthermore, a goodwill feeling, which is a positive feeling between the customer and the sponsor company, has reached the highest point in the grading system having a 127 (46%) votes as a "very important" factor. However, this could also relate to the fact that positive feeling between a consumer and the sponsor company can only be obtained through customer satisfaction. As mentioned before, a positive customer satisfaction index can only mean bigger revenue and profit for the sponsor company, a "win-win situation".

Emotional attachment and influences attitudes and behavior share the last place in the grading system as not important factors in the connection between a customer and the sponsor company.

6. Conclusion

This chapter concludes the thesis and is organized as follows. Firstly, the summary of the sports sponsorship process will be explained. Then, the research is briefly summarized and the main findings are presented which are followed with limitations of the study.

In order to illustrate the process, a theoretical conceptual model is developed. Hence, the conceptual model displays the sports sponsorship process from the objectives through selecting process and measurement of sports sponsorship effectiveness. When designing a sponsorship program the first stage is to carefully outline the sponsorship objectives. Due to the different range of definitions and classifications of sponsorship, the concept of sponsorship also offers several objectives which can be utilized in different kinds of situations. Sponsorship is one form of promotion where the sponsorship objectives should be linked to the broader promotional planning process and its objectives. These objectives serve in order to achieve the higher marketing goals which in turn originate from the objectives of the organization. Corporate related objectives along with tile marketing objective of business relations, as well as the media objectives of generate visibility and publicity are four commonly stated objectives. Each of these objectives contains a certain number of sub-objectives which can be seen in Table 1. After the objectives are set, selection of the specific sports sponsorship is a next step of sports sponsorship program. Selecting an appropriate choice deals with matching the brand to a choice that is related to the brand's attributes, benefits, or image in a natural way. Choice of sports sponsorship should be closely related to the interests of the target market. The last stage of sports sponsorship program is the measurement of sports sponsorship effectiveness. At this point, companies measure the return of the invested program. It's not always necessary that the main goal is the increase of profit, it can be the case of evaluating the effectiveness of the sponsorship agreement. Companies may investigate if they have received the right rate of exposure or the right number of tickets from the sponsored team or club. Another evaluation method is to look over the percent of invited clients that appear on the sponsorship activities to see if the interest tends to decrease. The communication results, including awareness and attitudes, can also be noticed before and after a specific sports event in order to evaluate the effectiveness. In the end, companies go through the sponsorship costs annually and discuss if the company should sponsor more or less the following year.

The analysis of the surveyed data has discovered that in terms of brand awareness a high recall ability and recognition of the brand among the people who consider themselves a sports fan exist. With the analysis of the questionnaire, the result shows that as expected, man present a better brand recall than women and young people have also a better brand recall than older people. Concerning the sponsor recall, brand name followed with color of the kit are most important factors that help people recall sponsor of their team/player. These results indicate that the combination between visual colors with the brand name is the most powerful tool for brand awareness in sports marketing. Furthermore, the study has confirmed that placement of the sponsor on the kit has higher brand recall than placement of the sponsor in the stadium when it comes to team/player recognition. These results could also relate to the fact that fans mostly watch sports games of their favorite team/player via television. Therefore, the stadium advertisement is less noticeable since the team/player is in the spotlight during the entire game. Another fact which can explain the difference of brand recall between the two mentioned subjects is the freedom vision for the direct audience and the vision focused for the indirect audience. The people in the stadium have a wide field vision. They are free to choose what they want to look in the game environment, while the viewers are less free and less autonomous. They are under the influence of the channel because the channel decides on which elements will be broadcast (game, players, coaches, fans, replays...).

Concerning the effect of brand awareness on customers purchase decision the results suggest that the sponsorship of a favorite team/player has no effect on the consumer's behavior. Sponsor companies spend an extensive amount of time, energy and financial resources to acquire permission to sponsor a sports team or player for a single goal, selling more of their products. However, the sponsorship does not seem to have an effect on the consumers final purchase decision and therefore the sponsorship is meaningless and does not bring the sponsor company additional funds. Why do companies do sponsor a sports team/player if it means more expenses than profit? Jack Ewing, analyst from Bloomberg Business Week, is of the opinion that sponsor companies tend to sponsor because international publicity and that they are doing so at relatively low cost as they usually find sport talent before it is globally recognized (Bloomberg, 2007). Another explanation of negative results regarding on customers purchase decision presented a consulting agency CiV. CiV has published the result of the survey in which Croatian sponsorship market was analyzed. Based on CiV's findings, Croatian companies invest around 50 percent of sponsorship budgets in sports. That is still a

much lower percentage than in the world, where, as CiV states, 68 percent of all sponsorship money is dedicated to sports. CiV also came to the conclusion that sponsorship in Croatia is used around 30 percent worse that it is the international praxis. The main reasons for this are supposed to be the fact that a lot of Croatian companies use sponsorship just for gaining visibility and that in some companies it is not clearly known who (which department) is responsible for sponsorship. They added also that in Croatia around 90 percent of companies still only mainly focus on the media aspect (CiV 2013.).

Since Croatian citizens are a majority among the respondents of the conducted survey it should be taken in concern that this is the reason why the result show sports sponsorship as a useless tool for consumer buying decision.

Regarding the effect of sports sponsorship on brand image, the analysis has brought up that respondents have to a great extent a positive attitude toward sponsoring brands. The study has also shown that within the framework of a sponsorship, a transfer of attributes through associations occurs. Even though emotionally positively affected, this cannot be congruently transferred to effects in purchasing habits which this research proved. Nevertheless, a positive attitude to sports sponsorship of a particular target audience has a positive effect on the linked associations with a sponsor's brand, can also be affirmed in terms of positive associations.

Type of sponsorship program is always a dilemma for every company. Results show that in respondent's opinion there is a small difference among what they think is the effective sponsorship programs. Stadium naming rights, tournament sponsorship and broadcast sponsorship have more or less the same effect on respondents' sponsorship recognition. Team sponsorship differs and has a significant result among respondents opinion to be the most effective tool for the sponsorship recognition. Fact that can explain this difference is that teams and players are main factors in sport and tournament sponsorship, stadium names and broadcast sponsorship are just a prelude. Another fact is the duration of sponsorship exposure, the longest duration of exposure, the higher effect it will be. In sports, teams and players are always in the main focus and the rest always fall into the second plan. The same story is with the sponsorship methods. Opportunities with branding increase in fan base, development of sport team and financial benefits are all important factors that affect the increase of sponsorship sports but media and television is the tool that brought everything to a "higher level". Furthermore, results show that the main factor for the successful connection between a sponsor and a consumer is "meeting the consumer needs". There is nothing better than a

satisfied consumer. Customers have the need to feel special and privileged from the sponsor company. Their satisfaction, not only with the company's products, but also with their services and customer relation gravely affects their opinion about the sponsor company.

6.1. Limitations of the study

Critique can be pointed towards the settings of the experiment and follow up the study. It can be argued that results are somewhat biased due to possible extraneous variables such as respondents being distracted because the place where the questionnaire was filled is maybe not be an appropriate. It is possible that the brand recall and consumer behavior would be higher if the experiment was conducted in a laboratory setting since in that case respondents would be able to really think about their answers. The questionnaires could be distributed to a higher number of respondents further strengthen the research even though 272 were enough to be able to statistically analyze the results. Moreover, the questionnaire was filled up in English and as mentioned, the majority of respondents are Croatians. It is possible that some question weren't perfectly understood.

6.2. Future research

During the research, the author has encountered several interesting issues connected to the purpose of this thesis and unexplored that could affect the sport sponsorship effect. For example, the effectiveness of sponsorship is it related to the event's result (if the team or player wins or loses). Or the effectiveness of an event can be due to climatic variables (wind, rain, sun, mist...). These disruptive elements can limit the visibility of sponsor logos or reduce the rate of participation in the event?

Another interesting area of research will be the importance of the role played by environmental factors (such as the music in the stadium, the speaker, the behavior of groups of fans?

Another interesting topic will be to make cultural comparisons in terms of effectiveness of sponsorship. The popularity of a sport can change from one society to another, as well as reactions to sponsorship may be different.

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Annexes

Questionnaire used in survey study:

Q1 Gender?

○ Male (1)
○ Female (2)

Q2 What is your age group?

○ 18-25 (1)
○ 26-35 (2)
○ 36-45 (3)
○ 45 or older (4)

Q3 Highest education completed

○ Less than high school (1)
○ High school (2)
○ Bachelor degree (3)
○ Master degree (4)
○ PHD (5)

Q4 Do you consider yourself a sports fan?

○ Yes (1)
○ No (2)

Q5 How many times per month do you watch sport?

- ❍ 1-2 (1)
- ❍ 3-5 (2)
- ❍ 6-10 (3)
- ❍ More than 10 times (4)
- ❍ Never (5)

If Never Is Selected, Then Skip To Q7

Q6 When I watch the sport I usually watch

- ❍ Alone (1)
- ❍ In a company of 1 friend (2)
- ❍ In a company of 2-5 friends (3)
- ❍ In a company of 6 friends or more (4)

Q7 Do you own any special feelings towards one specific team/player?

- ❍ Yes (1)
- ❍ No (2)

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To Q24

Q8 When I talk about my favourite team/player, I usually say "we" rather than "they".

- ❍ Not at all like me (1)
- ❍ Not much like me (2)
- ❍ Somewhat like me (3)
- ❍ Quite a lot like me (4)

Q9 I would never change my feelings towards my favourite team/player.

❍ Definitely will not (1)
❍ Probably will not (2)
❍ Don't know (3)
❍ Probably will (4)
❍ Definitely will (5)

Q10 I would publically defend my favourite team/player.

❍ Definitely will not (1)
❍ Probably will not (2)
❍ Don't know (3)
❍ Probably will (4)
❍ Definitely will (5)

Q11 I would recommend others to support my favourite team/player.

❍ Definitely will not (1)
❍ Probably will not (2)
❍ Don't know (3)
❍ Probably will (4)
❍ Definitely will (5)

Q12 I will bring/wear my favourite team/player product with me when I watch their match.

❍ Never (1)
❍ Sometimes (2)
❍ Often (3)
❍ All of the Time (4)

Q13 I know which company sponsor the kit of my favourite team/player.

❍ Yes (1)
❍ No (2)

Q14 How do you recall sponsor of your team/player? Which of following factors help you identify?

	Very Unlikely (1)	Unlikely (2)	Undecided (3)	Likely (4)	Very Likely (5)
Colour of the kit (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Brand name (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Notoriety of the sponsor (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Size of the sponsor (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Place of the sponsor on the kit (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Place of the sponsor in the stadium (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q15 My buying decision will be very much based on whether it is the sponsor of my favourite/player team or not.

- ◯ Definitely will not (1)
- ◯ Probably will not (2)
- ◯ Don't know (3)
- ◯ Probably will (4)
- ◯ Definitely will (5)

Q16 When I shop for product and services, I will purposely look for those sold by sponsor of my favourite team/player.

- ◯ Definitely will not (1)
- ◯ Probably will not (2)
- ◯ Don't know (3)
- ◯ Probably will (4)
- ◯ Definitely will (5)

Q17 If my favorite team/player change sponsor it would affect my purchase decisions

- ◯ Definitely will not (1)
- ◯ Probably will not (2)
- ◯ Don't know (3)
- ◯ Probably will (4)
- ◯ Definitely will (5)

Q18 Suppose that you were choosing between two brands that are alike in terms of price and quality. One of them you recall is a sponsor of your favourite team/player and one is not. Which brand would you choose?

- ◯ My favorite team/player brand (1)
- ◯ The other brand (2)
- ◯ Either one, it doesn't matter (3)

Q19 I would never buy a product from the sponsor of my rival team/player.

○ Definitely will not (1)
○ Probably will not (2)
○ Don't know (3)
○ Probably will (4)
○ Definitely will (5)

Q20 Suppose that you were choosing between two brands that are alike in terms of price and quality. One of them you recall is a sponsor of yours rival team/player and one is not. Which brand would you choose?

○ Rivals team/player brand (1)
○ The other brand (2)
○ Either one, it doesn't matter (3)

Q21 Through the sponsorship of my team/player, I am more positive towards the sponsor.

○ Very Unlikely (1)
○ Unlikely (2)
○ Undecided (3)
○ Likely (4)
○ Very Likely (5)

Q22 The sponsorship of the team/player makes me pay more attention to marketing activities of the sponsor.

○ Very Unlikely (1)
○ Unlikely (2)
○ Undecided (3)
○ Likely (4)
○ Very Likely (5)

Q23 I think the existing sponsor and my team/player fit together.

❍ Strongly Disagree (1)

❍ Disagree (2)

❍ Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)

❍ Agree (4)

❍ Strongly Agree (5)

Q24 I think sponsorship is a good method of supporting a team/player.

❍ Strongly Disagree (1)

❍ Disagree (2)

❍ Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)

❍ Agree (4)

❍ Strongly Agree (5)

Q25 It is good to see companies sponsor sports.

❍ Strongly Disagree (1)

❍ Disagree (2)

❍ Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)

❍ Agree (4)

❍ Strongly Agree (5)

Q26 I am more likely to buy products from companies that are official sponsors

❍ Very Unlikely (1)

❍ Unlikely (2)

❍ Undecided (3)

❍ Likely (4)

❍ Very Likely (5)

Q27 The sponsorship allows me to think of the sponsor next time I go buy sports products.

O Strongly Disagree (1)

O Disagree (2)

O Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)

O Agree (4)

O Strongly Agree (5)

Q28 What types of sponsorship do you find most recognizable?

	Very Ineffective (1)	Ineffective (2)	Neither Effective nor Ineffective (3)	Effective (4)	Very Effective (5)
Stadium naming rights (1)	O	O	O	O	O
Tournament sponsorhip (2)	O	O	O	O	O
Broadcast sponsorship (3)	O	O	O	O	O
Team sponsorhip (4)	O	O	O	O	O
Stadium internal activities (5)	O	O	O	O	O

Q29 What in your opinion is the major factor for the increase in sponsorship in sports?

	Not at all Important (1)	Very Unimportant (2)	Neither Important nor Unimportant (3)	Very Important (4)	Extremely Important (5)
Media and Television (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Opportunities with branding (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Increase in Fan base (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Development of Sport teams (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Financial benefits for both parties (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q30 What in your opinion is the main reason that a connection between a consumer and a sponsor is successful?

	Not at all Important (1)	Very Unimportant (2)	Neither Important nor Unimportant (3)	Very Important (4)	Extremely Important (5)
Goodwill Feeling (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Emotional Attachment (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Meeting the Customer Needs (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Influences Attitudes and Behaviour (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍