RELATIONSHIP OF TEAM PERFORMANCE, STARS AND TEAM IDENTITY TOWARDS PURCHASE INTENTION OF THE SPONSORS' PRODUCTS

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ABSTRACT

Businesses have various intentions in sponsoring a sport team. The purpose of this research is to 1) better understand relationships of the three attributes i.e. team performance, presence of the star players, and team identity and the purchase intention of the sponsors' products as well as 2) identify the links between those attributes a sponsorship. A quantitative survey research was conducted in Chonburi, Thailand. A series of hypotheses testing relating the sport sponsor team to team performance, presence of the star players, and team identity have been tested. The result showed that team performance, presence of star players and team identity influence the consumer's purchase intention to buy the products. While amongst the three attributes, there is a significant relationship between them. Product placed with images of a sport team has a positively affected on consumer's purchase intention. Image with a presence of the star players and team identity has a relatively higher ability to predict intention to purchase of the consumers. The businesses therefore should pay a lot of attention not only the team identity but also team performance and presence of the stars in the team when choosing to sponsor any team. Selecting the right team could encourage a positive outcome, i.e. increase in sales of the company's products.

Keywords: Sport sponsorship, Team performance, Team identity, Purchase intention, Sport marketing

Introduction

Nowadays physical activities such as sports are not just an ordinary element of your daily entertainment. Sports are now playing a big part as a revenue generator in the world's economy (Collignon, Sultan, & Santander, 2011). Sports industry is composed of different sections, consists of manufacturing goods, services, and a combination of activities with business, mass media and politics (Blain, 2002). Many businesses are now using sport to market their products in order to gain competitive advantages. They will need to take a bigger stride in the competition (Collignon et al., 2011).

Sport has been integrated into Thai national strategic plan since 2007. From then, there are six national sport strategic plans. The current one names "The sixth Thai national sport strategic plan 2560-2564 B.E." or "The sixth plan". The sixth plan has been enforced with the vision to "develop sports to be international excellences and to foster sport professionals and create economic values" (Sport Authority of Thailand, 2019). Since the year 2007, the sport authority of Thailand has attempted to build professional sport, especially Thailand professional football leagues. It has created economic values to every provinces starting with local leagues to

national leagues. Chonburi has Chonburi football club that is successful in terms of number of supporting fans as well as the ranking (Chonburi Football Club, 2019). Number of supporting fans in Chonburi shows that Chonburi is one of the area that sport sponsorship could probably influence on the purchases' intention of the sponsored products.

There are several ideal reasons that could explain how successful the strategy has become. It is therefore very appealing to find out whether or not the strategy using these attributes-team performance, presence of the star players, and team identity-relate to consumer's purchase intention.

Objectives of the study

This study is an extension of previous work on team performance, presence of star player and team identity to consumer's purchase intention. Purchase intention on sport sponsored product and non-sport sponsored product of a specific product available in the market. There are two main objectives of this research, which are:

1. To understand the relationship of the three attributes i.e. team performance, presence of the star players, and team identity and the purchase intention of the sponsors' products
2. To identify the links between team performance, presence of the star players, and team identity and a sponsor selection.

Literature Reviews

Sponsorship

Sponsorship is a business relationship (Jobber, 2004 b) between two parties who are the sponsor and its stakeholder and the sponsors and its stakeholders (Olkkonen, 1999). The sponsor gives financial support (Dolphin, 2003), resources or services (Jobber, 2004 a) to a leisure or sport activity,

or an individual or company, which offers in return some rights and association that may be used for commercial advantages (Jobber, 2004 a). Hence, the sponsoring companies have a wide range of entities and activities to choose from, for example, community activities, charities, teams, tournaments, arts and sports (Bennett, 1999). The most popular sponsorship medium is sports sponsorship (Bennett, 1999), which accounted for over 75 percent of all sponsorship (Dolphin, 2003).

According to Dolphin (2003) sponsorship is an activity associating the organization with a third party. This activity designed to achieve certain business objectives, which are to enhancing corporate image, increasing brand awareness, stimulating sales, and leveraging corporate reputation. Tripodi (2001) and Walliser (2003) mentioned that the most important reason why companies participate in sponsorship is to increase company's awareness and enhance the company's image. Therefore, to be successful in sponsorship is to meet these objectives. To maximize a sponsorship investment, it is recommended to employ together with the four elements of the traditional promotional mixes including advertisement, public relations, sales promotion, and personal selling (Dolphin 2003).

Consumer behavior is also an important broad area of the research, this does not only include marketing, but also the psychology and sociology. It is the study of the process involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use or dispose of products services, ideas or experiences to satisfy needs and desires (Solomon, Bamossy, Askegarrd, & Hogg, 2006).

Team performance

According to sports psychology literatures, there are two kinds of emotions that have received much attention (Wann &

Branscombe, 1993; Heider, 1958; Cialdini et al., 1976), namely, Basking-in-reflected-glory (BIRG) and Cutting-off-reflected-failure (CORF). Both are driven by the desire to maintain a positive self-identity (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). The study by Cialdini et al. (1976) examined the BIRG effect when the tendency to BIRG by publicly announcing one's associations with successful others. In contrast, the CORF response is an ego-protection technique in which there is a desire to distance one's self from an unattractive source (Heider, 1958).

Team identification refers to one's level of attachment to, or concern about, a particular sports team (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). Wann and Branscombe (1993) found that fans' level of identification with a team moderated their tendencies to display BIRG or CORF in their reactions to wins and losses. This allows sport to clearly distinct between the win or loses but there are also tendency for both effects to emerge.

Presence of star players

A team with star members can help to build the equity of the sponsoring brands because team member attractiveness is one factor that leads to supportive behavior of the fans (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998), which resulted in support of the sponsor's products. A losing team with no stars might be expected to lose the support, but a losing team with a star should be expected to win, at least some of the time. Any other outcome would generate inconsistent stimuli (Berlyne, 1954). Therefore, there are different arguments within the subject whether the team needed a star in order to win or lose their fans.

Team identity

On the topic of a team becoming a moderate team identity. Team identification can be determined by many different behaviors; game attendance, the amount of money spent on team licensed merchandise (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998; Wann & Branscombe, 1993) and the inclination to purchase a sponsor's products (Madrigal, 2000). It is proposed that the relationship of team performance and the presence of stars in the team with consumer response towards the sponsor will be moderated by the consumer's degree of identification with the team through a fan's tendency to BIRG or CORF (Wann & Branscombe, 1993).
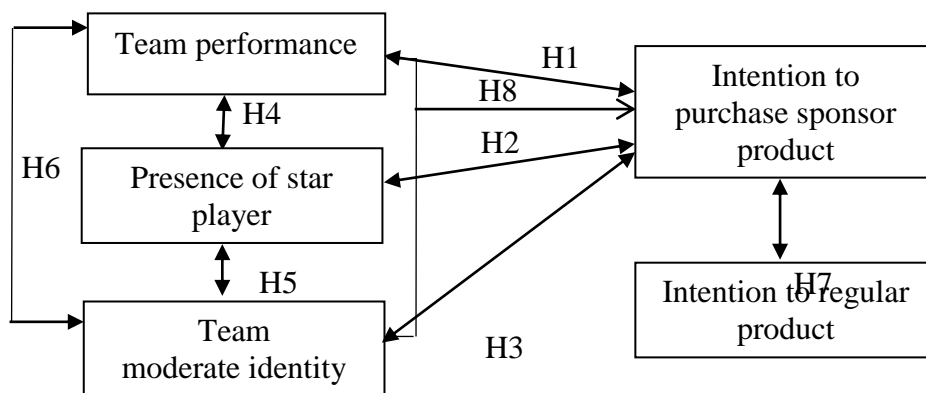
Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses that were formulated according the research are:

H1: Intention to purchase the sponsored products and the team performance are related.

H2: Intention to purchase the sponsored products and the presence of the star player are related.

H3: Intention to purchase the sponsored products and the team identity are related.

Hypothesis 1, 2 and 3 is formulated to identify whether or not the sponsored products and the attributes are related.

H4: In comparison to team performance of sponsored products and the presence of the star player is positively related.

H5: In comparison to team performance of sponsored products and team identity is positively related.

H6: In comparison to team identity of sponsored products and presence of the star player is positively related.

Hypothesis 4,5 and 6 is formulated to identify whether or not between the attributes it related.

H7: There is difference between sponsored products and regular products on the purchase intention of consumers.

Hypothesis 7 is formulated to compare the two images of sponsored products and regular products are different according to the consumer purchase intention.

H8: The three attributes can predict the purchase intention of the sponsored products.

Hypothesis 8, is formulated in order to identify if the three attributes could predict the purchase intention of the sponsored products.

Research Methodology

The contribution of this research is to better

understand why a consumer chooses a certain product that is influenced by the image of sponsored products. This research employed quantitative approach using questionnaire survey to gather the necessary data. The questionnaire was gone through validity and reliability tests with the score above 0.8 for all sections of the questionnaire. The sample size was calculated using a formula for an unknown population (Glenn, 1992) plus some reservation. The total of 400 questionnaires was distributed and collected using convenient sampling in Bang Sean, Chonburi, Thailand.

The questionnaire includes questions relating to the attributes and the intention to purchase, by using the seven levels Likert scale. The questionnaire included photos of sponsored products with two different football teams. After obtained all the necessary data, data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics i.e. Pearson Correlation, Paired Sample t-test and Multiple Linear Regression.

Results

Descriptive analysis

The respondents of this research are 76.75% male, and 23.25% female. Mostly aged between 18-25 years old, which is 53.25% of the respondents. The 88.25% of the respondents support at least one football team.

Hypotheses testing

Table 1 The comparison of Intention to Purchase of sponsored and regular products on each
　　　　independent variables (H1-H3)

Dependent variable: intention to purchase	Pearson correlation (r)	Sig.
Sponsored product		
Team performance	.432**	.000
Presence of star	.502**	.000
Team identity	.503**	.000
Regular product		
Team performance	.115*	.022
Presence of star	.210**	.000

Table 1 (Continued)

Dependent variable: intention to purchase	Pearson correlation (r)	Sig.
Team identity	.213**	.000

* Correlation is significance at the level 0.05 level (2-tailed)

** Correlation is significance at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 suggested the results as follows:
H1: Pearson Correlation value (r) between Intention to purchase and Team Performance is 0.432**; with significant value is .000 = < 0.01. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Where also, Pearson Correlation value (r) between Intention to purchase regular and Team Performance is 0.115* with significant value is .022 = < 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. These implied that team performance has a positive relationship with intention to purchase of sponsored products. However, the products with image of the team presence on the package has a higher association with the team performance.
H2: Pearson Correlation value between Intention to purchase and Presence of star player is 0.502** with significant value .000 = < 0.01. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. While looking at the product with no images; Pearson Correlation value between Intention to purchase regular product and presence of star player is

0.210** with significant value is .000 = < 0.01. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. These implied that Presence of the star has a positive relationship with intention to purchase of sponsored products. However, the products with image of the team presence on the package has a higher associations. H3: Pearson Correlation value between Intention to purchase and Team Identity is 0.503** with the significant value is .000 = < 0.01. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected Whereas regular product, Pearson Correlation value between Intention to purchase regular product and Team Identity is 0.213** with the significant value of .000 = < 0.01. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. These implied that Team Identity has a positive relationship with intention to purchase of both sponsored and regular products. However, the sponsored products has a relatively higher association when compared to the regular products.

Table 2 Correlation between Team Performance, Presence of Star and Team Identity (H4-H6)

	Pearson correlation (r)	**Sig.**
team performance x presence of star	.692**	.000
team performance x team identity	.677**	.000
Team identity x presence of star	.756**	.000

** Correlation is significance at the 0.01 level (1-tailed)

H4: Pearson Correlation value between team performance and presence of star player is 0.692** with significant value of .000 = < 0.01. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected as there is a positive association between the two variables.

H5: Pearson Correlation value between team performance and team identity is 0.677** with significant value of .000 = < 0.01.

Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected as there is a positive association between the two variables.

H6: Pearson Correlation value between team identity and presence of star player is 0.756** with significant value of .000 = < 0.01. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected as there is a positive association between the two variables.

Table 3 Differences of Intention to Purchase between Sponsored and Regular Products

	n	$\bar{X}$	SD	Std. error mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Sponsored product & regular product	400	.78	1.67	.08	9.43	399	.000

H7: Paired sample t-test was used to test this hypothesis and the result showed that between the sponsored product and regular product is t = 9.43 at the significant value of .000 = < 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected i.e. there is a significant difference between sponsored product and regular product on purchase intention of consumers. Consumers are intending to purchase the sponsored products more than the regular products.

Table 3 Relationship of Team Performance, Team Identity and Presence of the Star Players, and Intention to Purchase

Variables	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	R	R^2	R^2 Change	t	Sig.
	B	Std. error	Beta					
Constant	2.643	0351					7.537	.000
Team performance	-.107	.071	-.107	.237[a]	.056	.056	-1.501	.134
Team identity	.181	.092	.158				1.963	.050
Presence of star player	.221	.105	.167				2.113	.035

For the last hypothesis H8, a Multiple Linear Regression was employed.

Three variables: Team performance (X1), Team identity (X2) and Presence of star player (X3) were able to predict consumer's purchase intention is reliable at 29.1% (R2 = .291). F is 54.231 and Sig value is .000 < 0.05, this indicates that combination of these variables, Team Identity, Team Performance, and presence of star significantly can predict the dependent variable. The result also shows that; Durbin-Watson is 2.077, which is more than 1.5 explains that there is no autocorrelation. However, once considering each variable, Presence of the Star Players and Team Identity can be predicted the intention to purchase of the sponsored products with significant value of 0.035 and 0.05, while the team performance was not a good predictor.

This hypothesis stated that purchase intention of product containing images could be predicted by team performance, presence of star player and team identity. The result showed that the purchase intention to choose the sponsored product was influenced by two variables; team identity and presence of the star player in the team. The result also indicated a positive outcome with the high rating of the R-value. Also, the coefficient of determination (R^2) value determines that it is reliable at 29.1%.

Discussion

The eight hypotheses were tested and supported. The intention to purchase the sponsored product is related to the team performance, presence of star player, and team identity. This suggested that the consumer's intention to choose a product is influenced by team performance, presence of star player, and team identity. This also supports the Basking-in-reflected-glory (BIRG) and Cutting-off-reflected-failure (CORF) theories (Wann & Branscombe, 1993; Heider,1958; Cialdini et al., 1976), and provides an evidence that consumers evaluate the team as whole and consumer's attachment to the specific sport team. The results of this research also consistent to Fisher and Wakefield (1998) who have mentioned that team performance has an important influence on fan's intention to purchase the sponsored product as well as Berlyne (1954) who stated that at least having one star player in the team, even though stimuli on win or loose would be inconsistent is related to the purchase intention. This proved that the three attributes associate to the purchase intention of the sponsored product. Whereas H4, H5, and H6 indicated that the three attributes are supported and there are relationships amongst them. This also consistent with the BIRG & CORF theories that it does effect one another (Wann & Branscombe, 1993; Heider, 1958; Cialdini et al., 1976).

Further, it can also be concluded that there are differences intention to purchase between the sponsored product and regular product i.e. image of sponsored team placed on the packaging has a higher likelihood to buy if the consumers are fans of the team. Last but not least, the result also suggested that the purchase intention of product with sponsored images can be predicted through team identity and presence of star players. This supports Fisher and Wakefield (1998) who said team star member attractiveness is one factor that leads to fans' supportive behavior, including support of the sponsor's product.

Results from this study shows that sponsorship is important. Sponsors should pay attention to these three attributes

especially team identity and the stars in the team they are sponsoring. Choosing the right team will bring positive outcomes to the company. The findings of this research showed that there are relationships between team performance, team identity and presence of the star players. Sponsoring a team with star player will contribute to the highest impact because it showed that putting images of the star and the team on the product has a higher influence on purchasing decision of the consumers. Whereas team performance may not have a direct impact on the consumers purchase intention of product because performance of team either winning or losing cannot be predicted, a team might start off winning at the beginning of the season yet finish last on the leagues' table. Therefore a good team to sponsor would be the team with at least a star player and team with good identity.

Limitations and Recommendations for Further Study

This research focuses on the sponsorship as a whole, future research could be conducted by exploring the outcome on what attribute drives each purchase intention. Also, this research collected data from only in Thailand, it may be worth to extend the study to cover other ASEAN countries and compare the results with this research to further understanding about the cultural effects on the purchase intention. Lastly, the future research could also be done to specifically identify the relationship between the attributes together to better understand what causes what to affect one another.

Conclusions

The research had made several important contributions. The research had help clarify the importance of selecting a sport team to sponsor. The different attributes a company needs to take into consideration. It is important to sponsor the team with at least one star player because it has been proven to have a higher impact on the consumer's purchase intention. Followed by the team identity and how well they have placed themselves as social icon. Lastly, the team performance has the least impact on the consumer intention to purchase. This is because it is not possible to correctly predict if the next game the team will win or lose. Therefore, the consumer's intention would shift instantly if the team losses.

After all, there are many more areas that can be looked into in sport marketing. A future research could definitely be done to further identify the significance that could bring a greater outcome for the businesses.

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