Erfassung der Effektivität von Sportsponsoring als Marketingkommunikationsinstrument auf der impliziten und expliziten Verarbeitungsebene von Konsumenten als Handlungsgrundlage für operative und strategische Managemententscheidungen

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Zusammenfassung

In den letzten drei Dekaden hat sich das Sponsoring im Allgemeinen und das Sportsponsoring im Besonderen als eine immer wichtigere und verstärkt verbindende Marketing-kommunikationsplattform etablieren können. Im Kern versucht Sponsoring dabei, einen assoziativen Transfer zwischen der Sponsormarke und dem Sponsorobjekt (Event, Team, Athlet etc.) zu schaffen, welcher von dem Zuschauer bzw. Fan wertgeschätzt wird, um darüber die Markenwahrnehmung und das Markenverhalten zu beeinflussen. Aus moderner Kommunikationsperspektive, wie sie bei Sharp (2010) eingehend erörtert wird, sind weitere elementare Vorteile des Sponsoring, neben dem persönlichen Erreichen der Konsumenten, a) eine kontinuierliche und aufmerksamkeitsstarke Präsenz sowie b) das Auffrischen und Stärken von relevanten Assoziationen im menschlichen Gedächtnis zu ermöglichen. Cornwell et al. (2005) identifizieren in diesem Zusammenhang den folgenden Bedarf bei der Sponsoringforschung: „Implicit memory also plays a major role in the processing of sponsorship information. As such, greater consideration in future research must be given to investigating implicit memory for sponsorship information, rather than just using studies involving sponsor recall and recognition tasks tapping explicit memory." (Cornwell et al. 2005, p. 29). Auf akademischer und praktischer Ebene ist festzustellen, dass lediglich in wenigen Sportsponsoring-Studien implizite Erhebungstechniken eingesetzt wurden, wie es auch generell im Marketing zu beobachten ist, obwohl dies Cornwell et al. (2005) in deren viel beachteten und zitierten Artikel als zukünftige Notwendigkeit klar identifiziert und gezielt hervorgehoben haben. Den Ausgangspunkt zum systematischen Verständnis der Sponsoringwirksamkeit bildet die assoziative Netzwerktheorie. Jeder Marketingkontakt wie das Wahrnehmen des Trikotsponsors oder der Post eines Athleten in den Sozialen Medien über den neuen Ausrüster, ob nun persönlich bzw. direkt oder nicht-persönlich bzw. indirekt erfahren, löst einen assoziativen Lernprozess aus, der neue Assoziationen im impliziten Gedächtnis speichert, bestehende Assoziationen verstärkt oder überschreibt und darüber am Ende den Marketingerfolg wie Markengefallen oder Markenkauf beeinflusst.

Vor den skizzierten Hintergründen und den identifizierten Forschungslücken auf praktischer, theoretischer, methodischer und empirischer Ebene ergibt sich ableitend die folgende Motivation für die Durchführung einer systematischen Forschungsreihe: Schaffung eines

erkenntnisleitenden Beitrages zur Wirksamkeit von horizontal und vertikal ausgerichteten Sportsponsoringaktivitäten auf impliziter und expliziter Ebene der Markeninformations-verarbeitung. Die einzelnen Studien der Forschungsreihe, welche insgesamt sechs aufeinander aufbauende Arbeiten umfasst, fallen in den Bereich einer verhaltenswissenschaftlichen Fundierung des Marketing im Allgemeinen und der Marketingforschung im Besonderen. Ziel der Forschungsreihe ist die Initiierung eines wissenschaftlich fundierten Erkenntnisfortschritts bei gleichzeitig hoher Praxisorientierung.

Das Verständnis sowie der Nachweis, welche substanzielle Wirksamkeit eine Sportsponsoringaktivität hinterlässt, insbesondere bezüglich der markenwertspezifischen Assoziationen im Gedächtnis der Konsumenten, die in ihrer Gesamtheit das Bild einer Marke, präziser formuliert das Markenwissen determinieren und entsprechend die Wahrnehmung als auch das Verhalten gegenüber einer Marke beeinflussen, ist für das Marketingmanagement einer Sponsormarke von erfolgskritischer Relevanz. Die durchgeführten Forschungsstudien zielten darauf ab, eine inhaltliche und methodische Weiterentwicklung der Sportsponsoringforschung aus Perspektive der Wissenschaft und Praxis systematisch umzusetzen. Mittels einer kombinierten Erhebung und Analyse impliziter und expliziter Markenassoziationen sowie zusätzlicher markenwertrelevanter Engagementmaße wie Markenempfindung, -weiterempfehlung und -präferenz – wie im Rahmen der vorliegenden Forschungsreihe erfolgreich konzipiert, eingesetzt, überprüft und sukzessive weiterentwickelt wurde – lässt sich die Sponsoringwirksamkeit in einer kompakten und gleichzeitig ganzheitlichen Art und Weise sowohl wissenschaftlich fundiert als auch praxistauglich evaluieren. Insbesondere die zielorientierte und multidimensionale Erfassung von impliziten Markenassoziationen, wie von Cornwell et al. (2005) als kritisches Forschungsdefizit identifiziert, erwies sich als leistungsstark und wertvoll.

Aus Perspektive des Marketingmanagement zeigt die vorliegende empirische Forschungsreihe ebenfalls die kritische Notwendigkeit des kombinierten Einsatzes aus impliziten und expliziten Erhebungsinstrumenten, um ein ganzheitliches Verständnis entwickeln zu können, wie Konsumenten die Marke und damit einhergehend die Markenkommunikation wahrnehmen und verarbeiten. Des Weiteren scheint es aus Perspektive des Marketingmanagement angebracht, die Wirksamkeit einer Sponsoringaktivität im Vorfeld anhand des Assoziationsfits zwischen Sponsorobjekt und Sponsormarke analytisch abzuschätzen. Nur wenn am Ende das

Sponsorobjekt im Vergleich zur Sponsormarke bei den Assoziationen klar besser abschneidet, die für die Sponsormarke mit Blick auf eine positive Konsumentenreaktion essentiell sind, scheint ein Sponsoringinvestment zweckmäßig, da dann ein positiver Assoziationstransfer vom Sponsorobjekt auf die Sponsormarke wahrscheinlich ist, welcher einen nachhaltigen Ausbau und eine substanzielle Stärkung des Markenwissens ermöglicht.

Schlagwörter: Implizite Messung, Assoziationstransfer, Sportsponsoring, Markenmanagement, Branding, Werbewirkung, Markenkommunikation, Reaktionszeitmessung, Neuromarketing

Abstract

Over the last three decades, sponsoring in general and sports sponsoring in particular has been able to establish itself as an increasingly important and unifying marketing communication platform. In essence, sponsoring attempts to create an associative transfer between the sponsoring brand and the sponsored object (event, team, athlete e.g.), which is valued by the spectator or fan, in order to influence brand perception and brand behaviour. From a modern communication perspective, as discussed in detail in Sharp (2010), further elementary advantages of sponsoring, in addition to the personal reaching of consumers, are a) a continuous and attention-grabbing presence and b) the refreshing and strengthening of relevant associations in human memory. In this context, Cornwell et al (2005) identify the following need in sponsorship research: "Implicit memory also plays a major role in the processing of sponsorship information. As such, greater consideration in future research must be given to investigating implicit memory for sponsorship information, rather than just using studies involving sponsor recall and recognition tasks tapping explicit memory". (Cornwell et al. 2005, p. 29). On an academic and practical level, it can be noted that only in a few sports sponsorship studies have implicit survey techniques been used, as is also generally the case in marketing, although Cornwell et al (2005) have clearly identified and specifically emphasised this as a future necessity in their much noted and cited articles. The starting point for a systematic understanding of sponsorship effectiveness is associative network theory. Every marketing contact, such as the perception of the jersey sponsor or the message of an athlete in the social media about the new supplier, whether experienced personally or directly or non-personally or indirectly, triggers an associative learning process which stores new associations in the implicit memory, reinforces or overwrites existing associations and ultimately influences marketing success such as brand appeal or brand purchase.

Against the outlined background and the identified research gaps on a practical, theoretical, methodical and empirical level, the following motivation for the implementation of a systematic research series is derived: Creation of an epistemological contribution to the effectiveness of horizontally and vertically oriented sport sponsoring activities on an implicit and explicit level of brand information processing. The individual studies of the research series, which comprise a total of six are part of a behavioural science foundation for marketing

in general and marketing research in particular. The aim of the research series is to initiate a scientifically founded progress in knowledge while at the same time maintaining a high level of practical orientation.

The understanding and proof of the substantial effectiveness of a sports sponsoring activity, especially with regard to the brand value-specific associations in the memory of the consumers, which in their entirety determine the image of a brand, more precisely formulated the brand knowledge and accordingly influence the perception and the behaviour towards a brand, is of critical relevance for the marketing management of a sponsored brand. The research studies carried out were aimed at systematically implementing a further development of the content and methodology of sports sponsorship research from the perspective of science and practice. By means of a combined survey and analysis of implicit and explicit brand associations as well as additional engagement measures relevant to brand value such as brand perception, recommendation and preference - as successfully conceived, applied, reviewed and successively further developed within the framework of the present research series - the effectiveness of sponsorship can be evaluated in a compact and at the same time holistic manner, both scientifically sound and practical. In particular, the target-oriented and multidimensional recording of implicit brand associations, as identified by Cornwell et al (2005) as a critical research deficit, proved to be powerful and valuable.

From the perspective of marketing management, the present empirical research series also shows the critical necessity of the combined use of implicit and explicit survey instruments in order to develop a holistic understanding of how consumers perceive and process the brand and, consequently, brand communication. Furthermore, from the perspective of marketing management, it seems appropriate to analytically assess the effectiveness of a sponsoring activity in advance on the basis of the association fit between sponsored object and sponsored brand. Only if, in the end, the sponsored object clearly scores better than the sponsored brand in terms of associations, which are essential for the sponsored brand with regard to a positive consumer reaction, does a sponsoring investment appear to be expedient, since a positive transfer of associations from the sponsored object to the sponsored brand is then probable, which enables a sustainable expansion and a substantial strengthening of brand knowledge.

"…nobody bothers to measure sponsorship effectiveness

because the sponsorship 'just feels right'"

Paul Hartley (Senior Vice President & Managing Director at Escalent)

1. Relevanz, Motivation und Zielsetzung

In den letzten drei Dekaden hat sich das Sponsoring im Allgemeinen und das Sportsponsoring im Besonderen als eine immer wichtigere und verstärkt verbindende Marketingkommunikationsplattform etablieren können (vgl. Cornwell 2008; Cornwell und Kwak 2015). Klassische Kommunikationsinstrumente des above the line (z.B. Bewegtbildwerbung und Printanzeigen) verlieren zunehmend an Effizienz und Effektivität mit der weiteren Zunahme an fragmentierten Kundenkontaktpunkten (vgl. O'Driscoll und Murray 1998; Belzer 2013). Dieser Trend ist seit den 1990er Jahren verstärkt zu beobachten, primär bedingt aufgrund des technologischen Kommunikationsfortschritts, was wiederum sowohl ein verändertes und gleichzeitig intensiveres Medienkonsumverhalten als auch eine stärkere individualisierte Erlebnisorientierung auf globaler Konsumebene zur Folge hat (vgl. Kitchen und Wheeler 1997; Rust und Espinoza 2006). In ähnlicher Entwicklung hat innerhalb des marketingorientierten Kommunikationsmix derweil der gezielte Einsatz von Instrumenten des below the line wie Direktmarketing, Verkaufsförderungsmaßnahmen am Point-of-Sale (PoS) oder Product Placement kontinuierlich zugenommen (vgl. Palmer 1996; Hartley und Pickton 1999; Chang et al. 2009). Während Aktivitäten des above the line – bspw. TV-Werbung oder Out-of-Home-Werbung – die breite Masse erreichen sollen und vor allem einen langfristig orientierten Markenaufbau im Fokus haben, dienen below the line Aktivitäten dazu, sehr zielorientiert spezifische Kundengruppen anzusprechen und in erster Linie einen kurzfristig orientierten Produktkauf wie erstmalige Produktnutzung zu initiieren (vgl. Peattie und Peattie 1995; Farr 1996; Eagle und Kitchen 2000; Prins und Verhoef 2007). Im Zuge der stetig voranschreitenden integrierten Marketingkommunikation werden above the line und below the line häufig nicht mehr als voneinander unabhängige, sondern als konvergierende Kommunikationsinstrumente betrachtet und eingesetzt (vgl. Schultz und Schultz 1998; Grant und McLeod 2007; Kliatchko 2009). Schultz (1996) beschreibt diesen Entwicklungsprozess wie folgt: *„More important, in communication systems, the whole is generally greater than the sum of the parts. It is this increasing recognition of a holistic, systemic process of*

communication in which there are all types of synergies that will inevitably drive the acceptance and use of integrated marketing and communication programs." (Schultz 1996, p. 143).

Der Einsatz von Sportsponsoring im Rahmen der integrierten Markenkommunikation im Sinne eines through the line Instruments erlaubt eine potentielle Verstärkung der Synergieeffekte zwischen above the line und below the line Instrumenten (vgl. Tripodi 2001). Sport kann also nicht nur die Bindung zwischen Menschen unterschiedlicher Herkunft stärken, sondern auch das Zusammenspiel von kommunikativen Marketingmaßnahmen. Ein erfolgreiches Sponsoring schafft bei den potentiellen Konsumenten (ein erstes) Interesse an der und (erste) Assoziationen über die Marke, während die integrierte Marketingkampagne den Konsumenten kommuniziert, wofür die Marke konkret steht und welche Bedürfnisse mit ihren Produkten befriedigt werden können (vgl. Egan 2007). Systematisch eingesetzt, bildet Sponsoring eine leistungsstarke Kommunikationsplattform, um zentrale Key Performance Indikatoren (KPI) des Marketingmanagement wie Top-of-Mind Awareness, konsistentes und assoziationsstarkes Markenbild sowie Steigerung des Konsums im abgestimmten Zusammenspiel mit anderen integrierten Instrumenten zu schaffen und zu stärken, wie es bspw. der Biermarke Guinness bei der 4. Rugby-Union-Weltmeisterschaft im Jahre 1999 über alle Kanäle hinweg vor, während und nach dem sportlichen Großereignis als dem dominierenden Eventsponsor erfolgreich gelungen ist (vgl. vertiefend Rines 2002).

Im Kern versucht Sponsoring dabei einen assoziativen Transfer zwischen der Sponsormarke und dem Sponsorobjekt (Event, Team, Athlet etc.) zu schaffen, welcher von dem Zuschauer bzw. Fan wertgeschätzt wird, um darüber die Markenwahrnehmung und das Markenverhalten zu beeinflussen (vgl. Crimmins und Horn 1996; Gwinner 1997). Psychologisches Fundament für diesen potentiellen Transfer ist die Balancetheorie von Heider (1958). Diese besagt, dass Menschen ein Gleichgewicht in ihrem Leben präferieren. Bei einem Ungleichgewicht ändern Menschen unbewusst ihre Einstellung(en), damit der Gleichgewichtszustand wiederhergestellt wird. Übertragen auf das Sponsoring bedeutet dies, dass Zuschauer bzw. Fans eine ähnliche Einstellung gegenüber der Sponsormarke entwickeln werden wie der Einstellung gegenüber dem Sponsorobjekt, dem sie zugeneigt sind, damit keine Disharmonie im Kopf aufkommt (vgl. Erdogan und Kitchen 1998; Dalakas und Levin 2005). Es wird ein positives Framing initialisiert, von dem auch die anderen

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Kommunikationsinstrumente profitieren. Auf diesem Wege lässt sich zielorientiert innerhalb eines Zuschauersegmentes das Gros der potentiellen Konsumenten erreichen, ohne auf eine klassische Massenkommunikation zu setzen, weil eine persönliche One-to-One Kommunikationsebene mit dem Zuschauer bzw. Fan etabliert werden kann.

Aus moderner Kommunikationsperspektive, wie sie bei Sharp (2010) eingehend erörtert wird, sind weitere elementare Vorteile des Sponsoring, neben dem persönlichen Erreichen der Konsumenten, a) eine kontinuierliche und aufmerksamkeitsstarke Präsenz sowie b) das Auffrischen und Stärken von relevanten Assoziationen im menschlichen Gedächtnis zu ermöglichen. Mit Blick auf letzteren Aspekt betont Sharp (2010): *„Advertising works largely by refreshing, and occasionally building memory structures. Marketers need to research these memory structures and ensure that their advertising refreshes these structures by consistently using the brand's distinctive assets."* (Sharp 2010, p. xiv). Cornwell et al. (2005) identifizieren in diesem Zusammenhang den folgenden Bedarf bei der Sponsoringforschung: *„Implicit memory also plays a major role in the processing of sponsorship information. As such, greater consideration in future research must be given to investigating implicit memory for sponsorship information, rather than just using studies involving sponsor recall and recognition tasks tapping explicit memory."* (Cornwell et al. 2005, p. 29). Generell sind implizite Informationsverarbeitungsprozesse, die im Hirn spontan und automatisch mit nur wenig oder gar keiner bewussten Aufmerksamkeit ablaufen, aufgrund des starken Einflusses auf das menschliche Entscheidungsverhalten von hoher Relevanz für das Management im Allgemeinen und für das Marketing im Besonderen (vgl. Camerer et al. 2005; Schmidt et al. 2018). Jede Sekunde nimmt das menschliche Hirn 11 Millionen Bits an Informationen aus der Umwelt auf, wobei nur ungefähr 50 Bits auf einer explizit-bewussten Ebene verarbeitet werden, der größte Teil der Informationen demnach eine implizit-unbewusste Verarbeitung erfährt (vgl. Wilson 2002; Dijksterhuis und Nordgren 2006).

IEG (2011, 2015, 2018) zufolge sind die weltweiten Ausgaben für Sponsoring von 2007 mit 37,9 Milliarden US-Dollar bis 2017 mit 62,7 Milliarden US-Dollar um 90,6% gestiegen, wobei in Nordamerika der größte Teil auf Sportsponsoring entfällt und ein ähnlich dominierender Anteil für Europa und Asien erwartet werden kann. Für die nächsten Jahre bis 2023 wird geschätzt, dass die Ausgaben für Sportsponsoring um im Durchschnitt jährlich 5,5% weiter zunehmen, wobei die digitalen Medien die primären Wachstumstreiber sind, wegen des

Potentials einer sehr granularen Zielgruppenerreichbarkeit über eine zunehmende Anzahl an virtuellen Kontaktpunkten hinweg (vgl. Nielsen Sports 2018; PwC 2018). Derweil bekunden gerade oder wegen der steigenden Sponsoringausgaben aktuell etwa vier von fünf Marketingmanagern (78%) die verstärkte Notwendigkeit, die Wirksamkeit der Sponsoringaktivitäten nachzuweisen, wenngleich nur ungefähr jeder dritte Marketingmanager bestätigt (37%), diesbezüglich einen standardisierten Evaluierungsprozess zu verwenden (vgl. ANA 2018). Jede dritte Sponsormarke (31%) verzichtet sogar vollständig auf eine Bewertung der Sponsoringwirksamkeit (vgl. IEG 2018).

Gleichzeitig ist auf akademischer Ebene festzustellen, dass lediglich in wenigen Sportsponsoring-Studien implizite Erhebungstechniken eingesetzt wurden, wie es auch generell im Marketing zu beobachten ist (vgl. Schmidt et al. 2018), obwohl dies Cornwell et al. (2005) in ihrem viel beachteten und zitierten Artikel als zukünftige Notwendigkeit klar identifiziert und gezielt hervorgehoben haben. Der Einsatz expliziter Erhebungsinstrumente wie schriftlicher Fragebogen zur Erfassung von Zielgrößen wie Wiedererinnerung und Markenimage ist nicht nur in der Praxis dominierend (vgl. ANA 2018; IEG 2018), sondern auch der präferierte Erhebungsansatz in der Wissenschaft (vgl. Chanavat et al. 2010; Biscaia et al. 2014). Die vergleichsweise relativ wenigen Studien, welche implizite Erhebungstechniken verwendeten, setzten primär auf Reaktionszeitmessungen und fokussierten auf grundlegende Erfolgsgrößen wie Markenbewusstsein (vgl. Trendel und Warlop 2007; Herrmann et al. 2011) oder Markeneinstellung (vgl. Koenigstorfer and Groeppel-Klein 2012; Zdravkovic und Till 2012). Eine detailliertere Erfassung des assoziativen Gedächtnisnetzwerkes wurde derweil unterlassen, obwohl dies aus Marketingsicht besonders wertvoll wäre zu erfahren, um das ganzheitliche Markenwissen als Summe der Assoziationen bzw. als *„the essence of what a brand represents, how it can achieve competitive advantage and ultimately significant value to a business"* (Richards et al. 1998, p. 48) zu verstehen. Das generelle Defizit an Studien mit impliziten Erhebungstechniken ist vor dem Hintergrund verwunderlich, dass verschiedene Konsumentenstudien den substantiellen Einfluss impliziter Prozesse auf die Konsumwahrnehmung und das Konsumverhalten verschiedenartig aufzeigen konnten (vgl. Maison et al. 2004; Weber et al. 2009; Florack et al. 2010). Tyebjee (1979) und Aaker et al. (1980) haben auch bereits vor über einem Vierteljahrhundert Reaktionszeitmessungen als leistungsstarkes Verfahren zur Erfassung impliziter Prozesse in wissenschaftlichen A+ Journals publiziert. Darüber hinaus hat seit Mitte der 1990er-Jahre insbesondere die Sozial- und

Kognitionspsychologie eine Vielzahl an impliziten Erhebungsverfahren entwickelt, um gezielt *„automatic mental associations that are difficult to gauge with explicit self-report measures"* (Hofmann et al. 2005, p. 1369) erfassen zu können.

Den Ausgangspunkt zum systematischen Verständnis der Sponsoringwirksamkeit bildet die assoziative Netzwerktheorie (vgl. vertiefend Anderson und Bower 1973). Die Summe aller vergangenen Markenerfahrungen bildet und repräsentiert das mentale Markenwissen (vgl. Keller 1993), welches in Form von Bedeutungsclustern und Assoziationen im Gedächtnis der Konsumenten verankert ist (vgl. Teichert and Schöntag 2010; Friedman and Leclercq 2015). Jeder Marketingkontakt wie das Wahrnehmen des Trikotsponsors oder der Post eines Athleten in den Sozialen Medien über den neuen Ausrüster, ob nun persönlich bzw. direkt oder nicht-persönlich bzw. indirekt erfahren, löst einen assoziativen Lernprozess aus, der neue Assoziationen im impliziten Gedächtnis speichert, bestehende Assoziationen verstärkt oder überschreibt und darüber am Ende den Marketingerfolg wie Markengefallen oder Markenkauf beeinflusst (vgl. Plassmann et al. 2012). Aus Marketingsicht bietet das Sportsponsoring im Gegensatz zu klassischen Kommunikationskanälen die Chance, im tagtäglichen Leben des Sportkonsumenten integriert und mit diesem über die erlebten Sportereignisse bzw. -momente unmittelbar verbunden zu sein (vgl. Cornwell 2014). Gerade mit den technologischen Fortschritten im digitalen Marketing und der fortschreitenden Verankerung der sozialen Medien innerhalb der gesamten Gesellschaft besteht nunmehr das Potential einer „Rundum-Verbindung" mit dem Konsumenten, 24 Stunden am Tag und 7 Tage die Woche. Erfolgskritisch ist hier das Wissen, welche assoziativen Spuren diese indirekten Sponsoringkontakte im Markengedächtnis hinterlassen (vgl. Cornwell 2008). Um die Mechanismen und Leistungsfähigkeit von Sponsoring zu verstehen, ist es in der heutigen modernen Kommunikationsumwelt der «Immer-und-überall-Erreichbarkeit» nicht nur notwendig, die direkte, unmittelbare Wirksamkeit der horizontalen Sponsoringobjekte wie Event, Team oder Athlet zu erfassen, wie es zumindest auf expliziter Ebene bereits vielfältig untersucht wurde (vgl. zur Übersicht vertiefend Walliser 2003). Es ist nunmehr ebenfalls essentiell, auch die indirekte, nachgelagerte Wirksamkeit der vertikalen Sponsorkontexte wie Videospiele auf der Konsole, Soziale Medien auf dem Smartphone oder Produktpromotion im Supermarkt zu evaluieren, da dies die Lebensräume sind, in denen sich der moderne Sportkonsument regelmäßig bewegt und die Kontakte eher natürlicher Art sind, ohne wie die klassische Marketingkommunikation störend zu wirken bzw. sogar mental geblockt zu werden

(vgl. Meenaghan 2001). Diverse Konsumentenstudien zeigen auf, dass diese beiläufigen Markenkontakte, wie sie beim Sportsponsoring üblicherweise vorkommen, einen besonders starken Einfluss auf das automatische (implizite) Konsumentscheidungsverhalten ausüben, selbst oder gerade, wenn der Konsument sich des Kontaktes nicht bewusst ist (vgl. Chartrand 2008; Fitzsimons et al. 2008; Ferraro et al. 2009).

Vor den skizzierten Hintergründen und den identifizierten Forschungslücken auf praktischer, theoretischer, methodischer und empirischer Ebene ergibt sich ableitend die folgende Motivation für die Durchführung einer systematischen Forschungsreihe: Schaffung eines erkenntnisleitenden Beitrages zur Wirksamkeit von horizontal und vertikal ausgerichteten Sportsponsoringaktivitäten auf impliziter und expliziter Markeninformationsverarbeitungsebene. Die einzelnen Arbeiten und Studien der Forschungsreihe fallen in den Bereich einer verhaltenswissenschaftlichen Fundierung des Marketing im Allgemeinen und der Marketingforschung im Besonderen (vgl. Wiedmann 2004). Diesbezüglich sollen die folgenden Forschungsfragen konkret beantwortet werden:

- Welchen Mehrwert liefern implizite Erhebungstechniken für das Marketingmanagement im Allgemeinen und die Sponsoringforschung im Besonderen?
- Aus welchen assoziativen und markenwertorientierten Kerndimensionen setzt sich eine implizite Sponsoringmessung zusammen, um die Wirksamkeit eines Sponsoring-engagements zu bestimmen?
- Welche assoziative Wirksamkeit erzeugen horizontale und vertikale Sponsoringaktivitäten auf das Markenwissen?
- Wie kann die Symbiose aus impliziten und expliziten Erhebungstechniken im Rahmen einer evidenzbasierten Sponsoringforschung aussehen?

Um die aufgestellten Forschungsfragen zu beantworten, werden die folgenden Forschungsziele verfolgt:

- Identifikation und Einsatz eines sensitiven Erhebungsinstrumentes zur Erfassung von Markenassoziationen auf impliziter Informationsverarbeitungsebene
- Systematische Durchführung von aufeinander aufbauenden, empirischen Untersuchungen zwecks sukzessiver Bestimmung der impliziten und expliziten Wirksamkeit sowohl auf horizontaler als auch vertikaler Sponsoringkontaktebene

- Konzeption eines leistungsstarken Markenwertmessinstrumentariums bestehend aus impliziten und expliziten Erhebungsinstrumenten zur Erfassung der Markenassoziationen sowie einem Erhebungsinstrument zur Bestimmung des Markenengagements

Im folgenden Kapitel werden die einzelnen Beiträge der Forschungsreihe kompakt diskutiert, die sich der Beantwortung der oben aufgestellten Forschungsfragen und -ziele widmen.

2. Einordnung und Darstellung der auf die implizite und explizite Sponsoringwirksamkeit ausgerichteten Forschungsbeiträge

Um die im vorangegangenen Kapitel aufgestellten Forschungsfragen und -zielsetzungen schrittweise angehen zu können, wurden in Summe 6 Forschungsarbeiten umgesetzt. Die einzelnen Arbeiten bauen weitgehend aufeinander auf, um einen sukzessiven und wissenschaftlich fundierten Erkenntnisfortschritt bei gleichzeitig hoher Praxisorientierung zu initiieren.

Im Rahmen des ersten Forschungsbeitrages (**Beitrag 1**) wurde zum ersten Mal ein Erhebungsinstrumentarium bestehend aus impliziter und expliziter Assoziationsmessung eingesetzt, um darüber die multiassoziative Wirksamkeit beim Sponsoring eines Events zu identifizieren. Als Untersuchungsgegenstand diente die Fußball-Europameisterschaft der Herren 2012 mit vier ausgewählten Hauptsponsoren. Anstelle einer klassischen eindimensionalen Einstellungserhebung, wie in der Sponsoringforschung häufig durchgeführt, wurden multidimensionale Markenassoziationen auf Grundlage des Zürcher Modells der sozialen Motivation von Bischof (1993, 1996) erfasst. Auf implizitem Wege mit einer innovativen Reaktionszeitmessung, die auf dem assoziativen Lernparadigma aufsetzt (vgl. Craddock et al. 2012), sowie auf explizitem Wege mit einer gängigen schriftlichen Befragung (5er-Likert-Skala). In diesem Zuge wurde erstmals ein konzeptionelles Untersuchungsmodell eingeführt, welches die assoziativen Sponsoringeffekte von dem Sponsorobjekt auf die Sponsormarke auf impliziter und expliziter Ebene skizziert. Die Studie wurde online als Vorher-Nachher-Messung (within-subject-design) durchgeführt: Die Vorher-Messung fand eine

Woche vor dem Event-Start statt, die Nachher-Messung eine Woche nach Beendigung des Events. Bei jeder der vier Sponsormarken zeigten sich signifikante positive Effekte auf expliziter, aber vor allem auf impliziter Informationsverarbeitungsebene bei der assoziativen Markenwahrnehmung. Darüber hinaus konnte mittels einer einfachen Korrelationsanalyse ein positiver Zusammenhang zwischen Event-Sponsor-Fit und Assoziationsstärkung festgestellt werden: Je höher die Ausprägung der Eventassoziationen im Vergleich zu der Ausprägung der Sponsormarke vor dem Event ist, desto größer fällt die Assoziationsverbesserung der Sponsormarke nach dem Event aus, sowohl implizit als auch explizit. Im Kern zeigt die Studie den Mehrwert für das Marketingmanagement auf, eine Kombination besteht aus impliziter und expliziter Assoziationsmessung einzusetzen, um die Sponsoringwirksamkeit ganzheitlich zu erfassen und nicht Gefahr zu laufen, assoziative Transfereffekte auf impliziter oder expliziter Wahrnehmungsebene zu übersehen.

Aufbauend auf den Erkenntnissen des ersten Forschungsbeitrages wurde im zweiten Forschungsbeitrag (**Beitrag 2**) eine Reihe von vier weiteren empirischen Teilstudien durchgeführt, um die Analyse der horizontalen Wirksamkeit mit Blick auf das Sponsoring von Events zu wiederholen, aber auch um weitere horizontale Sponsoringobjekte wie Teams und Athleten erstmalig zu untersuchen. Hierzu wurde das gleiche Erhebungsinstrumentarium, bestehend aus einer impliziten und expliziten Multi-Assoziationsmessung, wie beim ersten Forschungsbeitrag eingesetzt. In der ersten Teilstudie wurden als Event die Olympischen Spiele 2012 in London (offiziell: Spiele der XXX. Olympiade) wiederum mit vier ausgewählten Hauptsponsoren untersucht, während in der zweiten Teilstudie bei der Fußball-Weltmeisterschaft der Männer 2014 die gleichen vier Hauptsponsoren wie beim ersten Forschungsbeitrag (EM 2012) analysiert wurden. Beide Erhebungen erfolgten als Vorher-Nachher-Messung (within-subject-design), eine Woche vor und eine Woche nach dem Event. Es zeigten sich zwischen den Events unterschiedliche Wirksamkeitseffekte. Bei den Olympischen Spielen 2012 konnten in erster Linie signifikante, negative Veränderungen mit einer schwachen Effektstärke identifiziert werden und lediglich eine signifikante, positive Veränderung auf impliziter Ebene. Derweil ist bei der WM 2014 ein ähnliches Wirksamkeitsmuster wie bei der EM 2012 identifiziert worden: Die Mehrheit der signifikanten Veränderungen trat auf einer impliziten, weniger auf einer expliziten Informationsverarbeitungsebene auf, wobei auf der impliziten Ebene eine einzelne negative Veränderung bestimmt werden konnte. Die sonstigen signifikanten Veränderungen waren

positiv auf schwachem bis schwach-mäßigem Effektniveau. Ebenfalls konnte ein positiver Zusammenhang zwischen Event-Sponsor-Fit und Assoziationsstärkung mittels einer einfachen Korrelationsanalyse festgestellt werden. Ein Grund für die schwächere und vorwiegend negative Wirksamkeit des Sponsoring bei den Olympischen Seiten könnte in den strengen Werberichtlinien des Internationalen Olympischen Komitees (IOC) begründet sein und dadurch könnten die Spiele selbst weitgehend eine werbefreie Zone darstellen. Zum Beispiel gibt es im Vergleich zur Fußball-EM oder Fußball-WM keine Bandenwerbung. Die strikten IOC-Regeln einer „Sponsoringunsichtbarkeit" verhindern oder begrenzen damit zumindest einen assoziativen Lernprozess, womit vor allem keine oder nur wenige Assoziationstransfers auf impliziter Ebene im Sinne eines *„neurons wire together if they fire together"* (Lowel und Singe, 1992, p. 211) erfolgen können. Dass gleichzeitig auf expliziter Ebene die Markenassoziationen sich tendenziell negativ verändern, könnte einem (wahrgenommenen) niedrigeren Werbedruck bei der klassischen Kommunikation wie TV-Werbung während der Spiele geschuldet sein, womit bspw. ein geringerer Mere-Exposure-Effekt und damit weniger positive Markenbewertung aufgrund einer niedrigeren Verarbeitungsflüssigkeit eintreten würde (vgl. Labroo et al. 2008). In Teilstudie drei und vier wurden Teams und Athleten als Sponsoringobjekte eingehend evaluiert, wiederum mittels einer Vorher-Nachher-Messung (within-subject-design). Darüber hinaus wurde zwischen Fan- und Nicht-Fan unterschieden, um die potentiell unterschiedliche Wissensstruktur über das jeweilige Sponsoringobjekt zu berücksichtigen. Die Wirksamkeit fiel beim Teamsponsoring mit schwachen bis starken Effektstärken positiver aus im Vergleich zum Athletensponsoring mit schwachen bis mäßigen Transfereffekten. Ebenfalls sind auf impliziter und expliziter Ebene beim Teamsponsoring mehr Markenassoziationen verändert worden. Generell konnte hier festgestellt werden, dass bei Fans in erster Linie eine implizite Wirksamkeit zu identifizieren ist, während bei Nicht-Fans nahezu ausschließlich eine explizite Wirksamkeit festzustellen war. Wie beim Eventsponsoring konnte auch beim Team- und Athletensponsoring ein Sponsorobjekt-Sponsor-Fit und eine Assoziationsstärkung mittels einer einfachen Korrelationsanalyse festgestellt werden. In Summe bestätigten die Studien die Notwendigkeit einer kombinierten Erhebung bestehend aus impliziter und expliziter Messung, um eine ganzheitliche Evaluation der Sponsoringwirksamkeit sicherzustellen. Des Weiteren zeigte sich, dass die Wirksamkeit des Sponsorings von kontextuellen Rahmenbedingungen wie Grad der Sichtbarkeit und Grad der Fanbeziehung beeinflusst wird.

Nachdem im zweiten Forschungsbeitrag die Praktikabilität und Leistungsfähigkeit des Erhebungsinstrumentariums, bestehend aus impliziter und expliziter Assoziationsmessung, zur Erfassung einer horizontalen Sponsoringwirksamkeit bestätigt werden konnte, wurde im dritten Forschungsbeitrag (**Beitrag 3**) als nächster Untersuchungsschritt erstmalig die vertikale Sponsoringwirksamkeit untersucht. Konkret sind event-bezogene Social Media Videospots, die (unter anderem) auf YouTube liefen, im unmittelbaren Vorfeld der Fußball-Weltmeisterschaft der Herren 2014 analysiert worden (Vorher-Nachher-Messung), sowohl aus Perspektive von vier ausgewählten offiziellen Eventsponsoren als auch von vier ausgewählten Ambush Marken, die als eine Art „Trittbrettfahrer" von dem bevorstehenden Event kommunikativ profitieren wollten, ohne offizielle Werberechte dafür zu besitzen. Während die offiziellen Sponsoren die Legitimation innehaben, offizielle Eventzeichen wie das FIFA- und Event-Logo in ihre Markenkommunikation (temporär) für eine unmittelbare Assoziation mit dem Event zu verwenden, nutzen bzw. schaffen die Ambush Marken einen Kontext, der eine indirekte Verknüpfung mit dem Event herstellen soll, wie bspw. der Einsatz von bekannten Athleten oder die stereotypische Verwendung der lokalen Bevölkerung oder bekannter Sehenswürdigkeiten, wo das Event stattfindet. Dabei haben sich die Sozialen Netzwerke für Ambush Marken als wertvolle Kommunikationsplattform herauskristallisiert, um die Exklusivrechte der offiziellen Sponsoren „anzugreifen" bzw. die erhöhte Konsumentenaufmerksamkeit um das Event herum „abzugreifen" (vgl. Burns 2014). Exemplarisch hierfür steht die Kopfhörermarke Beats by Dre, die nicht nur seit 2008 bei den Olympischen Spielen erfolgreich „in den Sozialen Medien ambushen" (vgl. Sweney 2012), sondern auch bei der FIFA WM 2014 mit ihrer Social Media Kampagne „The Game Before The Game", deren Kernelement ein fünfminütiger Clip über die Rituale von Fußballspielern vor dem Spiel ist und in der diverse internationale Stars wie Neymar Júnior (Brasilien) oder Luis Suárez (Uruguay) in ihrer mentalen Spielvorbereitung gezeigt werden, einen viralen Erfolg mit viel medialem und sozialem Netzwerkrauschen (Buzz) feiern konnte (vgl. Nudd 2014). Im Rahmen dieser empirischen Wirksamkeitsstudie wurde das Erhebungsinstrumentarium auf der impliziten und expliziten Assoziationsebene um eine Einstellungsdimension erweitert und mit der Weiterempfehlungsbereitschaft ein Verhaltensindikator zusätzlich erfasst, um eine breiter aufgestellte Markenwertmessung zu initiieren. Zugleich ist erstmalig ein Strukturgleichungsmodell aufgestellt und mit Partial Least Squares (PLS) geschätzt worden, mit dem Nachweis einer zufriedenstellenden Güte bezüglich der Validität und Reliabilität der

assoziativen Messmodelle. Mit Blick auf die Wirksamkeit nach einem kurzen bzw. nur wenige Sekunden andauernden Kontakt mit einem event-bezogenen Social Media Videospot konnten Effekte auf impliziter und expliziter Wirkungsebene festgestellt werden. Bei den offiziellen Sponsoren traten Assoziationstransfers alleine auf impliziter Ebene sowie eine einzelne Verhaltensänderung auf. Bei den Ambush Marken zeigten sich in Summe weniger Assoziationsveränderungen, dafür auf impliziter und expliziter Wahrnehmungs-, nicht aber auf einer Verhaltensebene. Ein Grund für die tendenziell höhere Wirksamkeit eines offiziellen Sponsorings im Vergleich zu Ambush Marketing, insbesondere auf der impliziten Ebene, könnte in den historisch gewachsenen, größeren impliziten Gedächtnisstrukturen über das Event begründet liegen, welches der durchschnittliche Eventzuschauer über die Jahre durch Erfahrung (TV-Konsum etc.) aufgebaut hat, und durch entsprechende Symbole wie das FIFA- und jeweilige Event-Logo aktiviert werden. Mit der höheren assoziativen Leistungsfähigkeit sowohl auf quantitativer (Anzahl an Assoziationen) als auch qualitativer Ebene (Anzahl an Aktivierungsmerkmalen) besteht das Potential eines besseren Assoziationstransfers vom Event auf die Sponsormarke zum Ausbau und zur Stärkung des Markenwissens, dem sogenannten „brand's share of mind" (Sharp 2010). Im Vergleich dazu ist zu erwarten, dass das implizite Gedächtnis bezüglich eines Testimonials nur bei Zuschauern und Fans mit einem hohen Fanidentifikationsgrad prägnant ausgeprägt ist, nicht aber beim regulären Eventzuschauer, sodass das durchschnittliche Assoziationspotential geringer ausfällt, wie diese Studie aufzeigt. In Gänze zeigt das Studienergebnis abermals die Zweckmäßigkeit und Notwendigkeit eines impliziten und expliziten Methodeneinsatzes, um die markenwertbezogene Wirksamkeit von Sportsponsoring ganzheitlich erfassen zu können. Aus Sicht des Marketingmanagements eines der ausgewählten offiziellen Sponsoren würde ansonsten die Gefahr bestehen, die zum Teil außerordentlichen Sponsoringausgaben zukünftig zumindest infrage zu stellen, da bei einer klassischen Wirksamkeitsmessung mit nur expliziten Erhebungsinstrumenten keinerlei Assoziationseffekte mit Blick auf eine stärkere Verankerung der Marke in den Köpfen der Konsumenten feststellbar gewesen wären, sondern hier nur auf impliziter Ebene aufgetreten sind.

Vor dem Hintergrund der motivierenden Forschungsergebnisse der ersten drei Beiträge erfolgte im vierten Forschungsbeitrag (**Beitrag 4**) eine weitere Analyse der vertikalen Wirksamkeit, diesmal im Kontext von In-Game-Advertising und eSports. Von den Sponsoring- und Markenverantwortlichen wird eSports als der dominierende Wachstumsmarkt im

Sportsponsoringbereich angesehen (vgl. PwC 2018; Nielsen 2019). Globale Markenunternehmen investieren massiv in diesen Bereich, da sie sich einen hochengagierten Echtzeitkonsum im tagtäglichen Leben des Konsumenten versprechen, bedingt durch das veränderte digitale Medienkonsumverhalten, gerade unter jungen Konsumenten (vgl. Belzer 2013). So hat mittlerweile Coca-Cola einen millionenschweren Sponsoringvertrag mit EA Sports abgeschlossen, um den fiktiven und aufstrebenden Fußballstar „Alex Hunter" als virtuellen Markenbotschafter im Story-Modus des weltweit berühmten Videospiels FIFA 2018 exklusiv „auflaufen" zu lassen (vgl. Nudd 2017). Der Senior Entertainment Manager von Coca-Cola, Alban Dechelotte, fasst die Motivation von Coca-Cola wie folgt zusammen: *„The role Coca-Cola plays in football is before or after the match, so we recognized a natural tie-in with FIFA 18. […] Fans of the FIFA game, especially younger fans, share a 360-degree passion for football – playing, watching and gaming, […] So we decided to connect the love stories Coke has with the real and virtual worlds of football through our partnership with the world's biggest football video game."* (Coca-Cola Company 2017). In dieser Studie ist das erweiterte Erhebungsinstrumentarium des dritten Forschungsbeitrages zum Einsatz gekommen. Ebenfalls wurde eine PLS-basierte Strukturgleichungsmodellierung vorgenommen, die eine zufriedenstellende Güte der assoziativen Messmodelle bezüglich deren Reliabilität und Validität attestieren konnte. Als In-Game-Kontext diente das Videospiel FIFA 08 für die PlayStation Portable. Die Befragten wurden per Zufall einem von zwei englischen Fußballteams zugewiesen und mussten als Aufgabe für mehrere Minuten einen Ball virtuell jonglieren. Als konkrete Untersuchungsgegenstände fungierten der jeweilige Trikotsponsor und Trikotausrüster. Die Studie wurde als Vorher-Nachher-Messung aufgesetzt und in einem Labor durchgeführt. Bei der Analyse wurde zusätzlich eine Segmentierung nach der wahrgenommenen User Experience (UX) beim Videospielkonsum (niedrige UX versus hohe UX) vorgenommen. Vergangene Studien haben aufzeigen können, dass die wahrgenommene UX das Markenerlebnis beeinflusst und somit eine nachgelagerte Wirkung auf den Markenwert ausübt (vgl. Khan und Rahman 2015). In der Mehrheit der Untersuchungsgruppen konnte mindestens eine positive Assoziationsveränderung auf impliziter Ebene festgestellt werden. Bei der expliziten Wahrnehmung wurde lediglich eine einzelne Veränderung mit einem negativen Vorzeichen identifiziert. Des Weiteren zeigte sich ein positiver Effekt von der User Experience ausgehend: In drei von vier Untersuchungsgruppen mit einer hohen User Experience konnte eine Wirkung nachgewiesen

werden, aber nur in zwei von vier Untersuchungsgruppen mit einer niedrigen User Experience. Wie bei den vorigen Forschungsbeiträgen, insbesondere aber wie beim dritten Forschungsbeitrag, zeigte sich der praktische Managementmehrwert einer Kombination aus impliziter und expliziter Analyse. Ohne die implizite Assoziationsmessung wäre die positive Wirksamkeit von In-Game-Advertising auf das Markenwissen nicht ganzheitlich ersichtlich gewesen und ein entsprechendes finanzielles Engagement zumindest infrage gestellt worden, obwohl sehr substanzielle Markeneffekte existieren, die mit einer rein klassischen Erhebung aber übersehen worden wären.

Als nächster Erkenntnisschritt wurden im fünften Forschungsbeitrag (**Beitrag 5**) die affektiven Dispositionen von Fans gegenüber dem Sponsoringobjekt, hier rivalisierende Athleten der MotoGP, eingehend untersucht. Wie in den Teilstudien drei und vier des zweiten Forschungsbeitrages angedeutet, zeichnen sich unterschiedliche Wirkungseffekte zwischen Fan und Nicht-Fan ab. Generell bildet die Rivalität zwischen Teams bzw. Athleten eines der Schlüsselelemente für eine hohe Zuschauerattraktivität (vgl. Harvard et al. 2013). Wenn das favorisierte Team oder der favorisierte Athlet erfolgreich ist, zeigen Fans Jubel als Zeichen der Zuneigung, genauso wie sie als Zeichen der Abneigung Jubel zeigen, wenn der Rivale verlieren sollte (vgl. Zillmann et al. 1989). Die Skala der Abneigung reicht dabei von Missfallen, über Feindschaft bis hin zu Gewalt. Die Katastrophe von Heysel in Belgien im Rahmen des Finales um den Fußball-Europapokal der Landesmeister 1984/85 zwischen dem FC Liverpool und Juventus Turin kennzeichnet mit 39 getöteten Zuschauern und mehreren hundert verletzten Personen einen negativen Höhepunkt, der von rivalisierenden Hooligans beider Mannschaften ausging und von Lars-Christer Olsson, dem ehemaligen Generaldirektor der Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), als *„the darkest hour in the history of the UEFA competitions"* (Union of European Football Associations 2005) beschrieben wurde. Trotz derart extrem negativer Ereignisse bildet bzw. ist Rivalität grundlegend das *„Salz in der Suppe"*, gerade aus einer Medienperspektive heraus, warum Zuschauer mit Leidenschaft Sport konsumieren. Um die Ursache-Wirkung von Sportrivalität in einem ersten Schritt besser zu verstehen, wurde das Rivalitäts-Modell von Dalakas und Melancon (2012) konzeptionell erweitert, welches im Original vorgelagert aus Fanidentifikation und nachgelagert aus Siegwichtigkeit sowie Schadenfreude konzipiert ist. Konkret wurde das Modell auf der Einflussebene mittels impliziten und expliziten Liebe-Hass-Assoziationsdimensionen sowie auf der Erfolgsebene anhand einer affektiven Anziehung systematisch angepasst. Die Schätzung

des Strukturgleichungsmodells, aufgestellt als Universal Structure Modeling (USM), erfolgte auf Basis von Bayes'schen Neuronalen Netzen. Wenngleich auch ein expliziter Effekt ersichtlich ist, zeigen die Ergebnisse einen starken impliziten Effekt auf die Fanidentifikation auf: Je mehr Leidenschaft ein Fan auf unbewusster Ebene in Form von impliziter Liebe (Zuneigung) bzw. je weniger Leidenschaft ein Fan in Form von implizitem Hass (Abneigung) aufweist, desto größer der Grad der Fanidentifikation. Darüber hinaus scheint die Siegwichtigkeit die implizite und explizite Konsequenz von erhöhter Liebe bei gleichzeitig geringem Hass gegenüber dem Athleten zu sein, während die Schadenfreude primär das Resultat eines expliziten Hasses gegenüber dem Athleten ist. Die Siegwichtigkeit begründet dabei die affektive Anziehung, nicht aber die Schadenfreude. Die kausalanalytischen Ergebnisse deuten in Summe an, dass Liebe (starke Zuneigung) und Hass (starke Abneigung) auf impliziter und expliziter Assoziationsebene einen substanziellen Einfluss auf den Grad des Fan-Daseins sowie auf die Athletenanziehung ausüben, womit unterschiedliche Wirkungsmechanismen mit Blick auf den Assoziationstransfer je nach affektiver Disposition zu erwarten sind.

Im sechsten und letzten Forschungsbeitrag (**Beitrag 6**) erfolgte, aufbauend auf den bisherigen Ergebnissen, eine weitere Analyse der vertikalen Wirksamkeit von Sportsponsoring, diesmal im Kontext einer sponsoringbasierten Produktpromotion am Point of Sale (PoS) und unter Berücksichtigung der affektiven Disposition gegenüber dem Sponsoringobjekt. Dazu wurde das multiassoziative Messmodell abermals erweitert, konkret um Liebe- und Hass-spezifische Markenassoziationen des fünften Forschungsbeitrages sowie Wärme, Kompetenz und Reputation als weitere erfolgskritische Assoziationsfelder von Markenunternehmen (vgl. Walsh und Wiedmann 2004; Aaker et al. 2012). Als verhaltensbezogene Markenwert-KPIs sind die Engagementerfolgsmaße affektive Markenempfindung sowie intentionale Markenpräferenz erfasst worden. Somit setzte sich das angepasste Untersuchungskonzept aus nunmehr achtzehn Markenassoziationen (neun implizite und neun explizite Assoziationen) sowie zwei Markenengagementgrößen zusammen. Eine PLS-basierte Strukturgleichungsmodellierung zeigte auch für die erweiterte Messkonzeption eine in der Gesamtperspektive zufriedenstellende Güte der Reliabilität und Validität an. Als Untersuchungsobjekte dienten Produkte des Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), die im deutschen Markt käuflich erhältlich waren und als Faneditionsprodukte beworben wurden. Die Befragten wurden per Zufall einem der vier Untersuchungsobjekte zugewiesen (entweder

Coca-Cola mit Bayern München bzw. Borussia Dortmund oder Pringles mit FC Schalke 04 bzw. Pringles & Hamburger SV). Die Onlinestudie ist als Vorher-Nachher-Messung aufgesetzt worden, wobei die virtuelle Exposition mit dem entsprechenden Produkt auf fünf Sekunden begrenzt wurde, um lediglich einen oberflächlichen und kurzen Kontakt wie im Supermarkt üblich zu induzieren. Bei der Analyse wurde zwischen Fan, Nicht-Fan und Anti-Fan unterschieden, um die psychologischen Wirkungsmechanismen der unterschiedlichen affektiven Fan-Dispositionen adäquat zu berücksichtigen. Bei jeder der untersuchten Markenassoziationen, sowohl auf impliziter als auch expliziter Ebene, ist mindestens eine Veränderung in einem oder mehreren Fan-Segmenten festgestellt worden. Bei den Fans gab es überwiegend positive Veränderungen auf impliziter Ebene, während bei Nicht-Fans in erster Linie auf der expliziten Ebene positive Veränderungen identifiziert wurden. Auch zeigten sich bei Anti-Fans vorwiegend auf der expliziten Ebene signifikante Veränderungen, hier aber mit negativen Vorzeichen. In Bezug auf das Markenengagement hat sich die Markenempfindung bei den Fans substanziell verbessert, während sich sowohl die Markenempfindung als auch die Markenpräferenz bei den Anti-Fans signifikant verschlechtert hat. Bei den Nicht-Fans konnte keine Markenengagementveränderung bestimmt werden. Zusätzlich zeigte eine erweiterte Analyse mittels Bayes'scher Neuronaler Netzen auf, dass von einer positiven Assoziationsveränderung nach dem Sponsoringkontakt ausgegangen werden kann, wenn die entsprechende Assoziationsausprägung des Sponsoringobjekts größer ausfällt als die der Sponsormarke (Team-Sponsor-Fit). Die empirischen Ergebnisse des letzten Forschungsbeitrages unterstreichen noch einmal wiederholend die Bedeutung einer systematischen Methodenkombination aus impliziter und expliziter Assoziationsmessung, um eine ganzheitliche Erfassung des adaptierten Markenwissens nach dem Kontakt mit einem Sponsoringobjekt gewährleisten zu können. Des Weiteren hebt die Studie aus Marketingmanagementsicht die Notwendigkeit hervor, den Grad der Fanidentifikation und damit einhergehend die affektive Disposition der Zielgruppe gegenüber dem Sponsoringobjekt, zum Zwecke der Sicherstellung einer positiven Wirksamkeit einer potentiellen Sponsoringaktivität zu berücksichtigen.

3. Fazit und Implikationen

Das Verständnis sowie der Nachweis, welche substanzielle Wirksamkeit eine Sportsponsoringaktivität hinterlässt, insbesondere bezüglich der markenwertspezifischen Assoziationen im Gedächtnis der Konsumenten, die in ihrer Gesamtheit das Bild einer Marke, präziser formuliert das Markenwissen determinieren und entsprechend die Wahrnehmung als auch das Verhalten gegenüber einer Marke beeinflussen, ist für das Marketingmanagement einer Sponsormarke von erfolgskritischer Relevanz. Die durchgeführten Forschungsstudien zielten darauf ab, eine inhaltliche und methodische Weiterentwicklung der Sportsponsoringforschung aus Perspektive der Wissenschaft und Praxis systematisch umzusetzen. Mittels einer kombinierten Erhebung und Analyse impliziter und expliziter Markenassoziationen sowie zusätzlicher markenwertrelevanter Engagementmaße wie Markenempfindung, -weiterempfehlung und -präferenz – wie im Rahmen der vorliegenden Forschungsreihe erfolgreich konzipiert, eingesetzt, überprüft und sukzessive weiterentwickelt wurde – lässt sich die Sponsoringwirksamkeit in einer kompakten und gleichzeitig ganzheitlichen Art und Weise sowohl wissenschaftlich fundiert als auch praxistauglich evaluieren. Insbesondere die zielorientierte und multidimensionale Erfassung von impliziten Markenassoziationen, wie von Cornwell et al. (2005) als kritisches Forschungsdefizit identifiziert, hat sich als leistungsstark und wertvoll erwiesen. Ohne die implizite Erhebungsebene, die sehr sensitiv automatisch auftretende Assoziationsveränderungen gemäß des assoziativen Lernens erfassen konnte, hätte mit Blick auf die diversen im Rahmen der Forschungsreihe durchgeführten Sponsoringstudien mehrfach nicht der Nachweis einer essentiellen Sponsoringwirksamkeit erbracht werden können. Aus praktischer Sicht hätte dies dann zu einem kritischen Hinterfragen, wenn nicht gleich Einstellen, der entsprechenden Sponsoringaktivität geführt, obwohl eine positive Sponsoringwertschöpfung existierte, die aber auf klassischem Untersuchungsweg mit rein expliziten Instrumenten teilweise oder gar vollständig übersehen worden wäre. Unterdessen hätte eine Nicht-Beachtung der impliziten Informationsverarbeitungsebene aus wissenschaftlicher Perspektive die unterschiedliche affektiv-basierte Wirksamkeit nicht dezidiert herausgearbeitet werden können. Wie entsprechend aufgezeigt wurde, bestimmt die implizite Wirkungsebene (hier: spontane Zuneigung) in positiver Weise identitätsbejahende Indikatoren wie Siegwichtigkeit, während die explizite Wirkungsebene (hier: reflektierte Abneigung) in negativer Weise

identitätsverneinende Indikatoren wie Schadenfreude primär beeinflusst. Darüber hinaus zeigten sich unterschiedliche affektiv-basierte Wirkungsmechanismen in Bezug auf den Grad des Faninvolvements: Innerhalb des Segmentes der Fans sind vor allem Assoziationsveränderungen auf einer impliziten Ebene aufgetreten (in positiver Ausprägung), während innerhalb des Segmentes der (neutralen) Nicht-Fans mehrheitlich positive und innerhalb des Segmentes der Anti-Fans überwiegend negative Veränderungen der expliziten Markenassoziationen identifiziert werden konnten, sofern welche aufgetreten sind. Die Verarbeitung der wahrgenommenen respektive erlebten Sponsoringaktivität scheint bei Fans überwiegend automatisch-spontan abzulaufen, vermeintlich aufgrund einer reichhaltigeren Gedächtnisstruktur bezüglich des Sponsoringobjekts, während bei Nicht-Fans und Anti-Fans eine eher reflektiert-kontrollierte Informationsverarbeitung wirksam wird / zum Tragen kommt. Mittels sowohl einfacher Zusammenhangsanalysen (hier: Korrelationsanalysen) als auch fortschrittlicher Kausalanalysen (hier: Bayes'sche Neuronale Netze) ist darüber hinaus der positive Effekt eines Sponsorobjekt-Sponsormarke-Fits auf die Veränderung der Sponsormarkenassoziationen nach dem Kontakt mit der Sponsoringaktivität nachgewiesen worden. Je stärker die Ausprägung einer entsprechenden Assoziation beim Sponsorobjekt, desto höher die Wahrscheinlichkeit einer potentiellen Stärkung der entsprechenden Assoziation bei der Sponsormarke.

Aus Perspektive des Marketingmanagement zeigt die vorliegende empirische Forschungsreihe ebenfalls die kritische Notwendigkeit des kombinierten Einsatzes aus impliziten und expliziten Erhebungsinstrumenten, um ein ganzheitliches Verständnis entwickeln zu können, wie Konsumenten die Marke und damit einhergehend die Markenkommunikation wahrnehmen und verarbeiten. Darüber hinaus sollte das verantwortliche Marketingmanagement der Sponsormarke den Status quo der affektiven Dispositionen ermitteln, den Konsumenten im Allgemeinen und Fans sowie Anti-Fans im Besonderen gegenüber dem Sponsorobjekt aufzeigen. Hier gilt es vor allem, negative assoziative Transfereffekte innerhalb des Segmentes der Anti-Fans zu vermeiden, um das Risiko eines kommunikativen Fehlinvestments zu vermeiden respektive die Marke vor einer Assoziationserosion zu schützen. Andersrum sollten natürlich die positiven Assoziationstransfers innerhalb des Fan-Segmentes entsprechend maximiert werden. Für beide kommunikative Darstellungsstrategien gelingt dies primär durch die selektive Auswahl von Touchpoints, gerade im digitalen Bereich. Hier bieten sich insbesondere die digitalen Touchpoints als eine Art „physical availability" an, die ein

fanorientierter Konsument „von Natur aus" nutzt, wie bspw. die einseitigen Social Media Profile der Teams und Athleten, da sie häufig auch Interaktionselemente wie den „Gefallen"-Knopf aufweisen und dadurch ein derartiges (freiwilliges) Commitment, eine zusätzliche Markenwertstärkung, insbesondere auf der Engagementebene, zu erwarten ist. Idealerweise vermeidet eine Sponsormarke jeglichen Anti-Fan-Kontakt und tritt nur innerhalb des Fan-Segmentes in Erscheinung, damit ein möglichst werthaltiger und intensiver Assoziationstransfer im Sinne der Schaffung einer positiven „mental availability" gewährleistet wird. Des Weiteren scheint es aus Perspektive des Marketingmanagement angebracht, die Wirksamkeit einer Sponsoringaktivität im Vorfeld anhand des Assoziationsfits zwischen Sponsorobjekt und Sponsormarke analytisch abzuschätzen. Für Events scheint dies etwas schwieriger umzusetzen zu sein, weil die eventbezogenen Assoziationen erst mit der Durchführung des Events selber geschaffen werden, wenngleich hier als Annäherungswert die assoziative Wahrnehmung vergangener Events genutzt werden könnte. In Bezug auf das Sponsoring von Teams und Athleten gelingt dies einfacher, weil unmittelbar und sozusagen tagesaktuell die Assoziationswerte des potentiellen Sponsoringobjektes erfasst werden können. Nur wenn am Ende das Sponsorobjekt im Vergleich zur Sponsormarke bei den Assoziationen klar besser abschneidet, die für die Sponsormarke mit Blick auf eine positive Konsumentenreaktion essentiell sind, scheint ein Sponsoringinvestment zweckmäßig, da dann ein positiver Assoziationstransfer vom Sponsorobjekt auf die Sponsormarke wahrscheinlich ist, welcher einen nachhaltigen Ausbau und eine substanzielle Stärkung des Markenwissens ermöglicht.

4. Limitationen und Ausblick

Naturgemäß weist ein explorativer Forschungsansatz, wie in der vorliegenden Forschungsreihe umgesetzt, eine Vielzahl an Limitationen auf. Zuallererst zeigte das (weiter)entwickelte Erhebungsinstrumentarium bestehend aus impliziter und explizierter Assoziationsmessung plus relevanter Markenengagementmaße durchweg eine zufriedenstellende Messgüte bezüglich der Reliabilität und Validität an. Weitere Überprüfungen erweisen sich trotzdem als zwingend notwendig, um eine leistungsstarke und präzise Erfassung der Sponsoringwirksamkeit nachhaltig sicherzustellen. In diesem

Zusammenhang sollten zukünftige Studien eine Überprüfung der entwickelten Messmodelle mittels eines MIMIC-Modellansatzes anstreben, um eine erweiterte bzw. umfangreichere Güteprüfung durchzuführen (vgl. Jöreskog und Goldberger 1975). Des Weiteren ist die Mehrheit der Studien in einem Fußballkontext durchgeführt worden. Entsprechend sollten zukünftige Forschungsarbeiten mit Hilfe des entwickelten Messinstrumentariums die Sponsoringaktivitäten bei anderen Sportarten untersuchen, vor allem in Bezug auf Einzelsportarten, um den impliziten und expliziten Wirkungsmechanismus von Sportsponsoring systematisch generalisieren zu können und zusätzlich ggf. sportartspezifische Wirksamkeitsmuster festzustellen, gerade vor dem Hintergrund unterschiedlicher Emotionen, die von den diversen Sportarten ausgehen (z.B. Snooker mit konzentrierter Aufmerksamkeit vs. Eishockey mit impulsiver Leidenschaft). In diesem Zusammenhang sollte das entwickelte Erhebungsinstrumentarium auch in weiteren soziokulturellen Sportgesellschaften untersucht werden, um bspw. mit Blick auf die unterschiedlichen Fanbeziehungen zwischen den Ländern potentiell unterschiedliche Wirkungsmuster bestimmen zu können. Zu guter Letzt gilt es ebenfalls, den Einsatz sonstiger impliziter Erhebungstechniken zum Zwecke einer Erweiterung der impliziten Erhebungsebene zukünftig vertiefend zu evaluieren. In erster Linie wären dies Erhebungsinstrumente wie Eye Tracking zur Bestimmung der Blickbeobachtung und zum Nachweis, welche Sponsoringinformationen gezielt verarbeitet wurden (Häufigkeit, Dauer etc.) als auch die Elektroenzephalografie (EEG), mit deren Hilfe sich zum Beispiel die Verarbeitungstiefe von wahrgenommenen Sponsoringinformationen sowohl im Kurz- als auch Langzeitgedächtnis detailliert bestimmen lässt.

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Übersicht der Beiträge der kumulativen Dissertation

Beitrag 1

Schmidt S, Nadine H, Langner S, Limbach M (2013) The Explicit and Implicit Impact of Sport Sponsorship. Marketing Review St. Gallen 30: 58–70.

Beitrag 2

Limbach M, Wiedmann KP, Schmidt S, Reiter P (2019): Evaluating the Implicit and Explicit Effectiveness of Key Entities in Sports Sponsorship: Events, Teams and Athletes. Paper submitted at the International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship.

Überarbeitet und basierend auf:

Schmidt S, Limbach M, Schiessl M (2016) Assessing the Explicit and Implicit Effect of Team Sponsorship on Brand-Related Motivation. Paper accepted for Presentation at the Sport Marketing and Sponsorship Conference, Salzburg, Austria, April 7-8, 2016.

Schmidt S, Limbach M, Langner S, Reiter P (2016) Assessing the Explicit and Implicit Effect of Athlete Sponsorship on Attitudinal Associations Toward a Sponsor Brand. Paper accepted for Poster Presentation at the 2016 Global Marketing Conference, Hong Kong, Hong Kong, July 21-24, 2016.

Schmidt S, Langner S, Hennigs N, Limbach M, Rothensee M, Wiedmann KP (2015): Sponsoring FIFA World Cup vs. Olympic Games – Coca Cola, a Classical American Brand, And Its Explicit and Implicit Sponsoring Success at Worldwide Sport Events. Paper accepted for Presentation at the 2015 Academy of Marketing Science Annual Conference, Denver, CO, May 12-14, 2015.

Beitrag 3

Schmidt S, Limbach M, Langner S, Wiedmann KP, Albertsen L, Reiter P (2018): Official sports sponsorship fortress vs ambush marketing attack – Investigating the impact on implicit and explicit brand knowledge. International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship 19: 91–108.

Beitrag 4

Limbach M, Schmidt S, Wiedmann KP, Langner S, Schiessl M (2018): Communicating Sponsor Brands Playfully in Video Games: Evaluating the Impact of In-Game Advertising on Dual Brand Knowledge. Journal of Global Sport Management 4: 211–235.

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Schmidt S, Limbach M, Langner S, Wiedmann KP (2017): Assessing the Explicit and Implicit Effect of Sport Sponsorship on Dual Brand Knowledge – The Case of In-Game Advertising, Paper accepted for Presentation at the 2017 Global Fashion Management Conference, Vienna, Austria, July 6-9, 2017.

Beitrag 5

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Überarbeitet und basierend auf:

Schmidt S, Langner S, Limbach M (2017) Who Is Your True G.O.A.T? Analyzing The Cause-Effect-Relations Of Sport Rivalry On The Emotional Appeal Toward A Sport Athlete. Paper accepted for Presentation at the 2017 Academy of Marketing Science Annual Conference, San Diego, CA, May 24-26, 2017.

Beitrag 6

Limbach M, Fessler P, Schmidt S, Buckler F (2019) Die Wirksamkeit von Sportsponsoring in der Marketingkommunikation – Der Einfluss von Teamrivalität auf den impliziten und expliziten Markenwert. In: Keller B, Klein HW, Wachenfeld-Schell A, Wirth T (Hrsg) Marktforschung für die Smart Data World, Springer, Wiesbaden, S 229–251.

Überarbeitet und basierend auf:

Limbach M, Schmidt S, Langner S (2019) The effectiveness of sponsor-linked marketing within a rivalry context: The effect of team sponsorship on implicit and explicit brand associations. Paper accepted for Presentation at the 2019 Academy of Marketing Science Annual Conference, Vancouver, BC, May 29–31, 2019.

Hinweise zur Ko-Autorenschaft und Definition von Zuständigkeiten

Die vorliegenden Forschungsarbeiten wurden in Ko-Autorenschaft gemeinschaftlich erarbeitet. Sämtliche Inhalte (theoretische Fundierung, konzeptionelle Überlegungen, analytische Bearbeitung, etc.) basieren vollständig auf kollektiven und kooperativen Ausarbeitungen, wobei folgende Verantwortungsbereiche innerhalb der jeweiligen Beiträge definiert wurden:

Beitrag 1
Verantwortungsbereiche von *„The Explicit and Implicit Impact of Sport Sponsorship"*. Steffen Schmidt: Conceptual Model und Methodology; Nadine Hennigs: Introduction; Sascha Langner: Empirical Examination; Matthias Limbach: Theoretical Background und Event Sponsorship as a Success Factor for Brand Motivation Management.

Beitrag 2
Verantwortungsbereiche von *„ Evaluating the Implicit and Explicit Effectiveness of Key Entities in Sports Sponsorship: Events, Teams and Athletes "*. Matthias Limbach: Research Studies and Results; Klaus-Peter Wiedmann: Introduction; Steffen Schmidt: Theoretical Background; Philipp Reiter: Contribution, Findings and Next Research Steps.

Beitrag 3
Verantwortungsbereiche von *„Official sports sponsorship fortress vs ambush marketing attack – Investigating the impact on implicit and explicit brand knowledge"*. Steffen Schmidt: Research background and objective und Results; Matthias Limbach: Research methodology und Discussion; Sascha Langner: Review of literature; Klaus-Peter Wiedmann: Supervision; Levke Albertsen: Introduction; Philipp Reiter: Introduction.

Beitrag 4
Verantwortungsbereiche von *„Communicating Sponsor Brands Playfully in Video Games: Evaluating the Impact of In-Game Advertising on Dual Brand Knowledge"*. Matthias Limbach: Conceptual Framework und Results; Steffen Schmidt: Research Background und Method; Klaus-Peter Wiedmann: Supervision; Sascha Langner: Discussions; Michael Schiessl: Introduction.

Beitrag 5
Verantwortungsbereiche von *„Who Is Your GOAT? Investigating Fans' Affective Dispositions – The Case of MotoGP Motorcycling"*. Matthias Limbach: Review of literature, Conceptual model und Methods; Steffen Schmidt: Results und Limitations and future research steps; Deborah Elisabeth Joekel: Conclusion; Klaus-Peter Wiedmann: Supervision; Philipp Reiter: Discussion; Sascha Langner: Introduction.

Beitrag 6
Verantwortungsbereiche von *„Die Wirksamkeit von Sportsponsoring in der Marketingkommunikation – Der Einfluss von Teamrivalität auf den impliziten und expliziten Markenwert"*. Matthias Limbach: Forschungshintergrund, Konzeptioneller Forschungsrahmen und Ergebnisse; Philipp Fessler: Einleitung; Steffen Schmidt: Methodik; Frank Buckler: Diskussion.

Beitrag 1

The Explicit and Implicit Impact of Sport Sponsorship

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The Explicit and Implicit Impact of Sport Sponsorship

Sponsorship is considered to be one of the most effective marketing communication tools and has been extensively analyzed in marketing research. The study presented here focuses on a combination of explicit and implicit measurement methods with regard to a set of selected main sponsors of a major sporting event to assess the effectiveness of sponsoring activities. The results suggest an enhanced brand perception impact of sport sponsorship based on explicit and implicit information processing.

Steffen Schmidt, Nadine Hennigs, Sascha Langner, Matthias Limbach

Sponsorship is considered to be one of the most effective tools within the integrated marketing communication mix; the global expenditures on sponsorship grew by 5.1 percent to US$ 48.6 billion in 2011 and are expected to increase by 4.9 percent to US$ 51 billion in 2012 (IEG, www.sponsorship.com). Sport sponsorship is one of the most important segments in the sponsorship market; events such as the Olympic Games or the FIFA World Cup attract millions of spectators worldwide and are considered to be very valuable for brand-oriented companies/brand managers who want to catch a piece of the event's spirit as a benefit of their sponsorship effort.

The field of sponsorship has been extensively analyzed in marketing research, focusing on a number of perspectives such as the nature of sponsorship, managerial aspects of sponsorship, measurement of sponsorship effects, customer perception and behavioral outcomes. When assessing the effectiveness of sponsoring activities with reference to the impact on consumer perception and behavior, marketing researchers and practitioners have become aware of the limitations of self-reported verbal indicators. Due to the fact that most experiences occur beyond human conscious awareness and cannot be reported verbally (Libet 2004), traditional self-assessment scales that rely on explicit measures of consumers' brand-related perception and behavior are susceptible to two kinds of bias (MacDorman et al. 2009): (1) participants may not be aware of the reasons behind their behavior, and (2) based on concerns about social desirability, participants may choose to conceal their true attitudes and give false answers (Greenwald et al. 1998). While explicit measures rely on the ability and willingness of the participants to report correctly, implicit measures reflect the participants' underlying automatic evaluation and are less influenced by social desirability concerns (Camerer et al. 2005; Gawronski/Bodenhausen 2007; Hubert/Kenning 2008). Nevertheless, implicit measures are not to be seen as better indicators of brand perception and behavior; they are just another source of evidence. Since explicit and implicit evaluations form different shades of consumer attitudes and behavior, an integrated approach is a better predictor than explicit or implicit measures alone.

Against this backdrop, the study presented here aims to investigate the effectiveness of sport sponsorship with regard to a set of selected main sponsors of a major sporting event (the 2012 UEFA European Football Championship) using a combination of explicit and implicit measurement methods. The results suggest that the effectiveness of sport sponsorship is based on explicit (conscious) and implicit (un-/subconscious) motivational information processing related to the sponsoring brand as well as the sponsored event.

Theoretical Background
Brand Perception and Event Sponsorship

Market research has frequently shown the importance of the "fit" between a sponsor's brand and the sponsored event (Crimmins/Horn 1996). Literature also reports that by increasing the perceived fit between sponsor and event,

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sponsors can actively boost the response to their sponsorship (Speed/Thompson 2000). However, the fit between a brand and the sponsored event depends on a great variety of aspects and facets (e.g., thematic, image-related or symbolic fit of sponsor and event) and the degree to which consumers perceive the pairing of brand and event as well balanced and a good match. According to this approach, brand and sponsored event have to be congruent in some way from a consumer's point of view (originating from various factors, e.g., the consumer's preferences, social status, attitude toward the sponsor's brand or attitude toward the event itself) (Park et al. 1991). Although many studies have confirmed that congruence and fit directly impact response (Crimmins/Horn 1996), so far most explicit research has only analyzed the occurrence of transfer effects (often by comparing the pre- and post-images of a brand) and the factors these effects depend on (Grohs et al. 2004). In particular, the literature lacks studies that combine both implicit and explicit measures to examine brand-related motivation (consumers' underlying reasons to use and buy a brand) in order to more extensively analyze current fits of brands and sponsored events and to better predict potential future matchups.

> *"Sponsorship is the most powerful clutter-busting marketing tool available today … where companies can reach consumers where they are most passionate."*
> **Sports Business Journal**

The Zurich Model of Social Motivation

The Zurich model of social motivation (ZMSM) is one of the widely established dynamic models of human motivation (Bischof 1993). It describes motivations as relatively constant set-points of feedback control systems. These motivational reference values define whether and how much of a particular category of experiences is usually needed to reach satisfaction – for example, how much time an individual wants to spend with his or her friends, how dependent he or she wants to be of his or her parents or even how much affiliation is desired with a product or brand (Hagemeyer et al. 2012).

In order to reach a mental state of equilibrium, the individual continuously compares his or her current state of mind with an ideal situation. Any discrepancies between actual situations and set-points trigger reactions intended to establish or restore the ideal mental state (Powers 1973). The intensity and direction of this motivational human behavior depend on the type and level of discrepancy. If the actual situation of an individual falls below the reference value, for example, the actual time spent with friends is shorter than desired, a target-oriented behavior is triggered. Time spent with friends will be perceived as very positive, and the individual will try to re-

serve more time for his or her friends in order to regain a state of mental equilibrium. If the individual instead experiences too much closeness to friends (the actual situation exceeds the reference value), another target-oriented behavior is triggered leading the individual to spend more time alone or with family (Gubler/Bischof 1991). When analyzing brand-related motivations, similar behaviors can be observed. Regarding relevant products and services, consumers also have stable set-points that act as reference values. If a brand, for example, satisfies certain security set-points, consumers are more likely motivated to use this brand, whereas brands that fall below these security-related reference values are more likely to be neglected. Different brands with their different characteristics can thus be perceived as appetitive or aversive depending on the customer's state of need in combination with his inner picture of the brand.

As human motivations are very diverse, the ZMSM describes motivation as a holistic system consisting of three main subsystems: security, arousal and autonomy. In the following, the most relevant characteristics of these three main elements of human motivation are described.

Security

In line with Bowlby's "attachment system" (Bowlby 1980), security can be defined as an internal variable that represents the need of being reassured. Both too little and too much security can be seen as undesirable mental states and will force the individual to increase or decrease the actual security level.

Arousal

Arousal refers to the individual reaction towards unfamiliar, relevant and nearby objects, regulating consciousness, attention, and information processing. If the level of arousal exceeds the internal set-point, fear is the general emotional reaction, motivating specific behaviors such as the fight-or-flight response. Yet if the actual level of arousal falls below the reference value, the individual enters a mental state that perceives arousal as an appetitive experience, triggering corresponding motivational behavior.

Autonomy

The autonomy system organizes the individual's reactions regarding dominance or social rank (power). If the actual level of power exceeds the internal set-point, for example if an experienced tennis player is challenged by a rookie, assertive behavior is triggered. Whereas if the level of power falls short of the own reference value, submissive reactions are triggered.

Thus, regarding the mutual fit of sponsor and event, companies have to search for events that ideally reach or exceed their customers' brand-related internal reference values concerning the main motives of security, arousal and power. If there are substantial gaps between an individual's mental set-points of a brand and the characteristics associated with the event, the event can either possess great potential or lack actual benefits for the spon-

Management Summary
- The effects of sport sponsoring on brand perception are best tested using a combination of implicit and explicit measurement methods.
- Analyzing brand-related and event-related motivation can help to determine the best fit of sponsor and event.
- Brands can profit by sponsoring events that offer specific motivational characteristics that their brands currently lack.

sor. Only by analyzing motivational reference values regarding their own brands and potential events are companies able to match their brands with promising events and to avoid events with negative motivational brand–event fits.

Conceptual Model

As outlined in the introduction, psychologists and marketing researchers have extensively studied how consumers observe, comprehend, save and later interpret and evaluate information related to products and brands (Capon et al. 1981; Hagerty/Aaker 1984). Brand (motivation) information is not only relevant in the context of actual buying decisions, but plays a crucial role in determining brand perception and the constitution of brand trust as relevant pre-conditions of later purchase behavior (Mandrik 1999). Regarding all mental functions and processes that are triggered by brand-related stimuli such as sponsorship activities of a brand, a better understanding of how this (motivation) information is processed in a consumer's brain is the key to effective brand communication and sponsorship. Therefore, an integrated analysis of sponsorship effects has to focus on the interplay between the explicit (conscious) and implicit (un-/subconscious) processing of information that constitutes the brand-related and event-related motivation perception.

Figure 1 shows the conceptual model which forms the basic framework for our study for examining the influence of implicit and explicit facets of sponsoring activities on consumer perception and behavior. In our paper, brand-related and event-related motivation is defined by the set-points of the three motivational subsystems as illustrated in the center of the conceptual model. Since individual behavior is always the result of a complex in-

Fig. 1 Conceptual Model of Explicit and Implicit Sponsorship Effects
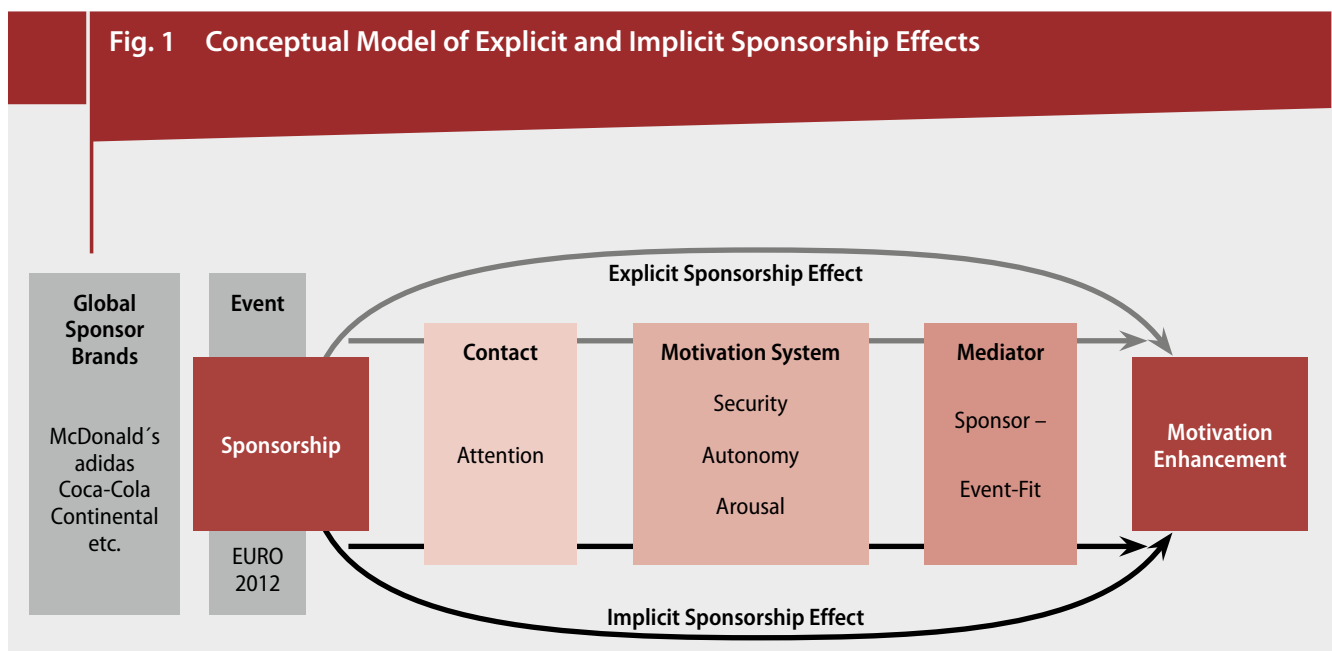
teraction of controlled and automatic processes, and of intuition and reasoning, it can only be examined by integrating both explicit and implicit processes and the three motivational subsystems in one integrated framework.

Methodology

While there is an established research stream in applying explicit measures for capturing explicit processess (e.g., self-report, in-depth interview), the empirical investigation of implicit processess using implicit measures is comparatively new. Especially in marketing research, those kinds of measures are given little or even no consideration at all in most research designs. This methodological deficit is a little surprising since the usage of implicit measures, especially of response time measures, is a standard research method in social cognitive psychology (Fazio/Olson 2003). Moreover, Tyebjee (1979) and Aaker et al. (1980) already introduced pertinent articles in the Journal of Marketing Research a quarter of a century ago. But in spite of their importance in examining consumer attitudes and behavior, implicit measures have so far been widely ignored in marketing science as well as in marketing practice.

"Sport sponsorship is one of the most important segments in the sponsorship market."

There is a broad range of implicit measures available (see de Houwer 2006 for an overview). Due to their simple implementation and low application costs, reaction time measurements as a special technique of implicit measures are of high value for both marketing science and marketing practice. Reaction time measures are based on particular tasks which participants have to answer. Under different task conditions, reaction times and responses (including errors for some reaction time techniques) related to a certain stimulus presentation are recorded and used for subsequent data analysis. These task procedures are generally computer-assisted. In short, the overall underlying assumption is that people respond to the task (stimulus) very quickly if the presented stimulus order corresponds to the associative memory structure of their brain.

First introduced over a decade ago by Greenwald et al. (1998), the (conventional) Implicit Association Test (IAT) became (probably) the most popular reaction time measurement procedure. Since then, the IAT has been adapted to a wide variety of reseach topics (see Nosek et al. 2011 for an overview), which are more or less appropriate for marketing questions. One suitable implicit measure within the class of reaction time methods for marketing research questions is the Brand Category Association Task (BCAT) (Scarabis/Florack 2007). The basic principle behind this implicit technique is to measure the response time between stimulus presentation and stimu-

Main Propositions
- Event sponsorship has a significant positive impact on brand-related motivation perception.
- There is a positive and strongly significant relation between motivation enhancement and sponsor–event fit.
- Only the combined analysis of implicit and explicit motivational information processing delivers a holistic picture of event sponsoring effects.

lus assignment (e.g., "yes" vs. "no" categorization via a keyboard) by the participant. For instance, interviewees may be asked to determine a brand's position with regard to a certain product category (e.g., soft drink as a product category and Pepsi-Cola as a brand stimulus). A short response time and a positive categorization ("yes" key) suggest a strong and spontaneous brand category linkage, and therefore a strong and high position within a customers' evoked set. Apart from product category associations, there are other cues for customers' buying decisions with a high relevance for marketing purposes: usage situation, product benefits, product attributes, and brand characteristics.

Figure 2 shows two selected implicit test tools: Single Category IAT and BCAT. Especially the implicit association strength of certain brand characteristics with reference to brand motives which a brand would like to address / appeal to, is of high interest for marketing management due to their strong effects on brand-related behavior (e.g., loyalty, buying intention).

Empirical Examination
Data Collection and Sample
Data were collected before (pre-event measurement) and after (post-event measurement) the 2012 UEFA European Football Championship (EURO 2012) hosted by Poland and Ukraine from June 8 to July 1. An internet survey using a snowball sampling method was developed in Germany to investigate the sponsorship impact model. First, one week before the beginning of the EURO 2012, a total of 243 interviewees with a high interest in sport in general and football in particular were recruited to evaluate the motivation-related images of four brands from different industries: adidas (sport accessories), Coca-Cola (soft drink), Continental (automotive parts) and McDonald's (fast food restaurants). These brands were chosen due to their high brand awareness values that enabled the respondents to answer

Fig. 2   Reaction Time Measurements for Brand-oriented Marketing Research
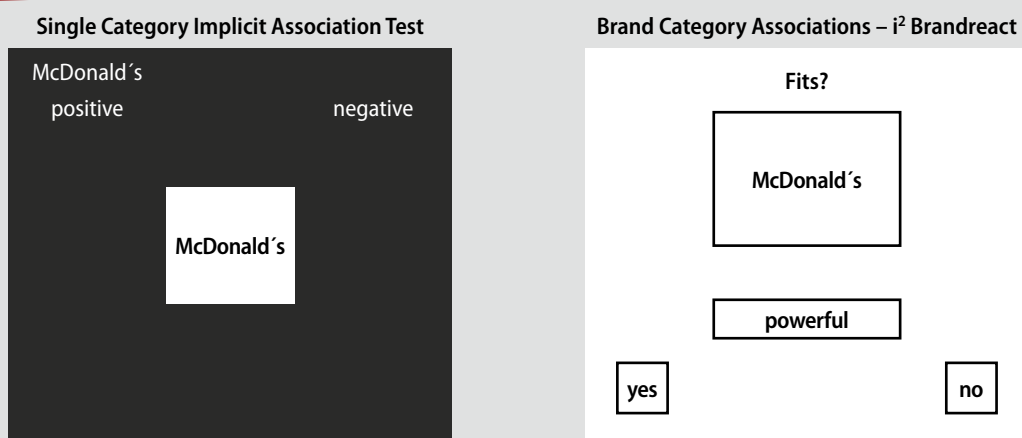
specific questions with regard to the brand-related motivation. The interviewees were not informed that these brands acted as the main sponsors of the EURO 2012.

In sum, the analysis comprised a final sample of 150 pairs of pre- and post-interviews after the deletion of all responses that did not answer the second questionnaire that was distributed one week after the 2012 UEFA European Football Championship (response rate: 61.7 percent). With regard to gender distribution, 52.7 percent were male and 47.3 female. The interviewees were mostly single (78.7 percent) and on average 28.6 years old.

Explicit and Implicit Brand-related Motivation Assessment
Both questionnaires included the same explicit and implict measures for brand-related motivation. In addition, the second questionnaire captured the event-related motivation perception of the EURO 2012. All explicit motivation dimensions were rated on the five-point Likert scales (1 = strongly

> *"By increasing the perceived fit between sponsor and event, sponsors can actively boost the response to their sponsorship."*

disagree to 5 = strongly agree) to enable a more reflective and controlled brand-related motivation perception. In contrast, a simple reaction time measurement was employed with regard to any implicit motivation dimension to expose a more automatic and spontaneous motivation perception. The software i² BRANDREACT (www.eye-square.com) was used for the implicit reaction time measurement (see figure 2). All explicit/implicit brand motivation dimensions were rescaled from 0 to 100 for better interpretation, with a higher explicit/implicit motivation score indicating a higher explicit/implicit brand motivation characteristic.

Data Analysis
I. General event sponsorship effect
Nonparametric paired tests (Wilcoxon signed rank test) were employed for a pre-post-analysis. The results indicate a positive impact of event sponsorship on brand-related motivation perception. As shown in figure 3, any investigated main sponsor brand of the EURO 2012 could increase both the explicit as well as the implicit brand-related motivation perception, even though the sponsoring effect does not impact on every motivation dimension. For example, McDonald's sponsorship effort during the EURO 2012 significantly enhanced the implicit and explicit security dimension as well as the implicit autonomy dimension, but did not lead to significant effects related to the implicit and explicit arousal dimension or the explicit autonomy dimension. Moreover, the results of this study sug-

gest a divergence of explicit and implicit brand-related motivation shifts. Referring to the brands Coca-Cola and Continental, the security motivation was increased significantly on an explicit level, whereas there was a significant impact related to the arousal motivation on an implicit level. With reference to adidas, the results show a significant enhancement for the explicit arousal dimension as well as for the implicit autonomy and security brand-related motivation perception. In summary, it can be stated

Fig. 3   General Event Sponsorship Effects
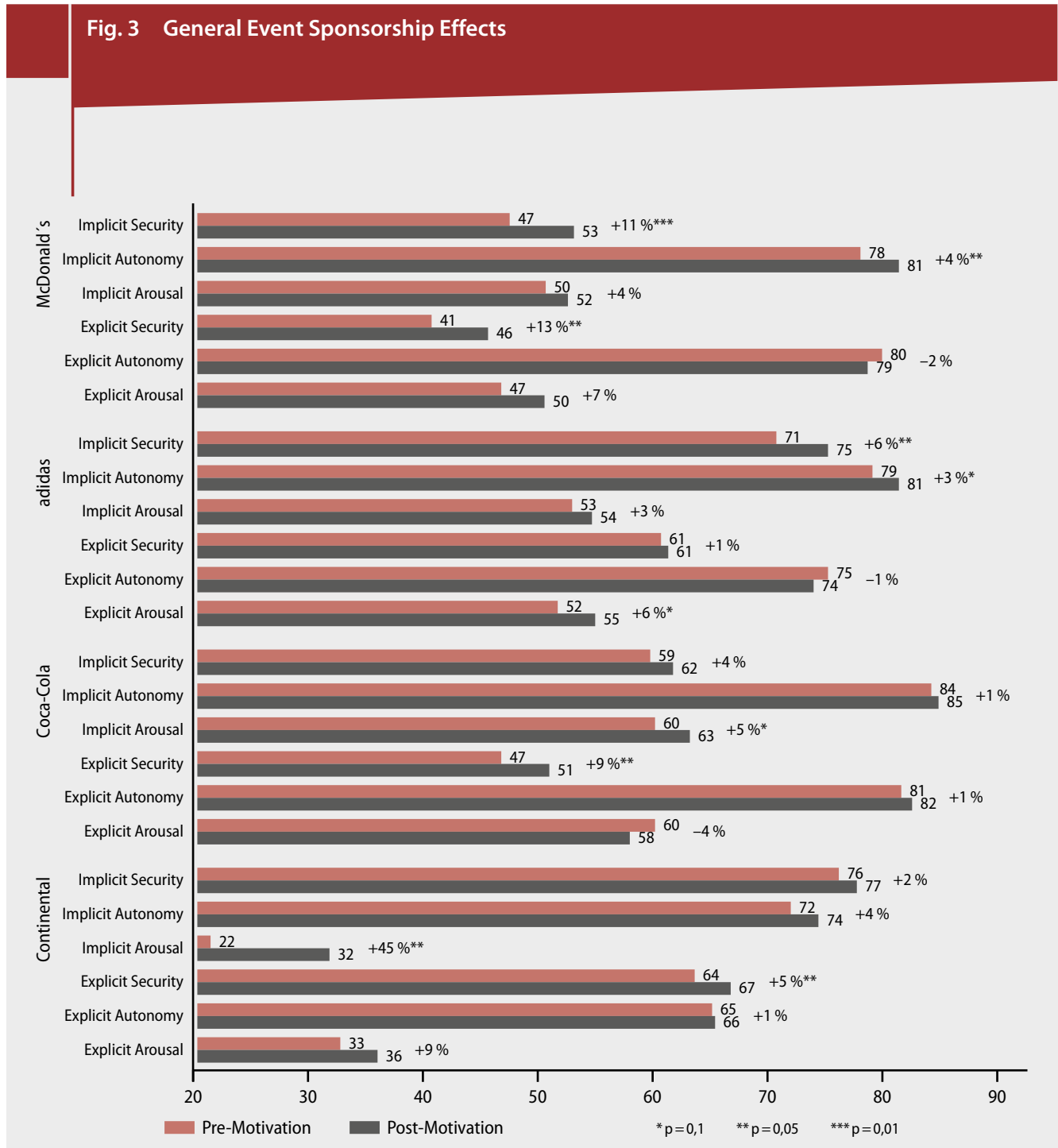
that explicit and implicit measures reflect different changes in consumer perception. The implicit measures seem to be slightly more sensitive in capturing brand-related motivation variations. On average, the absolute implicit motivation shift was approximately 8 percent, whereas the absolute explicit motivation shift was approximately 5 percent. In particular, the implicit arousal motivation for the brand Continental increased by 45 percent (from 22.2 to 32.1), but the explicit arousal perception only by 9 percent (from 33.2 to 36.2).

### II. Specific sponsor–event transfer effect

In addition to the results described above, two artificial indicators were calculated to investigate a specific relationship between motivation enhancement and sponsor–event fit. The first indicator (motivation enhancement) was computed by subtracting the pre-motivation perception from the post-motivation perception for any dimension with regard to the adequate sponsor brand. Next, the second indicator (sponsor–event fit) was calculated by extracting the pre-motivation perception of the sponsor brand from the motivation perception of the event. The relation between these indicators was examined by employing a correlation analysis (Spearman's rank test).

The empirical data suggest a positive and strongly significant relation between motivation enhancement and sponsor–event fit. Moreover, as indicated by the graphical correlation analysis (see figure 4), the results revealed a necessary condition (sine qua non) for a positive sponsor–event fit (event motivation perception exceeds or at least equals the pre-motivation perception of the brand) with respect to a targeted brand-related motivation perception improvement. In other words: If spectators of an event perceive in an explicit (conscious) and/or implicit (un-/subconscious) way a negative gap between brand-related and event-related motivation, the financial/non-financial engagement of the sponsoring brand could lead to ineffective or detrimental effects, respectively, leading to a decreased motivation perception.

Event Sponsorship as a Success Factor for Brand Motivation Management

The primary goal of the present study was to investigate the effectiveness of sport sponsorship with regard to a set of selected main sponsors of a major sporting event. In particular, this study focused on the brand-related and event-related motivation perception. The results revealed empirical evidence for a positive impact of sport event sponsorship on brand perception. In detail, the results provided support for the assumption that a good sponsor–event fit is a necessary success factor for enhancing the brand-related perception of a sponsor brand. They also demonstrated that the impact of sport sponsorship is based on explicit (conscious) and implicit (un-/subconscious) motivational information processing related to the sponsoring brand as well as the sponsored event.

Fig. 4   Specific Sponsor-Event Transfer Effects
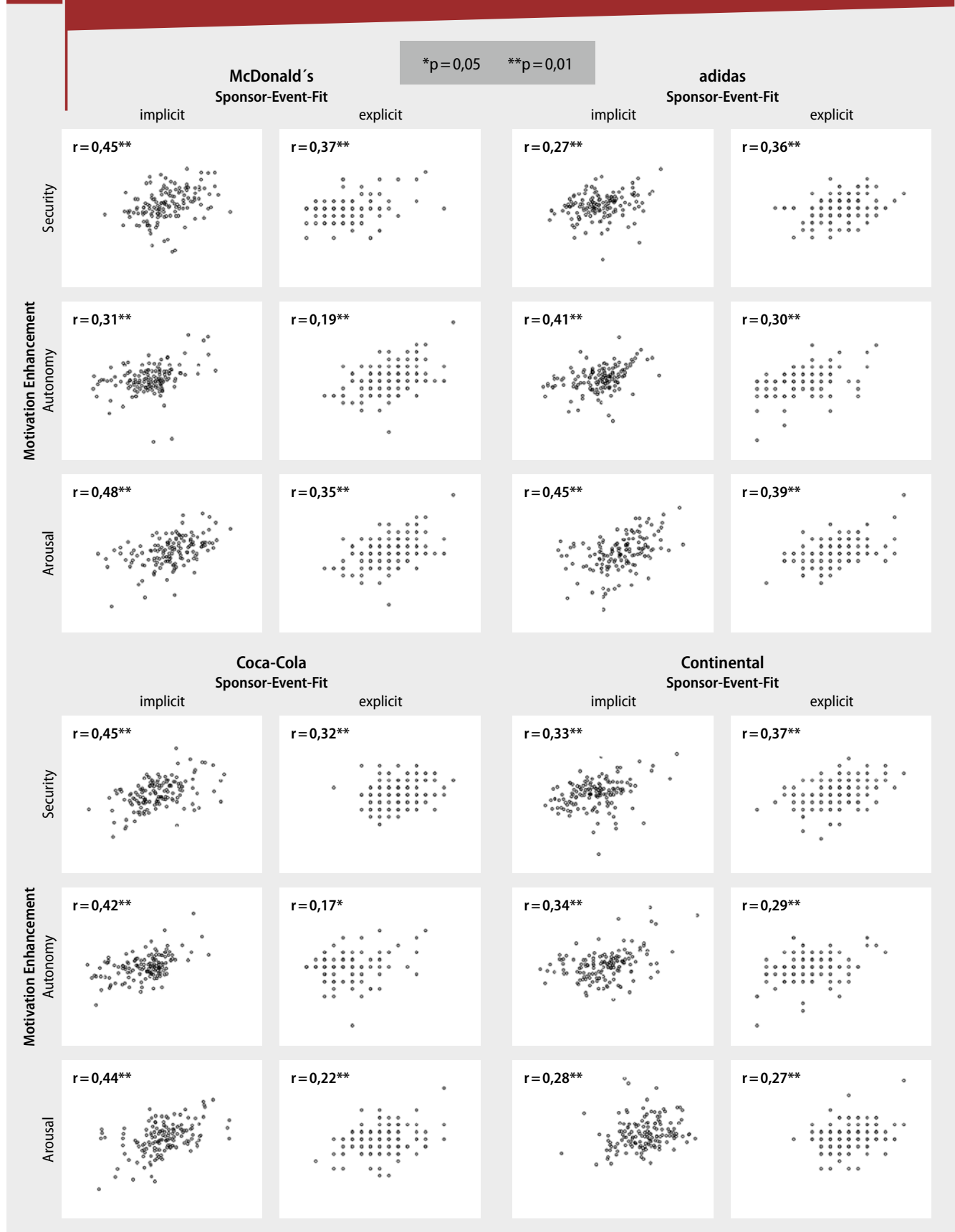
Managerial Implications

In line with the findings of this paper, the following recommendations can be derived from a managerial perspective:

- Marketing researchers should assess a combination of explicit as well as implicit measures of consumer perception to evaluate and enhance brand communication efforts in general and sponsorship activities in particular.
- To identify, and to respond to, potential weaknesses from a customer's point of view, marketing managers have to examine the status quo of explicit and implicit brand-related motivation perception with reference to both the sponsoring brand and the sponsored event.
- Finally, to realize a positive sponsor–event transfer effect from a consumer's perspective, marketing managers should concentrate their sponsoring activities on events that evoke at least the same level of explicit and implicit motivation with regard to the dimensions of security, arousal and autonomy.

All things considered, the results of the study presented here can be seen as a promising step that may pave the way for further research leading to a better understanding of consumer behavior in the context of sponsorship activities. Our measurement approach may be adapted or extended to other sponsors brands (e.g., unfamiliar or B2B brands), broader event contexts (e.g., all-season events), miscellaneous types of sponsorhips (e.g., sponsoring of teams or single athletes) as well as cross-national consumer groups to verify the results and generalize the findings. Another future research goal might be an investigation of the relation between brand-related motivation and explicit and implicit consumer motivation needs (brand–consumer fit) and related effects on consumer brand perception and buying behavior. Based on the combined measurement of explicit (conscious) and implicit (un-/subconscious) consumer reactions to a sponsoring brand and a sponsored event, brand managers may leverage the power of brand communication in general and sport sponsorship in particular for an effective marketing management.

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Lessons Learned

- Marketing researchers should assess a combination of explicit as well as implicit measures of consumer perception to evaluate and enhance brand communication efforts in general and sponsorship activities in particular.
- To identify, and to respond to, potential weaknesses from a customer's point of view, marketing managers have to examine the status quo of explicit and implicit brand-related motivation perception with reference to both the sponsoring brand and the sponsored event.
- To realize a positive sponsor–event transfer effect from a consumer's perspective, marketing managers should concentrate their sponsoring activities on events that evoke at least the same level of explicit and implicit motivation with regard to the dimensions of security, arousal and autonomy.

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Beitrag 2

Evaluating the Implicit and Explicit Effectiveness of Key Entities in Sports Sponsorship: Events, Teams and Athletes

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Wiedmann, Klaus-Peter
Schmidt, Steffen
Reiter, Philipp

EVALUATING THE IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT EFFECTIVENESS OF KEY ENTITIES IN SPORTS SPONSORSHIP: EVENTS, TEAMS AND ATHLETES

ABSTRACT

Sports Sponsorship is considered as an effective and valuable platform for brand communication to increase the brand equity by fostering the associative network of the sponsor brand. To evaluate the associative network, most research approaches in science and business practice are missing the implicit processing of brand-related sponsorship information. That research gap is surprising since an increasing number of studies show the greater relevance of implicit processes over explicit processes for a positive brand response. Against that background, the present paper aims to systematically investigate the effectiveness of key entities in sports sponsorship by applying a combined measurement instrument to assess implicit and explicit multidimensional associations.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past 10 years from 2009 to 2018, the global spendings of companies on sponsorship, in particular regarding sports sponsorship, has greatly increased by around 50 percent from 44.0 million US-$ to (estimated) 65.9 million US-$ (IEG 2011, 2018). For the next 3 to 5 years, the annual growth rate by revenue stream is expected around 5.5 percent (PwC, 2018). Major investments such as Chevrolet's 559.0 million US-$ seven-year chest-front advertising contract with Manchester United expiring in 2021 (Smith, 2016), Cristiano Ronaldo's 44.0 million US-$ sponsorship earnings in 2018 (Badenhausen, 2019), or Heineken's yearly sponsorship spend of 118.3 million US-$ for events such as the UEFA Champions League or Formula 1 (Ayles, 2019) are indicating the continuously increasing interest of companies in sports sponsorship marketing. As essential part of a broader integrated marketing communication approach (Tripodi, 2001), the marketing management of

a sponsor brand aims to increase the brand knowledge as well as to receive a superior brand positioning in consumer's mind (Gwinner and Eaton, 1999; Keller, 2003), by influencing consumer's perception compared to traditional advertising less directly, but more indirectly via a peripheral exposure to sponsor-related brand information (Meenaghan, 2001; Olson and Thjømøe, 2003).

Indeed, managers are regarding sponsorship as a valuable marketing instrument that *"can contribute to the difficult task of differentiating a brand from its competitors and adding financial value to the brand"* (Cornwell et al., 2001, p. 48). However, there is also evidence that on average the return on investment (ROI) of a sponsorship activity is negative, despite its great potential to influence consumer, but while being an expensive communication tool (Crimmins and Horn, 1996). As a recent study by the Association of National Advertisers (ANA) shows, only a minority (37 percent) of the interview managers responsible for sponsorship use a standardized measurement approach to assess the effectiveness of a sponsoring activity, while the majority (78 percent) fundamentally confirm the need for an effective measurement (ANA, 2018). Furthermore, another recent study indicates that one of three sponsor brands (31 percent) make no attempt at all to evaluate the sponsoring ROI (IEG, 2018). Therefore, the marketing-related effectiveness evaluation of a sponsorship activity is often completely missing, or it is only carried out insufficiently or misleadingly, especially if measuring instruments are used which have no relation to the sponsoring goals at all (Meenaghan, 2011).

Against the backdrop of an increasing demand for the implementation of sponsoring within the integrated marketing communication mix, inducing most of the time great expenditures, and at the same time the existence of widespread neglect of evaluating the respective sponsoring activity in business practice reveals *"a seeming paradox of satisfaction with sponsorship results without quantitative or qualitative measures of what these results*

are" (Thjømøe et al. 2002, p. 10). Even if a sponsorship evaluation is conducted, most approaches and studies are only measuring the explicit effectiveness, but do not take into account the implicit information processing of brand-related sponsorship information that has a substantial influence on consumer's perceptual and behavioral response toward a brand (Schmidt et al., 2018). The at least limited decision making process of managers due to such *"existence of a measurement deficit"* (Meenaghan, 2013, p. 388) is still surprising. Indeed, Cornwell et al. (2005) highlighted over a decade ago in their highly influential sponsorship article the crucial relevance of implicit processes: *"Implicit memory also plays a major role in the processing of sponsorship information. As such, greater consideration in future research must be given to investigating implicit memory for sponsorship information, rather than just using studies involving sponsor recall and recognition tasks tapping explicit memory"* (Cornwell et al., 2005, p. 29).

Each sponsoring-related experience with a sponsor brand creates an effect in consumer's brain, particularly on an implicit level (e.g., Plassmann et al., 2012). The effect is triggered by the respective sponsor object such as event, team or athlete. In more detail, the associations of the sponsor-brand become linked with the associations of the sponsor-object (Gwinner and Eaton, 1999). Hence, in accordance with the brand knowledge theory, the association-based image from the sponsor object is transferred to the sponsor brand (e.g., Keller, 1993). Due to the general lack of implicit studies in the field of sports sponsorship, it is unclear or less clear how consumers process sponsorship-related information in their mind when they perceive a sponsor brand together with a sponsor object, although more and more implicit sponsoring studies are being conducted (e.g., Trendel and Warlop, 2007; Herrmann et al., 2011; Koenigstorfer and Groeppel-Klein, 2012; Trendel et al., 2012; Trendel and Warlop, 2013; Zdravkovic and Till, 2012; Schmidt et al., 2013; Herrmann et al., 2014; Zerhouni et al., 2016; Schmidt et al., 2018; Limbach et al., 2019; Zerhouni et al., 2019). Therefore, the current

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research aims to consider implicit processes, but also explicit processes in the context of processing brand-related sponsorship information. Specifically, this research uses the combined measurement approach of Schmidt et al. (2013) assessing multi-dimensional implicit and explicit brand associations. Also, the focus is to re-evaluate the effectiveness of event sponsorship as conducted by Schmidt et al. (2013), but also of team and athlete sponsorship in addition as another key entities of sports sponsorship (e.g., Farrely and Quester, 2005; Chanavat et al., 2016). In considering different entity contexts while analyzing both, the potential implicit and explicit associations transfers, the presented study provides valuable insights to open the black box, and thus to further fill the gap of theory-based research in field of sports sponsorship (Cornwell et al., 2005; Cornwell, 2008).

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

A sponsorship engagement aims *"to achieve favorable publicity for a company and/or its brand within a certain target audience via the support of an activity not directly linked to the company's normal business"* (Bennett, 1999, p. 291). As a type of celebrity endorsement entity, sponsorship deals with sports figures such as events, teams or athletics (Amis et al., 1999). Generally speaking, *"a celebrity endorser is an individual who is well known to the public"* (Ross et al., 1984, p. 185). In this regard, the main purpose of sponsoring is to establish an association transfer from the sponsor object to the sponsor brand (Crimmins and Horn, 1996; Gwinner, 1997). More in detail, marketers aim to enhance the customer perceived value of a brand through the sponsorship activity by establishing an (goal-directed) association between sponsored object (celebrity endorsement entity) and sponsor brand. Specifically, the sponsorship activity is expected to improve the overall picture of a sponsor brand through a positive association transfer from the sponsor object towards the sponsor

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brand. Consequently, managers of sport objects should consider and manage their sponsor object as a brand in order to be considered as an attractive celebrity endorsement entity.

Two axioms provide the psychological foundation for a potential association transfer: Heider's (1958) balance theory and McCracken's (1989) meaning transfer. The balance theory as introduced by Heider (1958) assumes that people prefer (mental) harmony in their lives, and they are motivated to re-establish a balanced harmony whenever they discover any imbalanced harmony, e.g., by changing their attitudes. Therefore, a positive (negative) perception of a sponsored object predicts a positive (negative) perception of the sponsor brand (Dean, 2002). A consumer who likes or dislikes a sponsored object, respectively, will result in a liking or disliking, respectively, of the sponsor brand, otherwise an imbalance would occur (Dalakas and Levin, 2005). The meaning transfer as proposed by McCracken (1989) argues that a meaning is transferred from the celebrity endorsement entity – such as sponsor object like an event, team or athletic – to the sponsor brand when both are perceived together during the sponsorship exposure. When associations about a sponsor object are activated during the sponsorship exposure, an association-based meaning transfer from the sponsor object to the sponsor brand is elicit in consumer's memory (Keller, 1993; Gwinner and Eaton, 1999).

In accordance to Keller's (1993) brand equity conceptualization, an efficient mean to enhance and maintain the perceptual and behavioral value from a customer's perspective (e.g., liking, loyalty or trial purchase) is to create and foster unique associations held in the customer's memory. Specifically, the uniqueness of brand associations relates to the additional motivational benefit that gives customers an appealing motive for a positive approach toward the brand, e.g., some type of wanting. In accordance with the Zurich Model of Social Motivation as proposed by Bischof (1990), three basic and interacting motivational systems affect the (social) distance regulation toward people or objects likewise such as brands: security, arousal (joy) and autonomy (Schneider, 2001).

An impactful brand communication contact creates and refreshes relevant (salient) associations in consumer's mind that enhances the mental availability of the brand (Sharp, 2010). From that perspective, to establish *"efficient, choice-shaping associations with the brand name"* (Walvis, 2008, p. 180) is the primary task of brand management. Understanding sports sponsorship as a goal-oriented associative branding strategy is the attempt to provide a meaningful association transfer from the sponsor object to the sponsor brand (e.g., Park et al. 1993; Farquhar, 1989). Regarding the processing of brand-related sponsorship information, a crucial role is performed by long-term memory processes (Lynch and Scrull, 1982). In fact, every second the brain processes 11.2 million bits per second, but just roughly 50 bits in a conscious manner, while the majority of information is processed implicitly according to the unconscious-thought theory as proposed by Dijksterhuis and Nordgren (2006). Hence, the majority of brand-related experiences, such as a sponsorship exposure, is processed and stored in the un-/subconscious mind of the consumer, so-called implicit memory, with no or only little awareness (Plassmann et al., 2012).

Against this background, each sponsorship activity aims to initiate a positive brand information processing that enables a brand-related association change, meaning to develop, maintain or strengthen brand-related associations in consumer's mind for a positive brand response in the future. In order to generate a deeper understanding of how sponsor brands are processed, the following research question is addressed: What is the effect of a sponsorship exposure related to the sponsoring of events, teams and athletes on consumer's processing of implicit and explicit sponsor brand associations?

To empirically investigate the effectiveness of the various sponsorship exposures, the combined measurement approach of implicit and explicit brand associations as introduced by Schmidt et al. (2013) is applied.

General Study Design Information and Measures

In total, four exploratory empirical studies have been conducted to test the effectiveness regarding an association transfer initiation of the following sponsor objects: events (study 1 and 2), teams (study 3) and athletics (study 4). Each study applied a within-subject-design that consists of a before measurement (associative evaluation of the sponsor brand) ahead of the sponsorship exposure and an after measurement (associative evaluation of the sponsor object and sponsor brand) subsequently to the contact with the sponsorship activity. Also, each study was conducted as an online study. With reference to the assessment of the multi-dimensional implicit and explicit associations of the sponsorship entities (sponsor object and sponsor brand), combined measurement approach of implicit and explicit brand associations as introduced by Schmidt et al. (2013) is applied. Specifically, the following associative dimensions have been captured: security, arousal (joy) and autonomy. To measure explicit brand-related associations, five-point Likert scales were applied regarding all three dimensions in order to determine a more reflective and controlled association assessment. By contrast, a basic response latency-based measure was applied for all three implicit dimensions to capture a more automatic and spontaneous association evaluation. During the implicit test, compliance rate (the given response, here yes or no) and reaction time (latency) are measured (see also Craddock et al., 2012). Each association dimension, both implicitly and explicitly, was evaluated using two items and later transformed into one single factor by mean computation.

For each computed difference of the before-after measurement, a Wilcoxon signed-rank test was performed, and the respective z-value used to calculate the effect size r as a robust effect size index to report the practical (clinical) significance (Rosnow and Rosenthal, 2003) with the following formula: $r = z/\sqrt{N}$ (e.g. Fritz et al., 2012, p. 12). Furthermore, the following

thresholds were used as benchmarks for the effect size interpretation: r = 0.1 as small effect, r = 0.3 as medium effect, r = 0.5 as large effect (Cohen, 1992). Also, against the background of the exploratory character of the studies and in part relatively small sample sizes, the cutoff of $p < 0.20$ is applied to report statistical significance. Only differences with a statistically significant as well as at least small practical significance have been reported as meaningful change. In addition, for each dimension an association fit between sponsor object and sponsor brand was calculated was follows: sponsor brand association of the after measurement subtracted from the sponsor object association. The fit score was used to further check and understand the potential existence of an association transfer by applying a simple correlation analysis considering the association difference and respective fit score.

Study 1

Material and Participants

The first study was designed to test the effectiveness of the Summer Olympic Games, concretely the XXX Summer Olympic Games 2012 in London. In contrast to other events, the sponsor brand is only allowed the present itself around the Olympic Games (e.g., TV advertising, general sport coverages, product branding etc.), but not during the sports event meaning that no advertising must appear on the clothing and equipment of the athletes and teams as well within the venues. As investigation brands, four main sponsor brands of the event were chosen: McDonald's, Adidas, Coca-Cola and Panasonic.

This before measurement was conducted 7 to 5 days ahead of the official beginning of the XXX Summer Olympic Games 2012 in London. The after measurement was executed 5 to 7 days after the official end of the sport event (via email invitation to the interviewees which participated in the first survey). Participants who confirmed to have not watched any competition of the Summer Olympic Games have been removed from the final data set. In

total, a final sample of 213 respondents answered both surveys (female: 38.5 percent; male: 61.5 percent; mainly aged 30 to 49 years: 51.6 percent; average age: 43.19 years). Each participants evaluated all four sponsor brands.

Results

As shown in Table 1, by tendency the empirical results reveal a negative explicit association change on a small effect size level for McDonald's (autonomy), Adidas (arousal and autonomy) and Coca-Cola (autonomy). For Panasonic as the other sponsor brand, a small increase of the implicit association arousal is indicated. In addition, significant correlations on an aggregated level could be identified considering the fit score and association difference.

--- Table 1 about here ---

Study 2

Material and Participants

The second study was run in order to test the effectiveness of the 20th FIFA World Cup 2014 in Brazil. By contrast to the Olympic Games, the visibility of the main event sponsors is not forbidden, so the sponsor brands can be perceived in all venues and during all games. The following four sponsor brands were chosen as investigation objects: McDonald's, Adidas, Coca-Cola and Continental.

7 to 5 days ahead of the beginning of the sport event, the before measurement was conducted, while the after measurement was performed 5 to 7 days after the official end of the sport event (via email invitation to the respondents which answered the first survey). Each participant who agreed to have not watched any game of the sport event was removed from the final data set. A final sample of 94 interviewees participated in both surveys (female: 35.2

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percent; male: 64.8 percent; mainly aged 18 to 29 years (61.4 percent); average age, 31.69 years). All four sponsor brands were evaluated by each participant.

Results

Overall, most of the identified meaningful changes is positive and occurs on an implicit information processing level with a small effect size (cf. Table 1). Specifically, the implicit association arousal has been positively affected for all four brands, while implicit autonomy has been increased for McDonald's and Adidas but decreased for Coca-Cola and with no change for Continental. On an explicit level, only the arousal association of the brand Continental was enhanced with a small effect size.

Study 3

Material and Participants

In a next study, the effectiveness of two newly announced sponsorship activities in the German Bundesliga (football) was investigated: Henkel sponsoring FC Bavaria Munich (official partner status) and Heinz von Heiden sponsoring Hannover 96 (official jersey sponsor status). Each participant of the before-after measurement evaluated only one sponsorship activity. Also, the fan relationship status toward the respective team was captured by a simple single question ("Are you a fan of the team XYZ?" with a "yes" or "no" answer option) to provide a more enriched data analysis by distinguish between fan and non-fan.

First, one day ahead of the official press announcement of the respective sponsorship, participants were recruited to perform the before measurement. The participants were not informed that the respective brand will act soon as a sponsor of the respective team. Then, one day after the day the official press announcement of the respective sponsorship activity, participants completed the after measurement after they were informed about the new sponsorship activity by reading a short newspaper article about it. In sum, a total sample of

n=169 participants answered both, the before and after measurement (Henkel and FC Bavaria Munich sponsorship activity: n = 84, with fans n = 18 and non-fans n = 66; Heinz von Heiden and Hannover 96 sponsorship activity: n = 85, with fans n = 22 and non-fans n = 63; gender: female = 54.4 percent and male = 45.6 percent; age: mainly aged 18 to 29 years with 85.7 percent; average age: 26.3 years).

Results

A specific pattern is revealed by the empirical results as shown in Table 1. With reference to the fan segment, more positive association changes can be identified compared to the non-fan segment. In more detail, of the seven meaningful changes, five changes, and thus most changes are indicated on an implicit information processing level within the fan segment with small to medium effect sizes. In contrast, only explicit association changes are revealed within the non-fan segment on a small to medium effect level.

Study 4

Material and Participants

In a next research step, the effectiveness of athlete sponsorship was investigated. For that reason, two real athlete sponsorship activities were analyzed, with both sponsor brand sponsoring the same athlete: Gillette (personal care brand with a strong associative perception in Germany) and BiFi (snack brand with a moderate associative perception in Germany), with both sponsor brands the same athlete, concretely, Thomas Mueller (German football player of FC Bavaria Munich). Each participant evaluated only one sponsorship activity. To ensure a more detailed analysis, similar to study 3, it was distinguished between fan and non-fan to determine the fan relationship toward the athlete by asking a simple question ("Are you a fan of the athlete Thomas Mueller?" with a "yes" or "no" answer option).

Subsequently to the before measurement, the participants got in contact with the respective sponsorship activity. Specifically, the participants got exposed to a real print advertisement for 10 seconds on a screen that showed the sponsorship activity between the sponsored athlete and the respective sponsor brand. Afterwards, the participants performed the after measurement. Overall, 107 participants took part in both, the before and after measurement (Gillette: n = 50, with fans n = 26 and non-fans n = 24; BiFi: n = 57, with fans n = 37 and non-fans n = 20; gender: female = 62.6 percent and male = 37.4 percent; age: mainly aged 18 to 29 years with 84.1 percent; average age: 26.6 years).

Results

As shown in Table 1, more association changes were revealed on an implicit level than on an explicit level. Considering the strong brand Gillette, a meaningful decrease of the implicit security association is identified in both segments, fans and non-fans. Furthermore, the explicit arousal association is enhanced in the fan segment, whereas the explicit autonomy association is decreased in the non-fan segment). With reference to the moderate brand BiFi, a substantial enhancement of the implicit security association is shown within the fan segment, while for the non-fan segment a meaningful increase of the explicit security associations is revealed.

Additional Association Transfer Analysis

In Table 2, the correlation between the fit scores and the association changes are presented on an aggregated level for each study. In each study, a significant and positive relationship between the fit score and respective association change is indicated.

--- Table 2 about here ---

Discussion of the Results

In all studies, implicit and explicit association changes are revealed. However, the empirical results indicate different effectiveness and pattern when comparing the findings. First, study 1 and 2 indicate an influence of the visibility of sports sponsorships in the context of events. Precisely, the effectiveness of sponsoring the event Summer Olympic Games was by tendency negative on an explicit level, whereas almost no change, neither positive nor negative was revealed on an implicit level. In contrast, the sponsorship of the event FIFA World Cup was on average positive with most changes on an implicit information processing level. Probably, the non-visibility of the sponsorship activity during the games of the Summer Olympic Games was limiting the association transfer on an implicit level since the association network of the event and the sponsor brands where not simultaneously active so that no *"neurons wire together if they fire together"* (Lowel and Singer, 1992, p. 211) occurs that could have established an associative learning process. With reference to the sponsorship of teams and athletes, it appears a) that team sponsorship is by tendency more effective than athlete sponsorship, and b) that within the segments of fans predominantly an implicit association transfer is activated, while non-fans show primarily an association change on an explicit level. That pattern might be explained that the associative network of a team is on average greater than one single athlete, indicating a greater probability that sponsor brand can connect to that network. Similarly, fans should have a greater associative knowledge structure about their favorite team or athlete, thus inducing a higher change that an association transfer from the enriched associative network of the sponsor object to the sponsor brand is occurring. In addition, the positive correlation between the fit scores and association changes reveals that the sponsor object should have at least the same if not greater association performance than the sponsor brand to ensure a positive association transfer. Otherwise, if the respective

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association of the sponsor object is lower than the sponsor brand, it is very likely that a negative association transfer is triggered, thus reducing the brand equity of the sponsor brand.

CONTRIBUTION, FINDINGS AND NEXT RESEARCH STEPS

THE GOAL OF THE PRESENT PAPER WAS TO EXAMINE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF key entities of sports sponsorship, concretely, the sponsorship of events, teams and athletes. A more profound management knowledge of the effectiveness in general and psychological mechanism of a sponsorship activity on an explicit and implicit information processing level is valuable for both, academia and business practice. In this regard, the present paper contributes to the existing literature in the field of sports sponsorship to highlighting the importance to a) capture both, implicit and explicit brand associations, and b) to not only evaluate the association network of the sponsor brand, but also of the respective sponsorship object.

Overall, the empirical results of the presented studies suggest that sponsorship activities are affecting the associative network of sponsor brands, but in a positive and negative way as well as on an implicit and explicit level. The sponsorship is positive if a) the sponsorship is visible and b) the associative network of the sponsor object is at least as strong as the associative network of the sponsor brand. Also, the sponsorship activity is primarily powerful within the segment of fans considering the fostering of brand associations on an implicit level that will support a positive consumer response toward in the future. Within the segment of non-fans, primarily explicit changes are triggered that might support an enhanced awareness toward the brand, but not necessarily a more positive behavioral brand reaction.

Taken together, the empirical studies demonstrated the usefulness of the combined measurement approach as introduced by Schmidt et al. (2013) to capture multi-dimensional

implicit and explicit brand associations. Future research should re-apply that combined association instrument to enable a further examination of the overall measurement performance. Against the background of an increasing digitalization of the society, future research should focus on respective digital touchpoint contacts such as social media in general or eSports in particular. Another valuable approach might be the appliance of additional implicit measures in future sponsorship studies. Especially eye tracking to assess the visual processing of a sponsorship exposure or electroencephalography (EEG) to evaluate an approach vs. avoidance motivation of a sponsorship activity should shed further light into the black box of how brand-related sponsorship information are processed automatically in consumer's implicit mind.

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Table 1: Summary Statistics for the Before-After Measurements

Study 1: Event Sponsorship

Construct	McDonald's			Adidas			Coca-Cola			Panasonic		
	ΔM	p	r	ΔM	p	r	ΔM	p	r	ΔM	p	r
Implicit Arousal	2.26	0.17	0.10	0.56	0.73	0.03	-0.16	0.91	0.01	3.44	0.03	0.14
Implicit Autonomy	-1.44	0.30	0.08	0.38	0.78	0.02	-1.16	0.41	0.06	-0.83	0.59	0.04
Implicit Security	0.33	0.81	0.01	-0.52	0.66	0.03	-1.85	0.26	0.08	-1.81	0.20	0.09
Explicit Arousal	-0.59	0.71	0.02	-2.49	0.07	0.11	-1.60	0.26	0.07	1.07	0.44	0.04
Explicit Autonomy	-3.14	0.10	0.14	-3.26	0.06	0.15	-2.67	0.09	0.13	-1.01	0.53	0.04
Explicit Security	-0.83	0.61	0.03	-1.66	0.24	0.08	-1.42	0.39	0.06	1.42	0.34	0.06

Study 2: Event Sponsorship

Construct	McDonald's			Adidas			Coca-Cola			Continental		
	ΔM	p	r	ΔM	p	r	ΔM	p	r	ΔM	p	r
Implicit Arousal	2.82	0.15	0.13	4.95	0.03	0.23	5.23	0.04	0.24	5.34	0.03	0.25
Implicit Autonomy	0.38	0.86	0.02	3.34	0.04	0.27	-3.47	0.06	0.24	-0.08	0.97	0.00
Implicit Security	-2.50	0.32	0.12	2.03	0.30	0.11	2.38	0.24	0.11	-1.02	0.61	0.06
Explicit Arousal	1.06	0.63	0.04	2.26	0.35	0.10	3.19	0.22	0.13	4.92	0.04	0.22
Explicit Autonomy	-1.60	0.55	0.07	-0.53	0.82	0.03	-1.86	0.47	0.09	-0.27	0.91	0.01
Explicit Security	-0.13	0.95	0.01	-1.99	0.42	0.10	6.25	0.01	0.29	1.99	0.38	0.09

Study 3: Team Sponsorship

Construct	Fan Hannover 96			Non-Fan Hannover 96			Fan FC Bavaria Munich			Non-Fan FC Bavaria Munich		
	ΔM	p	r	ΔM	p	r	ΔM	p	r	ΔM	p	r
Implicit Arousal	6.98	0.06	0.45	0.91	0.72	0.05	7.86	0.05	0.49	-0.27	0.89	0.01
Implicit Autonomy	2.07	0.50	0.09	-1.76	0.54	0.08	8.86	0.08	0.37	1.30	0.64	0.06
Implicit Security	5.73	0.13	0.24	-1.14	0.69	0.05	6.83	0.11	0.37	1.73	0.52	0.08
Explicit Arousal	0.00	1.00	0.00	4.56	0.12	0.22	11.81	0.03	0.64	6.25	0.02	0.32
Explicit Autonomy	-3.98	0.22	0.17	-1.59	0.64	0.06	5.56	0.41	0.23	5.11	0.12	0.20
Explicit Security	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.20	0.93	0.01	6.25	0.18	0.41	0.76	0.78	0.04

Study 4: Athlete Sponsorship

Construct	Fan Gillette			Non-Fan Gillette			Fan BiFi			Non-Fan BiFi		
	ΔM	p	r	ΔM	p	r	ΔM	p	r	ΔM	p	r
Implicit Arousal	3.77	0.39	0.15	4.19	0.42	0.19	-0.03	0.99	0.00	-5.53	0.37	0.19
Implicit Autonomy	1.10	0.84	0.04	-5.80	0.35	0.22	-0.30	0.92	0.01	-3.89	0.53	0.15
Implicit Security	-6.88	0.17	0.31	-6.07	0.20	0.25	5.50	0.15	0.21	2.95	0.52	0.12
Explicit Arousal	6.73	0.06	0.27	4.17	0.38	0.18	3.04	0.29	0.11	-0.63	0.86	0.02
Explicit Autonomy	0.00	1.00	0.00	-9.38	0.11	0.39	3.38	0.38	0.11	4.38	0.33	0.15
Explicit Security	1.44	0.67	0.07	-0.52	0.88	0.02	1.01	0.78	0.04	7.50	0.16	0.30

Note: ΔM=Post-Measurement (after) – Pre-Measurement (before)

Table 2: Correlation Coefficients Between Fit-Scores and Association Changes

Construct	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Study 4
Implicit Arousal	0.511***	0.372***	0.431***	0.153*
Implicit Autonomy	0.460***	0.355***	0.419***	0.316***
Implicit Security	0.355***	0.299***	0.380***	0.347***
Explicit Arousal	0.362***	0.444***	0.513***	0.452***
Explicit Autonomy	0.459***	0.418***	0.486***	0.374***
Explicit Security	0.503***	0.474***	0.406***	0.488***

Note: Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (one-tailed: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.10$)

Beitrag 3

Official sports sponsorship fortress vs ambush marketing attack – Investigating the impact on implicit and explicit brand knowledge

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OFFICIAL SPORT SPONSORSHIP FORTRESS VERSUS AMBUSH MARKETING ATTACK: INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT ON IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT BRAND KNOWLEDGE

STRUCTURED ABSTRACT

Purpose – The present research article assesses the effectiveness of event-related sports sponsorship and ambushing activity using social media video advertising that aim to affect spectators' implicit and explicit brand information processing.

Design/methodology/approach – A dual model of brand knowledge is used that considers the implicit and explicit information processing of marketing-induced brand messages. A web study was conducted prior to the 2014 FIFA World Cup. Each participant implicitly and explicitly evaluated either one sponsor brand or one ambush brand before and after watching the video advertisement (within-subject design). A Wilcoxon signed-rank test was used to evaluate each change of the pre-post testing scores.

Findings – Implicit and explicit brand associations as well as brand behavior were partially affected by the short contact with the advertisements of sponsor brands and ambush brands. In this regard, the implicit association measurements were more sensitive to reveal changes in the brand knowledge structure than their explicit counterparts. Furthermore, sponsorship advertising was slightly more effective than ambush advertising.

Originality/value – The current exploratory study evaluated for the first time the performance of event-related video advertisements that were originally released on social media of sponsor brands and ambush brands. The findings emphasize the necessary requirement of evaluating the implicit processing in addition to the explicit processing of sponsorship information to ensure a holistic evaluation of consumers' memory with regard to the effectiveness of a sponsorship activity.

Keywords: *sports marketing, event sponsorship, brand knowledge, dual information processing, reaction time measurement*
Paper type: Research Paper

INTRODUCTION

With the growth of commercial sponsorship and increasing efforts to secure sponsorship rights (Hoek and Gendall, 2002a), the phenomenon of ambush marketing in sports as a "parasitic activity" (Hoek and Gendall, 2002b, p. 72) has gained popularity in diverse manifestations (e.g., Nufer, 2016). In particular, the heightened competition for rights to international sporting events as an attractive marketing communication environment to address a global target group has reduced the number of potential bidders who can fund these rights but has simultaneously raised the number of ambushers because of the increased prestige of such worldwide events (Hoek and Gendall, 2002b). For official sponsors and event owners, this development has created a greater sponsorship fortress to defend exclusive associations with such events. This enhanced sponsorship protection is partly because sponsorship has become a "mainstay of marketing communications" (Cornwell, 2008, p. 41).

It is less surprising that event owners and official sponsors typically regard ambush marketing as immoral and unethical since it threatens and limits the overall ability to recoup the marketing investments made in the event (Payne, 1998). In fact, as part of a broader brand-building marketing program to receive superior brand appeal (e.g., Keller, 2003), marketers of a sponsor brand aim to enrich their financial efforts of a sponsorship engagement to enhance brand knowledge (Gwinner and Eaton, 1999). From a marketing perspective, a successful sponsorship is reflected in the ability to gain a competitive advantage by creating an added value for consumers (e.g., providing less quality uncertainty), so-called brand equity, which results in, among other things, greater consumer confidence in the sponsor brand than in a competitor brand (e.g., Farquhar, 1989). The measurement and management of brand equity generally embody consumer perception and consumer behavior (Silverman *et al.*, 1999). In particular, consumers' view of a brand, which comprises perceptual drivers (e.g., brand image),

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affects consumers' brand behavior, which includes relational and intentional outcomes (e.g., brand loyalty) (Esch *et al.*, 2006). Typically, customer-based brand equity is conceptualized with reference to strong, favorable and unique brand associations and the corresponding brand knowledge that is created in consumer's mind (Keller, 1993; Keller and Lehmann, 2006). According to the associative network theories of cognition, knowledge of a brand is constituted by all the mental representations of a brand that are based on past experiences with the brand (Keller, 2003), which, in turn, are stored as clusters of meaning and associations in the memory of consumers (e.g., Teichert and Schöntag, 2010; Friedman and Leclercq, 2015).

A study by Cornwell *et al.* (2001) confirms that managers perceive sponsorship as a marketing instrument that "can contribute to the difficult task of differentiating a brand from its competitors and adding financial value to the brand" (Cornwell *et al.*, 2001, p. 48). However, comparatively little sponsorship studies have been conducted regarding the effectiveness of leveraging brand knowledge through sponsorship, especially in the context of innovative media and marketing approaches such as social media to communicate a sponsorship and regarding the manner in which sponsorship-linked communication is processed in a spectator's mind that relates to the information processing of brand messages (Cornwell, 2008). With reference to Cornwell (2008), the present study aims to fill the gap of empirical research in general and empirical evidence in particular that focuses on the measurement of sponsorship effects as one of the main research streams of academic sponsorship research (Cornwell and Maignan, 1998). Specifically, the purpose of the current research is to create meaningful insights to better understand the communication capabilities of sponsorship and ambushing on the processing of implicit and explicit brand associations. Such brand association networks not only evoke a meaning or image but also primarily form consumers' mental knowledge of a brand that is understood as "the essence of what a brand represents, how it can achieve competitive advantage and ultimately significant value to a business" (Richards *et al.*, 1998, p. 48).

In marketing science and business practice, self-reports are regularly regarded as the gold standard to measure brand knowledge by focusing on brand awareness and brand image often used as performance indicators to evaluate brand-related marketing efforts such as sponsorship (e.g., Esch *et al.*, 2006). However, in the last two decades, an essential finding and consensus of social and cognitive psychology is that stored evaluations such as attitudes "often come to mind automatically" (Wilson *et al.*, 2000, p. 102). Specifically, various studies have demonstrated that people often are not fully aware of their beliefs, thoughts, and feelings, which suggests an inherent lack of introspective access to implicit mental processes (e.g., Nisbett and Wilson, 1977; Wilson, 2009). The still-existing shortage of a systematic implicit assessment of brand knowledge in marketing is surprising, particularly because well-established dual-process theories of reasoning and decision making with concurrent explicit and implicit information processing have been developed since the late 1970s and early 1980s (e.g., Schneider and Shiffrin, 1977; Cacioppo and Petty, 1984; Smith and DeCoster, 1999). In addition, Tyebjee (1979) and Aaker *et al.* (1980) published academic articles on reaction time measurement as an innovative and beneficial approach to capture implicit processes for brand performance assessment in A+ journals more than a quarter century ago. Furthermore, various consumer studies have demonstrated the substantial impact of implicit processes on perception and behavior (e.g., Maison *et al.*, 2004; Weber *et al.*, 2009; Florack *et al.*, 2010).

Similarly, effectiveness evaluations of sponsorship activities mainly focus on recall, recognition and image tests that are based on explicit self-reports (e.g., Chanavat *et al.*, 2010; Biscaia *et al.*, 2014). According to the hierarchy of effects (HOE) models in communication

and advertising (e.g., Barry, 1987; Vakratsas and Ambler, 1999), the reasoning behind these conventional measurement approaches is the assumption that conscious awareness of a marketing activity (e.g., TV advertising, event sponsorship) is a necessary prerequisite for a marketing impact (e.g., increased brand image, enhanced willingness-to-recommend). Such HOE models do not take into account findings from psychology that provide strong evidence that judgments and decision making are often influenced and activated by automatic processes, with no (or only little) conscious awareness of this causation (e.g., Bargh, 1994; Chartrand, 2005; Dijksterhuis *et al.*, 2005). For this reason, various valuable implicit measures that "are intended to assess relatively automatic mental associations that are difficult to gauge with explicit self-report measures" (Hofmann *et al.*, 2005, p. 1369) have been developed since the mid-1990s in social cognition research.

Recent research in sports marketing has indicated an increasing level of interest regarding the implicit processing of sponsorship information and has provided valuable insights concerning the effectiveness of sports sponsorship, e.g., memory-based consideration set (Herrmann *et al.*, 2011; Herrmann *et al.*, 2014), sponsor-event linkage (Koenigstorfer and Groeppel-Klein, 2012; Trendel *et al.*, 2012; Schmidt *et al.*, 2013) and sponsor-sponsored-entity fit (Trendel and Warlop, 2007; Zdravkovic and Till, 2012). However, the majority of empirical research on sponsorship-related issues is conducted solely on explicit self-reports. In total, there is comparatively little research that explains and investigates the impact of implicit information processing regarding the effectiveness of sports sponsorship as a mainstream communication tool in a broad marketing context. This lack of research is surprising because the highly influential sponsorship article by Cornwell *et al.* (2005) over a decade ago not only emphasized the relevance of implicit processes but also noted the need to systematically consider the implicit processing of sponsorship messages: "Implicit memory also plays a major role in the processing of sponsorship information. As such, greater consideration in future research must

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be given to investigating implicit memory for sponsorship information, rather than just using studies involving sponsor recall and recognition tasks tapping explicit memory." (Cornwell *et al.*, 2005, p. 29).

RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE

Psychological theories on information processing often provide the basis for marketing communication research (Cornwell, 2008). The current research follows the psychological perspective of the dual-system view as proposed by Kahneman (2003). According to this theory, outcomes of (social) judgments (e.g., "I like the sponsored event") and decision making (e.g., "I will buy the sponsor brand") result from the simultaneous interplay of two major brain systems, namely, System 1 and System 2.

System 1, the implicit system, operates on an automatic level and its processing path is fast and effortless, whereas System 2, the explicit system, works on a controlled level and its processing routine is slow and effortful. Against this background, successful brand information processing creates meaningful (salient) implicit and explicit brand associations. Concerning this matter, Schmidt *et al.* (2016) recently introduced a dual model of brand knowledge. Their model is grounded in Keller's (1993) brand equity conceptualization and relies on the brand image construct that incorporates "perceptions about a brand reflected by the associations held in consumer memory" (Keller, 1993, p. 3). Specifically, the dual knowledge model of Schmidt *et al.* (2016) evaluates the favorability and uniqueness of brand associations. In particular, the favorability of brand associations refers to the attitudinal value, i.e., some kind of preference. Furthermore, the uniqueness of brand associations relates to the additional motivational benefits (e.g., a unique selling proposition) that provide an appealing reason for consumer's decision

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making, i.e., some kind of desire. In greater detail, the Zurich Model of Social Motivation as developed by Bischof (1993) constitutes the core for evaluating the motivational values of a brand and proposes three motivational subsystems: arousal, autonomy, and security (Schneider, 2001). Within this dual model of brand knowledge, both types of associations are processed on an implicit and explicit level. Consequently, implicitly and explicitly stored and retrieved brand knowledge influences the behavioral response toward the brand (e.g., recommendation, repurchase). As illustrated in Figure 1, this advanced brand knowledge evaluation enables a comprehensive analysis of association changes and behavior shifts in the implicit and explicit mind of sports spectators to assess the effectiveness of sponsor-linked marketing.

Against this backdrop, the current study seeks to address the relative lack of implicit research on sports sponsorship in general and to respond to the call by Cornwell *et al.* (2005) in particular. More precisely, the goal of the present research article is to assess the effectiveness of event-related sports sponsorship and ambushing activity using social media video advertising that aims to affect spectators' implicit and explicit brand knowledge and brand behavior. Specifically, this study addresses the following research question: what is the effect of sponsorship and ambushing on spectators' processing of implicit and explicit brand associations and on spectators' brand behavior after they are exposed to an event-related social media video advertisement?

--- Figure 1 about here ---

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Study Context and Relevance

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In the present study, the FIFA World Cup was chosen as the research context because it is, along with the Olympic Games, the most attractive sporting event worldwide in terms of spectator interest and media coverage (Slater, 2014) and has been particularly affected by the emergence of ambush marketing (Chadwick and Burton, 2011). In the past, the FIFA World Cup has attracted not only well-known sponsors but also an increasing number of ambushers with innovative high-profile campaigns, such as the successful "Beer Babes" intrusion by the Dutch brand Bavaria, which generated more free publicity and significant buzz in the online blogosphere than any of FIFA's official partners during the World Cup 2010 (Edwards, 2010). Despite FIFA conducting rigorous efforts to inhibit this ambush marketing attack, or perhaps for this very reason, the Dutch brewer Bavaria received widespread online attention, according to Google data (Herzog and Nufer, 2014). Encouraged by such viral online success, ambushers have placed their individual marketing campaigns on social media platforms as a new battleground to attack the exclusive attention fortress of official sponsors, even ahead of the 2014 FIFA World Cup (Burns, 2014).

To test the perceptual and behavioral impact of sponsorship and ambushing with reference to spectators' implicit and explicit mind, as shown in Figure 1, the present study evaluated the changes in brand associations that refer to implicit and explicit information processing and the behavioral shift after exposure to an event-related video advertisement that was published on the social media platform YouTube. As mentioned above, the sporting event 2014 FIFA World Cup was chosen as the investigation context. FIFA invested enormous time and resources, including the establishment of a Brand Protection Team, to guard the valuable brand assets of the 2014 FIFA World Cup before and after the championship against ambush marketing attacks in the offline and online world (FIFA, 2014). In general, FIFA's sponsorship fortress includes the exclusive usage of universally known branding elements, such as the official emblem, the FIFA World Cup Trophy, its official mascot, official slogan and other

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assets, which represent key elements of FIFA's commercial program (FIFA, 2017). Official sponsor brands are allowed to use these event-related key assets in their marketing and communication activities for their commercial association with the FIFA World Cup. In contrast, ambushers are not authorized to use any of FIFA's official marks in their promotions and advertisements that constitute a direct or indirect commercial association with the event.

Study Design and Material

To empirically compare the effectiveness of official sponsor partner appearance and ambush marketing intrusion using social media video advertising, an exploratory research study that uses a within-subject design was conducted in Germany 14 to 7 days before the 2014 FIFA World Cup officially began. Specifically, each participant evaluated either one sponsor brand or one ambush brand before and after watching the video advertisement of the assigned brand (pre-post testing). Only subjects who confirmed that they wanted to watch the 2014 FIFA World Cup at least partly (dichotomous "yes/no" question: "I do agree that I want to watch at least a couple of games of the upcoming 2014 FIFA World Cup.") were allowed to participate in the study.

Concerning the selection of investigation brands, sponsors were defined as being an official FIFA partner that deployed official marks of the 2014 FIFA World Cup in its marketing communication. In addition, ambushers were interpreted as non-sponsors that used event-related elements such as famous football stars in their advertising to associate themselves with the FIFA World Cup event. From the nine existing FIFA partners (IEG Sponsorship, 2014), four brands were selected for the final study because for each of these brands, a comparable ambush brand that operated in the same market was identifiable with a comparable video advertisement in terms of length and similar advertisement release ahead of the event on social

media. Concretely, the following sets of brands were chosen (sponsor brand – ambush brand): Adidas – Nike, Coca-Cola – Pepsi-Cola, Sony – Samsung, and Emirates – Turkish Airlines.

The selected video media advertisements were released on YouTube approximately three (e.g., Adidas and Nike) to six months (e.g., Turkish Airlines and Samsung) ahead of the 2014 FIFA World Cup. Each sponsor brand used FIFA's official marks in their advertisement, while the selected ambush brands bypassed FIFA's communication restriction by relying on prominent football stars as testimonials to create a football atmosphere. However, the advertisement of Emirates as sponsor brand utilized not only official marks of the 2014 FIFA World Cup (the official event logo and labeling as an official FIFA partner) but also a former (Pelé) and current (Cristiano Ronaldo) football player as testimonials. Also, the advertisement of Turkish Airlines as ambush brand adopted not only a football player (Lionel Messi) as a testimonial but also a well-known U.S. basketball star (Kobe Bryant) without any apparent associations to the FIFA World Cup event. Therefore, in both cases, the effective reason for a potential impact on the customer-based brand equity is less clear because of the use of different retrieval cues (brand information), which should be kept in mind when interpreting the results.

Sample and Procedure

In June 2014, participants were recruited based on opportunity sampling. On selective social network websites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube), links were distributed with the invitation to actively contribute to the web study. Consumers with a principal interest in the 2014 FIFA World Cup were targeted as study participants. To gain access to the final online questionnaire after they clicked on the invitation survey link, the subjects were requested to click on a consent button to agree to participation. Furthermore, the participants were told that the study concerned the upcoming FIFA World Cup, but they were not informed about the research objective to avoid any biased judgments and decisions. Questionnaires from subjects

who confirmed to have seen the respective advertisement before were removed (n = 16). In total, 271 questionnaires were used for the final data analysis (female: 47.6 percent; male: 52.4 percent; mainly aged 18 to 24 years: 65.3 percent; average age: 26.12 years). Random assignment to one of the eight investigation brands was executed: Adidas (n = 29), Nike (n = 40), Coca-Cola (n = 41), Pepsi-Cola (n = 31), Sony (n = 37), Samsung (n = 32), Emirates (n = 27), and Turkish Airlines (n = 34). Each participant agreed to be familiar with the assigned brand ("I am aware of the brand.").

After answering various introductory questions with a general focus on sports so that they felt comfortable with the survey (e.g., individual sports preference and sports consumption), the participants were randomly assigned to one of the eight investigation brands and asked to indicate their familiarity with the respective brand. Next, the participants completed the pre-measurement, which started with a reaction time measurement to capture the implicit brand associations, followed by a self-report to assess the explicit brand associations and behavioral response toward the brand. After this pre-measurement, the participants were asked to turn on their speakers to watch an online video. Then, the video advertisement that was originally released on YouTube was shown on the screen. Specifically, the video advertisement was embedded in the professional survey software used to conduct the web study (www.unipark.de) by employing YouTube's iframe embedding functionality with control elements disabled (e.g., pause button) and autoplay enabled. This proceeding ensured that the subjects were actually watching the video advertisement without being distracted by other (uncontrollable) social media content and that they were unable to manipulate the video playback (e.g., skipping forward). Finally, the participants finished the survey with the post-measurement in the same order of measures as in the pre-measurement. In the pre and post testing, the implicit measurement was applied prior to the explicit measurement to avoid an evaluative conditioning regarding the content of the implicit measurement (e.g., Gawronski and Bodenhausen, 2006).

Measures and Data Analysis

As a qualified explicit measure, a self-report was employed to capture a controlled and reflected brand association assessment on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), as used in previous studies that evaluated customer-based brand equity (e.g., Yoo *et al.*, 2000). In addition, the latency-based measure e² BrandREACT (eye square, 2017) was applied as an appropriate implicit test with reference to a spontaneous and automatic brand association evaluation. In particular, this type of reaction time measurement is similar to the Single Category Implicit Association Test (SC-IAT) as introduced by Karpinski and Steinman (2006). More precisely, it requests subjects to decide as quickly as possible whether the corresponding attribute item displayed on the screen fits to the brand through a "yes" and "no" key allocation. The attribute items regarding the assessment of the attitudinal value (attitude: good, great) and the three motivational values (arousal: thrilling, exceptional; autonomy: ruling, powerful; security: caring, proper) were adapted from previous studies (e.g., Simpson *et al.*, 1996; Schmidt *et al.*, 2013) and used for both the explicit and implicit association measurements. Furthermore, global scales were rated in the pre and post testing to assess the external validity of brand attitude (feeling thermometer, 11-point scale: 0 = very cold to 10 = very warm) and brand motivation (overall measure for each dimension, 7-point scale: 0 = not at all arousal-/autonomy-/security-oriented to 7 = extremely arousal-/autonomy-/security-oriented).

Considering the behavioral response toward the brand, which is affected by significant implicit and explicit brand associations (cf. Figure 1), the recommendation intention was used as a performance indicator similar to the sponsorship study of Pitt *et al.* (2010). Specifically, the recommendation intention was measured by applying Reichheld's (2003) Net Promotor Score (NPS). Despite all criticism of the NPS (e.g., Keiningham *et al.*, 2007), this simple single

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indicator is easy to track and a valuable diagnostic metric that provides information about the current brand health with reference to the reflection of consumers' past brand experiences and the examination of consumers' overall brand loyalty as an essential behavioral outcome (e.g., Reynolds and Phillips, 2005; Grisaffe, 2007).

Regarding the individual calculation of the implicit values, in a first step, all latencies lower than 300 ms/greater than 3,000 ms were recoded to 300 ms/3,000 ms according to the conventional Implicit Association Test (IAT) scoring algorithms (Greenwald *et al.*, 2003). Next, the captured reaction time (RT) and response given (RG, yes = "1", no = "-1") for each attribute were first transformed into one single implicit score (IS_{att}) by applying the following formula: $IS_{att} = RG * (RT - RT_{max}) / (RT_{min} - RT_{max})$. This data transformation places "quick responses at each extremity of the continuum according to the nature of the response" (Craddock *et al.*, 2012, p. 191). With this formula, "yes" responses are translated into increasing positive scores (indicating a certain level of approval), while "no" responses are translated into increasing negative scores (indicating a certain level of non-approval) (see also Schmidt *et al.*, 2017). Subsequently, an average value over all corresponding scores and items for each implicit and explicit measurement, respectively, was calculated to obtain the construct estimates. In addition, each implicit and explicit value (construct estimate) was transformed on a scale from 0 to 100 by using the following minimum-maximum adjustment: 100 * (value – minimum value possible)/(maximum value possible – minimum value possible). Such rescaling was applied to ensure a high level of understanding and comparability considering the various measurement scales.

To ensure a robust test of the reliability and validity of the multiple-item measures, structural equation modeling (SEM) was applied, similar to past research in the domain of implicit-explicit measurement (e.g., Gawronski, 2002; Nosek and Smyth, 2007). Specifically, Partial Least Squares (PLS) was chosen as an appropriate SEM technique to evaluate the outer

model (evaluation of the measurement instruments) against the background of the exploratory character of the present research, and due to the fact that roughly one-third of the values were non-normally distributed. The association constructs were defined as independent latent variables, whereas the behavioral construct was determined as dependent latent variable. The PLS-SEM estimation was conducted with the statistical software SmartPLS 3 (Ringle *et al.*, 2015). Furthermore, to examine the outcome of the present empirical research with repeated measures and a within-subject design, not only the statistical significance but more importantly the practical (clinical) significance (importance) are evaluated by calculating the effect size to avoid the potential peril of flawed interpretations concerning the obtained p-values (Ranstam, 2012). In addition, this approach enables academics for future studies to conduct meta-analyses for a substantial research progress toward a cumulative, cohesive and practical science (Lakens, 2013). As stated above, the data were non-normally distributed to a large extent, and thus, did not meet a crucial requirement of parametric tests. For this reason, a Wilcoxon signed-rank test was used as an alternative approach to evaluate each difference (change) of the pre-post testing scores. Then, as a useful and robust effect size index (for an overview, see Rosnow and Rosenthal, 2003), the effect size Pearson's product-moment *r* was computed from the reported z-score of the Wilcoxon signed-rank test for each before-after change. In detail, the following formula for non-parametric data was used: $r = z/\sqrt{N}$ (e.g., Fritz *et al.*, 2012, p. 12), where N is the total number of observations without the ties (only the count of positive and negative ranks) (Larson-Hall, 2010, p. 382).

RESULTS

Evaluation of Measurement Instruments

Table 1 presents the empirical results of the measurement evaluations. First, all brand association measures achieved satisfactory values in terms of item reliability (factor loadings and composite reliability) and internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha). However, the Cronbach's alpha for implicit security in both measurements (pre and post) and for explicit security in the post-measurement is slightly below the recommended threshold of 0.7, but still acceptable (Taber, 2017). Second, each brand association measure significantly correlated with a corresponding global scale, thus suggesting sufficient external validity. Third, the average variance extracted (AVE) for each measure was in the range from 0.76 to 0.88, in support of convergent validity. Fourth, the Fornell-Larcker criterion was met, and hence, discriminant validity is established. Overall, considering the reliability and validity of all brand association measures, the empirical results provide supportive evidence of a reasonable quality of the measures.

--- Table 1 about here ---

Findings

The results of the pre-post testing including the effect size product-moment r are shown in Table 2. To report statistical significance, the common cutoff of $p < 0.05$ is used. Considering the practical relevance of changes in brand knowledge and behavior, the following thresholds are applied as benchmarks to interpret the effect size product-moment r: 0.1 = small effect, 0.3 = medium effect, 0.5 = large effect (Cohen, 1992). The next sections separately consider the results for each group of brands.

--- Table 2 about here ---

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Sports brands: Adidas versus Nike

Regarding the information processing of implicit and explicit brand associations, the results indicate no association changes for Adidas or Nike. Moreover, no difference in the recommendation intention is identified. Thus, both advertisements were incapable of triggering brand association changes with regard to implicit and explicit brand knowledge, and likewise, no change in brand behavior is provoked.

Soda brands: Coca-Cola versus Pepsi-Cola

The empirical results suggest a significant positive and medium effect on implicit attitude for Coca-Cola as the sponsor brand ($\Delta M = 5.878$, $p = 0.015$, $r = 0.381$). Regarding Pepsi-Cola as the ambush brand, the results reveal a significant positive and medium increase of implicit security ($\Delta M = 8.081$, $p = 0.030$, $r = 0.391$). Considering explicit brand associations and brand behavior, no changes are indicated for both brands.

Technology brands: Sony versus Samsung

A significant positive increase with a medium effect size is suggested by the empirical results regarding the information processing of implicit arousal for the official sponsor brand Sony ($\Delta M = 8.419$, $p = 0.017$, $r = 0.393$). In contrast, no change is identified considering the information processing of implicit brand associations for the ambush brand Samsung. In addition, the explicit brand knowledge structure and brand behavior indicate neither a positive nor a negative shift for both brands.

Airline brands: Emirates versus Turkish Airlines

Against the background of the empirical results, a significant enhancement of implicit attitude with a large effect ($\Delta M = 14.407$, $p = 0.007$, $r = 0.523$) and of implicit autonomy with

a medium effect ($\Delta M = 8.426$, $p = 0.020$, $r = 0.449$) is revealed for the sponsor brand Emirates, whereas no change is identified considering the explicit brand knowledge structure. In comparison, a significant positive and large increase of implicit arousal ($\Delta M = 15.279$, $p = 0.001$, $r = 0.600$) and explicit arousal ($\Delta M = 9.191$, $p = 0.010$, $r = 0.560$) is suggested for the ambush brand Turkish Airlines. Regarding brand behavior, the sponsor brand advertisement of Emirates was impactful and evoked a significant positive and large shift in the recommendation intention ($\Delta M = 9.259$, $p = 0.044$, $r = 0.503$), but not the ambush brand advertisement of Turkish Airlines ($\Delta M = 0.882$, $p = 0.790$, $r = 0.060$).

Conclusions and Interpretation

Primarily, customer-based brand equity was enhanced at least partially by a single short contact with the advertisements of sponsor brands and ambush brands. Specifically, implicit brand associations were positively affected for three of the four sponsor brands and for two of the four ambush brands, although not all implicit brand associations of each of these brands increased. In contrast, the explicit brand knowledge structure was partially affected only for one of the four ambush brands, but not at all for any of the investigated sponsor brands. Regarding brand behavior, one of the four sponsor brand advertisements was sufficiently impactful to increase the recommendation intention, whereas the ambush brand advertisements triggered no change considering the recommendation intention.

Overall, exposure to the sponsor and ambush brand advertisements affected the information processing of implicit brand associations to some extent for most brands, whereas the explicit brand knowledge and the brand behavior remained almost unchanged for the majority of the investigated brands. However, the advertisements of the sponsor brands seemed to be slightly more effective with four brand knowledge changes and one behavior shift. In comparison, the ambush brand advertisements affected the brand knowledge less with three

association changes and no behavior shift. Figuratively speaking, at least in the current research, the sponsorship fortress defied the ambush marketing attack, although sports sponsorship "5 to 3 win" over ambush marketing is not a superior victory. However, mental availability, which is the brand-related network of salient associations in a consumer's mind, or the so-called "brand's share of mind" (Sharp, 2010, p. 193), should in general be better developed through sponsorship compared with ambushing for two main reasons, namely: the quantity and quality of associations which are potentially "transferred" from the entity to the brand (Sharp, 2010). Quantity refers to the number of associations, while quality relates to the strength and relevance of the associations. With reference to the current research, it can be assumed that the average spectator and consumer holds an established network of associations in the memory concerning a well-known sports event such as the FIFA World Cup due to a greater and more intensive experience with this sports event. In contrast, the network structure of a testimonial that is typically used as a core entity in an ambush advertisement should only reach a greater amount of associations among the spectators and consumers with a high level of fan identification. In a nutshell: the average spectator and consumer knows and cares more about a sports event than a testimonial. Thus, a sponsor brand should be associated with more and positive associations when linked to a sports event than an ambush brand that is associated with a testimonial.

Considering the diagnostic performance of the measurements, the implicit association measures were more sensitive to reveal changes in the brand knowledge structure against the explicit counterparts. In particular, the advertisement of the sponsor brand Emirates elicited the highest implicit association impact with positive changes of the attitudinal value and one motivational value. In fact, Emirates was the only brand that could gain an increase in brand behavior, and it therefore established an improved brand strength. This result agrees with the work of Schmidt *et al.* (2016) who argue that "attitudinal values create the necessary conditions and motivational values create the reasonable conditions for strong brand positioning in a

customer's head" (Schmidt *et al.*, 2016, p. 9). However, in the case of Emirates, the pure impact of the sponsorship is less clear because the video advertisement of Emirates included both sponsorship (official marks) and ambushing elements (testimonials). However, it is reasonable to argue that the testimonial implementation of Cristiano Ronaldo as one of the two testimonials that were used in the advertisement should have evoked a controversial spectator perception because Cristiano Ronaldo is hated by most (opposition) football fans (e.g., The Telegraph, 2015). Thus, if any exists, one may have expected a negative testimonial impact of Cristiano Ronaldo on brand knowledge and brand behavior, but this negative impact may have be neutralized by the more positive impact of Pelé as the other testimonial and more prestigious football player (e.g., The Guardian, 2016). Therefore, without implementing any testimonial, the advertisement of Emirates should probably reach the same if not greater level of effectiveness.

DISCUSSION

Contribution and Implications

Past research has revealed a positive relationship between sponsorship and brand knowledge (e.g., Roy and Cornwell, 1999; Donlan, 2013; Lacey and Close, 2013). From a brand management perspective, brand knowledge is the primary source of brand equity (Keller, 2003). Accordingly, sports sponsorship must be understood and designed as a brand marketing program in general and marketing communication program in particular to leverage brand equity (Keller, 2013). Sponsorship leverage significantly contributes to increase brand equity (e.g., Sparks, 1999; Henseler *et al.*, 2007; Holt, 2007), but it must be backed by goal-oriented communication investments in advertising and promotion (Cornwell *et al.*, 2001; Henseler *et al.*, 2011). In this regard, the present work has analyzed the effectiveness of sponsorship-linked

marketing that relies on event-related social media video advertising concerning the 2014 FIFA World Cup to affect the implicit and explicit brand knowledge of sports spectators. In particular, the current article extends the findings from sponsor-linked marketing research on the effectiveness of official sponsorship compared with ambush marketing using only explicit self-reports (e.g., McDaniel and Kinney, 1996; Michaelis *et al.*, 2008) and applying both implicit and explicit measures (e.g., Koenigstorfer and Groeppel-Klein, 2012; Trendel *et al.*, 2012).

The present study provides significant contributions and valuable implications for science and business practice. Specifically, an advanced model of brand knowledge with a dual information processing approach was used for the first time. This model extends the common brand association evaluation regarding brand attitude through the supplementary consideration of the associations that relate to brand motivation. In addition, the processing of sponsorship information was assessed by investigating not only explicit associations but also implicit associations. Additionally, the captured behavioral response was considered to enable a more comprehensive evaluation of brand equity. Concerning the measurement quality, all implicit and explicit measures were successfully examined and applied. In this regard, the current study evaluated for the first time the performance of event-related video advertisements of sponsor brands and ambush brands that were originally released on social media as an emerging communication channel that is becoming increasingly important in sports marketing. Specifically, the present study revealed partially positive effects of sponsorship and ambushing advertisement on brand perception and brand behavior, which primarily enriches the knowledge of implicit and explicit measurements in sponsorship research (e.g., Roy and Graeff, 2003; Koenigstorfer and Groeppel-Klein, 2012). Furthermore, the current empirical research extends the sports marketing literature not only by identifying the dual effects of official sponsorship on brand motivation (e.g., Schmidt *et al.*, 2013) but also by determining the implicit and explicit influences of ambushing on brand motivation.

Overall, the findings of the present research provide further evidence for the crucial role of implicit processes regarding the processing of sponsorship information. In particular, the current study emphasizes and demonstrates the requirement for marketing managers and marketing researchers to assess, analyze and address not only explicit but also implicit brand associations to ensure a comprehensive evaluation of consumers' memory regarding the effectiveness of a brand communication activity. In fact, for five of the eight investigated brands (62.5%) in the present research, an implicit impact on brand knowledge was identified, but an explicit impact was identified only for one of the eight brands (12.5%). Thus, without assessing implicit association changes, the effectiveness of brand communication such as sponsorship and ambushing may be easily underestimated if not regarded as non-existent. The perceptual and behavioral significance of implicit processes and their assessment, eventually, increases in conditions with a low level of awareness, which appears to be the predominant mode of information processing as stated by Bargh and Chartrand (1999): "Most of a person's everyday life is determined not by their conscious intentions and deliberate choices but by mental processes that are put into motion by features of the environment and that operate outside of conscious awareness and guidance." (Bargh and Chartrand, 1999, p. 462). In current times of all-pervasive second-screen media usage during the consumption of sports events (Jensen *et al.*, 2015), spectators' available awareness is even more limited, and therefore, primarily, the implicit system is put in charge of processing sponsorship information. Generally speaking, concerning evidence-based brand management, marketing managers should constantly examine the dual brand knowledge to evaluate the effectiveness of brand communication such as sponsor-linked marketing.

Limitations and Next Research Steps

Given the nature of exploratory research, several study limitations demand the need for further research considering the sound applicability of the introduced measurement instruments and the generalizability of the derived insights. First, future studies should repeat the presented evaluation approach of a dual brand knowledge assessment to review the reliability and validity of the applied measures, especially with a larger sample size that enables more sophisticated examinations such as multitrait-multimethod analysis regarding dual-construct validation (Nosek and Smyth, 2007), and not only on an aggregated brand level but also on an individual brand level. Second, the study covered only the impact of social media advertising prior to a sporting event. Therefore, future research should concentrate on the assessment of the communication performance in the media in general and social media in particular during and after a sporting event. In addition, this research used the FIFA World Cup event as a communicative frame for sponsorship and ambushing activities. Thus, third, future sponsorship studies should investigate and use other major sporting events that occur every few years within a narrow time frame (e.g., the Summer Olympics or Winter Olympics) or every year in a specific time frame inside the regular season (e.g., biathlon) as well as a year-long season with several contests over the course of a year (e.g., motorcycle racing). Fourth, the additional application of other implicit measures (e.g., facial coding) should provide further insights regarding the implicit processing of brand communication in sports marketing.

Overall, the introduced methodology and derived findings of the present study should create an encouraging basis for ongoing research that incorporates the knowledge of consumer psychology and sports marketing into one transdisciplinary research framework. In general, each brand communication should follow the three neuropsychological laws of relevance, coherence and participation to create salient brand associations in consumers' memory (Walvis, 2008). Ultimately, "creating and repeating relevant specificity (over time and across touch points) around one central brand theme, using the richest and most engaging forms and media

possible" (Walvis, 2008, p. 189) should be the communication motto. Concerning this matter, sports marketing has – with its manifold and exciting opportunities – best qualifications to win the battle in consumers' implicit and explicit mind.

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Figure 1: Dual-process model of brand knowledge for sports sponsorship communication

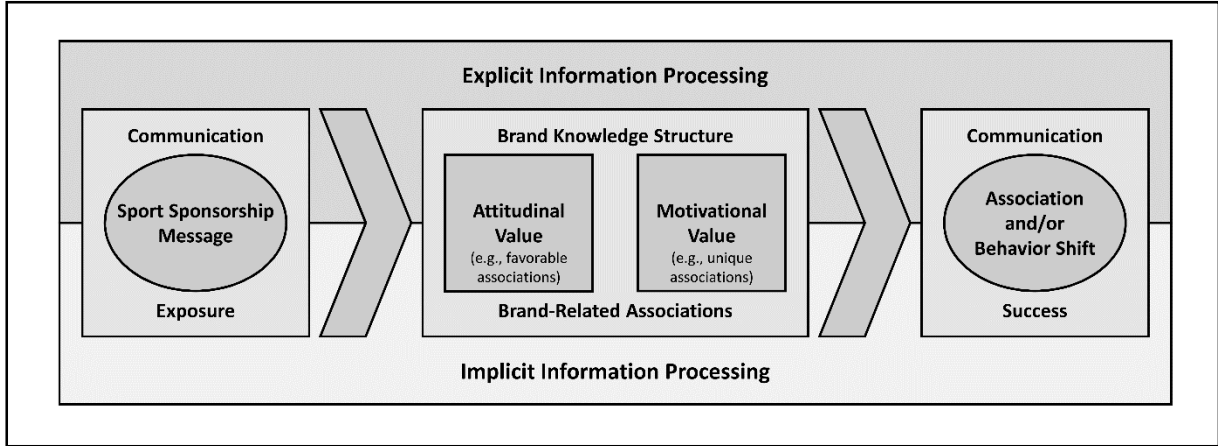**Table 1: Evaluation of the brand association measures**

Pre-measurement

	Factor loadings	**Composite reliability**	**Cronbach's alpha**	**Average variance extracted**	**External validity**	**Fornell-Larcker criterion**
Explicit attitude	0.921 >	0.924	0.835	0.858	0.681**	0.926 > 0.606
Implicit attitude	0.910 >	0.914	0.800	0.842	0.536**	0.918 > 0.681
Explicit arousal	0.920 >	0.924	0.836	0.859	0.485**	0.927 > 0.579
Implicit arousal	0.878 >	0.900	0.752	0.818	0.520**	0.904 > 0.681
Explicit autonomy	0.933 >	0.938	0.867	0.883	0.652**	0.940 > 0.649
Implicit autonomy	0.890 >	0.895	0.755	0.809	0.557**	0.899 > 0.649
Explicit security	0.879 >	0.876	0.717	0.779	0.486**	0.883 > 0.579
Implicit security	0.854 >	0.869	0.677	0.768	0.451**	0.876 > 0.659

Post-measurement

	Factor loadings	**Composite reliability**	**Cronbach's alpha**	**Average variance extracted**	**External validity**	**Fornell-Larcker criterion**
Explicit attitude	0.920 >	0.924	0.835	0.858	0.692**	0.926 > 0.588
Implicit attitude	0.904 >	0.910	0.802	0.835	0.467**	0.914 > 0.684
Explicit arousal	0.924 >	0.927	0.843	0.864	0.634**	0.930 > 0.572
Implicit arousal	0.894 >	0.889	0.752	0.801	0.525**	0.895 > 0.684
Explicit autonomy	0.928 >	0.935	0.860	0.877	0.756**	0.936 > 0.644
Implicit autonomy	0.899 >	0.896	0.768	0.812	0.564**	0.901 > 0.644
Explicit security	0.857 >	0.865	0.690	0.763	0.569**	0.873 > 0.594
Implicit security	0.837 >	0.863	0.688	0.759	0.519**	0.871 > 0.644

Note: ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Table 2: Results of the pre-post testing scores

Construct	Sponsor brand: Adidas (n = 29)					Ambush brand: Nike (n = 40)				
	ΔM^1	SD	Z	p	r^2	ΔM^1	SD	Z	p	r^2
Implicit attitude	-2.724	20.351	0.530	0.596	-0.098	0.788	16.288	0.021	0.983	0.003
Implicit arousal	3.207	20.412	0.552	0.581	0.102	-0.275	14.871	0.195	0.845	-0.031
Implicit autonomy	2.672	19.323	1.081	0.280	0.201	-0.625	15.022	0.054	0.957	-0.009
Implicit security	-1.034	22.822	0.454	0.650	-0.084	-0.275	16.051	0.112	0.911	-0.018
Explicit attitude	-2.874	15.314	0.580	0.562	-0.130	-1.250	13.970	0.036	0.971	-0.006
Explicit arousal	2.586	18.413	0.802	0.423	0.184	1.875	18.680	0.600	0.548	0.146
Explicit autonomy	-2.586	14.322	0.821	0.412	-0.194	0.000	18.989	0.153	0.878	0.034
Explicit security	-1.724	13.247	0.644	0.519	-0.186	1.563	15.808	0.528	0.598	0.110
Recommendation	-2.414	11.849	1.038	0.299	-0.277	0.000	9.058	0.060	0.953	0.015

Construct	Sponsor brand: Coca-Cola (n = 41)					Ambush brand: Pepsi-Cola (n = 31)				
	ΔM^1	SD	Z	p	r^2	ΔM^1	SD	Z	p	r^2
Implicit attitude	5.878	16.784	2.437	0.015	0.381	4.726	19.432	1.098	0.272	0.197
Implicit arousal	0.927	18.003	0.246	0.805	0.038	4.887	17.664	1.460	0.144	0.262
Implicit autonomy	-3.000	16.557	1.263	0.206	-0.202	1.081	17.269	0.000	1.000	0.000
Implicit security	-1.976	19.613	0.480	0.632	-0.075	8.081	17.732	2.175	0.030	0.391
Explicit attitude	1.626	15.334	0.475	0.635	0.083	-2.823	16.611	0.242	0.809	-0.047
Explicit arousal	3.354	22.013	0.609	0.543	0.115	1.613	16.690	0.395	0.693	0.096
Explicit autonomy	-1.524	25.341	0.807	0.419	-0.172	-3.629	23.760	0.703	0.482	-0.157
Explicit security	5.183	20.724	1.737	0.082	0.302	-0.403	19.760	0.205	0.837	-0.047
Recommendation	-2.683	21.216	1.483	0.138	-0.291	-6.129	23.760	1.400	0.162	-0.305

Construct	Sponsor brand: Sony (n = 37)					Ambush brand: Samsung (n = 32)				
	ΔM^1	SD	Z	p	r^2	ΔM^1	SD	Z	p	r^2
Implicit attitude	0.797	18.889	0.189	0.850	0.031	0.969	19.893	0.627	0.531	0.111
Implicit arousal	8.419	17.599	2.392	0.017	0.393	4.188	22.489	0.832	0.405	0.147
Implicit autonomy	3.162	13.984	1.222	0.222	0.201	5.516	17.571	1.578	0.115	0.283
Implicit security	-1.486	20.305	0.573	0.566	-0.094	2.594	19.526	0.842	0.400	0.149
Explicit attitude	1.577	14.970	0.260	0.795	0.048	-3.255	12.907	0.884	0.377	-0.177
Explicit arousal	3.716	19.513	1.010	0.313	0.220	-0.391	12.891	0.206	0.837	-0.048
Explicit autonomy	2.703	18.665	0.601	0.548	0.142	-2.734	12.988	1.195	0.232	-0.319
Explicit security	-0.338	16.268	0.116	0.908	-0.026	1.953	12.743	0.936	0.349	0.221
Recommendation	-0.811	17.381	0.989	0.323	-0.211	-0.625	17.402	0.271	0.787	-0.064

Construct	Sponsor brand: Emirates (n = 27)					Ambush brand: Turkish Airlines (n = 34)				
	ΔM^1	SD	Z	p	r^2	ΔM^1	SD	Z	p	r^2
Implicit attitude	14.407	22.685	-2.715	0.007	0.523	7.324	21.477	-1.832	0.067	0.319
Implicit arousal	7.704	25.219	-1.454	0.146	0.280	15.279	21.981	-3.449	0.001	0.600
Implicit autonomy	8.426	17.955	-2.331	0.020	0.449	-3.588	23.580	-0.812	0.417	-0.139
Implicit security	10.815	25.465	-1.946	0.052	0.375	1.147	23.288	-0.616	0.538	0.106
Explicit attitude	4.938	19.917	-1.593	0.111	0.340	3.309	20.043	-1.090	0.276	0.232
Explicit arousal	5.556	25.080	-1.076	0.282	0.261	9.191	19.047	-2.567	0.010	0.560
Explicit autonomy	7.870	22.239	-1.675	0.094	0.384	3.676	20.068	-1.115	0.265	0.238
Explicit security	3.704	23.973	-0.618	0.537	0.142	-4.779	17.947	-1.516	0.130	-0.339
Recommendation	9.259	23.685	-2.014	0.044	0.503	0.882	17.984	-0.267	0.790	0.060

Note: [1] ΔM = pre-test score subtracted from post-test score; [2] Pearson product-moment r.

Beitrag 4

Communicating Sponsor Brands Playfully in Video Games: Evaluating the Impact of In-Game Advertising on Dual Brand Knowledge

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Communicating Sponsor Brands Playfully in Video Games – Evaluating the Impact of In-Game Advertising on Dual Brand Knowledge

Abstract

Sports sponsorship is a core element of brand communication and one of the most effective and demanded tools in marketing. In the context of football, jersey sponsorship agreements dramatically increased over the last decade in terms of deal volume. Another current brand communication trend is the brand strategy of placing brands into entertainment media, especially in video games, so called in-game advertising (IGA). Against that background, the current study addresses the short-term effects of IGA on consumer's implicit and explicit brand knowledge after the sponsor brand has been exposed in a video game. The findings of the laboratory research showed that the IGA exposure of sponsor brands, which was simulated in the current study as a virtual consumer-brand interaction within a playfully football game, was primarily effective to enhance brand-related associations on an implicit level, but not on an explicit level.

Keywords: Sport Sponsorship, In-Game Advertising, Implicit Information Processing, Sponsorship-Linked Marketing, Brand Association Transfer

1. Introduction

Sports sponsorship has become a "mainstay of marketing communications" (Cornwell, 2008, p. 41). Indeed, sports sponsorship is considered to be one of the most effective and demanded tools in marketing (e.g., Woisetschlager, 2007). In the context of soccer, the jersey of a team is not only a piece of fashion, but "its single biggest sponsorship asset, as players and fans alike have become walking billboards that are up for sale to the highest bidder" (Smith, 2016 May 11). With regard to the jersey sponsorship, which can be termed as chest-front advertising, such sponsorship agreements dramatically increased over the last decade in terms of deal volume (e.g., Jacobs, Jain, & Surana, 2014, June; East, 2015, February 25; Cave, 2015, May 13). Presently, Manchester United is the "soccer shirt sponsor king" by signing a seven year $560 million jersey chest agreement with Chevrolet and a ten year $1.14 billion kit supplier deal with Adidas (Smith, 2015, May 6; Badenhausen, 2016, March 23).

Another current brand communication trend is the brand strategy of placing brands into entertainment media, especially in video games, so called in-game advertising (e.g., Yang, Roskos-Ewoldsen, Dinu, & Arpan, 2006; Grace & Coyle, 2011). This phenomena is less surprising according to a recent study by PricewaterhouseCoopers (2012), which indicated that the average young consumer spend more time playing video games compared to other media options available to spend one's own spare time (e.g., streaming movies). In fact, 100% of the interviewed young consumers played a video game at least one time a week on their smartphones, 86% played on a console, but only 70% streamed movies or TV shows at least one time a week (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2012). This altered media consumption behavior enabled an evolution in sports sponsorships. Major companies such as MillerCoors or State Farm shifted their sponsorships budget towards the brand integration into those media channels and devices their consumers and non-consumers are highly engaged in and loyal to (Belzer, 2013, April 22). For a video game publisher, in-game advertising enhances the degree of

realistic illustration and illusion of the video game, while for the brand owner it provides a high level of consumer-brand integration where the brand is displayed in a natural experience and consumption context including a casual virtual consumer-brand interaction (e.g., Ho, Lin, & Yang, 2011).

In accordance to the latest trends in digital media usage, especially with reference to young consumers, more and more classic sport brands, both as sponsor entity as well as sponsored entity, are widening their portfolio sponsorship activities towards the development of e-sports engagements to benefit from the integration of sports brands in virtual games. For example, the first division football club FC Schalke 04 from the German Bundesliga recently signed up one of the best video gamers to create an own team for the League of Legends as one of the biggest games played worldwide on a professional level in order to participate from the growing number of spectators and sponsorship deals (Summers, 2016, May 16). The continuous progress in the professionalization of e-sports leads to significant switches from the sponsorship of classical sport activities into the sponsorship of digital sport activities. As a prominent example, TAG Heuer has been engaged so far in various multi sports sponsorship contracts worldwide, but now invests a significant amount of their sponsorship budget for a three year contract of exclusive naming rights for the official e-sports German virtual Bundesliga to improve their brand performance in the German market (Glendinning, 2015, August 22). Also, Electronic Arts Sports (EA Sports) as the market leader in interactive game entertainment and cooperation partner of the German virtual Bundesliga mentioned above, offers brand companies various advertising opportunities in the form of in-game integration (EA Sports, 2017). In their current bestseller, the video game FIFA 18 of the highly popular FIFA series, Coca-Cola not only integrated in the story mode of the game called "The Journey" the virtual athlete Alex Hunter as a virtual brand ambassador, which will result for the average player in a 15 hour ad exposure as estimated by EA Sports marketers (Burns, 2017, September

27). Simultaneously, Coca-Cola released in FIFA 18 their first ever in-game advertising advert for use on external communication platforms, whereby the spot itself is an hommage to the legendary "Mean Joe" ad from 1979 (Coca-Cola Company, 2017). The enhanced and ongoing attractiveness of in-game advertising as valuable communication environment is also indicated by a market study of McKinsey&Company (2016) predicting that in-game ad spendings will rise up to 3.63 Billion US Dollar in 2017 and increase to over 5 Billion US Dollar by the year 2020.

From a management perspective, marketers aim to capitalize the financial efforts of a sponsorship engagement, which is part of a broader brand-building marketing program and primarily focusses on the enhancement of brand knowledge (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999, Keller, 2003). A study by Cornwell, Roy, & Steinard (2001) provides evidence that the brand management recognize sponsorship as marketing instrument that "contribute to the difficult task of differentiating a brand from its competitors and adding financial value to the brand" (Cornwell et al., 2001, p. 48). However, relatively little is known about the effectiveness of leveraging brand knowledge through sponsorship in general and how sponsorship-linked communication is processed in spectator's mind in particular (Cornwell, 2008). Furthermore, a recent study by the Association of National Advertisers (ANA) shows that only one-third of the interviewed marketers consistently evaluate the impact and effectiveness of their sponsorship activities, while roughly 8 of 10 of them confirm an increased need to evaluate sponsorship activity (ANA, 2013).

The evaluation of sponsorship effectiveness is a major research stream in academic research provided well advances regarding the assessment of sponsorship performance (Cornwell & Maignan, 1998; Walliser, 2003). However, business practice as expressed in the ANA (2013) study demands more sophisticated sponsorship evaluation approaches that currently incorporates a) the application of additional measurement instruments, especially from the area

of neuromarketing and b) the analysis of the value of an altered communication environment, especially in the digital world. In the light of the increasing relevance of IGA due to altered media usage pattern and with reference to Cornwell (2008), the present study partially fills the gap of empirical research in general and empirical evidence in particular related to the measurement of sports sponsorship impact. Particularly, the current research relies on an adapted implicit association test (IAT; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998) from cognitive psychology and widely applied in neuromarketing to better understand consumer's automatic and spontaneous responses, so-called implicit processes, to marketing stimuli (e.g., Dimofte, 2010: Horcajo, Briñol, & Petty, 2010). Furthermore, in-game advertising as emerging media channel for brand communication was chosen as associative branding environment (e.g., Smith & Zook, 2016). According to Alban Dechelotte, Coca Cola`s senior entertainment marketing manager, video game platforms such as the FIFA series provide an integrative 360-degree consumer-brand-passion of "playing, watching and gaming" (Coca-Cola Company, 2017). The present laboratory research provides evidence that applying in-game advertising as innovative brand communication strategy primarily enhances brand-related associations on an implicit level, but not on an explicit level.

2. Research Background

One of the core purposes of sports sponsorship is supporting the achievement of marketing objectives by integrating sports sponsorship as a communication instrument (Walliser, 2003). In particular, sports sponsorship is a communication approach that primarily addresses branding goals such as establishing brand awareness and strengthening brand image by means of linking the sponsor entity with the sponsored entity for a positive brand equity through transferable associations (Close & Lacey, 2013). Technically speaking, sponsorship can be

regarded as "cash and/or in-kind fee paid to a property (typically a sports, entertainment, non-profit event or organization) in return for access to the exploitable commercial potential associated with that property" (Ukman, 2004, p. 154). Sport sponsorship as a primarily indirect marketing communication approach is considered as sponsorship-linked marketing (Cornwell, 2008), which again is defined as "the orchestration and implementation of marketing activities for the purpose of building and communicating an association to a sponsorship (Cornwell, 1995, p. 15). From a management perspective, marketers primarily responsibility is the articulation of the sponsorship relationship in order to create an associative linkage between the sponsor and the sponsored entity in consumer's memory (Cornwell, Humphreys, Maguire, Weeks, & Tellegen, 2006). Associative branding is the brand communication strategy that attempts to satisfy these marketer responsibility by providing a potentially positive association transfer effect (e.g., Park, McCarthy, & Milberg, 1993).

Since consumers are exposed to diverse brand information every day, a crucial role in brand-related judgements and decisions is performed by long-term memory processes (Lynch & Srull, 1982). Indeed, the extent to which brand information are stored in long-term memory and the ease to which those information are retrieved from long-term memory determine the degree of decision importance (Walvis, 2008). For this reason, the primary task of brand management is to associate the brand name with brand-related information that establishes "efficient, choice-shaping associations with the brand name" (Walvis, 2008, p. 180). Literally speaking, salient and positive brand associations might allow consumers to fall in love with a brand, which is the ultimate reason to buy (Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012). But it requires relevance of brand association in the mind of consumers (Campbell, 2002). Put another way: Associations without any meaning are just trivial facts or irrelevant pieces of information, respectively. The key challenge for brand managers is to understand and manage brand associations in their embodiment as associative networks to build and claim significance in consumers' minds (Till,

Baack, Waterman, 2011). Therefore, sports sponsorship in its portrayal as associative branding – a goal-oriented brand management process of strengthen the brand with specific associations (Park, Lawson, & Milberg, 1989) – performs an elementary brand strategy to gain a competitive advantage considering the establishment of brand knowledge (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999). A successful sports sponsorship activity results in the creation of strong, favorable and unique brand associations in consumer's mind, so-called brand equity (Farquhar, 1989; Keller, 1993).

The effectiveness of sports sponsorship communication regarding the adaption of the brand knowledge structure is affected by the qualitative and quantitative transfer of brand-related information from the associative network of the sponsored entity to that of the sponsor entity (Smith, 2004). The extent of processing brand information depends on attention processes and various mental subsystems (e.g., storage, recovery, manipulation) in order to recognize, (re-) store and elaborate brand-related information pieces (e.g., Walvis, 2008). Basically, brand information is understood as contextual cue that incorporates the information processing of the perceived brand name itself in the presence of other brand-related information (Samu & Krishnan, 2010). For example, a brand claim in an advertisement, a celebrity using a brand in a movie or the exposure of a brand within a video game are contextual cues that communicate specific brand associations. In short, any cue that affects the communicated brand message and individual brand experience represents brand information (MacInnis, Moorman, & Jaworski, 1991). Within the context of sports marketing, it comprises, e.g., benefits from top performance, usage of professional sports, users such as competitive athletes, and usage situations such as a prestigious sporting event or an entertaining sport video game. Brand concept maps are an efficient way to illustrate and diagnose brand association networks (Henderson, Iacobucci, & Calder, 1998; John, Loken, Kim, & Monga, 2006). From a marketing perspective, the mapping and evaluation of those associative networks is essential for

understanding what happens in customers' minds (Anderson & Bower, 1980). Indeed, brand association networks form consumers' mental knowledge of a brand that comprises "the essence of what a brand represents, how it can achieve competitive advantage and ultimately significant value to a business" (Richards, Foster, & Morgan, 1998, p. 48). In this respect, communicating an association to a sponsorship for positive brand behavior (e.g., future purchase) is the main purpose of sponsorship-linked marketing (Cornwell, 1995). Essentially, the value of any marketing activity should effectively be apparent in strengthened brand equity (e.g., Simon & Sullivan, 1993; Mackay, 2001).

3. Conceptual Framework

A main goal and benefit of sport sponsorship covers the building, fostering and enhancing of the associative network memory related to the brand knowledge structure in order to occupy a superior positioning in consumer's head (Donlan, 2013). In general, the outcomes and successes, respectively, of brand communication depends on the "extent to which consumers allocate attention and processing resources to comprehend and elaborate on brand information" (MacInnis et al., p. 33). In marketing science and marketing business, effectiveness evaluations of sponsorship activities are primarily focusing on recall, recognition and image tests based on explicit self-reports (e.g., Chanavat, Martinent, & Ferrand, 2010; Biscaia, Correia, Ross, & Rosado, 2014). Those conventional approaches do not take into account the essential finding and consensus of social and cognitive psychology that stored evaluations such as attitudes "often come to mind automatically" (Wilson, Lindsey, & Schooler, 2000, p. 102). Indeed, over the last four decades, various studies have demonstrated that people often are not fully aware of their beliefs, thoughts, and feelings, suggesting an inherent lack of introspective access to implicit mental processes (e.g., Nisbett & Wilson, 1977; Wilson, 2009).

Various valuable implicit measures that "are intended to assess relatively automatic mental associations that are difficult to gauge with explicit self-report measures" (Hofmann, Gawronski, Gschwendner, Lee, & Schmitt, 2005, p. 1369) have been developed since the mid-1990s in cognitive psychology research to overcome the methodological limitations of explicit conventional measures. Contrary to the progress in cognitive psychology, there is comparatively little research in sports marketing explaining and investigating the impact of implicit information processing regarding the effectiveness of sports sponsorship. However an increasing interest in and enhanced usage of implicit measures in sport marketing is recognizable. Indeed, in the last decade a number of methodologically sophisticated studies investigated the implicit processing of sponsorship information that provided valuable insights concerning the effectiveness of sports sponsorship, e.g., sponsor-sponsored-entity fit (Trendel & Warlop, 2007), sponsor-event linkage (Koenigstorfer & Groeppel-Klein, 2012; Schmidt, Hennigs, Langner, & Limbach, 2013), memory-based consideration set (Herrmann, Corneille, Derbaix, Kacha, & Walliser, 2014) and brand image affect transfer (Cornwell, Lipp, & Purkis, 2016). In spite of this encouraging and enlightening first studies, the fundamentally lack of further implicit research in sports marketing is still surprising. Particularly, since the highly influencing sponsorship article by Cornwell, Weeks, & Roy (2005) not only emphasized the relevance of implicit processes, but also called out for systematically taking into account the implicit processing of sponsorship messages more than a decade ago: "Implicit memory also plays a major role in the processing of sponsorship information. As such, greater consideration in future research must be given to investigating implicit memory for sponsorship information, rather than just using studies involving sponsor recall and recognition tasks tapping explicit memory." (Cornwell et al., 2005, p. 29). In particular, there are evident research gaps of measuring effects considering indirect, non-traditional marketing approaches such as

communicating a sponsorships association within a video game as advergaming or in-game advertising (Cornwell, 2008).

Against that background, the current study addresses primarily the following research questions: What are the short-term effects of in-game advertising as innovative indirect communication approach on consumer's implicit and explicit brand knowledge related to a fashion-related sponsor brand exposure within a video game? Furthermore, since the outcome of a video game with reference to player's user experience of the video game plays an important role on the impact of in-game advertising (e.g., Mau, Silberer, & Gödecke, 2010; Herrewijn & Poels, 2013), the present research addresses a further question: How does the perceived user experience affect the effectiveness of in-game advertising? Specifically, the kit supplier and the jersey sponsor are chosen as essential fashion-related sponsor brand types and a football video game for a mobile device as branding environment.

As mentioned briefly, marketing researchers and practitioners often fall back on classical approaches of measuring brand knowledge that provides only a limited depth of understanding. The conventional retrieval of brand knowledge (e.g., focus interview, self-report) is only evaluating verbalized knowledge that customers consciously are aware about the brand (Koll, Wallpach, & Kreuzer, 2010). Particularly, most of the past sponsorship studies did not take into consideration any dual-process theories of social cognition, which typically distinct between implicit (unconscious, fast, automatic) and explicit (conscious, slow, deliberate) processes and account for human's reasoning and decision-making (e.g., Evans, 2008). Concerning this matter, recently Schmidt, Wiedmann, Reiter, & Kurlbaum (2016) introduced a dual model of brand knowledge enhancement that evaluates the attitudinal value (favorable associations) as unipolar construct and motivational value (unique associations) as multiple construct with arousal, autonomy and security as relevant dimensions. As illustrated in Figure 1, that advanced brand knowledge evaluation enables a comprehensive analysis of association

and behavior shifts in the implicit and explicit mind of consumers to assess the effectiveness of sponsor-linked marketing such as in-game advertising in video games.

--- Figure 1 about here ---

4. Methodology

4.1. Study Design and Material

An exploratory research study using a within-subject design was conducted to empirically test the effectiveness of in-game advertising to affect the dual brand knowledge of sponsor brands. Specifically, the present study investigated the impact on the implicit and explicit information processing of brand associations elicited by a short brand contact within a video game. For that reason, the well-known football video game series FIFA, released each year by the publisher Electronic Arts (EA) under the label EA Sports (www.easports.com/fifa), was used to provoke a virtual consumer-brand interaction. The study was conducted in a laboratory setting. Each participant was individually tested and seated in a small room. During the whole test situation, all participants were attended by an interviewer. The interview instructions were given verbally and in writing. Furthermore, participant's implicit and explicit judgements were recorded on a standard laptop with a 17-inch screen size.

The virtual consumer-brand interaction was enabled by playing the video game FIFA 08 released for the PlayStation Portable (PSP). Specifically, participants played the FIFA 08 mini game "ball juggling" for five minutes on the game console PSP. More precisely, subjects were randomly assigned to play that mini game either with one of the football players of the team Chelsea FC or Arsenal FC. In this regard, participants evaluated the corresponding kit supplier and jersey sponsor of the assigned football team during that time as follows: Adidas as kit

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supplier and Samsung as jersey sponsor of Chelsea FC, Nike as kit supplier and Emirates as jersey sponsor of Arsenal FC. As in real football sports, the brand logos of the kit suppliers were apparent on the jersey and shoes, while the jersey sponsor brands were visible on the chest.

4.2. Sample and Procedure

In total, 67 undergraduate students studying sport management participated in the laboratory study (female: 34.3 percent; male: 65.7 percent; mainly aged 18 to 24 years: 95.5 percent; average age: 20.81 years). As a typical characteristic of laboratory research, the recruited sample size of the current study is limited due to disadvantages in terms of time and other related costs. However, the sample size is in the mid-range compared to the sample size of other in-game advertising studies that range in general from around 30 (e.g, Herrewijn & Poels, 2014) to 100 participants (e.g., Lewis & Porter, 2010). The participating students were recruited via a purposive sampling on the local university campus focusing on the sports students mentioned above. An informed consent was provided by the participants. None of the students received any compensation for the participation in that exploratory study. In order to avoid biased judgments, the participants were told that the study concerned the football video game FIFA 08 for the PSP by EA Sports, but they were not informed about the actual research objective regarding the impact of in-game advertising. A random assignment to one of both selected football teams, and hence kit suppliers and jersey sponsors, was completed: Chelsea FC (n = 35) and Arsenal FC (n = 32). Each participants confirmed to be familiar ("I am aware of the team/brand .") with the assigned team and respective brands, which are all well-known in general, thus no subject data needed to be removed from the final data analysis in order to ensure a homogenous brand knowledge structure in terms of awareness.

A before-after measurement was run to investigate the impact of in-game advertising on the information processing of implicit and explicit brand associations. First, participants answered various introductory questions with regard to their general sport consumption behavior to get comfortable with the study. Next, participants were randomly assigned either to the Chelsea FC or Arsenal FC investigation group. Then, the reaction time measurement was completed to capture the implicit brand associations. Next, participants answered a self-report questionnaire to assess the explicit brand associations and intentional behavior toward the brands. After that before measurement, the participants played the FIFA 08 mini video game "ball juggling" with the assigned team for five minutes on a PSP. After that virtual consumer-brand contact, first, participants answered various questions regarding their user experience of the video game itself. Then, the same measurement procedure as in the pre measurement was completed by the participants. Finally, participants rated their brand familiarity and finished the survey with a socio-demographic characterization.

4.3. Measures and Data Analysis

The implicit-explicit measurement approach of Schmidt et al. (in press) was used to evaluate consumer's brand knowledge. Therefore, both association measures used the same set of attribute items to assess the attitudinal value (attitude: good, great) and three motivational values (arousal: thrilling, exceptional; autonomy: ruling, powerful; security: caring, proper). Specifically, as explicit association measure, a self-report with a five-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree) was employed to capture a controlled and reflected brand association assessment. With regard to the implicit brand knowledge assessment, a reaction time measurement similar to Craddock, Molet, & Miller (2012) was conducted using the latency-based tool e² BrandREACT (eye square, 2017) that captures a spontaneous and automatic association evaluation. In this regard, latencies lower than 300 ms and greater than

3,000 ms were both recoded to 3,000 ms in order to ensure that only realistic automatic associations were captured. Furthermore, a logarithm transformation of the reaction time data was employed as proposed by Craddock et al. (2012). Subsequently, the implicit value calculation of Schmidt et al. (2017) was applied to receive a final implicit score. Finally, for each implicit and explicit association measurement an average value over the respective scores and items was calculated to obtain the construct estimates, which again were transformed on a scale from 0 to 100 for the sake of a high level of understanding and comparability considering the various brand association measures. Besides, the recommendation intention was used as performance indicator regarding the behavioral response toward the brand (e.g., Pitt, Parent, Berthon, & Steyn, 2010) and measured by applying Reichheld's (2003) Net Promotor Score. In addition, global association scales were used in the before and after measurement to evaluate the external validity of brand attitude (preference scale, 11-point scale: 0 = not at all preferable to 10 = very preferable) and brand motivation (overall measure for each dimension, 7-point scale: 0 = not at all arousal-/autonomy-/security-oriented to 7 = extremely arousal-/autonomy-/security-oriented).

With regard to a robust check of the reliability and validity of the brand association measures, structural equation modeling (SEM) was applied similar to past research in the domain of implicit-explicit measurement (e.g., Gawronski, 2002; Nosek & Smyth, 2007). Against the backdrop of the exploratory study character of the present research, Partial Least Squares (PLS) was chosen as an appropriate SEM technique. Specifically, brand attitude and brand motivation as the association constructs were defined as independent variables, whereas brand recommendation as behavioral construct was determined as dependent variable. In order to run the PLS outer model assessment (measurement model) regarding the evaluation of the reliability and discriminant validity, the SEM software SmartPLS 3 (Ringle, Wende, & Becker, 2015) was used. Note, a secondary inner model assessment (structural model) was not

conducted due to the fact that the current research aimed to investigate the association and behavior changes in consumer's dual mind, but not to estimate the construct relationships.

The present research relied on a repeated measures within-subject design. To examine the outcomes of that pre-post testing, both the statistical significance and the practical (clinical) significance (importance) was evaluated in order to avoid the potential peril of flawed interpretations concerning the obtained p-values (Ranstam, 2012). To a large extent, the data were non-normally distributed and so violated a crucial requirement of parametric tests. Therefore, as nonparametric alternative Wilcoxon signed-rank tests were performed to assess the difference (change) of the pre-post testing scores. For each before-after difference, the z-value from the Wilcoxon signed-rank test was used to compute the effect size Pearson's product-moment r as a useful and robust effect size index (Rosnow & Rosenthal, 2003). This effect size statistic is dimensionless and provides a standardized effect size estimation (Nakagawa & Cuthill, 2007). Furthermore, it facilitates a direct comparison with other sponsorship studies since the estimated r values can be easily converted in other effect size statistics such as the familiar d-statistic (e.g., Rosenthal, 1994). Indeed, the effect size Pearson's product-moment r is an appropriate statistical technique to evaluate the effectiveness of a (e.g., marketing-induced) treatment or intervention in behavioral sciences (Cohen, 1977; Rosenthal, 1994)—here, consumers' sponsor brand contact (interaction) within a video game. To calculate Pearson's product-moment r, the following formula was used: $r = z/\sqrt{N}$ (e.g., Fritz, Morris, & Richler, 2012, p. 12), whereby N discards the ties and counts only the positive and negative ranks (Larson-Hall, 2010).

5. Results

5.1. Evaluation of the Brand Association Measures

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The empirical results of the measurement evaluations are shown in Table 1. In terms of item reliability, each brand association measures achieved satisfactory values with factor loadings of 0.869 and greater and composite reliability values ranging from 0.821 to 0.965. Considering the internal consistency, Cronbach's alpha of implicit arousal in the before measurement, implicit autonomy in the after measurement and of implicit security in both measurement were slightly below the recommended threshold of 0.7, but still sufficient in the light of the small number of item for each construct (e.g., Schmitt, 1996; Taber, 2017). Furthermore, the results revealed a significant correlation of each measure with a corresponding global association scale on a moderate (after measurement: explicit arousal, 0.316, p < 0.01) to high level (before, measurement: explicit autonomy, 0.694, p < 0.01) in support of external validity. Also, results provided evidence of satisfactory convergent validity with average variance extracted (AVE) values of each measure well exceeding the common threshold of 0.50. In addition, the discriminant validity was tested based on the Fornell-Larcker criterion. The AVE value of each measure was greater than any squared correlation with another construct, thus sufficient discriminant validity was established. Against that backdrop, the empirical results indicated a reasonable quality of the applied implicit and explicit brand association measures.

--- Table 1 about here ---

5.2. Findings

The pre-post results including the product-moment r as chosen effect size are shown separately in Table 2 and Table 3 for the brand group kit suppliers and jersey sponsors, respectively. Furthermore, an additional group segmentation with regard to the perceived user experience related to the video game FIFA 08 was performed to reveal deeper consumer insights. As past research has indicated, user experience (UX) affects the brand experience and, consequently,

the equity of a brand (see for a review Khan & Rahman, 2015). Specifically, the higher the perceived UX, the greater the extent of positive brand association and brand behavior changes (e.g., Mishra, Dash, & Cyr, 2014). In the current research, the German school grade range from 1 (excellent) to 6 (very poor) was used to rate the perceived UX. The group *high UX* included participants who evaluated the user experience of the video game FIFA 08 with the school grade 1 or 2, while the group *low UX* incorporated participants with a user experience evaluation of 3 or worst.

With regard to the relatively bounded sample sizes of the various investigation groups due to the inherent costs of laboratory research, the cutoff of $p < 0.10$ is applied to report statistical significance. However, the general reasonableness of significance tests has been intensively discussed and criticized in the past concerning the potential flawed interpretation of p-values (e.g., Krueger, 2001; Gigerenzer, Krauss, & Vitouch, 2004). The essence of the critics is summarized in the famous quote of Rosnow and Rosenthal (1989): "surely, God loves the 0.06 nearly as much as the 0.05" (Rosnow & Rosenthal, 1989, p. 1277). Indeed, many research with useless effects gained acceptance because of a sufficient sample size that kept p under the requested small p-value cutoff, where other valuable research with useful effects failed to receive acceptance due to small sample sizes that (automatically) lead to larger p-values (Lambdin, 2012). Therefore, concerning the identification and interpretation of not only the statistically significant results but also the practically meaningful changes, the effect size product-moment r was calculated and used as specific benchmarks for shifts in brand knowledge and behavior. Generally speaking, effect size benchmarks provide an easy way to interpret and to evaluate the relative magnitude of changes (Kazis, Anderson, & Meean, 1989). Furthermore, effect size benchmarks allow researchers and practitioners in the domain of sports marketing and brand management to gain a deeper and clearer understanding about the relevance of changes with regard to brand knowledge and brand behavior evoked by a

particular marketing intervention such as sports sponsorship. For this reason, the present study primarily relies on the effect size r as a robust estimator with the following absolute thresholds as benchmarks for interpretation: 0.1 = small effect, 0.3 = medium effect, and 0.5 = large effect (Cohen, 1992).

--- Table 2 about here ---

Kit supplier brand: Nike

As shown in Table 2, the empirical results reveal no association or behavior changes within the participant group of low UX. By contrast, when participants perceived a high UX, a significant positive impact with a moderate effect size on implicit arousal is revealed ($\Delta M = 7.010$, $p = 0.087$, $r = 0.475$), but the contact was negative with a large effect on explicit arousal ($\Delta M = -12.500$, $p = 0.066$, $r = 0.921$). However, no change considering brand behavior is identified.

Kit supplier brand: Adidas

With reference to the low UX participant group, the results (*cf.* Table 2) indicate a significant positive shift with a large effect size on implicit autonomy ($\Delta M = 9.943$, $p = 0.036$, $r = 0.543$). Regarding the participant group with a high UX, also significant and positive shifts, here with a medium effect size, are indicated by the results on the information processing of implicit associations. Specifically, the virtual consumer-brand interaction was impactful to enhance implicit attitude ($\Delta M = 9.168$, $p = 0.073$, $r = 0.401$) and implicit arousal ($\Delta M = 11.868$, $p = 0.030$, $r = 0.484$). In contrast, neither a significant positive nor a negative shift is indicated on explicit brand associations and on brand behavior within both UX participants groups.

Jersey sponsor brand: Emirates

As presented in Table 3, within the participant group of low UX, a significant positive and medium effect on the information processing of implicit arousal is revealed ($\Delta M = 7.875$, $p = 0.099$, $r = 0.379$). Also, the results suggest a highly significant and large impact on brand recommendation ($\Delta M = 14.737$, $p = 0.004$, $r = 0.790$) as selected key performance indicator for brand behavior. Regarding the participants who perceived a high UX of the video game, medium to large and positive effects on implicit autonomy ($\Delta M = 10.023$, $p = 0.075$, $r = 0.494$) and on implicit security ($\Delta M = 14.825$, $p = 0.006$, $r = 0.766$) are revealed by the empirical results, whereby no shift is indicated referring to explicit brand associations and brand behavior.

Jersey sponsor brand: Samsung

The virtual consumer-brand interaction elicited no change on the information processing of implicit and explicit brand associations, both within the participant group of low UX and high UX (*cf.* Table 3). Likewise, and in line with those association results, the video game contact was not capable to provoke a shift in brand behavior.

--- Table 3 about here ---

6. Discussion

6.1. Conclusions and Interpretation

The in-game advertising exposure of kit supplier and jersey sponsors, which was simulated in the current study as a virtual consumer-brand interaction within a playfully football game, was primarily effective to enhance brand-related associations on an implicit level, but not on an explicit level. In detail, implicit brand associations, even though not each dimension, was

positively affected within five of eight investigation groups, but the processing of explicit brand associations was influenced within only one single group and that also in a negative direction. However, regarding the jersey sponsor Samsung neither a positive nor a negative impact of IGA on implicit and explicit brand associations was revealed. With reference to brand behavior, the virtual consumer-brand interaction was only capable to increase the recommendation intention within one single group. Furthermore, as assumed, the perceived UX seemed to be a moderator for a successful impact on brand associations and brand behavior. Specifically, the findings indicated an impact within three of four groups with a high UX, but only in two of four groups with a low UX.

The findings of the presented study suggests that in-game advertising during a virtual consumer-brand interaction provides the potential to provoke an impact on consumer's brand knowledge and brand behavior, even though not in every single case and on all investigated brand dimensions. One reason might be that the impact of in-game advertising on brand assocations follows a S-shaped curve, meaning that the effect is relatively low for established and well-known brands with a strong association level, as the brands were recognized by the subjects in the current study, compared to less established brands with a moderate extent of brand associations (e.g., Nickell, Cornwell, & Johnston, 2011). However, the inherent effectiveness of a relatively short and single in-game advertising exposure for an enhanced brand appearance identified in the present research is in line with general findings of brand communication research (e.g., Sharp, 2010). Importantly, the study demonstrated that a virtual and interactive consumer-brand contact within a video game is predominantly capable to elicit a positive implicit response related to brand associations, while an explicit response was less recognizable. In this regard, a positive (implicit) brand impression is primarily provided by a satisfying UX related to the virtual and digital consumer-brand interaction (e.g., Mishra et al., 2014). A positive UX triggers a good mood of the consumer as essential experiential outcome

(Hassenzahl & Tractinsky, 2006), whereby this well-being ideally results in a flow as a specific mental state (Hassenzahl, 2008). As past research from cognitive psychology has shown, in a state of flow, System 1 is in charge (Kahneman, 2011), which incorporates the effortless automatic information processing and consequently increases the implicit knowledge of a human (e.g., Dietrich, 2004). That kind of automatic storage and activation of associated evaluations refers to the (implicit) affective learning (Cornwell et al., 2016). Specifically, the affective valence induced by the video game experience is transferred to the brand, and consequently the brand is (more) associated with the respective valence(s) such as arousal or security.

However, entities such as a video game often provide not only positive, but also negative associations (Campbell & Warren, 2012). Therefore, the transfer might be also negative toward the brand (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). Thus, even in the case of a high user experience, the video game contact potentially induces a brand-related negative event (e.g., faulty navigation of the menu), that again triggers a negative spillover from the video game toward the brand (e.g., Singh et al., 2016). A negative spillover is especially likely if the fit between the entity and brand, here in the present study between the video game and the kit supplier as well as jersey sponsor, respectively, is insufficient meaning that the entity does not provide the same valence of associations as the brand itself (e.g., Schmidt et al., 2013). That psychological transfer mechanism provides an explanation for the decrease of explicit autonomy for Nike as kit supplier within the group of participants which perceived a high UX on the whole. Therefore, those participants seemed to enjoy the video game per se. However, the control of the video console in general and of the mini game in particular itself needs some experience and learned skills. Thus, one issue here was potentially a perceived low level of control for some participants due to a lack of experience and skills meaning that those kind of users felt some confusion regarding the given input control (square cross) to manage the game task (ball

juggling) accurately (e.g., van de Laar et al., 2013). As a consequence, the confusion decreased the perceived autonomy, whereby that critical and low affective valence was then associated with the brand on an explicit, conscious level, probably because those users were aware and frustrated with their unreliable input to control the game. However, that is only a reasonable assumption, but a sophisticated user experience measurement would have been needed to explain that negative transfer more reliable and valid.

The fundamental association transfer of affective learning is in accordance to the Hebbian theory of learning (Hebb, 1949), which is summarized in the phrase "neurons wire together if they fire together" (Löwel & Singer, 1992, p. 211). The ability to learn and remember experiences creates the fundament of human's existence (Krupic, 2017). Indeed, a consumer is his memory about products, brands and consumption situations. However, in order to form brand associations in consumer memory, some attention is needed toward the ad and the respective cues (MacInnis et al., 1991). In this regard, associative learning is blocked when one of the cues, concretely the entity or the brand, lacks of attention so that both cues are not encoded together meaning that a potential co-occurrence, that is the purposed associative linkage between the entity and brand, is not processed in consumer's mind (van Osselear & Alba, 2000). With reference to the conducted research, that kind of limited or inhibit information processing provides an explanation why Nike and Samsung were less successful to increase their brand associations than Adidas and Emirates as the corresponding counterparts. In comparison to the latter sponsor brands, the logo as essential brand information of both former brands were less recognizable. In the light of the small screen size and low resolution of the PSP as used video game console, Nike's decent logo was exposed during the played mini game very subtle. On the other hand, Samsung's logo was admittedly apparent, but it was the adapted logo of Samsung mobile, and thus not totally identical to the corporate logo of Samsung. Nonetheless, across all investigated brands and participants groups, the

findings of the present study provide evidence for the basic communication effectiveness of in-game advertising regarding a potential association transfer of affective learning based on a virtual consumer-brand interaction within a video game.

6.2. Contribution and Implications

The current study explored the effectiveness of sponsorship-linked marketing. Specifically, the performance of in-game advertising as emerging brand communication approach to promote a sports sponsorship in a casual way was investigated with regard to the impact on brand knowledge as the primary source of brand equity. Basically, the present work extends the literature of sponsorship-linked marketing research with regard to the effectiveness of in-game advertising in general (e.g., Chaney, Lin, & Chaney, 2004; Cianfrone, Trail, Zhang, & Lutz, 2008; Wise, Bools, Kim, Venkataraman, & Meyer, 2008; Cianfrone & Zhang, 2009, 2013) and the usage of implicit measures to assess the effectiveness of sports sponsorship in particular (e.g., Koenigstorfer & Groeppel-Klein, 2012; Trendel, Mazodier, & Vohs, 2012).

Significant contributions and valuable implications for both science and business practice are provided by the current research. First, the advanced measurement approach to evaluate the dual brand knowledge as introduced by Schmidt et al. (in press) was applied and reviewed. Specifically, a satisfactory reliability and validity of the implicit and explicit measures was successfully confirmed. Furthermore, the identified effects of in-game advertising regarding a significant sports sponsorship communication primarily enriches the literature of implicit and explicit information processing in sports marketing (e.g., Trendel & Warlop, 2007; Herrmann, Walliser, & Kacha, 2011; Zdravkovic & Till, 2012; Schmidt et al., 2013; Cornwell et al., 2016). Also, the identified crucial role of user experience for a positive brand exposure in a digitized environment extends the literature of brand experience and brand communication (e.g., Fitzsimons, Chartrand, & Fitzsimons, 2008; Brakus, Schmitt, & Zarantonello, 2009).

Taken together, the present research provide further evidence for the essential importance of consumer's implicit mind and its unlimited capacity to process sponsorship information in order to strengthen brand-related association, and thus to enhance consumer's knowledge about a brand. Generally speaking, consumer's world these days is characterized by a all-pervasive second-screen media usage that creates a multi-tasking media consumption pattern regarding marketing- and sport-related content (Jensen, Walsh, Cobbs, & Turner, 2015). In light of that scattered media use, the available awareness of consumers is even more bounded. Indeed, according to a recent study by Microsoft the digitized lifestyle seems to primarily cause the dramatically reduction of human's attention to on average eight seconds nowadays, which is below the average attention span of a goldfish with nine seconds (Microsoft Corporation, 2015). The lower the level of awareness, the greater the significance of implicit information processing for an automatic evaluation of the environment which is human's superior mode of decision-making in most situations: "Most of a person's everyday life is determined not by their conscious intentions and deliberate choices but by mental processes that are put into motion by features of the environment and that operate outside of conscious awareness and guidance." (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999, p. 462).

Therefore, from a brand management perspective, implicit processes driven by System 1 are predominantly responsible for the processing of brand-related information in general and of sponsorship information in particular. The findings of the present research provided support for that psychological mechanism by indicating a more significant impact on implicit brand associations than on explicit brand associations. From the perspective of an evidence-based marketing management, those findings highlights the necessity to examine and address both explicit and implicit brand associations to ensure a comprehensive evaluation of consumers' memory. Considering the present research, without assessing the changes on implicit associations and focusing solely on explicit associations, the performance of in-game

advertising would have been clearly underestimated and at the bottom indicated as non-existent. Additionally, when applying in-game advertising or any other communication activity such as event sponsorship or print advertisement, marketers should carefully analyze and use only brand-related cues (e.g., celebrity, event logo etc.) that provide at least the same affective valence (e.g., security) to evoke a positive brand knowledge enhancement. Otherwise, a negative association transfer might be caused by linking the brand with a less valence-related entity.

6.3. Limitations and Future Research

The exploratory nature of the present research incorporates several limitations that require further investigations to replicate, review and extend the findings. Especially the achievement of a sufficient implicit measurement quality and basic suitability of the applied implicit measures is a critical challenge (e.g., Nosek, Greenwald, & Banaji, 2007). In this research, all implicit and explicit measures of brand knowledge showed a satisfactory measurement performance. Nonetheless, first, future studies should not only repeat the applied measurement approach to review the reliability and validity again, but also use the implicit-explicit measurement approach to examine other sponsorship stimuli and sponsorship context regarding the capability of determining relevant marketing-relevant findings. Besides, the study relied on a specific video game contact to simulate a virtual consumer-brand interaction that aims to communicate and strengthen brand-related associations through in-game advertising. Specifically, the participants played only a mini game as additional feature of a football video game, but not the whole video game or other sport video games. Furthermore, the game was played on a mobile video game console with limited screen size and in an isolated consumer-entity interaction. Thus, second, future sponsorship studies should investigate in-game advertising on other video game devices and in different sport video games, but also in

various interaction situations (e.g., cooperative gameplay with friends) that will potentially trigger a diverse user involvement and user engagement, and thus will activate a varying information processing. Also, the in-game advertising was displayed in a regular video game environment. New video game technologies provide an altered user perspective and interaction quality. Specifically, third, the impact of virtual and augmented reality in order to process brand-related information through in-game advertising exposure should be of interest in future studies. Moreover, in the present research a latency-based measure was used to capture implicit processes. Hence, fourth, the advanced usage of additional implicit measures (e.g., facial coding) is expected to reveal further insights regarding the implicit processing of brand-related communication in sports marketing.

To sum up, the laboratory findings of the exploratory research demonstrate that even a relatively brief in-game advertising exposure within a video game evokes changes of brand associations, but primarily on an implicit level. For business practice, these evidence-based findings are encouraging to strengthen brand knowledge by utilizing video games as communication environment for sports sponsorship. Against the backdrop of an increasing consumption of interactive media such as video games or smartphone games, that communication approach becomes more crucial not only to reach consumer, but to influence their knowledge about brands and products. However, in-game advertising is not a valuable communication environment per se. As the study results indicated, even negative association effects might occur, and thus decrease brand equity in its mental form as brand knowledge. A sophisticated and continuous evaluation of brand communication based on an implicit- explicit measurement approach should reduce the threat of an inferior communication and simultaneously provide the transparency regarding the effectiveness of brand communication to build and strengthen the brand.

7. References

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8. Tables

Table 1. Evaluation of the brand association measures.

			Before Measurement			
	Factor loadings	**Composite reliability**	**Cronbach's alpha**	**Average variance extracted**	**External validity**	**Fornell-Larcker criterion**
Explicit attitude	0.950 >	0.946	0.886	0.897	0.601**	0.897 > 0.717
Implicit attitude	0.918 >	0.899	0.776	0.816	0.625**	0.816 > 0.629
Explicit arousal	0.917 >	0.909	0.799	0.833	0.436**	0.833 > 0.717
Implicit arousal	0.896 >	0.831	0.603	0.711	0.511**	0.711 > 0.602
Explicit autonomy	0.896 >	0.887	0.744	0.796	0.694**	0.796 > 0.625
Implicit autonomy	0.895 >	0.871	0.706	0.772	0.611**	0.772 > 0.584
Explicit security	0.928 >	0.881	0.737	0.787	0.650**	0.787 > 0.536
Implicit security	0.872 >	0.821	0.570	0.697	0.493**	0.697 > 0.629
			After Measurement			
	Factor loadings	**Composite reliability**	**Cronbach's alpha**	**Average variance extracted**	**External validity**	**Fornell-Larcker criterion**
Explicit attitude	0.969 >	0.965	0.927	0.932	0.683**	0.932 > 0.771
Implicit attitude	0.879 >	0.870	0.702	0.771	0.577**	0.771 > 0.675
Explicit arousal	0.921 >	0.906	0.793	0.828	0.319**	0.828 > 0.608
Implicit arousal	0.894 >	0.872	0.708	0.774	0.363**	0.774 > 0.675
Explicit autonomy	0.951 >	0.947	0.887	0.899	0.594**	0.899 > 0.630
Implicit autonomy	0.879 >	0.839	0.619	0.723	0.572**	0.723 > 0.577
Explicit security	0.935 >	0.928	0.845	0.865	0.572**	0.865 > 0.771
Implicit security	0.869 >	0.855	0.661	0.747	0.401**	0.747 > 0.651

Note: ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$.

Table 2. Results of the pre-post testing scores of the kit supplier brands.

	Low User Experience									
	Kit Suppler: Nike (n = 19)					**Kit Supplier: Adidas (n = 15)**				
Construct	ΔM^1	**SD**	**Z**	**p**	r^2	ΔM^1	**SD**	**Z**	**p**	r^2
Implicit attitude	-5.391	27.068	-0.523	0.601	0.120	-2.173	22.959	-0.284	0.776	0.073
Implicit arousal	-8.258	27.916	-0.483	0.629	0.111	4.640	24.488	-0.909	0.363	0.235
Implicit autonomy	-5.761	19.269	-1.167	0.243	0.268	9.943	17.137	-2.101	0.036	0.543
Implicit security	4.645	21.435	-0.845	0.398	0.194	-2.489	32.429	-0.114	0.910	0.029
Explicit attitude	-3.947	25.018	-0.718	0.473	0.254	-5.833	29.831	-0.489	0.625	0.163
Explicit arousal	-3.289	18.086	-0.765	0.444	0.221	4.167	34.932	-1.276	0.202	0.354
Explicit autonomy	-6.579	18.337	-1.446	0.148	0.417	-1.667	31.646	-0.367	0.714	0.122
Explicit security	5.263	17.338	-1.630	0.103	0.543	-5.833	34.352	-0.521	0.602	0.151
Recommendation	6.842	25.615	-0.997	0.319	0.301	-6.667	19.881	-1.199	0.230	0.424
	High User Experience									
	Kit Suppler: Nike (n = 13)					**Kit Supplier: Adidas (n = 20)**				
Construct	ΔM^1	**SD**	**Z**	**p**	r^2	ΔM^1	**SD**	**Z**	**p**	r^2
Implicit attitude	-0.363	16.664	-0.175	0.861	0.048	9.168	28.015	-1.792	0.073	0.401
Implicit arousal	7.010	13.325	-1.712	0.087	0.475	11.868	22.264	-2.165	0.030	0.484
Implicit autonomy	3.401	17.341	-0.804	0.422	0.223	-0.552	12.920	-0.709	0.478	0.159
Implicit security	4.577	18.761	-0.734	0.463	0.204	-4.128	21.876	-0.523	0.601	0.117
Explicit attitude	-4.808	24.227	-0.425	0.671	0.174	1.250	18.092	0.000	1.000	0.000
Explicit arousal	0.000	22.822	-0.104	0.917	0.033	0.000	14.622	0.000	1.000	0.000
Explicit autonomy	-12.500	22.822	-1.841	0.066	0.921	-1.875	18.706	-1.098	0.272	0.347
Explicit security	-5.769	16.627	-1.372	0.170	0.519	-1.875	12.351	-0.690	0.490	0.218
Recommendation	-0.769	11.875	-0.144	0.885	0.051	5.500	18.202	-1.327	0.185	0.442

Note: $^1\Delta M$ = pre-test score subtracted from post-test score; ^{2}Pearson product-moment r.

Table 3. Results of the pre-post testing scores for the jersey sponsor brands.

	Low User Experience									
	Jersey Brand: Emirates (n = 19)					**Jersey Brand: Samsung (n = 15)**				
Construct	ΔM^I	**SD**	**Z**	**p**	r^2	ΔM^I	**SD**	**Z**	**p**	r^2
Implicit attitude	2.988	27.559	-0.201	0.841	0.046	-2.727	17.134	-0.966	0.334	0.249
Implicit arousal	9.118	22.229	-1.650	0.099	0.379	6.274	14.709	-1.590	0.112	0.411
Implicit autonomy	0.892	32.183	-0.121	0.904	0.028	-2.827	19.118	-0.682	0.496	0.176
Implicit security	-7.018	24.285	-0.845	0.398	0.194	-1.323	24.993	0.000	1.000	0.000
Explicit attitude	7.895	20.074	-1.572	0.116	0.474	-0.833	15.999	-0.905	0.366	0.320
Explicit arousal	5.263	19.237	-1.054	0.292	0.292	5.000	19.365	-0.794	0.427	0.251
Explicit autonomy	-1.316	18.585	-0.612	0.541	0.170	2.500	13.529	-0.722	0.470	0.255
Explicit security	0.000	19.983	-0.472	0.637	0.131	1.667	19.970	-0.187	0.852	0.062
Recommendation	14.737	18.064	-2.847	0.004	0.790	-2.000	9.411	-0.832	0.405	0.263
	High User Experience									
	Jersey Brand: Emirates (n = 13)					**Jersey Brand: Samsung (n = 20)**				
Construct	ΔM^I	**SD**	**Z**	**p**	r^2	ΔM^I	**SD**	**Z**	**p**	r^2
Implicit attitude	12.778	29.439	-1.503	0.133	0.417	6.120	25.246	-1.083	0.279	0.242
Implicit arousal	7.875	22.950	-0.943	0.345	0.262	3.533	20.037	-0.149	0.881	0.033
Implicit autonomy	10.023	18.932	-1.782	0.075	0.494	5.859	24.668	-0.971	0.332	0.217
Implicit security	14.825	13.770	-2.760	0.006	0.766	2.102	18.361	-0.672	0.502	0.150
Explicit attitude	-0.962	12.972	0.000	1.000	0.000	2.500	21.306	-0.376	0.707	0.097
Explicit arousal	1.923	16.806	-0.288	0.774	0.102	-1.250	19.827	-0.499	0.618	0.138
Explicit autonomy	-1.923	13.352	-0.535	0.593	0.161	7.500	19.194	-1.554	0.120	0.449
Explicit security	1.923	14.294	-0.520	0.603	0.197	-0.625	26.431	-0.438	0.662	0.113
Recommendation	5.385	16.641	-1.182	0.237	0.357	-2.500	12.513	-0.741	0.458	0.214

Note: $^I \Delta M$ = pre-test score subtracted from post-test score; ^{2} Pearson product-moment r.

9. Figure

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework to Evaluate the Effectiveness of Sports Sponsorship Communication.

Beitrag 5

Who Is Your GOAT?: Investigating Fans' Affective Dispositions – The Case of MotoGP Motorcycling

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Understanding Rivalry and Its Influence on Sports Fans

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IGI Global
DISSEMINATOR OF KNOWLEDGE

Chapter 7
Who Is Your GOAT?
Investigating Fans' Affective Dispositions – The Case of MotoGP Motorcycling

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ABSTRACT

There is little research explaining how affective dispositions of fans such as love and hate toward an athlete or team can determine sport rivalry. In consumer research, the concept of love and hate are often investigated related to brands. In view of the fact that sport athletes and sport teams can be described and managed as brands, the concept of brand love and brand hate is also applicable in sport marketing. Against that backdrop, the research question guiding the present chapter is: What is the impact of implicit and explicit love as well as hate toward an athlete in a rivalry competition? The current study extends the sport rivalry model as proposed by Dalakas and Melancon. With that said, the purpose of the present study is to integrate and examine fans' affective dispositions in terms of athlete love and athlete hate as potential key drivers and emotional appeal as further key outcome within a sport rivalry context.

INTRODUCTION

Rivalry as intense competition between hard-fighting athletes or teams is a key element for strong spectator appeal. (Kimble & Cooper, 1992; Mahony & Moorman, 1999). In fact, rivalry is one of the main reasons for vigorous and lasting debates among journalists and sport spectators (Bryant, Brown, Comisky, & Zillmann, 1982). The sweetness and spiciness of rivalry nurtures media's and public's awareness and gets them geared up for an ongoing competitive contest (Whitson, 1998; Stead, 2008). Whether two athletes, two teams or two nations are battling for supremacy, spectator's passion framed by the rivalry enables a high level of enjoyment (Zillmann, Bryant, & Sapolsky, 1989). Specifically, the greatest rivalries in the history of sport electrified millions of spectators worldwide and ensured a high media coverage (Maguire, Poulton, & Possamai, 1999).

Positive consequences of such a strong enthusiasm toward an athlete or team are, among others, greater willingness to invest larger amounts of time and money to watch a match (Wann & Branscombe, 1993) and higher intention to purchase licensed products and paraphernalia (Bristow & Sebastian, 2001; Fisher & Wakefield, 1998). Such passionate and loyal spectator and fan responses explains the attractiveness for companies which seek to monetize their sponsorship-linked marketing communications (Cornwell, Humphreys, Maguire, Weeks, & Tellegen, 2006), apart from creating awareness primarily through eliciting an affect transfer from the sponsored subject (athlete, team, etc.) or object (event, venue, etc.) to the sponsor brand (Pracejus, 2004).

However, that bright side of sport-related affection also has a dark side. The vibrant competitive environment of sports can also create a negative affective disposition toward the rival athlete or team, and above that toward the respective fans or supporters, which ranges from dislike (Dalakas & Levin, 2005), over hostility (Lee, 1985) to violence (Ward, 2002). From a media perspective, the affiliation, or one step in advance, the affective dispositions ranging from positive to negative which a viewer holds toward the competing athletes and teams are a significant element of consuming sport to evoke diverting enjoyment and lasting excitement (Raney, 2006). In that regard, Bryant and Miron (2002) argue: "Once an audience has thus placed its sentiments pro and con particular characters, enjoyment of conflict and its resolution in drama depends on the ultimate outcome for the loved and hated parties" (Bryant & Miron, 2002, p. 568).

The MotoGP World Championship 2015 has provided such dramatization. Specifically, Valentino Rossi and Marc Marquez, currently the two biggest motorcycling stars of the MotoGP, clashed several times during the 2015 season (Crash, 2015; MotoGP, 2015; Motorcycle News, 2015). That those rivalry turned into such an athlete- and supporter-related hostility in a relatively short period of time

is also on the merits of social media, since it "can be used to spread love, or hate" (Motor Sport Magazine, 2016, para. 1), whereby in the season 2016 social media is being used too often for the latter case wishing riders among others paraplegia or even death (Motor Sport Magazine, 2016).

However, the MotoGP World Championship provides a high level of rivalry with Rossi and Marquez as the key players, and thus it is an appropriate research case for the current study to investigate the bright and dark sides of the sport rivalry phenomenon. In more detail, this study seeks to better understand how athlete love and athlete hate affects cognitive (identification), behavioral (importance of winning, schadenfreude) and emotional responses (emotional appeal) toward an athlete from a fan perspective.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Against the backdrop of the illustrated bright and particularly dark sides of supporting an athlete or team, Madrigal and Dalakas (2008) reviewed that the nature of fan behavior ranges from socially acceptable reactions to negative inappropriate reactions. Recently, a vast number of studies provided valuable insights regarding rivalry-related issues, e.g., social identity such as psychological membership (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998) or identification (Wann, 2006; Havard, 2014), fan behavior such as schadenfreude or importance of winning (Dalakas & Melancon, 2012; Ouwerkerk & van Dijk, 2014), sponsorship effectiveness such as association transfer (Dalakas & Levin, 2005; Davies, Veloutsou, & Costa, 2006; Grohs, Reisinger, & Woisetschläger, 2015; Bee & Dalakas, 2015), consumption such as spectatorship (Havard, Eddy, & Ryan, 2016; Ko, Yeo, Lee, Lee, & Jang, 2016), rival meaning such as fluctuating adversarial relationship (Havard, Gray, Gould, Sharp, & Schaffer, 2013; Havard, Reams, & Gray, 2013), antecedents of rivalry such as social categorization (Tyler & Cobbs, 2015), and consequences of rivalry such as aggression (Havard, Wann, & Ryan, 2013; Shoham, Dalakas, & Lahav, 2015).

However, there is little research explaining how affective dispositions of fans such as love and hate toward an athlete or team can determine sport rivalry. Existing research mostly focuses on media-related outcomes such as suspense (e.g., Knobloch-Westerwick, David, Eastin, Tamborini, & Greenwood, 2009), but not on the important athlete- or team-related feelings such as admiration or contempt. Especially negative feelings can provoke a highly charged and poisoned atmosphere as outlined in the paragraph above. Additionally, rivalry itself might not only affect unethical behavior such as violence, it is often the consequence of deliberate and automatic processes (Kilduff, Galinsky, Gallo, & Reade, 2016). Indeed, psychologists revealed in the last four decades that most social phenomena become automatically activated (Bargh,

1994; Bargh & Chartrand, 1999; Wegner & Bargh, 1998). Due to the implicit nature of automatic processes, in particular regarding a limited introspection capability, people are not fully conscious of their feelings, thoughts, and actions (e.g., Nisbett & Wilson, 1977; Wilson, 2009). For that reason, the current study aims to address those research gaps by taking into account the affective dispositions toward an athlete by quantitatively examining the love and hate toward an athlete on an explicit and implicit information processing level.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL

The current study extends the compact and robust sport rivalry model as proposed by Dalakas and Melancon (2012) that includes identification, importance of winning and schadenfreude as key elements of a sport rivalry context. With that said, the purpose of the present study is to integrate and examine fans' affective dispositions in terms of athlete love and athlete hate as potential key drivers and emotional appeal as further key outcome within a sport rivalry context.

Basic Characteristics of Love and Hate

In consumer research, the concept of love and hate are often investigated related to brands (e.g., Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Zarantonello, Romani, Grappi, & Bagozzi, 2016). Even though no universal definition exists in the literature explaining what brand love and brand hate means in detail from a customer perspective, in generic terms brand love can be interpreted as a positive affective disposition (Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2012) and brand hate as a negative affective disposition toward the brand (Bryson, Atwal, & Hultén, 2013). In turn, those affective dispositions determine the level of brand commitment (Albert & Merunka, 2013; Romani, Grappi, Zarantonello, & Bagozzi, 2015) with identification as essential component (Fullerton, 2005). In addition, a consequence of brand love is a supportive relationship such as loyalty or willingness to recommend a brand (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Batra et al., 2012), while brand hate might evoke a destructive relationship such as desire for avoidance, revenge or negative word of mouth (Grégoire, Tripp, & Legoux, 2009; Phillips-Melancon & Dalakas, 2014). Moreover, affective dispositions arise from significant brand-related experiences (e.g., Johnson, Matear, & Thomson, 2011; Langner, Bruns, Fischer, & Rossiter, 2016) and result in an emotional bond with the customer (e.g., Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2010).

Since sport athletes and sport teams can be described and managed as brands (e.g., Gladden & Funk, 2002; Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer, & Exler, 2008; Kaynak, Salman, & Tatoglu, 2008), the concept of brand love and brand hate is also applicable

in sport marketing. In accordance with that assumption, the disposition theory of sports spectatorship also indicates that a fan can hold an attitudinal reaction toward an athlete or team along a continuum of affects ranging from extreme liking to extreme disliking (Zillmann, Bryant, & Sapolsky, 1989; Bryant & Raney, 2000). Furthermore, the strength and valence of the dispositions toward the athlete or team within a rivalry context determine the perceived enjoyment of a sport game (Kinnally, 2012), and, thus as a consequence of that sport, experience the emotional appeal such as respect or condemnation toward the team or athlete (primarily based on the outcome of the game).

Dual Nature of Affective Dispositions

Attitudes are the pathways to affective dispositions (Batra et al., 2012). A more elaborate definition defines an attitude as "a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor" (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, p. 1). An important finding of psychologists is that attitudes are understood as stored evaluations that "often come to mind automatically" (Wilson, Lindsey, & Schooler, 2000, p. 102). Well-established dual-process theories of reasoning and decision-making (e.g., Shiffrin & Schneider, 1977; Fazio, 1990; Evans, 2003) suggest that information processing occurs both on an implicit (automatic, spontaneous processing with no or low effort) and explicit (deliberate, reflected processing with high effort) pathway.

In social and behavioral sciences, the most used method to capture explicit attitudes are self-reports (Wittenbrink & Schwarz, 2007). However, implicit attitudes are automatically activated evaluations with no, or only little, awareness of that causation (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). Due to the automatic activation, the implicit evaluation of an attitude object occurs within a few hundred milliseconds after it has been encountered (Wittenbrink, 2007). Implicit measures like the widely prominent implicit association test (IAT) as invented by Greenwald, McGhee, and Schwartz (1998) seek to capture implicit evaluations such as affective dispositions outside a respondent's conscious awareness and control. Besides response time measures like the IAT, other available implicit measures are primarily techniques that measure physiological responses or brain activity (Wittenbrink & Schwarz, 2007).

Framework and Hypotheses

Reasoning the duality of information processing pathways regarding explicit and implicit components of affective dispositions and against the backdrop of the concepts as discussed above, Figure 1 shows the conceptual model for an integrated analysis of the impact of implicit and explicit affective dispositions on key elements of sport

rivalry. In short, affective dispositions of fans are the primary source for commitment toward a sport object such as an athlete. Based on the level of commitment, and hence on the degree of fan identification, the extent of a supportive relationship, here related to importance of winning, as well as the degree of a destructive relationship, here related to schadenfreude, is affected. Due to the nature of sport in general and rivalry in particular, either a fan's beloved athlete or the hated rival will win the exciting sports drama. In the first case, the fan is feeling proud of his hero, while in the second case the fan is feeling humiliated of the villain. Thus, the fan's emotional appeal of an athlete will range between condemnation (hatred rival wins) and respect (beloved athlete wins). The following hypotheses sum up all assumptions.

H1: Fan identification is affected by implicit athlete love (H_{1a}), explicit athlete love (H_{1b}), implicit athlete hate (H_{1c}), and explicit athlete hate (H_{1d}).

H2: Importance of winning is affected by implicit athlete love ($H_{2}a$), explicit athlete love (H_{2b}), implicit athlete hate (H_{2c}), explicit athlete hate (H_{2d}), and fan identification (H_{3e}).

H3: Schadenfreude is affected by implicit athlete love (H_{3a}), explicit athlete love (H_{3b}), implicit athlete hate (H_{3c}), explicit athlete hate (H_{3d}), fan identification (H_{3e}), and importance of winning (H_{3f}).

H4: Emotional appeal is affected by implicit athlete love (H_{4a}), explicit athlete love (H_{4b}), implicit athlete hate (H_{4c}), explicit athlete hate (H_{4d}), fan identification (H_{4e}), importance of winning (H_{4f}), and schadenfreude (H_{4g}).

METHODS

Sample and Procedure

To empirically investigate the complex cause-and-effect relationships of the sport rivalry phenomenon against the background of the derived conceptual framework (cf. Figure 1), the athlete rivalry of the MotoGP season 2015/2016 between Valentino Rossi, Marc Marquez, and Jorge Lorenzo from a fan perspective was investigated. Therefore, participants who indicated not to be fan of the MotoGP were not allowed to participate in the study. That subject limitation was appropriate given the requirement to recruit a representative and meaningful sample of sports fans against the backdrop of a sport-related research context (e.g., Lardinoit & Quester, 2001; Dalakas & Kropp, 2002).

In spring 2016, during the first quarter of the MotoGP season 2016, an opportunity sampling via links on selective social network websites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) with the invitation to actively contribute to the study was employed in Germany.

Figure 1. Conceptual model
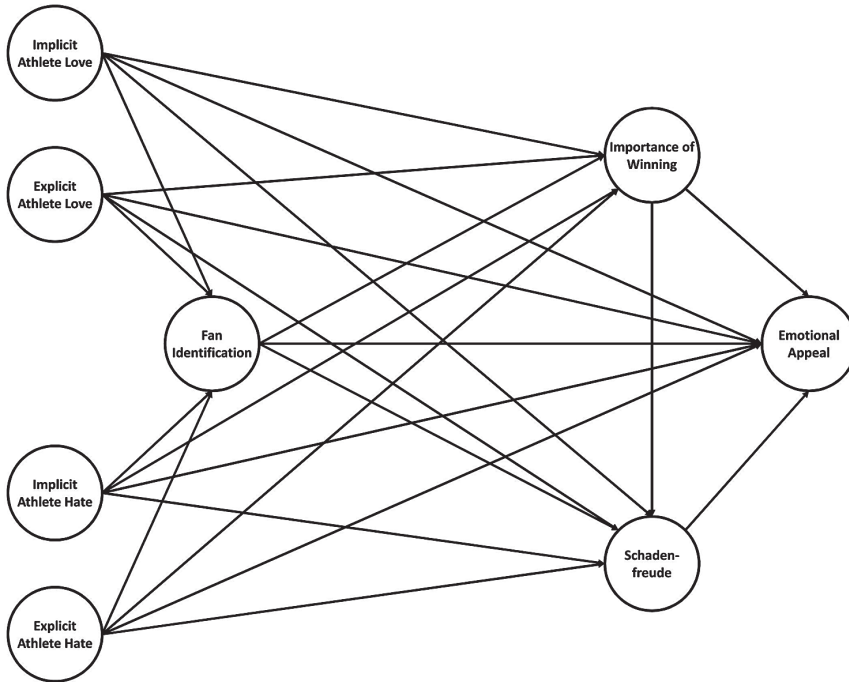
After clicking on the invitation survey link, participants were requested to click on a consent button as an agreement for participation and to finally gain access to the online questionnaire. Furthermore, each participant completed the measurement procedure related to the chosen three MotoGP athletes. Specifically, the questions toward the respective MotoGP athletes were presented in a randomized order (e.g., first asking questions related to Rossi, next regarding Marquez and then considering Lorenzo). However, when a participant confirmed not to be familiar with one of the three athletes, no questions toward that specific athlete were asked. That procedure was enabled to ensure a profound knowledge of the participants about the selected MotoGP athletes. In sum, a pooled sample of 175 athlete-related questionnaires was received for the final data analysis.

Interviewees were mainly male (85.9 percent), aged between 18 and 29 years (46.0 percent; average age: 28.22 years, SD 11.17), single as marital status (76.6 percent) and with higher education background (A-level or university degree: 53.1 percent). The higher proportion of young and male participants may indicate that many sports fans within this social group are interested in motorsport in general and motorcycle racing in particular.

Measurement Instruments

With reference to the assessment of fan identification, importance of winning and schadenfreude toward the respective MotoGP athlete, single-item measures were developed that represent the core of each construct (cf. Table 1). Specifically, informal interviews with MotoGP fans ($n = 5$) as well as sport marketing experts ($n = 5$) were conducted to assure a clear interpretation of each measure. In addition, the application of those single-item measures was considered to be appropriate since that constructs provide a relatively unambiguous meaning, and to avoid a comprehensive and costly survey in terms of time-consuming questionnaire length (e.g., Drolet & Morrison, 2001). In this regard, Bergkvist and Rossiter (2007) demonstrated that there is no difference considering the predictive validity of multiple-item and single-item measures when the respective construct of interest consists of a clear singular object and a concrete characteristic, as in the current research.

However, multi-item measures were applied to assess implicit and explicit athlete love as well as athlete hate and emotional appeal of the athlete due to the reason that those constructs are less definite in their manifestations. Concretely, an adapted self-report measure developed by Fombrun, Gardberg, and Sever (2000), consisting of four items, was used to evaluate the emotional appeal. For assessing athlete love and athlete hate, new scales were developed following the four steps approach by Diamantopoulos and Winklhofer (2001), namely, content specification, indicator specification, indicator collinearity, and external validity. Additionally, exploratory interviews with marketing researchers ($n = 5$) and sport fans ($n = 5$) were conducted to guarantee a proper item generation regarding the measurement necessity of clarity, length, directionality, and the need to avoid ambiguity and jargon (e.g., DeVellis, 1991; Spector, 1992). Both constructs, athlete love and athlete hate, comprised three items in their final characteristics. With that said, the explicit dimensions of athlete love and athlete hate were measured on a five-point Likert rating (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) to capture a more reflective and controlled evaluation. As opposed to this explicit measurement, the implicit facets of athlete love and athlete hate were assessed by means of a basic reaction time measurement to detect a more spontaneous and automatic evaluation. The explicit and implicit measures applied the same item set regarding the corresponding constructs. Additionally, all measures were specified with reference to the selected MotoGP athletes. All relevant measures used in the current research and their respective items are shown in Table 1. Eventually, each instrument was rescaled from 0 to 100, with higher (lower) scores indicating a more positive (negative) approval related to the adequate construct, for the sake of greater clarity and comparability.

Table 1. Overview of the manifest variables

Dimension	Item(s)
Implicit athlete love	cherish him, adore him, idolize him (reaction time measurement)
Implicit athlete hate	despise him, abhor him, scorn him (reaction time measurement)
Explicit athlete love	cherish him, adore him, idolize him (five point Likert ratings: 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree)
Explicit athlete hate	despise him, abhor him, scorn him (five point Likert ratings: 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree)
Fan identification	Are you a fan of this athlete? (single rating scale: yes, completely, whereby I like every team this athlete is associated with – yes, very much – yes, rather it – indifferent, neither yes nor no – no, rather not – no, not at all – no, absolutely not, whereby I dismiss every team this athlete is associated with)
Importance of winning	How important is it for you, that this athlete will be successful on race day? (five point Likert rating: 1 = not at all important to 5 = very important)
Schadenfreude	How delighted are you if this athlete will not finish on race day? (five point Likert rating: 1 = not at all delighted to 5 = very delighted)
Emotional appeal	I esteem this athlete very much. I admire this athlete very much. I respect this athlete very much. I trust this athlete very much. (five point Likert ratings: 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree)

Implicit Measurement and Indicator Calculation

The basic reaction time measurement was conducted using the implicit association tool e^2 Brandreact by eye square (2016). While the measurement logic behind that method is similar to the Single Category Implicit Association Test (SC-IAT) as introduced by Karpinski and Steinman (2006), the e^2 Brandreact employs an adapted measurement procedure which enhances the application value for business practice since participants need less time to perform that measure (less survey time decreases the subject costs and increases the participation probability). Specifically, the participant's task is to decide quickly whether the displayed attributed item on the screen fits the shown athlete or not (key allocation: "A" for yes and "L" for no). In detail, each athlete task consists of twelve decision trials: three love-related items, three hate-related items and six supplementary attitude-related items. Any item was presented once on the screen and both compliance rate as well as reaction time was measured. In a nutshell, the reaction time indicates how close a presented item and athlete are associated together, thus, indicating a strong (or weak) automatic activation in the respondent's mind. By combining the reaction time with the compliance rate, that implicit procedure reveals a spontaneous valence evaluation (e.g., positive or negative evaluation).

With reference to the calculation of an implicit score, first, all latencies lower than 350ms and greater than 2000ms were deleted as relatively rigor lower and upper boundaries for valid response times to ensure an automatic evaluation (Greenwald, Nosek, & Banaji, 2003). Next, an implicit love (hate) indicator was computed for each item that incorporates the reaction time as well as the decision valence ("yes" = 1 or "no" = -1). Lastly, averaging across all implicit love (hate) indicators calculated a final implicit love (hate) score.

Structural Equation Modeling Technique

Probably the most prominent and widely employed structural equation model (SEM) techniques are the covariance-based SEM (CB-SEM) and the partial least squares SEM (PLS-SEM) path modeling (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2004; Hair, Sarstedt, Pieper, & Ringle, 2012). However, both modeling approaches are limited to assess and estimate linear relations among the analyzed model constructs (Turkyilmaz, Oztekin, Zaim, & Demirel, 2013). With that said, in the current research, nonlinear effects are highly expected due to the appliance of implicit assessments. Therefore, universal structure modeling (USM) was applied to investigate the postulated research hypotheses. That advanced SEM approach overcomes the limitations of the conventional SEM techniques mentioned above. Specifically, USM substitutes a PLS-based linear least squares regression approach by relying on a Bayesian neural network approach (Buckler & Hennig-Thurau, 2008). Particularly, the USM approach represents a more exploratory approach to test (also hidden in terms of unknown) model structures. The analysis software package Neusrel was used to estimate the proposed model parameters (Neusrel, 2016), which also enables to quantify and visualize nonlinear effects among model constructs.

RESULTS

Evaluation of the Measurement Instruments

In total, all multi-item measures revealed satisfactory values in terms of item reliability (factor loadings and average variance extracted) and internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha and split-half reliability, respectively), as shown in Table 2. Furthermore, the important question of how the implicit and its corresponding explicit measure are related was investigated with reference to the construct validity (Nosek, Greenwald, & Banaji, 2007). The empirical results regarding the love and hate measures provide evidence for both convergent and discriminant validity (cf. Table 2). Hence, the adequate implicit and explicit measures, athlete love and athlete hate, respectively,

Table 2. Evaluation of the multi-item measures

	Factor Loadings	Average Variance Extracted	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Convergent Validity[1]	Discriminant Validity[2]
Implicit athlete love	> 0.851	77%	0.856	0.938	0.615***	0.718***
Explicit athlete love	> 0.895	83%	0.895	0.965	0.616***	
Implicit athlete hate	> 0.777	68%	0.762	0.866	-0.550***	0.668***
Explicit athlete hate	> 0.954	92%	0.955	0.993	-0.585***	
Emotional Appeal	> 0.876	83%	0.932	0.966	n/a	n/a

Note. n/a = not applicable; significance level (two-tailed): *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.10$; [1]Spearman's rank correlation analyses between the respective emotion measure and a global external factor that summarizes the essence of sentiment toward the athlete (feeling thermometer, eleven-point semantic differentials ranging from 0 to 10: "very nasty feelings - very pleasant feelings"); [2]Spearman's rank correlation analyses between the corresponding explicit and implicit measures.

refer to related but distinct constructs. These findings are in accordance with results from other areas of implicit cognition research (e.g., Nosek & Smyth, 2007).

Model Estimation and Impact Analysis

To answer the research question in general and proposed hypotheses in particular, USM was employed to estimate the model parameters. Table 3 presents the empirical results. Notably, the applied USM approach indicated a greater explaining performance with regard to the coefficient of determination (R-squared value) in contrast to an alternative PLS approach. Indeed, the *R*-squared values of the USM estimation ranged from .70 to .84, whereas the *R*-squared values of PLS estimation were in the range from .52 to .63. According to Chin (1998), those USM values can be rated as substantial. In brief, the predictive power of the USM estimation reached a highly satisfying level.

Considering the expectations of non-linear effects, the average simulated effect (ASE) values were chosen as adequate path strength coefficients. In addition, the linear path coefficients (LPC) that are similar to a genuine PLS estimation were estimated to receive a comprehensive view of the various impact pathways. Furthermore, a nonparametric bootstrapping procedure was applied to test the significance of the ASE as well as LPC values. Figure 2 presents the impact pathways including the total scores of the overall explained absolute deviation (OEAD) that can be interpreted as the effect strength. As a result of the USM estimation, the following insights with reference to the initial hypotheses are revealed (cf. Table 3).

Table 3. Direct effects of the universal structure modeling path analyses

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	ASE[1]	t	p[3]	LPC[2]	t	p[3]	R^2 USM	R^2 PLS
Fan Identification	Implicit athlete love	0.45	3.40	< .01	0.36	3.54	< .01	0.77	0.60
	Implicit athlete hate	-0.36	2.82	< .01	-0.17	3.05	< .01		
	Explicit athlete love	0.38	2.83	< .01	0.24	4.26	< .01		
	Explicit athlete hate	-0.29	1.19	< .15	-0.22	3.64	< .01		
Importance of winning	Implicit athlete love	-0.09	0.76	< .20	0.14	1.88	< .05	0.74	0.63
	Implicit athlete hate	-0.09	1.08	< .20	-0.11	1.39	< .10		
	Explicit athlete love	0.44	1.50	< .10	0.19	2.87	< .01		
	Explicit athlete hate	-0.06	0.93	< .20	-0.10	1.96	< .05		
	Fan Identification	0.52	5.05	< .01	0.48	4.02	< .01		
Schadenfreude	Implicit athlete love	-0.14	1.34	< .10	-0.07	1.66	< .10	0.70	0.52
	Implicit athlete hate	0.23	1.54	< .10	0.15	1.61	< .10		
	Explicit athlete love	-0.14	1.36	< .10	-0.07	1.49	< .10		
	Explicit athlete hate	0.37	2.26	< .05	0.25	3.88	< .01		
	Fan Identification	-0.08	0.90	< .20	-0.02	0.93	< .20		
	Importance of winning	-0.13	2.21	< .05	-0.25	2.58	< .01		
Emotional appeal	Implicit athlete love	0.29	2.37	< .01	0.14	2.58	< .01	0.84	0.61
	Implicit athlete hate	0.12	0.98	< .20	0.03	0.83	< .20		
	Explicit athlete love	0.46	3.00	< .01	0.24	3.54	< .01		
	Explicit athlete hate	-0.49	4.32	< .01	-0.43	5.55	< .01		
	Fan Identification	-0.08	1.35	< .10	-0.04	1.15	< .20		
	Importance of winning	0.35	2.25	< .05	0.19	2.57	< .01		
	Schadenfreude	-0.03	1.04	< .20	-0.06	1.43	< .10		

Note. [1]ASE = average simulated effect; [2]LPC = linear path coefficient (β); [3]One-tailed test.

Figure 2. Impact pathways
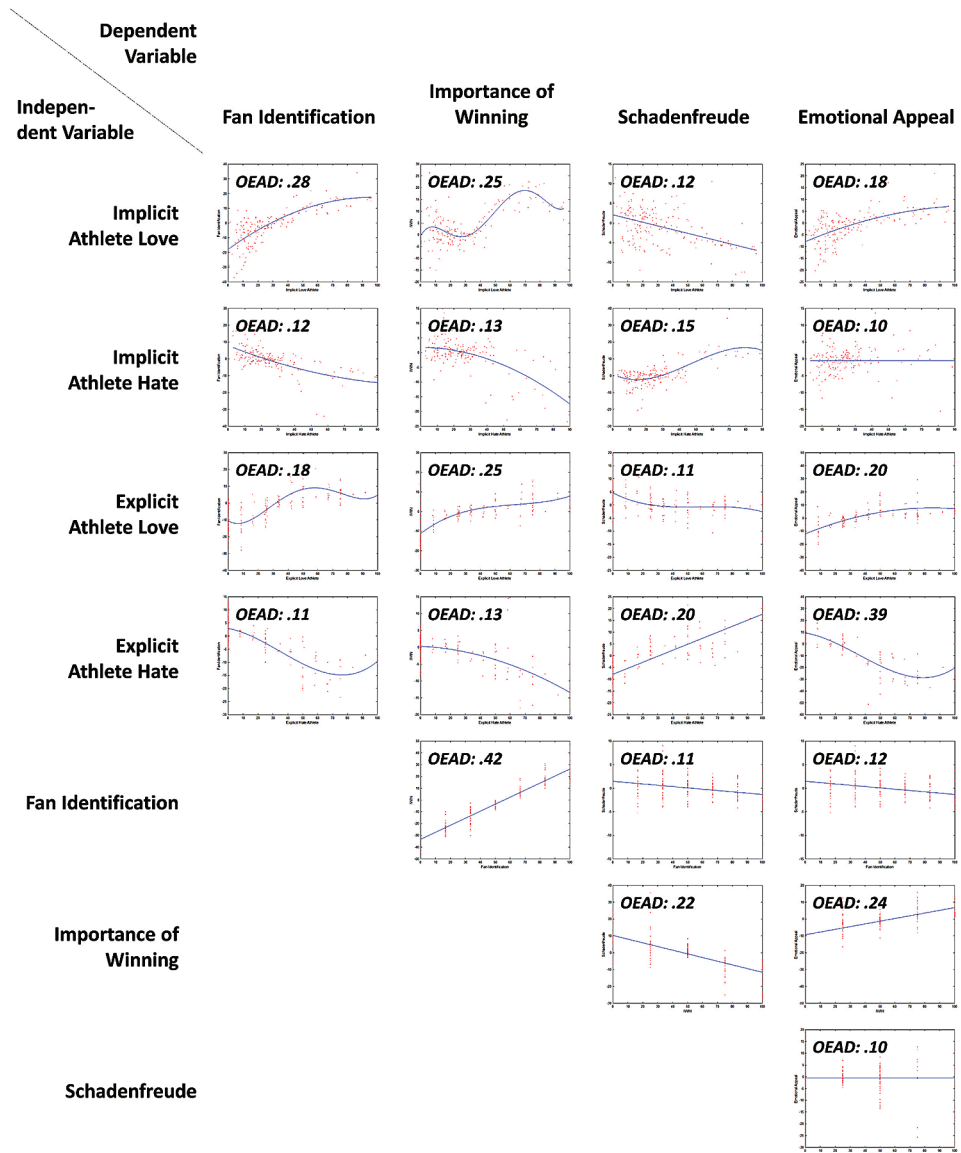
Note: OEAD = Overall Explained Absolut Deviation (Effect Strength)

H$_{1a}$ to H$_{1d}$ are confirmed. The first set of hypotheses assumed a positive direct impact of implicit and explicit athlete love and a negative impact of dual athlete hate on fan identification. Findings reveal significant and nonlinear effects of dual athlete love as well as dual athlete hate on fan identification with highest ASE coefficient

of 0.45 ($p < 0.01$) for implicit athlete love. Thus, the findings provide evidence for hypotheses H_{1a} to H_{1d}.

H_{2a}, H_{2b}, H_{2d} and H_{2e} are confirmed, H_{2c} is rejected. Regarding the second set of hypotheses, a direct impact of dual love, dual hate and fan identification on importance of winning was postulated. The USM estimates suggest significant linear effects of both athlete love dimensions as well as explicit athlete hate and a nonlinear effect of fan identification on importance of winning, but neither a linear nor a nonlinear effect of implicit athlete hate was identified. In particular, fan identification showed highest impact with an ASE coefficient of 0.52 ($p < 0.01$). Taken together, the empirical results are supportive for H_{2a}, H_{2b}, H_{2d} and H_{2e}, but not for H_{2c}.

H_{3d} and H_{3f} are confirmed, H_{3a} to H_{3c} and H_{3e} are rejected. Next, the third set of hypotheses proposed a direct impact of both dual constructs, love and hate, and of fan identification as well as importance of winning on schadenfreude. The empirical data indicate a positive linear effect of explicit athlete hate (LPC = 0.25, $p < .01$) and negative linear effect of importance of winning (LPC = -0.25, $p < .01$) on schadenfreude. However, no effect was detected for the remaining constructs. Hence, H_{3d} and H_{3f} receive full support, but not H_{3a} to H_{3c} and H_{3e}.

H_{4a}, H_{4b}, H_{4d} and H_{4f} are confirmed, H_{4c}, H_{4e} and H_{4g} are rejected. Considering the fourth and last set of hypotheses, a direct impact of dual athlete love, dual athlete hate, fan identification, importance of winning and schadenfreude on emotional appeal was supposed. In detail, evidence was found for significant nonlinear effects of implicit and explicit athlete love, explicit athlete hate and importance of winning, while the results suggest no effect of implicit athlete hate, fan identification and schadenfreude. In more detail, explicit athlete love showed the highest positive nonlinear effect with an ASE coefficient of 0.46 ($p < .01$). Thus, the results supply support for H_{4a}, H_{4b}, H_{4d} and H_{4f}, but no evidence was identified for H_{4c}, H_{4e} and H_{4g}.

DISCUSSION

Interpretation

Taken together, findings indicate that affective dispositions of fans toward an athlete in terms of love and hate strongly influence fans' level of identification with an athlete, either in a positive or negative direction. In other words: the more passionate the fan, especially on a nonconscious level, the greater the degree of fans' involvement with an athlete which results in affection or aversion depending on the kind of emotional quality (love or hate). Furthermore, importance of winning seems to be a positive consequence not only of fan identification, but also a positive fan reaction in terms of dual athlete love, remarkably enhances the importance

of winning. In contrast, a negative fan reaction referred to athlete hate primarily increases the extent of schadenfreude when that adverse emotion becomes aware on a conscious information processing level. However, similar to the study of Dalakas and Melancon (2012), importance of winning primarily accounts for the expression of schadenfreude. In detail, when the confirmed importance of winning toward an athlete is less than indifference ("For me, it is neither relevant nor irrelevant if that athlete will be successful on race day or not."), the probability increases that a spiteful or even more hostile reaction toward that athlete will occur. Finally, the emotional appeal of an athlete appears to be primarily evoked by a positive fan preference for that athlete referring to dual love as well as importance of winning. However, the emotional appeal can also be highly negatively affected when athlete hate becomes conscious. Then, condemnation instead of attraction toward that athlete will rise as a last consequence.

Contribution

The current research aimed to examine the bright and dark side of sport spectators' affective dispositions, specifically in terms of love and hate regarding fan identification, importance of winning, schadenfreude and emotional appeal are key elements of the sport rivalry phenomenon. The conducted study provides significant contributions and valuable insights for science and business practice.

Initially, the love and hate construct was applied within a sport marketing context for the first time to the best of the author's knowledge. Particularly, both constructs have been conceptualized as dual constructs referring to the assumption that those specific affective dispositions toward a sport-related object (e.g., sponsor brand or sport event) or subject (e.g., sport team or sport athlete) may emerge implicitly (nonconscious awareness) as well as explicitly (conscious awareness). For that reason, new measures were conceptually developed and successfully tested to capture the implicit (spontaneous, automatic) love and hate, concretely, using an innovative response latency-based measure, as well as to evaluate the explicit (deliberated, reflected) love and hate, in practice, applying a conventional self-report scale.

Next, the rivalry model as introduced by Dalakas and Melancon (2012) could successfully be extended in its basic structure modeling by the integration of athlete love and athlete hate as antecedents and emotional appeal as consequence of the corresponding sport rivalry constructs. Furthermore, the findings of Dalakas and Melancon (2012) exploratory research study could be confirmed. Here, in particular, that fan identification reveals a strong direct effect on importance of winning, whereas the latter construct indirectly affects the impact of fan identification on schadenfreude. However, at this point, it is to mention that the current research study investigated a different fan point of view by taking in a singular perspective (measures were

specified to a single sport subject only) instead of a dyadic perspective as performed in the study of Dalakas and Melancon (2012) (part of the measures was specified either to the favorite or to the hated sport subject). Due to that different sport object relations, the impact of importance of winning on schadenfreude is negative in the present study, but positive in the study of Dalakas and Melancon (2012). Yet, the essence of both research findings is identical: fan identification affects schadenfreude on an indirect impact route via importance of winning.

Lastly, against the backdrop of the highly predictive power of the derived conceptual model, marketing managers of a sponsor brand could use the introduced assessment approach for evaluating the current state of affair of sport spectators regarding a sponsored athlete (or any other sport subject). In particular, determining the emotional appeal of a sponsored athlete as key outcome indicates whether athlete's appearance provides a beneficial or harmful frame for the sponsor brand. For example, when a sport athlete is hated by a crucial fraction of sport fans, communicating a sport sponsoring engagement with that athlete in mass media seems not to be efficient or even counterproductive since the sponsor brand will be predominantly linked with negative associations due to fan's condemnation. Then, a more restrained strategy in terms of a targeted sponsoring communication approach within a selective sport spectator audience (e.g., addressing only real diehard fans of the sponsored athlete via respective social media channels such as an official athlete fan page on Facebook or Instagram) appears to be more promising. Generally speaking, one should always try to evoke positive associations with regard to actual fans of the athlete, and one should always try to avoid negative associations regarding sport spectators which scorn the athlete. In contrast, when the emotional heat of a sport rivalry cools down and therefore the extent of hate decreases, the emotional appeal of the formerly hated athlete should slowly increase. For example, the main rivals may bury the hatchet, as happened in the MotoGP between Valentino Rossi and Marc Marquez during the mid-season 2016 (Fox Sports Australia, 2016; Fox Sports Asia, 2016). Since that moment, the number of Rossi fans who acknowledge the extraordinary riding style of Marquez in terms of respect and admiration, and also for winning the world championship, is increasing gradually. Such level of acknowledgement did not exist at all at the end of the MotoGP 2015 season when Rossi and Marquez clashed in the epic Sepang race 2015. This finding from MotoGP provides relevance and evidence not only for the conceptualized model in the current research. Specifically, love and hate are highly volatile (less linear) affective dispositions, meaning it is a thin line from being a well-liked hero to a reviled villain (Dalakas, 2016), which should be permanently observed from a sponsor brand perspective to derive an appropriate sponsoring (communication) strategy.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH STEPS

The presented research provided several valuable findings and contributions. However, due to its exploratory character and relatively small sample size, the current study displays several inherent limitations that demand the need for further research. First and foremost, future studies should repeat the current study to retest for reliability and validity, especially with regard to the developed implicit and explicit measures of love and hate. With that said, second, an important limitation is that the study only covered the impact of sport spectators' affective dispositions and sport rivalry in a Motorsports context, and merely considers the Road Racing World Championship of the Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme (FIM). Therefore, future studies should concentrate on other types of sports in general (e.g., team sport, individual sport, spectator sport) and on various sports in particular (e.g., athletics, tennis, football), most notably those with a high level of rivalry. Third, additional sponsoring-related outcomes should be regarded and integrated into the introduced conceptual framework such as emotional appeal of the sponsor brand or brand-related perception and behavior. Fourth, the appliance of additional implicit measures (e.g., facial coding, electroencephalography) should shed further light on the automatic processing of sport-related affective dispositions such as implicit love and implicit hate.

CONCLUSION

First and last, the findings of the presented study create another motivational basis for ongoing research that incorporates the insights of sport marketing and neuromarketing into one research framework. In particular, the presented study proves the importance and derives a methodological approach to better understand the impact of sport spectators' affective dispositions toward an athlete. From a sport sponsor brand perspective, marketing managers should carefully examine the status quo considering quality and extent of affective dispositions in term of how spectators in general and fans in particular both implicitly and explicitly feel about the sponsored athlete to address the appropriate strategy as well as consequent actions. For example, on the bright side of athlete-related affective dispositions, marketing managers should use that positive sport sponsoring momentum to establish and foster positive associations toward the sponsor brand. Sponsors can create a visible common bond between athlete, spectators and sponsor brand (e.g., communicative slogans such as "We are proud partners of our athlete"), especially during successful sport times since athlete love particularly affects importance of winning. In contrast, on the dark side of affective dispositions, the marketing management of the sponsor brand should

be highly cautious considering their degree of closeness with a sponsored athlete. Specifically, they should only enter the stage as a sponsor brand among the kernel fans to avoid negative spill-over effects from the sponsored athlete onto the sponsor brand. such as disrespect within the group of anti-fans or even non-fans.

In sum, sport spectators' feelings in terms of affective dispositions toward a sponsored subject or object in a rival competition are of high relevance for the marketing management of the sponsor brand (e.g., Tyler & Cobbs, 2015). Particularly, affective dispositions are often related with positive reactions such as favoritism (e.g., Gwinner & Swanson, 2003) as well as negative reactions such as aggression (e.g., Wann, Weaver, Belva, Ladd, & Armstrong, 2015). The current research extended past works regarding the sport rivalry phenomenon by incorporating affective dispositions into a cause-and-effect relationship analysis. As proposed, the dual conceptualization of affective dispositions, here in terms of implicit and explicit love as well as hate, revealed a significant impact on fan identification, importance of winning, schadenfreude, and emotional appeal. With the evidence of a highly predictive power of the introduced research model, future researchers and sport marketers are able to better investigate, understand and manage the impact of sport spectators' affective dispositions toward a sponsored sport subject within a heated rivalry competition.

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Beitrag 6

Die Wirksamkeit von Sportsponsoring in der Marketingkommunikation – Der Einfluss von Teamrivalität auf den impliziten und expliziten Markenwert

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1 Die Wirksamkeit von Sportsponsoring in der Marketingkommunikation

Der Einfluss von Teamrivalität auf den impliziten und expliziten Markenwert

Matthias Limbach, Philipp Fessler, Steffen Schmidt, Frank Buckler

Zusammenfassung

Die Beliebtheit von Sportsponsoring als Kommunikationsinstrument nimmt weiter zu. Das besondere Potential von Sportsponsoring zur nachhaltigen Steigerung des konsumentenorientiertes Wertes einer Marke, einem der zentralen intangiblen Assets eines Unternehmens, ist in der Leidenschaft und Begeisterung begründet, die alle Sportarten umgibt. Sportsponsoring nutzt das erhöhte Kundenengagement beim Konsum von Sport und soll darüber die langfristige Beziehung zwischen Sponsormarke und (potentieller) Kundenbasis fördern und stabilisieren. Als weitgehend unzureichend haben sich die bisherigen Ansätze zur Bestimmung des Return on Investments (ROI) von Sponsoringaktivitäten herausgestellt. Der folgende Beitrag stellt im Rahmen eines sportlichen Rivalitätskontextes ein neuartiges leistungsstarkes ROI-Analyseinstrumentarium vor. Dieses vermisst nicht nur den expliziten Wert einer Marke im Kopf des Konsumenten, sondern erfasst ebenfalls den besonders konsumrelevanten impliziten Markenwert.

1.1 Einleitung

Das Sponsoring im Allgemeinen und das Sportsponsoring im Besonderen haben sich in den letzten drei bis vier Jahrzehnten zu einer wichtigen Marketingkommunikationsplattform (weiter)entwickelt (Cornwell 2008; Cornwell und Kwak 2015). In der Tat bietet insbesondere der Sport ein einzigartiges konsumentenorientiertes Markenwertpotential aufgrund der Leidenschaft und Begeisterung, die alle Sportarten umgibt. Der besondere Mehrwert des Sports besteht in der Möglichkeit, die Marke in ein hochengagiertes Echtzeit-Konsumerlebnisumfeld integrieren zu können. Aus einer unternehmerischen Markenperspektive heraus ist die damit einhergehende relativ große Alltagsnähe zu potenziellen und aktuellen Kunden eine primäre Motivation für Sponsoringaktivitäten. Genau das ist der Grund, warum eine globale Marke wie Coca-Cola mittlerweile einen millionenschweren Sponsoringvertrag mit dem fiktiven Fußballstar „Alex Hunter" abgeschlossen hat, der in der weltweit beliebten FIFA-Erfolgsreihe von EA Sports in FIFA 18 im Story-Modus des Spiels vorkommt und als Teil der Spielgeschichte mit Coca-Cola einen Vertrag als Markenbotschafter unterzeichnet (Adweek 2017).

Dabei ist aus betriebswirtschaftlicher Sicht das Sponsoring in erster Linie „a legitimate communication option for marketing management" (Meenaghan 1991, S. 36). Innerhalb eines kontinuierlich wachsenden Sponsoringsektors erhält der Sport die größten Ausgaben (Meenaghan 1991). So macht in Nordamerika Sportsponsoring 70 Prozent des gesamten Sponsoringmarktes im Jahre 2018 aus (IEG 2018). Dies zeigt nicht nur, dass das Management Sponsoring weiterhin als effektives Kommunikationsmittel des Marketings anerkennt, gerade im Vergleich zu klassischen Kommunikationsmitteln wie Print- oder TV-Werbung, sondern dass der Sport selbst nach wie vor das am stärksten nachgefragte Sponsoringumfeld darstellt (Tripodi 2001). Wird Sport verstanden als „lingua franca of 21st century workplaces and gathering spots" (Greyser 2011, S. xiii), dann wird die Bedeutung des Sportsponsorings in einem zunehmend diversifizierteren Marketingkommunikationsumfeld recht offensichtlich. Von Natur aus ist Sportsponsoring dabei als ein Werbeinstrument zu verstehen. Aufgrund eines überwiegend indirekt ausgerichteten Kommunikationsauftrittes innerhalb einer in der Regel weniger kommerzialisierten, aber stärker kundenorientierten Erlebnispräsenz, führt die Darbietung einer Sponsoringaktivität meistens zu positiven Ergebnissen (Cornwell 2019). Das spezifische Engagementpotential von Sportsponsoring besteht hier vor allem in der Förderung bzw. Stabilisierung einer langfristigen Beziehung zwischen Sponsormarke und deren (potentiellen) Kundenbasis (Pansari und Kumar 2017).

Im Vergleich zu anderen Formen des Erlebniskonsums und der Unterhaltung fällt der Aktivierungsgrad von Emotionen sowie generell der Zu- bzw. Abneigung beim Konsum von Sport durchschnittlich höher aus (King et al. 2011). Die stärkere Aktivierung führt zu einem größeren Engagement und damit zu einer besseren Marketingeffektivität im Sinne einer verbesserten Markenleistung der Sponsorenmarke (Close et al. 2006). In diesem Zusammenhang erleben Sportbesucher nicht nur eine positive Anspannung

durch die passive Beobachtung und aktive Unterstützung ihrer favorisierten Athleten oder Mannschaften, wenn diese sich mit anderen Teilnehmern im Wettstreit messen, sondern vor allem dann, wenn deren Favorit einen (verhassten) Rivalen in einem leidenschaftlichen Kopf-an-Kopf-Duell zu besiegen vermag (Raney und Kinnally 2009; Havard et al. 2013). Eine derart erhöhte Sportbegeisterung führt aber nicht allein zu einem positiv orientierten Konsumverhalten, z.B. einer höheren Zahlungsbereitschaft für Sporttickets (Wann und Branscombe 1993) oder den Kauf von Merchandisingartikeln (Bristow und Sebastian 2001; Fisher und Wakefield 1998). Das energiegeladene Wettbewerbsumfeld des Sports initiiert vor allem regelmäßig intensive, hitzige Gespräche im sozialen Mikrokontext (z.B. Diskussionen in einer Bar über den gegebenen Strafstoß im letzten Fußballspiel) oder kontroverse Debatten in einem gesellschaftlichen Makrokontext (z.B. Meinungsartikel in Zeitungen über die Ungleichheit von geschlechtsspezifischen Lohnunterschieden im Fußball). Auf Seite der Fans können sogar negative Gefühle und Reaktionen wie Abneigung (Dalakas und Levin 2005), Feindseligkeit (Lee 1985) und sogar Gewalt (Ward 2002) erzeugt werden.

Vor dem Hintergrund der möglichen positiven als auch negativen Auswirkungen von Sportrivalität zielt die vorliegende Arbeit darauf ab, die Leistungsfähigkeit von Sportsponsoring in einem derartigen Rivalitätskontext näher zu untersuchen. Konkret soll die Wirksamkeit eines Sportsponsoring-Engagements untersucht werden, wenn die Sponsormarke spezifische Konsumangebote für Fans eines Teams offeriert. Die Konsumentenperspektive, die in der vorliegenden Studie eingenommen wurde, reicht von der Wertschätzung des Teams als (eingefleischter) Fan bis hin zur Verachtung des Teams als Anti-Fan. Insgesamt zeigen die Ergebnisse der vorliegenden Studie auf, dass die Leistungsfähigkeit eines Team-Sponsorings auf die explizite und implizite Informationsverarbeitung gegenüber der Sponsormarke je nach Fanidentifikationsgrad positive als auch negative Auswirkungen hervorrufen kann.

1.2 Forschungshintergrund

Die sponsoringorientierte Marketingwissenschaft konnte seit den 1970er Jahren, insbesondere aber in den letzten zwei Jahrzehnten, robuste Erkenntnisfortschritte erzielen (siehe für einen Überblick Cornwell und Kwon 2019). Grundlegend bestätigen Manager die positive Wirksamkeit eines Sponsoringengagements auf die Unternehmensentwicklung (Cornwell et al. 2001). Einen standardisierten Messprozess zur genauen Bewertung des Return on Investments (ROI) von Sponsoringaktivitäten setzen aber lediglich 37 Prozent und damit etwa ein Drittel der interviewten Sponsoringmanager gemäß einer aktuellen Studie der Association of National Advertisers (ANA) ein, während gleichzeitig vier von fünf Managern (78 Prozent) die Notwendigkeit äußern, die Wirksamkeit eines Sponsoringengagements nachzuweisen (ANA 2018). Ebenso überraschend sind die Ergebnisse einer aktuellen Studie von ESP Properties. Diese zeigt auf, dass ein Drittel der untersuchten Sponsormarken (31 Prozent) überhaupt keinen Versuch anstellen, den Sponsoring-ROI zu bewerten (IEG 2018). Allerdings zeichnet sich in beiden Sponsoringstudien auch ein positiver Entwicklungstrend ab, nämlich der verstärkte Fokus auf psychologische und verhaltensbezogene Key Performance Indikatoren (KPI) wie Einstellung zur Marke oder Markenpräferenz (ANA 2018; IEG 2018). Derweil verliert die sponsoringbezogene Wirksamkeitsmessung mittels einfacher Kennzahlen aus der Werbewirkungsforschung wie Medienpräsenz und Markenerinnerung zunehmend an Relevanz in der Unternehmenspraxis, wenngleich diese aber immer noch in den meisten Sponsoring-Wirksamkeitsstudien regelmässig erhoben werden.

Aus einer Gesamtperspektive heraus ist es wenig verwunderlich, wenn daher Manager unter Druck geraten, einen belastbaren Rechtfertigungsnachweis für Sponsoringaktivitäten zu erbringen. Häufig fehlt die marketingbezogene Wirksamkeitsmessung vollständig oder sie wird nur unzureichend bzw. irreführend durchgeführt, gerade wenn Messinstrumente eingesetzt werden, die überhaupt keinen Bezug zu den Sponsoringzielen aufweisen (Meenaghan 2011). Vor dem Hintergrund eines weiterhin zunehmenden Bedarfes an der Umsetzung von Sponsoringaktivitäten und gleichzeitig einer stark verbreiteten Vernachlässigung einer systematischen Erfassung der Sponsoringwirksamkeit bleibt festzuhalten, dass scheinbar in der Praxis „a seeming paradox of satisfaction with sponsorship results without quantitative or qualitative measures of what these results are" (Thjømøe et al. 2002, S. 10) (zumindest) latent existent ist. In der Tat wirkt es fast derart, dass „nobody bothers to measure

sponsorship effectiveness because the sponsorship «just feels right»" (Hartley 2015). Gegenwärtig hat das moderne Sponsoring noch mit „[T]he existence of a measurement deficit" (Meenaghan 2013, S. 388) zu kämpfen. Die gegenwärtig eingesetzten Messansätze, die wie oben erwähnt häufig lediglich einfache Medien-KPIs erfassen, limitieren die Entscheidungsfindung von Managern und sind mehrheitlich nicht in der Lage, zuverlässige, valide und smarte Erkenntnisse zu liefern.

Das sponsoringbezogene Marketing sollte zukünftig stärker eine Sichtweise berücksichtigen, die auf die Messung der Markenattraktivität im Zusammenhang mit der erlebten bzw. erfahrenen Sponsoringaktivität fokussiert (Meenaghan und O'Sullivan 2013). In der Tat fungieren Marken als Qualitätssignale, die aus Kundensicht im Laufe der Zeit auf Basis persönlicher und nicht-persönlicher Erfahrungen gelernt wurden (Keller und Lehmann 2006). Markenerfahrungen werden überwiegend in den unbewussten Systemen des Konsumgehirns, dem so genannten impliziten Gedächtnis, verarbeitet und gespeichert (Deppe et al. 2005; Plassmann et al. 2012). Vergangene Forschungen und eine zunehmende Anzahl an Studien heben beständig die Bedeutung impliziter Gedächtniserinnerungen und deren entsprechenden Einfluss auf das Konsumverhalten hervor (z.B. Fitzsimons et al. 2002; Heath und Nairn 2005). Aus diesem Grund haben Cornwell et al. (2005) bereits vor mehr als einem Jahrzehnt darauf hingewiesen, die implizite Informationsverarbeitung von Sponsoringaktivitäten stärker systematisch zu berücksichtigen: „Implicit memory also plays a major role in the processing of sponsorship information. As such, greater consideration in future research must be given to investigating implicit memory for sponsorship information, rather than just using studies involving sponsor recall and recognition tasks tapping explicit memory." (Cornwell et al. 2005, S. 29). Trotz des Aufrufs von Cornwell et al. (2005) in ihrem weithin bekannten Sponsoringartikel, werden bei wissenschaftlichen Sponsoring-Wirksamkeitsstudien mehrheitlich immer noch explizite Fragebogenmaße/Selbstberichte eingesetzt (z.B. Chanavat et al. 2010; Biscaia et al. 2014). Diese klassischen Ansätze können bei der Sponsoring-Wirksamkeitsmessung aber nur verbalisiertes Wissen erfassen, über dass sich der Konsument bewusst sein muss und dieses aus dem expliziten Gedächtnis abrufen kann (Koll et al. 2010). Eine stetig wachsende Anzahl an Sportsponsoring-Studien, welche implizite Messinstrumente erfolgreich einsetzten, haben mittlerweile aber erste ermutigende und interessante Erkenntnisse bezüglich der Wirksamkeit von Sponsoring auf der vorbewussten/unbewussten psychologischen Ebene der Konsumenten aufzeigen können (z.B. Trendel und Warlop 2007; Königstorfer und Groeppel-Klein 2012; Schmidt et al. 2013; Herrmann et al. 2014; Cornwell et al. 2016; Limbach et al. 2018; Schmidt et al. 2018; Limbach et al. 2019).

Die vorliegende Studie verfolgt das Ziel, die existierende Literatur mit Blick auf die implizite Wirksamkeit eines Sportsponsoringengagements zu erweitern. Konkret soll die explizite und implizite Wirksamkeit von Sponsoringaktivitäten im Kontext von Sportrivalität untersucht werden. Für diesen Zweck werden Konsumenten einer kurzen Sponsoring-Reizexposition mit schnelldrehenden Produkten (Fast Moving Consumer Goods – FMCG) ausgesetzt. Die Produkte sind mit Logos von ausgewählten deutschen Fußballteams der 1. Bundesliga gekennzeichnet, wie sie auch regulär in deutschen Supermärkten zu erwerben gewesen sind.

1.3 Konzeptioneller Forschungsrahmen

Sponsoring zielt darauf ab, „to achieve favorable publicity for a company and/or its brand within a certain target audience via the support of an activity not directly linked to the company's normal business" (Bennett 1999, S. 291). Aus psychologischer Konsumentenperspektive bestimmt der erlebte Nutzen (Wert) einer solchen markenbezogenen Sponsoringaktivität das Ausmaß an Gefallen bzw. Vergnügen (Eustress) oder Missfallen bzw. Verdruss (Disstress) im Moment der Reizexposition (Kahneman et al. 1997), hier der wahrgenommene bzw. erlebte Kontakt mit der Sponsoringaktivität. Die Erfahrung von Vergnügen stellt ein „Go-Signal" dar (z.B. Konsumfortführung) und löst eine Annäherungsmotivation aus, während die Erfahrung von Verdruss ein „No-Go-Signal" (z.B. Konsumstopp) repräsentiert und eine Vermeidungsmotivation aktiviert (Higgins 1997). Der Affect-as-Information-Hypothese von Schwarz und Clore (1983) folgend besitzen die affektiven Stimmungszustände eine urteilsbeeinflussende Informations- und Weisungsfunktion. Insbesondere hat die affektive Stimmung einen kritischen Einfluss auf die Verarbeitungsqualität und -quantität der Informationen, die im Konsumentengedächtnis während des Ereignisses kodiert werden

(Mecklenbräuker und Hager 1984), hier während der Sponsoring-Reizexposition. Die stimmungszustandsabhängige Informationsverarbeitung lässt sich darüber hinaus anhand der assoziativen Netzwerktheorie erklären (Bower 1981). Je stärker die affektive Zustandsaktivierung sowohl in positiver als auch in negativer Richtung, desto größer ist die assoziative Verbindungsstärkung des aktivierten semantischen Markenassoziationsknotens (z.B. Sponsormarke) mit dem ereignisbezogenen Knoten (z.B. Sponsorobjekt). Weiterhin erklärt und prognostiziert die Adaptive Control of Thought (ACT) Theorie (Anderson 1983): Je häufiger eine Sponsormarke gleichzeitig mit einem Sponsorobjekt auftritt bzw. wahrgenommen wird, desto wahrscheinlicher ist der (selbstverstärkende) assoziative Lernprozess bei der Herstellung einer dauerhaften Verbindung zwischen Markenassoziationsknoten und ereignisbezogenen Objektknoten.

Vor diesem Hintergrund ist in dem Kontext von Sportrivalität davon auszugehen, dass bei Fans mit einer heiteren Stimmungsaktivierung während der Sponsoringexposition ein positiver besetztes Assoziationsnetzwerk der Sponsormarke im Konsumentengedächtnis entwickelt und verstärkt wird. Im Gegensatz dazu ist bei Anti-Fans mit einer düsteren Stimmungsaktivierung zu rechnen, dass ein negativer besetztes Assoziationsnetzwerk in Bezug auf die Sponsormarke aufgebaut und gefestigt wird. Dabei stellen Sponsoringverträge mit Sportmannschaften und Athleten im Kern eine Prominentenwerbung (celebrity endorsement) dar (Amis et al. 1999), zumindest innerhalb einer spezifischen Zuschauerschaft. Allgemein gesprochen: „A celebrity endorser is an individual who is well known to the public" (Ross et al. 1984, S. 185). Im Gedächtnis werden die Sponsormarke und die Prominentenmarke durch eine Vielzahl an assoziativen Knotenpunkten repräsentiert, im Sinne eines Assoziationsbündels. Während der Sponsoringexposition kommt es dann zu einem Assoziationstransfer, zumindest zwischen Teilen der jeweiligen Assoziationsknotenpunkte (Gwinner 1997; Till und Shimp 1998). Die eigentliche Marketingleistung von Kommunikationsmaßnahmen wie Prominentenwerbung besteht in der Anpassung des assoziativen Markenwissens im Gedächtnis der Konsumenten. Konkreter der Erwerb von werthaltigen und intensiv verankerten Markenassoziationen während der Reizexposition, die als explizite und implizite Informationsinhalte im Gedächtnis der Konsumenten verarbeitet, gespeichert und später abgerufen werden (Camerer et al. 2005; Plassmann et al. 2007). Aktuelle Studien konnten aufzeigen, dass der werbliche Einsatz von Prominenten leistungsstark genug sein kann, den Markenwert steigern zu können, von der Markenbekanntheit über die Markentreue bis hin zum Markenkauf (Spry et al. 2009).

Abbildung 1. Assoziatives Gedächtnismodell der Sportsponsoring-Kommunikation.
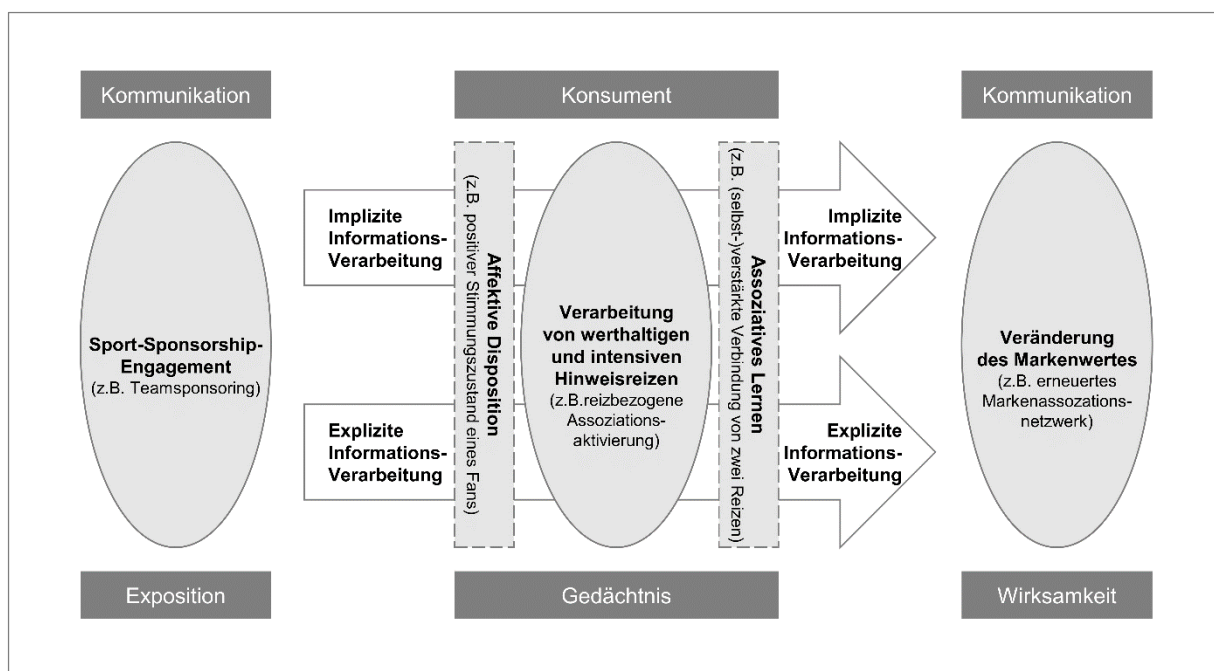
Demnach zielen Marketingmanager, absichtlich oder unabsichtlich, beim Sportsponsoring von Teams darauf ab, den konsumentenorientierten Markenwert zu verbessern, indem eine zielgerichtete

Assoziationsverbindung zwischen dem gesponserten Team (celebrity endorser) und der Sponsorenmarke hergestellt werden soll. Insbesondere besteht hier die Erwartungshaltung, dass das Sponsoringengagement die Struktur des Markenwissens sowie das Markenverhalten der Sponsormarke durch einen werthaltigen und intensiven Transfer von Assoziationen vom gesponserten Team auf die Sponsormarke verbessern wird. Mit Blick auf die Fans eines Sportteams ist von einer positiven affektiven Einstellung zum Team auszugehen, so dass ein positiver Assoziationstransfer zu erwarten ist. Bei Anti-Fans, die aufgrund einer gewissen Rivalitätsbeziehung eine negative affektive Einstellung zum Team aufweisen sollten, kann ein negativer Assoziationstranfer erwartet werden. Abbildung 1 veranschaulicht den durch das Sponsoringengagement induzierten markenbezogenen Informationsverarbeitungsprozess. Dieser Analyserahmen ermöglicht eine ganzheitliche Betrachtung von impliziten und expliziten Assoziationsänderungen sowie von damit einhergehenden Veränderungen des Markenwertes. Auf diesem Analysewege lässt sich systematisch die marketingbezogene Wirksamkeit von Sportsponsoring im Allgemeinen und die Beantwortung der folgenden Forschungsfrage im Besonderen beurteilen: Welche markenwertsteigende Wirksamkeit hat das Sportsponsoring von Teams, innerhalb des Segmentes von Fans und Anti-Fans und in Bezug auf die markenbezogene Informationsverarbeitung von impliziten und expliziten Assoziationen sowie dem Markenverhalten, bei der Konsumenten einer Reizexposition bei einem Produkt aus dem FMCG-Segment ausgesetzt werden, welches mit dem Logo eines Sportteams gekennzeichnet ist?

1.4 Methodik

1.4.1 Studiendesign und Untersuchungsmaterial

Als experimentelles Design wurde ein Pre-Post-Test gewählt, um die markenwertsteigende Wirksamkeit des Sportsponsoring von Teams zu evaluieren. Die Erzeugung eines Rivalitätskontextes diente dazu, ein bestimmtes Maß an positiver und negativer Aufregung hervorzurufen. Durch den Kontakt mit einem favorisierten oder verhassten Teams sollten affektive Dispositionen aktiviert werden, die je nach Grad der Fanidentifikation von einer starken Vorliebe bis hin zu einer starken Abneigung gegenüber dem Sportteam reichten. Der spezielle Forschungsfokus wurde auf den Sponsoringeinfluss a) auf markenbezogene Assoziationen und b) auf das Markenengagement gesetzt, die in dieser Arbeit als erfolgskritische Elemente des Markenwertes verstanden werden. Zur Gewährleistung einer realistischen und authentischen Sponsoringpräsenz wurden bestehende Produkte aus dem FMCG-Bereich ausgewählt, die auf dem deutschen Markt erhältlich gewesen sind. Konkret wurden Fan-Editionsprodukte von Coca-Cola Zero (0,33l Cola-Dose) und Pringles (190g Chips-Verpackung) ausgewählt, die 2017 für einen begrenzten Zeitraum von mehreren Monaten regelmäßig zum Kauf angeboten wurden. Die Coca-Cola-Dose ist entweder mit dem Logo des FC Bayern München oder Borussia Dortmund markiert gewesen, während die Pringles-Chips-Verpackung mit dem Logo des FC Schalke 04 oder des Hamburger SV gekennzeichnet war. Die Produkte wurden in ihren Originalzustand belassen.

1.4.2 Stichprobe und Vorgehensweise

Die Datenerhebung erfolgte im Sommer 2017, zwei Wochen nach Beginn der neuen Fußballsaison der 1. Bundesliga, der deutschen Königsklasse im Fußball. Auf ausgewählten Sozialen Netzwerken (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.) wurden Links einhergehend mit der Einladung verteilt, aktiv an der Studie mitzuwirken. Diese Rekrutierung durch Selbstaktivierung (opportunity sampling) wurde gewählt, da es eine einfach durchzuführende und kostengünstige Art der Stichprobenziehung in der Online-Forschung darstellt. Eventuelle methodische Schwierigkeiten wie nicht-repräsentative Stichprobe sind für die vorliegende Studie aufgrund ihres explorativen Forschungscharakters und der generell hohen Fußballaffinität der deutschen Bevölkerung von untergeordnetem Gewicht gewesen. Bevor die befragten Personen den Online-Fragebogen ausfüllen konnten, mussten diese ihre Teilnahmebereitschaft durch Auswählen eines Einverständnis-Buttons bestätigen. Personen, die bekundeten, überhaupt kein Interesse am Fußball zu haben, wurden aus dem Datensatz entfernt, um eine aussagekräftige Stichprobe von Fußballzuschauern vor dem Hintergrund eines sportbezogenen

Forschungskontextes zu gewährleisten (Dalakas und Kropp 2002). Die finale Stichprobe umfasste 324 fußballinteressierte Personen. Die meisten Interviewten waren männlich (68,2 Prozent), 18 bis 29 Jahre alt (69,5 Prozent; Durchschnittsalter: 31,45 Jahre; SD: 11,33), Single als Familienstand (80,4 Prozent) und zeichneten sich durch einen höheren Bildungsgrad aus (Abitur oder Universitätsabschluss: 91,1 Prozent).

Zunächst beantworteten die Befragten verschiedene Einführungsfragen zum persönlichen Sportkonsumverhalten. Per Zufallszuweisung erfolgte anschließend eine Zuordnung zu einem der vier Sponsoringengagements: Coca-Cola Zero & Bayern München, Coca-Cola Zero & Borussia Dortmund, Pringles & FC Schalke 04 oder Pringles & Hamburger SV. In der Vorher-Messung wurde im ersten Schritt die Reaktionszeitmessung zur Erfassung der impliziten Assoziationen der Sponsormarke durchgeführt, gefolgt von einem klassischen Fragebogenteil zur Messung der expliziten Sponsormarkenassoziationen und des sponsorbezogenen Markenengagements. Im Anschluss erfolgte eine kurze, fünf Sekunden andauernde Reizexposition mit einem der genannten FCMG-Produkte. Danach wurde die Fußballmannschaft bewertet, wiederum zuerst mit einer impliziten und anschließend einer expliziten Assoziationsmessung. Die Nachher-Messung lief identisch zur Vorher-Messung ab, am Ende ergänzt um die Beurteilung des Grades der Fanidentifikation mit dem Team und soziodemografischen Fragen.

1.4.3 Erhebungsinstrumente und Analysetechniken

Die Messung der Markenassoziationen erfolgte mittels expliziten und impliziten Erhebungsinstrumenten, welche die gleichen Assoziationsfacetten erfassten. Im Einzelnen wurden die Dimensionen mit jeweils zwei Items erhoben (Dimension: Items). Die insgesamt sieben Dimensionen sind in Teilen bereits in früheren Untersuchungen verwendet und in dieser Studie durch qualitative Experteninterviews mit Marketingleitern erweitert worden (n=7):

- Sicherheit: ist sorgfältig, ist umsichtig

- Autonomie: ist dominant, ist überlegen

- Freude: ist lustig, ist fröhlich

- Fürsorge: ist freundlich, ist fürsorglich

- Kompetenz: ist kompetent, ist hochbegabt

- Reputation: ist angesehen, ist populär

- Gefallen: ist gut, ist toll

Um die expliziten Assoziationen auf einer reflektierten und kontrollierten Informationsebene zu erfassen, kamen klassische fünfstufige Likert-Skalen (1=stimme überhaupt nicht zu bis 5=stimme voll und ganz zu) zum Einsatz. Die impliziten Assoziationen sind mit einer Reaktionszeitmessung und dem BrandReact-Tool von eye square (2019) erfasst worden, um die spontane und automatische Informationsverarbeitung zu bewerten. Der BrandReact hat eine vergleichbare Messlogik wie der von Karpinski und Steinman (2006) eingeführte Single Category Implicit Association Test (SC-IAT). Im Detail sind die Befragten aufgefordert, so schnell wie möglich per Tastaturantwort zu reagieren und zu entscheiden, ob das auf dem Display angezeigte Attribut (Markenassoziation, Item) mittels einer „ja" (Tastaturbelegung: A) und „nein" (Tastaturbelegung: L) Antwortoption zur Zielmarke (hier: Sponsormarke bzw. Sponsorobjekt) passt oder nicht. Die Berechnung der finalen impliziten Assoziationswerte erfolgte analog zur Vorgehensweise von Schmidt et al. (2017). Um eine bessere Interpretation und Vergleichbarkeit der unterschiedlichen skalierten expliziten und impliziten Messmetriken zu gewährleisten, wurden alle expliziten und impliziten Assoziationswerte von 0 bis 100 normiert. Je höher (niedriger) der explizite/implizite Assoziationswert, desto stärker die positive (negative) Einschätzung, mit 50 als neutralem Bewertungsbereich. Des Weiteren wurde der Grad der Fanidentifikation mittels einer fünfstufigen Likert-Skala erfasst (1=Ich hasse diese Fußballmannschaft bis 5=Ich liebe diese Fußballmannschaft), um darüber Anti-Fans (Skalenpunkte 1 und 2), neutrale Zuschauer/Nicht-Fans (Skalenpunkt 3) und Fans (Skalenpunkte 4 und 5) zu bestimmen. Als weitere KPIs für den Markenwert der Sponsormarke sind, neben der impliziten und expliziten

Markenassoziationserfassung, zwei Markenengagement-Skalen implementiert worden: affektive Markenempfindung (11-polige Skala: Was sind Ihre Empfindungen gegenüber der Marke von 0=überhaupt nicht positiv bis 10=sehr positiv?) und verhaltensorientierte Markenpräferenz (11-polige Skala: Wie wahrscheinlich werden Sie die Marke gegenüber einer alternativen Marke von 0=überhaupt nicht wahrscheinlich bis 10=sehr wahrscheinlich bevorzugen?). Darüber hinaus wurden im Pre- und Post-Test globale Skalen verwendet, um die externe Validität der verschiedenen Markenassoziationsfacetten evaluieren zu können.

In Anbetracht der Sicherstellung einer aussagekräftigen Bewertung der Reliabilität und Validität der erfolgskritischen Markenassoziationsmessungen ist der bei Schmidt et al. (2018) und Limbach et al. (2018) verwendete fortschrittliche Bewertungsansatz in dieser Studie verfolgt worden. Dazu wurde auf Partial Least Squares (PLS) als leistungsfähige Strukturgleichungsmodellierung (SEM) im Rahmen von explorativen Studien gesetzt. Als unabhängige Variablen sind die expliziten und impliziten Assoziationen definiert worden, während die zusätzlich erhobene Weiterempfehlungsbereitschaft (klassische Net Promoter Score Abfrage im Pre- und Post-Test) als abhängige Variable diente. Zur Modellschätzung ist die SEM-Software SmartPLS 3 (Ringle et al. 2015) zum Einsatz gekommen, wobei nur eine Beurteilung der äußeren Messmodelle vorgenommen wurde. Des Weiteren wurden die ermittelten Pre-Post-Differenzen nicht nur einem regulären statistischen Signifikanztest unterzogen, sondern ebenfalls eine Bewertung der praktischen (klinischen) Relevanz (Wichtigkeit) anhand der Bestimmung der Effektstärke (bzw. Effektgröße) vorgenommen. Dieser moderne Erkenntnisansatz vermeidet nicht nur die potentiell fehlerhafte und verzerrte Interpretation von p-Werten, sondern ermöglicht eine kumulativ-orientierte Wissenschaft durch die Durchführung einer dimensionslosen Bewertung der Differenzen, was besonders wertvoll für zukünftige Metaanalysen ist (Nakagawa und Cuthill 2007; Lakens 2013). Die Bestimmung der Signifikanz erfolgte mittels des Wilcoxon-Vorzeichen-Rang-Tests. Anhand des z-Score des Tests wurde für jede Pre-Post-Differenz das Pearson's Product-Moment r als gewählte Effektstärke unter Verwendung folgender Formel berechnet: $r=z/\sqrt{N}$ (Fritz et al. 2012, S. 12). N ist hier die Gesamtzahl der Beobachtungen ohne Bindungen (nur die Anzahl der positiven und negativen Ränge) (Larson-Hall 2010, S. 382). Die Interpretation der Effektstärke r basiert auf den folgenden Schwellenwerten: 0,1>schwacher Effekt, 0,3>mittlerer Effekt, 0,5>großer Effekt (Cohen 1992). Zusätzlich wurden die potentiellen Assoziationstransfers von dem gesponserten Team auf die Sponsormarke durch einen Bayes'schen neuronalen Netzwerkansatz analysiert, weil dieser Ansatz auch nichtlineare Effektverläufe identifizieren kann (Buckler und Hennig-Thurau 2008). Die Schätzung wurde unter Verwendung der Analysesoftware Neusrel (2019) durchgeführt. Als unabhängige und abhängige Variable wurden zwei neue Variablen wie folgt berechnet:

Unabhängige Variable → Fit-Score berechnet aus Pre-Test-Assoziationswert der Sponsormarke subtrahiert vom Assoziationswert des gesponserten Teams

Abhängige Variable → Assoziationsdifferenz berechnet aus Pre-Test-Assoziationswert der Sponsormarke subtrahiert vom Post-Test-Assoziationswert der Sponsormarke

Um die Stärke des potentiellen Assoziationstransfers zu bestimmen, wurde die Effektgröße f2 ermittelt und folgende Schwellenwerte zur Interpretation herangezogen: 0,02>schwacher Effekt, 0,15>mittlerer Effekt, 0,35>großer Effekt (Cohen 1992).

1.5 Ergebnisse

1.5.1 Bewertung der assoziativen Erhebungsmethoden

Alle expliziten und impliziten Messinstrumente zur Erfassung der Markenassoziationen erreichten in Bezug auf Item-Reliabilität und interne Konsistenz zufriedenstellende Werte, mit Ausnahme des expliziten Gefallens beim Post-Test mit einer relativ niedrigen Faktorladung, wobei hier die anderen Kriterien eine befriedigende Qualität anzeigen, wie in Tabelle 1 dargelegt. Die sonstigen Messgütekriterien wie externe Validität (Korrelation mit einer adäquaten globalen Skala je Assoziationsdimension), konvergente Validität (durchschnittlich erfasste Varianz) sowie diskriminante Validität (Fornell-Larcker-Kriterium) wurden ebenfalls erfüllt. Insgesamt zeigen die explorativen Ergebnisse eine ausreichende Messqualität der verwendeten assoziativen Erhebungsinstrumente an.

Tabelle 1 Gütebestimmung der assoziativen Erhebungsinstrumente

Sponsor-Marken: Pre-Test	Faktorladungen	Kongenerische Reliabilität	Cronbachs Alpha	Durchschnittlich erfasste Varianz	Externe Validität	Fornell-Larcker-Kriterium
Explizite Sicherheit	0.889 >	0.887	0.746	0.797	0.462*	0.893 > 0.736
Explizite Macht	0.857 >	0.902	0.796	0.822	0.677*	0.907 > 0.591
Explizite Freude	0.930 >	0.935	0.861	0.878	0.728*	0.937 > 0.758
Explizite Fürsorge	0.857 >	0.866	0.693	0.764	0.660*	0.874 > 0.758
Explizite Kompetenz	0.815 >	0.861	0.691	0.757	0.557*	0.870 > 0.692
Explizite Reputation	0.883 >	0.887	0.745	0.796	0.449*	0.892 > 0.591
Explizites Gefallen	0.927 >	0.926	0.840	0.862	0.748*	0.929 > 0.796
Implizite Sicherheit	0.730 >	0.814	0.573	0.689	0.360*	0.830 > 0.603
Implizite Macht	0.644 >	0.812	0.668	0.692	0.525*	0.832 > 0.570
Implizite Freude	0.884 >	0.893	0.761	0.806	0.629*	0.898 > 0.725
Implizite Fürsorge	0.741 >	0.797	0.508	0.665	0.586*	0.815 > 0.668
Implizite Kompetenz	0.709 >	0.794	0.513	0.662	0.403*	0.814 > 0.620
Implizite Reputation	0.802 >	0.831	0.600	0.712	0.406*	0.844 > 0.532
Implizites Gefallen	0.890 >	0.894	0.763	0.808	0.718*	0.899 > 0.796
Sponsor-Marken: Post-Test						
Explizite Sicherheit	0.565 >	0.783	0.734	0.660	0.566*	0.812 > 0.678
Explizite Macht	0.946 >	0.948	0.891	0.901	0.692*	0.949 > 0.789
Explizite Freude	0.847 >	0.892	0.769	0.805	0.699*	0.897 > 0.726
Explizite Fürsorge	0.870 >	0.878	0.722	0.782	0.669*	0.884 > 0.726
Explizite Kompetenz	0.884 >	0.896	0.771	0.812	0.573*	0.901 > 0.789
Explizite Reputation	0.913 >	0.931	0.854	0.870	0.477*	0.933 > 0.739
Explizites Gefallen	0.082 >	0.374	0.788	0.332	0.745*	0.576 > 0.376
Implizite Sicherheit	0.828 >	0.846	0.639	0.734	0.536*	0.856 > 0.617
Implizite Macht	0.830 >	0.856	0.668	0.748	0.618*	0.865 > 0.490
Implizite Freude	0.902 >	0.898	0.773	0.815	0.614*	0.903 > 0.679
Implizite Fürsorge	0.761 >	0.814	0.556	0.687	0.579*	0.829 > 0.679
Implizite Kompetenz	0.781 >	0.806	0.524	0.676	0.531*	0.822 > 0.574
Implizite Reputation	0.830 >	0.846	0.637	0.733	0.419*	0.856 > 0.503
Implizites Gefallen	0.892 >	0.896	0.767	0.811	0.666*	0.900 > 0.688
Fußballmannschaften						
Explizite Sicherheit	0.888 >	0.893	0.761	0.807	0.623*	0.898 > 0.719
Explizite Macht	0.903 >	0.930	0.855	0.869	0.808*	0.932 > 0.606
Explizite Freude	0.884 >	0.938	0.902	0.883	0.525*	0.940 > 0.818
Explizite Fürsorge	0.806 >	0.878	0.753	0.784	0.638*	0.885 > 0.818
Explizite Kompetenz	0.766 >	0.835	0.626	0.718	0.786*	0.847 > 0.715
Explizite Reputation	0.873 >	0.890	0.756	0.802	0.620*	0.896 > 0.604
Explizites Gefallen	0.891 >	0.907	0.797	0.830	0.708*	0.911 > 0.601
Implizite Sicherheit	0.873 >	0.878	0.723	0.783	0.547*	0.885 > 0.637
Implizite Macht	0.884 >	0.899	0.777	0.816	0.648*	0.903 > 0.637
Implizite Freude	0.860 >	0.877	0.722	0.781	0.513*	0.884 > 0.671
Implizite Fürsorge	0.812 >	0.815	0.546	0.687	0.514*	0.829 > 0.671
Implizite Kompetenz	0.841 >	0.850	0.649	0.740	0.695*	0.860 > 0.665
Implizite Reputation	0.898 >	0.896	0.768	0.812	0.555*	0.901 > 0.602
Implizites Gefallen	0.882 >	0.890	0.755	0.803	0.622*	0.896 > 0.665

Hinweis: *Signifikanzniveau des Spearman Rang-Korrelationskoeffizienten p<0,01.

Abbildung 2. Einfluss der Fit-Scores auf die Veränderungs-Scores.
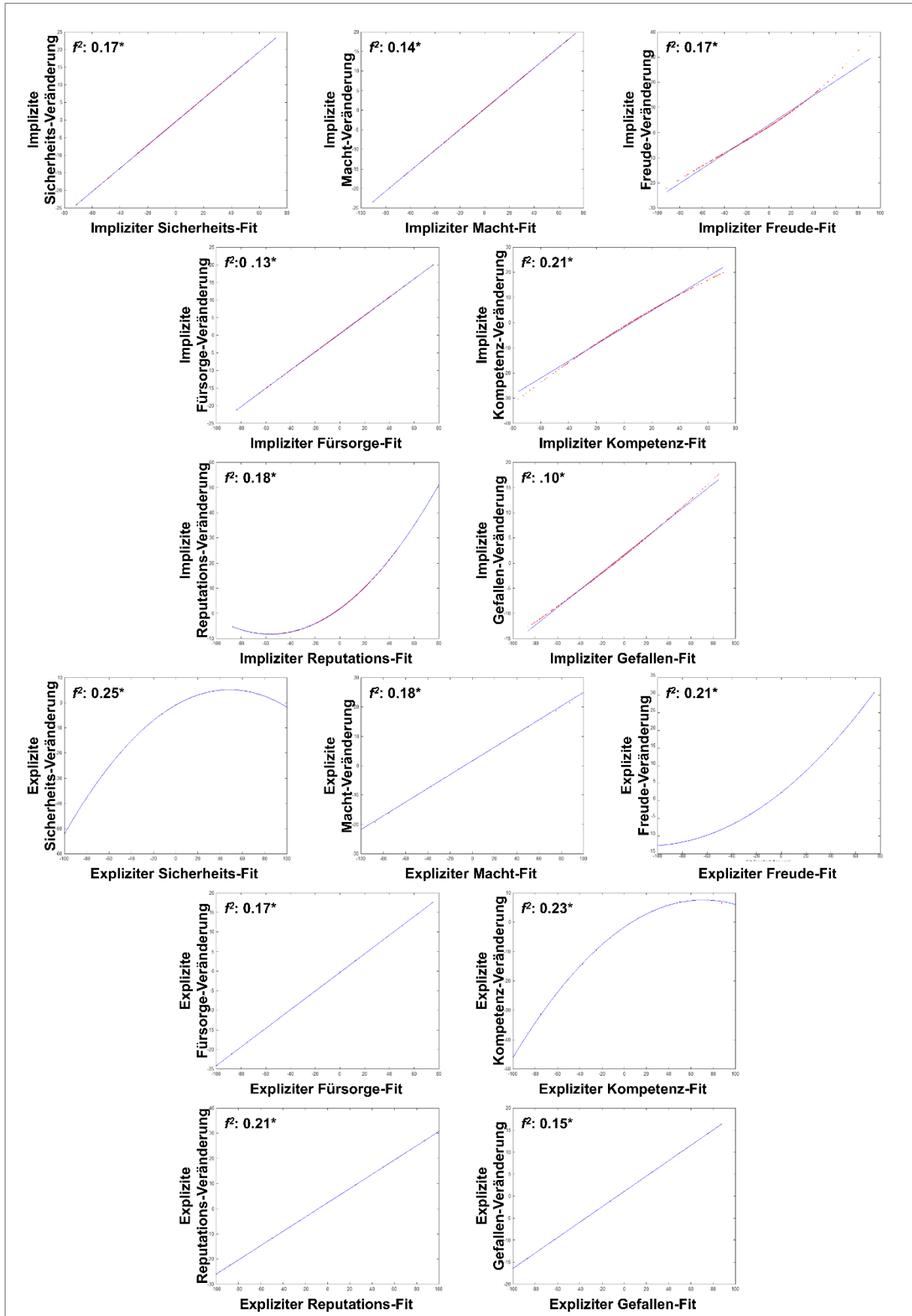
1.5.2 Befunde

Die empirischen Ergebnisse des Pre-Post-Tests sind in Tabelle 2 dargestellt. Die Differenzen wurden getrennt nach dem Grad der Fanidentifikation mit Fans (n=58), Nicht-Fans (n=45) und Anti-Fans (n=221) ausgewiesen, um eine stärkere Erkenntnistiefe bezüglich der zu erwartenden, unterschiedlichen affektiven Zustandsaktivierung zu erfahren. Als Schwellenwert für die statistische Signifikanz wurde $p<0,10$ vor dem Hintergrund des explorativen Studiencharakters mit in Teilen limitierter Stichprobengröße auf Subgruppenebene gewählt.

Fans: Auf der expliziten Informationsebene deuten die Ergebnisse auf positive Veränderungen mit mittleren bis großen Effektstärken für Sicherheit, Fürsorge und Kompetenz hin. Mit Blick auf die impliziten Assoziationen werden positive Änderungen mit mittlerer bis großer Effektstärke für Sicherheit, Fürsorge, Kompetenz, Reputation und Gefallen angezeigt. Außerdem ist der Markenengagement-KPI Markenempfindung auf mittlerem Niveau gestiegen.

Nicht-Fans: Mittlere bis große Effektstärken werden auf der expliziten Ebene für positive Assoziationsveränderungen bei Sicherheit, Fürsorge und Kompetenz angezeigt. In Bezug auf die impliziten Assoziationen erfährt Macht einen Anstieg auf mittelstarken Niveau. Derweil ist bei beiden Markenengagement-KPIs keine Veränderung feststellbar.

Anti-Fans: Ein schwacher bis mittlerer Rückgang tritt auf der expliziten Ebene bei den Assoziationen Macht, Freude, Reputation und Gefallen auf. Ebenfalls ist bei den impliziten Assoziationen ein schwacher bis mittlerer Rückgang identifizierbar, konkret bei Freude und Gefallen. Darüber hinaus zeigen beide Markenengagement-KPIs einen schwachen bis mittleren Rückgang an.

Effekte beim Assoziationstransfer: Zusätzlich wurde der potentielle Transfer von Assoziationen von der Teammarke als Sponsorobjekt auf die Sponsormarke einer näheren Untersuchung unterzogen. Wie in Abbildung 2 illustriert, ist bei allen Assoziationen ein signifikanter Transfer identifizierbar, überwiegend mit einer mittleren Effektstärke und sowohl auf der expliziten als auch impliziten Informationsverarbeitungsebene. Ebenfalls werden lineare aber auch nicht-lineare Assoziationstransferverläufe ersichtlich.

1.5.3 Schlussfolgerung und Interpretation

Bei jeder der untersuchten Dimensionen konnte in Bezug auf die Markenassoziationen mindestens eine assoziative implizite und/oder explizite Veränderung in einem oder mehreren Fan-Segmenten festgestellt werden. Ebenfalls zeigten sich positive und negative Veränderungen bei beiden Markenengagement-KPIs, in Abhängigkeit des Grades der Fanidentifikation. Insgesamt hat die vorliegende explorative Sportsponsoring-Studie aufzeigen können, dass bereits eine kurze Sponsoring-Reizexposition ausreichend intensiv sein kann, um eine substanzielle Wirksamkeit auf den Markenwert auszuüben. Konkret war hier ein fünfsekundiger Kontakt mit einem mit dem Teamlogo markierten Produkt aus dem FMCG-Bereich aktivierungsstark genug, um bei etwa einem Drittel der Markenassoziationen eine Veränderung hervorzurufen, zumeist auf mittleren Effektstärkenniveau. Die Leistungsfähigkeit der analysierten Sponsoringaktivität wurde auch zusätzlich durch die identifizierten Verläufe der Assoziationstransfers bestätigt, wobei ebenfalls die Transferwirkung im Durchschnitt eine mittlere Effektstärke aufwies.

Die letztendliche positive bis negative Wirksamkeit des untersuchten Sponsoringengagements hängt jedoch stark von dem Grad der Fanidentifikation ab. In der vorliegenden Studie separat nach Fan, Nicht-Fan und Anti-Fan untersucht. Wie erwartet, moderierte die affektive Disposition der Fans gegenüber dem Sportteam die Wirksamkeit als auch die Richtung der Veränderungen. Innerhalb des Fan-Segmentes zeigten alle identifizierten Veränderungen in eine positive Richtung, während bei den Anti-Fans eine negative Veränderung und damit Minimierung des Markenwerts festgestellt werden konnte. Bezogen auf die Nicht-Fans zeichnete sich ein positives Veränderungsbild, wenngleich insbesondere auf der impliziten Ebene nur eine Assoziation beeinflusst wurde. Dies hängt vermeintlich primär damit zusammen, dass die Nicht-Fans ein vergleichsweise kleines Assoziationsnetzwerk über das Sponsorobjekt, hier das Fußballteam, im impliziten Gedächtnissystem abgespeichert haben. Entsprechend werden vermeintlich bei einem Kontakt nur relativ wenige implizite sponsorobjektbezogene Assoziationen aktiviert, die dann auf die Sponsormarke implizit übertragen

werden können.

Darüber hinaus zeigen die erweiterten Analysen in Bezug auf die Verläufe eines potentiellen Assoziationstransfers ein klares Muster an. Es kann von einer positiven Assoziationsänderung für die Sponsormarke ausgegangen und vorhergesagt werden, wenn die entsprechende Assoziationsausprägung des Sponsorobjekt, wie hier das Sportteam, größer ist, als die der Sponsormarke, was in der vorliegenden Arbeit als Assoziationsfit bezeichnet und berechnet wurde. Dabei gilt: Je größer (niedriger) der Assoziationsfit, desto höher die Wahrscheinlichkeit einer positiven (negativen) Assoziationsveränderung nach der Sponsoring-Reizexposition. Befindet sich derweil der Assoziationsfit nahe bei Null, was auf eine ähnliche assoziative Merkmalsausprägung zurückschließen lässt, dann ist die Wahrscheinlichkeit einer Assoziationsänderung bei der Sponsormarke gering. Außerdem scheint zu gelten: Je mehr Assoziationsänderungen hervorgerufen werden, desto größer ist die Wahrscheinlichkeit, dass auch das Markenengagement sich verändert, entweder in eine positive oder negative Richtung, wie das Segment der Fans und Anti-Fans mit acht bis zehn Assoziationsveränderungen und ein bis zwei Änderungen beim Markenengagement im Vergleich zum Segment der Nicht-Fans mit sechs Assoziationsänderungen und keiner Änderung beim Markenengagement andeutet.

Tabelle 2 Ergebnisse der Pre-Post-Tests

	Fan (n=58)									
	Explizite Informationsverarbeitung					**Implizite Informationsverarbeitung**				
Konstrukt	ΔM^1	**SD**	**z**	**p**	r^2	ΔM^1	**SD**	**z**	**p**	r^2
Sicherheit	6.250	15.576	-2.767	0.006	0.455	8.743	22.110	-2.745	0.006	0.364
Macht	5.388	24.346	-1.361	0.174	0.221	2.236	20.578	-0.507	0.612	0.067
Freude	3.664	19.451	-1.498	0.134	0.257	4.076	23.474	-1.576	0.115	0.207
Fürsorge	7.974	16.672	-3.484	0.000	0.598	5.235	19.419	-1.680	0.093	0.223
Kompetenz	4.310	16.812	-1.815	0.070	0.326	9.725	18.823	-3.821	0.000	0.502
Reputation	2.155	19.328	-0.693	0.488	0.119	4.730	14.348	-2.474	0.013	0.325
Gefallen	2.371	15.435	-0.948	0.343	0.176	8.147	18.803	-2.969	0.003	0.390
	Markenengagement									
Konstrukt	ΔM^1		**SD**		**Z**		**p**		r^2	
Markenempfindung	3.621		15.526		-1.796		0.072		0.308	
Markenpräferenz	-0.862		23.492		-0.231		0.817		0.034	
	Nicht-Fan (n=45)									
	Explizite Informationsverarbeitung					**Implizite Informationsverarbeitung**				
Konstrukt	ΔM^1	**SD**	**z**	**p**	r^2	ΔM^1	**SD**	**z**	**p**	r^2
Sicherheit	8.056	14.875	-3.242	0.001	0.624	0.126	20.361	-0.976	0.329	0.145
Macht	0.556	16.633	-0.374	0.709	0.078	8.068	22.349	-2.297	0.022	0.342
Freude	-2.222	18.710	-0.707	0.480	0.134	-3.020	20.280	-1.259	0.208	0.188
Fürsorge	3.889	11.865	-2.083	0.037	0.425	-3.863	20.532	-1.067	0.286	0.159
Kompetenz	3.611	18.391	-1.721	0.085	0.344	3.277	18.076	-0.830	0.407	0.124
Reputation	-2.778	15.741	-1.549	0.121	0.304	-2.861	20.050	-0.389	0.697	0.058
Gefallen	-0.556	12.200	-0.287	0.774	0.059	-1.840	20.914	-0.288	0.773	0.043
	Markenengagement									
Messkonstrukt	ΔM^1		**SD**		**Z**		**p**		r^2	
Markenempfindung	-1.778		15.996		-0.858		0.391		0.172	
Markenpräferenz	-3.333		17.451		-0.943		0.346		0.181	
	Anti-Fan (n=221)									
	Explizite Informationsverarbeitung					**Implizite Informationsverarbeitung**				
Konstrukt	ΔM^1	**SD**	**z**	**p**	r^2	ΔM^1	**SD**	**z**	**p**	r^2
Sicherheit	-0.452	19.323	-0.176	0.860	0.015	-0.674	22.295	-0.335	0.737	0.023
Macht	-2.602	20.022	-1.644	0.100	0.141	0.191	23.350	-0.474	0.635	0.032
Freude	-1.810	16.020	-1.748	0.080	0.165	-3.604	23.954	-1.922	0.055	0.129
Fürsorge	-1.301	16.570	-0.937	0.349	0.084	-1.345	20.305	-0.631	0.528	0.042
Kompetenz	-1.075	20.598	-0.461	0.645	0.039	-1.040	21.331	-0.335	0.737	0.023
Reputation	-6.787	19.159	-4.961	0.000	0.446	-3.704	22.149	-1.225	0.221	0.082
Gefallen	-4.751	18.732	-3.418	0.001	0.312	-2.920	21.513	-1.906	0.057	0.128

Messkonstrukt	Markenengagement				
	ΔM^1	SD	Z	p	r^2
Markenempfindung	-4.253	15.463	-3.794	0.000	0.343
Markenpräferenz	-3.937	19.221	-2.696	0.007	0.242

Anmerkung: $^1\Delta$ M = Pre-Test-Score subtrahiert vom Post-Test-Score; ^{2}Effektstärkenmaß r berechnet als r=Z/$\sqrt{N}$, wobei N die Gesamtzahl der Beobachtungen ohne Bindungen ist (nur die Anzahl der positiven und negativen Ränge) mit r > 0,1 kleiner Effekt, r > 0,3 mittlerer Effekt und r > 0,5 großer Effekt ist.

1.6 Diskussion

1.6.1 Erkenntnisbeitrag

Sowohl für die marketingorientierte Wissenschaft, als auch Unternehmenspraxis ist ein tieferes und breiteres Verständnis der expliziten und impliziten Informationsverarbeitung von werthaltigen und intensiv verankerten Markenassoziationen während einer Sponsoring-Reizexposition wertvoll. Nur unter Berücksichtigung einer ganzheitlichen Wirksamkeitsbetrachtung lässt sich der Sponsoring-ROI zuverlässig und präzise ermitteln. In erster Linie trägt die vorliegende Studie zur bestehenden Literatur im Sportsponsoring dazu bei, wiederholt die Relevanz aufzuzeigen, dass Marketingmanager und Marketingforscher nicht nur die explizite, sondern vor allem auch die implizite Markeninformationsverarbeitungsebene analysieren und ansprechen müssen. Insbesondere vor dem Hintergrund, dass, wie in der vorliegenden Studie, die Änderungen auf der expliziten und impliziten Assoziationsebene nicht zwingend kongruent sein müssen. Des Weiteren zeigt die Studie auf, dass der Grad der Fanidentifikation und die damit einhergehende affektive Disposition gegenüber dem Sponsorobjekt die Wirksamkeit und Richtung der Änderungen bei den Markenassoziationen beeinflusst. Außerdem wurde in dieser Arbeit ein Analyseansatz demonstriert, um die potentiellen assoziativen Transferverläufe von dem Sponsorobjekt auf die Sponsormarke detailliert zu bestimmen, womit sich bspw. im Vorfeld der Entscheidung für oder gegen ein Sponsoringengagement eine erste ROI-Vorhersage durchführen lässt.

1.6.2 Implikationen

Aus Perspektive der Sponsormarke sollte das verantwortliche Marketingmanagement den Status quo der affektiven Dispositionen ermitteln, den Kunden im Allgemeinen und Fans sowie Anti-Fans im Besonderen gegenüber dem Sponsorobjekt aufzeigen. Um negative assoziative Transfereffekte innerhalb des Segmentes der Anti-Fans zu vermeiden, ist der Grad der Nähe zum Sponsorobjekt über die vielen potentiellen Touchpoints hinweg sorgfältig abzuwägen und im Zweifelsfalle eher „zu verstecken", insbesondere dann, wenn die aktuelle und potentielle Kundenbasis innerhalb des Anti-Fan-Segments verhältnismäßig groß ist. Im Idealfall tritt die Sponsorenmarke nur innerhalb des Fan-Segmentes in Erscheinung, damit ein möglichst werthaltiger und intensiver Assoziationstransfer gewährleistet wird. Des Weiteren erscheint es zweckmäßig, in diesem Zusammenhang die Wirksamkeit und den ROI des Sponsoringengagements im Vorfeld der Sponsoringentscheidung anhand des Assoziationsfits empirisch abzuschätzen, so wie es in der vorliegenden Studie im Zuge der Effektbestimmung bei den Assoziationstransfers skizziert wurde.

1.6.3 Einschränkungen und zukünftige Forschungsschritte

Vor dem Hintergrund des explorativen Charakters erfordert die vorliegende Studie naturgemäß eine Vielzahl weiterer Forschungsbemühungen. Erstens sollten zukünftige Studien die eingesetzten Messinstrumente, insbesondere die expliziten und impliziten Assoziationsmethoden, erneut verwenden und einem weiteren kritischen Test auf Reliabilität und Validität unterziehen. Zweitens erscheint es zweckmäßig, wie bereits im Ergebniskapitel kurz angerissen, eine implizite Bestimmung des Grades der Fanidentifikation zu entwickeln und vorzunehmen. Ein derartiges Messinstrument sollte in der Lage sein, das Risiko einer Fehlklassifikation des Fangrades deutlich zu minimieren, insbesondere vor dem Hintergrund einer potentiell vorhandenen sozialen Erwünschtheit. Drittens, die rivalitätsbedingte

Sponsoringwirksamkeit wurde in der vorliegenden Studie anhand von deutschen Fußballmannschaften und FMCG-Produkten als Untersuchungsobjekte analysiert. Entsprechend sollten zukünftige Forschungsarbeiten die Rivalitätswirksamkeit mit Blick auf andere Länder, weitere Sportarten sowie sonstige Konsumbereiche näher untersuchen.

Mit dem positiven Nachweis einer bereits hohen Sensitivität der verwendeten Untersuchungskonzeption steht Forschern und Managern ein leistungsstarkes Analyseinstrumentarium zur Verfügung, um generell die Sponsoringwirksamkeit besser zu bewerten, zu verstehen und zu steuern.

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