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## Effectiveness of the Sponsors and Sporting Events Website

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## **Effectiveness of the Sponsors and Sporting Events Website**

### **Abstract**

Sporting event websites allow for commercial displays to be formed that affect the behavior of fans and visitors to the site and depending on the size of the event, small or medium; it may become your only source of commercial information. This paper studies how an average sporting event sponsor has influences on a web visitor. It proposes a model measuring the buying intention and attitude towards the event and sponsor based on image transmission. Through a structural equation modeling it is determined that the website influences the event and image transmission but not on purchase intent. We conclude that certain strategies be proposed in order to improve the process of marketing the event and sponsors.

**Keywords:** sponsorship; sport event; image transfer; website

## **Effectiveness of the Sponsors and Sporting Events Website**

### **Introduction**

Sports sponsorship has become a tool widely used and considered communication within the company's business strategy. The substantial increase in spending on sponsorship in recent years supports this assertion. International Event Group (IEG, 2014) in its annual report on sponsorship spending estimates that in 2014 spending on global sponsorship again will increase by 4.4%. The figure will reach US\$55.3 billion and there are several reasons that support this which involves communication strategy. For example, Kutintara (2009) points to the emotional alignment that produces the sponsorship with the consumer. Meenaghan (1991) supports that it is less intrusive means. It may be because it is considered as one of the most profitable flexible modes (Novais & Arcodia, 2013) and marketing communication strategies (Dees, Bennett, & Villegas, 2008).

In parallel it has been recognized the importance that the website has in business strategy of events, teams and sports organizations. Firstly, this is because the users of sports websites are less obtrusive to advertising through sponsorship advertising banners. Users are more likely to buy a sponsor's product, or consume the service from a conventional advertiser (Kutintara, 2009). Secondly, because buying tickets online is an important source of income for sports teams and leagues (Ahn, Suh, Lee, & Pedersen, 2014). The website can be used to obtain information, but also to socialize with fans and share interests of different consumers, to forget the daily routine and get away from the problems of everyday life, or to continue purchasing products safely and entries for the sporting event (Hur, Ko, & Valacich, 2007).

The aim of this study is to measure and explain how the effectiveness of the sponsors influence the sporting events website. The research is focused on a medium sized event, the Valencia Open 500. An event whose size is considered preferred object of study in sponsorship (Novais & Arcodia, 2013). The event is part of the global sporting circuit of tennis. This sector accounts for \$ 739 million in sponsorship global spending, both amateur and professional (IEG, 2014). The size of the investment underpins the importance of the study. However, the main reason the work is supported by the fact that the website of a sporting event is often the sole or primary source of information (Suh & Pedersen, 2010), purchase of tickets (Lee, Kim, & Parrish, 2012), or exchange of

experiences. Furthermore, events small or medium size. And it becomes essential when it comes to small international events, when there is less relevant information available in the media.

In summary, the contributions of this work are twofold: (1) development of a conceptual theoretical model based on literature review that explains the influence of the website of the sporting event in the effectiveness of sponsorship. The study will fill a gap which has hitherto not been investigated. (2) Practical implications for sponsors and sporting events managers understand the scope of the actions of patronage and influence on the brand's website. The goal is to select the right to sponsor sporting events.

### ***Literature review about sport websites***

According to Beech, Chadwick and Tapp (2000) it was circa 1991 when the first professional sports teams began using the Internet channel to communicate with consumers and transact with their supporters and the general public. Initially, the websites of sporting events were only used as complementary vehicles for reporting timetables, transport, etc. (Filo, Funk, & Hornby, 2009). The view changed in the first decade of the century (Scholl & Carlson, 2012) and now the website can serve information, but also to socialize with like-minded fans, where it can also serve to forget the daily routine and disconnect the problems of everyday life, and be safely used to continue purchasing products and event tickets (Hur, 2007).

The use of the website by sporting bodies has changed and so has academic research undertaken regarding this topic. It is necessary a theoretical approach to the literature on the sport website to establish a frame of reference for approach to the subject of study. It is important to frame the subject of research within the stream that studies the relationship between the website and sporting event or team. Several articles have classified the studies about the use of website in sporting events and teams (Hur, Ko, & Claussen, 2012; Hur, Ko, & Valacich, 2011). Based on the above studies conducted by Hur, our classification proposes six areas of research with some examples: (1) Articles on Importance and role of the Internet and sports websites (Caskey & Delpy, 1999; RL Smith, Pent, & Pitts 1999). (2) Another area of further research has focused on temporary Study content management oriented marketing on sports web pages (Beech et al., 2000; Brown, 2003; Kriemadis, Terzoudis, & Kartakoullis, 2010). (3) Opportunities in sports marketing websites (Carlson,

Rosenberger, & Muthaly, 2003; Evans & Smith, 2004; Tsuji, Bennett, & Leigh, 2009). (4) Study on users, Their motivations and marketing opportunists and characteristics of online fantasy sports (Davis & Duncan, 2006; Drayer, Shapiro, Dwyer, Morse, & White, 2010; Karg & McDonald, 2011; Ruihley & Hardin, 2011). (5) Studies related to the reporting of sporting events over the Internet (Chalip, Green, & Hill, 2003; Edge et al., 2009). And finally, (6) user behavior of sports websites (Funk, Beaton, & Alexandris, 2012; Hur et al, 2012; Seo & Green, 2008). There is no empirical evidence demonstrating the influence of the website on the effectiveness of sports sponsorship.

Only a few authors have explored the relationship between website to sports sponsorship. Choi & Yoh, (2011) compared the effect of the Internet and television channels on three factors that measure the effectiveness of sponsorship (brand awareness, event-sponsor fit, and purchase intention). Kutintara (2009) explored the effect of segmenting the same factors as the medium (on-site, online, and Both on-site and online). Although these studies have opened a door to a necessary research, thus far no investigation has determined the direct influence of the website on the effectiveness of the image transmission

### ***Sponsorship effectiveness: The image transfer***

The term image transfer is used in marketing literature and sports sponsorship to indicate the sequence by which a sponsor benefits from the inherent attributes of a sporting event. Sports teams and events have personality and attributes associated with your brand. According to Meenaghan (1983) individuals sporting events are associated with certain characteristics. When an activity is sponsored, pictures are transferred to the sponsor, then the attitude you have towards the sponsored is transferred to the sponsor (Grohs, Wagner, & Vsetecka, 2004; Gwinner, 1997; Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Meenaghan, 2001). Just as the brand equity in other areas of marketing (Cornwell & Maignan, 1998; Gwinner, 1997; Keller, 1993).

Keller (2003) defines the attitude toward the sponsor as the overall evaluation towards the brand and organization. Others see it as a bias towards the brand by consumers (Dees et al. 2008; Meenaghan, 2001). What is certain is that this variable has been one of the means most used to measure the effectiveness of sponsorship (Kim, Ko, & Jeffery, 2011; Koo, Quarterman, Jackson, & Suh, 2005; Pappu & Cornwell, 2014; Roy & Cornwell, 2004).

For example, the Formula 1 is associated with the speed, power and precision. Brands product category such as computers and watches could be interested in positioning their brands based on those characteristics and finally the transfer is achieved simultaneously by presenting both fashion brands (Grohs & Reisinger, 2005). Several studies have provided empirical evidence supporting the theory of image transfer for sporting events (Alonso Dos Santos, Calabuig Moreno, Montoro Rios, Valantine, & Emeljanovas, 2014; Grohs, Wagner, & Vsetecka, 2004). Therefore: (H1) The attitude toward the event (sponsored) exerts a positive influence on the attitude toward the sponsor.

### ***Behavioral intention***

The theory of reasoned action (TRA) proposed (Ajzen, 1981) has been used over the years to explain that individuals act and are influenced by their attitudes. In particular, in the area of marketing and sports sponsorship it has been identified that the attitude toward the sponsor directly and positively influence purchase intentions (Lacey, et al., 2007; Pope & Voges, 2000). The study of relationship between the attitude and purchase intent has been utilised years ago in the area of advertising (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989; Shen & Chen, 2007), where the relationship has been previously validated.

Thus, it has been proposed as a valid indicator to measure the effectiveness of sponsorship (Ko, Kim, Claussen, & Kim, 2008). The problem lies mainly in that the measurement of the effectiveness of sponsorship through sales which is not directly attributable to exist due to difficult of control (Lacey et al., 2007). Researchers have trouble isolating the variables that significantly influence the sponsorship relationship and sales (Quester & Farrelly, 1998). Then, to measure the effectiveness of sponsorship the following hypothesis is proposed: H2: The attitude toward the sponsor positively influences the intention to purchase products from the sponsor.

### ***Attitude towards the sport event website***

According says Ahn (2010), attitude toward the website has a fundamental role in marketing: There is a fundamental link between what consumers feel about a website (formalized in attitude) and how they act in relation to the site web through behaviors such as buying products and word of mouth (the behavior).

Again based on the TPB (Ajzen, 1981) we support the hypothesis of the relationship between attitude, behavioral intention and behavior. The attitude towards

the website is a critical factor to predict due to the potential behavior of a user (Ahn, 2010). As stated Tomaseti, Ruiz, and Reynolds (2008) have verified in marketing literature the positive relationship between attitude toward the ad and brand attitude. For example, in studies of Ko et al., (2005). They demonstrate that the attitude toward the website influences the attitude towards the product. An increase in attitude towards the website generates greater interaction with the website and brand, which also leads to more information about the product, in this case the event. Ultimately, a positive impact on the evaluation of the product or service is generated. H3: Developing a positive attitude toward sponsored website influences the development of a positive attitude towards the brand of the event.

Singh Dalal (1999) proposed the concept of attitude towards the website as a measure to evaluate the effect of attitudes toward web homepage on attitudes toward the sponsor of this page. Later, Stevenson, Bruner II, and Kumar (2000) proposed the influence of the web page on the attitude toward the ad. If these previous findings can be applied to web ads, it could extrapolate sporting event sponsorships. Stevenson et al., (2000), backed by Bruner II and Kumar (2000) suggest that the attitude towards the website may be used under the premise of the hierarchy of effects model in conjunction with advertising models to assess the effectiveness ads online. Their findings suggest that the attitude towards the website mediate attitude toward the ad. That is, if a viewer likes the website then it is likely they will be more receptive to ads within your website. So it stands to reason that the affective response to the same website influences the sponsors of the same event. Like the TPB (Ajzen, 1981), the theory of technology acceptance model (TAM) suggests a causal relationship between attitude and behavioral intention (Ahn et al., 2014). And while researchers have examined the web attitude and moderating role on purchase intent, there is still no consensus about its influence (Kim, Kim, & Shin, 2009). H4: Developing a positive attitude toward sponsored website influences the development of a positive attitude toward the sponsor of the event. H5: Attitude towards the website positively influences the intention to purchase products sponsor sporting event.

### **Methodology**

A banner was inserted into the website of the Valencia Open 500 Tennis Professional Tennis Association, this is an annual event held in late October. It has a capacity of 6300 seats and around 61 million viewers around the world (ATP, 2012). The

banner was directed to an online questionnaire auto administered which encouraged 443 surveys which were collected. The questions were formulated in Likert scales with options of 1-5 points.

To measure the attitudes toward a website, an adapted model from Chen and Wells (1999) is used. The scale was based on scales of attitudes toward advertising. The scale was later used and validated in other studies (Ahn, 2010). The scale for measuring attitude toward the event was adapted from Speed and Thompson (2000). It was subsequently validated by Dhurup and Rabale, (2012). The attitude toward the sponsor was measured by Dees et al., (2008) and later used in other studies (Alonso Dos Santos et al., 2014). The last scale model was adapted from Smith, Graetz, and Westerbeek (2008).

### **Sample**

Once the data was collected it proceeded to purge the database. The listwise method was used to remove the lost data because 35 people started the survey but did not proceed to the second question. For the treatment of an initial scan of outliers through the box plot diagrams was performed. Subsequently, a linear regression is used in order to conduct an analysis of outliers Mahalanobis (1936), to calculate the Mahalanobis distance (MD), from the variance of each point is performed. Mahalanobis distance is zero when the point is in the center of mass to each point and greater than zero when it is distant there from. Consequently, far from the center of mass values considered outliers are located. This technique is, unlike chi-square graphic box-plot analysis, a multivariate approach and a distribution with degrees of freedom equal to the number of variables included in the calculation. The contrast of multivariate normality of the data was performed and thus you cannot conclude that the data follow a multivariate normal distribution. The final sample consisted of 388 people. The age distribution was between 18 and 54 years. Both bands 18-24 and 35-44 had a percentage of 24%. As for sex, 60% were men.

### **Results**

First, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to determine the internal structure correlations. Confirmatory factor analysis subsequently (CFA) is used together with structural equation modeling system (SEM) to test the validity, reliability of the constructs and items, and model fit.



EFA was employed using principal components and varimax rotation. A value of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) of 0.877 (Kaiser, 1970) was obtained. Bartlett's test was significant. Total cumulative explained variance was 82.43%. All items showed higher loads than 0.6 in their respective constructs. The details of the analysis are shown in Table 1. These demonstrate four variables, three items in each of the variables.

**Table 1.** Factor analysis results: Loadings, communalities and Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ).

Factor	Items	Loading	Communality	$\alpha$
Attitude towards the sponsors				.871
	In general, I like sponsor of the Valencia Open 500	.842	.839	
	In general, sponsor of the Valencia Open 500 are quality brands	.834	.847	
	In general, sponsor of the Valencia Open 500 are prestigious brands	.741	.713	
Attitude towards the event				.946
	I like, the Valencia Open 500 tennis event	.887	.861	
	The Valencia Open 500 tennis is entertaining	.876	.927	
	The Valencia Open 500 tennis is fun	.846	.918	
Attitude towards the website				.905
	I am satisfied with the service of the website Valencia Open500	.877	.854	
	The website ValenciaOpen 500 is nice	.852	.880	
	I like the website ValenciaOpen500	.808	.799	
Purchase intention				.802
	I try to buy products or services from event sponsors	.877	.751	
	I more likely to purchase products and services from sponsor than from non-sponsor	.761	.796	
	The sponsoring this event positively influence my buying decision	.652	.707	

As recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is used to confirm the internal consistency of the scales (Bagozzi & Yi,

1988; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The CFA was adopted by AMOS (Analysis of Moment Structures) program to analyze first the validity and reliability of the constructs of the model. Method asymptotically distribution-free is used. It is the method available in the AMOS program to estimate samples that do not meet the test of multivariate normality of the data (Villarejo-Ramos & Sánchez-Franco, 2005).

To check the reliability and validity of the scales and items Cronbach's alpha was analyzed, average variance Extracted (AVE), factor loadings, squared multiple correlations and composite reliability. The results are shown in Table 2. As can be seen the values of Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951) and composite reliability exceed the recommended (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012) indices. The AVE exceeds the critical values of 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The squared multiple correlations are also analyzed, all of above 0.5 (Hair & Anderson, 2010). Regarding convergent validity, the factor loadings of the items on their respective constructs all were significant at the 0.05 level and above 0.5 (Kline, 2011) standardized coefficients.

**Table 2.** Measurement Model: Composite Reliability (CR), Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Standardized Regression Weights ( $\beta$ ), Standard Error (SE) and Squared Multiple Correlations (R2).

Factor and items	CR	AVE	$\beta$	SE	R2
Attitude towards the sponsors (Spoatt)	.921	.795			
Spoatt1			.805***		.702
Spoatt2			.866***	.054	.751
Spoatt3			.797***	.075	.636
Attitude towards the website (Webatt)	.965	.903			
Webatt1			.874***		.764
Webatt2			.965***	.044	.931
Webatt3			.981***	.048	.961
Attitude towards the event (Eveatt)	.942	.843			
Eveatt1			.882***		.778
Eveatt2			.889***	.053	.790
Eveatt3			.878***	.067	.771
Purchase intention (Purint)	.886	.722			
Purint1			.817***		.668
Purint2			.649***	.090	.521
Purint3			.888***	.073	.788

Note: \*p>.05; \*\*p<.05; \*\*\*p<.001

We then proceeded to check the discriminant validity. Standardized correlations between items are less than 0.9, which also indicates the existence of discriminant validity (Luque, 2012). To check the validity at the discretion of Fornell and Larcker (1981) is constructed PHI matrix (Farrell, 2010). Table 3 shows that the estimate is greater than AVE shared variance with other variables.

**Table 3.** Average variance extracted and shared variance estimates.

Variable	Items	1	2	3	4
1 Attitude towards the sponsors	3	<b>.795</b>	.345	.291	.556
2 Attitude towards the website	3	.588	<b>.903</b>	.451	.221
3 Attitude towards the event	3	.540	.672	<b>.843</b>	.177
4 Purchase intention	3	.746	.471	.421	<b>.722</b>

Note: Correlations are below the diagonal, squared correlations are above the diagonal, and AVE estimates are presented on the diagonal.

Finally, for constrastar hypotheses structural model was tested. The results indicate that the model has a good fit (SB  $\chi^2 / df = 1.034$  ( $p = .409$ ), CFI = .995, TLI = 0.960; GFI = .944; RMSEA = .013). The results of hypothesis testing are specified in Table 4. All hypotheses were supported except the relationship between attitude toward the website and purchase intent.

**Table 4.** Hypotheses results, estimates, standard errors and critical ratios.

Hypotheses	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	Support for hypotheses
H1 Spoatt <--- Eveatt	.261	.099	2.631***	Supported
H2 Purint <--- Actpatr	.829	.116	7.147***	Supported
H3 Eveatt <--- Webatt	.701	.075	9.309***	Supported
H4 Spoatt <--- Webatt	.420	.100	4.213***	Supported
H5 Purint <--- Webatt	.058	.092	0.633*	Non Supported

Note: \*p>.05; \*\*p<.05; \*\*\*p<.001

### Discussion

This research has been conducted in order to explore the influence that the website has on the effectiveness of sponsorship. There is a clear lack of studies on this

area and sporting events such as denoted in the literature review (Novais & Arcodia, 2013). And the website is now more than a means to disseminate information (Suh & Pedersen, 2010) or purchase tickets (Lee, Kim, & Parrish, 2012). It is a form of emotional communication (Hur et al., 2007). The website has more importance in communication channels (Kutintara, 2009). And sometimes it may be the only means available to get information, buy tickets or communicate with other fans, especially when it comes to international events small and medium size.

The theory of image transfer (Gwinner, 1997) allows us to study the influence of the sponsors website on measuring the attitude and purchase intention. Then five hypotheses are proposed. The first two of them are on the process of transferring the image and the three remaining on the influence of the website on the attitude towards the event, the attitude toward the sponsor and purchase intent.

To contrast the hypothesis, we included a banner on the official website of a sporting event. After collecting the sample databases stripped and capacity and internal consistency of the scales was analyzed to represent the constructs. The good reliability and internal consistency can check the model fit and The fit indices are adequate. Then the hypothesis constraste supports four of the five assumptions presented. With the data obtained we can not say that the attitude toward the website has a direct positive influence on the intention of buying products from sponsors.

Regarding hypotheses H1 and H2, the assumptions concerning the process of image transmission have been supported as expected. Previous research on sports sponsorship match these results (Lobo, Meyer, & Chester, 2014; Neijens, Smit, & Moorman, 2009; Speed & Thompson, 2000). This confirms that the attitude is transferred a sporting event to the event sponsor and sequentially intend to purchase products from the sponsors of the event. This image transmission justifies the investment made by companies to increase visibility and brand awareness, and improve the attitude towards it, extracting and assimilating inherent to the event and / or the sport sponsoring values. It might be inferred from the literature review, purchase intent had been used as an indicator of the effect of sponsorship (Ko et al., 2008). Some authors have suggested that sponsorship increases the willingness of participants to buy products from the sponsors of the brand (Cornwell & Coote, 2005; Pope & Voges, 2000). Others have shared their interest in connection with purchase intent, supporting similar results (Carrillat, Harris, & Lafferty, 2010; Levin, Joiner, & Cameron, 2001).

Researchers generally lack control mechanisms to isolate a direct relationship between sponsorship and sales performance (Quester & Farrelly, 1998). But sporting organizations should investigate how to increase their brand attitude through sponsorship to increase revenue. Companies by investing in sponsorship can achieve other objectives mentioned by Choi and Yoh (2011) concerning reputation or brand value. Among the variables that should control the congruence (Na & Kim, 2013), ie the perceived fit between the two constructs, the attitude towards the event to consumers, and any responsible actions that make the sport organization (Johnston & Paulsen, 2011).

Regarding the hypotheses H3, the attitude of the website has a direct and significant influence on the attitude towards the event. In line with results in other areas, it has been shown that the goods that bring benefits sought influence attitudes positively (Carlson & O'Cass, 2010). For example, in the context of brands online banking, O'Cass and Grace (2004) found that the service experience influences the development of attitudes towards the brand. That is, if the service received is evaluated as a quality service, the consumer a more favorable attitude of the bank's brand is formed. To increase the attitude, Suh & Pedersen (2010) propose to increase the quality of it in terms of attraction, utility, usability and reliability. In addition, it is perceived usefulness indirectly affect purchase intentions through perceived ease of use (Ahn et al., 2014).

The attitude towards sports event website directly and positively influences sponsor sporting event (hypothesis H4). As they predicted in the field of advertising Stevenson et al., (2000) and Bruner II and Kumar (2000) affective predisposition to website influences the commercials within the website.

Contrary to the opinions of Suh & Pedersen (2010) and Ahn et al., (2014), Stevenson et al., (2000) suggest that more sophisticated websites or detailed no lead to improved advertising effectiveness. That is, a design and more elaborate navigation system does not lead to increase sales and improve brand attitude. But they qualify the type of role the website can influence your study (eg commercial website). Conversely, Chiang & thereof, (2011) provide evidence that the control in the website may influence positive attitudes. Suh, Ahn, & Pedersen (2014) also added features like interactivity and real-time sports scores as antecedents of attitude.

Finally, there has been evidence that the attitude toward the website influences purchase intention (hypothesis H5). Choi & Yoh, (2011) explored the influence of visiting the website of Super Bowl XLII and found no evidence to link the visit of the website

page to intend to buy products from the sponsor. Also, Kutintara, (2009) found no evidence to say that sponsorship through the website is more effective than on-site sponsorship. In conclusion, therefore, it is recommended to increase the attitude towards website to directly increase the attitude towards the event, the attitude toward the sponsor, and indirectly purchase intent. Ahn et al., (2014) recommends increasing the entertainment website through interactive feature films. They found that the entertainment was an indirect predictor of purchase intent. On the other hand, a company must implement interactive messages between users. Ko, Cho, & Roberts (2005) found that interactivity enhances the positive attitudes towards websites, positive attitudes toward the brand and purchase intention. Therefore, we have also found no evidence in the literature about the relationship between the website and the predisposition towards the sponsor of the sporting event. Involvement could explain this situation (Alonso Dos Santos, Vveinhardt, Calabuig & Montoro, 2016). The users of the web would show a high implication towards the event, therefore, through the attitude it would not be possible to directly influence the purchase of the products of the sponsor through the web. But it does increase the purchase of the products of the sponsor through the attitude towards the sponsor.

Finally, it is important to encourage frequent visits from users. Ko, Cho, & Roberts (2005) found a higher probability that the user of the website visits online advertising and therefore buy products of the sponsor if they attend more frequently through the constant updating of content and game results and making a site related website content. All year round, not just during the celebration of the event. Similarly, the organization may conduct online meetings regular fans and weekly chat sessions on the website seizing the opportunities that social media offer with new channels of communication between the fans, the novel consumer and the organization, eg by using social networks like Twitter, Facebook and YouTube to redirect the user to the website. In general, it is recommended to provide opportunities for interaction with other consumers before, during and after the event (Beaton, et al., 2011)

### ***Limitations and future research directions***

Although research has followed a rigorous analysis of literary and statistical content the analysis should be taken with caution because the results are not without limitations.

This study used a convenience sampling by an official event website. And although the sample is considered more appropriate for the type of research and exploratory, sampling error and confidence level is not known. Also, the game, the type of website, the sport and culture may have moderate results and therefore the conclusions adopted.

For future research it would be interesting to address the effectiveness of sponsorship and image transfer from an emotional standpoint. While cognition is certainly relevant to the success of sponsorship, it seems necessary to investigate the role played by the emotional response of consumers to determining the properties of the results of sponsorship; also due to the emotional response they generate events and sports equipment for the consumer, web user and viewer (Bal, Quester & Plewa, 2009).

Similarly, one could compare the effectiveness of sponsorship with other communication tools such as advertising, public relations or patronage. Even Henseler, Wilson & De Vreede (2009) suggest investigate the transfer from the sponsor to the sponsored. That is, consider how the choice of a sponsor may influence the attitude towards the event, organization or athlete. Finally, new studies are investigating how virtual brand communities could influence the effectiveness of image transmission (Alonso Dos Santos et al., In press). We think it could be an interesting new line of research.

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