

Fan Involvement and Sponsorship Awareness Effect on Brand Image: Analyzing the Game of Cricket in Bangladesh

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Abstract: Sponsorship has become gradually more accepted as marketing tools in recent years. In this subcontinent, it is one of the major used tools and particularly sport sponsorship is often used to endorse companies' products and to reach their targeting consumers. Because of its attractiveness and the lack of research on how sport sponsorship influences on the brand image, this article seeks to analyze the impact of sports sponsorship on brand image by considering two significant factors fan involvement and sponsorship awareness. This study inspects the sponsorship effects on sports through fan involvement on cricket of Bangladesh and sponsorship awareness of fans towards brand image. Survey method approach is taken in which data is collected through questionnaires from the different respondents in the capital of Bangladesh.

Keywords: Sports Sponsorship, Fan Involvement, Brand Awareness, Sponsor's Awareness, Brand Image

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I. Introduction

Sponsorship, in its various forms, is at least a 2500-year-old tool that has been embryonic with the times. Sponsorship was born as a form of benefaction of philanthropy used by members of imperial and wealthy family. The decision to pecuniary support someone or a project was uttered by the patron's own interests, not by company objectives, and publicity was limited mainly to word and mouth. The earliest 'sponsorships' date back to the 5th century BC in prehistoric Greece. Initially, sponsorship took the form of a tax paid by rich citizens to finance major contests and public merriments. The Renaissance was a inexhaustible period for the art and sciences, which would almost certainly not have been possible without the help of patrons. Some of the earliest corporate sponsorships occurred at the beginning of the media boom. In the late 1980s through 1990s, corporate sponsorship exploded.

In the present day, sponsorship becomes a vital tool for the marketing strategies and targeting the consumers. According to the sponsoring report from 2016 which was published by IEG, the total global expenses grew from \$ 51.1 billion to \$ 60.2 billion in 2015. Out of this \$ 60.2 billion spending on sponsorship, the worldwide revenue of sport sponsorship is \$ 45.2 billion which is still growing year by year [1]. Sponsorship has become an effective and necessary tool for the marketer in capturing the utmost market share and targeting the huge market [2]. The major point of the sponsorship is to capture or target the huge consumers and the other one is to boost the image of the corporation through different modes and ways of advertising, promotion and media exposure. Sponsorship shows the alliance and relationship of the organization with the sports event [3]. Due to rapidly increase in media exposure companies try to target the substantial consumers in short period of time. For this principle companies adopted the sponsorship to incarcerate the huge consumers, communicating the brand information and image, inform the consumers about the company and its offerings and building the long term relationship with the consumers [4].

In Bangladesh, cricket is the most popular game among the viewers of sports. BCB (Bangladesh Cricket Board) raveled in their financial summary report (FY report 2016-17) that sponsorship money in the previous fiscal year was 285,498,065 BDT; and it was gradually increasing near the past years. Robi (A prominent Telecommunication Company in Bangladesh) was retained their sponsorship on national cricket team, that's why the jersey of Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Mushfiqur Rahim, Shakib Al Hasan and other national cricketers used the Robi logo but unfortunately a premature termination had happened and new contract established with Unilever Bangladesh as team sponsor from 6th September 2018. The Tigers (cricket players of Bangladesh National Team) will don the national kit with the logo of Unilever's product Lifebuoy. Right now, BCB (Bangladesh Cricket Board) has official sponsor partners like Amara Wifi as ISP partner, Qater Airlines as Airlines partner, Fresh Soul Up as Beverage Partner, GTV (Gazi Television) as Media Partner, Brac Bank as Team Kits partner, Fresh Drinking Water as official drink partner, Pan Pacific Sonargaon as Hospitality Partner.

In June 2012, Sahara had outbid Grameenphone (another prominent Telecommunication Company in Bangladesh), who had sponsored the Bangladesh team for eight years, to sponsor the Tigers with a \$14 million

four-year deal. Beside national team sponsorship, company can sponsor on sport event in various ways and integrate these marketing mix strategies on several online and offline media vehicles.

Sports sponsorship is very helpful tool to associate brand with the sports in creating the strong thoughts about the brand in the heart of consumers. Sponsorship shows the passion, excitement, spirit, emotions, feelings and excellence when the brand values associate with the values of sport. From this we make out the overall analysis and determine from sponsors their impact on brands and consumers involvement and awareness.

For sponsoring any particular sports team, fan involvement on this relevant sport and awareness of sponsoring brand can blend together for building an image of a brand to the consumer mind.

II. Purpose

Purpose of this study is to analyze the impact of sports sponsorship on brand image, where are the factors like fan involvement and sponsors' awareness leading to higher or lower impact on both variables.

III. Limitation

The first limitation of this study is based on only the respondents of Dhaka city; secondly enough research time, budget and lack of access to better instruments might be possible limitations of this study. A researcher can start further research about purchase intention and brand equity of cricket fans' in Bangladesh by using this study.

IV. Significance

This report helps out the marketers to recognize the value and credibility of sports sponsorship towards consumers in building the brand image. It describes the functions, importance and its uses in existing environment at national level. How a marketer can bond himself with an offering that has appeal towards target audience to attract their attention towards him and draw a positive image of the corporation. Sports sponsorship has become a key tool for driving awareness for leading brands. We've seen this across all sports and especially in football, as typified in the way Barclays has invested in the Premiership over the past decade [5].

This report helps the sponsor (marketer) in the completion of sponsorship functions, technique, procedures, process and strategies in an effectual way. Major purpose of this study is to decide whether sports sponsorship has impact on brand image through fan involvement and awareness of consumer. If the sports sponsorship impacts the brand image then which is the factors that can build and fortify the brand image. Findings of this report help the marketers to find out the factors that can enhance the brand image and through that process it can increase the sale for the goods and services in later.

V. Literature Review

A well established and recognized brand promotes restate buying. Brand is a combination of numerous associations build on a consumer's memory about its characteristics and use [6]. Sport sponsorship objectives can varies in different ways and it can be explained by AIDA framework, In addition to the AIDA model, the author added the three stages which the consumer is moving in response to the promotion: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. In addition the primary objectives of sponsorship were added to the model.

Table no 1: Objectives linked with stages

Stages	AIDA Model	Objectives of Sponsorship
Cognitive	Attention	Increased brand awareness Reaching Target Market
Affective	Interest Desire	Image Building
Behavioral	Action	Sales increasing Relationship Marketing

Sponsorship on a sports team not always gives positive outcomes. Boyle and Walter, 2002 [7] found no relation between the success of the New Zealand national rugby team and the stock market reaction in the country. Ashton, Gerrard, Hudson, 2010 [8] find a strong relationship between the performance of the English national football team and the change in the price of shares traded on the London stock exchange, where good (bad) performances by the national team are followed by positive (negative) market returns. Brand is very much involved in the process of developing of brand equity, which includes its awareness and attributes [9]. The image of the brand depicts consumer's knowledge and belief about brands various commodities and its attributes.

To build the relationship between brand and consumers the organizations must have to converse brand character and defines the benefits for the consumers in the form of offering, feelings, emotions and association

(Lin, 2004) Probably one of the most fundamental goals of a company when it comes to sponsorship is to generate or to increase the awareness of its products, services, or the corporate name. For a new brand, sponsorship can be very useful tool to enhance their awareness in a short time [4]. Sponsorship is defined by Meenaghan (1983, p. 9) as: “provision of assistance either financial or in kind to an activity by a commercial organization for the purpose of achieving commercial objectives”. There are only two parties involved in sponsorship, namely the sponsor- party which pays in any form in order to be associated with a specific property and the sponsor- property which offers value through association [11].

Sponsorship works better than promotional activities and it creates a strong perception in the minds of people because of its affiliation with the offering. People remember that sponsor when he thinks about the offering. Sponsorship works for the both promotional tool as well as building the association in the minds of consumers [12].

In sponsorship the main purpose of the marketer is to increase the awareness of his brand which leads to enhance the overall brand image and equity of the corporation [13]. Every sponsor wants to get the maximum benefit from the investment that he made in sponsorship and ensures that it will give him benefits more than other investment [14]. There are many ways to measure the effectiveness of a sponsorship program, and there is not one general one which can be applied to every sponsorship deal. After analyzing a few of them, the author decided that the theory of Brassington and Pettitt, 2000 [15] and the one of Shank (2009) may be the most relevant one for this study. Shanks approach to the measurement of sponsorship is divided into three stages of strategic control. The following figure shows the approach of Shank.

Figure no 1 Control Phase of Strategic Sport Marketing Process (Shank 2009, 572.) ^[10]



As the sport marketing plan is built upon assumptions, it is significant to control those assumptions and to guarantee whether they are still suitable or not. The external environment factor and the sport industry factor should also be considered as they are the most important ones in the sport marketing sector. This process of strategic control is necessary so that the responsible persons can guide themselves through the process. However, this phase of the control is not considering the internal and external aspects of the environment which are not possible to find out during the planning phase. Therefore, two further steps are required. The process control evaluates the efforts which already have been done to execute the plan. Because of changes in contingencies and premises which are usually caused as the result of process control activities. The last point which Shank is mentioning is the contingency control. The contingency control is under the assumption that there is an uncertain and unpredictable environment which may be the reason to reassess strategic choices. The object of this stage of the control phase is to scan the environment so that they can discover any changes that could affect their sponsorship activities [10]. Purchase intention is composed of consumer’s feelings, thoughts, experience and external factors that he considered before making any purchase. Purchase intention of the consumers depicts and expresses their behavior and the way they making decisions about their buying process [16]. Purchase intentions describe and determine the consumer response to purchase the offering. The higher the intention leads to elevated purchase of that offering. Consumers purchase intention can be determine through their responses, feedback and their involvement. Highly involved consumers shows high rate of purchase [17].

VI. Research Frameworks

In this study, a questionnaire has been developed where the demography of the cricket fans like gender, age, profession, family income, average cricket watching time on TV per week scrutinize carefully for understanding how much fans are involved in the popular game like cricket in Bangladesh. Major sponsoring companies before sponsor on this particular game they should consider fan involvement as well as after

exposure on game how fans aware about sponsors cause it can lead to enhance their brand image and later on brand image can enhance purchase intention. In this specific study, it finds the relationship of fan involvement and sponsors' awareness and then verifies the effect of sponsors' awareness on corporate brand image, connection of straight dotted arrow indicates the pre-sponsoring face of major sponsoring companies and straight line full black arrow indicates the pro sponsoring face in this overall process.

Figure no 2 Research Frameworks

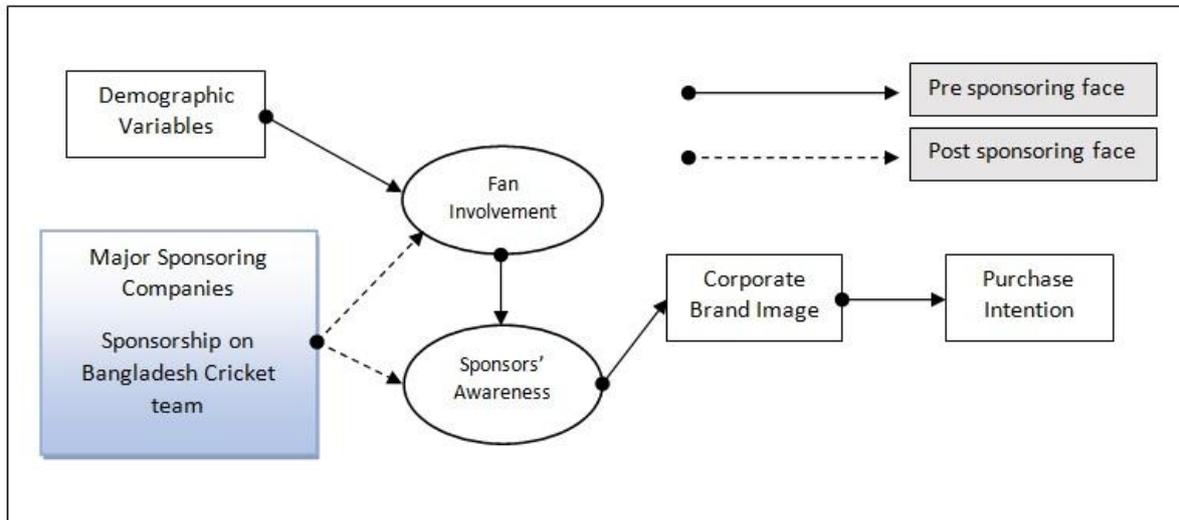


Figure 2 presents the research framework. This framework demonstrates the relationships and effects of pre-sponsoring and post-sponsoring faces among major sponsoring companies' sponsor on Bangladesh cricket team, fan Involvement, sponsors' awareness, corporate brand image and purchase intention. It also intends to measure the effects of 'demographic variables' on fan involvement.

VII. Research Question

Does the corporate brand image can influence fan involvement and sponsors' awareness among the cricket fans' of Bangladesh?

VIII. Research Objectives

The following would be the objectives of this research study-

- i. To understand is there any demographic factors influence on fan involvement or not
- ii. To Measure the importance of sports sponsorship through fan involvement and sponsors' awareness
- iii. To analyze how the fan involvement and sponsors' awareness partially build corporate brand image.

IX. Hypothesis

The following would be the hypothesis of this research study-

H_0 : -Demographic Variables has no impact on fan involvement
 H_1 : -Demographic variables have a significant positive impact on fan involvement.

H_0 : There is no relationship between gender on fan involvement
 H_1 : There is a significant relationship of gender on fan involvement

H_0 : There is no relationship between age on fan involvement
 H_1 : There is a significant relationship of age on fan involvement

H_0 : There is no relationship between profession on fan involvement
 H_1 : There is a significant relationship of profession on fan involvement

H_0 : There is no relationship between income on fan involvement
 H_1 : There is a significant relationship of income on fan involvement

H_0 : There is no relationship between TV watching per week on fan involvement

H_1 : There is a significant relationship of TV watching per week on fan involvement

H_0 :-Fan involvement has no relationship on sponsors' awareness

H_1 :-Fan involvement has significantly positive relationship on sponsors' awareness.

H_0 :-Corporate brand image has no influences over the fan involvement and sponsors' awareness

H_1 :-Corporate brand image has positive influences over the fan involvement and sponsors' awareness

X. Methodology

According to the research framework, we design the questionnaire items for five dimensions: fan involvement, sponsors' awareness, corporate brand image, and demographic variables. These 3 items except demographic are measured on Likert's five-point scale, ranging from 1 point to 5 points, denoting "strongly agree", "agree", "undecided", "disagree", "strongly disagree". We administered the questionnaires to investors living in Dhaka using random sampling from October 5, 2017 to March 31, 2018. A total of 277 responses were distributed, and 240 usable responses were collected. An acceptable response rate of 86% was achieved. The research methodology would start from intense literature review and it includes the study of researches and journals which are related to impact of sports sponsorship on brand image and purchase intention. Study is descriptive and explanatory in nature. The sample exhibited differences in various demographics characteristics such as gender, age, profession, monthly income and average cricket watching time per week on TV.

XI. Analysis And Discussion

This study uses IBM SPSS® software platform offers advanced statistical analysis version 25 for conducting analysis. Initially, it gives a description of demographic variables and later on it analyzes relationship between demographic variables and fan involvement through cross tabulation analysis and chi square test. Afterward, correlation between fan involvement and sponsor's awareness has been done where fan involvement was independent variable and sponsor's awareness was dependent variable. Then lastly, partial correlation technique was used to understand the brand image's effects on the relationship between fan involvement and sponsor's awareness.

Description of Demographic variables: Through descriptive statistics analysis in Table 1, we are able to understand the distribution of participants' basic attributes. The gender data shows 55.00% of the subjects are male, and 45.0% are female. The age categories show the main group is 20-29 years old, taking up 36.6%, followed by the group of 30-39 years old (30.8%), 40-49 years old (20.4%), and above 50 years old (12.0%). Demography of profession indicates the majority of professions are service holder, and it taking up 37.0%, 2nd position is 32.0% and they are students, then business people holds 27.5%, and others 3.3%, Monthly family income the highest group range is from 40000 to 49000 and its taking up 38.7%, second highest is 50000-above and it takes 29.5%, then 30000-39000 is 22.5% and 20000-29000 is 9.1%.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Demographic Variables

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	132	55.0
	Female	108	45.0
Age	20-29 years old	88	36.6
	30-39 years old	74	30.8
	40-49 years old	49	20.4
	50-above	29	12.0
Profession	Business	66	27.5
	Service	89	37.0
	Students	77	32.0
	Others	8	3.3
Monthly family Income	20000-29000	22	9.1
	30000-39000	54	22.5
	40000-49000	93	38.7
	50000-Above	71	29.5
Average Cricket watching time on TV per week	3-6 hours	34	14.1
	7-10 hours	45	18.7
	11-14 hours	101	42.0
	15-above	60	25.0

This table shows the descriptive statistics analysis for the sample data. The first column is demographic variables in this study. The third and fourth column reveals the frequency and percentage of total number of observations in each category, respectively.

Demographic Variables and Fan Involvement: From appendix-A, SPSS data analysis from figure 1.3 the chi square test has been done at 0.05 significance with 12 degree of freedom and it finds critical value 21.03 and the calculated value is 12.901, because calculated value is less than the critical value, so In this circumstance, it was easily revealed null hypothesis is cannot be rejected that’s why it can be interpret that there is no relationship between gender and fan involvement, again in case of age, from figure 2.3 the chi square test at the 0.05 level of significance with 42 degree of freedom, the critical value of chi square statistic is 58.12 and the calculated value is 46.198, because calculated value is less than the critical value, so the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. So, this study finds that there is no relationship with age factor and fan involvement. For analyzing, the relationship between profession and fan involvement, also chi square test has been hardened and it finds that calculated value with 42 degree of freedom at the 0.05 significance level is 55.789 which is less than the critical value 58.12. Therefore, it also cannot reject the null hypothesis. So, this study states that there is no relationship of profession on fan involvement. For studying the relationship between another demographic variable income per month of cricket fans and their involvement in the game of cricket chi square test has done again and it finds that there is no association between them cause calculated value at the 0.05 significance level with 42 degree of freedom is 36.195 which is less than the critical value 58.12. And finally, association between TV watching per week and fan involvement states no relation among them because it finds that at the 0.05 significance level with 42 degree of freedom calculated value is 40.026 which is less than the critical value 58.12. Subsequently, it reports that null hypothesis could not be rejected. So, there is no affiliation in between TV watching per week with fan involvement. Overall, this study could not accept the first alternative hypothesis that demographic variables have a significant positive impact on fan involvement. In this study, it finds that demographic variables have no relationship with fan involvement.

Table 2: Fan Involvement and Sponsor’s Awareness

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Fan Involvement	1.9067	.40617	240
Sponsor’s awareness	2.0675	.48873	240

Table shows the mean of Fan involvement is 1.9067 and its standard deviation is .40617 from its mean. The mean value of sponsor’s awareness is 2.0675 and its standard deviation is .48873 from its mean.

Table 3: Correlation of Fan Involvement and Sponsor’s Awareness

Correlations			
		Fan Involvement	Sponsor’s Awareness
Fan Involvement	Pearson Correlation	1	.579**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	39.429	27.452
	Covariance	.165	.115
	N	240	240
Sponsor’s Awareness	Pearson Correlation	.579**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	27.452	57.086
	Covariance	.115	.239
	N	240	240

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

This table shows the value of Pearson correlation is .579 so, it indicates that there is a moderate strong relationship between fan involvement and sponsor’s awareness. The value of significance between fan involvement and sponsor’s awareness is .000 which means that the relationship is significant to .01 confidence level. So we are accepting (Alternate Hypothesis) H1 and rejecting (Null Hypothesis) H0. So, this report finds that the fan involvement has the moderately positive impact on sponsor’s awareness. Because it finds very little positive relationship among them that’s why it takes corporate image as control variable for doing partial correlation.

Table 4: Corporate brand image with Fan Involvement and sponsor’s awareness:

Correlations				
Control Variables			Fan Involvement	Sponsor’s Awareness
Corporate image	Fan Involvement	Correlation	1.000	.358
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000
		df	0	237
	Sponsor’s Awareness	Correlation	.358	1.000
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.
		df	237	0

This table shows after doing partial correlation through SPSS, the value of correlation between fan involvement and sponsor’s awareness is .358 and it considers corporate brand image as a control variable, and it finds that there is a weak relationship between this two variables at the .000 significance with 237 degree of freedom. In summary, the result found that the fans of the game of cricket considers prior brand image of companies because it influences the relationship of fan involvement and sponsor’s awareness.

XII. Recommendation

Following are the recommendations for the companies whose are sponsoring in cricket in Bangladesh -

- Though it widely used phenomenon that the boys are more likely involved in sports related activities but in case of involvement towards cricket in Bangladesh, gender is not a big deal, sponsors can use common strategy for involving more fans despite of gender differences.
- Age differences not a major factor among the fans of cricket in Bangladesh; all matured persons almost follow and take update of their favorite matches by using different media.
- People of Bangladesh is handsomely connected with the game of cricket in spite of professional differences but professional differences tends to create different media scheduling that’s why sponsoring companies should analysis media timing well before reaching all fans of cricket.
- Family income could be connected with affordable brand purchase intention, but if companies sponsor their products and service with most popular sportsman, it can create positive brand image which can lead future desire of purchase of the premium brands.
- Sponsoring companies can make different advertising campaigns which are more related with the game of cricket and by this process it can make their brand popular among the fans.
- Corporate brand image plays a vital role on awareness and fan involvement in games, that’s why companies which already have well consumer attachment should placed their promotions in near stadium, transit areas, corporate materials, jersey or any other available areas.
- Companies can capture large audience through sponsoring in sports events like world cup cricket in Bangladesh.
- Companies can cover wide range of media through sports sponsorship because it is an effective tool in creating brand image among consumers as compared to other tools of promotion.
- Companies brand image clearly creates strong perception among the cricket fans of Bangladesh, through this process sponsor’s awareness can influence too much and it can finally involve fan more and more.

XIII. Conclusion

In today’s environment sports sponsorship plays a very significant role towards consumers and people give a lot of value. Cricket is very popular among the people in Bangladesh, because of this reason marketers finds it very easy to engage fans to it. This research paper hints that it will help renowned brand to explore widely how they can connect fans more and more involved fans must be more aware about sponsors’. Demographic differences are not a very big covenant for the game of cricket in Bangladesh and brand image has strong influences in fan involvement and sponsor’s awareness.

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