

Chapter 4

A Path Analytic Model of the Relationship between Event Involvement and Sponsors Recall

Anish Yousaf

Lovely Professional University, India

Anil Gupta

University of Jammu, India

ABSTRACT

This chapter empirically examines the importance of involvement in accurate sponsor identification in Indian Premier League (IPL) and explores the involvement differences between gender characteristics. The study aims to: (1) validate Kyle et al. (2004) involvement scale in context of IPL, (2) examine involvement differences according to gender characteristics, and (3) explore the impact of individuals' involvement on their ability to recall sponsors. Findings of the study reveal that involvement differences do exist among gender characteristics and individuals' levels of involvement significantly impact their ability to recall sponsors, as it was found that highly involved individuals recall more sponsors. These findings have implications for marketers investing in sponsorship-linked marketing in emerging economies.

INTRODUCTION

The important role played by involvement in consumer research and marketing practices is well highlighted by researchers who argue its importance on individual's decision making. Involvement also helps marketers for categorizing their advertising messages as well as products/services (Michaelidou & Dibb, 2008) and then

target them afterwards using effective marketing strategies (Michaelidou & Sally, 2008). Involvement has been defined as “a state of motivation, arousal, or interest toward an activity or product, in addition to the constructs of social identity theory, attachment, and satisfaction to develop a model of devoted fan behavior” (Laverie & Arnett, 2000). Referred to as an individual level construct, ‘involvement’ has been studied previously with

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respect to individuals cognitive and behavioural outcomes, brand commitment (Coulter, Price, & Feick, 2003), brand similarity and brand switching (Campoa, Gijsbrechtsb, & Nisole, 2000), advertising/communications (Chen, Ross, Yen, & Akhapon, 2009), purchase decision (Hollebeek, Jaeger, Brodie, & Balemi, 2007), perceived risk and information search (Sinha & Uniyal, 2005). The affect of involvement on fans brand loyalty has also been explored and increasing individual's involvement has been cited as one of the best strategy for retaining fan loyalty (Alexandris, Kouthouris, & Meligdis, 2007).

Involvement has also been subjected to research in leisure/recreation sports in tourism industry (Kyle, Absher, and Graefe, 2003) and sports sponsorship (Lardinoit & Derbaix, 2001). Previous researchers have argued the positive impact of individuals' involvement with a sport/team on enhanced sponsors recall (Grohs, Wagner, & Vsetecka, 2004; Walliser, 2003). Lardinoit and Derbaix (2001) extends the application of this construct for assessing its impact on recall of sponsors and argued involvement as one important factor impacting sponsors recall. Highlighting the important role played by involvement in accurate sponsor identification, the current study aimed towards assessing the recall of sponsors by linking fans involvement with Indian Premier League (IPL).

A tri-dimensional approach proposed by Kyle et al. (2004) is used for validation consisting of attraction, centrality, and social bonding. Attraction was defined as the importance and pleasure derived out from an activity. Centrality was defined as the social importance of an activity whereas social bonding reflects the emotional bonding of the individuals with the event/activity and conveys the meaning or self-image which the individuals wanted to convey via activity participation. This empirical paper also measure sponsor recall by linking fans involvement with Indian Premier League (IPL) and explored the differences between gender characteristics.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- Validate Kyle et al. (2004) involvement scale in context of IPL.
- Assessing the impact of fans involvement on recall of sponsors.
- Examining involvement level differences as a result of gender characteristics.

BACKGROUND

The Concept of Involvement

Zaichkowsky (1994) conceptualized involvement as a two dimensional construct represented by an individuals' cognitive and affective dimensions. Mitchell (1981) defined involvement as "an individual level, internal state variable that indicates the amount of arousal, interest, or drive evoked by a particular stimulus or situation". Shank and Beasley (1998) highlighted individuals' involvement in sports as a different construct and defined sports involvement as "the perceived interest in and personal importance of sports to an individual". The important role played by involvement in consumer research and marketing practices has been well highlighted as believed by researchers that it influences individual decision behavior. Researchers had conceptualized sports involvement as an individual's ability to absorb sports as a core component of his/her life or as an unobservable motivation, arousal or interest to participate in an activity (Kyle, Absher, & Graefe, 2003). Various researches have been done previously which have highlighted how important involvement is in assessing sponsorship effectiveness.

Involvement and Sponsorship Effectiveness

Sponsorship has been defined as "an exchange between event and firm(s) where the event receives fees or donated products from the firm (s) and allows them to participate in the event and promote

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