Alcohol and Sport Sponsorship:

The Effect of Involvement and Congruence on Attitudes

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Abstract
The evolution of sponsorship marketing from transactional agreements to mutual relationships has sparked a shift in the way that organisations view the effectiveness of sponsorship. Consequentially, the study of attitudes has become pivotal and critical in the ways in which sport sponsorship relationships are evaluated and validated. The study of attitude change and formation has been explained by Fiske’s Schema Triggered affect theory. This theory illustrates the influence of subjective and consumer perceived matches between the two sponsorship parties, i.e. congruence. This relationship between attitudes and congruence, however, must be evaluated with respect to the moderating variable of involvement, therefore shedding light on the impact of psychological development on the affective attitude components by assessing constructs such as knowledge, interest and familiarity.
Introduction and Background

Sponsorship, in recent times, has become increasingly significant and important in the field of marketing communications (Cornwell and Maignan, 1998; Crompton, 2004; Gwinner and Swanson, 2003; McDaniel, 1999; Walliser, 2003). World wide, two thirds of all sponsorship constitutes sport sponsorship (Madrigal 2000; McDaniel and Heald, 2000) and total spending is estimated to have reached $50 billion in 2006 (SponsorClick, 2004). Firms often choose to conduct the mutual relationship with a sporting entity due to its prominence in the community and the positive attitudes associated with the organization (Nicholls, Roslow and Dublish, 1999; Westerbeek and Smith, 2002). Sport can “carry very strong images, have a mass international audience and appeals to all classes” (Abratt et al., 1987, p 21). As noted by the presence of 24 hr sport channels such as ESPN on television and SEN1116 on radio, sport is a medium that has continual appeal and will passionately unite people from various backgrounds. The sponsorship message can be frequently repeated to these large audiences, who attend games weekly, watch replays on television and listen to an evaluation of the game on radio (Nicholls et al., 1999). This direct and indirect presence of sport in people’s lives has implications for marketers who note that the sporting fan base form enduring relationships with their club without needing to be directly involved in the spectacle (Lucas, 1996; Zillmann and Paulus, 1993).

Alcohol and sport are two symbols of Australian culture. Many believe these two are best consumed simultaneously. While sponsorship agreements may be deemed an effective method to shape consumer attitudes, one cannot ignore potential ethical issues regarding the sponsorship relationship. One may argue there may be negative consequences of alcohol abuse on the community when the ingrained Australian drinking culture is preserved through alcohol sponsorship. Voices have been raised as to the arguably socially irresponsible behaviour of sponsorship agreements involving unhealthy products such as alcohol (McDaniel and Heald, 2000; McDaniel and Mason, 1999; Mosher, 2004).

As public awareness is heightened as to the detrimental effect of alcohol abuse in the community, the issue of ethicality will not die down soon (Cornwell and Maignan, 1998; McDaniel and Mason, 1999; Rice, Kelman and Miller, 1991; Slater, Rouner et al., 1996). However, arguments such as McDaniel’s (1999), while holding some weight, are often discredited due to conflicting research regarding the ability for sponsorship to effectively shift and change consumer affective attitudes regarding alcohol and thus behavioural intentions (Boddewyn, 1994).

In examining whether government intervention is necessary with regards to regulation of alcohol sponsorship and advertising it is preferable to compare the situation to a similar product (Aitken et al., 1986; Schuster and Powell, 1987). Companies are quick to separate alcohol and tobacco as two separate cases, where alcohol, consumed in moderation can prove harmless and potentially beneficial, tobacco, in any size doses can prove detrimental (McDaniel and Mason, 2000). Secondly, it is not yet established that banning advertising produces a positive effect on consumers’ health (Ambler, 1996; Boddewyn, 1994). Government policy is idealistically prepared to protect the vulnerable, those susceptible to danger and harm. Alcohol sponsorship as field sponsorship often employs fine print promoting the product is “to be drunk in moderation”/“drunk responsibly” (Fosters, 2007). It is debatable whether such disclaimer is providing a message or simply lip service. Thus, the ethicality of alcohol sponsorship becomes a balancing act between the interests of the wider community and the commercial objectives of both sponsorship parties. Indeed, sports teams such as the Adelaide Crows have made a conscious decision to not have their alcohol sponsors directly involved in their young members programs or social activities (Communication, 2007). A dimension of adjudging the ethicality of alcohol sponsorship is the determination of what affect the sponsorship has on consumers.
Thus it is of paramount importance to examine consumer attitudes as measure of effectiveness of sponsorship in the context of sport and alcohol sponsorship relationships. This research will address the identified gap and provide a substantial foundation that will aim to provide valid and important information to answer this discrepancy. The context for the paper is an analysis of alcohol and sporting event sponsorship relationships. Secondly, the paper will address the gap in the literature regarding sponsorship of unhealthy products (McDaniel and Heald, 2000; McDaniel and Mason, 1999; Mosher, 2004) as well as providing arguments in favour and against government regulation of sponsorship activities. Thirdly, this paper highlights specific research questions derived in order to help fill this research gap, including scales and survey questions. Finally, this paper will address the methodology to be undertaken for this research to be completed.

**Literature Review**

**Sponsorship**

Sponsorship agreements are tools widely utilised in the marketing communications mix (Walliser, 2003). They are often employed due to their cost effectiveness (Shilbury et al., 2003) and their ability to intimately communicate with their target market without being overtly intrusive (Levin et al. 2001). Sponsorship agreements are often coined *win-win* due to the mutual relationship of value between both parties in the relationship (Shilbury et al., 2003).

Academic research is not currently united in a single definition for sponsorship (Walliser, 2003). However, most definitions involve two fundamental components (Cornwell and Maignan 1998; Westerbeek and Smith, 2002; Gardner and Shuman, 1987; Witcher et al., 1991). First, the sponsorship agreement is an exchange of funds/kind for access to property. Second, benefit is derived from this exchange, supporting either corporate or marketing objectives. The objectives of sponsorship remain subjective, meaning the aims are different for each organization due to the context and goals for the relationship (Cornwell and Maignan, 1998; Westerbeek and Smith, 2002). As a result, a comprehensive definition of sponsorship needs to be both broad and descriptive (Cornwell and Maignan, 1998).

The lack of one internationally accepted definition reflects the ambiguous nature of sponsorship and its overlapping principles with other methods of communication (Walliser, 2003). For the purposes of this review, the Meenaghan (1983) definition will be adopted as the optimum description. This is due to its common use in the literature (Madrigal, 2000; Speed and Thompson, 2000; Walliser, 2003) and its focus on the relationship between the parties which is indicative of the shift from transactional agreements to mutual relationships between sponsorship parties (Farley et al., 2006).

**Types of Sponsorship**

Sponsorship agreements can be categorised into two main types, field sponsorship and broadcast sponsorship (Mason 2005). Field sponsorship can segmented further as placard signage, turf signage and billboard signage (Shilbury, Quick and Westerbeek, 2003). Broadcast sponsorship has been excluded by research (Walliser, 2003) as it is argued that broadcast sponsors associate themselves with the “broadcast of the event” and are popular among ambushers. Thus, sponsorship at a broadcast level does not always result in a legitimate transfer of property.

Although field sponsorship has been the main focus of academic research, it is not without its limitations, which involve the large amount of clutter and surrounding noise (Crowley, 1991; Lardinoit and Quester, 2001; Wright, 1988). It has also been argued that highly involved fans
disregarded billboards at a soccer match as they were focusing only on the game (Levin et al., 2001). This implies the sponsorship effectiveness is limited. Levin et al. (2001) examined the impact of sponsorship that was present on the NASCAR cars and attempted to explore and possibly find a solution to the problem of reduced sponsorship effectiveness due to noise. They examined sponsorship material that is present on materials incorporated into the action. Levin et al. (2001) discovered, by incorporating the moderating variable of involvement, those highly involved within the NASCAR event would be more likely to report more positive attitudes towards the sponsored brands. These findings indicate that for those highly committed and involved fans, one of the most efficient ways for marketers to communicate to these involved fans would be to incorporate their sponsored material into the context of the sponsored event (Hunt, Bristol and Bashaw, 1999).

**Ethicality of Alcohol Sponsorship**

A limitation of sponsorship interactions is arguably present when a relationship exists between sporting events and unhealthy products such as tobacco, alcohol and fast food (McDaniel and Mason, 1999). This limitation facilitates for sponsorship marketing to be used as a vehicle to promote messages that vulnerable members of society are unable to disseminate (Ambler, 1996; Boddewyn, 1994; US Public Health, 1993).

Voices have been raised as to the arguably socially irresponsible behaviour of sponsorship agreements that involve unhealthy products such as alcohol (McDaniel and Heald, 2000; Mosher, 2004). Such arguments are countered by alcohol companies by drawing distinction between other socially deemed “unhealthy” product such as tobacco. Arguments revolve around the detrimental effects of tobacco, at any level, yet alcohol can be consumed in moderation without harmful effects. Thus, the ethicality of alcohol sponsorship becomes a balancing act between the interests of the wider community and the commercial objectives of both parties in the relationship.

**Sponsorship and attitude change**

Although effectiveness of sponsorship may vary depending on marketing communication objectives, the examination of attitudes has been stated as the superior measure (Crompton, 2004; Funk and James, 2004; Jalleh et al., 2002). Attitudes are directed towards some aspect of our environment (Kreech and Cruthfield, 1984) and can be described as the “learned predisposition to respond in a favourable or unfavourable manner with respect to a given object” (Fishbein, 1967). The enduring nature of attitudes (Kreech and Cruthfield, 1984) is important with regards to sponsorship, as these attitudes are indicative of an overall evaluation of a brand or product category (Neal et al., 2004). Resulting consumer behaviour towards the brand/product category can be symptomatic of these attitudes (Engel Blackwell and Miniard, 1990), therefore marketers, managers and businesses cannot disregard its importance. Marketing literature has acknowledged the use of social psychology to appreciate the complexity of the attitude-behaviour interactive process (Bright, 1997; Funk et al., 2000) in the sporting context (Backman and Crompton, 1991). This social psychology theory has laid the groundwork for marketing specific theoretical development and unique sporting consumer attitude dimensions (Bright, 1997).

Several theories have been used to explain the effect of sponsorship in forming and changing attitudes. Firstly, learning theories explain how attitude formation and change occur due to learning and conditioning (Swales and McClelland, 2007). Conditioning and learning can occur through the mere exposure theory through signage at sporting events (Zajonc, Markus and Wilson, 1974), classical conditioning (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) and associative learning (Keller, 1993). Learning theories are applicable to this research as these learning theories dictate the effectives of marketing objectives as they explain the process to achieve the desired marketing
communication objectives (McDaniel and Heald, 2000). These theories were chosen due to the
emphasis on affective learning (Gwinner and Eaton, 1999; Mason, 2005; McDaniel, 1999;
McDaniel and Heald, 2000) and the use of the tri component attitude formation.

Schema Triggered Affect theories emphasises the use of schemas in sponsorship (McDaniel and
Heald, 2000) and seek to explain how sponsorship agreements can shape the neutral stimulus of
the sponsorship brand with the positive stimulus of the sporting event (Mahony and Howard,
1998). Schema triggered affect theory has been used by literature with regards to unhealthy
products and with sponsorship agreements (McDaniel and Heald, 2000) therefore illustrating a
valid theory in the context of the research.

The role of congruence and involvement

The concept of congruence is confirmed as an important factor regarding attitudes towards
sponsorship relationships (Cornwell and Maignan, 1998, Gwinner and Eaton, 1999, Rifon et al.,
2004). Sponsorship congruence as the perceived holistic match in the minds of consumers
between the sporting event and the sponsored product category/brand (Speed and Thompson,
2000). While some literature addresses the level of congruence as by looking at the themes
between the two fields (McDaniel and Heald, 2000) other literature looks at their compatibility
and perceived fit (Bainbridge, 2001). It is proposed the themes method is tailored towards
tapping into the affective component of attitudes and the fit method is dealing with the cognitive,
meaning the theme approach is more applicable to sports patrons attitudes and the fit approach is
used more often with cause related sponsorship (Gray, 2000). Congruence can also be seen as the
perceived relatedness or the direct or indirect relevance of the sponsor to the event (McDonald,
1991). This method of classification, along with the fit method is the foundation of the learning
theory named the image based transfer (Gwinner, 1997). The literature suggests that congruence
can aid the enhancement of attitudes towards both the product category and sponsored brand
(Johar and Pham, 1992; McDaniel, 1999). That is, the sponsorship relationships that are viewed
as highly congruent can lead to favourable brand attitudes (Roy and Cornwell, 2003; Ellen Mohr
and Webb, 2000) through repeated exposure and direct correlation (Gwinner and Eaton, 1999).
This effect occurs because less elaboration will be needed to correspond the sponsor and event
(Hastie, 1984). This method of elaboration can be explained by either image based transfer theory
or schema triggered affect theory.

Congruence is viewed in image transfer theory as “perceived fit”, can be classified into
dimensions of “functional based” similarities and “image based” similarities (Gwinner and Eaton,
1999). Functional based similarity involves products that “are actually used by the participants in
the event” whereas image based similarity involves the image of the “event is related to the brand
image” (Gwinner and Eaton, 1999 p 49). By applying such segmentation, it was established that
image transfer was achieved more fluidly with products with image based similarity (Gwinner
and Eaton, 1999). However, it is necessary for brands under the product category to be attempting
to align themselves with an image that reflects their goals and objectives (Rifon et al., 2004).

Schema triggered affect theory utilises the match up hypothesis as a means explaining the
positive brand attitudes that can be obtained through two field which are perceived to be
congruent. The match-up hypothesis originally was employed to explain the celebrity endorser
model, which illustrates the perceived match up between the celebrity endorser and the product
(Roy and Cornwell, 2003). If the match between the celebrity and product was deemed by
consumers to be a good match consumer responses such as favourable brand attitudes were often
reported (Crimmins and Horn, 1996; Roy and Cornwell, 2003). That is, the celebrity endorser
model may be applicable to sponsorship relationships (McCracken, 1999; McDaniel, 1999).
There are a number of factors that can impact on the perceived congruence of the variables in the minds of consumers (Rifon et al., 2004). It has been noted that schema based processing involves the influence of two main variables, the perceiver’s motivation to process stimulus information and the perceiver’s expertise with the stimulus category (Fiske and Neuberg, 1990), both relating to involvement. That is, if the perceived outcome is more important to the perceiver then they will place more weight and emphasis on cognitive processing (McDaniel and Heald, 2000) and if the consumer is an expert, or someone who is more informed, these individuals will invoke schema inconsistent information to make a judgment where as those with less information will revert back to schema congruent information (Fiske and Taylor, 1991). This implies that those who are knowledgeable with regards to the product category and/or sporting event are less likely to simply categorise two fields that are incongruent and are more likely to evaluate their relationship and adjudge them individually, not in accordance with pre existing schemas (McDaniel and Heald, 2000). Thus, the level of involvement with the product category and sporting event will have a moderating effect on the sponsorship stimulus processing Gwinner (1997). However, literature also sustains (Taylor and Crocker, 1981) that schema’s become more resistant to change over time. This implies that repeated exposure from sponsorship may help to reinforce and develop schema and thus once consumers have deemed the relationship ‘congruent’ they are unlikely to reclassify it ‘incongruent’ after time.

**The moderating role of involvement**

Involvement, as a construct of behavioural consequence, has been frequently used as a determinant factor or a predictor of a decision (Day et al 1995, Quester and Lim 2003). Involvement, with origins from social psychology (Sherif and Cantrill, 1947), is defined as “a motivational state of mind (arousal) that is goal directed” (Zaltman and Wallendorf, 1983 p 550). Involvement can be classified into two streams, enduring involvement and situational involvement (Laurent and Kapferer, 1985). Enduring involvement, representing a general and permanent perception (Lee and Lim, 2006), deals in the majority with products (e.g. alcohol) where as situational involvement deals with advertising and purchasing decisions (Jain and Mittal, 1989; Srinivasan, 1990; Zaichkowsky, 1985,). A definition of involvement in the sponsorship context is established by Levin et al., (2000 p 26) as “a consumer’s relative interest in and knowledge with the [sport event/sponsored brand/product category]”.

Involvement is coined a moderating variable with regards to sponsorship effects on future attendance motivation (Hill and Green, 2000), brand recall (Levin et al., 2000), brand recognition (Levin et al., 2000) and/or shaping brand and product category attitudes (Levin et al., 2000, McDaniel and Mason, 1999). The use of involvement has been discussed concerning placement of sponsorship (Pham, 1992). Consequentially, involvement is a more prevalent factor when the sponsor is placed on a piece of equipment/player/object that is part of the action as opposed to being mentioned and show on advertisements as a sponsor (Levin et al., 2000).

In the context of alcohol sponsorship, involvement can be examined with regards to psychological involvement with the sporting event and involvement with the product category (McDaniel and Heald 2000, McDaniel and Mason 1999). Such combination has not been previously examined and this is an important omission that should be addressed especially in the context of unhealthy products (Kelly and Edwards, 1998; Pierce et al., 1998). Firstly, psychological familiarity, knowledge and interest influence both the cognitive and affective dimension of attitudes (Beasley, 1998). This implies it is necessary to examine involvement in a sport/sporting event with regard to psychological constructs (affective and cognitive) as opposed to purely behavioural perspectives (Beasley, 1998). For example, “perceived importance of the sport to the consumer” was measured as psychological involvement with the sport of rugby league (Hill and Green, 2000).
It has been established that one’s “involvement with a product class is directly related to one’s commitment or loyalty towards a brand within that product class” (Quester, Karunaratna and Lim, 2006). Consequentially, the stronger the product class is tied with the consumer’s identity, the more readily a consumer forms a fused psychological connection with the brand (Quester, Karunaratna and Lim, 2006). This has implications for those engaged in a sponsorship relationship as the attitudes towards a product class can easily be transferred onto the respective brands under the umbrella of the generic field (McDaniel and Heald, 2000) through the use of schemas.

Based on this literature review, one may summarise that congruence directly influences consumers attitudes (McDaniel and Heald, 2000). Secondly, both psychological involvement with the sporting event and involvement with alcohol moderate the congruence-attitude relationship. Consequently, the following model has been derived to express these findings, as shown in figure.
Hypothesis

Literature has noted a lack of empirical research regarding sponsorship and the specific field of sports sponsorship, relative to its importance and financial impact in the marketing communications spectrum (Cornwell and Maignan, 1998; Hoek, Gendall, Jeffcoat and Orsman, 1997; Gwinner and Swanson, 2003; Speed and Thompson, 2000). These hypotheses will address the identified gap and provide a substantial foundation that will aim to provide valid and important information to answer this discrepancy. Another gap, as identified by McDaniel (1999) calls for more research into sponsorship that promotes the consumption of unhealthy products. This gap in the literature seeks to be addressed through the following hypothesis and consequentially more information will be provided to authorities regarding issue of government imposed regulation.

The first hypothesis concerns the relationship between congruence and attitudes:

\( H_1: \) Congruence between Product Class and Sporting Event positively influences attitudes towards the sponsorship relationship.

This hypothesis will attempt to reinforce previous literature expressing that the more a consumer believes there is a “holistic match” between the two fields the more positive the resulting attitudes. (McDaniel and Heald, 2000). This hypothesis is confirmed with the application of the match up hypothesis where Speed and Thompson (2000) found Sponsor-Event fit was a significant indicator of consequential brand attitudes and the attitudes surrounding the sponsorship relationship. The match up hypothesis is applied through schema theory, as schemas promote efficiency and are frequently utilised by consumers due to the short retrieval time from memory (Taylor and Crocker, 1981).

The second hypothesis analyses the affect of consumer perceived involvement on the attitudes towards the sponsorship relationship between the AFL and alcohol.

\( H_2: \) Involvement with the Sporting Event influences attitudes towards the Sponsorship Relationship

It is established through literature that the level of involvement with a sporting event has a moderating effect on the Congruence-Attitudes Relationship (Speed and Thompson, 2000). Previous literature would suggest that there is a positive correlation between the level of involvement with the sporting event and the attitudes reported by the consumer (Hill and Green 2001; Jalleh et al., 2002,) with regards to individual product categories, brands and the relationship as a whole (McDaniel, 1999; McDaniel and Mason, 1999). It is important to study consumer attitudes, as these attitudes reflect the level of effectiveness for the sponsorship agreements. The moderating effect is crucial to understand as it can help segment the market of targeted consumers and aids marketers and organizations to predict and forecast achievable goals from their marketing mix.

The final hypothesis relate to the consumer reported involvement in the product category.

\( H_3: \) Involvement with Product Category influences attitudes towards the Sponsorship Relationship

It is expected that the involvement in the product category will illicit more positive attitudes towards the product category and sponsorship relationship (Levin et al., 2001; Quester and Smart, 1998). It is important to study the level of involvement with a product category as this measure
will adjudge the extent to which the consumer has been exposed to the item and thus whether this predisposed acceptance is able their shape attitudes.

Overall, these hypotheses reflect the need to fill the gap regarding empirical evidence in the sports sponsorship field. It will also provide data and information regarding the effectiveness of sponsorship as a function of consumer attitudes. Finally, it will help to address consumer attitudes regarding a deemed socially irresponsible product, alcohol.

**Measurement Scales**

For an effective and thus statistically valid survey, it is necessary to take into consideration potential issues such as scale formation. It is critical that the scales employed, such as ranking statements, asking respondents to agree/disagree with sentences or asking respondents to rate a statement by selecting an item from a list of responses, reflect the desired construct and are statistically valid in the context of the study.

A scale employed for hypothesis 1, adapted from Meuhling and Laczniak (1988), is a 3-item 7 point attitude towards the relationship scale (McDaniel and Heald, 2000). These three items adjudge the favourability, the perceived “goodness” and its positive or negative perception of the sponsorship relationship. This relationship is further refined as being between the sporting event, the AFL, and alcohol. This relationship is to be examined in isolation and data analysis is to be conducted in order to examine the impact of moderating variables (involvement) on this result. This provides for context specific results as well as generalisable results, confirmed by a reliability alpha over 0.80.

The first hypothesis will also be measured using a congruence scale by McDaniel and Heald (2000). This method uses three 7 point likert scales measuring the degree to which subjects perceived a holistic match between the event and the product category. In the context of this study it will be used to measure perceived fit between AFL sporting event and alcohol, e.g. “The AFL event and alcohol sponsorship are well matched”. The McDaniel and Heald (2000) study is very applicable to the current study as it also related to sponsorship agreements between perceived unhealthy products, alcohol and tobacco, and sporting events. The reliability alpha of .94 confirms its statistical validity.

The second hypothesis involves measuring consumer involvement with the sporting event, i.e. the AFL match (Hill and Green, 2001). This measure involves three 7-point semantic differentials anchored at one end by “not at all” and at the other by “very”, e.g. "How interested are you in the AFL?" These three questions measure interest, importance of knowledge and familiarity with the AFL. These constructs have been validated by Levin et al (2001) as the three critical and pivotal factors for adjudging involvement with a sporting event. These questions have been confirmed by Hill and Green (2001) for the purposes of this study as the research involves measuring psychological involvement with rugby league. The reliability alpha of 0.90 confirms its statistical validity.

The third hypotheses relate to a consumers involvement with the product category. The Laurent and Kapferer scale (1985) is a consumer involvement profile (CIP) scale measuring selected antecedents of involvement Interest-pleasure, Sign, Risk Probability and Risk Importance. A slightly modified version of this scale has been utilised by Quester and Smart 1998 in the alcoholic beverage product category, therefore validating its use in this study. It involves 7 point Likert Scales with 4 items corresponding to each antecedent and is a valid measure as indicated by the reliability alpha of 0.82.
Data Collection

The aim of this research is to discover whether the alcohol sponsorship relationship is able shape people’s attitudes towards sponsored brands and the product category of alcohol. This notion will arguably be moderated due to their involvement with either brand and whether they believe there is a good fit between the sporting event and alcohol. The data collection method to be employed is self administered surveys. The surveys are to be administered at the end of a crows football game at AAMI Stadium during August. These surveys will be undertaken either in the crows shed, a meeting place for crows fan after the game and in the queues for the “footy express” bus, which is next to AAMI stadium.

The method of collection involves face to face interactions between the interviewer and the respondent. The advantages of such arrangement lie in the higher response rate (as compared to mail, telephone or web surveys) and facilitate for respondents to clarify issues, therefore less likely becoming confused and therefore returning results that do not aptly reflect their views on the topic. Disadvantages, however, relate to the cost in time and resources. Being an honours project, there is limited scope for employing a team of 50-100 interviewers. Consequently, it is likely the sample size will be smaller than desires, but still significant.

The weaknesses of surveys lie in the potential errors as a result of survey design and the administration of surveys. It is essential that the survey questions aptly reflect and relate to the construct you wish to measure. To avoid such ambiguous and statistically invalid questions, the questions being used have already been tested in sport and sponsorship related literature.

Another error which is apparent is the interviewer bias, this error is to be counteracted by directions from the survey organizer to the helpers, indicating the manner in which questions are to be asked and what clarifications can be given. It is essential that each person taking down responses fully understands the directions and therefore consistent interpretations of the questions will be attainable. This leads to a higher level of generalisability and thus external validity.

Ethical issues

In order to provide for respondents to feel most comfortable with giving answers that reflect their true opinions, beliefs and emotions, the survey will ensure confidentiality by not asking patrons for their name/phone number or any other identifying questions. Surveys will be numbered and patrons will simply be asked whether they have completed the same survey previously before being a respondent in the exercise. Permission has already been granted by the Adelaide Football Club to utilise the crows shed as a venue for the surveys.

Limitations

While one of the major strengths of the study is the use of AFL patrons, therefore illustrating high levels of external validity, the major limitation with the study is the lack of control found in the study and thus the low levels of internal validity. While the survey will ask how many games the patrons have attended so far this year, the survey is unable to account for previous experiences, prior exposure and prior attitudes towards both the sponsored brand and the alcohol product category. One is unable to control how many times the consumers have been exposed to the sponsorship material, and there may be differences in exposure relating to their seating position. Also, many consumers arrive early to the games and thus there is a potential 2-3 hours difference in levels of exposure between those who arrived early and those who arrived just before the game begins. However, the lack of internal validity is countered by the relatively higher external validity. This is important as most studies have previously conducted research with high internal
validity, therefore illustrating a gap in the literature which will be filled by this research. The higher external validity must be preserved by ensuring patrons do not answer the survey more than once, nor answer as a group. Both these problems have already been discussed and will be solved through the questionnaire design. The gap in the literature regarding the lack of studies exhibiting external validity validates the stance taken on this matter.

The second limitation is the use of a convenience sample; it would be implausible to conduct random sampling in the venue of AAMI stadium. In order to counter this limitation, the surveys will be conducted in an environment where the respondents are not rushed and therefore should provide results that reflect their true values. Also, restrictions on the survey, such as not being able to answer the survey more than once or answering the questions as a group will help to improve its validity.

The third limitation of this study is the possibility of obtaining more respondents who are highly involved with the sporting event. This is due to surveying patrons at the Crows' Shed; a popular meeting plans for crows members and dedicated and passionate fans. The other venue, the bus queue hopes to provide a range of involvement with the sporting event and thus alleviate the potential limitation.

Finally, there are issues with generalisability due to the low sample numbers likely to be obtained and its direct application to AFL games and alcohol consumption. Thus, before applying the finding of the study, one must take into consideration the parameters and context of the study.

Implications and Conclusions

This paper seeks to investigate the role of involvement in the relationship of congruence and attitude towards alcohol sponsorship. This is an important measure in light of social and political issues regarding community values regarding alcohol consumption and potential policy decisions in the future. This study will contribute to the area of sport sponsorship effectiveness, evidence that has been highly sought after due to the high levels of accountability needed in marketing. The large financial outlay of the sponsorship relationships justifies the need to explore moderating variables such as involvement as a means of segmenting the target population.

The ethicality of alcohol in sponsorship agreements is a contentious issue due to conflicting values and beliefs regarding alcohol amongst the community. The study of the perceived congruence between alcohol and a sporting event will provide evidence regarding whether football patrons, the members of society most exposed to the sponsorship material, believe a holistic match exists and whether this influences their attitudes towards brands and product categories. If governments are to initiate restrictive measures, it is first necessary to determine the influence of alcohol in the sponsorship relationship amongst those who are most affected and likely to be influenced by the material.
Reference List


