

Impact of event sponsorship in purchasing behavior of consumers:

Impact of event sponsorship in purchasing behavior of consumers: A Comparative Study in the Local Conglomerate Companies of Bangladesh

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Abstract: *With the expansion of globalization in the business era, now most of the organizations tend to sponsor in many events to get the exposure of maximum number of customers. This Article examines the effects of event sponsorship and the factors that influence the purchasing behavior of the customers. A model has been developed to examine linkages among perceived quality, relationship quality, product event congruence and brand attitude with impact of event sponsorship in the purchasing behavior of the consumers. The statistical analysis revealed that the product or service quality and event resemblance of the sponsors have almost similar impact on improving the brand attitude but perceived quality showing insignificant effects on the outcome of purchasing behavior. Hence it is sufficing to say that with positive brand attitude creates a good impact in purchase decision of consumers. The study may provide a roadmap for the sponsors to understand how sponsorship actually works to influence in the purchase behavior of the customers. The findings suggest that relationship quality and product-event congruence has more influence on increased brand attitude than perceived quality. But other four variables also have positive impact on the purchasing behavior of consumers. A total of 262 responses collected for data analysis.*

Keywords: *Perceived quality, relationship quality, product-event congruence, brand attitude, Purchase behavior.*

Introduction

Sponsorship is defined as an investment. The number of sponsorship has increased in Bangladesh since competition increased. most of the well reputed organizations show interest on various sport events, concerts and public events. But in recent time, sponsorship in many corporate and digital events created a big impact on the target audiences. From various studies

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it has been seen that there is indirect influence of sponsorship in the purchase behavior of the customers especially in brand preferences of the target customers. But there is a direct influence of the group of people for whom the product or

service is sponsored. For example in sports event, athlete's purchase behavior is directly influenced by the sponsorship (*Dimitra Papadimitriou, Kyriaki Kiki Kaplanidou, Nikolaos Papacharalampous, 2016*). If the company achieves a trust on their target customers about the integrity of the product or services that they are offering, then the sponsorship may have a positive impact towards the purchase behavior of the customers. Study indicates that the higher degree of relationship quality indicates higher possibility of consumers purchase behavior towards the sponsor's product/ service (*Yu Kyoum Kim, Yong Jae Ko, Jeffery James 2011*). Sponsorship is an effective tool to increase the brand equity (*Leah Donlan, 2014*). But the success of brand building is not guaranteed here. The most successful sponsorship contributes to structure brand associations, perceived quality and brand loyalty (*Leah Donlan, 2014*). Besides this, event sponsor fit, community fit and other product congruence also has influence in the purchase behavior of the customer. Here, independent variables are perceived quality where the elements are high end product, market leader, high functionality and innovations. The other three variables are relationship quality, product event congruence and brand attitude that eventually creates brand equity. In the end, it leads to purchase intention and influences consumers to buy the sponsor's product.

Literature Review & Research Hypothesis

In this competitive global business era, firms focusing more of promoting themselves to create brand positioning. Positioning will influence the purchasing behavior of the customer. To create positioning, sponsoring in the events seemed to be more acceptable as the target market is engaged in the events where companies want to sponsor. For this reason, firms focus on sponsorship. Most of the firms focus on the promotion of their brand to get maximum exposure. Event sponsorship is another medium of BTL (Below the Line) marketing where companies can cover a huge number of audiences at a time. In this era of digitization, sponsoring in many digital events are a bigger opportunity to cover maximum number of target Audiences. Now firms are tending to invest in welfare segments to create positive image in the customer's mind and influences purchase tendency. If event-sponsor fit and relationship quality is developed, there will be a positive attitude towards the brand and influence consumers purchase decision.

Brand attitude links with observed value and relevant behavioral meanings

Kotler explained the perception of branding is the combination of Favorable and unfavorable personal evaluation, emotional feeling that an individual keep. Brand perception is a psychological approach that is explained by assessing a particular entity with a degree of favor or disfavor.

There is a straight forward relationship between sponsorship and brand image. the research focuses on responses to brands in terms of consumer-based brand equity. (Donlan, 2013; Mazodier and Merunka 2012; Olson, 2010) with inconclusive findings, at least when there is a comparison between a very well established and less established firms in the market. Donlan (2013) received data from two sponsored sports events. The purpose was to explore the consumer-based brand equity benefits for a newly launched brand compared to an established one. There has been a widely used measurements to bring the results and it suggests that sponsorship can have an impact on brand associations, perceived brand quality and brand loyalty. This result is only for an established brand. a brand can create only a established familiarity with the customer y sponsorship. It works more on building an existing stock of brand associations by creating a positioning in consumers' memory. For the new brands, benefits are not evident like the established brand. For the new brands sponsorship impacts only on brand awareness.

Relationship quality

A considerable attention as one alternative concept can be received by Relationship quality. It can be used to encapsulate the unique psychological bonds formed between a sports team and sports customer. Kim (2009) proposed a conceptual framework of relationship quality and tested a model in the upon the concept of the behavior of sports consumption. Kim found that sport consumers are more likely to attend a team's game who perceive higher degree of relationship quality. They are more likely to consume a team's media product, and purchase licensed team merchandise. The role of the sport consumer's relationship quality with sport teams or other entities has not been examined in the context of evaluating sponsorship effectiveness, but effectiveness of sponsorship activity will be influenced in part by a consumer's attitude toward a sponsor. The relationship quality between a sports property and customer (e.g. a sports team) has the potential to mediate a positive attitude toward a sponsor of the property. A research model was developed to portray the theoretical relationships between relationship quality and three prominent variables: sincerity, attitude toward sponsor's brand, and future purchase intention.

Product-event congruence and its link with brand attitude and sponsor brand purchase behaviors

The construct of perceived fit between a sponsor and event, or organization is a positive respondent of brand towards the target audience. Novais and Arcodia (2013) reviewed six different brand image transfer models that are create at perceived fit that is centrally constructed across all models, but also there is a notable fragmentation that exists in the factors (e.g. sponsor attitude, event image, sponsor awareness, event involvement, etc.). it needs to be included in a comprehensive model of effective brand image that transfer sponsorship-related consumer response. In an event context, sponsors investing in resources are getting benefited from positive brand image transfer, which is highly influenced by a good match between the event and the sponsor (Novais and Arcodia, 2013). If there is a good fit between the sponsored goods functional or image-based fit with the sponsored event, then this fit drives consumer to transfer some of the positive meanings, and attributes from the event towards to the sponsor. Functional fit is meant to be a product that is sponsored in an event.

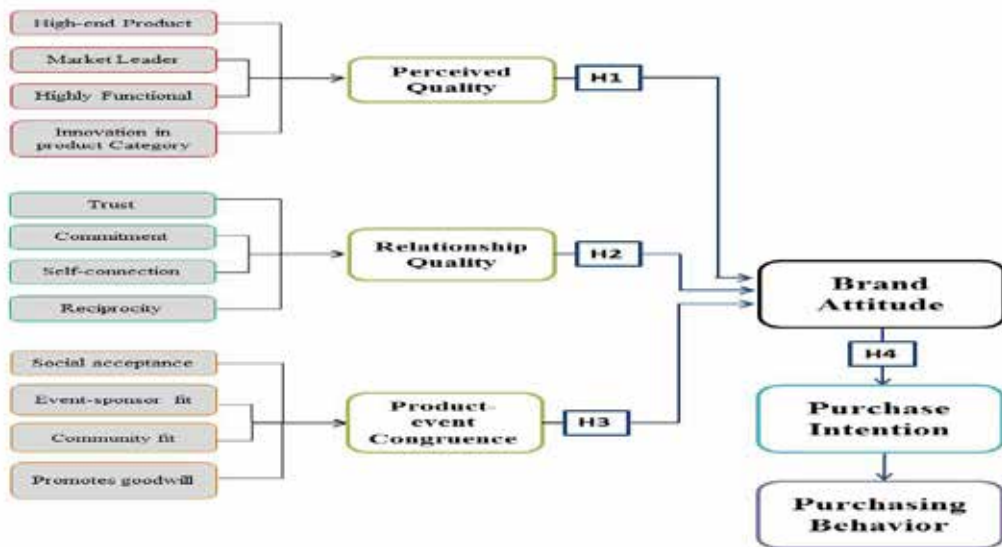
There is a lack of clear definition and operationalization for the fit that is constructed despite assertions of event–sponsor fit that is critical in fully understanding sponsorship benefits, the relevant literature. (Zdravkovic *et al.*, 2010; Speed and Thompson, 2000) it is also a comprehensive understanding of its actual role in brand image transferring process (Novais and Arcodia, 2013; Donlan, 2013).

Previous research has thus suggested that a favorable attitude can be created by a high-fit sponsorships in an event (Mazodier and Merunka, 2012;)

Attitude toward a sponsor and intention to purchase sponsor’s product

Attitude is a response of a consistent beneficial manner towards an object. Positive brand attitude creates strong customer attention and increases purchase behavior. A major target of researcher is to evaluate a customer’s attitude towards a brand. Previous studies have highlighted the importance of brand attitude measurement towards the sponsorship for indicating sponsorship effect. The research variables that were hypothesized are associated positively with the purchase intention. Enormous number of studies concerned with the human’s behavioral prediction have relied on the theory of reasoned action. Potential customers moving from brand awareness to purchase before the investment of sales. There is a significant association of brand attitude with advertisement and purchase intentions. Thus, it is hypothesized:

Graphical Model



From above discussions, there are 4 hypotheses as below:

H1. Perceived brand quality of the sponsoring brand relates positively to sponsor brand purchase intentions

H2. A consumer's relationship quality with a brand is positively related to their attitude toward a sponsor of the team.

H3. Perceived fit between the sponsor and the event relates positively to attitude toward the sponsoring brand

H4. Attitude toward the sponsor is positively related to future purchase intention.

Methodology

Firms are starting to invest more and more to the events because this segment has a positive growth over the past two decades (*Yu Kyoum Kim, Yong Jae Ko, Jeffery James, 2011*). In order to better understand the processing the influence of event sponsorship in the consumer's purchase decision, a well-controlled experimental studies are essential (*Heidi M.K. Ngan, Gerard P. Prendergast, Alex S.L. Tsang, (2011)*).

The questionnaire was developed for any type of even sponsoring like sports event, reality show, social development activities, corporate events, university events etc. A specific sponsoring company is not selected to avoid the undesirable impact on the hypothesized relationships. It also shows the implications of the ability of the sponsor's events to convey their message to their target audience and to communicate them to purchase the sponsor's product.

The study was conducted on the sponsored events in different places around Bangladesh to measure the purchase behavior of its influence. A self-administered questionnaire was developed and distributed to 262 respondents (sample size n= 262). The modes for distribution were through face-to-face personal approach and through Google forms.

The questionnaire was divided into 3 main parts; the demographic part had 5 questions which covered the respective profiles of the respondents. The psychographic part had 3 questions which were developed to see the association of the respondent in respect to the research topic. The final part was again divided into 5 parts according to the number of dependent and independent variables. The dependent variables had the constructs mentioned as followed:

Perceived Quality (High-end product, High functionality, Market leadership and innovativeness),

Relationship Quality (Trust, Commitment, Self-connection and Reciprocity),

Product-event congruence (Social acceptance, product-event fit, sponsor-community fit, Goodwill), **Brand Quality** (Favorable/unfavorable, likeable/unlikeable, and satisfactory/unsatisfactory)

In total, the questionnaire had 27 items and 4 questions converted into hypotheses.

The final questionnaire was first pretested on 38 individuals and was revised on the basis of their feedbacks.

Analysis & Discussion

Reliability Statistics

In order to determine whether the data obtained from the survey can represent the variables and best fit the final result, “Reliability Test” is done. The alpha values of each of the variables are given below:

Variables	Number of constructs	Alpha Value
Perceived Quality	4	.749
Relationship Quality	4	.741
Product-event congruence	4	.642
Brand attitude	3	.727
Purchasing Behavior	4	.734
Overall Reliability	19	.899

Here, it is seen that reliability test for “Perceived Quality” consists of 4 items. And Cronbach’s Alpha for these 4 items is .749. So, the items are reliable and accepted as Cronbach’s Alpha value is more than 0.7. reliability test for “Relationship Quality” consists of 4 items. And Cronbach’s Alpha for these 4 items is .741. the items are reliable and accepted as Cronbach’s Alpha value is more than 0.7.

Subsequently, it is seen that reliability test for “Product-event congruence” consists of 4 items. And Cronbach’s Alpha for these 4 items is .642. Here, the items are not so reliable and hardly accepted as Cronbach’s Alpha value is less than 0.7.

Followed by “Product-event congruence”, it is seen that reliability test for “Brand attitude” consists of 4 items. And Cronbach’s Alpha for these 4 items is .727. So, the items are reliable and accepted as Cronbach’s Alpha value is more than 0.7.

Finally, it is seen that reliability test for “Purchasing Behavior” consists of 4 items. And Cronbach’s Alpha for these 4 items is .734. So, the items are reliable and accepted as Cronbach’s Alpha value is more than 0.7.

In the end, it is seen that the overall reliability consists of 19 items. And Cronbach’s Alpha for these 19 items is .899. So, the items are reliable and accepted as Cronbach’s Alpha value is more than 0.7.

Reliability is defined as the degree to which measures are free from error The value is measured on a scale of 1 where the standard value is .70. The closer it is to 1, the better it is. (Source: Wikipedia).

Correlation Analysis

From the table given below, it is correlated to determine the dependent variables’ dependency on each other. Correlation is tested for all the variables and all are positively related with Purchasing Behavior.

		Correlations				
		Perceived Quality	Relationship Quality	Product-Event Congruence	Brand Attitude	Purchase Behavior
PerceivedQuality	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
RelationshipQuality	Pearson Correlation	.524**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
ProductEvent Congruence	Pearson Correlation	.481**	.654**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000			
Brand Attitude	Pearson Correlation	.577**	.656**	.655**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		
Purchase Behavior	Pearson Correlation	.459**	.585**	.571**	.637**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	

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

In terms of **Perceived Quality & Relationship Quality**, two variables have moderate influence on each other having a relationship of .524 among them.

For **Perceived Quality & Product-event congruence**, we can see that two variables have moderate influence on each other having a relationship of .481 among them.

Perceived Quality & Brand Attitude

From the above correlation table, two variables have a relationship of .577 among them. That means these two variables have moderate influence on each other.

Perceived Quality & Purchasing Behavior

From the above correlation table, it is seen that these two variables have a relationship of .459 among them. That means these two variables have moderate influence on each other

Relationship Quality & Product-event congruence

Here two variables have moderate influence on each other having a relationship of .654 among them.

Relationship Quality & Brand Attitude

From the above correlation table, it is seen that these two variables have a relationship of .656 among them. That means these two variables have moderate influence on each other.

Relationship Quality & Purchasing Behavior

There is a moderate relationship among the two variables (.585)

Product-event congruence & Brand Attitude

Here two variables have moderate influence on each other having a relationship of .655 among them.

Product-event congruence & Purchasing Behavior

two variables have moderate influence on each other having a relationship of .571 among them

Brand Attitude & Purchasing Behavior

From the above correlation table, it is seen that these two variables have a relationship of .637 among them. That means these two variables have moderate influence on each other.

Regression Analysis

To identify whether the variation of the dependent variable can be predicted well by these independent variables, it requires more study. For knowing the predicting power of these independent variables, a multiple regression analysis has been conducted.

The R value is .688 which signifies a good level of prediction. The R-square value came out .474 and adjusted R square is .466 which means that independent variables Perceived

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.688 ^a	.474	.466	.59367

a. Predictors: (Constant), BrandAttitude, PerceivedQuality, ProductEventCongruence, RelationshipQuality

Quality, Relationship Quality, Product-event congruence and Brand attitude can explain or predict 47.4% of the variability of the dependent variable. Adjusted R square is .466 which implies that standard error level is low.

Anova

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) is a collection of statistical models used to analyze the differences among group means and their associated procedures (such as "variation" among and between groups), developed by statistician and evolutionary biologist Ronald Fisher.

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	81.537	4	20.384	57.837	.000 ^b
	Residual	90.577	257	.352		
	Total	172.115	261			

a. Dependent Variable: PurchaseBehavior

b. Predictors: (Constant), BrandAttitude, PerceivedQuality, ProductEventCongruence, RelationshipQuality

The significance level of this study is 0.000 which is less than 0.05 that means the study is valid

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.905	.183		4.934	.000
	PerceivedQuality	.057	.051	.064	1.116	.265
	RelationshipQuality	.212	.068	.207	3.122	.002
	ProductEventCongruence	.197	.073	.176	2.696	.007
	BrandAttitude	.307	.060	.349	5.087	.000

a. Dependent Variable: PurchaseBehavior

The significance of “Perceived Quality” is 0.265, so the alternative hypothesis for this variable is not accepted. There is no relationship between “Perceived Quality” and “Purchase Behavior”. Here, the Beta value for this variable is 0.064 which is the least important variable to the dependent variable. For 1 unit change in “Perceived Quality” will bring .064 unit changes in the “Purchase Behavior”.

The significance of “Relationship Quality” is 0.002, so the alternative hypothesis for this variable is accepted. There is relationship between “Relationship Quality” and “Purchase Behavior”. Here, the Beta value for this variable is 0.207 which is the second most important variable to the dependent variable. For 1 unit change in “Relationship Quality” will bring 0.207 unit changes in the “Purchase Behavior”.

The significance of “Product-event congruence” is 0.007, so the alternative hypothesis for this variable is accepted. There is relationship between “Product-event congruence” and “Purchase Behavior”. Here, the Beta value for this variable is 0.176 which is the third most important variable to the dependent variable. For 1 unit change in “Product-event congruence” will bring 0.176 unit changes in the “Purchase Behavior”.

The significance of “Brand Attitude” is 0.000, so the alternative hypothesis for this variable is accepted. There is relationship between “Brand Attitude” and “Purchase Behavior”. Here, the Beta value for this variable is 0.349 which is the most important variable to the dependent variable. For 1 unit change in “Brand Attitude” will bring 0.176 unit changes in the “Purchase Behavior”.

Significance values of all the independent variables are less than .05 except “Perceived Quality”. That means rests of the alternative hypotheses are accepted. The regression model shows that “Brand Attitude” has more significance on “Purchase Behavior” as its Beta is higher than all other independent variables.

Hypotheses Testing

According to the aforementioned regression table, conclusions can be made for the developed hypotheses.

Coefficients ^a						
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
	(Constant)	.905	.183			
1	PerceivedQuality	.057	.051	.064	4.934	.000
	RelationshipQuality	.212	.068	.207	1.116	.265
	ProductEventCongruence	.197	.073	.176	3.122	.002
	BrandAttitude	.307	.060	.349	2.696	.007
				5.087	.000	

a. Dependent Variable: PurchaseBehavior

Hypothesis 1 (Perceived Quality)

From the table, it is seen that the significance of “Perceived Quality” is 0.265. It is more than Alpha value 0.05. Hence the alternative hypothesis for this variable is not accepted. It is conclusive that there is no relationship between “Perceived Quality” and “Purchase Behavior”.

Even though it was thought that perceived quality elements would have had a positive impact on purchasing behavior, the data analysis implied that it doesn't. The analysis of such a situation and its contingencies are given under:

- It doesn't matter whether the product is of high-end or not. This implies that it doesn't necessarily mean to have higher sales volume if products are of higher end. Rather it would be wise to focus on constructs of the model.
- It was assumed that domination in the market would play a factor of enhanced purchase behavior. But the result implies that the product became the market leader through higher sales volume in the first place
- Innovation in a product category is one of the traits that make a brand successful. The output may come as such because of the analysis method weren't as rigorous to generalize each individual constructs. It is understandable that with use of one-sample T-test (analysis method to consider each individual element) the outcome could have been different.

Hypothesis 2 (Relationship Quality)

The significance of “Relationship Quality” is 0.002, which is less than the Alpha value 0.05. Hence the alternative hypothesis for this variable is accepted. It can be concluded that there is relationship between “Relationship Quality” and “Purchase Behavior”.

- Trust plays a stupendous role in building positive brand attitude. In the analysis, respondents were happy with the brand. Brands should emphasize on developing trust.
- Even though commitment towards a brand develops through constant satisfaction of customers, it is a bet that brands should put on.
- A self-connection where a customer feels obliged to take the benefits from the product even though provided with other alternatives. One of the constructs that inclines a consumer towards a certain brand is the reciprocity he shares with the brand.

Hypothesis 3 (Product-event congruence)

The significance of “Product-event congruence” is 0.007 which is less than the Alpha value 0.05. Hence the alternative hypothesis for this variable is accepted. It can be concluded that there is relationship between “Product-event congruence” and “Purchase Behavior”.

- Whether the product is accepted in society or not is a prospect that needs to be brought into consideration before taking sponsorship deals in any event
- it is essential to have product-event congruence which states the relation among the latter. A cigarette brand sponsoring in a Health campaign would be absurd.
- CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) always places a brand in higher position in mind of consumers. The study suggested that doing congruent CSR to promote goodwill will have positive impact in purchasing behavior.

Hypothesis 4 (Brand Attitude)

The significance of “Brand Attitude” is 0.000 which is less than the Alpha value 0.05. Hence the alternative hypothesis for this variable is accepted. It can be concluded that there is relationship between “Brand Attitude” and “Purchase Behavior”.

- Having positive impacts on relationship quality and product-event congruence leads in positive brand attitude. most of the respondents taking part in the corresponding

events had more or less positive attitude towards the sponsor. giving effort for building relationship quality and more emphasis on product-event congruence while designing an event will create better brand attitude which will eventually enhance the purchasing behavior of consumers. Since the analysis implies that perceived quality doesn't affect purchasing behavior of consumers, further analysis is needed to come to such conclusions. brands sponsoring in various events need to look after the other two variables for successful feedback.

Conclusion

The primary purpose of this study was to understand the role of perceived quality, relationship quality, product event congruence and brand attitude on sponsorship effectiveness. The variables were selected from various international journals and merged together to get a holistic result on sponsorship effectiveness. An empirically tested model was developed that specified direct and indirect relationships among the various constructs of the variables. The results of this study suggest that perceived quality of the brands products like leadership, innovation and functionality has no impact on purchase decisions. Rather perceiving higher level of relationship quality and find the product to be congruent with the event tend to believe that the sponsor's motives are sincere and consequently will develop a positive attitude towards a brand. This subsequently leads to enhanced purchasing behavior of sponsors products. The considerable contributions of this study are manifold. One significant contribution lies in establishing the importance of relationship quality with a brand attitude for a successful sponsorship. Next, this study provides a theoretical explanation about how a business creates a relationship with customer through quality influences the expected outcomes associated with a business-to-business relationship. Although this study has made several advancements in the knowledge of relationship quality and sponsorship effectiveness, much more work needs to be done. It also forwards the knowledge of how a product needs to be in congruence with the event.

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