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**SPORT SPONSORSHIP ACTIVATION FOR CUSTOMER
ENGAGEMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON BRAND STRENGTH AND
BRAND EQUITY THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA**

by

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Dedicated to the Memory of my beloved mother.

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Abstract

New technology has allowed business to discover new ways of managing what is, to them, the most profitable factor of production: their customers. Their management has become a major factor for them, creating the need for their management systems. This need has been met by Customer Relationship Management Systems. Specifically, they helped businesses sort, prioritize, and manage customers in the best possible way, giving each one the same importance. Then, the Internet and social media gave organizations the opportunity to have a global presence, something that dramatically increased their international audience. The so-called Social Media added another dimension to the customer-business relationship which became more interactive but also created more freedom for customers. This subsequently evolved into a part of brand marketing strategy worldwide, with sponsorship as perhaps the most probable avenue to create two-way relationships between the consumer and the brand. Besides their promotional material in thousands of brand logos can virtually be seen in almost every sports facility and sport equipment, but also in the names of basketball arenas and team-shirts. Sport Sponsorship is linked to consumer behavior variables and brand enhancers resulting in high fan engagement, namely performance tolerance where people do not mind if the sponsored brand performs badly; and brand basking where people takes pride in the competitive performance of his preferred sport team. A whole spectrum of other relevant dimensions of customer engagement include watching sports as a social attraction, being part of a memorable festive marketing event, exchanging dialogue about the sponsored sport team and finally, discussing a brand through speech with friends and peers. Customer engagement and brand attitude have been studied together in more recent years, but most importantly customer engagement and sponsorship activation (as ambient sport marketing) has not yet been linked as much as it should, most importantly in a social media context. Therefore, this paper effectively provides enhanced knowledge on the particulars of this study, which are the customer

engagement in sports and in sport sponsorship and dimensions that may enhance brands. Furthermore, social media benefits acquired from sponsorship activation are also discussed.

Taking 666 consumers of sports as part of our respondents beside other 4 cases of 2 sponsorship dyads among others by following a MMR methodology is far greater than what has been previously written and the results have shown that sponsorship activation usage acts accelerator to to the factors of engagement of sport fans through social media platforms, and brand enhancement is significantly linked with the level of usage of sponsorship activation in brand marketing and the level of customer engagement. Valuable insights from the sponsorship partners' mechanisms and characteristics and their sport sponsorship-related performance for reinforcing fans involvement and brand enhancement behind the quantitative results are identified, complementing each other.

Key words: Customer engagement, sponsorship activation, branding, social media

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Περίληψη

Η ταχεία ανάπτυξη της τεχνολογίας διευκόλυνε τις επιχειρήσεις να ανακαλύψουν νέους τρόπους για να διαχειριστούν καλύτερα τον πιο πολύτιμο παράγοντα για αυτές, τους πελάτες τους. Η διαχείρισή τους έχει γίνει σημαντικός παράγοντας για αυτούς, δημιουργώντας την ανάγκη για τα συστήματα διαχείρισής τους. Αυτή η ανάγκη έχει καλυφθεί από τα Συστήματα Διαχείρισης Σχέσεων Πελατών. Συγκεκριμένα, βοήθησαν τις επιχειρήσεις να ταξινομήσουν, να ιεραρχήσουν και να διαχειριστούν τους πελάτες με τον καλύτερο δυνατό τρόπο, δίνοντας στον καθένα την ίδια σημασία. Το Διαδίκτυο και τα μέσα κοινωνικής δικτύωσης έδωσαν στους οργανισμούς την ευκαιρία να έχουν παγκόσμια παρουσία, κάτι που αύξησε δραματικά το διεθνές κοινό τους. Τα λεγόμενα Social Media πρόσθεσαν μια άλλη διάσταση στη σχέση πελάτη-επιχειρήσεων που έγινε πιο διαδραστική αλλά δημιούργησε και περισσότερη ελευθερία στους πελάτες. Αυτό στη συνέχεια εξελίχθηκε σε ένα μέρος της στρατηγικής μάρκετινγκ επωνυμίας (brand) παγκοσμίως, με τη χορηγία ως ίσως την πιο πιθανή οδό για τη δημιουργία αμφίδρομων σχέσεων μεταξύ του καταναλωτή και της επωνυμίας στον αθλητισμό. Εκτός από το διαφημιστικό τους υλικό, χιλιάδες λογότυπα επωνυμιών μπορεί να δει κανείς σχεδόν σε κάθε αθλητική εγκατάσταση και αθλητικό εξοπλισμό, αλλά και σε ονόματα σταδίων και φανέλες ομάδων. Η Αθλητική Χορηγία είναι στενά συνδεδεμένη με παράγοντες καταναλωτικής συμπεριφοράς και παράγοντες ενδυνάμωσης της μάρκας με αποτέλεσμα υψηλή πελατειακή δέσμευση, συγκεκριμένα ανοχή στην απόδοση όπου οι άνθρωποι δεν ενοχλούνται εάν η ομάδα τους δεν έχει νικηφόρο αποτέλεσμα και το brand basking όπου οι άνθρωποι υπερηφανεύονται για την ανταγωνιστική απόδοση της αθλητικής τους ομάδας (Brand X). Ένα ολόκληρο φάσμα άλλων σχετικών διαστάσεων της αφοσίωσης των πελατών περιλαμβάνει την παρακολούθηση αθλημάτων ως κοινωνικό αξιοθέατο, τη συμμετοχή σε μια αξιομνημόνευτη εορταστική εκδήλωση μάρκετινγκ, την ανταλλαγή διαλόγου για τη χορηγούμενη αθλητική ομάδα και, τέλος, τη συζήτηση μιας επωνυμίας μέσω ομιλίας με φίλους και συνομηλίκους. Η δέσμευση πελατών σε συνάρτηση με την επωνυμία έχουν μελετηθεί μαζί τα τελευταία χρόνια,

αλλά το πιο σημαντικό είναι ότι η δέσμευση πελατών και η ενεργοποίηση χορηγιών (όπως το περιβάλλον αθλητικού μάρκετινγκ) δεν έχουν ακόμη συνδεθεί ουσιαστικά, κυρίως σε στο πλαίσιο των μέσων κοινωνικής δικτύωσης και των ευκαιριών που προσφέρει. Ως εκ τούτου, αυτή η ερευνητική εργασία παρέχει αποτελεσματικά βελτιωμένη γνώση σχετικά με τις ιδιαιτερότητες αυτής της διαδικασίας που περιβάλλει τη δέσμευση των πελατών στον αθλητισμό μέσω των αθλητικών χορηγιών και διαστάσεις που μπορούν να ενισχύσουν τα εμπορικά σήματα. Επιπλέον, συζητούνται επίσης τα οφέλη των μέσων κοινωνικής δικτύωσης που αποκτώνται από την ενεργοποίηση χορηγιών.

Ακολουθώντας τη μεικτή ερευνητική μέθοδο συμπεριλαμβάνοντας 666 καταναλωτές καθώς και τέσσερις μελέτες περίπτωσης, δύο χορηγικών δυάδων έχει να προσφέρει περισσότερα από όσα ήδη έχουν γραφεί και τα αποτελέσματα έδειξαν ότι η χρήση ενεργοποίησης χορηγίας επιταχύνει τους παράγοντες εμπλοκής των φιλάθλων μέσω πλατφορμών μέσων κοινωνικής δικτύωσης και η βελτίωση της επωνυμίας συνδέεται σημαντικά με το επίπεδο χρήσης της ενεργοποίησης χορηγιών στο μάρκετινγκ επωνυμίας και το επίπεδο αφοσίωσης των πελατών. Εντοπίζονται πολύτιμες γνώσεις πίσω από τους μηχανισμούς και τα χαρακτηριστικά των χορηγικών εταιρών και τις επιδόσεις τους που σχετίζονται με τις αθλητικές χορηγίες για την ενίσχυση της συμμετοχής των φιλάθλων και την ενίσχυση της επωνυμίας πίσω από τα ποσοτικά αποτελέσματα.

Λέξεις Κλειδιά: Δέσμευση πελατών, ενεργοποίηση χορηγίας, branding, μέσα κοινωνικής δικτύωσης

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Theoretical Background of the Research

In the light of the increasing competition in virtually every markets and sectors, any firm and brand that wants to remain competitive and profitable in these turbulent times has to fully understand the attitudes, needs, motivations, mindset and feelings of their groups of consumers. This is especially true in the sport sector which is the most competitive, the most dynamic, the most globalised industry in the world (PR Newswire, 2019) – it is the most lucrative industry with a compound annual growth rate of 8.1 per cent annually or US\$253.465 billion by 2024 – which meant that sport or non-sport-branded companies do not only need to make their advert more impacting, better suited to the expressed and latent needs and desires of consumers and to make their mark more attractive and compelling than the other competing marks by making consumers more loyal and protective towards their brand; every Brand must find a way to turn him/her into a fan of her Brand. (Prahlad and Ramaswamy, 2004)

This idea is playing out through the concept of customer engagement. One definition that came out of Kumar and colleagues' (2010) work examining consumer engagement in a sport context defines it as: 'behaviours of sport team customers towards the product/service provided by team or organisation that are formally and informally expressed'. Clearly, such a definition could indicate that consumer engagement, as defined here, contains customer behaviour, explicitly expressed and implicitly expressed, and could be measured by transactional implicit behaviour (i.e. purchasing intent, repeat purchasing). Meanwhile, engaging customers with sport teams members, consciously or unconsciously, also could build, for instance, referral intent, trust, commitment and other implicit variables, thus those behaviors increase sport customers' satisfaction, delight and loyalty which, in turn, each of them will enhance sales, profits, brand name and reputation of the sport teams companies.

The aforementioned would be typical in business/marketing journals, which contain many empirical studies that (wisely or unwisely) try to identify and profile loyal customers of a particular sport team. Yet, with only a few exceptions, surprisingly, there remains a yawning gap: a lack of a precise engagement scale for sport customers.

Further, with only a few exceptions, the narrowly defined literature that has addressed the two sides of sport consumer engagement, with a focus on the first (a) Non-transactional behaviour and (b) Transactional behaviour, has portrayed these two types of behaviour as central to the very conceptualisation and measurement of sport customer engagement. This behavioural view of conceptualising sport consumer engagement is probably the most common; yet, in most of the earlier literature authors took other approaches.

Indeed, today, as often there are many other ways for the fans to build a good relationship with the rights-holder, since the fan experience is by now not a dualistic one, triggered right at the beginning of a game on the court or the field, on the stadium or via television and web-casting violations, but long before. It's there that sport marketers will have many other opportunities to be part or parcel of the fans' life. Take for example a prewritten match report online, listen to the football/rugby/American Football coach's weekly podcast, leave a comment or 'like' page's content on a social fan page, at the favourite sports app to check the latest odds and injury report. In-game: latest stats on your mobile device during watching the game/sport event input in a stadium or on living-room in front of a TV screen. These micro moments in our daily lives are potentially some of the many opportunities to drive engagement. Sport sponsorship, it is a challenging marketing tool, in itself, can go in that direction while it is a mean potentially of setting a dynamic relativity of a brand with its consumers (Santomier, 2008). In doing so, strong relationships between company and client are created on multiple fronts. Nevertheless, various scholars (for example, Duke, Karamuković and Ventura, 2012), highlight the 'leveraging' of the sponsorship that is the key rope in modern sponsorship language, by referring to 'money spent to make people aware of the sponsorship'. Then, leveraging is something that goes beyond monetary resources. It requires motivation for producing something new, original enough to cut through and help a firm stand out of the clutter and from its competitors. Online digitalisation within the past decade constructed a very fertile ecosystem for the promotion of sponsorship activation through social media.

Consequently, organisations now need to think about the appropriateness of the validity of using various social media platforms as vehicles to help provide the necessary antecedents to successful relationship marketing activity as part of the wider communication provided and the effective level of interactivity (Williams Chinn, 2010

). The keys to sport sponsorship activation share characteristics with RM practice using social media as: "tools that can be used as a foundation to foster an emotional image in the consumer's mind because the relationship with consumers is built based on self-connection and brand-intimacy" (Turri, Smith and Kemp 2013). In uses, social media will facilitate the branding process as it provides an emotional bridge to the brand. "Emotional-engagement aids loyalty and advocacy" (Turri et al, 2013).

Being able to underpin financial value, brands has long held as a firm-specific intangible asset (M'zungu, Merrilees, Miller, 2010). Second, the construction and measurement of brand equity, as well as the management of brand equity, and use it to enhance brand value (called the construction and measurement of brand equity) can be used to direct the brand strategy or brand marketing mix decision, and to provide a firm with strategic competitive advantage (Baldinger, 1992; Atilgan et al. 2005). Originally conceived for explaining the relationship between the brands and the customers (Wood 2000). The third reason lies in its intrinsic nature as a perception-based concept. Brand strength is to describe a kind of brand impression, to which the brand strength is explanatory similar to a brand impression cognition, namely the set of consumers' brand impressions rather than the absolute and inherent features of the brand, which as a kind of consumers' representation.

Branded as a specialised community marked by social relations of brand consumers, since the relationship with the brand is built from that consumer's social relations (Muniz ã O'Guinn, 2001), that OBC may create the links mentioned above with the brand (Thompson ã Sinha, 2008). So, consumption in the OBC is relevant because that is where it is possible to identify those particularities and competence of the brand owner and give value to the relationship with the consumer, and also try to become part of its co-creation ('brand co- creation': Tsai et al., 2012).

Consumer socialising with other consumers, as well as brands online, also explodes in the number of cases (Kelley and Alden, 2016). Besides, marketers have focused on the ways that they could facilitate and foster something that would enable higher levels of consumer value, 'customer value' (Martínez-López et al., 2016). Thanks to redditors' support for and co-creation of brands, firms were able to bypass consumer's consumer-resistance to the arsenal of marketing tools (eg, advertising). Noticing the company side to consumer servant/assistantship, firms are also acting as

if treating consumers as peers, who would co-create a product, as well as – and not least – as decision makers, brand evangelists and, in general, as value creators becoming better integrated with the brand (eg, Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006).

1.2 Problem Identification

The decision to use customer engagement in sports as one of the explained variables and a core behavior that eventually enhances brand through online social platforms is based on several reasons in the first place. As regard the conducted study for the purpose of knowledge, customer engagement in sports is indeed considered a restricted field in terms of academic research while total naivety is detected wherever a study is conducted via valid and comprehensive style about the keystones of the innovative media application and social media usage in relation to branding. customer engagement and sport sponsorship activation in sports. Nevertheless, impressively enough, not even after the covid restrictions all over the world forced the digital transformation of sports marketing and third of the money that sport organisations get comes only from sport sponsorship, as not many sport activities could be played, no research has been done so far. In this context, we need to differentiate, as many research studies have clarified the importance of customer engagement (Handcroft & Jarratt, 2007), however only few aspect research intends to elaborate on sports, but no single research tried to investigate on social media. The second aspect that elevates this research as original is, that other researchers that attempted in dealing with the topic, did not appear to treat it from paralleling either sportsman or company, or then from paralleling the team or the event together. Thus, using a mixed methods research methodology, will enable us to combine both data and feedbacks from public and private sector, as the view of the team manager will be finalized by the ones, coming from a public federation as well (i.e. the greek basket ball federation). Along with the great fan's feedback that will follow, this will shape a spherical, crystalline and more complete picture of the aspect than the one side representation, that could possibly give us reliable comparisons and recommendations.

1.3 Scope of the research and research questions

Based on the literature review along with the research aim, the following research model was developed.

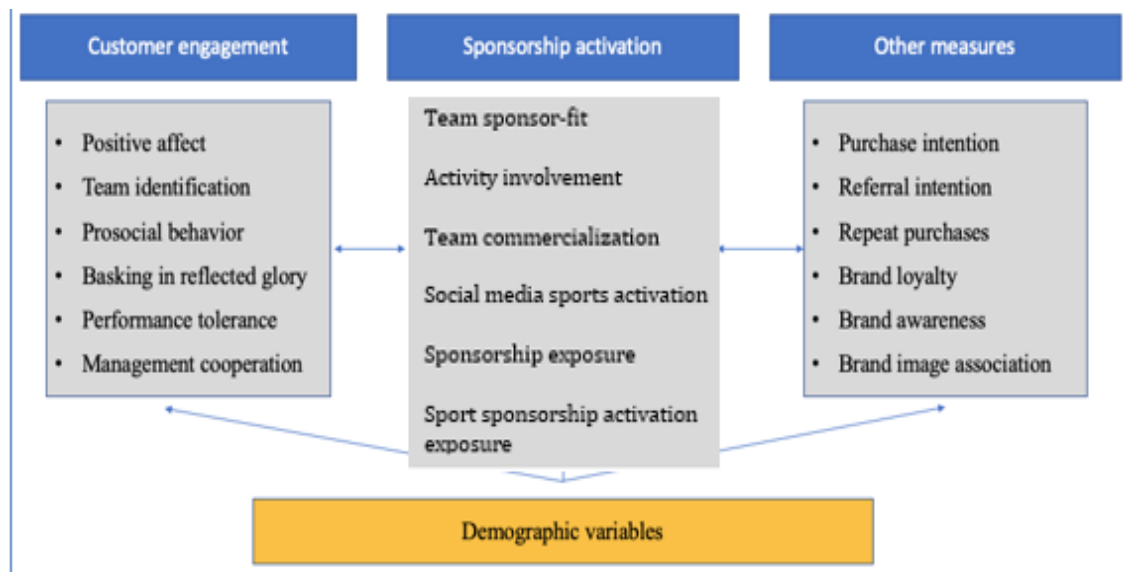


Figure A: Research Model

Based on the minimal literature (available in the public domain) available on sponsorship and social media in a sports context, it appears that the various factors customer engagement has been purported to bring about customer engagement and, thereafter, the brand too. Additionally, based on generalisations from the literature on customer engagement as a standalone concept, if customer engagement is high, it can bring about favourable customer behaviours towards the brand (purchase intention, repeat purchase), and any value attributed to this customer engagement behaviour has been a result of it bringing about desired customer behaviour. Plenty of literature and research works emerging and also demonstrating: (a) relationships between customer engagement and purchase intention, repeat purchases, referral intention (among other factors); (b) customer engagement again in a moderator role with all of the above, have been reported by researchers (specifically, but not limited to, in athletic industries) recording the influence of customer engagement on the company – in making the company an asset (ie, savings on costs and increasing profits) – brands can arguably be

seen as a current-day and modern-day asset of a company, measures of company behaviour, which company choices should be recorded upon.

On such a scale the main aim of this body of work is to create a qualitative primary research and to provide information about the title topic of consumer engagement in sport by integrating in the sponsorship mix through online social platforms. Moreover the level of influencing the brands of the sponsorship partners was also scrutinized. Overall, this piece of work aims to learn how each football federation and sport sponsor utilises fan behaviour through sponsorship activation on consumership by social media and their outcomes toward the purchase intention and brand strength and brand equity for sponsors and sponsees and to see as well, any differences or similarities, if any, towards their fans perspectives.

Accordingly the primary questions were formulated as follows:

1. To identify what are the determinants of customer engagement in a social media setting.
- 2) What are the consequences of consumer involvement on consumption behaviour in an online social context?
3. What is the relation between of consumer engagement and sponsorship activation?
- 4) Does sponsorship activation affects consumer behaviour in community online platforms?
5. Can buying intention being predicted by factors of sponsorship leveraging and consumer engagement?
- 6) Are different levels of engagement with the brand in a social media context depending on their demographic characteristics?
- 7) Ultimately, is there any evidence of variation in terms of sponsorship activation in a 'social media world' when compared with the demographics of consumers?

1.4 Limitations and Delimitations of the Research

The distinguishing features of the merits of this qualitative research work (shortage of time, the absence of financing and lack of previous studies) are the following:

In the selection of the respondents was made with their easy collection criteria for the researcher, defined as the convenience sampling, which has positive and negative aspects in relation to the method of selection of units of the population and in particular, it can be said that it allows fast collection of data, since the investigator can actually 'choose' who to ask, who is appropriate when and where he should be found, while on the other hand, its main disadvantage is its difficulty of applying it to 'the whole population' (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Although the researcher was taking supplementary actions to overcome as much as possible the drawbacks of the convenience sampling, he had additionally also disseminated the on-line questionnaire on two of the most popular on-line sports information media of a national level, so as to overcome as much as possible the drawbacks of the convenience sampling, a find he has published the questionnaire online also on two of the most popular on-line sports information webpages of a national level, so as to overcome as much as possible the drawbacks of the convenience sampling and the possibility of generalising the results, he has distributed the questionnaire online in two further and complementary modes to achieve a greater geographical coverage and, accordingly, randomness of the sampling. No guarantee can be given that a truly national geographical coverage was obtained, therefore complementary research with larger populations will permit an increase in generalisation of the outcomes. However, according to Tabachnick and Fidell formula (2001, p.117), the size of the sample was more than 3 times higher than the recommended minimum size, to reassure – based on previous studies - that the size of the sample is over sufficient. In order words, regarding the qualitative part of the research even though the various types of case studies studied may cover a large range of sponsors profiles (coming from completely various industries) or sponsees profiles (entering or already belonging to the public and private sector), and comply with the criteria of the number of the cases investigated in international literature, further research should be conducted containing more case studies in order to cover also organizations coming from other industries, other sports or other countries so as to help

the generalisation of the results.

Moreover, the scope of the current research was limited by little research made by others for partial parts of the topic and no research made on certain paragraph or the whole page regarding this topic combined together all those parts within the sport industry. Such literature gap is an opportunity for this research to discover omissions in that field and improve an such related areas. In particular, Customer engagement had been extremely researched during the last two decades but at the same time very little has been found for Customer engagement in sports, which is blur between the exploit of the marketing tools at social media and actually the marketing of the social media that what dominates the term of engagement through social media that most of the time appeared in the academic researches as the same term but not the same actual meaning that a second gap identified appear consequently after the literature review challenged is the gap between theory and practise of turning the theory to the practise adding more value for the marketing practitioner such as the fans demographic of a brand or the social media users of the specific post on the social media page of a specific organisation due to confusion of the pre-mentioned terms in international research. Where also the social media strategy and design for a successful sponsorship activation process leading to positive impact for the brand awareness and brand equity effect.

To finish with restrictions on this research it must be emphasized that in order to avoid mass results by diversifying the input factor of the sport's popularity, of the various sponsor and sponsees with varying experience and belonging industries when compared with the lack of research in this field so this study relates to one of the two most popular sports in Greece (basketball) with its proper corresponding marketing experience, meaning that other sports should be researched too in order to make the results generalisable.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1. Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporations also have to do more than just manage the profit/loss ledger – they also have to take on activities and programmes that exist beyond the realm of pure profit-motive and that do provide a longer-lasting benefit for the company and the wider community in which it resides. Such strategies are then developed by companies when designing their overarching strategies and plans. Practices enshrined within CSR can assume two basic forms, both external to the corporation itself: the first relates to directly assisting matters related to community development, such as targeting economic disadvantage and helping needy people sustain a life for their families and communities; the second incorporates those matters relating to the environment and fishability of the environment. Other forms of practices related to CSR are more internally focused and relate to changing the nature of the workplace for existing staff. The idea of CSR has been around in the US since the 1950s, yet has also gained more meaningful traction again in this past decade (Cordoba Campbeal.2007)

There is a general consensus that the underlying principle for CSR is the improvement of the society. The mechanism how this improvement takes place, as well as what and how can it be considered as positive, what can be regarded as negative in CSR are also a divisive topic, from scholar to scholar. In addition to all the forgone analysis, researchers are looking at CSR from several angles. CSR is framed within economic, legal and ethical aspects. In other studies mainly scholars focus on the community image enhancement as a main idea, which reflects the market role of CSR. Corporations are starting to realize the degree of influence the image can have on the economics of the company and therefore a number of corporations are incorporating CSR to some degree and including it in their corporate business plan (Kaynak, Salman, Tatoglu, 2008).

Conceptually, CSR has taken diverse evolutionary developments and nomenclature

change to express its various orientations. See the ‘modern’ CSR theory that originated from Carroll (1999) and later represented by (Fuller & Tian, 2006; Maignan, Ferrell, & Ferrell, 2005).

What underpins the notion of CSR is that business needs to embed public interest in its operating practices: the phrase ‘triple bottom line: People, Planet, Profit – the idea that companies can simultaneously pursue social and environmental objectives as well as profits’ has become synonymous with CSR ... Business is represented as concerned with social issues, having a responsibility to contribute to the society in which it lives and works.^[1]

And hence, the consideration of corporate social responsibility is thought to be part of the strategy of the company, which can be a good weapon against the competitors and can also be a competitive advantage and can lead to the conversation among the customers (Poolthong, N, 2009).

To get good results, many researchers pointed to indicators, such as an improved brand image (Hoeffler Keller, 2002); switching an image (Shell 1989); warm feelings from customers (Ross, Stutts & Patterson, 1991); a positive reputation (Nichols, 1990); increased self-esteem among employees; improving sales volume and bolstering quantity of purchase. In short, useful indicators could include effects such as increased profitability, sales volume, market share, the average amount and frequency of purchase, brand switching, and trial and repeat purchase behaviour. Due to the public relations nature of CSR, implicit indicators regarding corporate image include news reporting on a company’s programme activities and events. Pre- and post-programme studies can be conducted to measure the effect on corporate image (Varadarajan Menon, 1988).

Sport teams can provide an interesting perspective on CSR, since, like other businesses, if they want to be successful, then they need to remain profitable. However, the heavy reliance on community support for the team, which is sometimes the case, means that unlike other businesses, they are not solely (or even largely) dependent on themselves for success. Sport teams can also be structured in diverse ways. In some situations,

teams are owned by a single individual. In other instances, teams are owned by a group of disparate individuals, or by a large multinational corporation (Sheth, 2006).

Whereas CSR focus was more on 'hard' issues such as transparency, accountability, corporate governance and employee-related concerns, now it is focussed on 'soft' issues of the sports organisation and its role in society. As Lau, Makhanya and Trengrouse (2004) point out, sport is 'often too easily regarded as a normal corporate partner in the delivery of social initiatives'. Sport is a social entity and a sport organisation will have a greater chance of being welcomed in community level compared with a business, which is organised in more of a hierarchical way. Many grassroots communities will see sports and sport organisations as one of them. It has greater acceptance than business because of the nature of its activities and its perceived value to society. Society sees sport in a very positive light – people and organisations can come together. It is an accepted and non-political arena where partners can meet and thereby allow businesses to interact more with the communities.

Countless sporting and non-sporting events have attempted to tie in CSR agendas for the chance to raise awareness for health concerns, prevention of disease and the furtherance of economic development in the community. The Super Bowl, for example, with all of its largess, gives some companies the perfect platform through which they can make use of tremendous resources and almost limitless media exposures to further its CSR endeavour. Their efforts allow the chance for sports organisations to have social and community development impacts that other businesses cannot; most significantly, its works can impact healthcare for youth as well as education.

2.2. Customer engagement

Overall, Customer engagement could be really beneficial for any company as it gives it additional advantages. Customer relation its very important for a good appreciation. Sometimes, there can be several advantage of a high level of customer relation with a company or a brand.

Firt, because when a firm has high level of this customer's relation, it can gain more

good knowledge about a company from a point of customer. Like, if a customer has high level about his preferred company (as well as, its product), it can reflect the growing confidence to product.

The effects to all individuals which have been brought to light by the concept of consumer engagement and every highly professional CEO of a company is aiming at cultivating it are the following as been recorded by researchers.

a. The consumer became a more meaningful communicator Concurrently to external growth , the recent technological advancements and the multishow options available through the consumer's ability to go public with its opinion – through blogs and forums – resulted in the consumer being a more meaningful communicator. His opinion could influence the public in a positive or negative way.

b. Greater brand retention. The human-like engagement is expected to help in not losing customers to another brand, especially given the huge number of choices of brands out there and the fierce competition. And also because such human-like engagement can be a key consideration in the buying process.

c. namely that – as Van Doorn and colleagues noted back in 2010 – ‘aggressive engagement is also closely related to customer loyalty’, and that you can best retain a customer or make him (or her) more loyal by pumping up her level of engagement with your product/entity/organisation.

Dimensions of consumer engagement

When applied to sport, the term customer engagement was typically (and accurately) substituted with fan engagement (with one), while (Yoshida et.al., 2014) studies in particular concluded that fan engagement consists of three components: 1) management cooperation, 2) prosocial behaviour, and 3) performance tolerance.

From the theoretical perspective, multiple researchers and propositions have supported the fifth and final definition or construct of consumer engagement – for example, Vivek (2009), who highlighted five dimensions of conceptual consumer engagement:

Attention- is awareness, consciousness of and knowledge about the object of engagement.

Enthusiasm – Strong excitement about the object of engagement;

Interaction – interchange of ideas, thoughts, feelings about the object of engagement with others;

Activity – actions focused on the program or offering the person is engaged in

Extraordinary experience – sense of newness of perception and process.

Despite a multitude of various approaches to the dimensionality of Consumer Engagement and more than 20 facets of Customer Involvement, in the scientific literature there are mostly two forms: (1) consumer engagement – unidimensional construct and (2) consumer engagement – multidimensional construct. The first approach is about a specific dimension that is the most important one and has different meaning for different authors. What is more, at least one comment I would like to make regarding the studies of consumer engagement as a multidimensional construct because there is no agreement. On contrary, some researchers have already referred different combinations of consumer dimensions.

It also concerns engagement: Marks, Printy (2003) – cognitive and emotional; Bejerholm, Eklund (2007) – cognitive and behavioural; Norris et al. (2003) – emotional and behavioural (Hollebeek, 2011a). Various relevant distinctions are made with regards to the difference between enjoyment and engagement. Beyond being multidimensional, consumers' engagement may influence, and be influenced by, the different dimensions.

Customer engagement in sports

In spite of customer engagement being a much-researched topic in a variety of contexts, there is no established scale for sports. The academic literature on customer engagement can be divided into two categories by a) looking at nontransactional

behaviours and (b) transactional behaviours. Approaches among different researchers in literature vary a lot.

As noted by Ahearne and colleagues (2005), customer engagement is both an intrinsic and extrinsic motivated behaviour. This means that this impulse or need for customers to show and display their association with their team (preening in reflected glory) is a driver of customer engagement. Other researchers discuss about the positive feelings evolving when participating in a sporting event like excitement and pleasure,

With respect to the psychological perspectives, two antecedents of fan loyalty, defined both as early antecedents and as direct determinants in the sport-consumer context, are the sense of closeness to a sport team (The sense of psychological closeness and intimacy that a consumer feels for a sport team pertains to the extent to which a consumer identifies a team as part of their own self.) and the degree to which a consumer feels that a team successes and failures are happening to him or her (The degree to which a sport consumer feels identification for a specific sport team pertains to the extent to which a consumer responds to the success and failures of a sport team as if they were his/her own).

Non-transactional behaviours include performance-tolerance (Bloemer et al., 2000), a scale based on dimensions elaborated by the authors to describe service loyalty as well as to assess the relationships among the dimensions of service quality and the dimensions of service loyalty too; gaining glory and divesting shame from the fans' team defines another fundamental component of fan involvement. Then, there are social relationships established with friends or other peers (Jowdy McDonald, 2002); positive word of mouth behaviour (Swanson et al., 2003), which is target-oriented to the self, while the others are target-oriented to the team.

Also for behavioral component we find research on how often a customer attended a game (Funk 2001 James). And ultimately, its contribution to the continuance of forming strong relations with a sports club over time (Jowdy 2002 McDonald).

Another, in fact, too: modern as well: as 'customer connectedness' – ie, that a customer should not have to show loyalty 'because of an existing connection of mutual

obligations promoted by previous behaviour' (previous purchasing; ie, a product or service that the customer had purchased or used repeatedly). Or, more accurately: Oliver said it should be this: That is, commitment is the high likelihood that a customer will re-buy or continue to buy a product or service in the future in spite of situational influences or their own marketing efforts aimed at inducing a change in behaviour ...

The benefits of customer engagement

The most valuable benefits of customer loyalty to any business are mostly long-term and accumulative. Loyal customers produce higher profits than not only repeat purchasers (who purchase repeatedly as a fact but without the commitment) but also occasional buyers. Besides, higher the level of engagement is, the more it will do:

- Reduce marketing costs as well as transaction costs
- Increase transactions per customer
- Improve the word-of-mouth of the company.

And, in any event, the real world – eg, the broad range of empirical studies showing that the more loyal the customers of a given company are, the less apt they are to take up offers of the competition, the more widely they'll accommodate price changes, and the likelier they are to buy all of their other new products and/or to buy a new service a given company might be developing – should still count for something.

The key output of loyalty, consistent with the foregoing conclusions, is a high rate of customer retention, which begs the questions: what is it and why does the correlation between customer loyalty and the financial results of the business offer a logical explanation? The answer is firstly in a greater market growth potential, but more importantly also in the fact that the client is bringing more money to the company's coffers the more he buys and the more he refers the company to third parties.

2.3 Relationship marketing and social media

While some of the first thoughts that would soon originate as adapting to the approach of relationship marketing can be traced back as far as the 1950s, consistent research had to wait for another couple of decades, as the prevailing paradigm of marketing at the time postulated an antagonistic relationship between seller and buyer, the supplier and the client; the producer and the consumer. The first person who used this term was, according to Ganguli, Esligh and Nast Bechwati (2009), Leonard Berry who states to give the first definition of an approach to relationship marketing in service marketing in 1983. According to Berry, the first definition of an approach to relationship marketing in service marketing is: That relationships have four characteristics and his approach to this definition is: Relationship marketing is attracting, maintaining and—in multi-service organisations—enhancing customer relationships.

Palmatier (2008) also suggests that the emergence of this paradigm stemmed from an interaction of several other developments along with relationship marketing, including ‘expanding global competition, revolutionary computing technologies for storing and analyzing data related to customers, and the general shift toward service-based economies and innovative marketing strategies’. Where relationship exchanges differ from transactional exchanges (eg, incentivising or discounting customers) is that, in line with our principle that substantive identities are granted by autonomy, the primary purpose of transactional exchanges is ‘to influence customers based on their identity as customers’ in a ‘buyer-seller relationship’. The primary purpose of relational exchanges is ‘to influence transactions based on their identity in the fullness of interactions involving shared values’. But if, as Morgan and Hunt established, data availability was the ‘most dominant’ of relationship marketing’s primary rationales, both in practice and in theory, it was because, on the whole, ‘productive assumptions about the benefits in [building relations] might increase market share and profit’. Relationship marketing may be ‘all of the activities that firms undertake in a marketing environment to establish, develop, and maintain successful relational exchanges’.

For Palmatier, in the *International Journal of Behavioral Economics* (2008), the relationship marketing approach is ‘no doubt the most important marketing research

frontier today'; for Gronroos (1997), it's 'that something occurs where the goals of all parties to an exchange are achieved and these are achieved by a two-way chain of promises' This 'less perceived risk, higher trust, more cooperation, and more flexibility' is held out by the market-oriented/transactional marketing schema.

In addition, as Copulsky and Wolf in *Relationship Marketing: Positioning to the future* put it, relationship marketing is 'dedicating to the customer to create a long-term exchange relationship with a current customer', and 'two-sided gains in consumption exchange are critically important' (2009). Even Berry (1983) stated 'existing customers are important' and stresses 'not only for retained customers but for new customers for a long-term customer relations'. Moreover Spreng (2016) said that 'Overall purpose of relationship marketing in relationship exchange over space of time is to put a more and continuous good effect or when put in, long-term effect on business with the best use of resources because of the continuous interaction, widespread networking, key co-operation with with all – employees, customers, providers, business partners, etc) member who have a sense of belonging to create values of all with a basis of a trust space.' In addition relationship marketing looks at the customers as the lifetime customer in relationship marketing and relationship marketing do a very hard work to know more about the customer's needs, what does suffice them and what they locate a value in. Relationship marketing looks at a long-term and a continuous interaction and co-working with the market in order to better the interactions.

Emphasise in relationship marketing that (1) the firm needs to secure optimal returns from limited resources with intensive communication, networking and relationship with all relevant members (employees, customers, suppliers, business partners etc) and (2) effective commitment to deliver optimal value to all stakeholders in a trust-based environment. –Ganguli, Esligh, Nast Bechwati(2009)

An intriguing observation of Baron (2010) is that 'what it takes to sell to a new customer is on average from five to ten per cent of annual revenues, but a fraction of one per cent to sell to existing ones'. This is because of 'the very high cost of "failed prospecting", which is expended every time [a company] reaches out "to a new segment"' – with the caveat, as above, that 'the better the scheme works and the more

the customer falls for the organisational performance, mesmerised by it and in the same breath tolerant (or insensitive) of the price', he buys more frequently, and therefore 'the cost of operation [is] lower on every progressively much higher efficiency day'. In other words: 'the higher the defection rates, the lower the average customer relationship lifespan'.

Relationship Marketing in Sports

Most commonly, sport marketing more or less equals '[t]he broader concept of sport marketing is defined as all those industry activities that address the needs and wants of sport consumers through exchange processes' (Mullin, Hardy and Sutton, 2000). In *The Elusive Fan: Reinventing Sports in a Crowded Marketplace* (2006), perhaps the leading spokesperson in sports marketing, Robert E Rein, writing with the well-known marketer Philip Kotler and fellow sports expert Michael Shields, offering a portrait of the sports avid consumer, who is, as the subtitle suggests, now spoiled for choice by the 'crowded marketplace', states: Put more simply, never has a sport consumer had more choice – not just other sports but other forms of entertainment including digital television, online streaming video, videogames, fantasy sports, and many other more forms of entertainment, making it much more difficult for marketers to try to maintain any relationship whatsoever with consumers. In short, there's more choice than ever before. [In addition to the so-called] traditional sports (baseball, basketball, soccer etc), sports included lacrosse, paintball, NASCAR, extreme sports, and fantasy sports, among other.

Implementation of relationship-marketing strategies by some governing and professional sport organisations with the view of fostering and, in turn, maintaining long-lasting consumer relationships (or, in the case of sport, fan relationships) has been followed across the board. The outcomes have, for the most part, been positive. (eg, Williams 2008; 2011; 2012; 2012; 2013; 2015a; 2015b; 2015c; 2016a; 2016b; 2017; 2018; Williams and R Brooke 2015; William 2018). Many RM objectives seem uniquely appropriate to the idiosyncratic environment of sport Business development of fan loyalty to a particular sport organisation and building of their brand is primary 'because the objective "by working toward a long-term relationship with customers

(fans) that will build brand loyalty””, ‘Just as in RM, relationships with fans in sport marketing must be cultivated and nurtured and can be, one of its most vital adages (William, 2018).

Kim and Trail offer some cues why relationship marketing might be of benefit to sport organisations, both either: since sport organisations are under greater pressure to shift attention to retaining existing consumers versus acquiring new consumers; and since its usefulness for repairing consumer relationships after breakage occurs (2011). Such dissonance – and the alienation of fans that can flow from it – could end up in lower attendance at the stadium or arena, and lower viewing of the sport on TV, lost sponsorship dollars, revenue from licensed-product sales, media deals and more (Knyphausen and Nevill Crompton, 2005). Consumer entrapment with a sport organisation denotes the consumer being willing to expend their efforts despite the availability of alternatives.

Lastly, having acknowledged the existing academic research on the application of relationship marketing in sport, it is also fitting to remember that little has been done since (eg, Bee and Kahle (2006) stated that ‘very few empirical studies exist that deal with which particular drivers are most important in shaping relations among the consumer and the sport organisation and that we are interested in looking at the effectiveness of a relationship marketing intervention on perceptions that are mediated by compliance, identification and internalization expectations for sport-event attendance’; use of relationship marketing as a situationally relevant phenomenon in the Australian sport context was the qualitative focus of Stavros, Pope and Winzar who reported ‘Part of the reason that the sport sector has been slow in using a relationship marketing approach ... is poor database marketing ...’; (1997, Shani, 2008). Simply put.

Social Media, Branding and Relationship Marketing

Social media is a branding tool because your image should be seen as a relationship and quantity of followers. ‘– Ballouli and Hutchinson, 2010 Many forms of entertainment use it to build an emotional image in the mind of the consumer. Relationships are maintained between consumer and brand through the self. This results

in 'brand proximity' (B P, 2017). Two-way interactions are supported by social media because branding is turned into emotional branding and is therefore a suitable alternative for branding. The emotional connection builds loyalty and advocacy.– Turri, Smith and Kemp, 2013.

Organisations continue to speak of RM pillars, such as 'engagement' and 'communication', in terms of a company's activities on selected SM sites (Williams China, 2010). As SM helps consumers to empower themselves, it also promises attractive possibilities for

firms and opportunities for communication between marketers and consumers – opportunities that before now have been absent. Marketing communications prior to now have tended to be one-way, mass communications that consisted of static 'messages' with little mainstream media opportunities for 'dialogue' or communication giving consumers an opportunity to respond. More recently, SM has allowed the old business-to-customer offline dyad between the organisation and the user to become an off-the-cuff (almost) real-time two-way dialogue between the organisation and the user. Clive Drury (2008). The announcement and possibilities of portable, wireless mobile devices have increased the opportunity for dialogue further with the potential for not just reaching each individual on their very own site, but with possibilities to reach thousands and millions instantly. Hennig-Thurau et al. (2010).

In cell sports, social media exerts more benefits in terms of achieving goal purposes connected with the relationship-marketing building between organisations and customers in parallel. Companies can leverage social media as a channel for communication for consumers, we have developed a framework that starting the branding initiation through developing successful outbound communication to consumers as the first step to adopting social media. Consumers being the way they are nowadays, they will have to spend the most of their time on social media, and, if the brand is not on social media, they won't be found. The ideal ability offered by social media is the restriction to consumers in selecting the available options and to reduce information overload on complex choice, which obviously only benefits consumers, increasing their overall wellbeing and the progress of their lives, and for the purpose of branding, that would also mean facilitating the brands (Jacobs Nakata, 2010).

Therefore, for sports, if we view the sports fans also as deeply involved deeply felt co-creators, then, the value of relationship marketing is high since he is a co-actor, a co-creator of the brand and acquires more and more intimacy and self connection (Williams and Chinn, 2010). Customers are an operational resource, but in truth they are only one slice of the relationship exchanges and co-production pie ... Post-purchase, customers are becoming more confident and are actively engaged in relationship exchanges, co-production and value creation. There are many options for customers to develop and communicate their own voice in the firm ... through customer reviews, creative ideas and opinions. (Vargo and Lynch, 2004, p4)

That is to transform this natural social media setting into a continuous two-way interactive logo-communication situation in which consumers' spontaneous logomessages create almost instantance replies from the sports The social media affordance of information-sharing for a sports organisation is how the same tools become possible for that organisation to communicate about itself – its players, coaches, team, venues, events, programmes, activities, and other profit-yielding opportunities it has in the eyes of consumers (1984). Social media enables relationship marketing by the ability of the organisation in the sports realm, and the relationships between the sport consumer and the organisation, can interact online through multiple different, and often technologically-enhanced, settings (Hambrick, 2014). The five most popular social media/networking sites include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, FourSquare, Instagram, Pinterest and Google+ (Wysocki, 2012), all of which support a form of sport communication capable of delivering public relations, branding, customer relationship management and reputation management (Wysocki, 2012). The outcome will be a formula for sport-media success if one is genuinely committed to maintaining message consistency across all the mediums.

For example, with Twitter, which brings a sense of instantaneous communication and engagement; easy access to team and players' content; and makes a fan feel a part of the organisation, YouTube allows the consumer to subscribe and be viewed by the special content (eg: making videos for the special YouTube outlet). 'The notion of consumers participating in content generation is particularly applicable for relationship marketing since it creates an organic avenue in which to increase

interactions and user generated content. The consumers can upload images (video or photo) of the ways they relate to the team and place the fans at the centre of other forms of two-way verbal meaning generation.’ (Williams and Chinn, 2010) Sense of power will come about when the firms ask their consumer to design, post and edit content from the firm’s (organisation) social media. [A] number of studies acknowledged the significance relate to sport but, at the same time, dedicated less attention and a much less crucial role to this phenomenon in their empirical content, whereas not allocating any more resources to creating the knowledge regarding each individual club and their own attempts to improve their relationship-marketing efforts. Firms from other industries can leverage on this environment to build and strengthen relationships with the target fans’ Sport organisations can exploit this environment to boost and develop relationships with their fans but also to advance their relationship-marketing endeavours. Therefore, a bunch of empirical studies emerged showing social media to be an under-researched field with many improvements required to be used to more effectively use in sport.

Indeed, the social media experience itself is simply translated into a humanistic frame, which can then be examined – as Armstrong and his two colleagues write about basketball top league team initial foray into social media: For a brand or company, whereas social media might be a conduit for communications or for boosting the communications of messages promoting or selling products, social media can be the space of the brand for being human and being in and of the world as the consumers or fans are... It found that the Club has created, using social media through creativity and occasionally off-the-rails interactivity, a sense of a brand community. The very best sports work hard to think of this and that which could make them faster, more bendable, moreso being and thus less sales-orientated on the social media; less time thinking of any more ways to flog ’em. What it means to ‘be fast’, in sports and in social media Industrially, hyper-human speed of HR is measured using instruments – from the stopwatch to the computer, from the clipboard to the metrics – these instruments are very good for many things, but not for being fast or fostering the TRUST of fans and audience members, notwithstanding the tests of brand personality using Disneyesque management perceptions and methods. Negotiating the fast, flexible and being-humanspots using the reciprocation and (co-)creation of the sports group (the LANHL organisation, the Kings) using more ‘humane’ sense and person-to-person interactions is worth mentioning.

The social media platforms have transformed the relationship between brand and the sports consumer to where the finger of one directly engages with the direct sight of the other. Furthermore, the direct and unfiltered message that can be sent through a sport organisation's social media site gives and seems to be the optimal tool and strategy for forging and maintaining brand, and increasing the probability for repeat consumption. Wallace, J, Wilson, S, and Miloch, M (2011) the value of networks: social media and sports, *Journal of Sports Economics*, 12, 35-55. Social media should be a communicative outlet that can help support a wide range of expectations linked to relationship marketing. To achieve this, and support the accomplishment of multiple relationship-marketing goals, 'marketing should seek to integrate social-media tools that best enable a sport organisation's opportunity for relationship-building through communication, interaction, and value' (Williams and Chinn, 2010).

2.4 Sponsorship activation

In the marketing area, several leading brands use this opportunity to sponsor because a live relationship between the brand and its consumers might be their expectations from of this creativity (Santomier, 2008). There are multiple logos across so many sports arenas, players' equipment, promotion materials and even part of stadium's and teams' names (Petersen, 2014). Sponsorship marketing refers to a form of co-branding or strategic alliancing that Cornwell (1995) has described as: In ordinary marketing, every company is a separate entity; they may affiliate themselves and produce product ties, but they are not fused.

As Weeks et al. (2008) have eloquently put it: Sponsorship activation is the communications generated to enhance or energise the audience's interaction, engagement or participation with the sponsorship. From this perspective, the essence of sponsorship activation lies not in fans being exposed to or consuming specific branded content provided by sponsors, but in fans striving to interact with and experience the sponsor brands themselves.

Amid the clutter and crowding of a mainstream sponsorship environment, activation through social media can deliver ongoing and multiple goals, such as brand

awareness, interacting / engagement with fans, information provision, sales promotion, relationship building and brand attitude change. Delegate sponsorship activation to the sports club in return for a sponsorship trade-in value calculated on ticket or jersey sales; or source 'ready made' fan club-branded items to connect with fans. Sponsor 'Social Ticket' uptake to reflect your brand and sponsor values; or sponsor commentary to pitch your own brand into live sports discussion, and be seen as a leader in current sports debate. (Dees, 2011)

In their analysis of activation programme from sponsors, Bal, Quester and Plewa (2009) explained: 'the promise and benefit of a brand is based on an emotional connection. Sport sponsorship provides the vehicle of experiential activation to diffuse this emotional promise and benefit.' Very much as the sponsorship is used to reinforce emotional propositions to the consumer. The last words in the above passage refer to: 'the sum of these should lead to better outcomes' for the sponsorship. In a different paper, Cornwell, Pruitt and Van Ness (2001) said: 'at least under assumptions of congruency (fit) and appropriate communication, [the sponsorship] medium is persuasive, and, if not capable in itself of changing beliefs, it can massage the brand by increasing its financial value to the sponsor.' And then, even more recently, we hear talk of brands achieving 'emotional leverage' and requiring 'experiential activation' and 'engaging' with consumers in a 'deeper, emotional way' (Bal, et al, 2009). These much more enlightened views, and broadening of the definition of activation, may be little more than the emergence of one more manifestation of an ideological school, new to the blossoming of sponsorship studies – possibly beyond the historical divide highlighted by Alfvén et al (2013) – but, from my perspective, it remains a body of work that appears so far to be spread only across the academy, with little, if any, obvious signs that any of the progress is linking into eventual behaviour of either sponsor or rights-holder. With all of the above in mind, and in full acknowledgment of all of these differences, most scholars and indeed most practitioners are (at the least) using one term for all of this activity: activation, and a shared faith that all of these tactics should become more tightly integrated, and with a distinct belief that the greater picture should inevitably produce better outcomes for sponsorship. The sponsorship opportunity presents a gift of a prime resource needed, and reduces future uncertainty (Bal et. Al, 2009).

These three key reasons for the emergence of value-added from sponsorship activation were cited in the literature: 1. Programmes designed for activation can be creatively designed to overcome ‘clutter’ (DeGaris et al, 2009; O’Keefe et al, 2009): Important considering that, as sponsorship popularity grew, so did the ‘clutter’ (Cornwell et al, 2005: 34), and also because ‘consumers do not seek sponsors’ (Crimmins Hashlim and Horn, 1996). Rising popularity of sponsorship as corporate strategy in sport is, indeed, quite understandable given that: 1. Advertising in sport is expensive as a means of marketing activities, but sponsorship offers cost effectiveness and can be easily intercepted with new media marketing strategies.

Yet it contains perils for the sponsees as well as for the sponsors. Both of them, and especially the sponsors, can sometimes reap bad publicity when they exorbitantly throw the moolah even if the moolah sometimes is not thrown that exorbitantly when that allows the sponsorship rights of trademarks and its rights of association with the event to be sold specifically so as to permit that event’s public to become the sponsor as well as the brand. With which the marketer (or the brand) is willing to be associated (Titlebaum et al 2009) While Sponsorship activations actually then create something new for the cultural rubbish heap that every event is destined to create for the brand to be able to share some of the glory of the competitions to allow that public to associate its brand with the event and then to measure the value and the brand metric through which the marketer (or the brand) is being measured. Sponsorship activation is also seen as an aggressive positioning for the sponsor brand to undermine ambush marketing, one which can harness ‘their investment in’ a credible way of staying fresh in consumers’ minds’ and achieving favourable changes between earlier and later attitudinal measures among consumers (Quester & Thompson, 2001). A sponsor brand can achieve distinctive positioning and differentiation from competitors that is difficult to replicate by competitors as long as they are creative in activating their rights under the sponsorship deals (Cornwell et al., 2005).

2.5. *Consumer Behavior*

Consumers refer to a specific group of people who will eventually consume, purchase or use a product/service (Noel, 2009). Consumer is the very fundamental

components of the market that make the company to fetch the profit (Yazdanpanah Forouzani, 2015). If the consumer behaviour of the customer is understood sometimes can be the key advantage for the firm (Parsons C Maclaran Chatzidakis, 2017). The consumption behaviour describes how the customer is shopping, selecting, buying and using the product according to his or her needs (Parsons Maclaran Chatzidakis, 2017), this means it's necessary to understand consumer behaviour altogether, to give the customers the precise product with precise advert, and choosing the correct strategy (Yazdanpanah Forouzani, 2015). Following the consumer trends and knowing your customers are essential for the business to grow its profit and achieve its targets (Stephen, 2016). Consumer behaviour is a process with stages where the site could affect the final decision of the customers. Also, it is different from one consumer to another with different habits (Brassington Pettitt, 2000). So, as mentioned before, consumer behaviour is difficult to predict than even harder to estimate consumers' reactions past customer experiences to predict the future to determine the targets and strategies for the business (Yazdanpanah Forouzani, 2015).

The decision repertoire of a consumer and for purchase a specialty comprises of five stages.

Personally I think that the first stage and the most important one of consumer decision making process is Need Recognition (Parsons, Maclaran and Chatzidakis, 2017). Need Recognition is an initial stage to start the buying process. The consumer has understood the problems of the situation (Stephen, 2016). Then the consumer looks for the solution of this problem. \Paraphrased. "How did you solve the problem of your meal last night?" student's answer: "I went out with my friends to have a dawn kebab" The buying process has five stages:

The second process of buying in consumer decision making is finding and acquiring relevant information to the product which we want to get. In this stage, we are moving closer to becoming customers, and they are more likely to find and review their menus in the High street in retailers and suppliers or find them on the net in the store and read about them in papers (newspapers). The third stage is Evaluation of Alternatives (Kotler, 2009 p104. Evidence: Solomon et al., 2017). At this stage, customers can compare 2 or more products or services in order to see that those buy 2 are similar or that are different and evaluate the products or that services if buy this is

suitable for me or no, is far away or .When I want a milk, I go to the supermarket to dairy section that is a different section from the main section of the supermarket and there are include different products, because we can find milk with different features which are: cow milk, Lactose-free, low fat, complete and . so, in this step I(the consumer) buy which is as near as I want.”

The fourth stage is the real market. It can be change at any stage by negative feedback from another person or other reasons (Parsons, Maclaran Chatzidakis 2017 p.17-19. Evidence: Solomon et al., 2017)

In the previous example,. At the beginning of the previous example, the person wanted to buy the low fat milk brand A. Suddenly, the person heard feedback from another person then that this brand (he brand) is use preserver in their products so buy the product customer when they eat from their they have allergy symptoms. One surprise is that the buyer wants the product, but later on they are surprised to find that this product is not available, and consequently, the buyer wouldn't buy the item they desired at first.

The fifth and final step of the process is called postal market evaluation (Godey et al., 2016). This step is the most crucial because it will determine whether the customer will purchase the product again or not. Solomon et al. (2017) assert that whether a consumer is going to repurchases the same product depends whether his expectation of the item were fulfilled or not. At this stage, the customer will basically make comparison and determine his level of satisfaction with his purchase.

Stages two and three should be skipped when there is faith and the consumer who already defined his need goes straight to the buy the product (Godey et al., 2016). Similarly, when a consumer becomes satisfied by a product she purchases, this attitude will have a positive influence on all consumers who, in turn, can be perceived as a pool of potential loyal consumers. This is why the end stage of a postproduct market evaluation belongs to this process (Godey et al. 2016).

Meanwhile, if the product he bought is satisfactory then it could be purchased again: "Then, in turn, they tend to write bad comments on their friends who might be potential buyers as well (Parsons, Maclaran & Chatzidakis, 2017). This procedure is applied by most of the customers, however some customers skip two and three stages

of consumer buying process: it usually happens when customer absolutely know the product: it is their habit and product or services are part of their daily life. (Godey et al., 2016). For instance, if customer needs a specific brand of milk, then they run out of stock; they definitely purchase other brand, without thinking so often in this scenario, steps 2 and 3 are skipped in this process. The brain responds to make quick decision. Meanwhile, the story is a completely different when customer wants buy new computer. These type of market are big market and customers go through all stages. Generally; as they saying in the market money is the thing they need for the value of money (Butler et al., 2016). That is why stage 2 and 3 are so significant. Chose best computer and good price gives them feel like they have made a good buy.

Moreover, there are four factors can affect consumers habit (Butler et al., 2016). Moreover, consumers habit can be cultural, social, personal and psychological (Ashley & Tuten, 2015).

The first category is called cultural factors and related to the society which people live their life and consequently influence consumers behavior (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Generally, societies have categorized several classes those are depend on culture to each other (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Such as, culture, geography, ethnicity and social class are categorize per some people groups at global. Subcultures vary in religion, geography, ethnicity and social class (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Social classes are also highly influence on consumers habit regarding by income, education and occupation (Ashley & Tuten, 2015).

Second group of consumer factors are social and this divide on personal relation including with family, reference group, then buy product or service are a role or status represent teacher to consumers. (Ashley & Tuten, 2015)

My opinion is gender also have somehow categorise to consume object. Many study represent this. Anyway, people who past try some products or requests are called reference group. For example Louis Vitton bolier can be a reference group. Due to, well known brand can influence well on consumers habit. (Ashley & Tuten, 2015)

Similarly, family has another important role to buy product or service. Especially more important can be parents thing about to buy. (Ashley & Tuten, 2015)

Finally personal factors included three following things. Age, welfare and job. People can buy something due to their feeling. Such as feel bad about their age, get some product can make them feel better. Moreover, people who have families can buy some service which deal about food, regarding to their needs. By career, well paid person tend to consume more than low paid. (Ashley & Tuten, 2015)

Welfare: Since, well being of person highly attend to consumer to buy something, so make them happy.

Career: More career to deeply attach to workers can represent some fashion trend, finally can reach to three or seven-figure sum.

At last, psychological factors (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). This can be, inspire. Inspire can be explained as, getting inspiration to another person do something, make them to imitate or do something (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). For example, celebrities can inspire world to buy some product. This all category can be psychological imprints for consume this market.

2.6 Consumer behavior and marketing

Consumers represent different positions and goals during and after purchasing a product or service (Yazdanpanah & Forouzani, 2015). The consumer can be the buyer or the person paying for the product or the person who is going to consume it and enjoy its benefits (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). According to Siomko (2002), most of the time consumers know their needs and motivations to buy a product and in some cases they can understand the marketing methods and the impact of the various advertising messages.

In summary, although knowing the corporate behaviour and motives of a consumer in the buying process can positively improve the performance of a business (Calin, 2013), consumer behaviour knowledge becomes more effective the more accurate it is. As a consequence, Marketing research needs to involve in such process and aims to confirm behaviour and find the consumer needs (Hofacker, Malhotra, & Sultan, 2016). In this process, every consumer needs should be captured to be able company to offer right products and services and fulfill the consumer needs to its business vision (Kotler, 2011). Finally, the marketing department in any company needs to be aware of consumer's basic characteristics how they influence their behaviours, their pains and

consideration before buying so that they can signal the proper communication strategy and close the gaps.

2.7 Online consumer behavior models

In the online markets, there are many theories and models of consumer behavior. The first consumer model is called the consumer mind set model (Hofacker, Malthouse & Sultan, 2016). According to this model, the consumer's mindset is composed of different thoughts, feelings and presents a different information process (Shareef, Dwivedi, & Rana, 2015). The tendency for markets is influenced by consumer attitudes. Consumer mindset is geared towards achieving some goals, either experimenting. Goal-oriented behavior occurs when the consumer has made his decision and is more efficient and rational in his market (Yazdanpanah & Forouzani, 2015). These people are trying to complete their purchase quickly, they are determined about what they want to buy. Conversely, experimental behaviour of markets is triggered when a consumer acts like he/she is excited to experiment for some reason. This behaviour is when consumers are guided by prior experiences, and in the search for purchase enjoy the route of indirect information searching. (Shareef, Dwivedi and Rana, 2015). When consumers choose to shop online, they are mostly goal-oriented rather than wanting to experiment (Rezaei, 2015). Another model of consumer behavior is called Mind Set Formation and Influence (MSFI) and was developed by Bagozzi and Dholakia. This model states that consumer search behavior depends on the site selection, the length of time a person visits a site, and the information obtained (Hudson et al., 2016). Culture affects internet consumers in every aspect such as cognitive and behavioral aspects. It also provides cognitive orientation that is achieved through experimental and goal-oriented research and also has the power to transcend external influences. This is why the mentality is so strong as it provides insight into action (Yazdanpanah & Forouzani, 2015).

Another of the model of behaviour theory of uper consumer is Technology Acceptance model developped by Davis (Xiang, Magnini & Fesenmaier, 2015) . The model was focused on exploring the extrinsic value that shape the behaviour and intention. the grounding was both on the perceived utility and perceived ease of use (Xiang, Magnini, Fesanmair, 2015) On the other hand there is the model called Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) formulated by Fishbein and Ajzen.This model tries to

explain people's willingness and characteristics. It is a theory of social psychology that has been used in consumer behavior. The theory of Logical Action consists of three characteristics, the behavioral intention, the attitude and the subjective rule. Behavioral intention is a person's intention to have a specific behavior. Attitudes are beliefs about the consequences a person has if he or she performs this behavior (Yazdanpanah & Forouzani, 2015). Finally, the subjective rule is the mixture of perceived expectation with intentions to conform (Groeger, Moroko, & Hollebeek, 2016). Consumer behavior is very important for market managers, who need to know which factors and characteristics influence consumers to make decisions. Electronic consumer behavior gives businesses the opportunity to target, segment and predict consumer behavior, which helps businesses maximize their profits with the help of the Internet (Groeger, Moroko & Hollebeek, 2016).

2.8 Factors affecting consumer behavior

The behaviour of consumer and factors have effect on it has been a great attention of the researchers and researchers in the past decades. This remains is because the consumer is the main focus of any organization that intends to make money. As Calin (2013) stated that factors that can effect consumer behaviour are varied in nature and can be cultural, personal, social and psychological.

First of all, Calin cited cultural factors as factors that exists in the environment such as the event that the consumer was raised up. It can also be the place that the consumer live in.

Beside cultural factors, social factors are related to the friends, family and any group of people that the consumer relate to. Personal factors as another point of importance are connected with the personality and personal charcaters of the consumer such as is he male, female, his age and his lifestyle.

Finally, psychological factors are related to consumer believes and what the consumer know (Tarhini et al., 2016). Of all these factors, psychological factors have attracted considerable attention as they are more complex and have a direct impact on consumer behavior. According to Kotler (2011), the personality of the consumer influences his behavior and the motivation, therefore, to know the behavior and

characteristics of the personality of the public is considered very important for the marketing strategy of a company. Specifically, psychological factors are discussed below as follows:

Motivations. Every consumer decision is based on specific incentives that are most often related to their needs. According to Kotler (2011), factors that force the consumer to make a decision about a market or an action are motivating and leading to the satisfaction of this need. Consumer motivations can be described as rational or emotional. Reasonable motivations are based on rational thinking while emotional motivations depend on consumer emotions (Hongwei & Mukherjee, 2007). Knowledge of consumer motivations can increase the likelihood of a successful marketing plan aimed at more effectively meeting consumer needs (Yazdanpanah & Forouzani, 2015).

Perceptions. A consumer's perceptions include the process by which each consumer interprets and organizes the information available on a topic, influencing its behavior as they become part of its personality (Hongwei & Mukherjee, 2007).

Learning. Learning refers to the process of gaining experience from any previous activity or event and has a direct impact on consumer behavior (Kotler, 2011).

Beliefs. Consumers through their daily lives, activities and experiences form their own beliefs about products, services and any other aspect on which they act and make choices (Kotler, 2011).

2.9 Branding

In the business world, all businesses, whether they offer products or services, aim to stand out from the competition in order to attract customers and increase their profits. For many years, one of the practices used to achieve this goal has been to create a distinct and distinct "identity".

Each brand is designed to stand out and attract the consumer. It could include name, letters, number, symbols, shapes, words in slogans, specific colours and fonts (Blackett, 2003). The logo is often seen as the most important part of the brand, but many might argue that this logo is part of a more general identity. The brand tends to be made out of every contact with the consumer, every practice they use to differentiate

and distinguish the company, the good or the service from the competition (Stevenson, 2017). Report identity – in Kotler and Keller’s terminology – ‘nickname, epithet, symbol, logo, mongrel or an amalgam of these’ (ie, McCain the solicitor’s firm). It’s the brand introduced by an organisation to differentiate its product or service from those of its competitors. (Kotler et al, 2008) Stallabrass (2013) : ‘[W]riting in the Wall Street Journal, Wally Olins [a management theorist] has stated that we must consider a brand as ‘a form of conversation [which] sends a consistent, coherent message about company identity to all its stakeholders, its customers and suppliers, its employees and the press.

The performative identity is a vital enhancement, establishing emotional bonds between the consumer and the product. It renders itself irreplaceable (or at least useful to the extent that its absence would be unbearable), and essential to faith in the superiority of the product and the rightness of the purchase. Whether or not the identity-creator is for profit or not, identity serves as a guarantee for a certain behaviour or service, and the way that the ‘other’ – ie the public and/or consumer – is regarded is vital. However, the realisation of that special status of being a content- and meaning-filled presence required a prior preparatory effort of figuring out the strategy to adopt – to plan and articulate. Holt, 2003.

- Defining the mission, values and objectives and analyzing the internal environment of the organization,
- Evaluate existing culture around brands through research that needs to be done.
- Analyze the competition and the external environment of the organization to identify opportunities and risks that may need to be addressed.
- Designing and shaping the identity, visually and verbally, as well as strategizing and promoting the philosophy of the organization, in order to enhance and enhance the sense of 'belonging' to the visitor.
- Applying the strategy through the promotion and promotion of the brand to the target audience of the organization.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the strategy. At this stage, possible divergences are examined and alternatives are applied.

Working on which identity to claim, create or share as an organization or a company, of a good or a product is a fundamental element of the success and accomplishment of goals because the brand is the set of practices aimed to reach the public or a consumer.

2.9.1 Brand Equity

However, while there is quite a rich discussion related to brand equity in the marketing literature in general (Wood, 2000), brands have generally been viewed as one of the major key forms of intangible assets of firms (a statement that seems to broadly imply their high financial worth as well) and therefore the management of firm-level brand equity, its measurement and development are viewed in many contexts as a pivotal principal strategic challenge, one that can impact strategic results for the company such as strategic choice and the marketing mix factors for a brand in the context of a firm's strategic competitive advantage (Baldinger, 1992; Atilgan et al, 2005).

The term brand equity was brought in with an attempt to delineate the association between brand and the client (Wood, 2000). Keller (1993) gave the following generic and widely accepted definition of brand equity: In marketing terminology, brand equity is defined as the net differentials in perceived benefits that one brand offers relative to competing brand or a generic competitive alternative, and that is demonstrated to a premium price. Al Shocker and Bart Weitz defined brand equity, citing Warren J Leuthesser (1988), as follows: The other approach ...[to defining brand equity] is the customer-based brand-equity point of view. (Al Shocker and Bart Weitz, cited in Ailawadi, Lehmann, Neslin 2003, p427) In this view it is: ... a measure of utility, loyalty or differentiated, unique and clear image that is not explained by product attributes ...A second, alternative definition comes from the firm's point of view. (Al AlShoker and Bart Weitz, cited in Ailawadi, Lehmann, Neslin 2003, p427) Here brand equity is: ... the incremental cash flow engendered by the use of the brand name.

Furthermore, because the differences between brand equity and brand value are seldom outlined, and these concepts are often interchanged (See, for instance, De Mortanges, 2008), the field of studies on brand equity has been built on uncertain theoretical grounds. So far, we have reviewed the theoretical literature about the key concepts behind the studies that were done in the field of brand equity. This review has indicated that there is an underlying ambiguity, which can be solved by distinguishing between different conceptualisations of the essence referenced by the concepts in

question: the concept brand equity being used in the sense of how valuable the brand is for the user, and the concept brand value for how valuable the brand is for the company.

Service elements of the brand marketing mix can associate, describe and position the firm's service in competitive terms (Wood, 2000). Service elements of the brand marketing mix can potentially affect brand equity (Yoo et al., 2000), but further expect reduction in spending on brand-building activities (Mela et al., 1997). Huge scholarly output has been generated to vouch for the effectiveness and the significance of the service elements of the brand marketing mix (Keller Lehmann 2006). Yet, literature sadly lack in capturing the relationship between brand equity or its dimensions with the service elements of the brand marketing mix (Keller and Lehmann, 2006). Lassar and his co-authors (1995) observed that the Hystorically, literature feels shortage in examining the effects of these two brand marketing mix elements that are relevant to the study such as advertisement and sales promotion, on brand equity (Netemeyer et al., 2004).

As Baldinger (1992) remarks, the foremost objective of advertising as a marketing tool should be it to improve brand equity.

Various studies attest that sales promotion enhance brand equity in some cases (Yoo et al., 2000; Florence et al., 2011), and will reduce brand equity in others (Yoo et al., 2000). Further, it has been shown that the specific type of the communication that is used in the execution of the sale promotion in a marking communication plan is the source of the different outcomes, because promotional communications (i.e. monetary financial inducement to the end customer, e.g., price reduction) lead to the reduction of brand equity (Yoo et al., 2000), especially if they happen very frequently (Yoo et al., 2000; Mela, Ataman, Van Heerde, 2006 cited in Florence et al., 2011) . On the other hand, non-price based promotion (e.g., giveaways) was shown to increase brand equity (Palazon 2 005).

Meanwhile each individual element of the promotional activity is analysed as an independent predictor of some of the dimensions of the brand equity, ex-post defined in the brand equity literature. In other words, Buil et al. (2011: 688) reveal a positive association between the non-price promotions and the dimensions such as product

perceived quality and brand associations, and a negative one with price-promotional activity vis-à-vis the quality (a low price reflecting low quality according one with the strategic management author Alice Tyethaml (1988)). Other than the relationship between sales promotion and the perceived quality, the relationship between the total promotional effort and the brand loyalty, as one of the dimensions of the brand equity of the customer as an individual-or evaluates its effect as the long-term element of the asymmetric relationship – is a subject of an independent research, disclosed in the study published by Mela et al. As the authors state in the title of the article (‘New Test of the LAPH [long-term asymmetrically persistent homogeneity] Hypothesis: The Promotional Effort-Brand Loyalty Relationship’), they investigate how the total promotional effort affects the customer’s dimension of the brand equity through the exclusion of the promotional price offers versus non-price promotional spending. Finally – finish Lavern Joseph and Sukhvinder Sivakumaran (2009), ascribing the interpretation he and his colleagues’ results – the effect of the promotions in general, and consequently brand equity, depends on the stage of the customer’s brand loyalty, defining the threshold under which the promotions negatively affect the customer’s perception of the brand equity, while at the same time the promotions can be used, as one of the marketing instruments, by a firm in case of the very loyal customers to smooth the brand equity erosion following the purchase. The only study to pin down the interrelations between the multiple elements of the marketing whole (not the individual component of the mixture) was made by Yoo and his co-authors (2000). Although they used a set of perceptual measures of marketing activities, they also made a number of generalisations regarding the four P’s. (Yoo et al., 2000), for example, hypothesised that customer-based brand equity could be built using the store placement (distribution), premium products’ price, high level advertising expenditures and distribution.

Brand Equity Measurement

Being such a concept that needs to be thought its way and is of the highest complexity that can be measured in an acceptable manner, it had been measured through various versions with different frameworks (Atilgan et al., 2005) To date, there are yet any agreements of which measurement approach is a true mirror (Mackay, 2001), hence in market place is still no brand equities have been measured, but it is emerged from two different perspectives, one from the financial perspective and the

other from the customer-based perspective (Lassar et al., 1995). Brand equity that related to this paper bases on customer-based brand equity, and therefore it was mentioned in the beginning of the paper that the remainder of marketing literature review forms part of the CBB (customer-based brand equity) and so it is important to mention that CBB's concept of brand equity viewed from the financial perspective pertain to the value of the firm as a whole (Simon Sullivan, 1993).

In one of the first attempts to define how brand equity may be developed, Farquhar (1989) has proposed that brand evaluations (brand loyalty, which are affective attitudes that the item is of good quality), consolidation of the affective attitude (strengthening of brand attitude in the consumer's memory) and conceptual alignment (the construction of the image of the brand consistent with the category attributes) may account for the brand power. The first empirical attempt to define the concept and operational measurement of brand equity was carried out by Martin and Brown (1990, as cited by Lassar et al., 1995) which have disaggregated brand equity in five dimensions: perceived quality and value; brand image; consumers' trustworthiness and commitment.

As Keller (1993) describes, '[t]he difference between the effects of brand knowledge on the consumer response to marketing of the brand' is the customer-based brand equity, and another is its measurement.

The indirect one tries to measure the assets of brand equity by measuring the constructs of brand awareness and brand image, which form the brand knowledge.

Brand awareness, for instance, is defined as 'the ability to recall a brand, the likelihood that the brand is being thought about, and the relative strength (accessibility) of the brand in memory' (Silverman et al,1999), and tends to correlate with positive associations between brand awareness and customer-based brand equity (Huang Sarigollu, 2012). Brand image, finally, is summarised as 'the set of attributes, benefits,

and qualities that consumers associate with a brand and that differentiates a brand in their minds from competing offerings' (Keller,1993)

The second, more direct one, is the performance one, which attempts to evaluate the degree to which brand knowledge influences the consumer's reaction to the marketing-mix elements.

But for the other of two ways to measure the brand equity – very different – the foundations of the brand equity were identified by Aaker (1991, cited from Atilgan et al., 2005) who thought that the foundations of the brand equity, as embodied by students, were captured under five dimensions, one for each of a set of five embodiments of the brand equity: 1) brand awareness; 2) brand associations (attitudes, self-concept and loyalty); 3) brand loyalty; 4) perceived quality; and 5) other 'intellectual brand property', and that the brand equity should be measured by the respective single measures of each of the five dimensions.

Moreover, the dimensions also show a positive correlation with brand equity experimentally as measured by Aaker's framework (that is, Yoo, Donthu and Lee (2000) tested and found Aaker's framework to relate positively to the above dimensions).

However, Atilgan (2005) and others who retested this model found that brand loyalty had a positive, direct and dominating effect on brand equity; and other results indicated that brand equity dimensions were affecting other (ie, Buil et al, 2011). In particular, perceived quality and brand associations were positively related to brand awareness, and in turn, these two dimensions affected the brand loyalty (ie, Buil et al, 2011).

Conversely and following the footsteps of almost all conceptualisations (including the dimensions of brand equity), Lassar and colleagues (1995) introduced an enhanced framework (following Martin and Brown's dimensions of brand equity) by changing this and narrowing down that. Hence, the dimension of perceived quality is

changed by performance, which is more directed towards this; they measured commitment as they feel and not as an act, such that they believe that brand equity has as a consequential – and one of the dimensions – a favourable behaviour from the customer; value is related with the price of the brand; and the dimension of image is narrowed on social image, since the reputation in the society you have (not own) a given brand (Lassar et al., 1995). The research was touched by a 17 points measure, such that the researchers believe that it is a good thing both in terms of the dimension of the scales, as well as (and if comparing with other surveys in the field) being designed in order to provide individual measures of the five dimensions, and consequently the chance for the companies to check whether their marketing endeavours were efficient (Lassar et al, 1995).

Unlike the other studies where they simply ask respondents to evaluate their brand, here for the first time Erdem and Swait advanced the second leg of a theoretical explanation (How did these brand equity and behavioural constructs become associated with the location of the brand's product in the marketplace, the informational structure of the total market for the product?) to be the dependent variable for BEQ 'the construct set of seven brand equity' (here's the set itself) – investments, consistency, clarity, credibility, perceived quality and risk, information costs.. In other words, while customer based brand equity is influenced by a relative position of product in the market ("Explicated by the credibility of the brand signal") and we view credibility as a psychological-perceived phenomenon, we assume that clarity, consistency and brand investments directly influence the credibility as extrinsic variable. The more credibility concerning the position of product in the market, the more actual utility and probability that the consumer buys the product, the less perceived risk and information costs he or she should take (Erdem and Swait, 1998). In detail, the authors wrote that 'customer based brand equity should be a relative position of product in the market (assumed to be the quality of the brand signal)'. Afterwards, we can postulate that the more credibility in respect of the quality of the brand signal – the extent to which the customer believes that the brand is of high quality – the higher the expected utility and the probability of the purchasing opportunity of good/product, and the lower the perceived risk and the cost in searching and collating information. The characteristics of this approach of signalling were also tested in my own brand equity study, which I could

definitely make with the other colleagues too and we believe that compared with Keller's approach, firms can still use brands as signalling characteristics to tell people about the position of product in the marketplace (Menictas, Wang, and Louriere, 2012) and that it is actually equity that generates loyalty and not one of its dimensions as Aaker says in his theory.

Finally Silverman and others work (1999) – and this is the only available study of the two approach to brand equity – financial vs the customer-based approach, must be referenced here and this study that shows the fact that perceptions of a customer towards a brand implicate the financial performance of the brand in the market, and at the same time, perceived positive customer-based brand equity will tend to fast-track maximisation in the cash flow of an organisation.

2.9.2 Brand image

Through identity creation, businesses try to shape the view of their audience or customers and it goes without saying that they want this impression to be positive. The public's view is called a brand image. According to Rentschler, Bridson and Evans (2011): brand is the identity an organisation wishes to communicate, brand image is how an audience responds to that identity. More specifically, brand image could be defined as "the overall impression an organization, person, or cultural product generates on the public, a mental representation" (Dinnie, 2008). The message that the museum goes through is the brand and the way the public decodes it is the brand image. The decoding is also individual, and depends on the recipient of the message, her general characteristics, and the message, its subject and purpose. The result of the decoding is the picture that appears for each of them. More specifically, the image is an imaginative photograph shaped by the cognitive and perceptual background, the emotions that trigger the message and the holistic assessment of the identity of the organization (Gil & Ritchie, 2009).

Brand image acts as an incentive to visit a museum, as Uusitalo & Ahola find, in terms of the motivations of choosing a business or product can be economic, aesthetic or social. These motives are created in the public by the image that is usually formed of IFAs. Usually people see museums as a place of knowledge, a place of aesthetic

activation and enjoyment or a place of socialization (Ahola, 2008).

The visitor's image of a business is therefore the result of his impressions, perceptions and experiences. However, the business brand image has a specificity, it has a dual dimension. The two primary elements that make up it are the image of products or services, which refers to the production of experiences. The second element is the business image, which refers to the collection and promotion of specific features over time.

One observes that the shaping of the brand image by the public as a whole, but also by each individual, is a complex, mainly mental and mental process, the result of which is difficult to predict. For the result to be positive, the business identity must be representative and sufficiently promoted so that visitors are not disappointed. To enhance the public's positive perception, it is necessary to project a positive image and offer exciting and special experiences that create special emotions for the visitors (Wijaya, 2013).

2.10 Customer loyalty and retention

Consumer loyalty is called the psychological commitment a consumer has to a particular brand or company. In a non-competitive environment, it is easier for a business to retain its customers (Parsons, Maclaran & Chatzidakis, 2017). It is also easy to keep them in a market where there are not many substitutes or high provider switching costs. However, this is not the case in the online market as there are many options and no switching costs. If the consumer is not satisfied with his purchase, he can turn to competitors. This is why consumer retention and loyalty is so important for an online business, and just as important as consumer acquisition (Yazdanpanah & Forouzani, 2015). This necessitates a high level of consumer satisfaction because the customer relationship of online business is ambiguous and difficult. Customer analysis is crucial in creating consumer trust and retention, and online businesses need to retain the customers most favourable to them. However, their maintenance cost should not be exceeded beyond a certain limit (Groeger, Moroko, & Hollebeek, 2016). Every Internet company does not have to try to keep up or spend big on consumers who are committed and confident that there is no better competitor in the online marketplace. Businesses

on the Internet need to spend their money on customers who are not committed but important to the company. There should be a positive benevolent relationship between a business and the citizen, when its needs and expectations are well-defined and met. Once the needs and expectations of consumers are well-defined, the company can then adjust its strategies to yield more positive outcomes, and in some cases give consumers more than they even expect (Groeger, Moroko & Hollebeek, 2016). A very satisfied consumer will recommend the product or service to another person, showing their faith in the company. This is because the consumer feels trust in the company because of the value this company delivers on it (Groeger, Moroko & Hollebeek, 2016).

As mentioned above, consumer confidence and retention are achieved when the company provides excellent customer service exceeding its expectations. There are many ways and methods to do this and every company chooses different strategies depending on their capabilities. For example, most online companies offer special discounts, promotional offers and exclusive services to their subscribers (Parsons, Maclaran & Chatzidakis, 2017). This gives the consumer the feeling that he gets a lot of benefits when he is a registered customer. Another method is to remind the customer of a personal event or event that was stored in his account (Tarhini et al., 2016). In addition, some online companies have their own Discussion Blogs on their websites aimed at attracting consumers (Yazdanpanah & Forouzani, 2015). When a site contains valuable information and experiences about a product or service, it acts as a lure for consumers to come back. In addition, promotional messages and offers are useful in terms of consumer loyalty, but only with the customer's permission, otherwise their annoyance and resentment increase (Tarhini et al., 2016). Companies need to make the customer feel special, offering convenience, user-friendliness and many choices to choose from. All this must be accompanied by quality, good pricing and excellent service (Parsons, Maclaran & Chatzidakis, 2017).

2.11 Brand Loyalty

The term loyalty refers to the number of repetitions that consumers buy products or services, and the particular loyalty to a brand (Pappu & Quester, 2016). Aaker (1991)

states that brand trust is an indication of whether a consumer will replace one brand for another if the first brand changes specific product features, features, packaging, or pricing. Brand loyalty has been used to analyze the structure of consumer markets and sales of branded products (Aaker, 1991).

Furthermore Oliver (1999) describes brand trust as: A deep rooted urge to keep purchasing the same favourite product/ service brand repeatedly in the future in spite of marketing bludgeoning and competition assaults (Pappu and Quester, 2016). Loyalty is studied as a type of customer behavioural phenomenon where the customer expresses an emotional trust and faith in the brand (Sasmita and Mohd Suki, 2015). In other studies brand loyalty was treated as a correlate of either behaviours or consumer attitudes. Brand loyalty can be related to how consumers' feelings and attitudes drive them to repurchase a product or visit a particular business (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Conversely, behavioural commitment, where people physically purchase or repurchase the brand, is your action. The multiple definitions of behavioural commitment according to Sasmita & Mohd Suki (2015). Courtesy the respective authors. Cheng (2011) found that in his review of behavioural commitment 'it seems reasonable as a meaningful measure of actual purchasing although belief in attitude is rooted in cognitive-based consumer psyche'.

Networked media disseminate content that is consumed via social exchange, and is thus often lauded for its co-creative, communal, conversational and shareable behaviours (Trusov et al. 2009). For example, as consumers post to or 'Like' pages on social networks set up by companies on those networks, they interact directly with the brand and, moreover, consumers can add content to many of these static pages for the company as well (Pöyry et al. 2013). Interacting via social networks associates consumers more with the brand than those consumption situations where consumers aren't interacting via a social network (Hudson et al. 2016), and users over social networks can create value for brands if they 'transact [i] directly with the brand, make product suggestions, and influence other purchasers' and through providing personality data to the brand directly (Kumar et al. 2010). Importantly, consumer behaviours interact with each other as well as with brand communications and communities to predict not just consumers' enjoyment, but also that customers are more loyal to the brand, and that this loyalty is more to the brand (Wirtz et al. 2013).

The good points of an engaged customer would be commitment, enjoyment, contact, trust and commitment. (Brodie et al., 2013)The functionality of Facebook are all based on the liking between two users. That is, if two users like each other's sharing, they can share their status or link on another user's wall. (Chen et al., 2013)

The information shared on Facebook concerning brands are considered 'eWOM' that is, if the information shared is with regard to the views, the facts and the experience of the user on 'them'. (g) Redefining the hedonic and cognitive factors of 'WOM' to the emotional and cognitive ones. Ladhari (2007) discovered pleasure and reaction have an impact on 'WOM' intention.

When it comes to 'WOM' in social networks, the question is how to analyse consumers' response to online information. It is important to stress how people are now advised to assume that e-commerce is one click away and doesn't jeopardise consumers' impulses but rather facilitates them by directly allowing consumers to buy products suggested on Facebook fan page. Through those links consumers can visit online stores.

As Adelaar et al. (2003) indicated, "In emotional empathy, the same processes lead to positive self-reinforcement(reward/punishment) as in emotional contagion. Emotional response is characterised by a positiveintegration of additional consumer information... decreasing thepotential for self-control mechanisms." In other words, if the emotional response generated through the person branded ("UGC") is positive, impulsive markets will be stimulated. Positive emotions can trigger consumer purchase intention according to Baker et al. (1992) and therefore, the "UGC" might also stimulate spontaneous markets. Thus far, three groups have been considered regarding the stimulation of impulsive markets by schizophrenic consumer cue-emotion-cognition relationships.

While it is certainly intriguing to identify the effects of a WOM on the B2C markets, it is also interesting to investigate how a consumer may have an effect on brands. Kim and Ko (2012) declare that, 'brand-related contents posted on Facebook creates the value of relationship and the perceived continuance intention of consumers

remaining a friend of a brand'. Indeed, a brand-consumer relationship is a cornerstone ingredient in developing an RM programme (Keller, 2001). Brand engagement, for example, is 'defined as consumers' willingness to think about a brand, talk about a brand, and behave on behalf of a brand' (Goldsmith). An emotional bond to a brand makes a consumer willing to talk about a brand and spread the brand word (Keller, 2001). Brand engagement, in turn, is considered an outcome of the emotional states, and the cognitive states consumers feel by encountering a brand and, again, by experiencing brand UGCs.

2.12 Brand Personality

Brands can be described in terms of having a personality (adjectives/attributions/characteristics). And those terms depend on a consumer's experience with the brand (Aaker, 1997), and are 'grounded in the appearance/packaging of a specific product (e.g., product-related characteristics), as well as in symbolic meanings, or consumer experiences (not product-related characteristics)' (Singh, 2013). By what associations does the concept of personality spring to mind in relation to brands? Aaker (1997) identified five dimensions of brand personality: sincerity, enthusiasm, competence, excitement and sophistication.

Aaker's (1997) personality scale has been applied to the study of products by category – brands, countries of origin, automobiles, mobile phones, restaurants, and brand building. (Palomba, 2014) This particular brand of personality scale has been used to demonstrate that linking to the brand personality of the marketing manager and the perception of the consumer's personality can lead to successful brand maintenance (Singh, 2013).

2.13 Social Media Marketing

It seems today that social media marketing become some kind of an advertising mania, and it might be described in the following way: Social media marketing is a manner in which corporations and companies apply social media platforms such as: You

tube, facebook, Twitter LinkedIn, and others to dissemination their information and circulate in among the public or the custome.

As Luigi (2011) comments, ‘how people and brands use different social networks to get the info they need all depends on their targets and access’.

Business and marketing is filled with many topics fought on a daily basis. One of the highly battled topic is Social Media Marketing. At business view point, Social Media Marketing is term for the utilization of electronic social media arl as tool of marketing. Social Media Marketing is term for the utilization of electronic social media arl as tool of publicizing the product or services. Social media marketing is the process of creating publicity and awareness regarding services or items being operated by means of a social media sites arl a social media marketing is the process which help the company or organization promote their website, the product or services which developed by them and the Xmas which they are presenting through online social channel, so that it can reach to that place where they couldn’t reach by way of known circle. More generally, the social media and consumer appeal they have offered businesses has provided businesses with a new mode of communicating with consumers. The goals for using social networks differ by case. In particular, social media can be used for (Hill Moran, 2011):

- Recognition
- Increase website traffic
- Increase readers' engagement with the business
- Inform the public immediately
- Announcements
- Transfer of information
- Feedback / Improvement of services

At a minimum, in Social Media Marketing, publishing is the primary initial goal when sharing business information (with attracting consumers as its core or ultimate goal); a process responsible for it normally aims at other goals of any kind (Campbell et al., 2013).

These days on the marketplace, where the majority of business mostly are in financial problem, social medias is one of the financial way for the smallest of the businesses to reach their consumer or spread out the information that they want (Campbell et al.. 2013). First of all, social medias is one of the many opportunities that it gives to the business based on their aims but foremost on the spreading of the information to the consumer base (Tuten Angermeier- 2013) . Second, the biggest advantage that social medias gives to the business beside collecting information from the consumers is the opportunity of building long term relationship with them (Tuten Angermeier- 2013). At last, the presence of the businesses on social medias is now in both in industrial and commerce way expected and necessary for any kind of industry(Tuten Angermeier- 2013): while the profit that the business can get from it are in many different forms and is surprisingly very helpful like building relation with customer, getting new customer, growing market potential, knowing the problem and remarks of the customer, getting the chance of new products introductions and helping communication between business and business.

2.14 Branding and Customer engagement in social media

Brand community refers to a particular kind of community, unconstrained by either time or distance and based on the interpersonal relationships between people who share an admiration for a brand (Muniz and O’Guinn, 2001). It is within a brand community that it is possible for the consumer to develop a brand relationship [with a consumer] (Thompson and Sinha, 2008) with the consumer controlling the balance of power.

They argue that the OBC is a fundamental arena for positioning a business’s differentiation and competitiveness, deepening their relationship with consumers and proposing to contribute to its evolution (co-creation - ‘brand co-creation’).

And those consumers are becoming more and more involved and engaged with other consumers and with brands online (Kelley and Alden, 2016; Tonteri et al, 2011). Marketers are interested in how to cultivate and nurture such communities, which will net more consumer value (customer value) (Martínez-López et al, 2016). And via the very brand communities they invoke and often promote, firms are managing, if not sidestepping, consumers’ backlash against traditional (contingency hypothesis) more controlled marketing methods and technologies such as advertising. Companies

increasingly treat consumers no longer just as consumers but rather as allies/helpers in aiding the improvement of their products' development, the decision-making process about them and around them, their branding and, in general, increasing value for what used to be termed 'relations between the brand and the consumer' (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006).

Brand communities became an important element in corporate communication, which explains why the mechanisms of their success are a key focus of attention for marketers and academics alike (Casaló et al., 2013). Research on brand communities revolve around 2 areas: the first is the nature of the community (the community features, its relationships that leads to its structure, how can it be sorted, on how their user behaves); and the second area is consumer involvement and participation and its consequences to the certain brands (Woisetschläger et al., 2008). One of the key to each community is these 2 areas balanced (Casaló et al., 2013).

Although brand communities were analysed by several social and management perspectives (Cova and Pace, 2006; Hajli et al., 2015), there was insufficient research to orientate the practice companies on learning how to manage these communities to increase the involvement dynamic, by which the user is more confident about this product through his experience or identification (Porter A Donthu, 2008), considering, however, without any nuance on User Experience (Ott, 2006; Hung et al., 2011), thus leaving out of the analysis the dynamic of involvement that should be considered in addition to the quality of the Platform (Aral and Zeckhauser, 2012). Furthermore, although in the theoretical work there's notice on the importance of this involvement (Humphrey et al., 2011; McAlexander et al., 2005; Vivek et al., 2012), the relationship among them hasn't been investigated at empirical level (Relling et al., 2015). It's identified the participation and the identification with the online community and take part as the crucial role of understanding this dynamic of the engagement level (Brodie et al., 2013) and in some works (Abfalter et al., 2012) is marked the variables of the participation and identification as the relative variables more influent about the degree arrived of relationship that the User makes with the brand, and has been already identified as the differences levels of participation, engagement and loyalty have taken the centre because its influence on the participation of the user in the brand community and the factors that have influence on it (Vivek et al., 2012). Consumers are joining social networks and, more specifically, brand communities to get information

about a product outside the company (Kotler et al, 2010). Consumers trust other consumers more than the brand owner company. As a consequence of the changes, companies have to adapt: ‘In the course of innovation and development [of a business model], its designers find themselves navigating in the midst of potential’ (Hanna et al, 2011).

This translates into an expectation that brands need to inject some personality into otherwise technical online interactions (Weber, 2007). However, companies rarely know how to employ their online forums and the communities behind them (Kietzmann et al, 2011), often with the result that they alienate the consumer with respect to their brand. A brand will have a hard time convincing other users to form an online community around it if its members feel that they are merely being used (Clemons, 2009).

Therefore, firms can be helpful in focusing on how they can interact with their consumers in a community rather than on how to transmit brand information to them (Weber, 2007). This also implies an awareness on the part of the firm about the role played by consumers in the brand management, which is transformed then in co-creators of the brand. Thus, firms should leave to consumers part of the control over the brand (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2010). Therefore, in brand communities, members and sponsors (firms/brands) share ownership of brands (Healy and McDonagh, 2012). This control is also expected: as their reputation rests on the content created by consumers, community members, firms inherently want to limit and exclude content that does not agree with brand interests (Singh and Sonnenburg, 2012). Overall, the control process can influence the degrees of credibility the consumer gets from the community and, if left unattended, the community can start treating the firm as an act of invasion. For a start, it might be worthwhile to assess quickly what control the consumers are willing to tolerate in a community and not to trespass the boundaries (Fournier and Lee, 2009).

Further, since the company also enlists the brand community in selling the product and service the company is profiting from, consumers could see it as an other marketer on sponsor’s side. We view the brand community as a place for developing

relationships with other consumers., a setting in which to acquire information and even express their personality, rather than a marketing arena for selling (Wirtz et al., 2013).

In summary, although each creates its own unique sense of sponsor direction and pacing (Porter and Donthu, 2008), consumers collectively will view a brand as serendipitous only when they recognise that there can be a lot of control in a community.

2.15 Research Justification

The main reason and the starting point that the researcher had chosen sport as a topic is customer engagement and following that the power the leveraging of sponsorship agreements have through contemporary online platforms as a “hidden weapon” for the improvement of the value of the sponsorship partners brands.

Another reason is that there is not a study addressing the topic of customer engagement in sports , and also a study that combines sport and new media specifically social media , in fact there is less research that deals with customer engagement through chat boards knowing that many companies now produce campaign videos to be posted on Facebook by their customers, and yet no one tried to research on the customer's engagement and response through this media.

There are many studies that prove customer engagement important (Fliess, Nadzeika & Nesper. 2012; Bhalla. 2013; Handcroft & Jarratt. 2007) and the same topic is addressed in many scientific papers, but, in fact, only few papers were tackling sports and any sort of sample that were using social media, they were privet firms.

Moreover all those companies did not consider social media, and the studies that did still it coincide with only Twitter (not Facebook), in addition there is not a study that applied Facebook in this study. Furthermore, on the few relatable past research that attempt to compare a team with a company are focused only on opinions of either the sponsor or the sponsee and not both in a standardised form. This research juxtaposes the opinions of the public and the private sector in the same framework, and is to compare information by the team managers with a “public” head of federation, eg, the Greek Basketball Federation. The fans opinions would also be combined to provide a more reliable picture of the situation than any presentation from only one of the sides is set to present, which allows for reliable comparison between teams and conclusions.

The research model that has been designed with the reference of literature review and the objective of the research. As shown below.

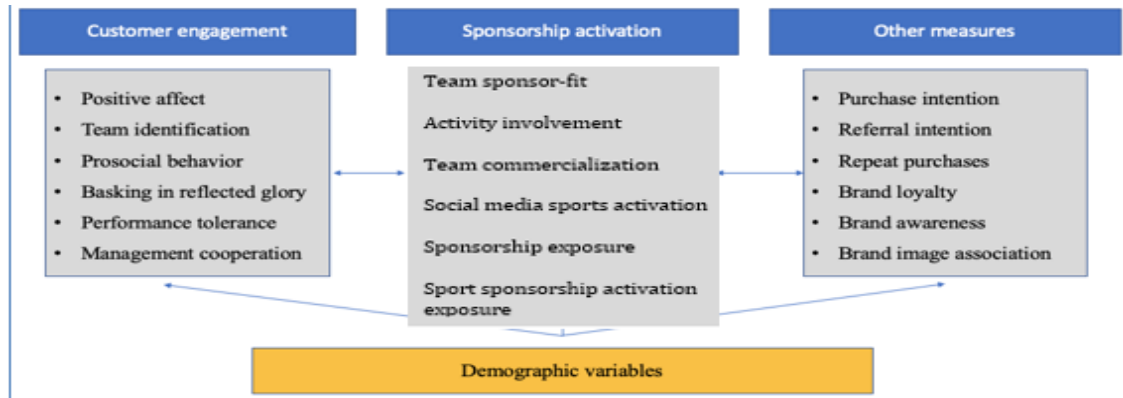


Figure A: Research Model

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

This third chapter describes the methodology targeted on the exploratory study, the research rationale, the sampling strategies, data collection and data analysis along the design and during every step in the exploratory research process.

3.1. Research Objectives and Questions

Accordingly, literature on customer engagement indicates that both sponsorship and internet communicative media platforms influence consumers involvement and the ultimate brand, as well as found from many research now that customer engagement at an elevated level could affect customers to behave positively (for example, buy products or experiences, recommend them etc). So the worth of customer engagement is its impact on consumers' behaviour will be set under the microscope of sponsorship in sport.

Therefore these relationships between customer engagement, purchase intention, repeat purchases and referral intention has been proved from many researcher, and those results that customer engagement could be razorback and beneficial for the firm (getting decreasing of costs and increasing on profits).Secondly, brands are the quintessential property of a company. Therefore, the impact of firm's actions and choice should be measured constantly.

On this scale the aim of this body of work is qualitative primary research and to provide information on the topic in the title – ie to create more involved fans using integration of sufficient sponsorship mix through online communities. Moreover the level of influencing the brands of the sponsorship partners was also scrutinized. Overall, this piece of work aims to learn how each partner of the deal utilises fan behaviour through sponsorship activation on consumership by social media and their outcomes and to see as well, any differences or similarities, if any, towards procedures.

Accordingly the primary questions were formulated as follows:

- 1.To identify what are the determinants of customer engagement in a social media setting.

- 2) What are the consequences of consumer involvement on consumption behaviour in an online social context?
3. What is the relation between of consumer engagement and sponsorship activation?
- 4) Does sponsorship activation affects consumer behaviour in community online platforms?
- 5.Can buying intention being predicted by factors of sponsorship leveraging and consumer engagement?
- 6) Are different levels of engagement with the brand in a social media context depending on their demographic characteristics?
- 7) Ultimately, is there any evidence of variation in terms of sponsorship activation in a 'social media world' when compared with the demographics of consumers?

3.2 Proposed Methodological Approach

This can be seen in the use of the mixed method and it outlines the selection of the mixed method research that was conducted.

A mixed method and it is also outlined the reasons why it was used and also the goals. While these investigators provides the argument of the depth differentiation between the two methods (philosophical bases, methodological assumptions and the course of research) it could be done through mix method for a rational of reason behind the study. Each approach contributes an approach strength and weakness at the same time it could also perceived the strength of an approach as the weakness the other and it works both way. These differences were framed by their protagonists in a dichotomy rather than complementarity and in a way that further intensified the quantitative/qualitative research debate, fought for years. Debates perpetuate epistemological fragmentation, theoretical disconnection and empirical arbitrariness (Gelo et al, 2008). For many decades, mixed method (MM) or mixed methods research

(MMR) has been designed as a new approach to research that combines and integrates the QQD approach.

And so MM is indeed a third way – one that combines the strengths of quantitative and qualitative approaches. This research approach, as well as the previous two research approaches (qualitative and quantitative) are characterised by many philosophical assumptions, methodological a priori and research methods, since in the research literature we have a series of research designs described and defined for the MMR, as recently recalled and updated (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003a), report an almost 40 types of mixed methods designs reported in the literature. These have been summarised by Creswell and colleagues (Creswell et al, 2003), and very recently updated (15 years since the mixed methods approaches were written about scholarly, with a rapidly increasing demand (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003b; Eom, 2014)). The list of 12 classifications into the four broad categories (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007) reduced into four main mixed methods designs, and with some of the many variants of each of them (because three or five phases are not always useful as a simplified, because they end up in a lot of variance): triangulation design: two approaches to the same phenomenon are applied in the same time; embedded design: two approaches are ‘embedded’; explanatory design: the two approaches are used to answer the research question; exploratory design: one of the approaches to the research question is exploratory All these designs can be characterised one phase or two phases approach; in the former because in the sense that quantitative and qualitative methods are applied simultaneously at the same time (as a consequence they are also called concurrent designs), this is the case of the triangulation designs, and of the one-phase embedded designs; while in two-phases approaches, in the sense that quantitative and qualitative methods are applied after each other (as a consequence they are also called sequential design) to the same sample, or to different samples in the two different phases of the study, this is the case of explanatory designs, exploratory designs, and two-phase embedded design.

This study will adopt the two-phase approach, one stage in different samples, and the last category of the explanatory design. Analysis A two-scheme was adopted for coding the justifications for engaging in one or the other of the two approaches,

quantitative and qualitative. Following the iconic scheme elicited by Greene et al. (1989) in the circuit of justification of mixed methods listed above, our respondents then reported: 1. We need both of them as only using one will provide something that the other won't. 2. It was an issue that looked like it needed a quant/qual mix. 3. It was decided for us that a quant and qual mix was needed. 4. The field required a mixed methods approach. 5. We wished to do both quan to qual.

1) Triangulation: convergence, corroboration, correspondence or results from multiple methods. In my context of coding triangulation, corroboration between quantitative and qualitative data was the most relevant.

2. Complementarity: striving for extension, extension, extension, extension, example, illustration, comparative explication of the results from one method compared with the results from another. (Greene et al., 1989: 259)

3. Development: always tends to exploit the output of one aim to improve the other so that development is deliberately used broadly to include sampling and actual implementation, as well as measurement decisions. 4. Assessment and development can and should profit from the congruence of these three aims (Greene et al., 1989: 259)

4. Innovation: specifically sought paradox or contradiction, new perspectives or frames of reference, the 'recasting' of questions or results from one method with questions or results from the other method (Greene et al., 1989: 259)

5. Extension: this type wishes to extend ... both the width and the scope of enquiry, and proceeds by different methods with different ... parts (Greene et al., 1989: 259)

Moreover, this type of typology – based on one axis (interests vs competence, see below) – has been better elaborated and yields a total of 18 different type of reasons to mix methods:

a) Triangulation or greater validity – This was the more traditional use of triangulation: the application of two methods (quantitative and qualitative research)

together to cross-validate each other. If the term was used as a synonym for combining quantitative methods and qualitative research methods, that was not coded as triangulation.

b) complementarity – the notion that the methods of the quantitative and qualitative paradigms have their own strengths and weaknesses, so the use of both together allows a researcher to compensate for the weaknesses of one with the strength of the other.

c) parsimony – after all, presumably [what] more can be said about the part of the puzzle in front of him/her because he/she uses both QM and QR?

d) Process – quantitative tells us how social life is structured but qualitative tells us how it feels.

e) Different questions – that quantitative and qualitative research can answer different types of research questions. Coded where authors stated explicitly that they were doing this.

f) Explanation – one is used to help explain findings generated by the other.

h) pleasant surprise – the thought that the pairing of Q and QR could be methodologically useful when Q leads to results that are surprising, and hence QR finds itself being used to explain Q For more information, see this Wikipedia page.

h) Instrument development – context where qualitative research is used for designing items of a questionnaire and/or scale – in other words, to generate better wordings or more representative closed answers.

Sample: sampling1) Sampling – as in when the inclusion of one type of design augments the sampling of respondents or cases.2) Stratification (that is, in the statistical sense) – as when samples or respondents are allocated to two or more groups (eg, males and females) based on systematic differences between them.3) Subsampling – as when

respondents (eg, 500 in the drawn-at-random sample) are apportioned into subsamples (eg, a drawn-at-random sample of 100 for more intensive follow-up).

j) Credibility – refers to suggestions that employing both approaches enhance the integrity of findings.

k) justificatory context: for cases where context justifies the aggregate (eg, the in-depth studies provide illuminating context for the broad trends revealed by the survey).

Illustrate: to use qualitative data to illustrate the quantitative ('dry') finding ('put meat on the bones...')

(l)

And

(m) Usefulness or 'make the findings more useful' – the fact that – ie, two-barrelled exhortation perhaps more everyday for applied pieces – that the two approaches be combined: this will be more useful for practitioners and others.

n) Stylise and discover – so you bring in qualitative data first, and generate hypotheses based on it, before going quantitative to test all of them in the same project.

o) Heterogeneity of perspective. I here admit a composite of two slightly different arguments: quantitative and qualitative research were respectively the basis of quantitative and qualitative combinations, and were couched in terms of two different motivations: on the one hand, the need for articulation of relationships among quantitative variables; on the other, the need for articulation of meanings within qualitative research participants.

p) Recommend promoting or furthering or developing/building upon – this one suggests referring to having further or better colonised the field by promoting or furthering or developing/building upon a Finding (quantitative or qualitative).

q) Other/unclear.

r) Not stated.

This is a research approach adopted because it is a mixed method research; meaning that the findings of qualitative research will compliment the finding of quantitative research as the researcher will be seeking for explanations, extension, illustrations but more relevant, clarification of the findings of one method with the finding of the other. Again, this is a research approach that promising to give the researcher an overall picture, some would say, a composite picture (or impression of an issue or concern). Finally, this is a mixed method research approach selected in order to increase the usefulness of the outcome as sport management as science is more interested in the useful implications of findings which are tailored towards providing managers with practical guidelines for action. Hence, this is a research approach that tries to address the areas of a concern (or phenomenon) both quantitative and qualitative but to deliver hopefully more rather than less coherent picture of your area of enquiry.

Importantly the research will focus not only on both sides of a particular issue as seen from those that sponsor sports and those being sponsored by the others but also as it has been highlighted above the customers- the real fans . These are the individuals for which the whole sport management science platform for all its vendors has been catered for in the first place .

Interviews and questionnaires will be used as data collection methods. Before the actual research, both questionnaire and interview questions were used as trial questions and interviews . The researcher used the trial questionnaire to learn the design of questions and to correct mistakes. Similarly the researcher used the trial interview to make herself feel more confident.

3.3 Procedure of Primary Research

Quantitative part: All questionnaires items will be drawn from different previously-validated, highly reliable scales that have been used in this kind of study before. These questions will be designed according to the constructs of fa engagement

(Inayatullah and Yusjiba, 2015; Yusjiba et al. 2014). For this part, adapted and additional questions will be used for this study only.

The questionnaire was set up as an on-line application. It was distributed through email invitation sent to teams database and simultaneously announced on two of the largest online sports news media reaching the general public. Public of basketball fans. The data was collected, analysed and interpreted by means of the statistical software of data analysing -SPSS version 24.0. Descriptive statistics were applied to describe the responses of consumers to each section within the questionnaire. In addition, analyses of variance and particularly (One-way ANOVA) and (Pearson correlation) test were used to compare who is the type of influencer and their characteristics. Furthermore, (multiple regression) was used to develop a regression model to predict aim it's to assessment and estimation of consumers behavior.

The type of statistical approach selected to analyze did so as a result of variable level of measurement. ($\alpha=0.05$) is the level of significance.

Due to this given research aim and problem, as you can see, I have chosen the qualitative research because it is not in the focus to generalise, but in the description and situations that the research problem exists; the qualitative researcher seeks usually a deeper and wider understanding of the material collected and the research problem. Holme & Solvang, 1991

Qualitative conclusions are largely grounded in attitudes and beliefs, non-quantified data, while the fundamental goal of research is to gain an in-depth understanding of the research problem, the drawing of conclusions should not be common. (Holme & Solvang, 1991)

Through her earlier studies in qualitative research, the researcher developed the meaning of a delayed description.

And Zikmund (2000) has described descriptive studies in the following terms: [At the bottom are] descriptive studies that are based on some prior notion of the nature of the research problem and that are used to assess the extent to which or whether one

part of a phenomenon differs from another with respect to behavioural or attitudinal needs, perceptions, attitudes and other characteristics. Such studies, Zikmund says, can answer 'who'- and 'what'- and 'when'- and 'how'-questions.

For this reason, qualitative and descriptive research is appropriate for this study.

Secondly, qualitative questioning will also be of help in both the case studies. As Yin (1994) has said: 'A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.' Single case study study one particular case and delve deep at this case more than a multiple case study But, at the same hand, by this case study methodology author shall have the opportunity to compare as well, in his opinion Yin (1994) suggests, 'The evidence from multiple cases is often viewed as being more convincing, and the entire study is therefore being viewed as being more robust.'

Hence it is an appropriate strategy, by the reason that it is looking for information that is depth and details, on the contrary, compared to another cases.

Second, there are no guidelines as to how many case studies will be admitted: More will obviously be better, but the literature will accepted 'minimums' of two to four cases on the 'low end' and 10, 12 or 15 cases on the 'high end' (Miles and Huberman 1994; Hedges 1985). This study will comply to the restrictions indicated by the scholars that will be introduced in the next paragraphs by using exactly the cases that will be introduced.

Yin (1994) has also stated that interview is the main source of data within case study. The case study researcher is free to use most of the evidence that already available in literatures. Thus it's called 'triangulation' (different views being taken) or 'multiple sources of usage' and that offers a chance to the researcher to have many measures of the same phenomenon, and also will raise validity of study.

Documents: Letters Administrative documents (progress reports, annual reports, and other internal documents) Articles and formal studies Yin (1994): '[D]ocumentary information is likely to be relevant' in every case study.

Therefore thirdly, for the data collection method of why I chose to conduct this present study, the data I will be gathering would be through multiple personal interviews (Main method of data collection) also triangulated by documentation (second main method of data collection) . Fourth, qualitative methods are the heart of the scientific method approach. Qualitative methods are the heart and soul of the triangulation approaches to find results consistent at the level of depth from data produced by quantitative tools.

3.4 Sampling

The sample has been formed by sports fans and sport managers of the most sponsorship active sport in Greece, which is basketball. As such, this classification made sense in terms of the increased popularity of the teams and the people that support them and especially their possible interest in the social media which as a simple communication conduit has evolved to a strong vitally needed factor for creating personal and corporate relationships through perceived trusts and affinities.

Researchers need to have data in order to have information. The researcher chose Purposive non-probability judgmental sampling via quotas to collect data. A quota process consists of fixing the number of subjects/ cases that have to be selected to partake in the study. The criteria of selection was from the eye of the literature and at the same time to the orientation of the research aims that were set before the commencement of the study. Through this approach, the singularity of the research effort (by means of time restrictions) were in fact the characteristics that eventually led to what kind of sample will be collected and by whom the questions will be addressed which was the convenience selection sample (Bryman 2015) according to its easiness to collect the sample in the given time period. So this sample is even less random than the cherry-picked sample, because it is up to the judgment of the researcher to decide whom to include. ‘Some writers indeed suggest that convenience sampling is actually easier than random sampling, once the decision has been taken.’ ‘Convenience sampling is commonly viewed as an advantageous approach to selecting population units since it provides relatively rapid data: the researcher can decide who will be questioned, when they are free to be questioned, and where they can be found (eg,

Bryman 2015: pp 353-55) '.However, it is very hard to generalize the results to the population because there are some respondents selected with a sole purpose: to increase the researcher's convenience. To secure the generalizability of the results and having data from a higher proportion of the common basketball fans across the country, the questionnaires were collected also by the click on the Facebook link of the questionnaire which was posted on the social media pages of the two of the leading online sport news organization. The mass collection effort through the online sports news media with very popular social media pages was undertaken in the belief that it would increase the generalization of the findings through attracting both the highly engaged fans, who are officially registered in a specific team or federation and basketball fans active on social media.

Second, Tabachnick and Fidell's (2001, p. 117) formula for calculation of how big your sample needs to be: $N > 50 + 8m$ (m = number of independent variables)

This means that, in this case, we have 17 free variables and, for our fulfillment, more than 186 responses, so our final 666 respondents. The sample size reveals the reliability of given data and it is enhanced by the external validity of other, previous similar studies. A second wave of qualitative data followed after the first set of quantitative data that were gathered from the personal data of the individuals involved. The researcher interviewed the responsible of one of the Leagues' team, the sports marketing head of their main sponsor, the marketing head of the Basketball Association and the marketing responsible of their denominator leveraging partner, a gambling organization. These popular teams and organisations were selected because they are heavy users of the social media platforms, and because their composition and leveraging of their sponsorship dyads are uniquely interesting.

As regards the number of cases to be studied that could be examined, there is no specific threshold set into literature. What the literature contains instead is an understood tolerance range of two to four as the minimum, and 10 or 15 as maximum (Miles and Huberman 1994; Hedges 1985). And this research, like any researcher, adheres, as stipulated in the previous paragraph of this paper, to the limits set by this research.

3.5 Measures Questionnaire Design and Interviews Structure

Based on this questionnaire and interview questions we had been inspired by consistent literature review. Interview questions questionnaire will provide researcher information about consumer the consumers attitudes toward the influencer marketing. Questionnaire contains four (4) phrases.

The first page of the questioned should be used to introduce the investigator, to tell the answerers about the research and about how the questionnaire has to be fulfilled. The questionnaire has been developed till its final form as follow;

Section one (1) represents for demographic variables (sex, age, higher educational degree, had worked in location, frequency of social media use). Section two (2) measures the engagement level and dimensions – customer engagement (team identification (three statements), positive affect (three statements), basking in reflected glory (three statements), management cooperation (three statements), prosocial behaviour (three statements), Purchase intention (three statements); referral intention (a number); repeated purchases (a number); brand loyalty (11 statements); brand awareness (four statements); brand image association (seven statements)). Section three (3) measures for Sponsorship activation and dimensions – Sponsorship activation – (team–sponsor fit (five statements); team commercialisation (five statements); activity involvement (four statements); social media sports activation (five statements) and sponsorship exposure (a number). All statements answers are reflected on a Seven point scale (Scale 1: ‘strongly disagree’, Scale 7: ‘Strongly agree’).

The interviews consisted of one set of questions to which we needed answers to be able to feed data into the results of our quantitative research, and answer our more overarching research questions. At the same time, we wanted to keep most of the interview open-ended, to still be able to keep a certain flexibility to the interview, and allow ourselves to probe some more in case something would come up. The questions that were formed, were tailored to these means, the purpose of the study:

“Funnel Principle”

Topical Sequence Method-Themes

1) What kind of relationship has your organization had with social media for the last 5 years?

2) Has your social media strategy changed due to Covid -19 pandemic and if yes how?

*Relationship
Marketing-Social
Media Strategy-
COVID*

3) In terms of customer engagement, which are the most important antecedents you focused on reinforcing through social media and how?

How would you prioritize them? (positive affect, team identification, prosocial behavior, basking on reflected glory, performance tolerance)

*Customer
Engagement
within the Social
Media Context*

4) Do you identify any consequences of customer engagement to the consumers' behavior within the social media context? Are there processes in place that control this aspect and provide numbers?

(Are those consequences depicted in purchase intention, referral intention and repeat purchases? Are brand elements (brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand image association strongly connected with the level of engagement?)

*Other
Measures
Brand
Elements,
Purchase
Intention ect.*

5. How the customer engagement and sponsorship activation is interacted within a SM context? Does the strengthening on the customer engagement within social media context had an impact on the sponsorship activation? Is it controversial? Does the utilisation of sponsorship activation increase the customer engagement within social media context?

6. How does sponsorship activation affect consumer behavior, ie., how does your social media handle this? Do you have any specific methods?

*Sponsorship
Activation within the
social media context*

7. How do you measure consumer variables in association with the sponsorship activation?

8) Does your organization identify any differences in customer engagement levels in the SM context regarding demographic characteristics of your fans? How do you adopt your social media strategy if you have faced such an issue?

Customer Engagement within the Social Media Context/Demographics

Do those demographic related differences affect the sponsorship activation levels and if so which are the actions you are taking?

Reliability and validity of the questionnaire

The fact that the variables are selected by using the theoretical analysis hence, the questionnaire is internally valid. Moreover, the definition of the questions in a clear form is another an indication can be taken as testifying a validity of the questionnaire.

Most important opposed to reliability tests that a questionnaire collects information that they are intended to collect. Reliability is measured by the frequency which can be replicated again and again, while the most common way is how to measure the coefficient of internal consistency, named alpha (a) of Cronbach. (Bryman, 2015) It states that any scale that exceeds 0.70 is a value for reliability.

Reliability Statistics

	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Team identification	.752	3
Positive affect	.839	3
Basking in reflected glory	.911	3
Management cooperation	.931	3
Prosocial behavior	.745	3
Performance tolerance	.760	3
Customer engagement	.855	18
Team – sponsor fit	.721	5
Team commercialization	.773	5
Activity involvement	.790	4
Social media sports activation	.702	5
Sponsorship activation	.747	19
Purchase intention	.763	3
Brand loyalty	.844	11
Brand awareness	.805	4
Brand image association	.902	7

Table 1

The reliability analysis calculated a Cronbach Alpha above 0.70 for all constructs, therefore the questionnaire is considered a reliable source for collecting information on the research topic.

However, in the case of the qualitative interviews it could help the people treating the first steps of the studies when he is testing what kind of a response people could make on the determined topic (Doyle, 1994). By using structured interviews you are taking on an extraordinarily rigid form, because most of the moments in a question you are limiting the number of possible responses to destination, and people often have to give some of the present answers which could not be a true image of things and drop their real feelings about the mentioned topic (Kvale, 1996). By the way, many disadvantages are waiting for the such a moments of communication with the researches, most of which are discovered by Burns (1997). Structured interviews: “Controlled erosion of authenticity”

Commonly used methods of structured interview by sport management researchers are semi-structured interviews. They are often conducted by researchers and other peoples’ knowledge on generally and also with a presumption of certain experience that the respondent had lived through which he can say anything about. And in that type of an interview, the situation must be analysed before the interview (Edwards Skinner 2009).

Judd, Vaughan et al (1991) argue the major disadvantage of a researcher is most often vulnerable “to the politics and bias of the informants subjective insights” and the correspondingly is caught up in the world view of the interviewee. It leads Burns (1997), that is a question of validity, if it is assuming that the informants behaviour is consistent with their perception of reality, the problem men of validity is seen as one of diminished proportions. All of the findings above will lead the researcher in a way of examining all of the cases of the primary research by using a semi-structured interviews and to follow the interview protocol as we know it from the literature.

Semi-structured interview could have an opening question with probes. An interview schedule ‘may be framed in terms of a topic area, but has been devised as a guide to managing the interview, not a fixed text (containing chapters rather than questions) which simply has to be read (Minichiello et al, 1995, p. 65).’ This content-focused direction offers a focus on material that is evidently related to the topic; and

this questioning style offers a degree of flexibility, allows greater opportunity for social interaction, more exploration of ideas and tensions – and affords opportunity to the researcher to see people in the face-to-face ongoing interaction as in the focus group (De Laine, 1997, p. 294). A researcher scans for topics about which she or he needs to have information. The respondent provides first-person descriptions of the topic. In a content-led interview, space may be opened up for presenters to provide first-person descriptions of the situation, as salient to them. As in this interview style, space afforded to interviewees allows the interviewer to probe and ask follow-up questions (Doyle, 1994).

Most limitations of the semi-structured interviews are fairly easy to circumvent for sport management researchers, via the combination of two classic models: specifically, the Stewart and Cash (1994) topical sequence model and the Judd et al. (1991) funnel principle. And that was what happened for us: some topics were built up which the sequence of which allowed the interviewer to probe, or to give probes, to the answers and to bring the interview according to the type of answer that he wants his participant to give. Plus, the ‘funnel principle’ was also taken into account and all the interview started with a general situation and questioning: ‘In the last 5 years, how much have you used social media in your organisation?’ The first question according to the ‘funnel principle’ ought to be quite easy, not very difficult to respond and simple for the participant. Later on in the interview, the questioning has to become more specific, since the interviewer had designed a bank of probes for each question so as to help the researcher on the way to the key issues of the question.

Reliability and validity of the research interviews

Reliability and validity of data presented are contingent upon the type of interview used, but also upon the experience of the interviewer. In terms of reliability, semi-structured interviews is the most robust of research instruments used by the majority of sport management researchers and the interviewer does have some experience using qualitative research and especially interviewing employing the method of semi-structured interviews. All of the individuals interviewed were not chosen at random through a random selection method but carefully selected because the using a random sample was not recommended (Doyle, 1994; Seidman, 1998). Furthermore, the validity of the interview method as an approach was also assured,

since the approach entails an inbuilt negative case analysis, whereby in each interview and with the interview before every subsequent interview it is built in to the requirement to try to invalidate claims when these emerge, by formulating them explicitly as explanatory of the data set (Dick 1990)

Having a measure with reliability means that the survey/test/technique consistently pretty much measures the things it's supposed to measure. Other researchers who repeat the study should get similar results (Sekaran, 2000; Emory Cooper, 1991). Reliability was maintained in two ways. Each is taken from the literature (Guba Lincoln, 1994): Firstly, reliability was achieved through the shaped structure of the interview; and Secondly, reliability was achieved through the scheduling of the structured process of recording, writing and interpreting data.

3.6 Data Analysis

This chapter presents the how of the data analysis typical of a doctorate research. The study was started and conducted as per the aforesaid nature and description here.

Over the last decade, there was a major increasing number of statistical packages capable of conducting multilevel analyses and, hence, the multilevel analyses researcher, who become more and more nowadays, is provided with a variety of software. Indeed, enough software are dedicated to it (see, e.g., from software reviews, Kreft et al., 1994; Zhou et al., 1999) and are could be achieved using more familiar statistical packages such as Statistical Analysis Software (SAS) and its programs and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

In addition, the same statistic package mentioned widely in literature and is an undisputable leader in this field and, thus, the SPSS is also used in the current statistical analysis part of the doctorate research.

Data entry and analysis were performed as well with SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences).

N = 666 participants in the experiment and for each test, we used the hypotheses with which it is based and tested using results of SPSS.

Yin (1994) goes further in suggesting that data analysis is where data are examined, classified, tabulated or otherwise recombined. Each investigation should involve at least an implicit analytic strategy that comes to terms with what it makes sense to analyse and why. A method of analysing qualitative data that emerge from the interviews that shaped this study is outlined as follows. Particularly, the analysis of qualitative data based on content analysis is utilized (Holsti, 1969). First, qualitative data of each case are analysed individually and then, in juxtaposition and contrast with each other, cases are compared on the bases that facilitated the formulation of the research questions. Given the acknowledgement of cross-case comparison as a method of approach, types of family are generated as proposed by Gouldner (1958) and Lofland and Lofland (1984); see an overview of clustering techniques in Table 10.2 (below). Two types of families are developed. In the first type of family, every basketball team or federation (the organisation that organises the Greek professional basketball league/sponsors the league) and its sponsor are put in pairs and examined accordingly. In the second type of family, the same cases are placed together and totality is analysed examining all the sports sponsorship partners. Cases can be examined to see if they fall into clusters of cases that share a similar pattern or configuration. To complement the grounded-theory method and the step by step family typology construction, we approached the analysis of the outcomes of the research questions which frame this study employing the techniques for data analysis presented in Miles and Huberman (1994), as outlined in Table 10.2 below.

Step 1: Single-case analysis: We conducted content analysis on the plant's data from interviews and selected documents.

Step 2. Family typing: Henceforth, for every case there are three families built on the base of sponsorship nets, relationships between every member of every sponsorship network there, three tables and three diagrammings about stages of sponsorship agreement selecting and building, one of them there for each family were built, while subjects data about similar phenomenon for every case was grouped in 'citizenship from age at birth', one family of sports properties and another family of sports sponsor.

Step 3. Construction of the typologies of the cases: Simple cases of both families – ie, the dyad of sport confederation and a major sponsor is our one ‘natural’ family, another is the dyad of a professional sport club and a major sponsor – are plotted one over the other as similar cases. Of course, similarities were looked for.

Step 4: Making sense of an content analytic summary tables. Upon looking at the above tables and figures, we resort to techniques of pattern-noticing, counting the cases, making contrasts and comparisons to make sense of data in either of the two family groups.

Step 5. Conclusion and recommendations. Conclusion and recommendations are followed by summary tables, process map and matrixes. Primary work outcomes along with certain ideas and techniques for improvement in the sample cases are included in tabular forms and a process map to present the general variables in a sport sponsorship activation process via social media targeting most prospective clients of this digital media and upgrading the consumer value of the brand.

Second, qualitative results will be evaluated to see how far they corroborate or enhance the quantitative results, and the results will be compared with the literature in order to help triangulate them and make them more valid, more generalisable.

Chapter 4 Results and Discussion

This chapter reveals the finding of the original research. The data is entered into the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). It is analysed then. N value of the data are 666 research participants.

The main statistical analysis result is as follows.

4.1. Descriptive statistics

4.1.1. Section one (1) Demographic characteristics

1. What is your age?

Related to the age of participants who join in at the upper research, (Table 2, {fig} B) the maximum part who were 35 to 44 got 36.9 % part, followed by 25 to 34 were (29.7%), Between 45 to 54 years old were (13.5 %).

Table 2: Age

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 18 years	22	3.3	3.3	3.3
18-24 years	80	12.0	12.0	15.3
25-34 years	198	29.7	29.7	45.0
35-44 years	246	36.9	36.9	82.0
45-54 years	90	13.5	13.5	95.5
55-64 years	30	4.5	4.5	100.0
Total	666	100.0	100.0	

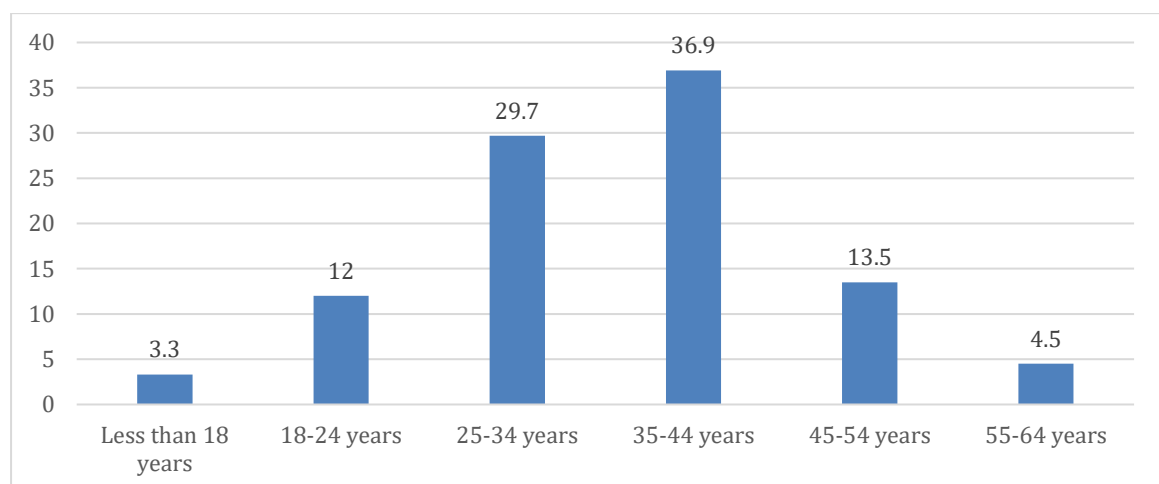


Figure B

2. Educational Background

With reference to the table above, we will discuss the highest educational degree of the participants from the primary research.

Overall, the biggest percentage of them (40.8%) who are holding a bachelor degree, while people who has a secondary level degree counts for 28.8% and people who has a masters' degree comes at third for 16.2%.

Table 3: Education

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Primary school	40	6.0	6.0	6.0
Secondary school	192	28.8	28.8	34.8
Bachelor degree	272	40.8	40.8	75.7
Master degree	108	16.2	16.2	91.9
PhD	18	2.7	2.7	94.6
Other	36	5.4	5.4	100.0
Total	666	100.0	100.0	

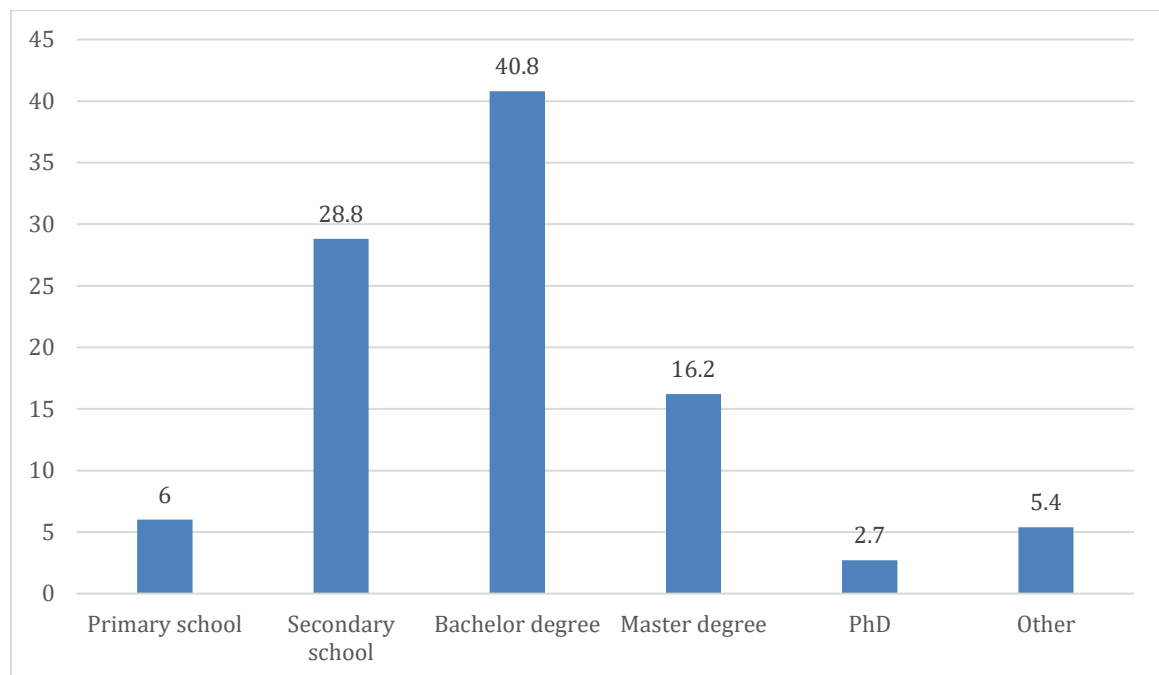


Figure C

3. Which of the following categories best describes your primary area of employment?

Overall, table 4 and figure D look at the conducted job of the respondents. In particular, it can be clearly seen that more than a third of the participants work as private employees.(38.4%) Then, come the civil servants, having the job of (18.3%). Finally, freelancers are the last but one to have more numbers of individuals which is (18.3%).

Table 4: Employment status

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Unemployed	32	4.8	4.8	4.8
Student	98	14.7	14.7	19.5
Civil servant	122	18.3	18.3	37.8
Private employee	256	38.4	38.4	76.3
Freelancer	122	18.3	18.3	94.6
Other	36	5.4	5.4	100.0
Total	666	100.0	100.0	

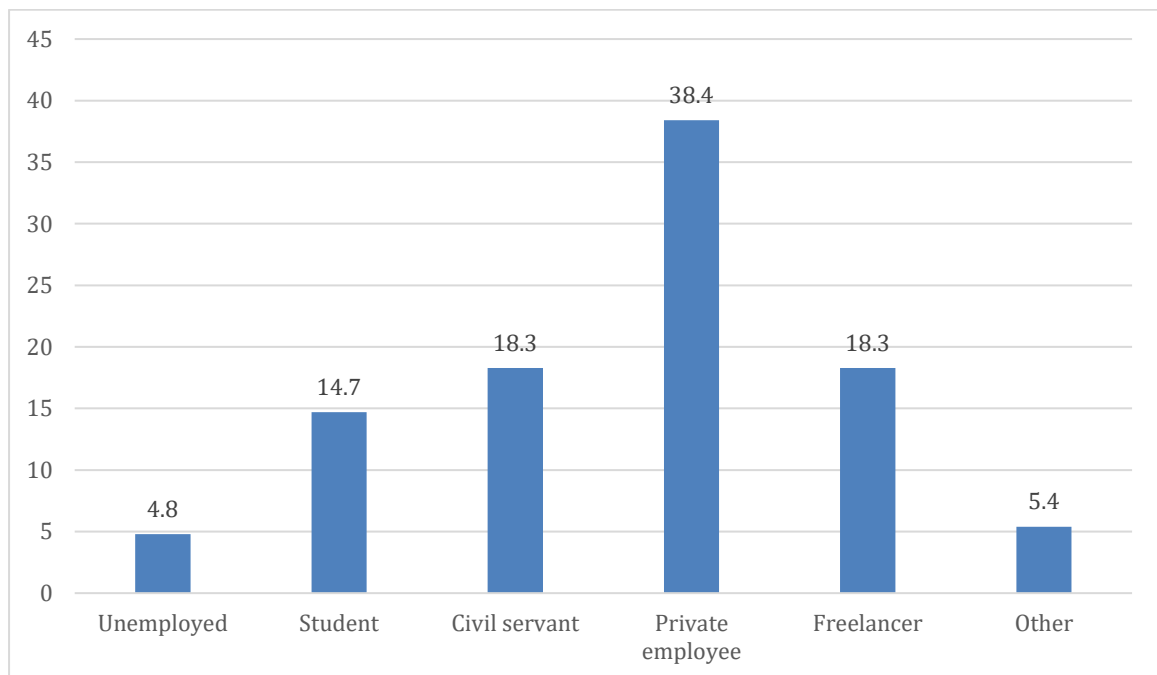


Figure D

4. How often do you use social media platforms?

Table 5 and figure E shows how often the participants use social media. Overall, It could be clearly seen that the majority of the respondent use SM regularly(47.4%) and often(33.9%).

Table 5: Frequency of social media use

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not at all	8	1.2	1.2	1.2
Seldom	30	4.5	4.5	5.7
Average use	86	12.9	12.9	12.9
Often	226	33.9	33.9	33.9
Very often	316	47.4	47.4	47.4
Total	666	100.0	100.0	100.0

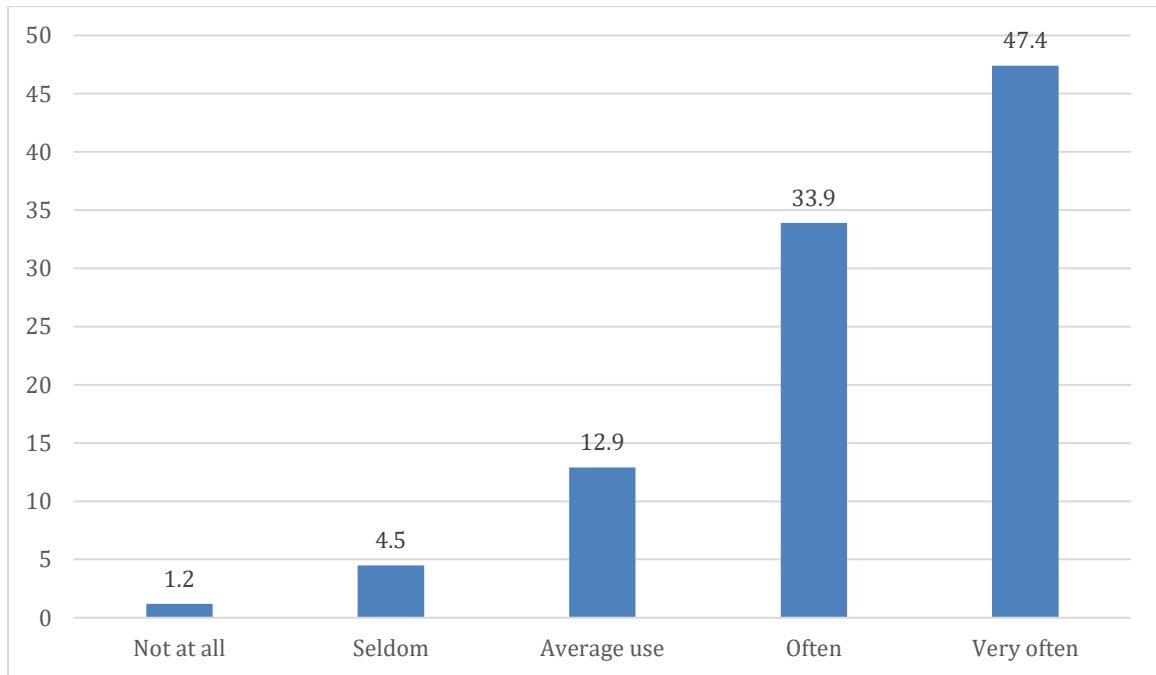


Figure E

4.1.2 Section two (2) Customer engagement

This part is offering you each respondent's answers on the online questionnaire related to statements of the several different dimensions of consumer engagement

as being investigated under the significant works research model.

5. Team Identification

The table 6 and figure F show the percentage and the mean answer of the repondents towards team identification.

The highest mean in percentage show for phraze "Imagining myself as a "real" fan of my team." Decied with mean of 5.08. Further bellow follow another mean about phraze "Imagining befor myself that I have to stop to be fan of my team, I feel I will suffer a loss."

Overall in the word "Team identification" we presentation mean from 4.73 with standart deviation of 1.733 what we can seen as above significant.

Table 6: Team identification

Team identification	SD						SA	Mea n
I consider myself to be a “real” fan of my team	4.5	7. 2	6	15	20. 1	18. 9	28. 2	5.08
I would experience a loss if I had to stop being a fan of my team.	11. 4	9. 9	11. 1	9.3	11. 4	13. 5	33. 3	4.73
Being a fan of my team name is very important to me.	9.3	9. 6	14. 1	19. 5	16. 5	10. 2	20. 7	4.37
Total team identification							4.73 (SD = 1.733)	

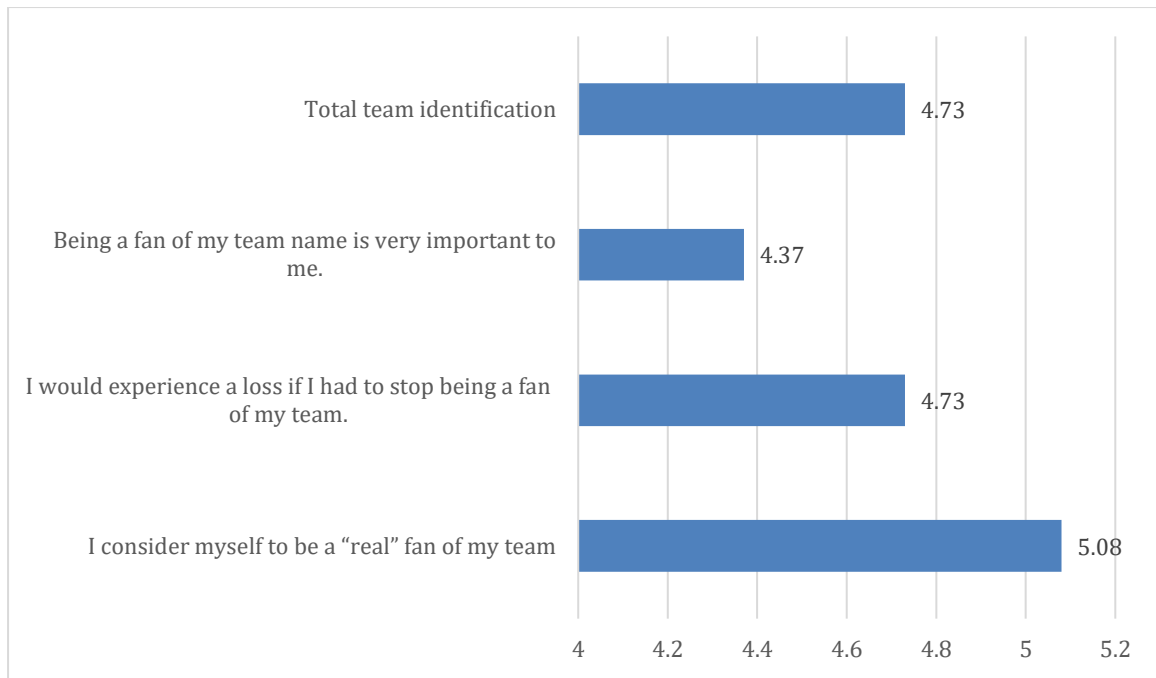


Figure F

6. Positive affect

Table 7 and figure G show the number and mean of answers of the questionnaire's participants who responded about questions that mention if they felt happier when they were a fan of their team.

Over all, the highest mean score of the statements was given to the statement "I feel good when I watch games of my team at this stadium" (Mean= 5.47) , and "Watching games of my team at this stadium gives me pleasure" (Mean= 5.45) coming second .

To sum up , the mean of "positive affect" is 5.42 with standard deviation of 1.608 . one can say that the result of positive affect is high.

Table 7: Positive affect

Positive affect	SD						SA	Mean
Watching games of my team at this stadium makes me happy.	2.4	5.7	8.1	12.6	15.6	20.4	35.1	5.35
Watching games of my team at this stadium gives me pleasure.	2.4	5.1	6	12.6	16.8	19.5	37.5	5.45

I feel good when I watch games of my team at this stadium.	2.7	5.1	6.3	9.3	18.6	20.1	37.8	5.47
Total positive affect							5.42 (SD = 1.608)	

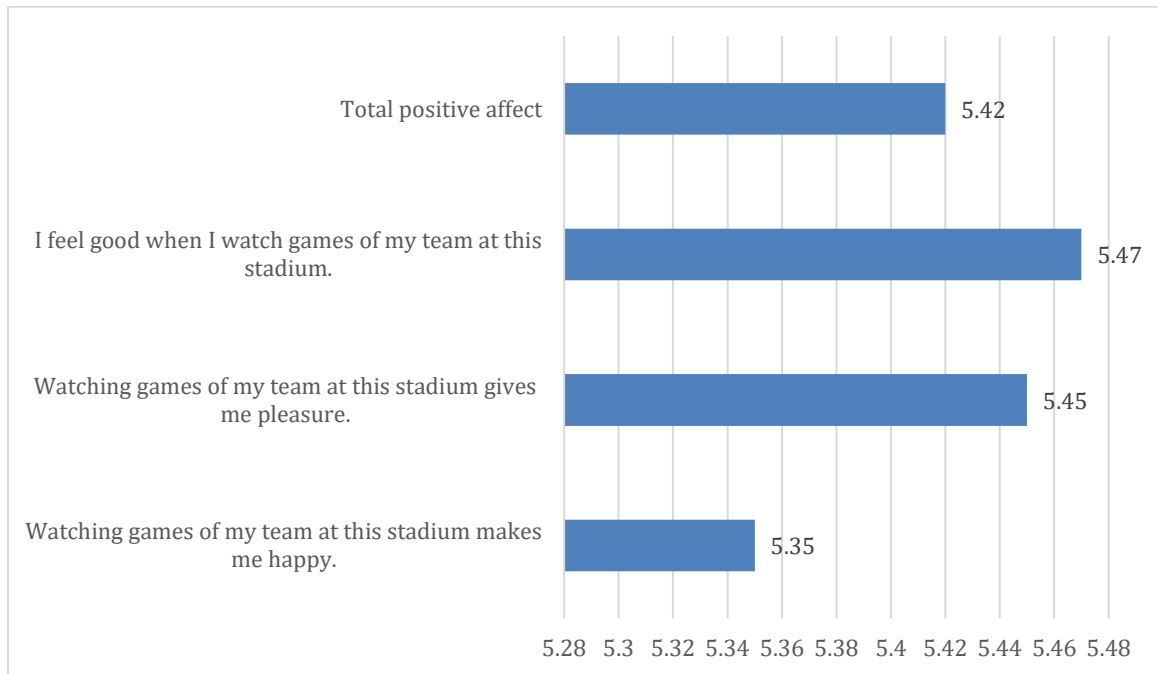


Figure G

7. Basking on reflected glory

Table 8 below illustrates the percentage of the respondent recommended the high percent Iiyasu and Maira (2013) meant by basking in reflected glory.

Figure H indicates that the meanscape scores of the respondents illustrate the actions Juma, Bohns (2012), Maira, Iiyasu performed when their team perform well. The maximum mean score represented for the statement ‘I would like to tell others about my association with my team when the team performs well’ (Mean = 3.73) followed by the statement ‘I would like to let others know about my association with my team when the team wins’ (Mean = 3.67).

Overall, the mean of basking in reflected glory is 3.66 with standard deviation = 1.968, thus it is proved as average.

Table 8: Basking on reflected glory

Basking in reflected glory	SD						SA	Mean
I would like to let others know about my association with my team when the team wins.	21.6	13.5	12.6	17.7	10.5	10.2	13.8	3.67
I would like to publicize my connection with my team when the team plays really well.	23.7	15	11.4	15.9	10.5	9	14.4	3.59
I would like to tell others about my association with my team when the team performs well.	19.8	14.4	12.9	16.5	12.3	9.9	14.1	3.73
Total basking on reflected glory						3.66 (SD = 1.968)		

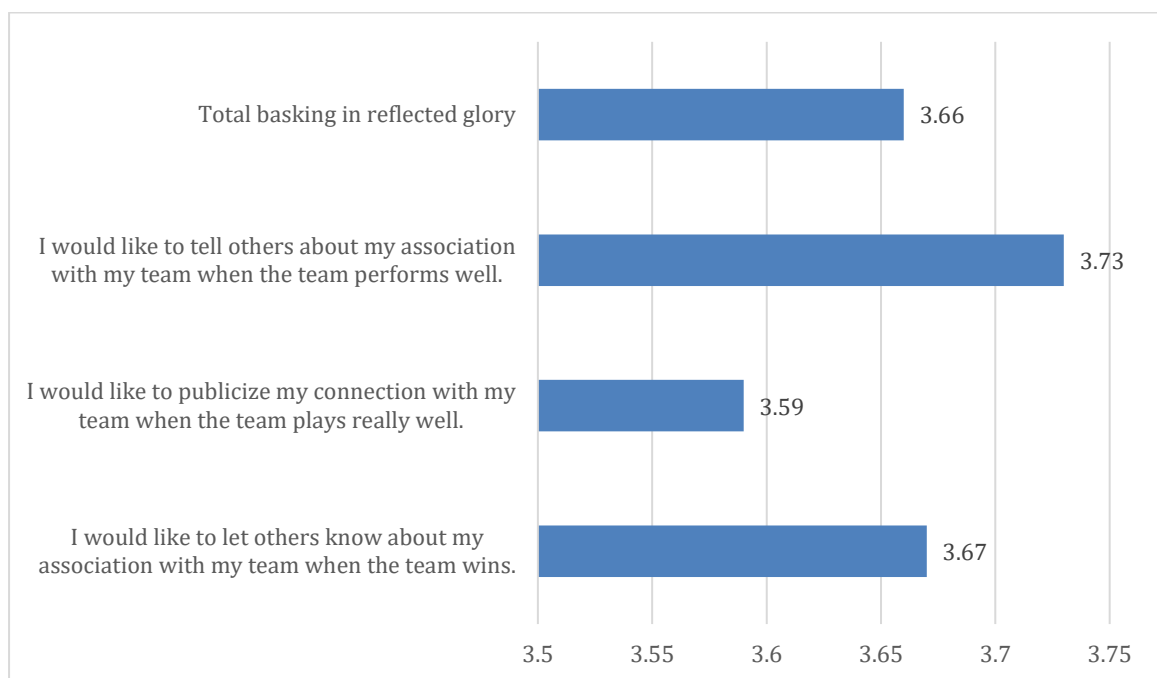


Figure H

8. Management cooperation

Table 9 – shown below , and Figure I illustrate the of the respondents in percentage and

s of their answers about .

The highest s on the statement . ' employees of my team get my full cooperation (, Mean= 3.75) next to the statement . ' try to work cooperatively with my team (, Mean= 3.63)

Overall, on average , the Mean presented of (3.56) and standard deviation of (1.876)

Table 9: Management cooperation

Management cooperation	SD						SA	Mean
I try to work cooperatively with my team.	23.4	13.5	11.1	17.1	12.3	7.8	14.7	3.63
I do things to make my team's event management easier.	27.6	17.1	11.7	13.5	10.5	8.7	10.8	3.31
The employees of my team get my full cooperation.	24.9	11.4	9.6	14.4	12.6	11.1	15.9	3.75
Total management cooperation							3.56 (SD 1.876)	

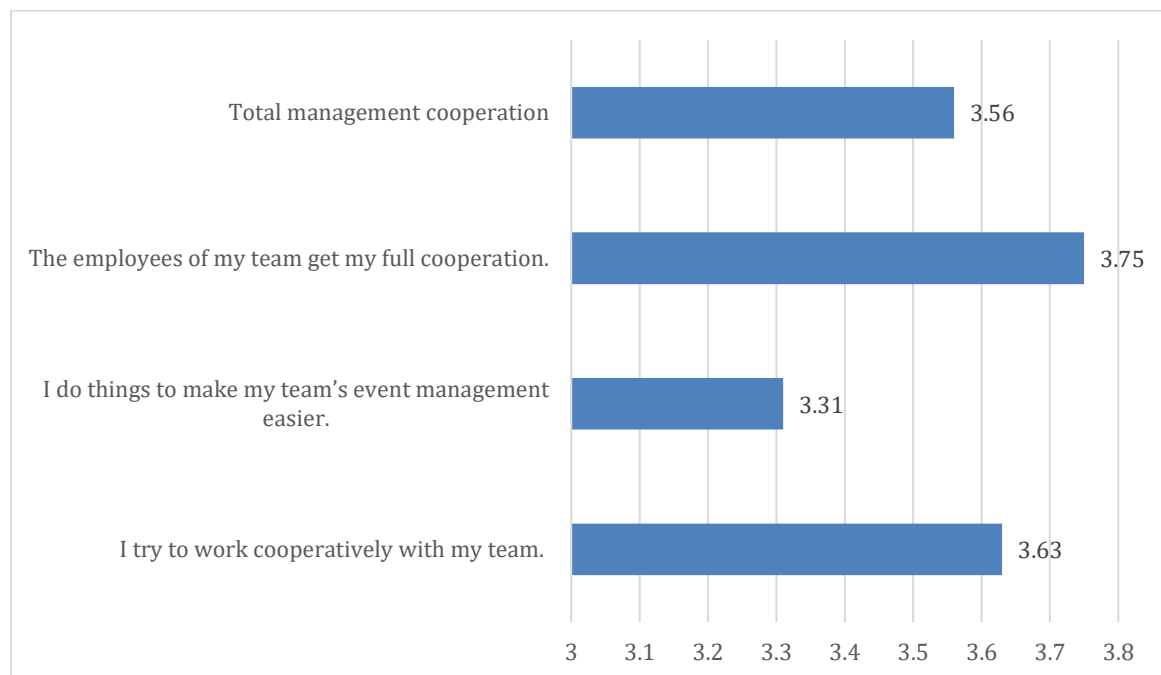


Figure I

9. Prosocial behavior

Table 10 and figure J are clearly shows that there are percentages and the mean of respondents response to the above prosocial behavior laboratory finding results .

The highest percentage of the higher Mean Score are given for statement (1) which is " I often talk with other fans about the team's problem" (Mean= 4.00) , Than statements (2) which shows " I would often advise other fans on how to support my team " (Mean= 3.19).

Summarily, there prosocial behavior has higher mean of 3.38 and a standard deviation of 1.712 which could be expressed as less than average.

Table 10: Prosocial behavior

Prosocial behavior	SD						SA	Mean
I often interact with other fans to talk about issues related to my team.	14.4	13.5	13.2	14.4	18.3	12.3	13.8	4.00
I often advise other fans on how to support my team.	29.4	17.1	12.3	12.6	11.4	8.7	8.4	3.19
I spend time on social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) sharing information with other fans of my team.	34.8	19.8	10.8	8.7	9.3	7.8	8.7	2.96
Total prosocial behavior							3.38 (SD = 1.712)	

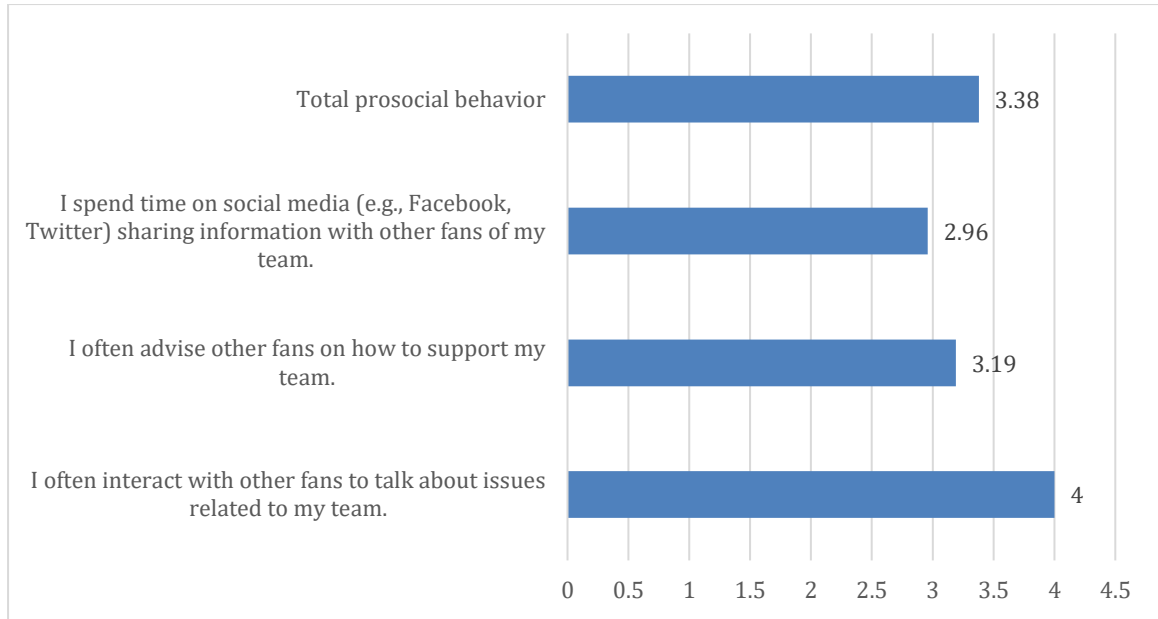


Figure J

10. Performance tolerance

Table 11 and fig K, according to our table we could notice the percentages and the answers that the samples gives us to explain the degree in which fans would accept that their team had losses or wins that do not affect their devotion to it.

The stuff that get the highest mean pensent as demonstration is the object I wear clothing surrounding the name of my team even if my team not revive of a good season (Mean = 4.27), following by saying I write the logo of my team on my clothing even if my team not revive of a good season (Mean = 4.21).

Conslusion , In the concept 'performance tolerance' beside us given a mean 4.18 and a standard deviation 2.260, a could say a more than average degree.

Table 11:
Performance tolerance

Performance tolerance	SD						SA	Mean
I wear apparel, which represents the fans of my	25.2	9.9	6.9	12.3	9	10.2	26.4	4.06

team even if the team has an unsuccessful season.								
I display the logo of my team on my clothing even if my team does not perform well.	22.8	10.5	5.4	12.6	8.7	12	27.9	4.21
I wear clothing that displays the name of my team even if my team has an unsuccessful season.	21	11.1	6.9	9.6	11.4	12	27.9	4.27
Total performance tolerance							4.18 (SD = 2.260)	

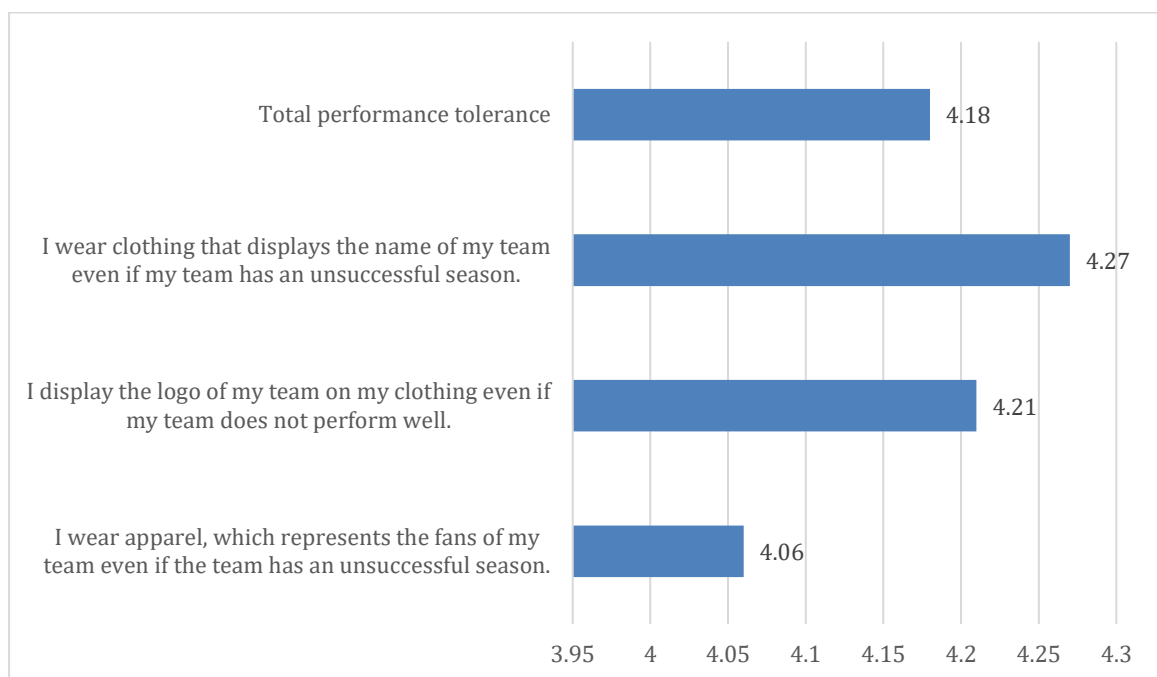


Figure K

4.1.3 Section three (3) Sponsorship activation

This section reports the results of respondents on all five items of all five dimensions of sponsorship activation as suggested by the model of research of this study. **11. Team – sponsor fit**

Table 12 below and the Figure L depict respondents in percentages and the mean scores for query the statement – team and sponsor fit.

The highest mean score displayed is for the statement that highlights “It makes sense to me that ‘sponsor name’ sponsors this team” (Mean= 4.20) followed by for the statement that illustrate “There is a logical connection between the team and ‘sponsor name’” (Mean= 3.63).

Overall, when it is applied to visualize team and sponsor fit there presents a mean of 3.63 with standard deviation 1.560 and thus it can be said that team an sponsor fit is represented by an average.

Table 12: Team and sponsor fit

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree		Mean
There is a logical connection between the team and “sponsor name”	18.9	12.3	15.3	21.6	12.9	9.9	9	3.63
The image of the team and the image of “sponsor name” are similar	24.9	12.3	16.5	16.8	12.9	10.2	6.3	3.36
“Sponsor name” and the team fit together well	20.1	12.9	15.3	25.2	13.8	6.9	5.7	3.43
“Sponsor name” and the team stand for similar things	21	12.9	13.5	23.4	12	8.7	8.4	3.52
It makes sense to me that “sponsor name” sponsors this team	10.8	11.7	11.7	23.1	14.7	10.5	17.4	4.20
Total team – sponsor fit							3.63 (SD = 1.560)	

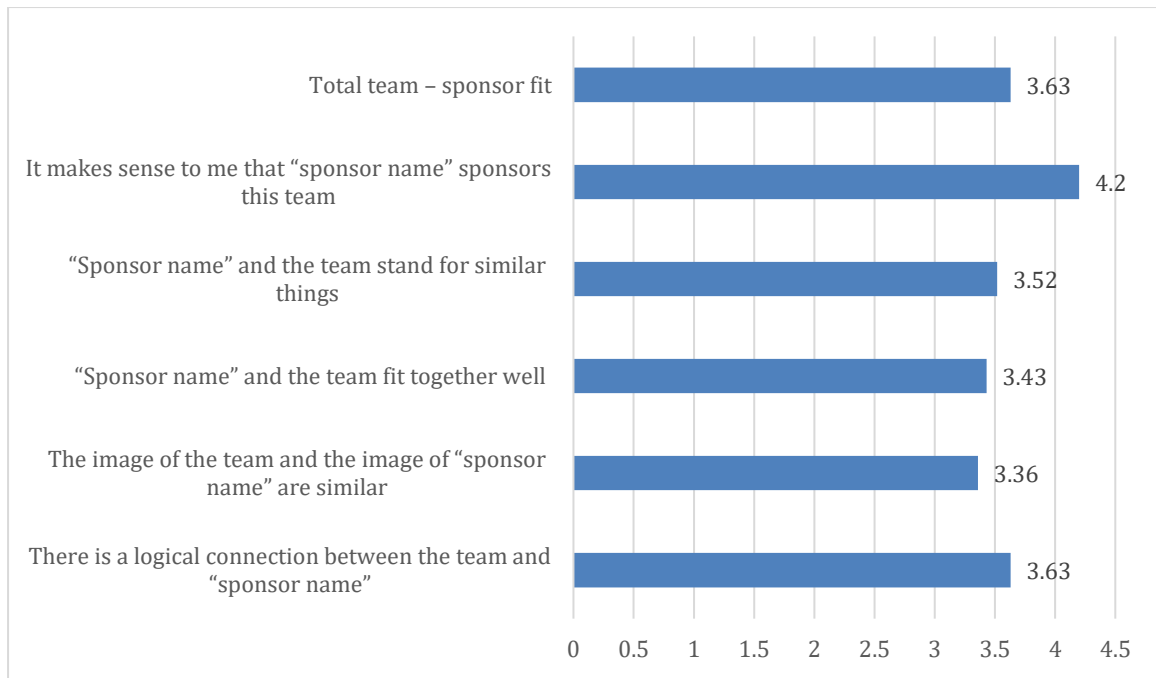


Figure L

12. Team commercialization

Table 13 and figure M represent several statements with percentages, and the mean scores of the answers about team commercialization.

The result of sum of various questions is visualized and Tabulated.

In detail, the highest Mean of Sapmar sports club visitors' answers is indicated to the consequence "The sponsors were too much in the focus of the sport" (Mean= 4.32), which then followed behind it by the answer to the question "Sponsors should not use the team for their commercial purposes" (Mean = 4.13).

To sum up, the overall indication of team commercialization is compared to the other questions with a Mean of 3.88, as well as a standard deviation of 1.337, which is considered above average.

Table 13: Team commercialization

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree		Mean
I feel that the team was too commercialized because of the sponsors	13.8	9.9	11.4	23.1	20.7	9.3	11.7	4.01
Because of the sponsors the sport was pushed to the background	24	12.9	18.3	21	12.6	6.3	4.8	3.23
Sponsors should not use the team for their commercial purposes	12.6	14.7	11.1	20.1	12	8.4	21	4.13
Instead of spending money on sponsorship, the companies should improve the quality of their products	18.6	14.7	9.9	22.5	11.7	10.8	11.7	3.73
The sponsors were too much in the focus of the sport	11.1	11.1	13.8	14.4	16.8	13.5	19.2	4.32
Total team commercialization						3.88 (SD = 1.337)		

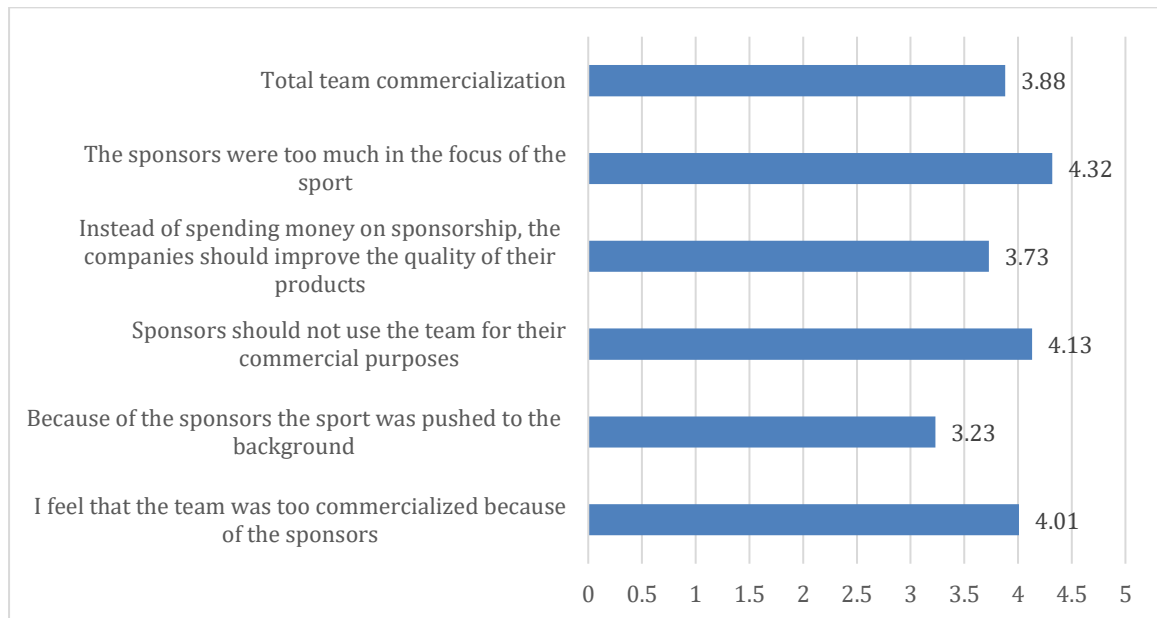


Figure M

13. Activity involvement

Table 14 and Figure N illustrate the percentage and mean scores of the respondents' answers on the activity involvement.

The highest mean score of the statement “Basketball is exciting for me” (Mean=5.46) and fairly high mean of “Basketball is important for me” (Mean=5.12) were identified. Meanwhile, the lowest percentage of is Mean= 5.14 mean with standard deviation of 1.635 in relation to “activity involvement” considered as high.

Table 14: Activity involvement

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree		Mean
Basketball is important for me	5.4	7.5	7.2	12.9	17.1	16.2	33.6	5.12
I like to get engaged in discussions about basketball	5.7	8.1	9.9	15.3	16.5	14.4	30	4.92
I am very interested in basketball in general	5.4	6.9	6.3	17.4	15.3	16.8	31.8	5.08
For me, basketball is exciting	3.3	4.8	4.5	12.3	15.6	23.7	35.7	5.46
Total activity involvement							5.14 (SD = 1.635)	

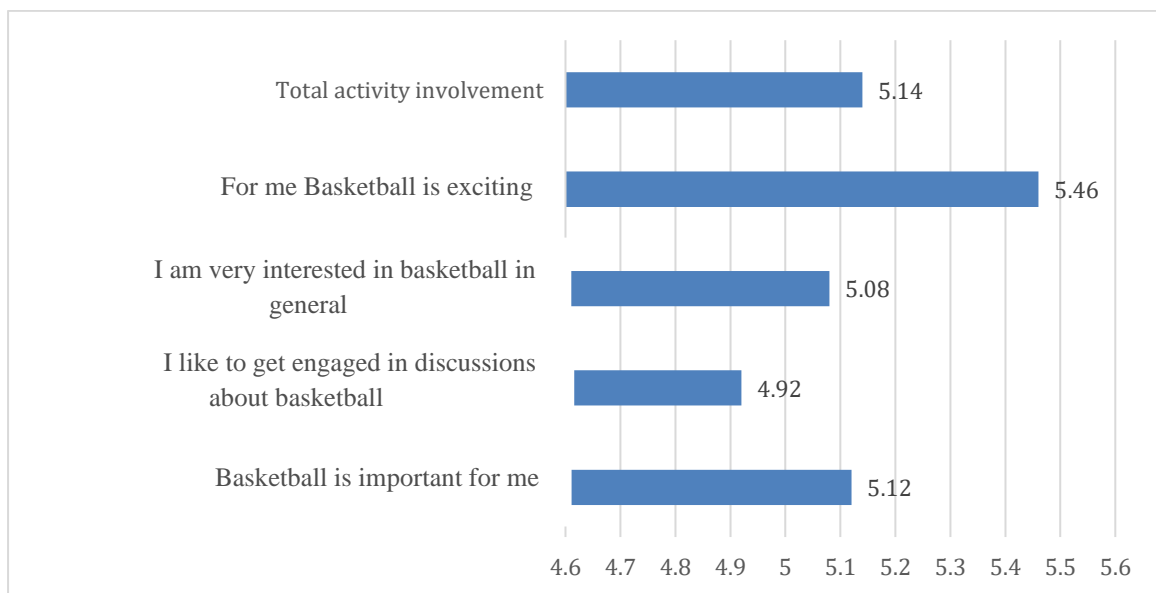


Figure N

14. Social media sports activation

Table 15 and Figure O illustrates the percentages and the mean scores of answers which respondents took for the problem for social media sports activation.

The highest mean score is presented for "I tend to publish information about sport topics" (Mean= 4.01) and the second is for Statement " I like to get engaged in discussions about basketball in social media" (Mean= 3.86).

In conclusion "social media sports activation" is Median=3.66 with standard deviation is equal to 1.782. We can say that the activity is average.

Table 15: Social media sports activation

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree		Mean
I like to get engaged in discussions about basketball in social media	19.2	14.4	11.4	16.2	11.4	8.7	18.6	3.86
I tend to publish information about sport topics	12.6	15.9	14.1	16.2	14.1	9.6	17.4	4.01
I tend to publish information about my favorite sports team in social media	18	19.8	13.5	12.9	13.2	9.6	12.9	3.63
I usually interact with others about sports topics in social media	21	20.1	12.9	13.5	13.2	8.4	10.8	3.46
I usually interact with my favorite team's posts in social media	24	20.1	12.9	12.6	11.4	6.9	12	3.36
Total social media sports activation							3.66 (SD = 1.782)	

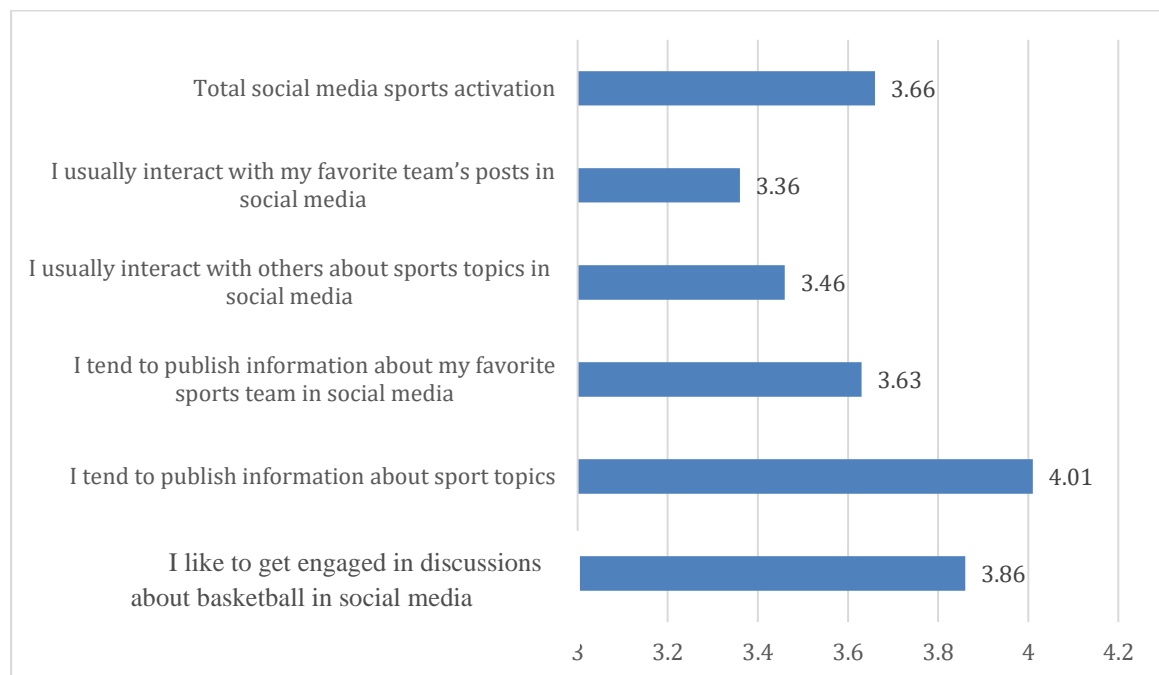


Figure O

15. Sponsorship exposure

Regarding sponsorship exposure, respondents have been a fan of their team for an average of 23.05 years (std. deviation = 11.12) (Table 16).

Table 16: Sponsorship exposure

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Sponsorship exposure	666	.00	60.00	23.0571	11.12984

16. Social Media Sponsorship Activation exposure

Regarding social media sponsorship activation exposure, respondents recall having interacted with sponsorship linked activities on social media for an average of 11.02 years (std. deviation = 4.07) (Table 17).

Table 17: Sport Sponsorship Activation exposure

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Sponsorship exposure	666	.00	16.00	11.0248	4.07784

4.1.4 Section four (4) Other measures

17. Purchase intention

Table 18 is about showing off the numbers of respondent answers given through percentages, and figure_P is about showing the mean score of answers given by the respondents.

the statement with the highest mean score is "The probability that I would attend another sporting event of my team is very high" (Mean= 4.82), followed by the the statement "The likelihood that I would purchase additional products (apparel and goods) from my team is very high" (Mean= 4.35).

In general, "purchase intention" was measured to be 3.85 mean with 1.583 standard deviation, that can be said to be slightly over the average.

Table 18: Purchase intention

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree		Mean
The probability that I will attend another sporting event of my team is very high	6.3	8.1	9.6	18.6	15.9	13.2	28.2	4.82
The likelihood that I would actively buy additional products (apparel and goods) from my team is very high	13.2	12	8.7	16.5	15.3	10.5	23.7	4.35
The probability that I will spend more than 50% of my spectator sports budget on my team is very high.	46.5	16.5	13.2	10.2	6.3	3	4.2	2.39
Total purchase intention						3.85 (SD = 1.583)		

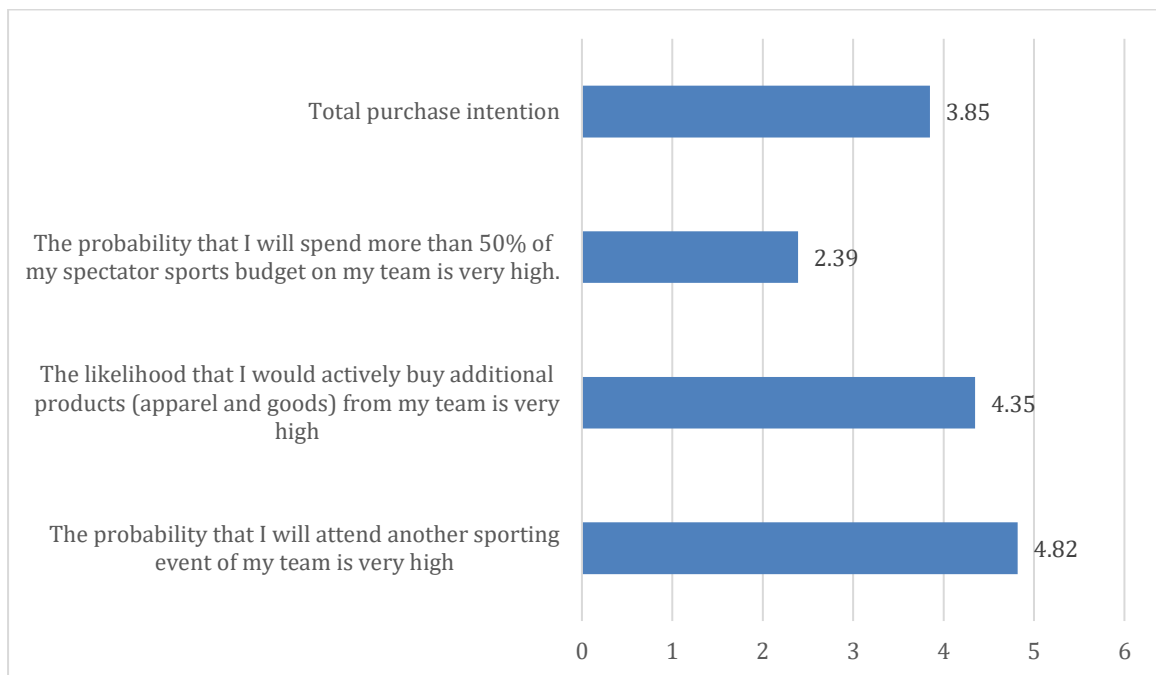


Figure P

18. Referral intention

Referral intention of each subject is on average around 6.86 referrals (standard deviation = 14.89), where subjects will refer their friends and family members to attend the team's future games during this season (Table 17).

Table 19: Mean number of referrals

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Referral intention	666	.00	152.00	6.8679	14.89524

19. Repeat purchases

In particular, when it comes to purchase repeat, the responder reimbursed 1.41 (standard deviation = 2.28) period of products of their team in previous season (Table 20).

Table 20: Repeat purchases

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Repeat purchases	666	.00	20.00	1.4114	2.28973

20. Brand loyalty

Table 21 and Figure Q depicts the total percentage and the mean score of respondents answers to the topic of "brand loyalty".

First, the highest average score was S2 "Last time I bought Sponsors' brand it satisfied my expectations" (Mean= 3.44), after which the S4 "I will buy Sponsors' brand the next time" (Mean= 3.33). Finally, the variable informative of brand loyalty ## displayed a M= 2.90 with s.d. = .1.473 and it is possible to say that it is less than the average.

Table 21: Brand loyalty

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree		Mean
I consider myself to be loyal to the sponsor	42.3	22.2	12	12.3	6.6	1.2	3.3	2.35
Sponsor would be my first choice	40.2	20.1	13.8	12.9	5.7	3.9	3.3	2.48
I will not buy other brands if sponsors' brand is available at the store	42	17.7	11.1	11.4	6.3	7.2	4.2	2.60
Sponsors' brand fulfilled my expectations the last time I bought it	23.1	10.8	15.9	21.9	11.4	10.5	6.3	3.44
I will buy Sponsors' brand again	24	13.5	13.8	21.6	13.8	6.6	6.6	3.33
I will suggest Sponsors' brand to other consumers	27	15	13.8	22.5	9	7.2	5.4	3.14
The price of another brand would have to be considerably inferior to not chose Sponsors' brand	30.3	11.4	14.7	20.1	8.7	7.5	7.2	3.16
Even in the case of not using it, I would like to buy Sponsors' brand	56.8	16.8	8.7	9.6	4.5	1.2	2.4	2.01
Even if other brands have the same features as Sponsors' brand, I would prefer to buy Sponsors' brand	34.8	11.1	13.8	14.7	8.4	8.7	8.4	3.10
If there is another brand as good as Sponsors' brand, I would prefer to buy Sponsors' brand	35.4	10.2	13.5	15.9	9	7.5	8.4	3.09
If another brand is not different from Sponsors' brand in any way, it seems smarter to purchase Sponsors' brand	32.4	10.2	14.7	17.4	9.6	7.8	7.8	3.16
Total brand loyalty						2.90 (SD = 1.473)		

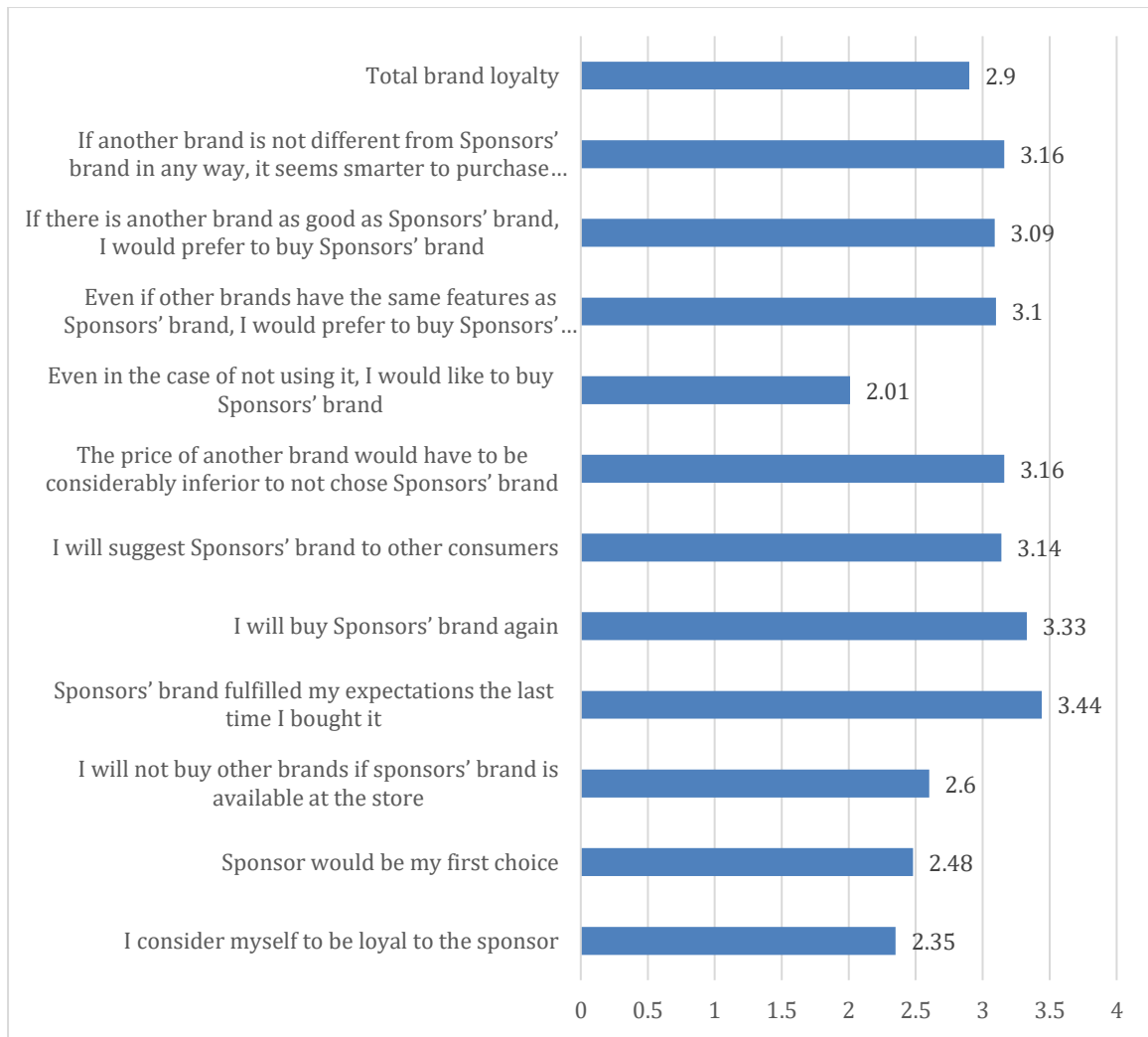


Figure Q

21. Brand Awareness

Table 22 and Figure R illustrated the percentage of the respondents and their mean scores of their answer with respect to the brand awereness. In brief, the highest mean score was for the statement “ I am aware of Sponsors’ brand” (mean= 5.03), whereas, the next higher mean score was indicated by the statement “ I know what Sponsors’ brand looks like” (mean= 4.98).

In short, the mean of ” brand awereness” was 4.70 with 1.761 standard deviation and the value of ” brand awereness” can be said high.

Table 22: Brand awareness

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree		Mean
I know what Sponsors' brand looks like	10.5	2.7	7.8	16.8	13.2	16.5	32.4	4.98
I can recognize Sponsors' brand among other competing brands	9.3	4.5	6.9	15	18.3	14.4	31.5	4.97
When I think of product category, Sponsors' brand is one of the brands that comes to mind	18.6	10.8	11.4	23.1	13.5	9.3	13.2	3.82
I am aware of Sponsors' brand	10.8	3.6	9	12.3	12	16.5	35.7	5.03
Total brand awareness							4.70 (SD = 1.761)	

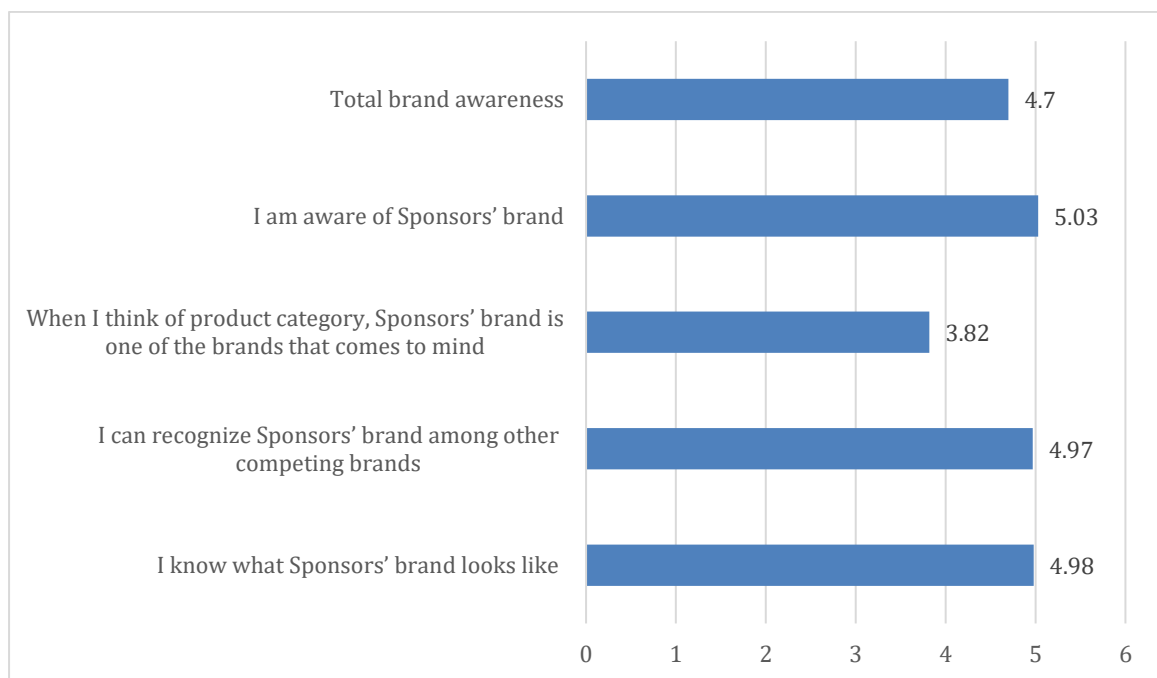


Figure R

22. Brand Image Association

Figures 23 and S, shows that on the respondents can remember the sponsors' logos or symbols easily, which took the mean scores of 4.69, the second for the response "Sponsors' brand has personality that can be memorized easily" which scored 4.33. In conclusion, the mean of 4.03 of for "brand image association" with standard deviation of 1.504 can be interpreted as more than the average.

Table 23: Brand image association

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree		Mean
Some characteristics of Sponsors' brand come to my mind quickly	15.6	8.1	11.1	22.8	15	12.6	14.7	4.10
I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of Sponsors' brand	11.7	5.1	11.1	12.9	17.7	15.6	25.8	4.69
Sponsors' brand has strong personality	12.6	6	9	24.9	18	14.4	15	4.33
I have a clear impression of the type of people who use Sponsors' brand	19.8	10.8	14.7	26.7	12.3	9.3	6.3	3.54
Sponsors' brand has a strong image	10.8	7.2	11.1	26.1	16.8	14.1	13.8	4.28
The intangible attributes of Sponsors' brand are reason enough to buy it	21.6	11.4	11.7	31.5	9.6	7.8	6.3	3.44
Sponsors' brand provides a high value in relation to the price we must pay for it	13.2	8.4	14.1	33	14.1	8.4	8.7	3.86
Total brand image association							4.03 (SD = 1.504)	

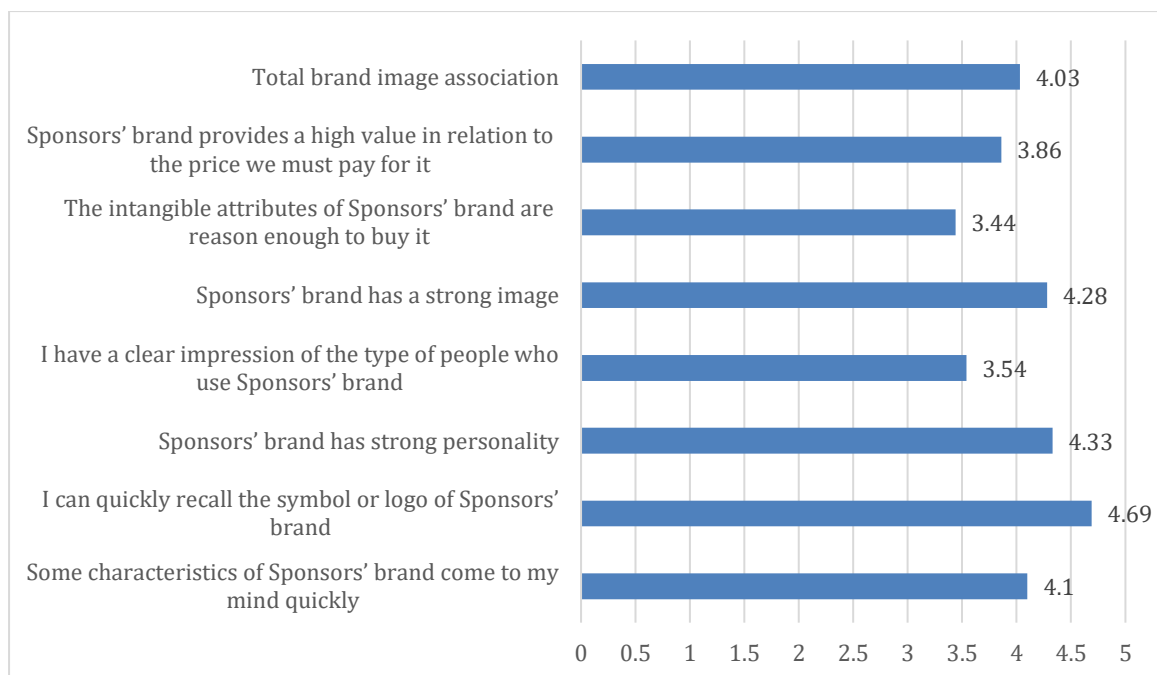


Figure S

4.1.5 Inferential Statistics

The following One – way Analysis Of Variance and Pearson correlation tests are conducted to test the relationship between the variables. The hypothesis was tested according to the result of SPSS for each test.

1. Customer engagement / Sponsorship activation

To consider the relationship between sponsorship activation and customer engagement, the below Pearson Correlation tests were conducted.

Correlation Coefficient is 0.285, and caused $p < 0.000$, when relating consideration with emotional connectivity. These two variables are related in a positive direction, and the significance level is strong. It could be stated that as the level of sponsorship activations increase, the emotional connectivity would as well increase. It also could be said that there is positive correlation between sponsorship activation and customer engagement ($r = .285, p < 0.05$).

Correlations

		Customer engagement	Sponsorship activation
Customer engagement	Pearson Correlation	1	.285**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	666	666
Sponsorship activation	Pearson Correlation	.285**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	666	666

Table 24. **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

2. Customer engagement, Sponsorship activation / Consumer behavior variables

This is to test Pearson Correlation between sponsorship activation and individual customers engagement to consumers behaviour variable. The Pearson Correlation found that customers engagement has positive correlation to all the variable of consumer behaviour.

There is positive correlation between customer engagement and purchase intention ($r = .701, p < 0.05$).

There is positive correlation between customer engagement and referral intention ($r = .254, p < 0.05$).

There is positive correlation between customer engagement and repeat purchases ($r = .352, p < 0.05$).

There is positive correlation between customer engagement and brand loyalty ($r = .500, p < 0.05$).

There is positive correlation between customer engagement and brand awareness ($r = .481, p < 0.05$).

Customers who engage with the brand are more likely to associate that brand with good product quality ($r = .498, p < 0.05$).

Additionally, sponsorship activation presents a positive relationship with the following variables.

There is positive correlation between sponsorship activation and purchase intention ($r = .174, p < 0.05$).

There is positive correlation between sponsorship activation and referral intention ($r = .186, p < 0.05$).

There is positive correlation between sponsorship activation and repeat purchases ($r = .139, p < 0.05$).

There is positive correlation between sponsorship activation and brand loyalty ($r = .129$, $p < 0.05$).

There is positive correlation between sponsorship activation and brand awareness ($r = .087$, $p < 0.05$).

Table 25. Correlations

	Customer engagement	Sponsorship activation	PINT Total	Referr al intenti on	Repeat purchas es	BL Total	BA Tot al	BIA Total
Customer engagement	1	.285**	.701**	.254**	.352**	.500**	.481**	.498**
Sponsorship activation		1	.174**	.186**	.139**	.129**	.087*	.075
PINT Total			1	.240**	.417**	.481**	.440**	.490**
Referral intention				1	.368**	.218**	.153**	.152**
Repeat purchases					1	.224**	.225**	.149**
BL Total						1	.524**	.664**
BA Total							1	.818**
BIA Total								1

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

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

3. Prognosis of Buying Intention

Next, a multiple linear regression using all cases of independents is run to see a measure of relationship between buying intention and all the other variables and to see which ones are most predictive in terms of rank of the coefficients of all the significant variables. The level of significance for all the tests remains at 5 per cent.

Table 26. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.800 ^a	.649	.641	.96168

a. Predictors: (Constant), BIA Total, TC Total, Sponsorship exposure, Referral intention, BRG Total, Repeat purchases, AI Total, TS FIT Total, PT Total, PA Total, MC Total, SMSA Total, BL Total, PB Total, TI Total, BA Total

From the ANOVA table it can be concluded that the R^2 is greater than zero and that not all regression coefficients are zero.

Table 27. ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	1064.639	16	66.540	71.948	.000 ^b
Residual	600.219	649	.925		
Total	1664.858	665			

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase intention

b. Predictors: (Constant), Customer Engagement variables, Sponsorship Activation variables, Other Measures variables

The prognosis model includes all variables of the research model of this work as follows:

Table 28. Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.094	.205		.459	.646
PA Total	.219	.036	.223	6.079	.000
TI Total	.085	.035	.093	2.401	.017
PB Total	-.014	.036	-.016	-.405	.686
BRG Total	-.020	.027	-.025	-.757	.449
PT Total	.161	.023	.230	7.086	.000
MC Total	.017	.031	.020	.537	.591
Sponsorship exposure	.008	.004	.059	2.315	.021
TS FIT Total	.085	.032	.084	2.633	.009
TC Total	.002	.029	.002	.083	.934
AI Total	.116	.031	.120	3.688	.000
SMSA Total	.125	.033	.140	3.753	.000

Referral intention	-.004	.003	-.034	1.280	.201
Repeat purchases	.125	.019	.181	6.465	.000
BL Total	.189	.039	.176	4.866	.000
BA Total	.109	.039	.121	2.793	.005
BIA Total	.201	.051	.191	3.972	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase intention

Therefore we conclude that the regression co-efficient for three independent variable is not zero. So we run the model again for those independent variables.

To conclude the overall run, it can be said that when we made a second run of the model and noted the parameters, variables values, and all the statistical cases they encompass, it turns out that almost sixty two per cent of the cases can be explained by the model

4. Age/ Customer engagement

For this ANOVA One-way test is conducted to determine whether the respondents' age is a causative factor of pleasant customer engagement. This table below is showing that the average score for pleasant customer engagement is higher for people aged less than 18 years old (M = 5.60) and lower for the respondents between 35 and 44 years old (M = 3.95).

Descriptives

Table 29. Age/Customer engagement

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Less than 18 years	22	5.6061	.92278	.19674	5.1969	6.0152	4.22	6.67
18-24 years	80	4.0611	1.24871	.13961	3.7832	4.3390	1.72	6.22

25-34 ye Ars	198	4.1420	1.38634	.09852	3.9477	4.3363	1.00	6.83
35-44 years	246	3.9580	1.41691	.09034	3.7801	4.1359	1.17	6.83
45-54 years	90	4.4136	1.62991	.17181	4.0722	4.7550	1.22	7.00
55-64 years	30	4.4000	1.51468	.27654	3.8344	4.9656	1.00	6.61
Total	666	4.1610	1.43999	.05580	4.0514	4.2706	1.00	7.00

Based on the p-value for ANOVA One-way test which is 0.000 which is less than the Sig. level, therefore we state that the age of respondents determines their level of engagement ($F(5,660) = 6.467, p < 0.05$).

Additionally, since we have more than 2 samples, we also need a post hoc test to find differences between groupings.

ANOVA

Table 30. Customer engagement

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	64.404	5	12.881	6.467	.000
Within Groups	1314.526	660	1.992		
Total	1378.929	665			

Now that we've run a Scheffe test, our data are broken into two large entities: those clashes where the defendant was 18 years old or over, and those who were under 18.

Customer engagement

Table 31. Scheffe^{a,b}

Age	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
35-44 years	246	3.9580	
18-24 years	80	4.0611	
25-34 years	198	4.1420	
55-64 years	30	4.4000	
45-54 years	90	4.4136	
Less than 18 years	22		5.6061
Sig.		.730	1.000

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

- a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 53.805.
- b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

Based on the following means plot, it can be stated that group 1 presents lower levels of customer engagement than group 2.

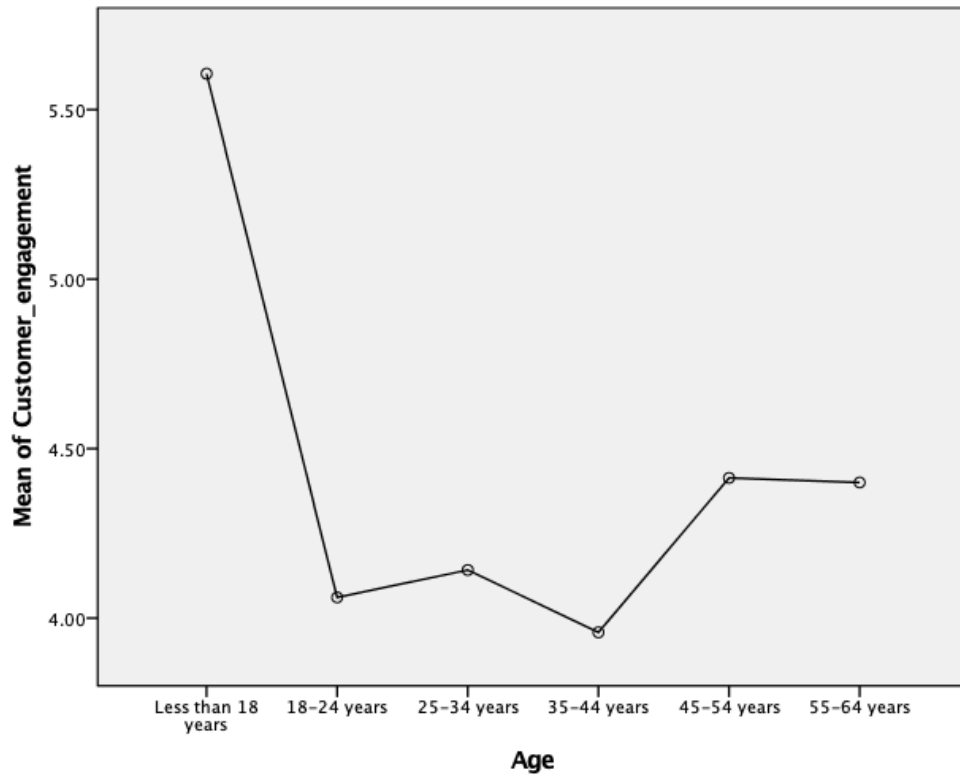


Figure T

5. Age/ Sponsorship activation

To ascertain whether the age of the respondents is a determinant factor of the level of sponsorship activation, one-way test were conducted and the table below indicates that the mean of sponsorship activation is higher among respondents between 55 and 64 years of age(M=9.67) and lower for 18-24 years old(M=5.93).

Descriptives

Table 32. Sponsorship activation

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Less than 18 years	22	5.9418	1.20293	.25647	5.4085	6.4752	3.91	8.24
18-24 years	80	5.9343	1.43626	.16058	5.6146	6.2539	1.97	9.08
25-34 years	198	7.0156	1.78153	.12661	6.7659	7.2652	2.38	10.84
35-44 years	246	8.5780	2.12871	.13572	8.3106	8.8453	3.06	14.37
45-54 years	90	9.4662	2.67426	.28189	8.9061	10.0263	3.61	13.55
55-64 years	30	9.6780	3.48263	.63584	8.3776	10.9784	3.80	14.44
Total	666	7.8784	2.41977	.09376	7.6943	8.0625	1.97	14.44

Since the p-value of ANOVA One-way test is 0.000 (which is lower than significance level), we can conclude that the age of respondents is a contributing factor that determines the level of their sponsorship activation ($F(5,660) = 44.199$ $p < 0.05$).

Furthermore, as there are more than two means, it is very important to perform post hoc tests to find out which groups differ.

ANOVA

Table 33. Sponsorship activation

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
--	----------------	----	-------------	---	------

Between Groups	976.750	5	195.350	44.199	.000
Within Groups	2917.029	660	4.420		
Total	3893.780	665			

According to the Scheffe test, there are two groups. Group 1: the clashes under 34 years old and Group 2: the clashes over 35 years old.

Sponsorship activation
Table 34. Scheffe^{a,b}

Age	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
18-24 years	80	5.9343	
Less than 18 years	22	5.9418	
25-34 years	198	7.0156	
35-44 years	246		8.5780
45-54 years	90		9.4662
55-64 years	30		9.6780
Sig.		.214	.196

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 53.805.

b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

From the chart below we can conclude that group 1 leads on sponsorship activation compared to group 2.

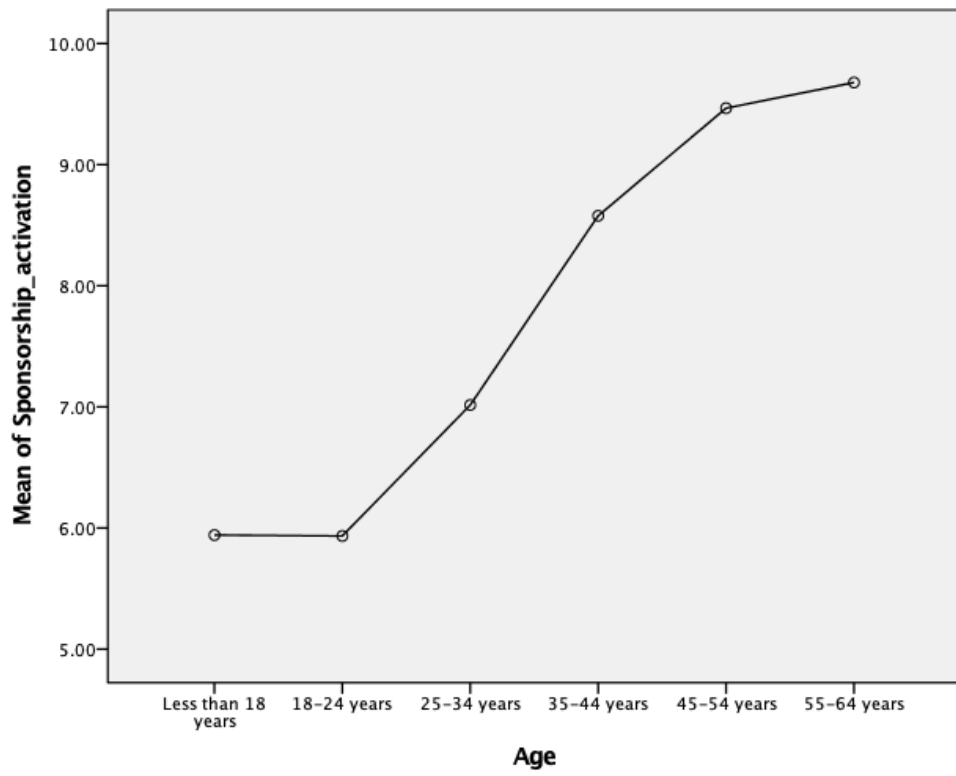


Figure U

Age/ Social media sports activation

ANOVA

To find out if there is an independent link in between the age of the respondent and the level of social media sports activation, we conducted one-way tests.

The table shown below indicates that the average score of respondents regarding social media sport activation increased amongst the community under 18 years old (M = 5.20) and age 55-64 (M = 3.64).

Descriptives

Table 35. Social media sports activation

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Less than 18 years	22	5.20	1.695	.361	4.45	5.95	2	7
18-24 years	80	3.69	1.946	.218	3.06	3.92	1	7
25-34 years	198	3.71	1.838	.131	3.45	3.96	1	7
35-44 years	246	3.70	1.629	.104	3.30	3.71	1	7
45-54 years	90	3.84	1.714	.181	3.49	4.20	1	7
55-64 years	30	3.64	1.951	.356	2.91	4.37	1	7
Total	666	3.67	1.782	.069	3.53	3.81	1	7

The p value related with the Analysis of Variance One-way test is 0.001 which is lower than chosen level of significance so we can safely say that is age of respondents is the factor that affects their degree of social media activation on sports ($F(5,660) = 4.128, p < 0.05$). As well, since we have more than two samples, post hoc test is required in order to see if there is a difference between the groups.

ANOVA

Table 36. Social media sports activation

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	64.008	5	12.802	4.128	.001
Within Groups	2046.840	660	3.101		
Total	2110.847	665			

Findings of the Scheffe test reveals two group. First group is made up of clash over 18 years old. Second group is made up of those less than 18 year old.

Social media sports activation

Table 37. Scheffe^{a,b}

Age	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
18-24 years	80	3.49	
35-44 years	246	3.50	
55-64 years	30	3.64	
25-34 years	198	3.71	
45-54 years	90	3.84	
Less than 18 years	22		5.20
Sig.		.955	1.000

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 53.805.

b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

From the bar chart group 1 is provided and considered it is possible to mention that people in 1 group activates less social media with sports by their daily life than other groups

- group 2.

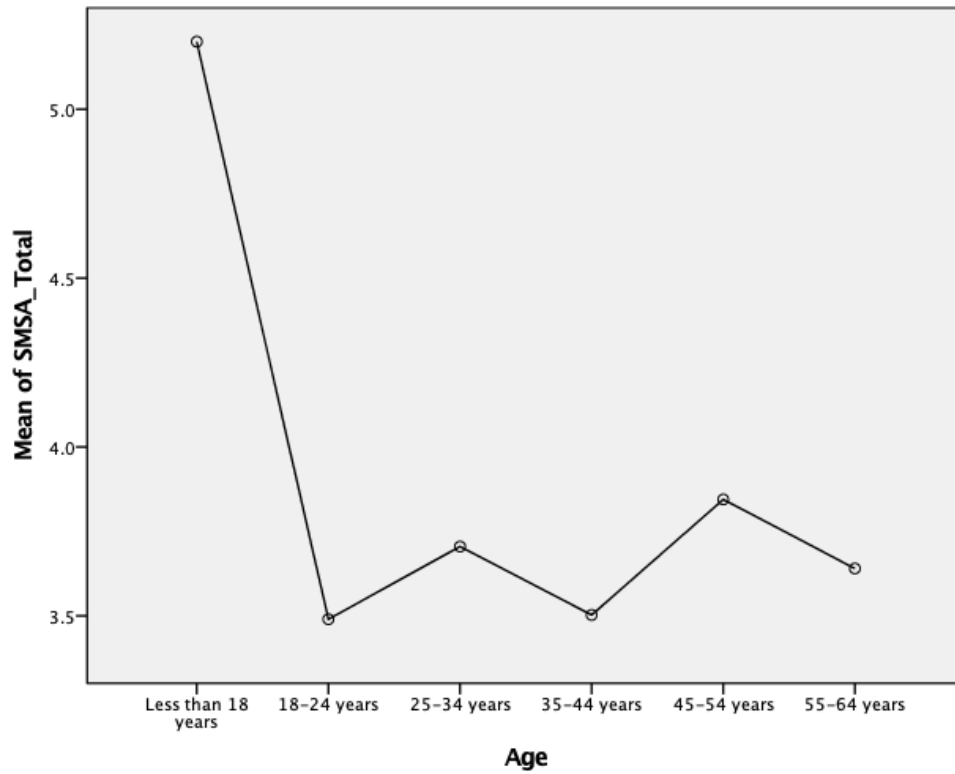


Figure V

6. Age/ Purchase intention

ANOVA

To identify whether the age of a respondent is a remarkable factor in prognosing purchase intention, one way Analysis of Variance test was conducted.

The below table presents mean score of purchase intention and all respondents have a higher score of under 18 year old ($M = 4.72$), while the higher value for the respondents between 55 and 64 years old ($M = 2.91$).

Descriptives

Table 38. Purchase intention

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Less than 18 years	22	4.7273	1.04723	.22327	4.2630	5.1916	3.00	6.33
18-24 years	80	4.1583	1.32908	.14860	3.8626	4.4541	1.33	6.67
25-34 years	198	3.9293	1.61931	.11508	3.7023	4.1562	1.00	7.00
35-44 years	246	3.7615	1.56985	.10009	3.5644	3.9587	1.00	7.00
45-54 years	90	3.7778	1.73241	.18261	3.4149	4.1406	1.00	7.00
55-64 years	30	2.9111	1.44087	.26307	2.3731	3.4491	1.00	6.00
Total	666	3.8549	1.58226	.06131	3.7345	3.9752	1.00	7.00

We need to focus on the p-value of p(F) associated with the ANOVA – One way test and it is 0.000 which is lower than the level of significance, so it is conclusive to say that the age of the respondents is a significant influencing factor on the level of purchase intention ($F(5,660) = 4.476, p < 0.05$). Also, since post hoc test data involves more than two samples, it requires a post hoc test in order to pinpoint the differences between each group.

ANOVA

Table 39. Purchase intention

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	54.607	5	10.921	4.476	.001
Within Groups	1610.251	660	2.440		
Total	1664.858	665			

The data of Scheffe indicates that there are two group, wick between 55- 64 years old (group 1) and under 34 years old (group 2), middle between 35 to 54 years old (in the middle).

Purchase intention

Table 40. Scheffe^{a,b}

Age	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
55-64 years	30	2.9111	
35-44 years	246	3.7615	3.7615
45-54 years	90	3.7778	3.7778
25-34 years	198		3.9293
18-24 years	80		4.1583
Less than 18 years	22		4.7273
Sig.		.143	.069

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 53.805.

b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

According to the following average means plot, we can say that the group 1 has lower levels of purchase intention compared to the group 2.

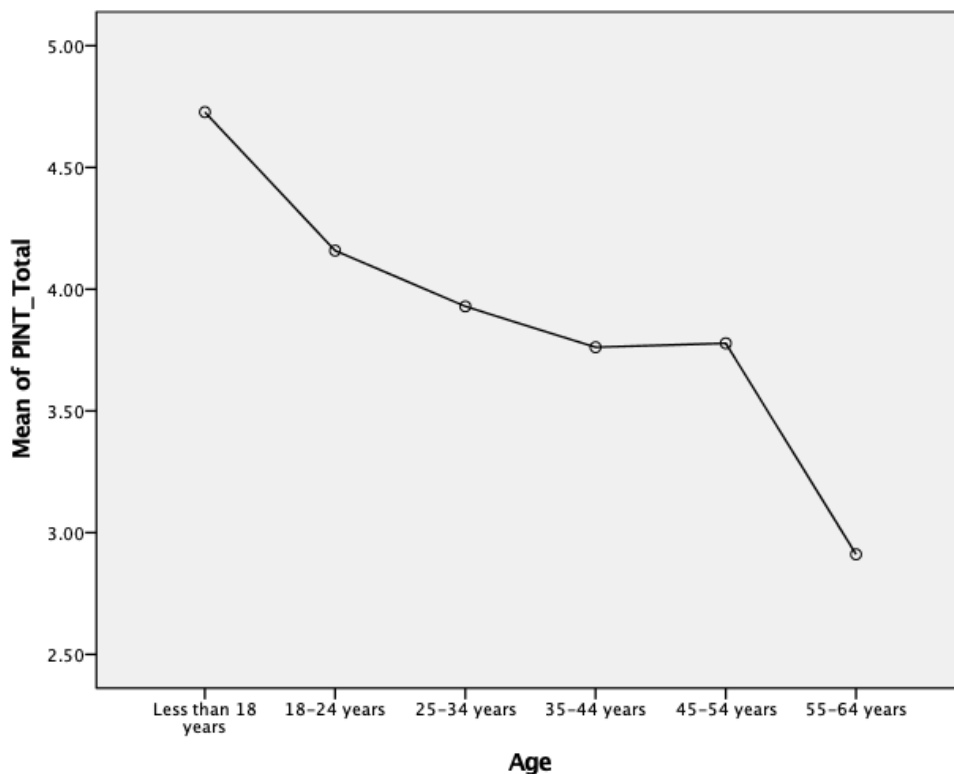


Figure W

7. Age/ Brand Loyalty

ANOVA One-way tests were done to check weather the age of the respondents is a predictor to the brand loyalty. The table below shows, that the mean score of the brand loyalty for the respondents under 18 year old (M = 3.65) and the mean score for

respondents that are located somewhere between 18 and 24 are lower ($M = 2.58$) but still higher than the mean score from the older questionnaire participants. For the older respondents the mean is ($M = 2.58$).

Descriptives

Table 41. Brand loyalty

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Less than 18 years	22	3.6529	2.03117	.43305	2.7523	4.5535	1.00	6.27
18-24 years	80	2.3659	1.10851	.12393	2.1192	2.6126	1.00	4.82
25-34 years	198	2.9651	1.38824	.09866	2.7705	3.1597	1.00	6.27
35-44 years	246	2.8995	1.52933	.09751	2.7074	3.0915	1.00	7.00
45-54 years	90	3.1657	1.58591	.16717	2.8335	3.4978	1.00	7.00
55-64 years	30	2.5879	1.12884	.20610	2.1664	3.0094	1.00	4.27
Total	666	2.9017	1.47286	.05707	2.7897	3.0138	1.00	7.00

The p-value obtained by running the ANOVA One-way test is 0.001, which is lower than the level of significance, and the result is that age of the respondents is factor leading to the level of brand loyalty ($F(5,660) = 4.289, p < 0.05$). As there are more than 2 samples, to discern the dissimilarities between the groups it is required to carry out a post hoc test.

ANOVA

Table 42. Brand loyalty

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	45.402	5	9.080	4.289	.001
Within Groups	1397.189	660	2.117		
Total	1442.592	665			

The results from a Scheffe test have shown that we have two groups: group 1, between 55 and 64 years and 18-24 years old and group 2 is under 18 years old while the other classes being in the middle.

Brand loyalty

Table 43. Scheffe^{a,b}

Age	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
18-24 years	80	2.3659	
55-64 years	30	2.5879	
35-44 years	246	2.8995	2.8995
25-34 years	198	2.9651	2.9651
45-54 years	90	3.1657	3.1657
Less than 18 years	22		3.6529
Sig.		.151	.207

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 53.805.

b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

According to the given means plot, it can be said that group 1 has lower level of the brand loyalty than group 2.

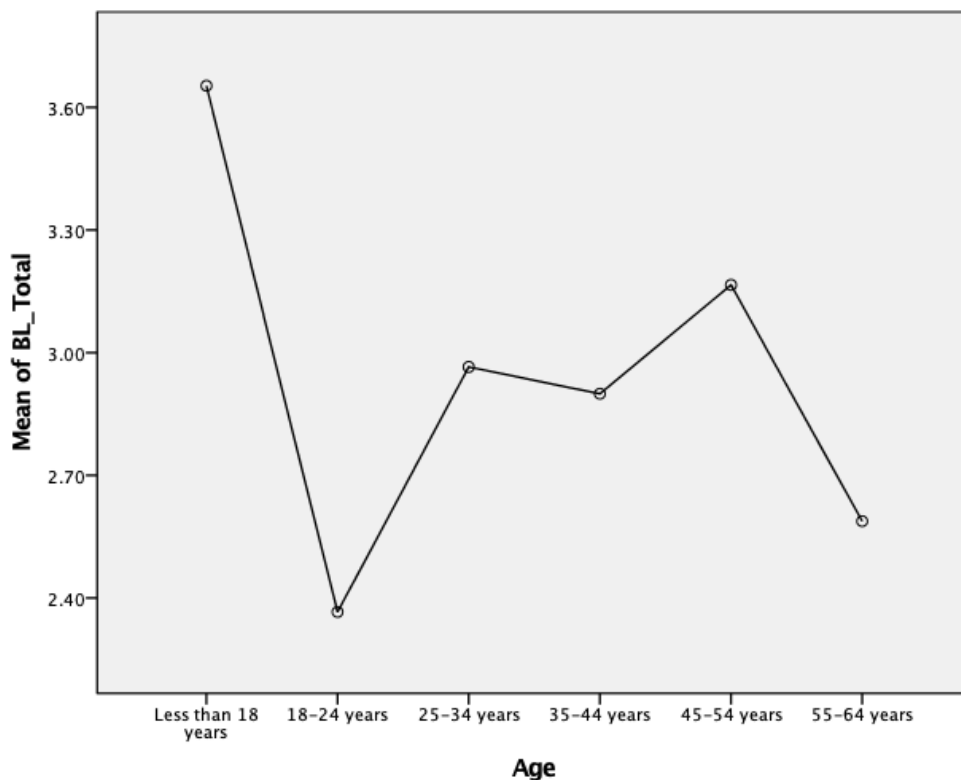


Figure X

8. Educational level / Customer engagement

ANOVA One-way test was conducted to see whether the educational level is a determinant of customer engagement or not. This table shows that the mean of

engagement level is higher for the primary school, and lower for PhD level of education.

Descriptives

Table 44. Customer engagement

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Primary school	40	4.8333	1.19908	.18959	4.4498	5.2168	2.44	6.67
Secondary school	192	4.3698	1.42713	.10299	4.1666	4.5729	1.22	6.83
Bachelor degree	272	4.1066	1.47140	.08922	3.9310	4.2823	1.00	7.00
Master degree	108	3.9352	1.34714	.12963	3.6782	4.1922	1.56	6.50
PhD	18	3.2222	.99417	.23433	2.7278	3.7166	1.17	5.06
Other	36	3.8580	1.55115	.25853	3.3332	4.3829	1.28	6.06
Total	666	4.1610	1.43999	.05580	4.0514	4.2706	1.00	7.00

P-value associated to the ANOVA One-way test is 0.000 (lower than the level of significance) , so ,based on this value , it can be said that the educational level of the respondent is an influencing factor in their level of customer engagement ($F(5,660)=5.166, p < 0.05$) . Moreover, since not only two samples have been created, and in order to determine the groups from which the difference arises, a post hoc test is required.

ANOVA

Table 45. Customer engagement

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	51.931	5	10.386	5.166	.000
Within Groups	1326.998	66	2.011		
Total	1378.929	66			

The results from the Scheffe test show that there are three groups with small differences between them.

Customer engagement

Table 46. Scheffe^{a,b}

Education	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
		1	2	3
PhD	18	3.2222		
Other	36	3.8580	3.8580	
Master degree	108	3.9352	3.9352	3.9352
Bachelor degree	272	4.1066	4.1066	4.1066
Secondary school	192		4.3698	4.3698
Primary school	40			4.8333
Sig.		.102	.686	.092

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 47.439.

b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

Based on this means plot, we can say that, while group 1 is having less customer engagement compared to group 2 and 3.

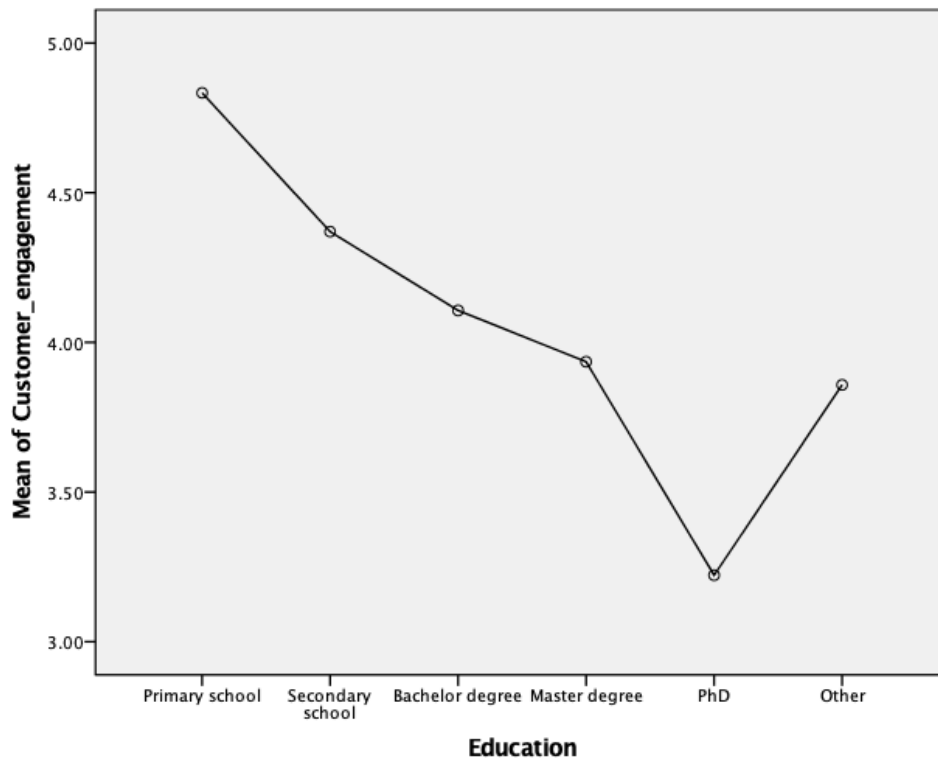


Figure Y

9. Educational level / Sponsorship activation

ANOVA

There was an analysis via one-way test to check if educational level of respondents is a significant factor to determine sponsorship activation. The below table indicates that mean value of sponsorship activation was higher for employees who had a Masters' degree ($M = 8.30$) and lower for bottom of the table ($M = 7.82$).

Descriptives

Table 47. Sponsorship activation

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Primary school	40	7.8210	2.79139	.44136	6.9283	8.7137	3.09	13.32
Secondary school	192	7.9664	2.54326	.18354	7.6043	8.3284	1.97	13.74
Bachelor degree	272	7.8715	2.15323	.13056	7.6144	8.1285	3.78	14.37
Master degree	108	8.3015	2.72466	.26218	7.7817	8.8212	2.90	14.44
PhD	18	7.8311	2.02258	.47673	6.8253	8.8369	3.94	10.16
Other	36	6.2800	1.86053	.31009	5.6505	6.9095	3.29	10.28
Total	666	7.8784	2.41977	.09376	7.6943	8.0625	1.97	14.44

The p-value obtained from the ANOVA One-way test is 0.000 which is lower than the threshold hence we can say that the educational level of the respondents is a confounding variable to their level of sponsorship activation ($F(5,660) = 3.944, p < 0.05$). As the t numbers are more than two therefore a post hoc test is obligatory to note the differentiation between groups.

ANOVA

Table 48. Sponsorship activation

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	112.978	5	22.596	3.944	.002
Within Groups	3780.802	660	5.728		
Total	3893.780	665			

The results from the Scheffe test show that there are two groups with small differences between them.

Sponsorship activation

Table 49. Scheffe^{a,b}

Education	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Other	36	6.2800	
Primary school	40	7.8210	7.8210
PhD	18	7.8311	7.8311
Bachelor degree	272	7.8715	7.8715
Secondary school	192		7.9664
Master degree	108		8.3015
Sig.		.064	.966

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 47.439.

b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

We can say from the following means plot that the group 1 activated less sponsorship than group 2.

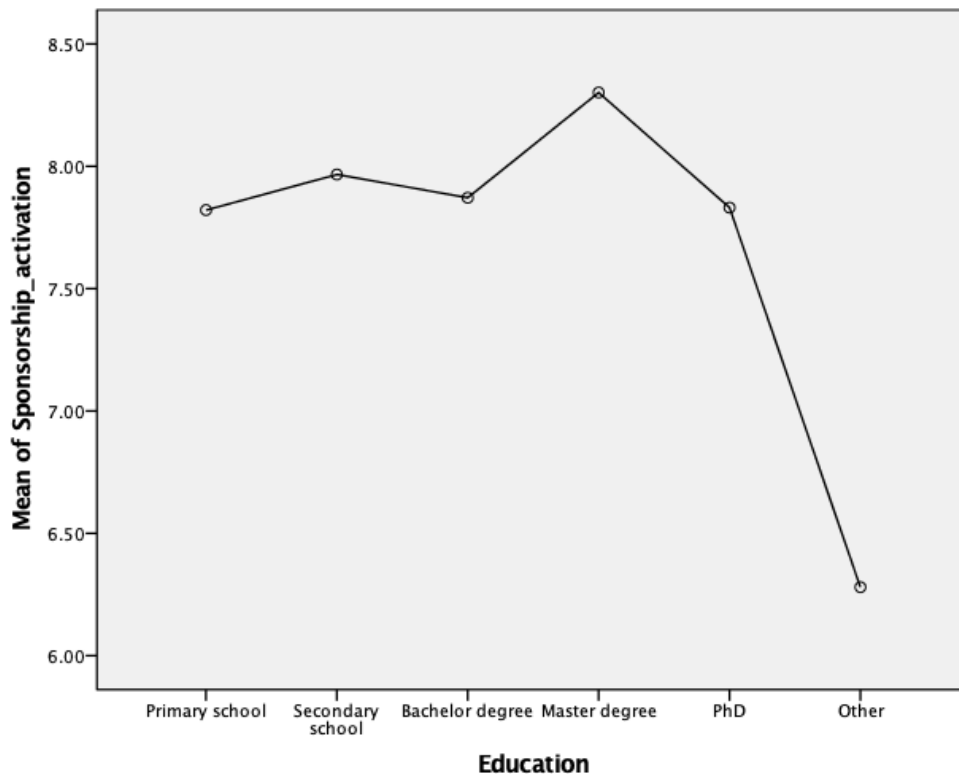


Figure Z

10. Educational level / Social media sports activation

ANOVA

In order to know whether or not the education level is a determining factor for the level of the social media sports activation, one-way was tested. According to the following table, we realize that the mean score of social media sports activation was the highest for those at a secondary education level ($M = 4.09$) and the lowest for those with a PhD ($M = 2.18$).

Descriptives

Table 50. Social Media Sports Activation

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Primary school	40	3.66	1.661	.263	3.13	4.19	1	7
Secondary school	192	4.09	1.851	.134	3.83	4.36	1	7
Bachelor degree	272	3.60	1.774	.108	3.39	3.81	1	7
Master degree	108	3.57	1.600	.154	3.27	3.88	1	7
PhD	18	2.18	.881	.208	1.74	2.62	1	4
Other	36	2.99	1.815	.302	2.37	3.60	1	7
Total	666	3.67	1.782	.069	3.53	3.81	1	7

The p-value of the ANOVA One-way test is 0.000 which is much less than the level of significance and so it can be stated that the type of education of the respondents is a variable that can bring about accentuation of social media sports activation. ($F(5,660) = 6.102, p < 0.05$)

The fact that we are dealing with more than two samples means that we have to use a posteriori test. Therefore, the next step will be to do an investigation of these differences in order to detect them.

ANOVA

Table 51. Social Media Sports Activation

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	93.273	5	18.655	6.102	.000
Within Groups	2017.574	660	3.057		
Total	2110.847	665			

The results from the Scheffe test show that there are two groups, group 1 consists of those with PhD, while all the other educational levels are in group 2.

Social media sports activation

Table 52. Scheffe^{a,b}

Education	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
PhD	18	2.18	
Other	36	2.99	2.99
Master degree	108		3.57
Bachelor degree	272		3.60
Primary school	40		3.66
Secondary school	192		4.09
Sig.		.404	.094

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 47.439.

b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

According to the given means graph, it is evident that group 1 have lower levels of social media sports activation, compared to group 2.

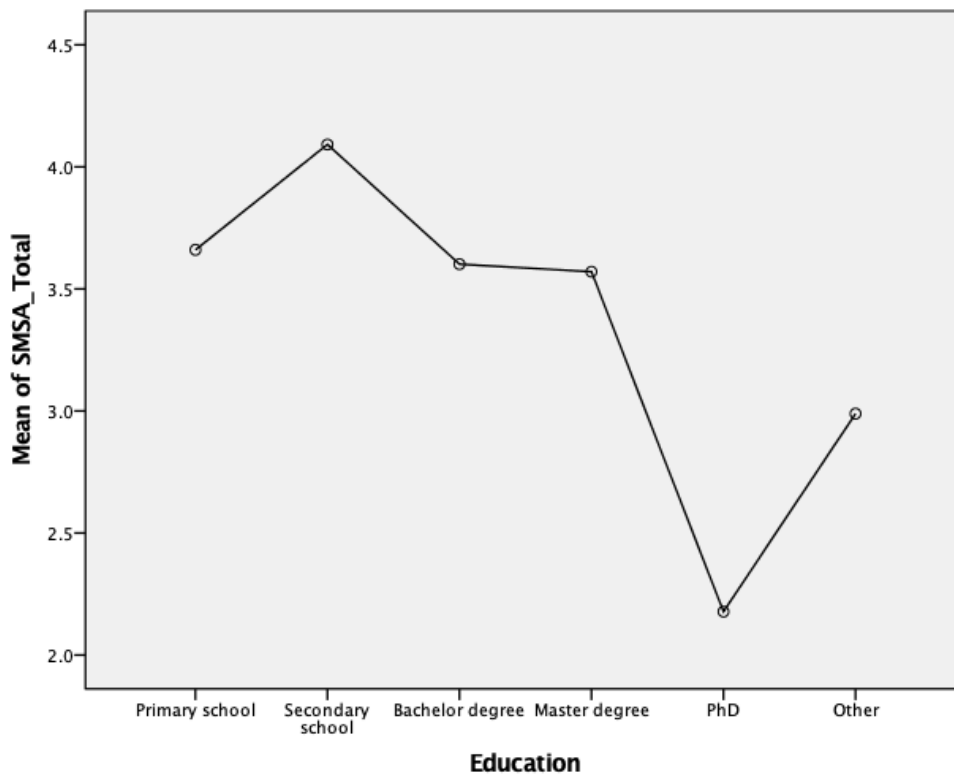


Figure Aa

Educational level / Purchase intention

One-way ANOVA are used to investigate whether or not respondents' educational level is a variable that effects their purchase intention. The table below shows that the mean of purchase intention is significantly higher for primary school attendee(4.11) and lower for PhD attendees (3.24).

Descriptives

Table 53. Purchase intention

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Primary school	40	4.1167	1.42934	.22600	3.6595	4.5738	2.00	7.00
Secondary school	192	4.0764	1.48405	.10710	3.8651	4.2876	1.00	7.00
Bachelor degree	272	3.8922	1.63945	.09941	3.6965	4.0879	1.00	7.00
Master degree	108	3.5679	1.58737	.15274	3.2651	3.8707	1.00	7.00
PhD	18	3.2963	1.17094	.27599	2.7140	3.8786	1.33	5.00
Other	36	3.2407	1.71198	.28533	2.6615	3.8200	1.00	6.33
Total	666	3.8549	1.58226	.06131	3.7345	3.9752	1.00	7.00

The p value regarding the ANOVA One-way is 0.006, that is lower than the level of significance and thus it can be concluded that the educational level of the respondents is a conditioning variable of the answering level ($F(5,660) = 3.302, p < 0.05$).

ANOVA

Table 54. Purchase intention

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	40.629	5	8.126	3.302	.006
Within Groups	1624.229	660	2.461		
Total	1664.858	665			

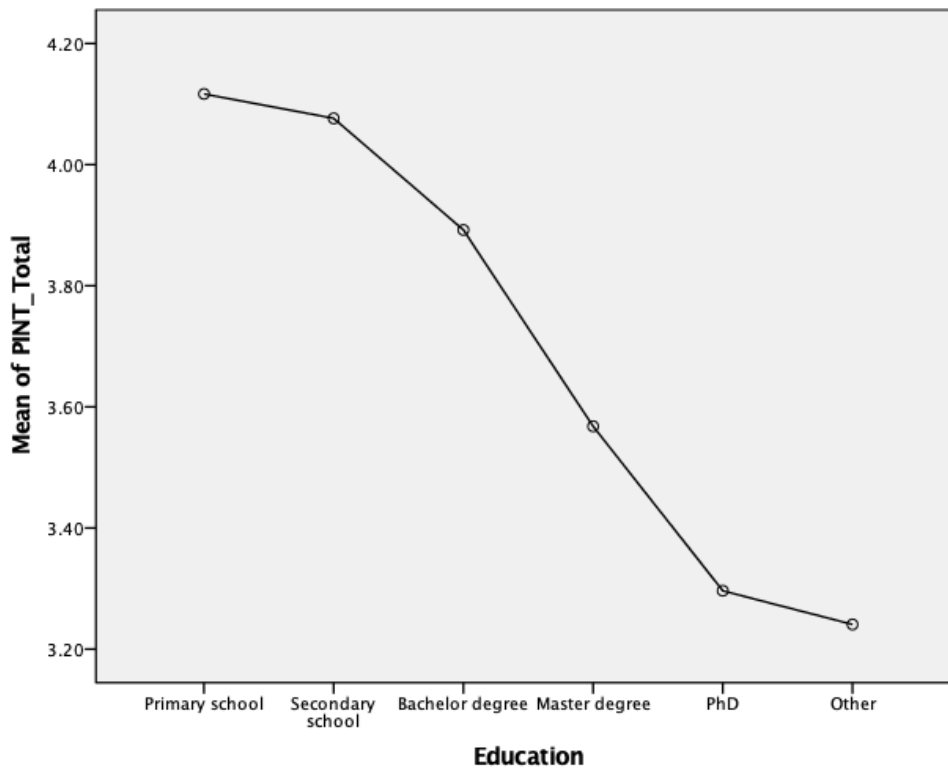


Figure Ab

11. Educational level / Brand loyalty

ANOVA

One-way tests have been performed to determine the degree of the impact of the educational level of the respondents at which they are on brand loyalty. The table below shows that the mean score of brand loyalty is the highest at primary school ($M = 3.70$) mean while is the lowest among PhD ($M = 1.91$)..

Descriptives

Table 55. Brand loyalty

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Primary school	40	3.7045	1.88611	.29822	3.1013	4.3078	1.00	7.00
Secondary school	192	3.0303	1.51091	.10904	2.8152	3.2454	1.00	6.36
Bachelor degree	272	2.8890	1.43809	.08720	2.7174	3.0607	1.00	7.00
Master degree	108	2.7256	1.22227	.11761	2.4924	2.9587	1.00	5.36
PhD	18	1.9192	.82669	.19485	1.5081	2.3303	1.00	3.55
Other	36	2.4394	1.49750	.24958	1.9327	2.9461	1.00	5.18
Total	666	2.9017	1.47286	.05707	2.7897	3.0138	1.00	7.00

By using the p-value retrieved from the ANOVA One-way test, which is equal to of 0.000 it is concluded that lower that level of significance and the educational level of the respondents is a factor in determining their level of brand loyalty ($F(5,660) = 5.472, p < 0.05$).

Moreover, having more than two samples, an additional step is needed before deriving any conclusion, which is, a post hoc test, to identify the differences among the groups.

ANOVA

Table 56. Brand loyalty

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	57.421	5	11.484	5.472	.000
Within Groups	1385.171	660	2.099		
Total	1442.592	665			

The results from the Scheffe test show that there are three groups with small differences between them.

Brand loyalty

Table 57. Scheffe^{a,b}

Education	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
		1	2	3
PhD	18	1.9192		
Other	36	2.4394	2.4394	
Master degree	108	2.7256	2.7256	2.7256
Bachelor degree	272	2.8890	2.8890	2.8890
Secondary school	192		3.0303	3.0303
Primary school	40			3.7045
Sig.		.061	.558	.056

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 47.439.

b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

Based on the following means plot, it can be stated that group 1 presents lower levels of customer engagement than group 2 and 3.

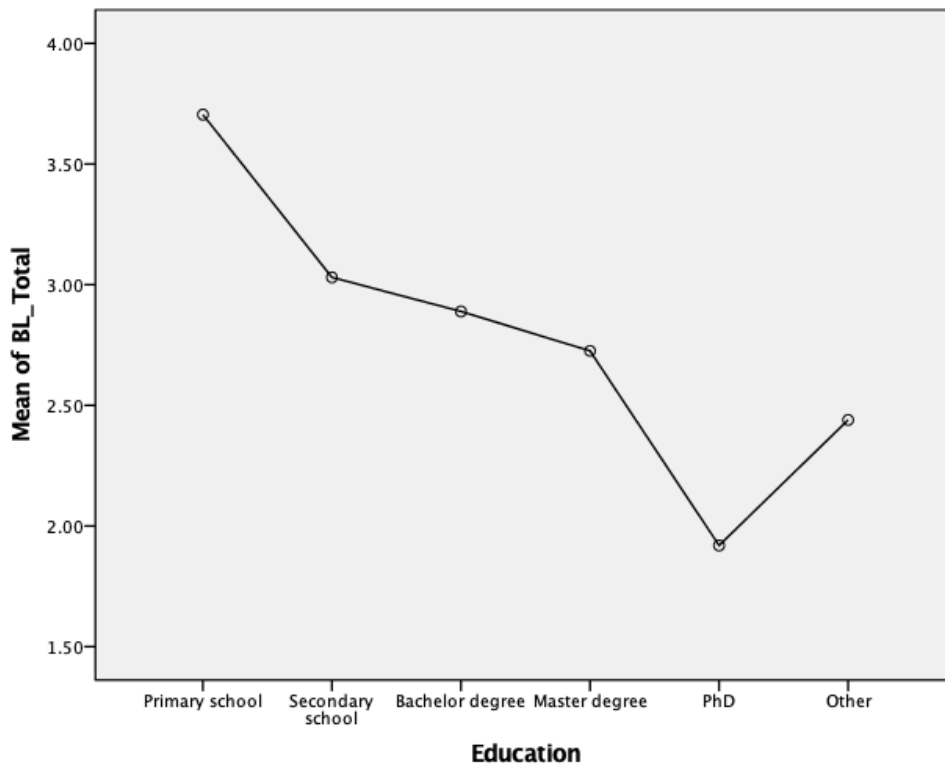


Figure Ac

12. Employment status / Customer engagement

Anova to check if status of employment by respondents is a determinant factor of the level of customer engagement a one-way test was conducted.

The table below is showing that the mean score of level of engagement is high

for students (M = 4.50) and lower for freelancers (M = 3.89t).

Descriptives

Table 58. Customer engagement

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Unemployed	32	4.2604	1.46562	.25909	3.7320	4.7888	2.33	6.83
Student	98	4.5011	1.36384	.13777	4.2277	4.7746	1.72	6.67
Civil servant	122	4.1840	1.41643	.12824	3.9301	4.4379	1.28	6.72
Private employee	256	4.1280	1.42010	.08876	3.9532	4.3028	1.28	6.89
Freelancer	122	3.8925	1.54710	.14007	3.6152	4.1698	1.00	6.83
Other	36	4.2130	1.35645	.22607	3.7540	4.6719	2.00	7.00
Total	666	4.1610	1.43999	.05580	4.0514	4.2706	1.00	7.00

The p-value of ANOVA One-way is 0.073 higher than the level of significance, therefore the first hypothesis is accepted, that is; the status of employment don't determine the level of customer engagement from the respondents ($F(5, 660) = 2.030, p < 0.05$).

ANOVA

Table 59. Customer engagement

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	20.887	5	4.177	2.030	.073
Within Groups	1358.042	660	2.058		
Total	1378.929	665			

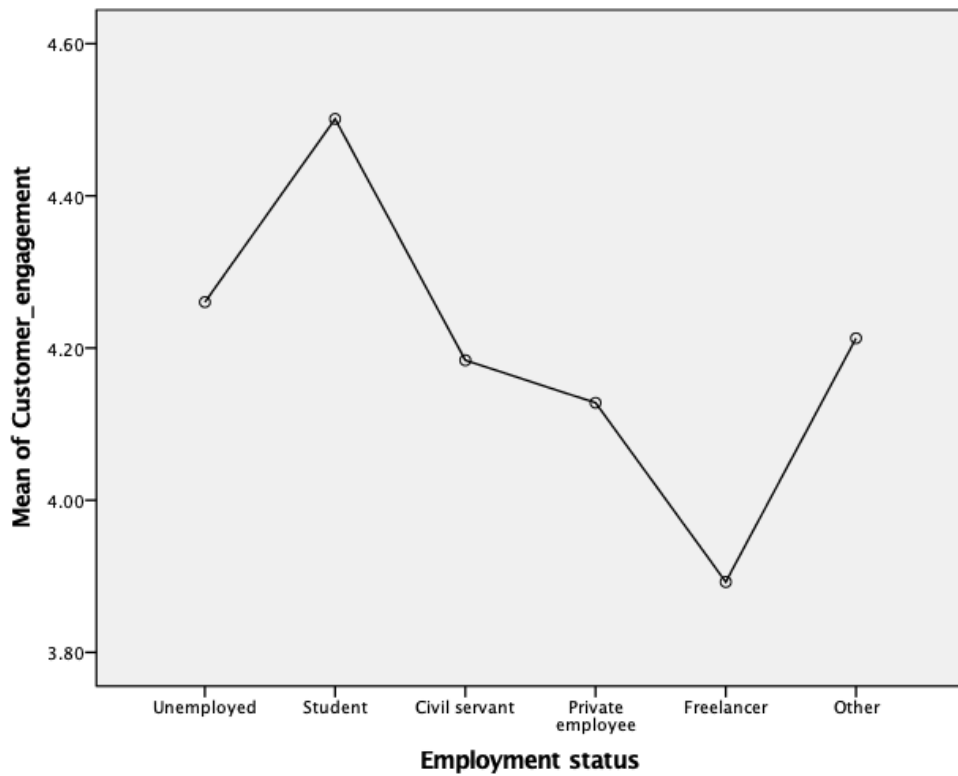


Figure Ad

13. Employment status / Sponsorship activation

ANOVA one-way tests have been used to check if the respondents employment status is the determining factor of the extent of the sponsorship activation.

The table below shows that the average score (M) for freelancers of the sponsorship activation is the lowest (8.85), while it is the highest for students of the sponsorship activation (6.01).

Descriptives

Table 60. Sponsorship activation

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Unemployed	32	7.2800	2.17269	.38408	6.4967	8.0633	3.78	11.65
Student	98	6.0182	1.67299	.16900	5.6828	6.3536	1.97	10.84
Civil servant	122	8.3007	2.38829	.21623	7.8726	8.7287	3.29	13.44
Private employee	256	8.0539	2.33411	.14588	7.7666	8.3412	2.90	13.40
Freelancer	122	8.8511	2.35671	.21337	8.4287	9.2736	4.76	14.44
Other	36	7.4989	2.52770	.42128	6.6436	8.3541	4.27	14.37
Total	666	7.8784	2.41977	.09376	7.6943	8.0625	1.97	14.44

The p-value of the ANOVA One-way test is: $p = 0.000$ which is less than the significance level hence can infer that the occupation of respondents is a predictor factor of their level of sponsorship activation ($F(5,660) = 5.166, p < 0.05$). Furthermore, since there is more than 2 samples so we re-used the post hoc test to know the differences between the groups.

ANOVA

Table 61. Sponsorship activation

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	500.850	5	100.170	19.485	.000
Within Groups	3392.930	660	5.141		
Total	3893.780	665			

The results from the Scheffe test show that there are three groups with small differences between them.

Sponsorship activation

Table 62. Scheffe^{a,b}

Employment status	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
		1	2	3
Student	98	6.0182		
Unemployed	32	7.2800	7.2800	
Other	36		7.4989	
Private employee	256		8.0539	8.0539
Civil servant	122		8.3007	8.3007
Freelancer	122			8.8511
Sig.		.067	.238	.530

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 67.015.

b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

According to the table that follow, DIAGRAM we can say that group 1 shows the most noticeable lower Sponsorship activation than the other two groups which are.....group 2 and group 3.

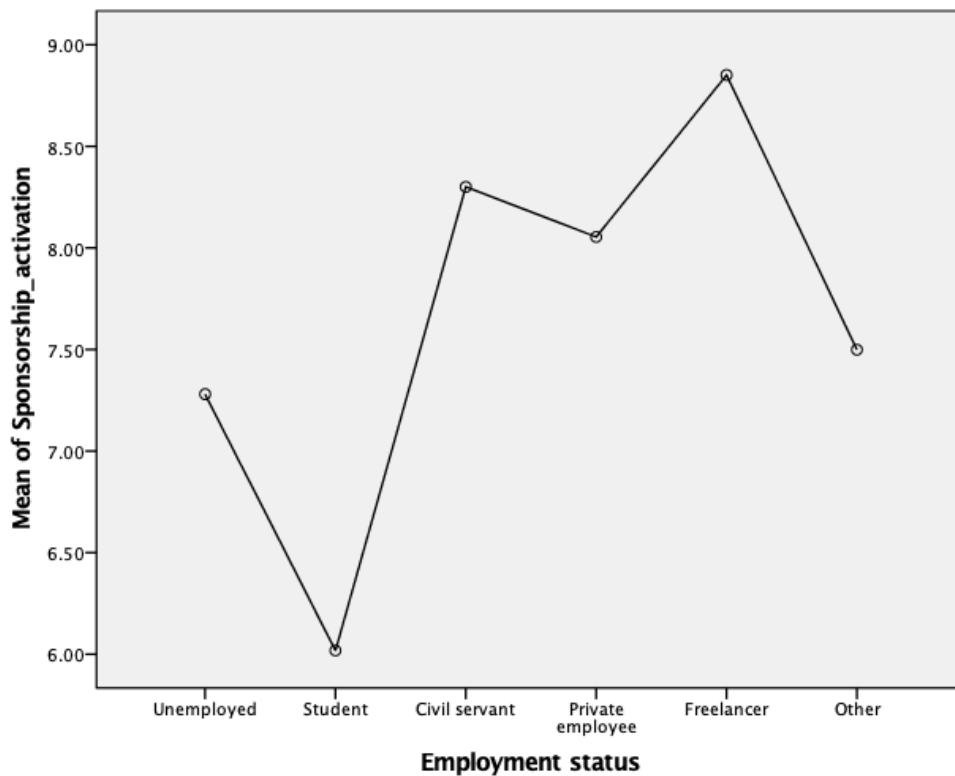


Figure Ae

14. Employment status / Social media sports activation

Using ANOVA one-way tests, it will be analyzed the effect of the employment status of the respondents in the level of social media sports activation.

According to the following table, the mean of social media sports activation scores is significantly higher for students (M = 4.02) , and lower for unemployed (M = 3.54).

Descriptives

Table 63. Social media sports activation

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Unemployed	32	3.54	2.069	.366	2.79	4.28	1	7
Student	98	4.02	1.957	.198	3.63	4.41	1	7
Civil servant	122	3.72	1.586	.144	3.44	4.01	1	7
Private employee	256	3.60	1.768	.111	3.39	3.82	1	7
Freelancer	122	3.70	1.705	.154	3.39	4.00	1	7
Other	36	3.01	1.878	.313	2.38	3.65	1	7
Total	666	3.67	1.782	.069	3.53	3.81	1	7

The p-value for the ANOVA One-way test is 0.094, which is bigger than the significance level. Therefore, we can say there isn't a relationship between work condition variable of the participants and their level of social media sport activation ($F(5,660) = 1.889, p < 0.05$).

ANOVA

Table 64. Social media sports activation

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	29.777	5	5.955	1.889	.094
Within Groups	2081.070	660	3.153		
Total	2110.847	665			

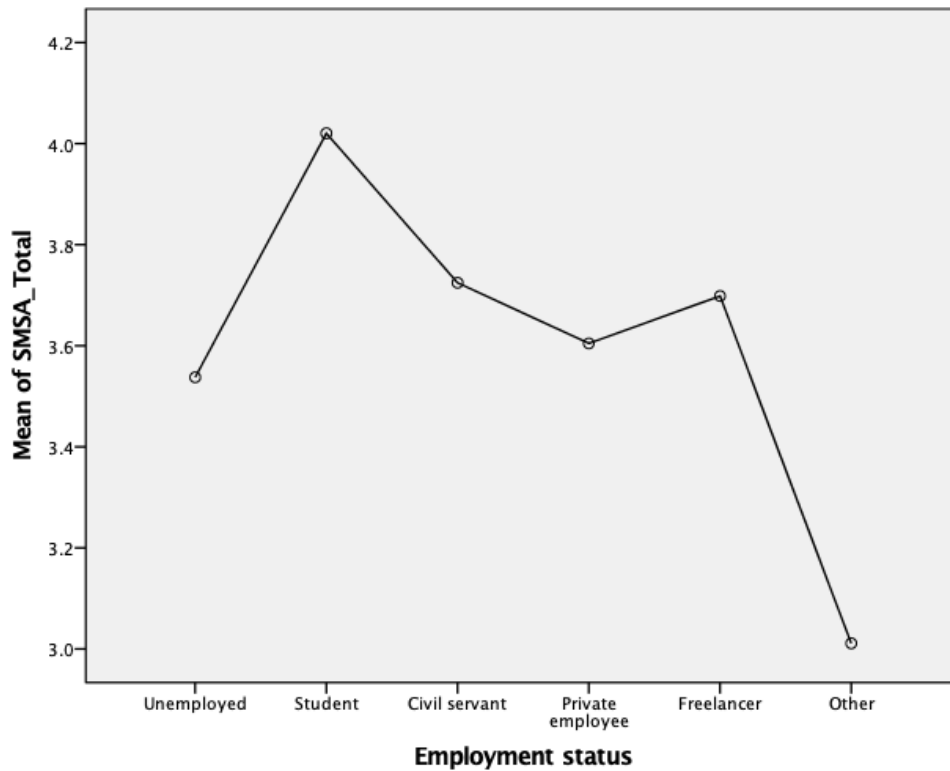


Figure Af

15. Employment status / Purchase intention

The one-way anova test has been executed to see whether the variable

employment status is making the difference for the purchase intention or not.

The following table depicts that with different status the respondents have a different degree of purchase intention.

From the above table we can concluded that the students have higher degree of purchase intention(M=4.17) than freelance(M=3.73).

Descriptives

Table 65. Purchase intention

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
					Unemployed	32		
Student	98	4.1701	1.38412	.13982	3.8926	4.4476	1.33	6.67
Civil servant	12	3.7923	1.50196	.13598	3.5231	4.0616	1.00	7.00
Private employee	25	3.8411	1.61149	.10072	3.6428	4.0395	1.00	7.00
Freelancer	12	3.7377	1.65102	.14948	3.4418	4.0336	1.00	7.00
Other	36	3.7222	1.78263	.29711	3.1191	4.3254	1.00	7.00
Total	66	3.8549	1.58226	.06131	3.7345	3.9752	1.00	7.00

Furthermore, the p-value of ANOVA one-way test comes to 0.414 which is greater than the level of significance, therefore we can say that the employment status of the customers is not the determinant factor of the stakeholders' purchase intention ($F(5,660) = 1.005, p < 0.05$).

ANOVA

Table 66. Purchase intention

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	12.584	5	2.517	1.005	.414
Within Groups	1652.274	660	2.503		
Total	1664.858	665			

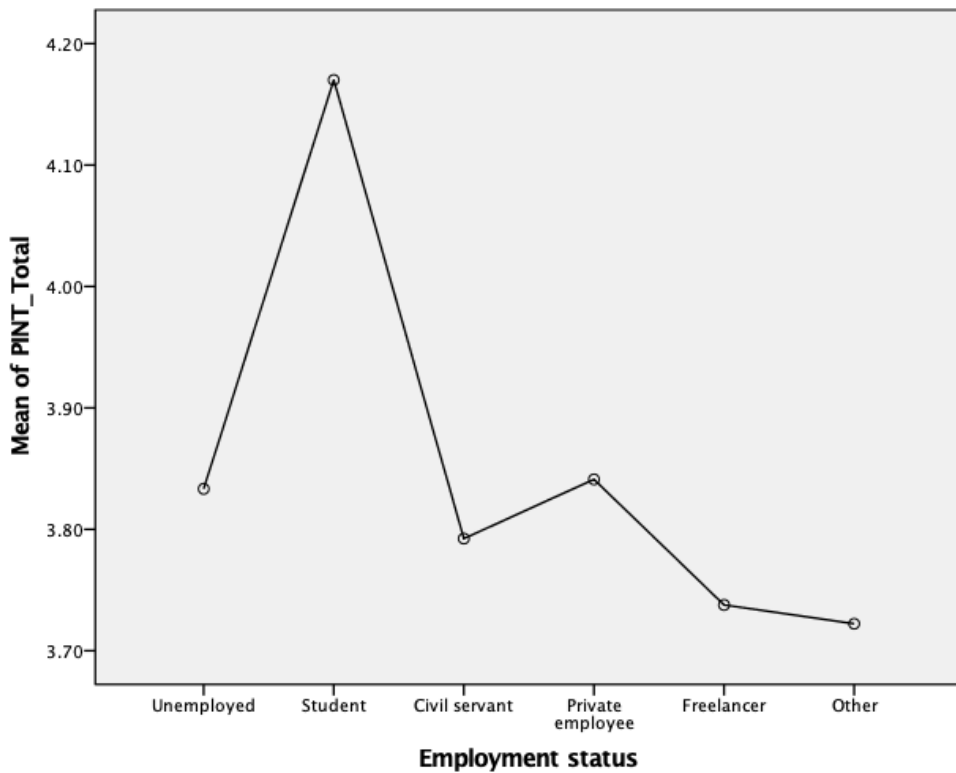


Figure Ag

16. Employment status / Brand loyalty

ANOVA One-way tests were carried out to check whether the category of employment of the respondent is a factor affecting the judgment for brand loyalty. The table below showed that the mean score of brand loyalty is higher for civil servants ($M = 3.07$) whereas the score is lower for freelancers ($M = 2.80$).

Descriptives

Table 67. Brand loyalty

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Unemployed	32	2.8409	1.56593	.27682	2.2763	3.4055	1.00	6.09
Student	98	2.9814	1.54233	.15580	2.6722	3.2907	1.00	6.27
Civil servant	12	3.0730	1.41935	.12850	2.8186	3.3274	1.00	5.73
Private employee	25	2.8750	1.42415	.08901	2.6997	3.0503	1.00	6.45
Freelancer	12	2.8018	1.45215	.13147	2.5415	3.0621	1.00	6.36
Other	36	2.6869	1.79155	.29859	2.0807	3.2930	1.00	7.00
Total	66	2.9017	1.47286	.05707	2.7897	3.0138	1.00	7.00

The p-value of the ANOVA One-way test is 0.639 that is larger than the level of significance, which means that we can say that employment status has no influence in the brand loyalty of the respondents ($F(5,660) = .679, p < 0.05$).

ANOVA

Table 68. Brand loyalty

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	7.384	5	1.477	.679	.639
Within Groups	1435.208	660	2.175		
Total	1442.592	665			

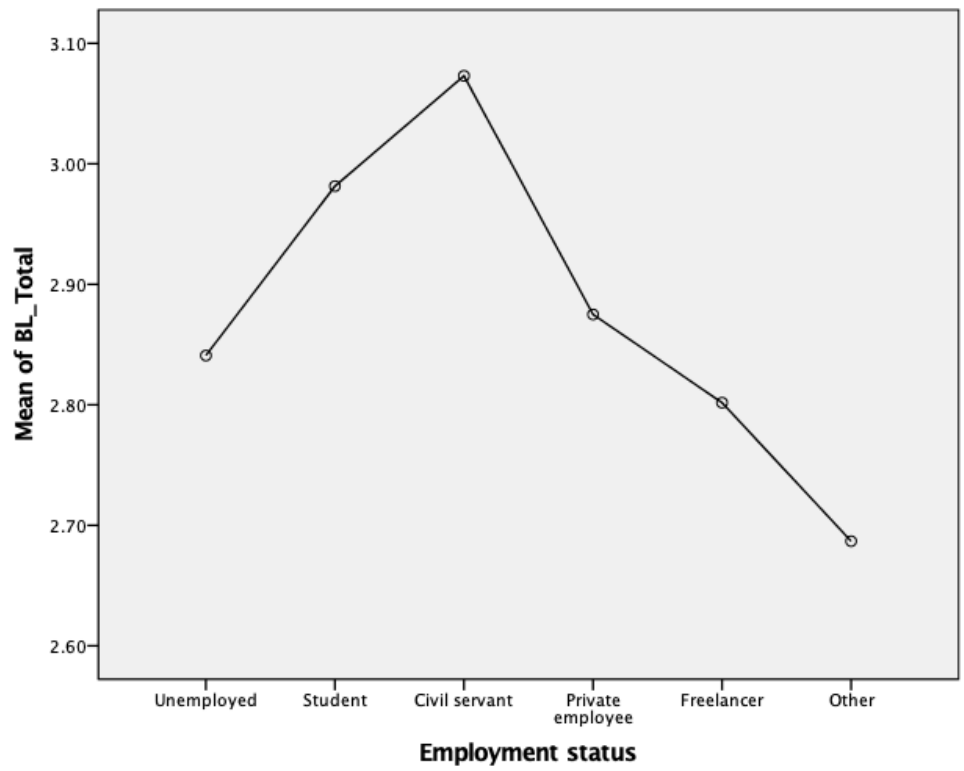


Figure Ah

4.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

4.2.1 Case 1 Sport Organization-Organizing Authority of Greek Professional Basket League

This sporting organization has been the organizing authority of the Greek Top Division Professional Basketball Championship for the past 30 years, since 1992, under the auspices of the Greek Basketball Federation. The official name of the Greek Top Division Professional Basketball Championship is “Stoiximan Basket League” in which the top 13 Basketball Clubs of Greece are competing. The Board of Directors is composed of 27 members and there are several committees operating in-house all linked to the successful delivery of the League.

The marketing manager of the organizing authority of the Professional Greek Basketball Championship was very clear and precise when referring to the organization’s relationship with social media for the past years. In particular, he said that they have been very active and present in all social media. His marketing team chooses the Social Media platforms they will use taking under consideration the popularity of them in Greek fans, which varies from country to country, explaining that for instance they are not holding an account in LinkedIn since it is not so popular in the Greek audience. When stating: “We have been very active and present in all social media” he clarified that by the term “all social media” he means all popular social media in Greece. He also underlined that they have their own app. Nevertheless, social media was a very helpful tool especially in covid-19 period for their sponsorship agreements. Both for the new but mainly for the pre-existent too.

He also mentioned that human resources allocation to the social media marketing sector within the organization could be more, since the exploitation opportunities of social media are endless with a good creative team and lead undoubtedly to competitive advantage. In particular, he said:

“Even though there is not a separate budget within the organization for social media experts but a whole digital marketing approach with two people in the department, I strongly believe that more budget for people involved in the social media creative team would surely drive us to gaining competitive advantage as an organization to other

Greek Leagues. The high popularity of our sport in Greece should not work, as a constraining factor in investing more in our marketing strategy. On the contrary, it should be the starting point for us to reinforce our positioning on the European and International Context. We do have a decent number of followers but we could have more if there was sufficient budget allocation on our social media only.”

His organization’s social media strategy is also deeply affected by the organizations’ “special nature” as a sports organization. As the marketing manager explained, the Hellenic Association of Professional Basketball Teams cannot be considered as a sports team but as an authority with certain rights and obligations following the National Law. Some constraints – the first restriction on exploitation of a successful sociability strategy – have to do with the type of content. For instance:

Secondly we cannot compete with other sport portals or sport news portals or sport news agencies in digital space during the general public because of some specific peculiarities of our system. For example, there are very specific rules about how we can handle the video clips of our TV sponsor during cover a live or not live match of the Greek basket league being broadcasted through TV. There are some restrictions, we have to utilise the live video content of the basket matches exclusively from our TV sponsor but our Public TV sponsor sends us our the highlights and the full basketball matches after 24 or 48 hours. While the video highlights have already been published by private TV. Therefore, one of the most powerful and powerful tools of the social media marketing cannot be used at its best because there are already photos and articles about the games at the time or even during the game exactly before a post with a video content on social media. I believe it's something we all should work on more. On the other side, our great heritage and most powerful tool is the official statistics of the games and this is the field we exploit the most. We actually try to attract all basketball fans and all of our followers to learn the statistics by our channels in social media even before Greek sports reporters who are actually our main digital visitors and reproduce our content in all Greek sports and basketball sites and social media ”.

Finally, he underlined another main characteristic that distinguishes his organization from the mainstreaming sports organizations, which is due to its nature.

HAPBT differentiates in terms of policy. Their policy is to keep social media active but in respect to the official websites and social media of the teams belonging to the League and definitely not by competing with them. They wish to be competitive against other leagues or sports and not their professional basketball clubs, their policy is to support them not compete with them. Their main aim in terms of marketing is to operate as a communication mechanism of the sport and the league. He further stated:

“Our content mainly provides statistics. We do not upload content or make a post including an analysis, any comments or criticism. The nature of our sport organization is to work for the good and the promotion of all of our teams. There are quite strict boundaries in our content even in posts or articles related to athletes. The content of the posts is carefully designed since we cannot promote a player more in comparison to another because we could be accused of discrimination or partialities among our basketball clubs, something which could destroy our reliability as an organizing institution of the national basketball league and an authority. We have dared to create content and pregame questions by trying to activate our followers sense of expertise, in order to enhance interaction and dialogue among the community as well as other initiatives but this is a content which needs careful design and allocation of time in order to interfere and interact with the followers and attain a respectable social media account. It cannot be left to work on its own. It needs social media experts and a budget for them.”

In the question “Has your social media strategy changed due to Covid -19 pandemic and if yes how?” the marketing manager of the Hellenic Association of Professional Basketball Teams responded that due to Covid-19, they were forced into large and quick changes like everything on the planet. He described the early covid19 period during which there were no fans in the stadiums or even worse when there were no games at all, as a shock to them. He also mentioned that from the marketing perspective and especially their social media strategy the reflexes of the organization were slow with a direct impact to their sponsorship agreements.

He also referred to the second Covid period, which was smoother and said:

“In the second year of the covid-19 game period, we had prepared adjustments nevertheless if I wanted to be honest with you I still believe we could have done more

and kept our social media more active. Many things we had designed on paper related to events were never implemented due to different national decisions on restriction measures against covid-19, which are unpredictable factors. However, even in the cases that we worked simply, by statistics of players of all teams, and some posts with just a picture it was a great marathon for us since we couldn't invest in community building and team and players identification. Some players left in the middle of the season due to covid19 because they came from different countries and the games had stopped or after the first Covid period during which there were games but still no fans, big teams changed players in the middle of the season for different reasons. If there is no stability in the basic structure of a team and players change very frequently even during a season it is very difficult for us to cultivate community building and enhance team identification.”

He also prioritized the customer engagement antecedents they focus on reinforcing through social media as follows: 1) positive affect, 2) team identification and 3) prosocial behavior. He further stated:

“But allow me to make a remark here. We mainly focus on the first three elements of customer engagement that is positive affect, team identification and prosocial behavior. It is not only about where you have your focus but also with which procedures you reach the goal you have set. The posts about an event that you organized such as games outside the court where fans can participate is an event with high interaction and cannot be compared to a simple post of a picture of a player or a highlights video of a match. Either wise, in order to answer your question even though I am not satisfied by our numbers on social media (covid19 period contributed to that) the first three elements are the ones that we aim at and promote within our sponsorship agreements too.”

Furthermore, he suggested that the starting point of the popularity of a sport or a league could make a difference on human resources allocation of an organization and consequently affect the type of event and posts, which are designed, and the success of reinforcing those customer antecedents. As he further explained:

“We use our social media to foster our customer engagement mainly in relation to the other leagues and sports. However, I have to mention that it works vice-versa too. The appeal of our social media to the public does not depend exclusively on our abilities as

a marketing team and/or our social media strategy but it also depends on the official ranking of the sport nationally. More popular sports like football have much more social media traffic and probably aim at increasing their fans' customer engagement in an already easygoing path, which is the popularity of the sport. Nevertheless, we are the second most popular sport in Greece which gives us the privilege to improve our social media numbers in comparison with sports such as volleyball or handball who actually are very far behind us in Greece.”

In order to answer the extent to which consumers' behavior (which is depicted in purchase intention, referral intention and repeat purchases) is countable within the social media context he underlined that there are processes and numbers in place who can show trends but not reality. He actually stated:

“We have real numbers like followers, reactions, likes, shares, comments, posts, re-posts etc. Within the social media context, we cannot identify who from our followers have actually bought tickets to the games but we have the number of followers who participated in a social media contest for winning one ticket for the entire league. Those numbers in combination with several numbers and indicators of other departments within the organization are driving us. Of course, we totally aim to support brand loyalty as a main goal to our target groups, make them identify the brand from the very first sight of our logo or our partner's logo, and make that logo and brand relatedness very strong in fans' perception, strongly through our social media in order to increase customer engagement, which results in increase of consumer behavior's numbers.”

For the relationship of customer engagement and sponsorship activation within a social media context, he stated that they are completely interconnected. He underlined that a successfully activated sport sponsorship can cause for both parts of the sponsorship agreement increase of customer engagement and that this is something that can be achieved through a proper social media strategy. Moreover, according to the marketing manager, through smart social media campaigns and initiatives, customer engagement can be increased which results in the conscious participation of fans into events, contests, internet activities in favor of the sponsors of their favorite team or sport. As he emphasized:

“In fact, one of our major sponsors is a betting company, which actually is extremely active in social media. As a result, many of the pre-requisites in the sponsorship agreement demanded the existence of common social media initiatives for further customer engagement. Nevertheless, inconveniently I will have to admit that the greater emphasis in all Greek sponsorship agreements at least in basketball is to have the led signs ready for the game and all the stickers, and mainly this is it. Social media references in the sponsorship agreements most of the time do not receive the attention they should and sometimes they are not carried out with none of the contracting members breaking the deal since the common practice is that they are of less importance as contract terms. The Euro league is very strict with its teams and every little contract term must be implemented. I think this is something we should adopt too, but it’s an issue that doesn’t depend on me.”

Furthermore, when responding for the relationship between sponsorship activation and consumer behavior and the techniques used through social media he characteristically stated:

“There is a well-known connection between successfully activating sponsorships and consumer behavior. At least this is what all marketing experts are working for! I will give you an example...One of our sponsors is the top leading Greek Fuels Company, it actually exists in peoples’ everyday lives regardless of their demographic characteristics. There are 986 gas stations nationwide of this company covering urban as well as more rural, isolated areas of Greece. The plan was to have just a stand with our logo on it with a small basketball basket integrated and ask our fans to upload photos or videos of themselves making a slam-dunk or a jump hook. Anyone could do it...an infant, a child, an adult, or a woman and of course this would be on a social media contest and the winner would receive a ball and a shirt by his favorite player delivered on spot! In the gas station the photo or video was shot! This would be a much-targeted trigger for all population to invite him to the sport of basketball and of course increase our consumers and consumer behavior is a-priori served with this approach for our sponsor! I have just described to you a technique which unfortunately was never implemented due to budget issues and covid-19. But yes, we totally want to work towards that direction.”

Regarding the possibility of prediction of consumer purchase intention through the antecedents of customer engagement and sponsorship activation related to certain metrics of the marketing department he clarified that they do not have indicators that connect sponsorship activation and purchase intention as an organization.

Finally, as far as the identification of any differences in customer engagement levels related to the demographic characteristics of their fans, is concerned, within the social media context he mentioned:

“We don’t have access to such information through social media. At least not as a service by a certain social media platform. We could do a sampling manually among our followers but still it is very time consuming and there aren’t enough economic resources allocation for such an action.”

4.2.2 Case 2 Betting Company (Sponsor of Organizing authority under Basketball Federation)

The Betting Company is subsidiary of a parent international company, a leading gaming company in Greece, and one of the fastest growing in Europe. As of today it is active in Greece, Cyprus, Germany, Romania, Portugal, Brazil, Bulgaria and Chile. The Betting Company is the largest online gaming operator in Greece. Its motto is 'Acting responsibly towards our stakeholders, especially on cutting edge technology and responsible gaming.' The company designed an ambitious Sponsorship programme to support various sports - from professional teams to Olympia Champions. This was also an unusually long and sophisticated Corporate Social Responsibility initiative, based mainly around education and brain-gain campaigning. The interviewee was the Sport Marketing Sponsorships Manager of the Betting Company, the principal sponsor.

His organization's relationship with social media for the last years is quite impressive having been awarded numerous times in Sports Marketing and Sports Sponsorships awards. His company entered the sport marketing area 7 years ago when there was a strategic decision to enhance its brand name through sports marketing and sport sponsorships by closing a sport sponsorship deal with one of the two Greek

leading professional basketball clubs. At the moment it is sponsoring the 3 top professional Greek basketball clubs, having covered basketball fans from almost all geographical areas of Greece. In Greece, as well as in all the countries they have in place a separate social media team, which is of major importance for the company and closely cooperates through frequent communication during its daily procedures with their sports marketing department. They occupy 3 people within the social media team in each country and on top of them there is the social media team content manager who is actually responsible for the social media content. The Sports Marketing & Sports Sponsorships Manager further explained:

“The reason for investing in people and separate social media teams per country with one more person as general responsible in charge is twofold. Firstly, we consider our sport sponsorships one of our most powerful communication tools. Secondly, in contemporary sports marketing maximizing the benefits gained through a sponsorship has to go through social media too. We totally appreciate and use SM as a very important marketing tool.”

He also explained that they have two main strategies in order to put social media into their sponsorship agreements and likewise to put their sponsorship agreements on the social media successfully, depending on the kind of sponsorship agreement and the sponsee. When it comes to sponsoring a great tournament or sporting event or a team with a very strong brand then they reassure the exploitation of this glory for improving and further develop their own channels of communication through our social media. An inviolable term from their perspective when preparing the sponsorship contracts in such cases is that all of the sponsee’s posts refer to their social media by using hashtags or mentions. Therefore, they use the tournament, the team, or the organizing authority of a league as a marketing vehicle in order to implement their own social media strategy. He actually said:

“It all depends on the kind of sponsorship agreement we are dealing with. The main purpose of the use of social media through sponsorship for us is to increase the numbers and impact of our organization’s social media through our sponsorship partner’s social media. This is what usually happens when the sponsee is a great tournament of sporting event or a team, or a league with a very strong brand. One of our success stories is the sponsorship of the Greek Basket League, which is actually named after us. A very

important term of this sponsorship agreement, providing access to a great database of social media in all Basketball fans among Greece.”

In addition, he continued analyzing the second case:

“There are other kinds of sponsorships such as individual sponsorship agreements sponsoring athletes not our ambassadors but independent athletes of less popular sports. For instance, we had such cases of sponsoring Greek athletes in the 2021 (2022) Olympics of Tokyo or in World Athletics Championships. In those cases, the athlete receives the glory of a big international organization such as ours, the athlete takes advantage of our audience and the key words within this kind of sponsorships are social responsibility, support and help to the athlete to achieve his or her goals through a strong brand while wearing the colors of the nation’s flag. Of course, this is one of our strategic moves related to our social media that we totally support in order to increase the dynamics of our social media to a broader audience apart from the BasketLeague fans. Of course we have other forms of sponsorship in which we are very active, being awarded a lot of times, like sponsorships linked to our social corporate responsibility but this is not something I will analyze since it is not sport sponsorships.”

Regarding Covid-19 restrictions and any modifications on their social media strategy the Marketing and Sponsorships Manager mentioned that social media turned into one of their main communication tools during the covid-19 period. He categorizes the covid-19 period into two main eras. Covid era 1(the very first hard restrictions) during which all of a sudden an unknown life threatening virus invaded our lives unexpectedly and the Greek government stopped all sport activities and championships including BasketLeague. The unprecedented total suspension of all sporting activities left them with no primary content to exploit. That was the most difficult period in the existence of their social media department since they had to create content-digital content- since there was no physical content and the actual games did not exist anymore! He actually underlined:

“In Covid era 1, we had to create digital content from scratch in order to take full advantage of all the assets and benefits of our sponsorship agreement and that was one of the greatest challenges we had to face and at the same time one of the most creative periods for us.”

In Covid era 2, according to the Manager, there was physical content (the actual games) but there were no fans' physical presence in all sport facilities in Greece. So there was no hospitality benefit for the organization as another important term in their sponsorship agreements. Furthermore, they still had to "remind" their presence and their sponsorship to their social media members. They had to successfully transfer the game and the "whole being in the facility experience" as well into the fan's hand through his mobile phone numerous times a day so that to keep him satisfied as well as get the maximum of the benefits of their sponsorship contract. Consequently, there was a quite large work overload to their social media team during Covid era 2 but not as much as Covid era 1 where mainly their social media team did all the work and tried to find creative solutions in order not to lose the communication with the community.

Moreover, he gave a thorough explanation on the important antecedents of customer engagement, which they reinforce through social media. They mainly use social media through their sport sponsorship agreements in order to increase the acquisition of new subscribers or followers as well as reinforce their pre-existent social media members' loyalty. Their organization being a betting company does not rely on its characteristics, one of which is easier customer engagement of pre-existent customers. On the contrary, they invest in brand loyalty. According to his words:

"Just as our customers are loyal to the sport of basketball or their favorite basketball team, the same way we want them to feel about our brand, which is sponsoring basketball. Our main goal is to increase brand loyalty of our brand within our existing customers in the geographical areas we are strategically aiming at. Another goal is to attract new customers from those certain geographical areas who have not yet been our clients."

Moreover, he explicitly analyzed the fact that for them engaged customers lead to loyal customers. If he had to prioritize the customer engagement antecedents, they are practically working with through their social media posts he would put first positive affect then team identification (or sport identification in our case of the league) and prosocial behavior and last basking on reflected glory. He further stated that:

"We are not the sponsor who will just rely on the actions of the sponsee. We do respect our sponsorship agreements and want the sponsees to respect all terms of the contracts

but we also work on our social media a lot and further exploit all the terms of the contract including the posts of the sponsee. In fact, during Covid-19 eras we had to work very hard on that... Awareness, recallness, improvement of brand perception, to make the fans of the sponsee to love you, acquisition, those are the objectives of all of our sponsorship deals.”

The technique mainly used to accomplish those goals is the use of giveaways. The manager explained that by creating and offering a unique experience to the customer his organization succeeds in covering all-important antecedents of customer engagement just because it is offering something unforgettable, something unique. According to the managers words:

“We mainly use giveaways. It is one of the most common yet successful practices all around the world. It is not something extremely innovative or new but it is the safest and the most efficient practice. It is all about investing in the fan’s love for his team or favorite athlete and creating unique experiences for him. For instance, we create contests and the winners have the chance to win a full zip signed by their favorite player with a personal dedication. This unique special gift increases brand loyalty and definitely provides us with new followers in our social media. In addition, of course by dragging attention to your social media in such a way you increase customer engagement by keeping close to you the customers for all other services you promote through your social as a company. Your customers actually systematically follow every post you make since you can provide a unique experience that your competitor cannot by having signed exclusive rights with your sponsorship partner.”

Furthermore, concerning the effects of customer engagement on the behavior of the consumer in the social media context and the processes that control this topic and gives the digits on this point, the manager stated that their social media campaign and the content on the social media as well as the entire marketing strategy is working on the following points: increase of key brand elements such as brand loyalty, brand awareness and brand image. But there is a focus just as the special nature of the organisation says. His organization is not a mass consuming products company like famous fizzy drinks or car companies, which could possibly use numbers such as increase of sales, purchase intention, or repeat purchase as Key Performance Indicators in relation to their social media marketing campaign. As we further clarified:

“We as an organization of course have in place certain metrics and processes. We use Key Performance Indicators KPI’s as well as Objective and Key Results OKR’s, but the nature of our organization, being a betting company, is completely different compared to companies from other industries. For instance, we use GGR and NGR as betting financial indicators but we cannot use that to see if our social media campaign is successful. We just use simple metrics like the increase of our fan base, the increase in our social media followers, social media metrics in order to enhance brand perception (positive perception) after the brand awareness and brand recallness steps which lead to engaged customers. However, purchase intention, referral intention and repeat purchases are KPI’s related to our sales department. For instance, when we have special offers for a certain game or special betting odds, those are very important KPI’s for our sales department but this information does not come to us at the end of the day. In the case of mass consuming products like famous fizzy drinks or car companies, someone could obviously use increase of sales or purchase intention or repeat purchase as Key Performance Indicators in relation to their social media marketing campaign. Our KPI’s and OKR’s are quite different from the mainstream mass products industries.”

Furthermore, due to the nature of their product there is an indirect connection between customer engagement indicators and sponsorship activation indicators. They do not have a direct link and indicators for those two in parallel. As he stated:

“Even though we wish to increase and reinforce customer engagement through certain elements of our sponsorship deals we keep those two sectors independent regarding the social media context. We will never communicate our actual product through social media with our sponsorship within the same social media content. Different posts refer to our sponsorship and completely different posts communicate an offer or a betting offer, which is our actual product. Coca –cola for instance (a completely different mass consuming product) could directly link those sectors and have indicators accordingly in the same post.”

As far as the relationship between sponsorship activation and consumer behavior and the certain techniques they use, the manager explained that they cannot predict consumer behavior by a successful sponsorship activation within a safe context, at least not in their kind of company. What they can predict or aim at is the increase of their social media members through a sponsorship. As he mentioned:

“For instance in our sponsorship in Atletico Mineiro in Brazil we had an increase of 45% in our social media followers in this certain geographical area. We can predict not the actual consumer behavior but the consumer intention, which is being made by our Business Intelligence department not us. This information comes to us by our Business Intelligence department once a month and I can then evaluate the impact of every social media campaign and adjust properly.”

Finally, he thoroughly explained that the only demographics they have access to is the geographical area of their social media followers when they make their first registration. In social media they use a holistic approach and they mainly count attracted viewers, reactions, hits, comments in each post and of course the numbers of their followers. The only input they have regarding their followers' age through their social media is the limit of 18 years old. As he further explained a disclaimer follows all of their social media competitions stating that the participant has to be over 18 years old to participate, following the Greek Legacy but they cannot control the validity of the digital individual statements in order to consider this demographic information. Of course, they do have all the demographics of their fans database but they have not ever cross checked with their social media followers in order to attain the rest of their followers demographics manually, since this would be very time-consuming with a very big effort procedure which would cost much more than they earn.

4.2.3 Comparison of Dyad-A results

In order to identify similarities and differences among the first two cases which I have dubbed Dyad-A, Basket League organizing authority and its major sponsor, this cross-case Analysis deploys interview-extracted result comparisons between the two parties below.

First fact that need to draw attention to, the interviewer included introitory questions in the begining of the interviews to understand the experience and skills of the organizations under research.

Secondly, though there is a continous interest to researches about social media marketing, using today festival term 'content' related to marketing. On this topic, for the literature review it is not clear to define social media marketing capability and results could be consider it as limited nature as restriction to examining social media

within a sport sponsorship context to find out consumers' perceptions of customer relationship management (CRM) – centric rationale for sport sponsorship and not gaining information about organization social media marketing capability.

The main focus of research is about consumer attitude and behavior in the social context of a social media without reviewing a firm's social media marketing capability and Covid-19 restrictions and their impacts in the background. Introductory results are shown below.

Both the organising body and its sponsored sport's body have been active in popular social media sites for the last 5 years (Facebook and Instagram mainly, featuring periodically their own YouTube channels, as well).

They both regarded the social media as a valuable and indispensable communication tool, which allows them to reach sponsorship agreements, especially in COVID time.

Organising committee is sponsored by a social media firm which employs at least three people per country it has branch in all of them in Charge of social media , all under the supervision of content media ?The organizing authority has two people in charge of the marketing strategy and are occupied with all marketing aspects including sport sponsorships, social media strategy, social media content creation, relationship marketing, website, press ect.

The sponsor of the organizing authority has been awarded numerous times in Sports Marketing and Sports Sponsorships Awards the past years and is continuously hiring staff in this direction.

The organizing authority has not allocated a budget for people involved only in a social media creative team.

Both entities have certain marketing-related restrictions varying according to the nature of their organizations.

For example, the official broadcaster has certain limitations on audios and videos of the League that the organising authority is not allowed to post, and sometimes

the private TV stations can shoot a short minute highlight during a League-broadcast game and broadcast earlier than the full time that the organising authority get back to the complete video. So that the looting opportunity has narrowed greatly. They never upload held or make reference to, or include any analysis, comment or critique of any member of its teams, the players, and any of its members. A post on certain players or teams could cause the organizing authority to be accused of making discriminations or partialities among their teams. Such content needs very careful design and social media strategy implementation for which the authority does not have sufficient resources. The very important component and heritage of an organizing authority of a League under the auspices of the Greek Basketball Federation is the official statistics. A unique exclusive element to be exploited through social media, which differentiates them and their social media strategy from other sporting organizations like its professional basketball clubs.

The sponsoring company does not produce a mass consuming product being what is considered to be called a traditionally mainstream sport sponsor. It is a gambling company, which means that in order to minimize the controversial history between sport and gambling, they aim to integrate into their marketing strategy as well as the social media strategy, corporate social responsibility in order to reinforce their relationship marketing. That is the reason that this certain sponsor implements two basic social media strategies with equal effort to both of them. They maximize the sponsorship agreements benefits through social media by sponsoring basketball league, basketball events and the three top basketball clubs, but also individual athletes' sponsorship agreements of less popular sports with the same efforts and passion like Greek athletes competing in the Olympics of Tokyo or in World Athletics Championships, for further enhancement of their social corporate responsibility. Finally, another important difference related to their respective industry is that they never communicate through their social media campaigns and sponsorship agreements metrics about sales increase, like a mass consuming products company could do, because this could cause reversed negative effects in terms of the cultivation of social responsibility.

For both organizations social media turned to be their main communication tool during the Covid-19 period. Sponsor A described two eras of Covid -19, each of them with different conditions and characteristics. Covid-era 1 during which there was an

official suspension of all professional or non-professional championships and Covid-era 2, during which championships restarted but with no fans attending on-site the games. Both organizations' social media strategies were adjusted accordingly to those unexpected and violently forced conditions. Sponsor A characterized those eras as a great challenge resulting in a very creative period for them whereas Sponsee A reported that they made adaptations but they were not really ready for that and that their reflexes were slow. Finally, both entities faced the challenge to create primary content that did not exist due to the suspension of sport activity in order to avoid losing communication within their communities.

Regarding factors connected to customer engagement in a social media context, Table 70 shows that they both value Positive Affect, Team Identification, and Prosocial Behavior as elements of great importance taken into account during the planning and the implementation of their social media strategies. A Covid related issue mentioned by the manager of the Basketball League Organizing Authority was that the increased mobility of foreign players of the teams jumping out and in from all Greek Teams throughout the Championship or its suspension during the Covid-restrictions period was a major problem in further investing in team identification and sustaining an active community. A nature of the company-related issue mentioned by Sponsor A was that they are very much aware that customer engagement leads to brand loyal customers. Even if their company has easier work in order to engage customers due to its "nature" and the providing services, customer engagement remains a very important factor for them, since the trend of last years is the "massive entrance" of gambling companies in the sport sponsorships international map and the competition within their industry remains high.

Table 69. Focus given on Factors connected to customer engagement in the social media context by sponsors and sponsees. Dyad A.

Sponsee-sponsor Dyad A	Organizing Authority of Basket League A	Sponsor A
Factors connected to customer engagement		

Positive affect	Major Focus	Major Focus
Team Identification	Major Focus	Major Focus
Performance Tolerance	No Focus	No focus
Basking on Reflected Glory	Minor Focus	No focus
Management Cooperation	No Focus	No focus
Prosocial Behavior	Major Focus	Major Focus

Furthermore, the Organizing Authority aims also at attaining new followers through the enhancement of those antecedents through social media. During Covid-19 their social media team worked out of the box, and went beyond the joint actions within the terms of the sponsorship agreement. They exploited certain exclusive rights, created content and modified their social media strategy to the direction of sustaining the community. Finally, successful investment in sport sponsorships for them means brand awareness, brand recallness, improvement of brand perception, customer acquisition and as the manager characteristically mentioned, “to make them love you”.

Finally, both organizations are mainly using giveaways as a method for activating the community within the social media context.

Regarding the consequences of customer engagement on consumer behavior and the extent to which this is a countable parameter of importance to the Organizing Authority and Sponsor A, both of the organizations suggested that they aim at customer engagement through their sponsorship agreements within the social media context in order to positively affect consumer behavior but they don’t have in place certain direct metrics on that.

In fact, they both highlighted that the predictions related to sponsorship activation (that is, to increase brand loyalty, brand awareness and brand image association) are defined in the sponsorship agreement. They agreed that one of the most

important goals of the sponsorships, especially within a social media context, is the opportunity to activate their sponsorships (more precisely, they must do it and do it everywhere), because the more customers are engaged, the more chances to buy the products they have. The giveaways used within social media context and their exploitation as a sponsorship activation tool, are apparently an almost endless machine to work on the engagement of followers, who all want to buy merchandising products to receive ‘a bit of glory’. Indirectly metrics related to some kinds of consumer behaviour (purchase intention, referral intention, repeat purchases) offer solid evidence, but they are not the numbers of the Marketing Department. The Sales Departments send them to communicate about what they do, and the Marketing Department can only thing about: the Marketing Department can only estimate some fanbases, reactions, etc.

Furthermore, Sponsor A, belonging to the gambling industry, does not use or promote his sales achievements through social media as a company within the sponsorship activation process like other mass consuming products companies, like a company of Fizzy drinks would do on a post or a social media competition. In addition, the Organizing Authority’s manager highlighted the fact that sometimes even though the clear social media initiatives are concretely written in the sponsorship contracts, the sponsors consider them to be of minor importance and sometimes they are not implemented. Finally, the sponsor A manager mentioned their Business Intelligence Department is responsible for collecting numbers on the purchase intention but those are working in parallel with the metrics of the Marketing Department and metrics such as increase in social media followers, numbers of posts, likes, shares, reactions, comments, people reached, reposts etc.

Finally, both the members of dyad-A, explained that even though demographic characteristics are valuable input to all different aspects and processes of a sport entity, there isn’t in place a structured process to acquire demographic information of their followers within the social media.

4.2.4 Case 3 Basketball Club-Dyad B

Basketball Club B is a new club in the first division of the Basketball Championships in Greece but has good results. The parent athletic club was established back in 1985, whereas the men’s basketball section of the club – known only today as PAOK – has been participating in the Greek Fantestis (local/regional) and B (second

local) leagues throughout the years. Initially, PAOK basketball qualified for a level of Greek national league classification in 2013, and after that, in two of the following three years skipped the national one to classify directly to the first national division on a professional level (as we will call it). So, it made that debut for the season 2016-17 and was the first Greek provincial team in that time span to qualify to the league's finals and enter in the Greek League's playoff finals. Furthermore, during the next season it entered for the first time in its history to a European-wide club competition (through the European secondary FIBA Champions League, to be more specific) and got to the Round of 16 (under that cycle of years we call it the Euro Cup). That was the name it was given by the Turkish owners back in 1960 – after one of the Titans that stole the fire from the gods and gave it for the benefit of the humans. Because he is a Greek, one of the Titans. And part of the Greek Mythology... He goes up fast in the re-birth of the Greek basketball in such period of time.

A marketing manger and also a sponsorships manger talking about a social media which is developing last 6 years as he said: Indeed those 6 years our relationship with social media I would say it is a real one, like a real engagement with social media, a proper social media strategy applied in an appropriate tool.

He said that before those 6 years their relationship with social media was through our partners, was very basic, was very small at that time, and they try at that period to develop our own social media landscape as a social media as a powerful tool like all the powerful social media marketing tool so before we have 6 years the relationship was open and that is it.

From that time, he continued, annually the relationship is getting bigger, bigger, bigger, bigger. &

They also argued that the last 2 years is the fastest one because their social media as a powerful marketing and sponsorship activation tool is multiplying, from one year to another, one year to another, five hundred percent last 2 years, as a social media tool to market, to post, as you see last year with a one million like events, and this year with the same acc using social media with seven millions of likes, seven million shares, seven million tag, seven million that is the increase of this last 2 years.

He said, very appreciated, very admired, big powers, big increase social media in that sector, and they try always to move and evolve with everything.

He called the period of the pandemic-19 “also in social media as a milestone-period for this marketing tool”.

As he characteristically said:

COVID-19 restrictions measures pushed a bit more to that direction – when one of the main means of communication is social media and you are fully or partially cut off from the community, then you have no alternative but to foster the use of the tool. It is not the best way to understand the high value of the tool as a marketing element but it happened and we lived this globally. In fact, sponsors demanded from us to use as much as possible social media in order to replace elements that sustained and enhanced a continuing sponsorship contract – actually, the existence of a decent social media strategy became a must for all new sponsorship partners. For this reason, COVID made a very large percentage of the communication to be online, good social media strategies translated into brand social media KPIs of the sport sponsorship contracts turned to be one of the bases of the success of sport sponsorship agreements globally having direct effects on the brand’s strength and equity. In parallel YouTube and video productions were also an important branch of the social media strategy since social media can communicate feelings but videos can also communicate language, attitude, visions, future and past. A video is faster, it is very interactive and it can capture the viewer’s attention. Photos or texts with the use of “scroll” or “swipe” in social media have to be very carefully designed in order to attract viewers. According to his words:

“It is all very fast and when everyone in the industry had to use social media as its main communication tool we had to gain competitive advantage. So a lot of videos were produced and used in our posts in order to capture our fans’ eyes and minds through YouTube as well. And then we had another problem. Before COVID good programmers of websites were very hard to find. After COVID entered our lives, we had to thrive to find the best good film maker who can properly communicate the character of our organization... This turned out to be now the profession that the whole marketing industry is looking for...”

Moreover, those last 6 years they realized that their social media strategy needs to be transformed towards a deeper understanding of their target groups, so as an organization they modified their internal processes and focused deeply in data analysis of their target groups with google analytics, Facebook analytics, YouTube analytics etc. They think according to the manager that they must be fully aware of where the receivers of their messages live, what they like, what they think in order to design the correct posts, videos and messages. An example of special social media strategy modification during covid-19 for them related to their analytics was that they decided to move to a more women friendly design of some of their posts, videos etc. In particular, with their presence in the top division their traditional target group was males with age range 16-55 years old. There was a strategic decision before Covid-19 and only one year after competing in the top basketball league to aim for a “whole family, kids friendly” approach and attain more fans from a larger age range and from non-traditional basketball fans market segments. However, Google analytics showed them that during Covid-era, a high percentage of the Greek population and even larger percentage of women made searches on sport, fitness and health related issues. As the manager explicated:

“This very important element drove us to the decision of further enhancing our fan base with women and move one-step forward and beyond to the whole family approach without of course abandoning it but by complementing it. Moreover, those decisions were also affected by our sport sponsorship strategy 6 years ago by approaching sponsors of non-traditionally sport sponsorship involved organizations like an educational organization who would totally fit to our vision of investing to the next generation through sport and education following our motto “better athlete, better person”. This way each piece of the puzzle contributed to its perfection.”

In addition, sport sponsorship activation happens through their social media by mainly fostering Team Identification, Prosocial Behavior and Positive Affect. The manager was very strict when he was asked for customer engagement and loyalty in order to enhance brand strength.

“We don’t talk about a brand in our case. We are only talking about our love mark. This is what we want our fans to think when we cross their minds. This basketball club is not just a “brand” for us; it is a “love mark”. We want the fans to say this is MY

beLOVED team no matter what. Our official hashtag is “Our Powerful Family” and our motto which we totally believe is “We are more than just a team”. Without people loving you, following you as a family you cannot move forward in the sports industry. This love relationship worked vice-versa too. The organization and its athletes cannot live without its fans, something that was also researched and scientifically proven during the Covid era. Athletes’ sport performance was also negatively affected because there were no on-site fans to contribute to the creation of the game atmosphere, which is one of sports industry's most powerful competitive advantages. Finally, we totally turn customer relationship into a loving sport community-family through our social corporate responsibility project NOUS which actually is linked to certain sponsorships and terms in sponsorship contracts and is aiming at cultivating both mind and bodies of our young athletes by further enhancing the feeling of happiness and joy of being a part of this family”.

Noticeably enough, according to the manager, performance tolerance is of no importance to them at all. In fact, they do not consider it when designing social media content for sponsorship activation and they do not aim at cultivating such antecedent in any context of their marketing strategy. On the contrary, they believe that losing or winning should not affect at any stage the instant communication of the community they are building or the promotion of their love mark-brand. A mother or a father as he characteristically mentioned would never reduce the amount of love for his child no matter if it won or lost. This genuine family love mark is the one they cultivate within the community and it has no connection with performance tolerance. Having lost or won is not connected in any way to making a post for sport sponsorship activation. The manager characterized this approach as a very old one.

Furthermore, basking on reflected glory has no meanings for them in the meantime as well as the manager explained that since our organisation is a very young company with a few years of life in the Greek Professional Basketball industry there is not much history we could bask on reflected glory compared to other companies of multiyear existence in the life of Greek Professional Basketball. Consequently, although they could build up this antecedent, they decided not to spend time on it as with a very impressive but short history in the highest league of Greek Professional Basketball League.

Identification of human consequences of customer engagement towards the consumers behaviours in social media and the process of Culture control which provide numbers is given by the manger through the described metrics analytics process that he/she used to get the trend for purchase intention in context of social media. Namely they use data analysis, google analytics, Facebook analytics, YouTube analytics, Joomla, number of followers, number of visitors, reactions etc. The connection of those metrics with for instance purchase intention as a component of consumers' behavior was presented to us by the example of counting visits when a post for whole year ticket members' sales is on social media, in relation to numbers from tickets sales and especially to the whole year ticket members. At the same time, it was underlined that for this kind of post special care is being given in the design of the content so as not only to promote the ticket sales but also promote the major sponsor with an engaging way for the follower. He characteristically stated:

“We can count trends, or thresholds not correlation of actual numbers but we can get the big idea. We also count likes, shares, interactions, visitors, followers, people reached on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and websites. We also cross check with indicators received from our merchandise and online stores. “

He also highlighted the importance of the love mark approach in the sponsorship activation within the social media context for brand equity. He specifically explained:

“We do all those metrics to get that trend for brand loyalty, [brand] awareness, image association and engagement As I come back to the love marks instead of the brand, I should say that we still talk with our wife in the house at home even if you abused her, we still talk with her as a family. That is the whole conversation in all our communication [process] we want the engagement that the relationship is built in the Greek Family for lifetime ...all the element of the brand activate [us] our members, community members and members of our family and make it highly engaged. You always allocate resource even with purchase intention for your family ... you also always support your family friends, the partner of the family, the sponsors in every way ... we are all a Great Greek Family ... this is what we want them to feel ... Community is the mega trend. A lot of brands lost their communities especially without the physical presence that covid caused and this is a big lesson for all of us. Just investing into strong

brands and their elements without the bonds that actually can keep a family together even in distance should not be the case in the sport industry. Sport organizations that had worked on community building professionally came stronger out of the hard Covid Restrictions Era.”

He further explained that they constantly build their community and communicate within their big family at least 2-3 times per day through posts on a regular basis with this frequency being the minimum unrelated to which period of the championship is running. They also research all daily social media trends and in case they can connect to a social media trend they take advantage of it (like a post for an athlete not necessarily from basketball when the Olympic Games were on). On the other hand, if there is a huge viral post related to basketball like a post of Yannis Anetokoumpo being awarded as MVP in the NBA, they do not even make a post because no one will ever see it during that day. In addition, if there is a very important non-sport related social post, negatively or positively important for the country they also try to link somehow with it and not act like living exclusively in their sport bubble just to promote sales for themselves and their sponsors and not care about the real everyday life of their community.

The manager and his team made certain adaptations during Covid-19 period. In particular, their post frequency was less than 2-3 posts per day because unfortunately there was no content for them to communicate. The unstable ground of an unknown future was a very confusing period for the international sport industry and a lot of social media strategies were never adjusted or modified since management could not give any guidelines for planning. But that was an international effect. All people lost their “third space” during the hard covid-era, and that was a fact.

He further stated that the relationship between customer engagement and sponsorship activation particularly in the social media environment is very crucial and it not only works in one direction , it works both ways, this; is the reasons why in all their sponsorships contract they request for promoting actions which market business attitude, mindset, values, mentality . They are working day and night to think of different ideas for each sponsor depending on their profiles in order to achieve successful sponsorship activations . Regards to customer engagement and sport sponsorship relationship he posited :

Our sponsors milk our database but we can't milk them in return. And in all our sponsorship contracts we try to utilize social media as well in order to beautify these sponsorships but it's the sporting organization, it's the sponsored sporting organization that usually constructs this and promotes this in social media. At least the kind of sponsorship activation through social media, I can't ever see, I don't remember a sponsee who was willing to give the fingers needed to activate sponsorship, to cooperate with the sporting club in sponsorship activation through cooperative social media actions. We invent the whole process of design and do all this and the sponsee gets the advantage through our social...So there is loyalty from us to our sponsees but there is not the same loyalty from the sponsee to the sporting organisation at least not in sponsorship activation through social media, at least not in Greece. All over the place, a sponsee feels like a proud sponsor of a basketball club whereas in Greece the sponsee feels like the basketball club is obliged to provide him with sponsorship benefits because he is a good customer and not because we are in partnership. And no partner will ever feel that he is the one being obliged to give something to his partner. Only a few smaller Greek companies whose actually main target group is youngsters have the know-how and are seeking for sport sponsorship in which they can also cooperate and be actively involved in the sponsorship activation process on a two-way basis."

The manager explained that sponsorship activation can lead to knowledge of consumer behavior within the social media context but not in the sense of strict indicators but by following the mega trends and through them acquire an understanding of the consumer response. According to him, there is not a success recipe to give to someone on social media especially in this present unpredictable changing environment. The lesson learned for them was that for the first time in the history of their BC, last year, they started a cooperation with an external company of Digital Marketing to invest in this trend of the sport industry worldwide. As indicated by his words:

"The very important thing is to be able to understand in time your next moves in terms of sponsorship activation and consumer behavior. After the hard covid era we realized that we need to invest more into digital marketing and that we needed a group of experts with deeper know-how. In fact, we invested in the best available digital

marketing company in Greece as one of our strategic moves. Our communication team within our organization is composed of 5 people, two of us working on social media nevertheless we thought we needed support and we made that extra step.”

According to the manager purchase intention can be predicted through the antecedents of customer engagement and sponsorship activation in theory but they didn't have this input during covid in order to share it. Nevertheless, their basic input is analytics as pre-mentioned. Another very important aspect highlighted by the manager was the interpretation of the analytics in order to “read” the trends correctly. He actually gave a detailed example as follows:

“Analytics is a very big discussion.... the correct interpretation of data is of utmost importance...numbers don't always tell the truth...I will give you an example. Think of an NBA game and NBA Analytics and try to do the breakdown of analytics. Analytics are very important and difficult too. The hard part is not the collection of the numbers but its analysis. For instance, during a basketball game if a player shoots 100 times 3 point shots in a whole game even if he succeeds only in 30 of it, he would have gathered 90 points and would have much more possibilities to win the match. If the same player shoots only close or under the basket 100 times he has to succeed in 45 shots in order to win the game. Pure analytics related to numbers would just predict that you should go with 3-point shots only. But is this interpretation of analytics correct? If for instance the opponent team has extremely tall defensive players what strategy should you go for? Can just the numbers of the analytics drive you to just shoot all those 3-point shots? Do they give a correct prediction? What I do here is to support my team to “read” or if you want to interpret our social media analytics correctly. This is another huge sector of major importance and yes; with this approach the metrics can be taken under careful consideration during planning or evaluation phase of sponsorship activation posts for brand-connected fans. In conclusion, analytics can give you trends if you are well experienced and trained in “reading” or interpreting them but they cannot provide you with pure indicators like other departments within an organization. As a result, they can complement other performance indicators within a sports organization.”

He also highlighted some nuances of sponsoring activation on social media to help us interpret trends into purchase intention. For example, he gave us examples of giveaways and design/quality of post. He explained one patisserie company sponsored post like this:

I will give an example for a pastry company who sponsored us with the purpose to increase its sales: Every week we had an online voting competition promoted mainly by our social media where the five highlights of our matches were backed by the certain company, and, at the end of the year, two of the participants would get a big raffle by the pastry company and merchandise products after a draw. Had our giveaway been a T-shirt a small package of 10 pastry and chocolate croissants, as they initiated first, this by itself diminishes the value and the self-perception of our club. If you're interested in a market segment of consumers that are very excited and eager to interact with you through the championship numerous times, and you're only planning to pay them with a T-shirt and a small package of 10 pastries and chocolatinas as giveaways for a social media campaign, this by itself diminishes the worthiness of your brand. Also, how can you predict for anyone who buys your products the purchase intention this individual might have for products consumed by consumers of this same segment you're actually targeting? We try to be very careful when it comes to the giveaways too, and in collaboration with our partners for the sake of both of us. The giveaway of a social media campaign to be only a T-shirt a small package of 10 pastries and chocolatinas is not an adequate safe and careful design. This type of sponsorship activation initiatives does not work for us.

Additionally, they have no access to demographic information on fans through social media. The manager continued: For some of them, social media are their 'third space'. Of course, many enjoy social media because they have the option of anonymity but there are other people who publish their entire lives and identity [on the platform]. There is tremendous potential there but you can't take into account the personal information and demographics in the way social media now operate because all this information is not reliable in terms of demographics.

4.2.5 Case 4 College of Education (Sponsor of BC)-Dyad B

This is the biggest private, Transnational Education college in Greece and a partner of a state UK university programme provider offering bachelor, masters, MBA programmes at seven campuses nationwide. It was founded in 1982 and is a founding

member of a supra-organisation umbrella, the largest Greek private postsecondary educational group (more than 25.000 students nationwide). It is accredited by the BAC (British Accrediation Council) UK, certifying it a higher educational institution abroad offering qualifications within the British system of semesters and credits.

The Marketing Responsible of the college and Communications Manager characterized her organization as a very active organization in social media holding a 12 years' presence in all kinds of social media from the very early years of this social media revolution as a marketing tool in Greece. She further stated that it is one of the first Greek private educational institutions systematically using YouTube 8 years ago. The educational organization is holding accounts in all popular Greek Social Media including Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Twitter. In the last 6 years, they have adopted a systematic increased use of social media as one of its main powerful communication tools and Covid-19 restrictions played a key-role towards that direction. One employee (social media expert) within the organization mainly deals with social media but elite students of the Marketing Faculty of the College periodically support his work during the time of their placements.

Regarding the effects of Covid-19 in their sponsorships within the social media context, she explained that as an educational organization they were quite familiarized with the digital world as an educational provider of distance learning bachelor and master degrees in comparison to companies from other industries. Not only their organization but also their target group (higher education students or provisional higher education students) was familiar with the digital world and the operation of the organization did not have any difficulties in handling Covid-19 consequences. Nevertheless, organization of on-site events, on-site conferences, sponsorships and mainly sport sponsorships was the sector that was affected the most. As she explained:

“Even though our organization is very active in building sponsorship partnerships, we made a strategic decision to get involved into sport sponsorship a few years ago. The main reason was the marketing approach of the sports club's people that was very close to our values. It is a Basketball Club with strong orientation to family and education, a very innovative approach for Greece and a very attractive approach for our organization. Even though sport was one of the most suffering industries during Covid-19, we are proud to say that the criteria we set in order to get involved and start the cooperation with this Basketball Club were correct, since they handled the Covid-19 period very professionally and came to us with a lot of plan B so as to minimize the

loss of our investment. Of course, I have to admit that we are not extremely competent in the sport sponsorships so the Basketball Club prepared the proposals and made all the main efforts as well as the modifications when Covid-19 stroke sport.”

Turning to positive affect, identification and prosocial behaviour, which are the key components of customer engagement we target from a marketing perspective in general, they are still highly relevant in the context of a sport sponsorship as well. For example, the manager of the educational organisation clearly explained:

Sponsor and sponsee fit was also crucial for us to be on board with this sponsorship agreement. From our side, we were very proud to advertise through our various social media, the 'Euro league Basketball Next Generation Tournament', as the Official Educational Sponsor of the 'Euro league Basketball Next Generation Tournament' - the title organised by the Basketball Club. Parallel to the activities of the 'Euro league Basketball Next Generation Tournament', we successfully organised three workshops, entitled 'Next Gen Talks', during which our Academics' main aim is to go closer to sports and make participants understand the multiple benefits, but also invite them to be even more actively engaged in sport activities, by improving their knowledge, through the creation of an imaginary dialogue on the topics of 'stress management and efficacy for athletes', 'Sports nutrition and the better performance of athletes' and finally "Easy tricks for your best game". Participants and their families had enjoyed the tournament and its parallel sessions. Moreover, as already mentioned, all this information and more, we promoted them through our social media. What derives from that kind of sponsor-sponsee fit is that we could better invest in customers' identification and prosocial behaviour. It is not only about the Basketball Club but all of us together, in this big family, putting our effort in the same good cause with the same values. In our educational organisation, Sports and the values that derives from it, are something that it is for us an extremely important pillar. That is the reason we could also support organisations, initiatives and actions that has Sports as a main issue and should they be promoted. Our participation in the 'BC' as a Major Education Sponsor, is something that happened, given that the Club Management Team perception and also the values that it holds regarding the role of Education. On this background, our cooperation is multidimensional, jointly implementing a series of actions with both educational and social impact.

The manager also said that the buying behaviour (purchase intention, referral intention and repeat purchases) of their clients cannot be predicted through their social media number of following. The main comment they made about their social media content and to the "nature" of their organisation was that their social media mostly consists of posts related to educational context. They are not going to reproduce the posts of Basketball Club though their name exists in most of the BC's posts, but they are going to share or create the content when there is an event related to more educational or social context. Therefore, they could not have input about their own social media's content nor any metrics regarding purchase intention, neither. Every year, their economic department alone gather the indicator related to purchase, and they will make cross analysis with the number of total spent from sponsorship or the purchasing response from their cross-analysis we come with geo-targeted sponsorship partnership, and all these metrics have no connection at all with social media metrics, especially sports sponsorship.

Additionally, as far as sponsorship activation and customer engagement is concerned, she claimed that sponsorships are of no value if they are not adequately activated. They allocate resources in creating events with special design for actions engaging the participants in order to activate sponsorships by active participation of their existing customers or of their new target groups. For instance, they have sponsored the official awards focusing exclusively on initiatives and individuals who foster Safety Excellence & Sustainable Shipping, one of the major events of the shipping industry the Career 4 Sea Virtual Forum, the International Athens "Play on Early Education" Conference, a theatrical performance of their Msc students of Drama School in cooperation with the leading British University of East London, the TAG Heuer Excellence Awards by Metropolitan are another important sponsorship partnership, they organized active participation in the authentic Marathon in Greece, they have sponsored the Open Chess Championship of Thessaly etc. Although they are very competent in sponsorship activation during onsite events there is not within their social media such an approach in order to enhance the sport sponsorship activation within the social media context. The Basketball Club is mainly responsible for those actions.

Moreover, despite this sport sponsorship is one of the most successful sponsorship that organization achieved, and this has been proven by the organisation its KPI's. They've even reached the sponsorship activation, in the same way as

increased the consumer behaviour, because they did a hard work on creating a strong brand, but since within social media marketing efforts are done only by Basketball Team, only social media analytics show that they have a good conversion from followers but nothing more than this, so there is no way how they can analyse the strong correlation between social media and good purchase intention. As we can conclude, the answer to the question of potential analysis of conversion of purchase intention of consumers by any of the two antecedents of customer engagement and sponsorship activation could be yes, as the manager explained in detail:

“Yes, a number of 57.458 followers only in our Facebook account is revealing increased brand awareness within the social media context. Our social media analytics of reactions, shares, likes, posts, etc. can definitely provide us with information of general intention. However, especially in the case of sport sponsorships our posts are very precise with education-related content so we cannot count on those numbers to evaluate purchase intention. The number of our sponsorships and the design of events to reassure active participation to the direction of sponsorship activation is existence and we do get the general idea, the general intention by the engagement of our followers within the social media context but for all of our sponsorships.”

Finally, they have a very well organized customers’ database with all the demographics needed to support their marketing strategy but they don’t have or acquire such information from their social media. As the manager said:

“The main goal is to attract them through social media which is a very powerful marketing tool and then acquire their demographics into our customer database, or potential customers’ database through other procedures until they finally become our customers”.

4.2.6 Comparison of Dyad-B results

With the purpose of to reveal the siminaliarities and dissimilarities caused in the two next cases, which we define as Dyad-B, Leading Basketball Club of the China’s candidate and number sponsor of the top division, through a cross-case analysis that overviews in a general way, what we have extracted from each of the interviewee of either the club or their venerated sponsor below (Bold or Italics appear only in original version).

Some interesting results showing up from the introductory questionnaire that was used to screen which organizations we chose to interview, verify their expertise and accumulative experience and the COVID-19 effect on sports sponsorship, is how this sport sponsorship dyad differs from the mainstream sport sponsorships that had been connected to the literature. The sponsee, according to the first impression, is a few years old Basketball Club participating in the Professional Top Division Basket League, while it is described as a “Greek phenomenon” Basketball Club with the level of its success in such a short period of time and a significant fan base nationally, having already started its fan base abroad, already a quarter finalist of the Euro Cup in the short history of its existence. Furthermore, its sponsor does not come from the so-called traditionally involved sport sponsorship industries sector. It is an educational private institution of higher education, which is not involved in college sports and is widely known as one of the leading private higher education institutions in Greece cooperating with numerous universities of Europe in a wide range of scientific fields.

Both of the organizations are having an over-6-years active presence in popular social media in Greece, mainly Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Twitter. In fact, the educational institution is holding a 12 years’ active presence in social media with a large number of followers.

Both of them describe social media as a very helpful and valuable communication tool especially in Covid-19 period for their sponsorship agreements.

The sponsor of the Basketball Club has rich experience in sponsorships and social media sponsorships activation but little experience in sport sponsorships. There is one person exclusively handling social media within the organization and elite students of the college support his work through placements. The social media content of their organization is mainly educational and they do not exploit all of the sponsorship activation actions through the basketball club’s social media. They prefer to benefit from all the actions being made in the basketball club’s social media.

The Basketball Club occupies 5 people in the marketing department and two of them work on social media and sport sponsorships etc. But they have recently made a cooperation with a social media experts communication-digital marketing agency for further exploitation of this important communication tool.

The Basketball Club in terms of social media strategy and sponsorship activation described Covid-19 restrictions period as a period of major modifications and adaptations, with huge efforts from them, but all of the involved personnel also characterized it as a very productive and creative period for them in order to overcome the challenge. The digital insight on the other hand, which is the educational institution itself (Figure 4) is more of a soft bank due to its way of communicating and sponsoring activation that I don't think this period can be seen as a hard period for the communication of the community inside a digital content like maintaining social media accounts, as the digital insight and its audience are well educated in distance learning and digital tools usage from a young age, so the communication of the community inside a pure digital content like sustaining social media accounts will not be that massive of a shift for it.

Moreover, the educational institution clarified that almost all of the activities needed for the sponsorship proposal and almost all the efforts and efforts needed for the sponsorship activation inside the virtual lifestyle of social media are mainly from the Basketball Club because they have no expertise at all in sport sponsorship.

The Basketball Club manager about Covid-19 sounded how the demand for content appeared via video productions as a social media content as a probably an unique sudden huge movement of social media communication as a business or marketing tool. He tracked also how the quality of a great filmmaker become number one ranked profession within the social media marketing industry. Both from the organisations sounded the resources of adaptability and agility as extremely important when handling sport sponsorship or social media masterplans especially in a non-expected circumstance such as Covid 19. Another factor of success during this sport sponsorship in such a challenging period as described by both organizations was the sponsor-sponsee fit. The Basketball Club is an organization having built its name and values on the ancient Greek mythology supporting it with many initiatives connected to the ancient Greek philosophy about investing in cultivating both bodies and minds through sports and education for the creation of better societies. The educational organization is a qualitative provider of higher education courses highly regarded in its respective industry, who wishes to be close to the average household, to the Greek

Family by providing a wide variety of universities of a wide financial cost range internationally so that more candidates can gain access to education for a better world. Additionally, it offers a lot of degrees related to sports science. This sponsor-sponsee fit and the strong brand connection between them facilitated the communication with the community as well as the adaptation of their SM strategy in a smoother way within the family feeling they have been cultivating during those years of partnership.

Both of the organizations invest mainly in team identification, prosocial behavior and positive affect for customer engagement through sponsorship activation whereas the manager of the BC who actually guides the educational organization within the social media context underlined that brands should be love marks for their fans or customers. And this is a priority when designing social media content for a sponsorship's term within the contract. Several examples of certain initiatives were provided by both organizations focusing on team identification, prosocial behavior and positive affect promoted through social media. The importance given to the factors connected to the customer engagement in a social media context by the members of sponsorship dyad B is presented in Table 71.

Table 70. Focus given to Factors connected to customer engagement in the SM by sponsors and sponsees. Dyad-B.

Sponsee-sponsor Dyad B	Basketball Club	Sponsor B
Factors connected to customer engagement		
Positive affect	Major Focus	Major Focus
Team Identification	Major Focus	Major Focus
Performance Tolerance	No Focus	No focus
Basking on Reflected Glory	No Focus	No focus
Management Cooperation	No Focus	No focus

Prosocial Behavior	Major Focus	Major Focus
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Regarding the consequences of customer engagement on consumer behavior and the extent to which this is a countable parameter of importance to the Basketball Club and its sponsor, both of the organizations suggested that they aim at customer engagement through their sponsorship agreements within the social media context in order to positively affect consumer behavior but all the metrics mainly provide them with trends not with certain numbers. But they both receive certain numbers from different departments each within their organization related for instance to sales and they compare them with their metrics. This process provides them short term and long term guidance.

As the manager of The Basketball Club states, in the sponsorship contract ‘detailed forecast is made about sponsorship activation that would lead to increased loyalty, awareness of the brand and its brand image association.’ All the sponsorship activation events and/or initiatives that they design are activities that demonstrate business attitudes, mind-sets, values and mentality of their organisation and the organisations of their sponsors. The manager emphasises that the sponsors are the ones who largely utilise their database, not the other way around.

For both of them, analytics can provide mega trends of consumer behavior through sponsorship activation within the social media context but according to the Basketball Club manager the key of success is not the quantity of analytics an organization acquires but the ability to interpret those analytics. He also suggested that the quality of the designed actions for sponsorship activation within the social media context can also affect the metrics-analytics as well as their interpretation. That is a basic factor of success according to the manager of the Basketball Club.

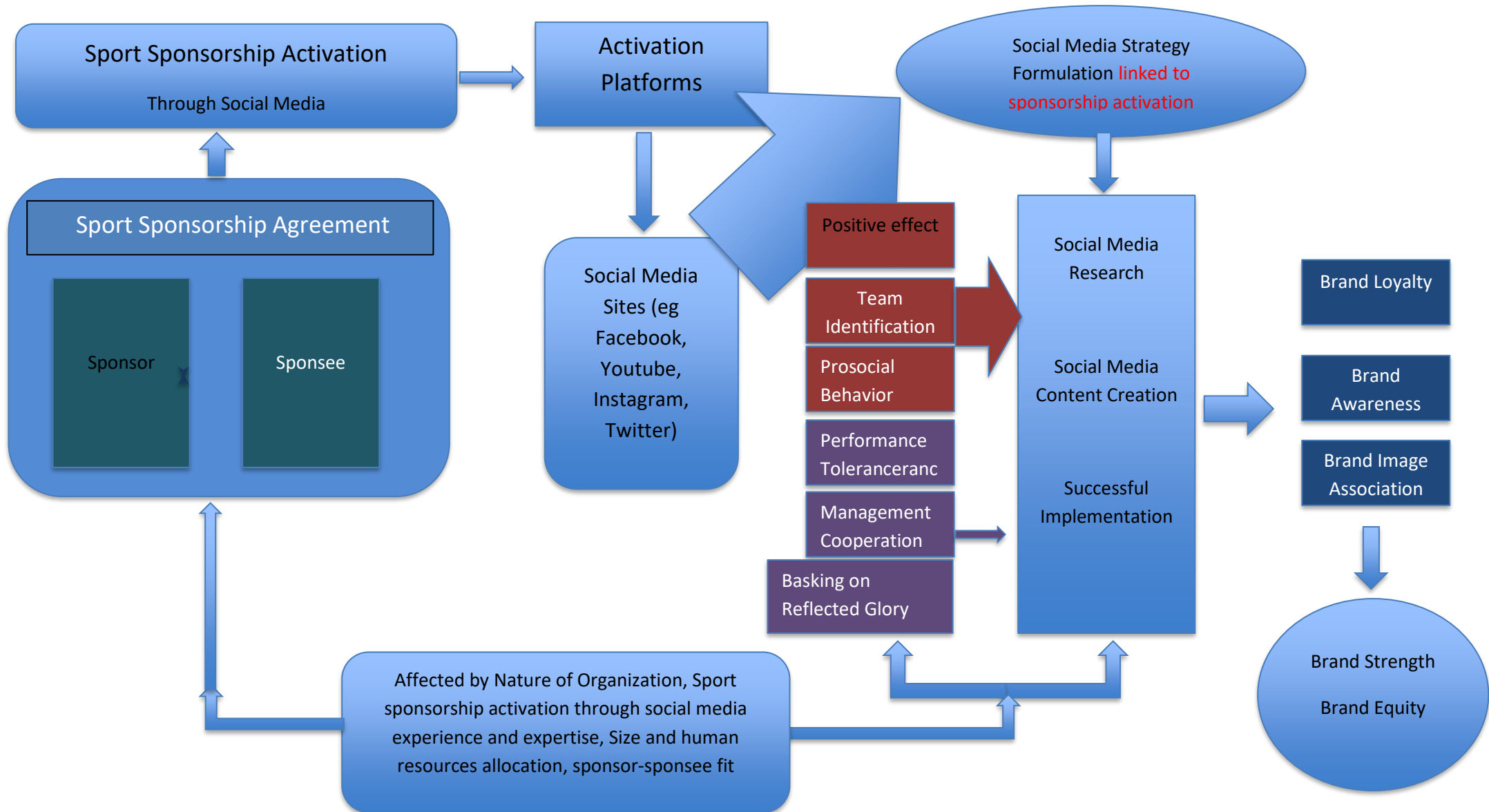
Finally, both the members of dyad-B, suggested that even though demographic characteristics are valuable input to all different aspects and processes of a sport entity or an educational institution, there isn’t in place a structured process to acquire demographic information of their followers within the SM but the demographics of their data fan base and data customer base are the data driving them to design their social media strategy for sponsorship activation and customer engagement. Moreover,

the manager of the educational institution explained that they cannot directly attain demographics of their followers through their social media but they aim to acquire those demographics through carefully designed sponsorship-linked events and initiatives included in their social media or the Basketball Club's social media accordingly.

4.2.7 Results of 4 Case Studies

Total results of the 4 case studies as examined in their sponsorship dyads regarding social media sport sponsorship activation for customer engagement and its impact on brand equity are depicted in Figure Ai.

Figure Ai. Sport Sponsorship Activation for Customer Engagement and its impact on brand equity through social media (*author's own construction*)



4.3 Discussion on Quantitative and Qualitative Results

Now, the social platforms are definitely a very common part of the lives of consumers that are ever more impulsive to be socially involved in social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, and others).

Organizations / managements are more sensitive to the importance of online marketing. They invest a lot of money to implement and develop online marketing (Weinberg & Pehlivan, 2011).

The benefits of communication technologies benefits growths (eg, efficiency and ease trading in information, more enriched and more participatory communication format and challenging one absolutely). With arrival of social media the benefits are even more evident because:

- the consumers can communicate each other and transfer information between them more efficient and timely way than in the past so they can even express their impression about any product and service before to buy it
- they can also place any message practically an instant without waiting and can have and like/share information coming from other consumers.. Therefore we can state that the way we choose to arrange us along to the purchase becomes more under the control of the consumers themselves who more and more act under the influence of Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Youtube and other popular platforms.

Nowadays some situations connected to the multiple use of social media (consuming, posting, liking, sharing in a second time) are possible but before it was more implausible. At present the way we choose to organise and come along to the purchase could be more influenced by the social effects with the consumers more strongly bonded than what is proposed by the business / organizations to promote the products / services (Berthon et al., 2012). In the international literature we can read now hundreds of studies about social media in general and in particular. We have already several researches to show the importance of social media in global perspective but in sports marketing in particular. Sponsorships are the main source of revenue for the larger unions both domestically and internationally. The

purpose of this work is to investigate in a dual-directions path from both the fans' and the sponsorship dyads' perspectives, the attitude of a well-known basketball club and a basketball federation towards the institution of sports sponsorship activation through social media, as well as how this affects their fans' purchasing behavior. Furthermore, the lack of such an approach in international sport sponsorship literature including cross analyzing both fans and sport sponsorship dyads perspectives under the same research field makes it unique. In particular, this work aims to identify the approach of different sport organizations and sponsors towards customer behavior through the lens of sponsorship activation for customer engagement within the social media and their effects in purchase intention for both sponsors and sponsees as well as detect differentiations and similarities among them, if any in comparison to their fans perspectives. In addition, the importance of the research that preceded it lies in the fact that given the adverse economic conditions that our country is undergoing the last years and the Covid-19 crisis that modified the global sport, deep research was made by the researcher, taking into account the degree of sponsorship withdrawal. Additionally, the attempts to overcome those challenges were investigated "putting under the microscope" ways that sport sponsorships stayed alive and activated, the ways that communities stayed digitally alive and how sport sponsorship affected the buying behavior of sports fans or not in the cases in which there was in place a proper marketing strategy design and implementation. Those are important factors and lessons covering all kinds of circumstances and kinds of organizations influencing business decision-making and can provide guidance to the organizations who invest in sport sponsorship.

Unlike all the other tools of external communication to the end user, sport sponsorship develops much faster, having numerous reasons for this, which have already been considered earlier in this work. The main one, however, seem to be an increasing media coverage of sporting events. The possibilities for a sports fan to use the media are documented almost in an unhalky way, and this has definitely defined the way the institution of sponsorship developed. It seems that digital television and the Internet are setting completely new rules to sport sponsorship and to the firms which choose this way of communication with their purchasing public should respond to the needs of the modern method of communication through a use of modern technics as soon as possible.

However, Sport Sponsorship development as a marketing tool was further impacted after covid-19 pandemic and gained a colossal lesson for all sport managers and marketers around the globe. Sport sponsorship and sport sponsorship activation will not be the same after covid-19 pandemic. Covid-19 pandemic impacted sport as much as any other industry. Governing bodies, sporting organisations and media corporations were severely affected; communities lost all forms of organised sport and recreational activities for a long period of time, while all the ‘sports for all’ (or ‘orienteeing for all’) activities that had already reduced over recent years became severely curtailed or abolished altogether to facilitate social distancing. It was not only the giant clubs, the famous and wealthy sporting federations and entities, world renowned athletes and mega events at the top of the chain that were confronted by this new factor – it was also a range of connected commercial areas such as event sector and sport sponsorships that received a bruising from the virus while adjusting their activities in consequence. Sport organisations needed to reduce their operations, suspend competitions, reset their priorities, both from a sporting and a commercial point of view, and reprioritise their resources before making a comeback, possibly adapting some new or expanded logistical matters involved, and all the while managing their cash flow as their priority number one. Alongside others, many were rapidly upscaling their digital methods, enhancing their social media engagement, and coming to the ‘table’ to affect boxed-thinking collaborations as sport had never done before. Sport managers and marketers need to find new ways to engage fans.

Both sponsor dyads explained that this pandemic time was therefore a period to be creative and increase the technological repertoire (such as creating to rescue the sports sponsorships and the sport from the loss of their community) and corporates ‘re-processed’ the sport content. It was a period of accelerated technological (the sport) change created by the pandemic, which included player tracking, bespoke information, super-connectivity, mob first, user-generated interaction, social media, the living at home experience, AI and learning algorithms, and even immersive technology. Buoyed by the pandemic, sponsors continuously recalibrated and reconfigured the field of technological development. The four organizations examined in order to cross analyze the quantitative results from the fans’ side, revealed certain differentiations related to the pandemic’s results like fast-tracked

technological developments and investment in their social media as mentioned before. Even though all four organizations admitted that they had to overcome great challenges during Covid-19 period, there were differences in human resources allocation for social media and digital events among the two sport sponsees.

In particular, the organizing authority of the BasketLeague under the auspices of the Greek Basketball Federation allocated limited human resources for the marketing department during the covid-19 period. Even though they also acknowledged the need of further investing in social media and digital events and the creation of sport digital content etc in order to minimize the losses of sport sponsorships there wasn't sufficient human resources allocation. On the other hand, the Basketball Club further invested in SM by allocating exclusively social media to certain personnel within their marketing department and additionally cooperated by signing external contracts with Social Media experts by the end of the pandemic until now. This identified difference can be partially explained by the following facts traced in international literature:

The main tasks of sport federations are 1) to represent a sport or a group of similar sports, 2) to act on behalf of their interests towards their social environment and to (inter-)national sport organisations (NSOs), 3) in close cooperation with sport federations acting as supra-organisations for national sport federations: to develop competitive sports and to organise competitions, championships, sport events4) to enact statutes and guidelines specifying the rules of competition. In addition to the historical development of sport and its increased social, economic and political role in most countries over the last decades, as a result of socio-technical changes, over the last decades, a number of challenges have arisen for sport federations from the three points listed above: 1) Top sport has increasingly internationalised over the last years; 2) Sport activities have become increasingly diversified and expanded to open up to wider forms of membership (sports-for-all); and 3) Sport services can no longer be performed exclusively by volunteers, but must on the one hand be partially transferred to paid staff. 3) Sport federations should be led to a necessary organisational change with an increased institutionalisation and an implementation of (efficiency oriented) management instruments (eg strategic planning, HR management,

reporting instruments) (See also Nagel MössnerWiskemann, 2015) On the contrary, the sport organization, the Basketball Club, had already in place an adequate number of people involved and the covid-19 restriction measures played a decisive role in further investing in social media and sport digital content by cooperating complementary to their marketing department with an outdoor digital marketing agency specialized in social media among others. This difference in financial investment could be linked to the difference of profit intentions between different sport sectors as illustrated by Scheerder et al. (2011). Scheerder et al. argue that the profit intentions differ between the different sports sectors. Sport Federations target social profit such as social inclusion, whereas professional sport organizations aim primarily at increase of their sales revenues and secondarily at public profit. Yet, although their profit orientations and organizational characteristics are not the same, they do experience competition from one another (Schubert and Seyffert, 2017) within the sport industry.

From the examined sport sponsors' perspective, sport sponsorship activation through social media for customer engagement was biased into digitized tools and means of communication but also boosted during the Covid-19 period. Both organizations reported this period as very creative for their social media teams because they had to think out of the box and cooperate with the sport organizations who had to create content from scratch in order to keep their sport sponsorships alive. This occurrence wasn't a contemporary situation as described by both sponsors. On the contrary, it was a creativity boost that even when the hard restrictions Covid-19 period stopped and world sports re-started, it continued to exist as a very valuable lesson learned for uplifting communication and marketing strategies.

The two sponsors belong to completely different industries. The sponsor of the organizing authority of the Basket League is a betting company whereas the sponsor of the Basketball Club is a private Educational Organization providing higher education courses. Both of them are well acknowledged and leaders in their respective industries having a rich experience in marketing and particularly sponsorships and social media. However, the Educational Organization lacks experience in sport sponsorship. In total expenditure, the sector which dominates sport sponsorship in 2021 is betting companies holding 18% of the

sponsorship pie whereas education is holding 3,3% (IEG, 2021). Both of the industries are included in the top 10 sponsor sectors. Gambling is the leading sport sponsor whereas education is the 10th out of 33 sport sponsoring industries.

Moreover, social media already evolved as a useful tool in terms of business and marketing not only because the biased condition of COVID-19 pandemic experience brought much harm to the business world, but also because of the prolonged research outcome of vast numbers of researchers in the previous years. For instance, Chikandiwa et al (2013) in one of their work suggested that 'social media is the tool of the 21st century', to give new horizons to businesses, to enhance their competitive position through new novel way in their respective fields and industries. On the other hand, Park and Oh (2012) contended that social media is playing a core role because it can make a transition of corporations from classical marketing ways which consists of one way (direction) information exchange to new contemporary form of multi-way (direction) information exchange.

All under-interviewing organizations recognise that social media has been a decisive force in any years' marketing endeavours. All the interviewees agree that the last years sport marketing experienced a huge technological revolution and thus no organization today can earn its livelihood from years of in-depth knowledge of sport sponsorship activations because the technology revolution that preceded as much as sport sponsorship. Another emerging issue from the research outcomes is that is of vital importance for an organization to import in its company a lot of knowledge and experience with social media and furthermore its capabilities to handle social media marketing. The Basket League's Legislation Body (whose main conductor is the National Federation) has immediately seized a need of further investment of human capital in its social media department but as explained above the funding barriers or managerial restrictions became a stumble block for that transfer, while the Basketball Club that spotted this need, reacted promptly to further investment of human resources in its marketing department as well as a socialmedia agency specialized in the outdoor destination marketing.

Therefore speed of reflexes in reacting to market demands is so critical for developing organisational learning for sport organisations, especially the ability at investing in social media sponsorship activation on people or partners who can use the social media marketing application. Another key barrier that can be an obstacle to use the full organizational potential of social media and that the firms do not really know how they could use the social media application to support market capabilities (Michaelidou et al, 2011). Tarsakoo and Charoensukmongkol (2020), speak about five dimensions of the social media marketing capability and assert it as organisational capability based on the use of applications in social media could aid the firm on the conduct of the marketing functions which can help conduct interactions for customers and eventually create value for the customers that lead to better measures of performance for the business.

Of these five dimensions, social media product development capability (social media marketing ability including capability of the firm to create values for consumers by firms' organisational capability to develop products and services including the element of the capability of constantly adapting to market demands) and social media marketing implementation capability are positively and significantly related to customer-relationship performance and financial performance. Social media marketing communication capability (social media marketing ability including the capability of the firm to manage the customers' value perception by leveraging effectively applications used in social media such as advertising, sales promotions, public relations, sponsorship and so on to execute marketing communications) is positively and significantly related to customer-relationship performance only, and social media marketing planning capability (social media marketing ability including the capability of the firm to formulate marketing strategy by matching a firm's resources and the marketplace and set its financial outcome) is related to financial performance only. All dimensions of social media marketing capability are a pre-requisite for any organisations to be effective to use social media to enhance the commercial success of the sponsorship and customer engagement activation.

Such need is far from new; however, what is sorely lacking from sports sponsorship scenario in the last years is the brand and its abilities to change consumers' behaviour: fast reaction

to fast trigger, when they have seen the campaign in the moment of sponsorship. Based on responses provided by responders to the questionnaire and findings of interviews, what the conducted research has found about the questions that have been asked earlier:

Research question 1: To identify what are the determinants of customer engagement in a social media setting.

As can be expected, the quantitative results of the respondents from the fans reveal that the main factors that relate to the high engagement level of consumers who interact with the online platform of the community, such as Facebook, Instagram, Youtube ect. with all kinds of posts, including the posts in which any kind of sponsorship leveraging exists, are the positive affect, team identification, performance tolerance, while basking in reflected glory, management cooperation, prosocial behaviour seem less important toward the agency of customer engagement.

In detail, the fact that the consumers feel positive by following to their team, that they feel proud that we consider them as a consumers of a specific team, they use the products with the brand name of team they support can be regarded as variables that make to customer engagement high. Those findings are in line with a high number of researches (e.g. Van Doorn et al., 2010; Yoshida et.al., 2014). Those factors, however, are also related to other variables that are expected to be related to the level of agency of the consumer.

Results from the qualitative interviews complement findings as all interviewees stated positive affect and team identification as the two most important customer engagement antecedents that should be adopted within the social media context and they systematically focus on them first and foremost when forming and designing their activating sponsorship initiatives through social media and when creating the post itself. Concurrently, the less scored customer engagement antecedents by fans – basking on reflected glory and total management cooperation – receive no or minor focus by the sponsors and sponsees. Interestingly enough, prosocial behaviour is described by all interviewees as the third most important customer engagement antecedent that should be adopted within the social media

context and they systematically focus on it second or third, while fans responses rate it as number last. Prosocial behaviour is consumers' engagement and participation with fans' communities and behaviour to help and interact with one another (Van Doorn et al, 2010). On the opposite side of the conversation, online prosocial behaviour, or cyberprosocial behaviour (Wright and Li, 2012), is prosocial behaviour 'that takes place in the online context (i.e. users' being on the internet)'. Even less research appears to have addressed the positive sides of SoMe (Schønning et al, 2020), such as online prosocial behaviour (OPB; ie, prosocial behaviour that takes place in the online context). Figure 1. OPB: the fans' scoring for interactions and prosocial behaviour (Fans were asked how they 'often' behave, how they 'can intervene to support' the team, and how they 'seek more information about' their team.) Fans scored highest in the statement 'I often interact with other fans to talk about issues related to my team' with a mean of 4.00, and the lowest mean was in statement 'I spend time on social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) sharing information with other fans of my team' (ie, only 2.96), with a low total mean of 3.38. On the basis of these contradictory answers, it could be argued that, even if the interaction with others users was accomplished (i.e., because the interaction on SoMe is a basic function of social media, in general), it does not reach its main objective (i.e., the interaction with other fans on that same digital community to help or support them for sport related issues of their team or their team's sponsor). This finding could also lead to the conclusion that even though there is discrete will by all sponsorship partners to invest in prosocial behavior within their social media sport sponsorship activations for customer engagement they need to improve their social media sport sponsorship activation internal procedures in order to achieve it.

Interestingly enough, according to the results respondents scored high performance tolerance whereas according to our qualitative results performance tolerance is of minor or no significance at all to the interviewed managers of the four case studies. There is a very interesting contradiction at this point which could be further explained by the patterns and mechanism revealed by our qualitative results of the members of the sponsorship partnerships examined within this work.

Specifically, fans scored a mean of 4.06 in the statement “I wear apparel, which represents the fans of my team even if the team has an unsuccessful season”, a mean of 4.21 in the statement “I display the logo of my team on my clothing even if my team does not perform well” and a mean of 4.27 for the statement “I wear clothing that displays the name of my team even if my team has an unsuccessful season”. This fans’ high scoring, maybe due to the sport sponsors and sponsees successful cultivation of other non-performance related aspects resulting in developing strong customer-brand relationships enriched with customer commitment and trust.

Basketball club’s manager overstated on their focus of developing a love brand, on building strong emotional relationship with their fans providing as a characteristic example their basic message “our big powerful family”, underestimating the performance tolerance approach and characterizing it as an “old faded story”. Moreover, he clearly linked consumers’ purchase intention with the development of a strong purchase brand image when he stated some one loves, and knows it really doesn’t matter if the team or athlete wins or loses because that is inherent in sports. On the other hand, fan purchases, sponsors purchases or purchase intentions should be totally dissociated with the wins or loss of a team or an athlete. Several researchers have tried to limit the reasons why consumer behaviours are motivated . Related studies suggest that these matters of purchase behaviours may include multifaceted components such as family orientation (Hunt, Bristol, Bashaw, 1999; Jones, 1997), consumer involvement (Funk ‘James, 2001), the expectation about team performance, the actual team performance and the roster talent (Ngan, Prendergast, ‘Tsang, 2011).’ Later research studies suggest that the central characteristics that developed mostly based on confidence could be the best predictor of not only the matters of purchase behaviours of consumers but other behaviours of support would be the emotional attachment of fans with a team (Yuan ‘et.al, 2019). Emotional trust and emotional value could be the ways that stimulate consumers’ purchase intention in the contemporary era of digital ‘e-marketing which plays a role of social media and live streaming’. According to these research researches and authors, instead of direct purchase intention, emotional trust and emotional value might be the ways that stimulate consumers’ purchase intention in the contemporary era of electronic advertising. These kinds of matters were never included in

the initial designs of advertisement, but are evolved along with the contemporary era. This is a new kind of personal habit of information aggregation and shopping in the contemporary era of electronic advertisement. It was proposed by Zhou and Tong (2022) that ‘emotional trust and emotional value may play an important role in stimulating consumers’ purchase intention in contemporary digital e-marketing such as social media and live streaming that combine the function of media and entertainment product and atmosphere provided by emotional contagion evolving naturally in the wonderful world of sport may influence consumers’ purchase intention through the full mediating effect of emotional trust and emotional value’.

Moreover, the findings from the qualitative interviews provide us with valuable insights within the different types of sponsors and sponsees. According to all interviewees, positive affect and team identification are of major importance for customer engagement but there are different approaches and processes within the social media context depending on the kind of company.

In particular, the sponsor of the organizing authority, the betting company does not rely only on the social media actions being made by the sponsees as they are being described in the terms of the sponsorship contract. On the contrary, they have allocated an important part of their human resources in their social media and sport sponsorships. Reinforcing positive affect through their social media with several sponsorship activation initiatives is a primary goal and of much higher importance for them during the design of the social media content. The consumers must feel positive when they follow their team but also feel positive when they follow its major sponsor or when they are experiencing a service that the sponsor provides. In addition, team identification is very important to sport organisations but also greatly exploited in sponsorship agreements by sport sponsors. The identification of the sponsor with the sports team may thus be an important source in the self-concept of the person. The sponsor aims at leveraging its association with a sport or team or athlete or a federation to achieve positive transfers from the property to the sponsor’s brand, and the same goes for the transfers the sponsee desires if connecting the sponsee’s own brand to that of the sponsor. (Bee et al. 2021)

This is an area that greater emphasis is being given compared to the rest of the antecedents of customer engagement in all sponsorship activation initiatives within the social media context by the betting company. A reason could be the nature and special characteristics of the particular industry. A great debate and a lot of research is being made about the “unhealthy sponsorship of sport” in which betting companies are included (Chambers, 2019). Gambling industry came as a financial rescuer for all sport organizations after the Covid-19 great financial loss for the international sport industry. According to the IEG report (IEG 2021) gambling sponsorships saw the biggest increase in the NFL’s 2021 season, tech deals ranked first and alcohol third, whereas deals in the crypto currency space are a “sideline model” waiting to be a mega-trend. On the other hand, a large merit of societies depending on the different countries and their respective laws think of sport sponsorship engaged betting companies as a threatening dominant sport sponsor which is at first potentially harmful but exclusively they are addictive and small children and young people are exposed to them through the sport or the team they are sponsoring reinforcing problem gambling (Jones et al, 2019). For the betting company to anticipate those negative voices related to their belonging industry, they have in place a very targeted social media approach related to their sport sponsorship and they promote plenty of social corporate responsibility initiatives, having been awarded for it in the national sport sponsorship awards. They also complement this sponsorship deal with the federation with other low budget sport sponsorships supporting less popular sport athletes or athletes preparing for their participation in the Olympics aiming at the national sentiment and their brands association to that.

Finally, from the sponsors’ and sponsee’s point of view prosocial behavior is much more important as a customer engagement antecedent rather than performance tolerance being cultivated through the sponsorship activation initiatives within the social media context. This may also occur by the nature of the sponsors examined. The betting company is thriving to form a positive attitude of sport fans towards their brand whereas the other sponsor investigated -the educational provider of higher education- wishes to emerge actions for the common good alike the vision and scope of an educational institution. Thus, prosocial behaviour investment through social media appears to play a more fundamental role in both

sponsorship dyads than performance tolerance. One additional reason can be also that (as reported by Van Doom et al, 2010 – previously cited in this paper – they reported that: ‘Prosocial behaviour consists of the level of consumers’ engagement and participation in fans’ communities as well as the behaviour to help consumers cope with the fans’ community...’). Yet, during the Covid-19 period, there aren’t any physical communities, just digital ones such as social media ones in which the fans’ communities have been forced into behaviours, as the only way of communicating. Under such perspective of the sponsorship dyads’ managers, the cultivation of prosocial behavior could have turned into one of their major priorities, for the increase of interaction related to sponsorship activation within the digital community of social media following this period’s wide peoples’ need to help and support each other, to read, listen or view good news for the society and the common good due to the isolation shock they experienced and actually remained as a priority within the context of the rapid global digitalization. This ties in with Hurley (2021), who notes that two of the most-followed accounts on social media in pandemic 2020 came from the sphere of sport, and that during the Covid-19 period, social media content uploaded by sport sponsors and sponsees had supported health-message campaigns or wellness and being active-focused messaging and harnessing their influence to engage with their fan base and help to change behaviours. There was certainly during the pandemic a sense of widespread proactive and prosocial behaviour in social media from sports organisations and athletes respectively in aiming to help and influence fans. Noticeably, therefore, it would appear that both parties in a sport sponsorship dyad are both carefully orchestrating the social-media content undertaken to promote CSR but activate sponsorship. In truth, greater attempts in this direction emanated from the basketball club in the sponsorship dyad B and the betting company in sponsorship dyad A.

They also pay more attention to presenting it in such a way that the consumers don’t see such CSR activities as profit-oriented but rather as being social-welfare-oriented, something that will, again, reduce interaction among members in the community and turn off sponsorship. This fits perfectly with the results reported in Tan J. et.al 2020, according to which when we take to social media to share a prosocial act, we’re always facing what the authors call the braggart’s dilemma. By announcing them, we run the risk of being seen

as boastful and thus less likeable; by not sharing our prosocial deeds, we get no credit for what we do. Their study indicates that, when a regular person announces a prosocial act, a more careful design of the post including a third-party acknowledgement about that prosocial act is prone to fetch a celebrating vote, or simply 'Like'. Furthermore, it reduces the suspect vibe of the sharer being a braggart, increasing the perception of the effort made in performing the prosocial acts.

Moreover, performance tolerance was one of the non-important antecedents among the sponsorship dyads because strong brand identity and brand relationships should be irrelevant in situations where periodically a sport organisation with brand strength/brand equity is losing or winning (as also explained by Yuan & Gao, 2022 who state that brand trust mediates for losing results and decreased purchase intention. The deleterious effects of losing results on brand trust and purchase intention only show up when the sponsoring brand is relatively unfamiliar with audiences and only for audiences with low identification). Perhaps the fact that the social media users as respondents are basketball fans that have been 'educated' for performance tolerance during the last years by older sport marketing strategies could explain this result combined with the fact that sport sponsors and sponsees' successful cultivation of other non-performance related aspects both lead to developing strong customer-brand relationships including customer commitment and trust.

Research Question 2: What are the consequences of consumer involvement on consumption behaviour in an online social context?

The results indicated that engagement was related to behavioural dimensions: fans who are highly engaged with their team were more likely to interact with other fans on social media channels and be more likely to talk about issues with their own team. On average, engaged customers were more engaged with fans on social media channels and more apt to talk about the problems with their own team, and they would be more likely to tell other fans they own their team, and more likely to want to be part of their own team.

On the other hand, from the findings, the scoreings are high on positive Behavioural Dimension, since the fans presented a high rate of referral intent during and after watching

a sporting event or a game in physical settings or in platforms settings as well as intending to buy additional products of his team. This is reflected on the statement “I will refer more people to attend other game for the season” and the score showing the likelihood that I would actively buy additional products (apparel and goods) from my team is very high. Fans’ customer engagement and purchase intention showed positive correlation and Repeat Purchases indicators.

The positive strong correlation between customer engagement and purchase intention, referral intention and repeat purchase indicate that the more engagement there has the customer, the higher the intention to make a purchase, to repeat purchase and to suggest others purchase a product of the team. The positive strong correlation between customer engagement and brand loyalty, brand awareness and the brand imagery association illustrate that the brand elements are strongly related to the level of engagement which, as argued above, similar studies also support (Parsons et. al 2017).

These quantitative results is just as what those qualitative results of the research states, that is, it seems like all sponsors and sponsees have acknowledged that customer engagement has a significant positive relationship with purchase intention and referral intention, as well as repurchasing intention in the social media context. The inquiry on the relationship between customer engagement and brand loyalty, brand awareness and association of brand image have stimulated them to keep designing for a type of posts that aims informing and promoting these elements of brand again and again.

All but one interviewees mentioned at least one prediction in the sponsorship contract relating to how the sponsorship will be activated to achieve a better effect (increased activation, improved brand loyalty/brand awareness/brand image association with the brand), and that this activation of sponsorship should be activated well. The sponsorship would be activated, however. Especially when social networking awareness is increasing, this would be a marketing capability offering more involve consumers at a lower cost and amount of money related from other marketing activities, for the sake that marketing

activities in social media achieve higher effective discrimination in relation to the high engagement and purchase decision of consumers than marketing activity at other marketing channel.

In particular, the social media are always perceived as an online community in which consumers provide (or share) some answers or experiences to other consumers as Dessart et al. (2015) described. Consumer-generated contents, or opinions about brands or marketing products on social media, seem to be perceived as more useful, or more relevant to consumer needs compared with the firm-generated contents. As an example, Heinonen's (2011) exploratory study about consumer behaviour in the social media commented: Consumers also seem to use social media primarily for product information or content, for instance, to share and exchange others' opinions, reviews or ratings.

Especially as far as the betting company is concerned, they believe that they can take advantage of sponsorship activation initiatives through social media aiming at customer engagement and purchase intention but they never include messages in their posts directly linked to their sales departments success like other kinds of companies of mass consuming products could do into a sponsorship activation message. On the contrary they never link a sales department social media post like an extra betting offer with a social media post related to their sport sponsorship. Their social media posts related to their sport sponsorship are always irrelevant with special offers of the day aimed at brand enhancement and they are properly designed to just activate the follower to like, share and mainly comment so as to challenge the word of mouth for their company through indirect ways. Meanwhile, in order to understand consumers' attitude towards the marketing messages within social media, Diffley et al. (2011) had another focus-group interview; 'Study 1 involved 10 respondents in a focus-group interview, which suggested that while marketing messages on social media were disliked when pushed directly onto consumers, when it was consumers' friends who commented on the posting, it evoked positive reactions from consumers, which then led to a favorable attitude towards the products or services advertised in social media'.

One commonality that we can recognise across all of the interviewees, independent of whether they are discussing a sports club or a federation, a sponsor that has a lot of experience with sports sponsorships or a new-comer who has less experience with sport sponsorship, is the social media contests (give-aways), and their uses as a sponsorship activation tool. As per the results of this research, they are considered a basic activation tool, and would mostly serve as an engaging sponsorship activation strategy as consumers are more and more engaged on social media, and those followers are ready to buy merchandising products in order to have some part of the glory or to get something. Social media are building more involved relationships where the content is directed to the consumer and from the consumer and between consumers to each other, and where sponsorship input is making their brand more effective with e-commerce strategies via more promotional offers, prize-driven contests, give-aways (Westberg et al, 2018). They also all agree that giveaways and the different techniques used according to the different targeted groups have to be mirrored and allied with their quality and their values of their brand. More focus is given in particular by the sports organisations with more qualitative creations of posts or videos in the sponsorship activation strategy within social media and the quality of them. A lot of reference has been done totally to digital content specialists in charge of producing short social media videos with qualitative outcomes as for a quality brand to be inserted into the consumers' minds in order to more engage consumers' behaviour to positive consumer behaviour to satisfy both the sponsor and the sponsee. Short videos that could share, forward or seen under three-minute period on the social media short video platforms (Liu et al. 2019) are a new type of video that mainly using intelligent mobile terminals for recording and editing. They are so important that people are really interested in researching about them. People are so interested in these short videos because they can be much more effective than the traditional videos and they could promote the business marketing greatly. The main feature of a short film would be as its name suggests users would watch it in a quick manner which might be in less than three minutes. The purpose they are making this short film is to make the brand itself much more effective and then gain more loyalty to the brand while enhancing more customer awareness of the brand. Instinctively, short videos are more dynamic and interactive than traditional videos than to say by themselves that moving

images have stronger power than still images. Therefore, if you could strictly use them to promotion matter, it can surely help to establish your brand.

Some very important findings of this research were that even though the basketball club uses several techniques of sponsorship activation (one of the most common the giveaways which have to be pertinent to the band's image and respectful to their fans) when it comes to the sponsorship partnership with the educational institution, it is a carefully designed tailor made sponsorship agreement according to the sponsor's brand characteristics something which seems to be a key factor of success in this sponsorship dyad. The educational organization is not very experienced in sport sponsorships but has a rich experience in social media as a marketing communication tool.

The educational organization differs in terms of sponsorship activation techniques, something which is depicted in the way the interviewee answers the question about the connection of customer engagement to purchase intention. The educational institution has a lot of input from their sales department regarding purchase intention, repeat purchases and referral intention and is linking certain indicators of the sales department with their successful sponsorship partnership with the basketball club since those indicators have increased in the geographical area the basketball club is situated. Nevertheless, it is not a sponsorship activation which happens within the social media context in the traditional way of sport events, online competitions and giveaways. In fact, the educational organization benefits from this sponsorship deal through the social media posts of the basketball team. As far as their own social media channels are concerned they only upload posts connected to education which is in line with its brand personality in order to sustain engaged customers. Noticeably enough, the positive aspects of sponsorship activation and their direct impact on consumer behavior through activation techniques aiming at financial, symbolic or social benefits such as education, and values promoted through sports have been identified by Dreisbach et. al, 2021.

Another feature from this style of dyad we've stumbled upon is that in addition to fans' high sectoral utilisation of the ornate brand and the love mark exploitation of the dyad, fans' government and high level of usage of this dimension are mutual to the dyad. So, while

contentions of this dyad from the perspective of the admirers and their investigations mentions the relation between cat's attributes and client behaviours, in this dyad style, we can achieve greater sophistication as it concerns helping to grow attributes of the cat within the dyad in common, or independent posts in social media medium with sponsorship activation events, along with its redolent emphasis on the brand the love mark expansion into their posts' design.

It is a long-term investment and commitment to achieve a Lovemark but the results showed that loving and respectful elements from the sponsored brand, quite remarkably, made the sponsoring brand predominantly associated to the values and feelings of the brand (for lovemark concept); thus, these results significantly licenced the percentage of the reverse or counter association, and that the use of sports sponsorship help the values of the sponsoring brand to have greater visibility and association with the sport, and it is an strategic instrument to build, as well as endorse, brand love; thus, sports sponsorship can be a key decision.' The authors also found 'affective and passionate love with the brand has moved into requirements for development and maintenance of strong consumer-brand relationships, which led to a greater brand loyalty and higher deliverables from brands, and that emotions were a significant and generally with prominence in the process in consumers' buying decision buying is based on feelings and emotions as opposed to in improved product functionality and the price worthiness of the products' (Giovanis and Athanasopoulou, 2018). And finally, our qualitative sponsorship dyad results fitted also well with the work by Koronios, Psiloutsikou, Kriemadis, Zervoulakos and Leivaditi (2016) which proved 'the mediating role of sponsor's image in changes in purchase intention of the sponsor's brand'. BL is a novel obvious construct of the marketing science important for the marketer so that allow for denser consumer-brand relations as in 'trust'. Brand love needs a continuing update of its interpretation Koronios (2016) proved a statistically relevant positive relation between corporate image and purchase intention, lauding Trivedy (2020) who complements Koronios results to note that CIS (CI of the sponsor) has a significant impact on BL. The last but not the least important result is that most importantly BL is a very important mediating role in

that CIS do not directly leads to PI and SI (Trivedi 2020) ‘a good CI is not enough to lead to PI. Brand love comes in the process and appears to have a cognitive effect as well’. This enlightened again the role of BL that is the phenomenon that the examined sponsorship dyad leveraged on the social media realm.

Complementing the above mentioned findings in regard to the high sponsorship exposure of the participants within their daily routine with the online community platforms indicative for the enhancement of the value of the brand are the responses since most of the respondents have high level of activity involvement (perceived importance of the activity to respondent).

Respondents who have high activity involvement grade as more activity that involve those customers is more fun and interest. Therefore it can be concluded that they activate more sponsorship for the particular activity.

Respondents rank over the average the team’s or sport’s commercialization (perceive level of renewing the commitment of the user only by monetary benefit in order for the sponsor’s team to make more financial profit but also surprising with these results since the literature shows that the lower the team commercialization, the higher the sponsorship activation, but all interviews reported even having high metrics then customer engagement and purchase intention go up. Furthermore, social media sports activation, the actual fan’s will to interact for sport-related or team-related issues was existent but average followed by the respondents’ notion that there is a team-sponsor fit which can also be characterized as average. The results are showing that individual components affecting sponsorship activation are of major importance in further enhancing this customer engagement.

The qualitative results of this study are complementing this positive correlation but also are enlightening certain prerequisites followed by the two sponsorship dyads investigated in order to reach that positive correlation successfully within the social media context through its individual components.

Firstly, both of the sport sponsorship dyads strived to sustain contact with the community in order to maintain customer engagement through sponsorship activation and

provide all retributive benefits in their existent sponsorship agreements during Covid-19 period. They all described the pandemic period as the most challenging for them since in certain periods they had to create social media content from scratch.

This process was described by the manager of the organising body under the sport federation as an extremely hard one, even if ‘we struggled to overcome this hard obstacle of Covid, my organisation result in the context of social media, was not satisfying’. This result is in line with the research of Mastromartino and Narain on a sample of NHL teams, proving that digital, instead of the previously conceptualised innovative features of this activity, proves to be an example of dis innovation. A low accomplishment of various consumer engagement outcomes was found, as wells as a lack of sponsor leverage value delivery. This could be because of a low number of human resources assigned to the marketing team of the sports property, which probably suffered from Covid-19 (a big financial crisis) on top of a big pre-existing 10-year Greek financial crisis. A non-adequately designed social media strategy for sponsorship activation or the actual sponsorship activation initiatives and posts in social media due to the federation’s limited human resources could also be linked to the average fans’ responding rate of the team’s or sport’s commercialization.

3. What is the relation between of consumer engagement and sponsorship activation?

Based on these findings, from the quantitative research I can conclude that, as mentioned in the research problem, sponsorship leveraging can result to highly involved fans-consumers and vise versa consumers highly involved are more self-driven to get actively involved into a sponsorship related post and/or a sponsorship activation campaign promoted through a social media post on different social media pages of both sponsorship partners

Based on these findings above, it is confirm and agree with those who said that some important antecedents of sponsorship activation (independent variable) do have a impact positively on customers engagement (dependent variable) such as activity involvement, team commercialization, sport activation through social media and team sport- sponsor fit.

Respondents identify their activity involvement level using the scale that ranging from 0 = Not at all to 7 = Very much

Findings also indicate that most of the respondents have high level of activity involvement (perceived importance of the activity to respondent).

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The basketball club’s manager and the betting company’s manager referred to this period as a very challenging but also very creative one. Sponsorship activation was used as tool of communication in order to achieve customer engagement and as described the betting company went over the terms of the sport sponsorship contract and allocated human hours and financial resources for content creation and sponsorship activation through social media because it was of great importance for them not to lose the contact with the community they had invested in but to sustain engaged customers as soon as the ban of sports would be lifted. An explanation could be that the gambling industry is interdependent to the sport industry so they had to develop quick reflexes. Both organizations were very careful when creating their social media content and avoided direct fans’ exposure to their sponsorship partnerships through their posts. On the contrary, they were oriented to the creation of smart, interactive posts, digital events, digital competitions, posts who tried to activate fans' comments and exchange original opinions about their sponsorship partners and their products but always indirectly. For instance,they started Conversations specific to however the sport is or specific athletes and their daily lifestyle during the covid-period or Something frequently,theyve even invested Social Media Sports Activation from sponsor activation perspective into their smartly designed visuals . Finding by Eddy et.al(2021) that when they look on ways how

sponsorship are using social media their means of advertising and concluded that in general, subtler (or passive) sponsor integration into social media messages could lead to more engagement (@NBAonTNT, 4 April 2019) (450 likes, 49 retweets, and 6 replies). Finding by Eddy et.al(2021) that when they look on ways how sponsorship are using social media their means of advertising and concluded that in general, subtler (or passive) sponsor integration into social media messages could lead to more engagement (@NBAonTNT, 4 April 2019) (450 likes, 49 retweets, and 6 replies).

Lastly, the club manager of basketball team refers to content creation as key success of sponsorship. Which is activation fit-in the social digital context activation with customers for keep your engagement with high quality innovative, innovative, catch-eye videos, films designed and produced by you, actually it is long terms contract for future with the company that can give them competitive advantage. 'Effective 360° integrations (With 360° virtual environments on platforms such as Go Pro's YouTube Channel function, sponsored by Red Bull, as a form of XR marketing -- and with effective user experiences and easy access to the technology -- offer tangible benefits for consumers' attitudes and experiences, and an avenue through which to activate partnerships.' Also, Krump (2017), reports that there are more than 5 million unique mobile users worldwide and almost 2.8 million of mobile users are social-media users looking at their devices. Almost 80% of 2019 data were videos, and 74% of consumers could purchase a product or service after watching a video of a branded video or a live-video will continue to prove a rewarding and highly engaging way to connect with consumers.' Another reason or fact to live-videos on social-media has some regulations or matters to be considered like ethics or privacy concerns, or legal and law enforcement issues are;

Live Video Will Continue To Reward Engaged With Creators

Live video will continue to prove a rewarding and highly engaging way to connect with consumers. As more brands go live, we will continue to see creative and groundbreaking new ways to connect with audiences and customers in an authentic, uninterrupted way

As indicated by the sponsor relatively reluctantly, Covid-19 eras are among the most difficult eras for the society and for the individuals. They were not discussing the dilemmas of sponsor activation in social media platforms as a way of promotion marketing to engage more the customers; most probably for organisational reasons. As per the above international journalism literature, the nature of the kind of the social media platforms adopted by the HEIs before Covid-19 pandemic to be part of their digital/e-marketing strategies of engaging with the current and the prospective higher education students, might be an important to be counted, factor regarding the nature of the social media platforms adopted by HEIs, before Covid-19 pandemic, to be part of their digital/e-marketing strategies of engaging with the current and the prospective higher education students. In brief, sending and communicating to the students through social media networks is a way of enhancing the relationships, build-up and upgrade, between the university and the frequent social networking sites users too, because of the nature of the demographics of the students' social media platforms. In addition, were the higher educated was the first industry that was federated to the concept of blended learning, and e-communication at the era of Covid-19 where they sharply increased their usage intensities of social media while they are forced to instructionally communicate to backend them to be home-learning, as well as, to reconsider the learners' group's dilemmas in their socialization, and academically.

But the manner they used social media for sponsorship activation as a tool for customer engagement is totally different from other types of sport sponsorship posts in social media made by any other 3 interviewed, and this should be the second underline. Differences appear in the way of sponsorship activation generally, mostly as a tool for customer

engagement in social media by sport sponsors or sport sponsees, and a more specialized, personalized approach on industry to industry for the sponsor.

Firstly, the sporadic posts about positive effects of sponsorship on their own social media notably low; and secondly, the content was hugely made up of educational information on how to get involved in the activation as found by Eddie et al (2021) more passive (or less overt) forms of sponsor integration in social media messages leads to more engagement among followers.

To provide an example, HEI educational institution was the main educational sponsor of a sports conference co-organized by both members of the sponsorship dyad, targeting professional athletes, coaches and general public interested in the topic as a parallel event of a European teens basketball tournament organized by the Basketball Club. This parallel event was also promoted during all the period of the tournament onsite as well as through other communications channels of the basketball club- sponsor partner of the HEI- including social media. That event (directly linked to education) was extensively promoted by the educational institution's social media and asked for comments through questions during the conference and the posts which were created with great success. So in this case, there were sponsorship activation posts made and promoted by the HEI. A large number of other social media posts made by the basketball club referring to their major sponsor - the educational institution- by using sport sponsorship activation techniques not related to education were not further exploited, promoted, re-shared on the education institution social media, including the mentions.

However, it should not be forgotten that this is not a HEI sport sponsorship in the sense used in international research. HEI sport sponsorship (sponsors may be sponsoring college sport) is a form of sponsorship in which educational organisations (universities, colleges, HEIs), through entering into a sport sponsorship contract, become involved in sport sponsorship (Meggyesy, 2000). A second and equally relevant type of HEI educational organisations' involvement with sport is organised through the Cooperative education model. A model which has since the enveloping term 'work integrated learning' (WIL) has been developed; see Fleming (2012), for example. Cooperative education will mean that

students will ‘tammes’ (Latin: learning, education) in conventional or mundane terms (sport academia), on a tertiary level, and alongside this (experience) one part to a larger part of the overall duration of their studies at a relevant workplace or in an applicable (sport) industry (for instance, a (sport) organisation). Third, and lastly, we timidly followed or actually did not follow the language we are used to encounter most frequently in describing the ‘externally-facing’ (inter-organisational or inter-organisational relationship) business sector (banks, airlines, telecommunication agencies) boundaries/borders with sport organisations. Naming the sport industry IORs – standing for inter-organisational relationship. For example, See Babiak (2007) for a definition provided by Mitchel, Morris, Richards and Dawes (1996), which appeared as: IOR was defined as volunteering in nature, proximal, and lasting a long time, planned strategic action between two or more organisations which pursue a common purpose, ultimately serving mutually beneficial purposes. (p.339). In a continuum, types of IOR’s can be organised starting from a one off relationship between firms to a strategic alliance (see Mitchel, 1990). Figure 3. Alternative structured view of inter-organisational relationships (IOR’s). From Geske and Roy (1994) Mergers and acquisitions (M&As) can result, as in the above business environment, when such types of IOR’s are conducted in a similar environment, as in the figure above. In such a type of view, organisational synergies (between each sport organisation) have been studied (such as in the international context) or examples abound in which international leader brand name sport organisations (such as the IOC, FIFA, EUROLEAGUE, FISU, etc) are collaborating on a win-win basis with prestigious and renowned large universities (such as, as an example, in relation to further improving the condition of the dual career in sport for the athletes) or in a win-win situation where the HEIs, universities or GU (hereinafter also jointly as ‘sport HEIs’) are, as part of an overall deal, delivering to the mobile sport organisations’ employees (by providing them with HE) HE with the objective to further increase their sale in enlarging their customer base, whereas the sport organisations are more able to develop more qualified employees to increase their competitiveness by further investing in developing their employees (HR), human resource.

This sponsorship deal is a one of a kind strategic sport sponsorship deal where the sport sponsor (the HEI educational institution) it took a small percent of pie of global sport

sponsors, and has not been researched enough in international literature and aim to exploit at most the benefits of the activation sport-sponsorship initiatives being made mostly by the basketball team and they want to use part of the social media strategy to display further sport sponsorship initiatives with education related context, or any type of Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives such as send video messages from famous basketball players to support the social image and well being for people facing Covid-19 period and after.

Research Question 4: Does sponsorship activation affects consumer behaviour in community online platforms?

From these findings which have reached by quantitative research, we can find these charts that show that there is a positive relationship between sponsorship activation and purchase intention and referral intention and repeat purchase. However, at the same time these researches have shown that there is a positive relationship between the sponsorship activation use and customer purchase intention , customer referral intention and customer repeat purchase intention (speaking in a broader, there is a direct proportionality). So, sponsorship activation is a positive tool which helps in encouraging children to reach their intension of purchase a product of a team, their intension of refer and re-purchases of a product of a team and to suggest others to buy a product of the team when they are surrounded with many teams and competitors.

On the other hand, this positive dependance has been showed on these charts in these researches (e.g. Ray, 2008; Chattopadhyay, 2013; White, White & White 2017; Parsons, Maclaran & Chatzidakis, 2017) that brand elements [percentage of identification knowledge; and brand attitude; as shown in some researches] have remarkable high related percentage (related) around the percentage of sponsorship use, almost when the percentage of sponsorship use reaches to a higher percentage , so the percentage of related brand elements with the use raises, that it should be investigate more this in future researches. In conclusion, we can say that there is a positive relationship between sponsorship activation and brand loyalty and brand awareness. As a simple example, we can see too that, as we had found in

the research some details above that brand elements [per cent of identification knowledge; and brand attitude; as shown in some other researches] have significant high related percentage (related) around the percentage of sponsorship use and almost when the percentage of sponsorship use increases until its highest percentage, the percentage of related brand elements with the use increases, this is what actually happen in reality.

This simple example is to brief the reader approximately about the theory that strongly suggests that the stronger use of sponsorship activation the stronger customer loyalty and their awareness to brand's name of the team.

Moreover, all Managers claimed to get from their sales departments or from their business intelligence departments information that confirms this positive consumer consumer behaviour (confirms which brand in their portfolio is being recognised in their social media actived environment as trend, prediction or real increase of sales correlating to sport sponsorship activation in the social media environment) but most of them mentioned that those analytics do not land directly from the social media environment as a function. It is true that most of the common social media platforms can deliver in their routine updated business mode analytics page views, actions taken on that page, page likes, reach of the posted page, story reach, likes, comments, shares, mentions, recommendations, engaged posts, responsiveness, videos taken, people who daily see your page, people followed your page, people who clicked on products you tagged in your posts (clicks and/or time that video was watched), report to your negativ evaluation of your input on the social media platform (hid post, repost as spam, unlike page, motive behind the unlike of the page, video was marked as a not interesting video) or age-range of people reached, people in which city, country they are from, which device they have used so one can flag the country where they come from and track the increasing, maintainance or decreasing of posts, stories, likes, comments, shares, clicks or videos on that country. That is the only unique information all those social media can deliver related from each post but only under the trend, show the increase or decrease on your target market. They cannot sure that all those social media profiles are not joking and/ or not keeping straight truth about their demographics only. They only have some basic demographic information (are you male or female, are you between 13/

25/ 30/ 40/ or between 10-35 years age, are you home or abroad at this moment) but this information entails information about which people engage themselves to your post (social media engagement) and social network behaviour and not client (customer) engagement to your brand and/ or customer real behaviour. Even though all those 4 different terms can display a similarity in their content, they are not the same but sometimes they getting mixed somehow in the international contrast. It is particularly true in the sport sponsorship context and in the social media turns.

Significant reference was also made by the basketball club manager, as regards social media activation of sport sponsorship activation not only for reflection reasons on consumer behaviour but also for prediction reasons of such mega trends indirectly leading to positive consumer behaviour. For example they cleverly choose the interactive post of an online contest encouraging contestants to simply and through their social media accounts to sign – up to their website or the sponsors webpage, their marketers are enabled to store customer information from social media activity, such as mobile apps history, desktop history and Cloud storages. According to Matz et.al (2017) and Buettner (2017) big data and predictive analytics in social media pave the way to enhance decision making about history. Yet, successful analytics requires from the basketball club’s manager experience marketers highly qualified to accurately interpret the results of the analytics and to predict future consumer choices. On the one hand, interests and habits are ever changing, although they are commonly continuing to be related to each other in time, hence, the interpretation needs to be complete and accurate, plus the design of their sponsorship activation techniques and social media posts content is materialised according to that valuable input, something which further lead to positive consumer behaviour reinforcing positively the correlation between sponsorship activation and consumer behaviour in particular in purchase intention, in referral intention and repeat purchases, especially through fans posts in social media known from the marketing science as the most credible and effective.

Since a lot of the antecedents identified by all 4 case studies have been discussed in the previous research questions it is necessary to highlight the significant importance of sponsor fit as a factor influencing sponsorship activation and resulting in consumer

behaviors for the sponsorship-dyad of the basketball club and the HEI as their major sponsor especially due to the rareness of this partnership.

Both of the managers have made extended reference to this sponsor-fit as a very important element of their cooperation which has been translated into increase of sales in both the organizations. As already mentioned, the basketball club has been investing in linking its name to the Greek Powerful Myth having being inspired for his name by it, and the Ancient Greek History with a profound orientation to the connection of sport and spirit, strong bodies with strong minds, utilizing slogans like “better athlete better person”, pointing out a sound and focused orientation to the interconnection of sport with education.

5.Can buying intention being predicted by factors of sponsorship leveraging and consumer engagement?

Most importantly the practical findings of this study imply that the enjoyable feelings the fan receives by being a fan of his team, the devotion to their team no matter wins or losses, the actual brand loyalty, the level of identification to his favourite team, his basketball involvement, the alliance of sponsor and sponsee, the connection of the logo to the brand and the number of times he pursues team or sponsor products and services can predefine whether the consumer is likely to buy in the future from both of the sponsorship partners or not.

Almost all of the aforementioned antecedents are completely in line with the qualitative results of this study. An important finding contradicting the order of importance of those identified by the quantitative results antecedents is that of performance tolerance as an important antecedent. According to the results respondents who love their team no matter what are also positively intended for a future buying behavior nevertheless according to our qualitative results performance tolerance is of minor or no significance at all to the interviewed managers of the four case studies.

In fact, the manager of the basketball club as mentioned before overstated on their focus of developing a love brand, on building strong emotional relationship with their fans

providing as a characteristic example their basic message “our big powerful family”, underestimating the performance tolerance approach and characterizing it as an “old faded story”. Furthermore, he clearly linked the development of a strong love brand to the consumers purchase intention by mentioning that someone loves and supports his family no matter what. He further said that wins or losses of a team or an athlete should be completely dissociated from fans purchases, sponsor’s purchases or purchase intentions. Many researchers have tried to narrow down the motivation of consumer behaviors. Related studies indicate that these purchase behaviours could bear multifaceted components, such as family orientation (Hunt, Bristol, Bashaw, 1999; Jones, 1997), consumer involvement (Funk ‘James, 2001), expectation about team performance, actual team performance and roster talent (Ngan, Prendergast, ‘Tsang, 2011).’ Yet later studies indicate that the significant characteristics that developed mostly of confidence could be the best predictor of not only purchase behaviours of consumers but other support behaviours, is the emotional attachment of fans to a team (Yuan ‘et.al, 2019). Emotional trust and emotional value could be the way to stimulate consumers ‘purchase intention in the contemporary era of digital ‘e-marketing which plays a role of both social media and live streaming’ According to the above research studies and authors, instead of purchasing intention directly, emotional trust and emotional value might be the way to stimulate consumers’ purchase intention in the contemporary era of digital e-marketing which plays a role of both social media and live streaming. This is a new individual habit of information aggregation and shopping in the contemporary era of electronic advertising. It was proposed by Zhou and Tong (2022) that ‘emotional trust and emotional value may play an important role in stimulating consumers’ purchase intention in contemporary digital e-marketing such as social media and live streamings that combine the function of media and entertainment. Product and atmosphere provided by emotional contagion evolving naturally in the wonderful world of sport may influence consumers’ purchase intention through the full mediating effect of emotional trust and emotional value.’

However, identification with a team – as was shown at the beginning of this paper – could be linked to some enduring basic values that a fan welcomes in that specific team

(inevitably emotional values: respect, fun, trust, pride) and the bond that is created between fan and that team as, for instance, as a family bond, and the time spent together. The greater is the identification becomes, the willingness is fans pay money to see their team on TV, seeing the game in the stadium, buy merchandise and knows the sponsors of the team and gets involved even if the winning identification team is two or three losses. Yuan et al. (2019) stated that although poor performance of the sponsored teams have a negative impact on the trust of the spectators in the sponsoring enterprises, mainly that their research revealed spill-over effect as a unique phenomenon, which is unlikely to generalize to other conditions, for example: The audiences are concerned with the scores in a competitive match; audiences know little about the sponsor, and/or fans show low affective commitment (Lings and Owen, 2007) for the sponsored team; and that they applied the research in a Chinese context with different social culture for ours. (Adds Shuv-Ami (2018 supplements to that opinion) Demonstrated positive sophisticated relationship between dimensions of Love marks and commitment ‘ applies to fans of the favourite football and basketball team: a representative sample of 1330 Israeli sport fans – suggests that the love component of the Love marks model, that is the involvement component that is represented by the engagement from attachment of commitment and sports spectator identity, might contain important constructs that influence real fan behaviour. Especially in the case of the favourite basketball team, as above, with giant success in the sport achievement in the short period of time that they have occupied a place in the best professional league (up till now only 6 years) compared with the spending of years (more than 30 years) by entry in BCs with big list of sport achievement. Thus, building a love mark might ensure sustainable competitive advantage there. In conclusion, the qualitative results might not be contradicting the quantitative ones regarding performance tolerance since the big investment in building a love mark brand instead of investing in educating the fans about performance tolerance will reinforce the disconnection of the sports brand to its sports achievement which in both cases is the ultimate goal. No(n) lovemark brand metrics (i.e. purchase intention) are measured and reported by the marketing department or any other department of the sport club. As illustrated by Giovannis and Athanasopoulou (2018), the lovemark metric is conceptualized third order reflective construct consisting of two second order factors called respect and love where respect reflect

on brand performance, trust and reputation, and love reflects on brand commitment, intimacy and passion.

Regarding the same finding of this research for the sport federation which also doesn't invest in performance tolerance as a main antecedent for purchase intention it could be explicated by the fact that Greek Basketball and its National Basketball Team is a traditionally dominating force in European as well as International Basketball since 1932 as a founding member of the International Basketball Federation. Ever since a large history of sports winning awards has accompanied the Greek National Basketball team such as two European Championships, 3rd places in International Championships as well as the Olympic Games, Mediterranean Games, Under 18 Euro Championships, holding the 9th place in FIBA ranking among the top 30 National Teams internationally. If we considered performance tolerance for a sport federation the ability of a federation to compete other sports federations successes and popularity during one financial year (something that has not being termed in literature yet), it is still not a priority for the organizing authority under the basketball federation maybe due to the pre-existent popularity in Greece of the certain sport holding the second place after football in terms of popularity and number of fans and successful results for the last decade in its national basketball teams in European and International Level turning basketball into a choice for the majority of Greeks surpassing other almost all other sport federations in Greece except the football federation.

Since a lot of the antecedents identified by all 4 case studies have been discussed in the previous research questions it is necessary to highlight the significant importance of sponsor fit as an antecedent of purchase intention for the sponsorship-dyad of the basketball club and the HEI as their major sponsor especially due to the rareness of this partnership. Both of the managers have made extended reference to this sponsor-fit as a very important element of their cooperation which has been translated into increase of sales in both the organizations. The basketball club has been investing in linking its name to the Greek Powerful Myth having being inspired for his name by it, and the Ancient Greek History with a profound orientation to the connection of sport and spirit, strong bodies with strong minds,

utilizing slogans like “better athlete better person”, pointing out a sound and focused orientation to the interconnection of sport with education.

HEI has been for years one of the leading figures in the nongovernmental sector of Higher Education provision in Greece, and showed signs of what could become a very successful sport sponsorship agreement back in 2010 when it managed one of its first educational projects for the young basketball club that evolved to become a long-term sport sponsorship successful deal in which the sponsor-fit seemed particularly evident. As far as we are concerned, it is the rare cooperation of those antipodal industries in the international sport sponsorship context of this particular case looked like a corporate sponsorship made in heaven as the sponsor-fit of that specific sponsorship dyad seemed to play a crucial role in the nurturing of the sponsorship umbrella into a seemingly successful and long-lasting partnership, consequently we assumed that the managerial focus and the monetary investment on that fit remain steady over time. Indeed, most of the sponsored-dyad experiments in sport marketing literature have examined the influence of perceived congruency in brand images of sponsoring dyads (eg, Chiu Pyun, 2020; Shu et al., 2015). At present, there is a general consensus that congruity between the sponsor and sponsee’s brand images creates positive reactions towards the brands (Chiu, 2020; K P Gwinner and Eaton, 1999), such as image transfer (Chiu, 2020; Smith, 2004), positive attitudes toward the sponsor brands ,(Papadimitriou et al., 2016), and purchase intention (Y Zhang et al., 1996).

Furthermore, a quantitative outcome that supports more the aforementioned qualitative outcomes, is that according to the results of Pearsall (2009) cited, there are additional moderating factors — for instance, the sponsor category that can affect the success of sponsorships — meanwhile, Hickman (2015) testing on the 16 sponsor categories of the most popular sports sponsorship revenues concluded that the incidence and types of sport sponsorships have a relationship with the sports sponsor types, by revealing, according to the outcomes of Evans, Shapiro and Brown (2020), on the three sponsor categories of low/medium/high fit, in particular and somewhat, that sport sponsors of low, medium and high fit were rightly perceived as sponsors of a sport event by sports fans, 23%, 59% and

97% of the time, respectively, but it was sporting goods retailer and the sports drinks manufacturers that comprise the high fit products category of sponsors.

Moreover, a more recent study of Rajabi et al (2022) lending more support to the nurture angle of the sport sponsorship fit research arguments that the sport sponsorship fit profile may be contingent on national culture and product category by employing the cluster analysis across countries of different culture (i.e., Russia, France and Iraq) and reported to the Greek participant of each sport sponsorship-fit profile to be different regarding each brand., and so the sport sponsorship profile is tied to the national culture and product category, which Rajabi et al's research is arguably the one that can best explain why a HEI is not described as the typical sport sponsor in the international literature. However, to the Greek fans' and many European fans of the Greek culture, there is a very successful, professionally run basketball club, which managed at some point to become an important European force, and has related its very existence and evolution to international marketing communication with inspiring ancient Greek quotes and beliefs, about sport, education and athletics, deriving from its country's living and everlasting culture, remaining contemporary and modern. This move can lead a very high sponsor-fit for a leader if the industry of education, and be exaggerated by its fans' national culture in terms of the Greek people, and lead conjure up positive outcomes in the purchase intention. As Simmons and Becker-Olsen (2006), who are the pioneers to show that the positive outcomes as the success occurs in a more high level of fit with the sponsor's logo – not necessarily to conjure up the title sponsor name which is called the fit low, while more negative would occur such as blurring brand positioning (with an altered to less others' reasons why the sponsor brand helps this competition such as a more selfish means justifying helping on the event) being attributed to the sponsoring brand under the real level of fit (which is the low response), because sponsorships seems less effective, since recipients are easier to offload the others to give credit to the sponsor's good image to the competition (Rifon et al 2004), so the happenstance of Rifon et al (2004), which can help to explain more the low social media sport activation. — specifically social media sport activation and sponsorship activation is mostly made by the sport property organization, i.e. the basketball club, supporting its dominant role in its own industry, while the Educational Institution is gaining more respect, value and the view

of a more altruistic motives of being a sponsor brand, by activating and communicating only via its own social media the education related trips being made via the media, supported by its sport sponsoring, in order to stay true to its commitments and its role and scope in its own industry by maintaining a low position in terms of social activating in sport (via social media sport activation and social media sport sponsorship activation).

Research Question 6: Are different levels of engagement with the brand in a social media context depending on their demographic characteristics??

Statistical tests of the quantitative outcomes indicated that there are some significant differences on customer engagement levels between different categories. These differences can be converted to something like differences in customer behaviours hence different segments in the market exhibit different behaviours. Furthermore basic demographics have proven to be determinants factors of the level of fans' engagement. Customer engagement is higher for people less than 18 years (16.34) and less for people in the age group 35-44 (16.23). Also, customer engagement is higher for people having basic education at the primary level and lower for people with PhD. It is also higher for students of any age and less for freelancers Freelancers are people who work typically individually but at the same time might not always be in one location. This would lead to time spent with the team less, like this , less involvement with customers.

Engagement to the customer is a research for any companies. It depends on networking ,influence among peers and social media. This research are spreading the content & product to target audience or people for engagement with audience. From this entire process ,incentive is provided to customers for sharing, tweeting, subscribe or like this content and them sending this to their computriot of peers.(Kulkarni 2017). Usage of the demographic variables were very specific when Filo et al. (2014) argues that in case of sports social media, the key reasons for the use of social media can potentially differ by gender, context, age and education. Similarly, Ottoni et al. (2013) explains the need of better

understanding of demographics in case of sales made in social media networks because of the fact that females are the highest users of the net; and as the participation of females are on a rise in sports, these decisions can definitely affect the purchase decisions because of their view point. Females are both players and spectators of sports. Users from all age groups who use Digital Social Media Marketing were found to keenly check for online reviews before shopping by Biswa and Rebeiro Rabi (2016); and functions of seeking information was also noted from social media by users. However, the tendency to share one's

online experiences in social media and influence the purchase decisions of others shows a downfall when the age group increases.

Yet, since 2010, with several hundreds of empirical works done on the issue, there is no agreement about the definition of the construct which feeds fragmentation of the discipline and the scholarly and practitioner community is unable to find (search) research on [on] consumer engagement (e.g., keywords on Google Scholar, etc) since it is not identified as such in the work of academics and practitioners. It is as confusing as customer engagement with a brand (through a marketing tool such as social media) vs customer engagement to a social media (by a firm's customers).

Customer engagement had been redefined more than 20 times. Maslowska, Malthouse and Collinger 2016 Customer engagement, traced back through relationship marketing, is defined – by Hollebeek (2011), cited by Maslowska, Malthouse and Collinger – as a 'relationship-centred, motivation orienting, brand-rhetorical, context-dependent brand interaction state as described by [readable] characteristics regarding cognitive, emotional and behavioural activity in direct [offline brand] interaction'. For Pansari and Kumar (2017) – and they're not alone here – the relation between a consumer and a brand is relational when the emotion in the relationship is: a – presence of relationality in consuming, and b – sense of fulfilment in transacting with the brand. Engagement is a direct/transactional, indirect or nondirect (nondirect) (Pansari and Kumar 2017). Academics have put forward a plethora of attempts at describing the construct of consumer engagement, both in theory and in empirical

demonstration; the reason the definition of the construct has yet to be agreed upon might just be the reason why so many studies seem to show variability in results – or are even challenging of each other – particularly around engagement in demography. The term traceable through educational psychology (eg, Fredricks, Blumenfeld, Paris, 2004) in the 1980s, migrated next to sociology (eg, Achterberg et al, 2003), and finally to organisational behaviour (eg, Kahn, 1990; Schaufeli et al, 2002) – see William Kahn for the first time espousing ‘engagement’ as an article title in 1990 (‘The Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement at Work’). From this seminal contribution, Kahn denoted ‘school involvement’, parallel to William Fredricks’s ‘educational psychology’ (‘My parents do not value talent as much as hard work’; ‘I go to school for myself – not just because of my parents’). Early research in the late 1990s and early 2000s categorised engagement as holistic or multidimensional and pictured it as being divided up into ‘three parts’: behaviour, emotion and cognition; where cognition referred to as self-perceived expectations that ‘the task will use up effort’ (ie ‘The course is extremely intensive’); behavioural engagement denotes attendance and participation in school (eg, ‘Works hard, watches or reads while other students are misbehaving, turns work in on time’); and emotional engagement refers to ‘sense of belonging or value’ to school (eg, ‘My school has an atmosphere of respect’ – or the inverse). Though most organisational behaviour scholars and psychologists might conceptualise engagement as a ‘motivational’ or a ‘cognitive’ state-oriented to directing and driving action (ie cognitive, such as ‘School is a positive experience for me’; emotional, such as ‘Feels a sense of belonging at school’, and behavioural, such as ‘Attends school regularly’), a completely different rendering comes from sociologists, who conceptualise engagement as a behaviour in its own right.

The former denotes the connotative use in the marketing context, while the latter (a firm, a product or a service) represents the denotative use in the marketing context. At the other end of the process, the commissioning party is not the consumer (as in the Cantodden and Thng (2020) definition of brand engagement), but the brave new world marked by the emergence of new media and new communication technology. There is an intersection between the two: consumers interact with the latter (firm, product, service) to take part in this activity to engage with the former (emotion/consumption); and the conundrum here is that consumers

interact with the former (firm, product, service) but to take part in the activity to engage with latter (emotion/consumption). It looks like the activity defined by the verb is engaged. The OED defines this verb as taking part in an activity to a high level of commitment ('do something with great interest and enthusiasm; give one's time, energy, and attention to doing something'), perfectly fitting for describing the experience of consumption (emotion/consumption). Thus, CE becomes both the activity (CE) and engagement (the interaction with something or someone else) with – not limited to – engagement with a brand (CBE), engagement with social media (social media CE or SCE) or engagement in online brand communities (online brand-community CE or OBE) (this last one by Mollen and Willson (2010), one of the least fed ATM machines among all the definitions so far). CBE with [a social media activation campaign (SMAC)] is defined by the degree of higher order cognitive, affective, and behavioral energies that consumers simultaneously and holistically devote to a campaign. The most popular definition of CE among scholars (eg, Brodie et al, 2013; Dwivedi, 2015; Hollebeek et al, 2011; Solum and Pedersen, 2016) defines CE with – not limited to – the aforementioned both cognitively, affectively and behaviourally.

Here are demographics, consumer characteristics (Goldsmith et al., 2013), behavioural measures, social media user characteristics (VanMeter et al., 2015) who reported an eight-factor, 27-item measure of consumer attachment to social media (ASM), extraversion and openness to experience predicted consumer engagement, and neuroticism predicted negative consumer engagement (Kabadayi and Price, 2014); extraversion predicted consumer engagement, and this effect was partially mediated by social identity expressiveness (Pagani et al., 2013); and Brager et al (2016) reported five antecedents (when did consumer engage) and four dimensions (how to engage) of social media engagement (Brager et al, 2016). Antecedents: brand or product, consumer, content and social media factors; Response: four dimensions (how to engage: react to content, react to content, comment on and participate in consumer forums).

The answer is that all interviewees of the four case studies agree that the demographics of customer engagement have a lot to do with what drives the type of fan engagement when you consider different demographics of fans in a social media environment — yet none of them gave a clear answer to how they can acquire these demographics and how they can leverage them to produce a social media post or activity of sponsorship activation — no one touched on these details directly in the interview process.

There are many indirect ways to collect the basic demographics and trends or analytics, which are actually used for providing different interpretations of customer engagement by each of the interviewees studied. There is a reasonable expectation for this complexity and ambiguity between customer engagement to the brand and social media engagement of the customer to the firm's social media within the key words of the research, which can also explain the fact that all the interviewees of the four case studies noted that there is a grey area in the process and the actual access to their fans' demographic characteristics on digital or social media for creating a meaningful presence for their fans' customer engagement to them and their sponsorship partners.

Based on the widely used definition of Customer Brand Engagement (CBE) with a social media activation campaign (SMAC) by Mirbagheri and Najmi (2019), a new term can be developed as sponsorship-linked Social Media Customer Brand Engagement (sponsorship-linked SMCB Engagement) because of the key words used in many questions asked in this form of engagement relevant to social media.

Research Question 7: Is there any evidence of variation in terms of sponsorship activation in a 'social media world' when compared with the demographics of consumers?

These differences are also reflected in statistical tests of the mean values on the sponsorship activation scales, with clear differences across market segments on the behaviour measured by sponsorship activation. Those findings seem to be totally aligned with the important empirical differences in customer engagement across different segments of fans with different demographics identified within this research's sample. Advertising measures such as brand awareness are largely irrelevant to the recent measures of sport

sponsorship activation that are based on engagement and fan measures (Cornwell, 2019; Wakefield et al, 2020).

Further, it is indicated that age, education and occupation influence the sponsorship activation level and also the social media sports activation depends mostly on age and educational level. It is important to note that previously in research question 2 there is low generic research and also not very specific on the demographics exploitation in social media context for customer engagement and sponsorship activation reasons which is clear in the qualitative results.

From a qualitative perspective, these results describe poor insights on sponsorship activation level differences based on the customers' demographics within the social media context, all four managers of the above mentioned case studies are more geared on mega trends their social media has "acquired" and how to activate their sponsorship agreements within the social media context. Their analytics also come from different sources (other than the social) and from different department within or out of their organization. Amazingly enough they don't have social media demographics information presented with clarity and structured process on what to do within their department so as to design their social media content or to design a social media strategy.

The reason for the foregoing result that this work has established is an explanation that is readily recognized by the low percentage, in terms of human resources, of the examined case studies, which does not compare to the percentage of human resources in the marketing departments of the big sport organizations and those of their large sponsors operating internationally, as well as the lack of agreement among the investigated areas regarding Social Media Engagement, Content of Social Media Engagement, Online Brand Communities Engagement and Customer Brand Engagement in SMAC as well as the low use in greek sport sponsorships of Artificial Intelligence methods for acquiring such inputs related to demographics and users' brand personalities so as to plan sponsorship activation strategies through social and sponsorship activation posts in order to enhance the brand and one or more of its consequences like highly engaged fans.

Another important outcome is they all consider social media as very powerful tool to sponsorship activation but all of them expressed their need to be “few more steps forward” in allocating financial and manpower resources on that direction and including a more insightful and professional look on social media demographics within the social media context as well how they interpret it.

This customer-centric approach to evaluating sport sponsorship activation is a crucial component and necessitates greater understanding of the "what's and why's" practitioners are measuring in various differentiated contexts, including demographics for customer engagement and sport sponsorship activation.

5. Managerial Implications

The obvious managerial implications are that engaging through social media for sponsorship activation can be a really powerful tool for customer engagement and well-grounded for the sponsorship partner with regards to build brand strength and increase its brand equity of both sides of the venture. Differentiations on the proper management of these social media engagement are closely associated with the types of organization structure and networking of departments and its human resources allocation and utilization in creating communication between stakeholders of both sides of the organization. Importantly, the type of organizations, the industries they belong to and the social media marketing capabilities together with its data analytics and trends collection and interpretation capabilities.

To begin with the categorization of the sport organizations involved in the sponsorship dyad. Important differentiations have been identified between the Basketball Federation (non-profit sport organization) and the Professional Basketball Club (profit sport organization). Sport Federations which are partially depending on governmental grants

resulting in limited human resources allocation for sport sponsorship activation and their social media teams should further invest in high quality social media personnel recruitment with great expertise in order to stand out of the competition through innovative, hyper-creative, high-tech sport sponsorship activation initiatives and looking-forward sports sponsorship activation social media posts. A sport federation's existent nature-related content restrictions for the creation of successful sport sponsorship activation initiatives through social media and the actual design of the social media posts are also requiring personnel with high social media content creation designing competences.

The proper selection of the sponsorship partner is of utmost importance and has to take into account multidimensional factors for a successful sponsorship activation within social media. But it is also suggested that a customized consultative more sophisticated dual way packaging approach should be adopted in which both actors of the sponsorship dyad are actively being involved for the formulation of the sponsorship agreement's terms regarding social media sponsorship activation taking into account tangible as well as intangible components (each brand's characteristics like brand value, experience ect) as well as human resources for design, creation and successful implementation of sponsorship activation through social media for customer engagement. In other words, the formulation of the social media sport sponsorship activation initiatives should concretely consider both brands' characteristics and brand personality throughout the process of the initial inspiration to the actual design and implementation instead of just following social media trends and general rules of creating interaction with online communities. Building engagement for strong brands is the ultimate goal instead of just budging.

Consequently, sport marketers of both sponsors and sponsees should further invest in social media not only as sports sponsorship activation platforms of lower cost than traditional marketing but as a marketing tool for the improvement of consumer perception of the brand and the increase of brand value, brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand image association resulting in the direct impact to brand strength and brand equity. This requires the investment in social media experts within the organizations for successful content design and creation since the excessively high-speed delivery of the message to a huge number of

the online communities has a very direct positive impact whereas in the cases of personnel which lack in expertise the process could lead to diverse outcomes followed by successful activation but in parallel a large scale negative effect on multiple online recipients.

Short video marketing is recommended to make the social media sport sponsorship activation stand out from the cluster. The organisers who have a short interaction experience both in industry and in sport sponsorship should strictly check short video content, and make short video content with a high level of interest and a high degree of entertainment, authenticity and humour integrated into short video content. Brand culture must be organically located in the content of short video that can provide more extensive entertainment, releasing the pressure of users, make them excited and relaxed, and improve the brand cognition and emotion of consumers. The attitude towards the brand is positively affected by the involvement of users. Companies make it easy for users to create short video and reproduce short video, and perform more regular and friendly interaction with users. It is considered as the foundation of consumers' brand knowledge and a favourable attitude to the brand. Sport marketers must always design the content of social media sport sponsorship activation that could facilitate happy fan syndrome and the capacity of team identification, positive affect and prosocial behaviour.

For that reason, managers in sports organisations must work even closer with sponsors to create online material that illustrates this synergy and confirm that the sponsor-sponsee symbiotic relations with the fans are psychologically balanced. Furthermore, empirical research up to this point has shown that the marriage of the two parties can be enhanced when the two parties have a direct and obvious match between them (i.e., the brand of the club can more easily crossover to the sponsor and improve the consumers' perception of the sponsored goods or services) and that both the sponsor and sponsees' marketers have to do more digging to assess their target groups' culture and nationality for a sponsor-sponsee fit (i.e., the scenario of this dissertation based on the finding that a non-traditional sponsor company could become the educational organisation that provides Higher Education and the 'Greek mythology' named brand becomes the sponsor of a low-experienced women's Professional Basketball Club and logo is deemed its name.

So, set the stage in advance, through your own social media outlets, and any other credible and authentic hook (based on match or inference) that seeks to create psychological congruence between the club and the sponsor, similar to that of the sponsorship dyad protagonists (that are out to promote both the Greek Family ethos and the Ancient Greek Philosophy on Disease and Health of the Body and the Mind – this latter, not unlike those in the modern Olympics, centred on the Olympic Values (Respect, Excellence and Friendship)). The purport of such sponsorship agreements is, after all, enacted properly, through their social media sponsorship activations, on their Greek fans, and also, and by their very nature, their European fans for whom – if all other things are equal (e.g., the team is not over-commercialised) – an unbiased (e.g., in terms of limited commercialisation of the team) link simply adds to the non-commercialisation of the team. Of course, sponsor-ponsee fit and an authentic relationship between the two are not the only determinants of success. For example, a high-fit sponsor may enhance the brand image but dilute brand equity if the sponsorship is disliked on other grounds (e.g., over-commercialisation), while a low-fit sponsor may still increase positive attitudes towards the firm or its products by adding attractive (and hopefully entertaining as well) values to the sponsorship platform, for example, through short videos (e.g., a short of a film star and a sports star chatting) – though the brand image may then be rather loud and confused. Culture – rooted in the land (which cannot be ‘controlled via country’, given its deep roots in Greece) – seems to have played a part too in this success, and so there are some things for sponsors to consider if they wish to maximise the success of their sponsorship activations, especially in the social media deployment to engage customers for the purposes of brand strength and brand equity. In short, social media experts in this activation is an added number of this activation to a high sponsor fit as a whole to enable the social media sports sponsorship activation to activate customers for brand strength and brand equity.

Consequently, based on the aforementioned analysis, differences in the sponsor’s property rights to the belonging industry must be taken into consideration in developing the social media sport sponsorship activation strategy for customer engagement in terms of content creation and related factors, as in the example of the betting company. The managers of the companies who produce non-mass products and who belong to those industries that

constitute a risk for people's health (eg, sport sponsorships of alcohol companies, fast-food companies, tobacco companies, gambling companies) have to clearly differentiate the general social media strategy from their social media sport sponsorship activation strategy in terms of content and goals. And all related social media sport sponsorship content (or the social media sport sponsorship activation strategy, such as online competition) for this particular industry should never be related to the goal of increasing their sales. On the contrary, it has to be created for achieving the goals of increasing brand awareness, increasing the community engagement, growing the brand's audience, or just to increase the number of people visiting the company's website.

A practical example of non sales-related social media goals application refers to time-posting. Social media sport sponsorship activation posts should happen during the game day instead of posting the days before for increasing the betting sales because in the game day fans have less negative comments on the sponsor-related posts, they become more emotionally connected to their team, and this positive sentiment toward the team may be transferred to the sponsoring brand. Moreover, sport sponsorship activation posts after a team victory (in which time there is not at all any betting sales perspective for the betting sponsor) may be particularly beneficial for transferring the pleasant feelings of the supporters from the team to the sponsor. During that time gambling sponsors could promote co-creation activities and game-related postings to capitalize on the goodwill spillover effect combined with an anti-addiction campaign emphasizing in its use as entertainment and not as income. An honest and authentic approach of betting companies within sport sponsorship as the one described could further contribute to their sustainability as sport sponsors and their wider acceptance by the general public since insincere marketing appeals often result in consumer skepticism. Furthermore, in this kind of industry complementary CSR initiatives are a crucial prerequisite for the successful sport sponsorship activation through social media and the facilitation of the image transfer and positive feelings of the sport involvement to the brand. CSR-related sponsorship tactics marketed through social media may give the relationship more social significance and raise both sponsorship partners' ratings.

Fan engagement through online social media channels positively influences behavioral intentions towards the club in offline settings. Sport managers should take advantage of all available resources for data analytics and exploit them accordingly. There is a lack of consensus among researchers having defined customer engagement more than 20 times over the years, as a result different sport managers of different organizations are thinking of different concepts when referring to customer engagement. Accordingly, the interpretation and exploitation of the available tools for analytics also differ per organization. Sport managers should have a very clear focus on the “what and why” they are measuring. Basic demographic information is attained through social media along with big data analytics but the measurement refers to the online user engagement or to online brand community engagement, or to customer brand engagement. A very good analysis of the collected data, among the different departments of an organization (for example business intelligence department, marketing department, sales department) is crucial since a highly online engaged fan with its demographic profile and online activity fully acquired by the firm, cannot be automatically interpreted to a highly engaged customer with high purchase intention unless a cross analysis with other available metrics is made along with careful design of the social media sport sponsorship activation based on this cross analysis.

Hence, in that direction, the term of the sponsorship-linked Social Media Customer Brand Engagement (sponsorship-linked SMCB Engagement) can be constructed by placing a word of facilitator before the word the brand, similar to the already supported definition of CBE with SMAC by Mirbagheri and Najmi (2019) [Customer brand engagement (CBE) is the extent of cognitive, affective and behavioural energies that consumers simultaneously and holistically devote to a campaign]. Like Hollebeek (2011b), Mirbagheri and Najmi amendate the definition of the three dimensions of CBE from the previous studies. A term of brand related customer engagement would be highly utilizable in the context of sponsorship activation with social media, because some of leading service marketing scholars already documented the mediating role of CBE to service marketing context (Dwivedi, 2015; Hollebeek et al., 2014; Kaur et al., 2020; Read et al., 2019), and followed NSD process, sport sponsorship and especially its activation, is a very beneficial service marketing tool, according to Athanasopoulou & Sarli (2015) and Douvis et al. (2015).

Furthermore, sport managers and marketers should take advantage of AI solutions such as Omni channel sources which help process data through the acquisition via multichannel systems including Google or Facebook sign-ups, the history of following the mobile applications, experiences from desktop and Cloud storage, and real-time interaction tracking, as well as integration of machine learning solutions (not only for prediction and appropriate design but also the activation of the social media sponsorship and the acquisition of valuable insights).

We recommend that sport managers would have to invest an extra effort to strengthen the organisation's social media marketing capabilities. Overall, the correlations between the five dimensions of social media marketing capabilities and customer relationship and customer loyalty-social media were positive for three dimensions, that is, social media product development (capability), communication (capability) and implementation (capability). Additional love mark brand approaches. For sport organisations especially with smaller sport history, this implication is even more important as sport is inherently an emotionally oriented business (Greve, 2013) and emotions matter as they drive outcomes. Practically, this implication can have newcomers to sport (or to sport sponsorship) target these factors effectively via a love mark brand approach, potentially gaining relative competitive advantage on the global sport sponsorship activation map through social media. One of the additional consequences is to the fact that technological investment, in isolation as an avenue to successful social media sport sponsorship activation as part of a social media strategy, will not get sponsorship partners home. The technology should also enable sponsorship partners to use it to develop greater brand strength (eg, awareness, activation, resonance, relevance) and brand equity.

Managers and marketers of the sponsorship dyad should always activate their sponsorships through social media with an extremely careful design considering this process is foundational and not a subsidiary of a minor importance process supporting their general social media strategy. On the contrary, as supported by this dissertation's cross analysis of both sponsorship partners and their fans results, sport sponsorship activation can be a key

actor in customers' engagement, brand strength and brand equity for both sides of the sponsorship deal when meaningful content is created with the right balance of content design, quality, creativity along with the promotion of team identification, prosocial behavior and positive affect as main elements in the sponsorship activation initiatives and/or posts.

6. Limitations & Further Research

The outcomes of this study assisted sport property owners as passionately as sponsors' companies to exploit in the most efficient rate their sponsorship investment both in terms of income revenue but also much more than that, through successful sport sponsorship activation on online social media paths, on sustaining and fostering the strength and equity of their customers' brands and brands, in growing and nourishing the Customer Brand Engagement. This has been a prototype mixed research on sport sponsorship but more than that, a pioneer research on sponsorship activation (with a broad notion of activation), within a wide-ranging and diversified spectrum of stakeholders and actors of the sponsorship activation process namely of basketball fans, a non-profit organization sport basketball federation, a for profit leading professional basket ball club and a sport sponsor (with a very much popular industry in the most recent years a betting company and a rare sport sponsor –non branded– in a popular sport sponsorship a provider and university of Higher Education with no engagement in the College sports, However, the 666 fans and syne 4 cases of Greek Basketball, irrespectively of an attempt to a multi-faceted effort to triangulate the data resulted, this current study, cannot easily be generalized, as the level of efforts where the samples were drawn were restricted. To a further research, that will extend the number of cases on either the triangulation or the replication of the cases (either the same team-sport or other team-sport) or possibly have a higher number of online social media users-sport fans. And lastly, the term Sponsorship-Linked Customer Social Media Brand Engagement (Sponsorship-Linked CSMB Engagement) is proposed for future research neither within this study's course, although some attempts are made, but more so even then sport sponsorship

and entities in general (keeping psychology and sports psychology aside with a single citation from the article by Christopher Horn (2003), in exercising caution on Social Media Engagement, Customer Engagement and Customer Brand Engagement not only on sport but in general contexts within Social Media.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

Introduction

Hello, my name is I am a PhD candidate of University of and this survey will be part of my thesis. I would like to assure you that all the information you provide on this questionnaire will be kept completely anonymous, so you can't be identified. Your participation is voluntary and you may refuse to answer any question you don't feel comfortable with. The data may be used in future publications, including academic publications.

Please see the attached Participant Information Sheet for information about confidentiality and anonymity and information about how the data will be disposed of at the end of the study.

Section one (1)

1) Gender

Male

Female

2)What is your age?

Less than 18 years

18 - 24 years

25 - 34 years

35 - 44 years

45 - 54 years

55 - 64 years

3) Educational Background

Primary School

- Secondary School
- Bachelor Degree
- Master Degree
- Phd (Doctoral)
- Other

4) Which of the following categories best describe your primary area of employment?

- Unemployed
- Student
- Civil Servant
- Private employee
- Freelancer
- Other

5) How often do you use social media platforms?

- Not at all
- Seldom
- Average use
- Often
- Very often

Section two (2) Customer engagement

6. Please state your agreement level with the following statements when 1= “strongly disagree” and 7= “strongly agree”.

Team identification							
I consider myself to be a “real” fan of my team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I would experience a loss if I had to stop being a fan of my team.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Being a fan of my team name is very important to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Positive affect							
Watching games of my team at this stadium makes me happy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Watching games of my team at this stadium gives me pleasure.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel good when I watch games of my team at this stadium.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Basking in reflected glory							
I would like to let others know about my association with my team when the team wins.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would like to publicize my connection with my team when the team plays really well.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would like to tell others about my association with my team when the team performs well.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Management cooperation							
I try to work cooperatively with my team.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I do things to make my team's event management easier.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The employees of my team get my full cooperation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Prosocial behavior							
I often interact with other fans to talk about issues related to my team.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I often advise other fans on how to support my team.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I spend time on social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) sharing information with other fans of my team.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Performance tolerance							
I wear apparel, which represents the fans of my team even if the team has an unsuccessful season.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I display the logo of my team on my clothing even if my team does not perform well.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I wear clothing that displays the name of my team even if my team has an unsuccessful season.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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Section three (3) Sponsorship activation

7. Team – sponsor fit

Please state your agreement level with the following statements when 1= “strongly disagree” and 7= “strongly agree”.

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree	
There is a logical connection between the team and “sponsor name”	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The image of the team and the image of “sponsor name” are similar	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
“Sponsor name” and the team fit together well	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
“Sponsor name” and the team stand for similar things	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It makes sense to me that “sponsor name” sponsors this team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

8. Team commercialization

Please state your agreement level with the following statements when 1= “strongly disagree” and 7= “strongly agree”.

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Disagree						
I feel that the team was too commercialized because of the sponsors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Because of the sponsors the sport was pushed to the background	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sponsors should not use the team for their commercial purposes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Instead of spending money on sponsorship, the companies should improve the quality of their products	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The sponsors were too much in the focus of the sport	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

9. Activity involvement

Please state your agreement level with the following statements when 1= “strongly disagree” and 7= “strongly agree”.

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree	
Football / basketball are important for me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I like to get engaged in discussions about football / basketball	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am very interested in football / basketball in general	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
For me, football / basketball are exciting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

10. Social media sports activation

	Strongly					Strongly Agree	
	y						

	Disagree						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I like to get engaged in discussions about football / basketball in social media	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I tend to publish information about sport topics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I tend to publish information about my favorite sports team in social media	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I usually interact with others about sports topics in social media	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I usually interact with my favorite team's posts in social media	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

11. Sponsorship exposure

For how long have you been a fan of the team?.....

12. Social Media Sponsorship Activation exposure

For how long have you interacted with sponsorship linked activities on social media?.....

Section four (4) Other measures

12. Purchase intention

Please state your agreement level with the following statements when 1= “strongly disagree” and 7= “strongly agree”.

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree	
The probability that I will attend another sporting event of my team is very high	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The likelihood that I would actively buy additional products (apparel and goods) from my team is very high	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The probability that I will spend more than 50% of my spectator sports budget on my team is very high.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

13. Referral intention

The number of referrals I will make for attending my team’s future games in this season is.....

14. Repeat purchases

How many times did you buy products of your team last season?.....

15. Brand loyalty

Please state your agreement level with the following statements when 1= “strongly disagree” and 7= “strongly agree”.

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree	
I consider myself to be loyal to the sponsor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sponsor would be my first choice	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I will not buy other brands if sponsors' brand is available at the store	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sponsors' brand fulfilled my expectations the last time I bought it	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I will buy Sponsors' brand again	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I will suggest Sponsors' brand to other consumers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The price of another brand would have to be considerably inferior to not chose Sponsors' brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Even in the case of not using it, I would like to buy Sponsors' brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Even if other brands has the same features as Sponsors' brand, I would prefer to buy Sponsors' brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
If there is another brand as good as Sponsors' brand, I would prefer to buy Sponsors' brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
If another brand is not different from Sponsors' brand in any way, it seems smarter to purchase Sponsors' brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

16. Brand Awareness

Please state your agreement level with the following statements when 1= "strongly disagree" and 7= "strongly agree".

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I know what Sponsors' brand looks like	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

I can recognize Sponsors' brand among other competing brands	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I think of product category, Sponsors' brand is one of the brands that comes to mind	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am aware of Sponsors' brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

17. Brand Image Association

Please state your agreement level with the following statements when 1= "strongly disagree" and 7= "strongly agree".

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree	
Some characteristics of Sponsors' brand come to my mind quickly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of Sponsors' brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sponsors' brand has strong personality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have a clear impression of the type of people who use Sponsors' brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sponsors' brand has a strong image	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The intangible attributes of Sponsors' brand are reason enough to buy it	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sponsors' brand provides a high value in relation to the price we must pay for it	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Interview Structure Design

“Funnel Principle”

Topical Sequence Method-Themes

1) What kind of relationship has your organization had with social media for the last 5 years?

2) Has your social media strategy changed due to Covid -19 pandemic and if yes how?

*Relationship
Marketing-Social
Media Strategy-
COVID*

3) In terms of customer engagement, which are the most important antecedents you focused on reinforcing through social media and how?

How would you prioritize them? (positive affect, team identification, prosocial behavior, basking on reflected glory, performance tolerance)

*Customer
Engagement within
the Social Media
Context*

4) Do you identify any consequences of customer engagement to the consumers' behavior within the social media context? Are there processes in place that control this aspect and provide numbers?

(Are those consequences depicted in purchase intention, referral intention and repeat purchases? Are brand elements (brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand image association strongly connected with the level of engagement?)

*Other Measures
Brand Elements,
Purchase Intention
ect.*

5. How the customer engagement and sponsorship activation is interacted within a social media context? Does the strengthening on the customer engagement within social media context had an impact on the sponsorship activation? Is it controversial? Does the utilisation of sponsorship activation increase the customer engagement within social media context?

6. How does sponsorship activation affect consumer behavior, ie., how does your social media handle this? Do you have any specific methods?

*Sponsorship
Activation within
the social media
context*

7. How do you measure consumer variables in association with the sponsorship activation?

8) Does your organization identify any differences in customer engagement levels in the social media context regarding the demographic characteristics of your fans? How do you adopt your social media strategy if you have faced such an issue?

Do those demographic related differences affect the sponsorship activation levels and if so which are the actions you are taking?

*Customer
Engagement
within the Social
Media
Context/Demogr
aphics*