Analytical Study of Consumer Perception towards Brand: A Case of Sports Marketing

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Abstract

In recent years the sports industry has shown vast potential as a promotional tool for various other industries. Sporting events come with huge opportunities for encouraging sports activities and the development of regions where these events are held. Of this the most recent example is the Common Wealth Games-2010, which just changed the map of Delhi and acted as a boost for various sports like shooting, boxing, archery etc.. An important part of the business of sports is Sport’s Marketing, which revolves around understanding consumer behavior and motivating target audience to purchase goods and services. Sport’s marketing also includes marketing through sports. It can be seen that organizations spend millions of dollars every year to promote their brand by using sports as a platform either through sponsoring sporting events (like IPL, FIFA, C.W.G etc) or using sports celebrities for endorsing their products (like M.S.Dhoni endorsing Maxx Mobiles etc.). The purpose of the present study is to analyze the effectiveness of sport’s marketing for promotion of brand and its influence on buying decision of consumers. For this study primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire and t-test has been applied for testing the hypothesis at 5% level of significance. The study has shown that sports marketing is a sure shot marketing way for brand promotion and for building brand image. The sports celebrities influence the purchase decisions of their fans who worship them as their role models. The findings of the present study can be used by marketers in formulating suitable strategies to unveil new avenues through sports marketing.

Keywords: Sponsorship, Sports marketing.
1. Introduction
Sponsorship of sporting events and entities has become commonplace over the past three decades and, with huge amount of invested by the private sector, sports have become ‘big business’. The business of sports is one of the fastest growing industries of the world. An important part of the business of sports marketing is simply any sales or publicity related activity associated with an organized sporting event, its personalities or the celebrity lifestyle of its participants. Sporting events come with huge opportunities for encouraging sports activities and the development of regions where these events are held. Of this the most recent example is the Common Wealth Games-2010, which just changed the map of Delhi and acted as a boost for various sports like shooting, boxing, archery etc. All over the world, many people participate as players and spectators in a variety of sporting events, creating opportunities for the marketing of various products and services. An important part of the business of sports is Sport’s Marketing, which revolves around understanding consumer behavior and motivating target audience to purchase goods and services. Sport’s marketing also includes marketing through sports. It can be seen that organizations spend millions of dollars every year to promote their brand by using sports as a platform either through sponsoring sporting events (like IPL, FIFA, C.W.G etc) or using sports celebrities for endorsing their products (like M.S.Dhoni endorsing Maxx Mobiles etc.). The purpose of the present study is to analyze the association between sports and sport’s marketing for promotion of brand and its influence on buying decision of consumers. For this study primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire and t-test has been applied for testing the hypothesis at 5% level of significance. The study has shown that sports marketing is a sure shot marketing way for brand promotion and for building brand image. The findings of the present study can be used by marketers in formulating suitable strategies to unveil new avenues through sports marketing.

The paper is divided into 5 Sections. Section II deals with the literature available on this topic. Section III explains the research methodology, Section IV reveals the findings and Section V focuses on the implications of the findings.

2. Literature Review
In country like India, sports celebrities form a very special relation with the viewers to the extent that viewers pray for them for achieving success in increasing competitiveness. The sports celebrities influence the purchase decisions of their fans who worship them as their role models. Thus, using sports celebrities would benefit to spread a positive word of mouth among the fans and their friends about that brand. Erdogan (1999), Tellis (1998) proposed some reasons why companies may use celebrities to endorse their products: image polishing, increase Attention, brand introduction, brand repositioning and underpin global campaigns. Sam Fullerton and Russel Merz (2008) developed a framework that is based on the two key dimensions: type of product and level of sports integration.
3. Research Methodology
The study undertakes a survey of 254 respondents of Noida who have interest or knowledge about sports and sports marketing. The study employs non probability convenience sampling technique for drawing the sample. For this study primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire and t-test has been applied for testing the hypothesis at 5% level of significance. The study tests the following hypothesis.

\( H_0 : \) Consumer Behavior does not vary with marketing through Sports activities

4. Data Analysis and results

Figure 1: Preferred Sport.

Figure 1, states that majority of respondents (59.84%) watch cricket followed by football (11%) and Tennis (6.30%). Thus it can be stated that Sports Companies may target these major sports for advertising.

4.1 Preferred Sporting Event

Figure 2: Sporting Event Preferred.
This graph (figure 2) shows that consumers prefer FIFA(20.87%) and IPL(19.69%) over others sports events. Cricket world cup follows next (12.20%).

4.3 Preferred Sportspersons

Figure 3 indicates that by far Sachin Tendulkar (57.09%) is the most recalled sportsperson among consumers. M.S.Dhoni(3.54%) follows Lionel Messi (5.9%), the Argentinean football player. Thus, sporting brands can target Sachin, M.S.Dhoni and Saina Nehawal for their campaign.

$H_0$: Consumer Behavior does not vary with marketing through Sports activities.

$H_1$: Consumer Behavior does vary with marketing through Sports activities

Table 1: Influence Statistics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I find brands involved in sport`$'$s events quite Interesting</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>.917</td>
<td>.058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate brand name with sporting event/team sponsored</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>1.090</td>
<td>.068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sporting events give more visibility to brands</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>1.255</td>
<td>.079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>purchasing the brand more often than usual during showcasing of brand in sporting events</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>1.061</td>
<td>.067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Interest Factor</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>.566</td>
<td>.036</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Sports Activities influence on consumers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Upper</th>
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<td>I find brands involved in sport`s events quite Interesting</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>15.800</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.909</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>1.02</td>
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<tr>
<td>Associate brand name with sporting event/team sponsored</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>10.300</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.705</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.84</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3.56</td>
<td>7.149</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.563</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.72</td>
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<tr>
<td>purchasing the brand more often than usual during showcasing of brand in sporting events</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>2.838</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.189</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Interest Factor</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>16.655</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.592</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The values in the Table1 and Table2 signify that consumers are very interested in the sports marketing concept. Sporting activities encourage consumers to purchase more of those brands that have either sponsored the sporting events or are being endorsed by sports athletes. Thus, there is enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis. It concludes that sports marketing is an effective concept that leads to increase in sales and also enhance the consumer perception towards brands involved in sports marketing. Thus increasing the profitability and brand value for the organizations.

5. Conclusion
Sports marketing concept is drawing a lot of attention these days from the consumers addicted to sports. Sporting activities encourage consumers to purchase more of those brands that have sponsored the sporting events.

Bibliography

