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A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY ON THE INFLUENCE OF BRAND AWARENESS IN SPORTS SPONSORSHIP

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of sports sponsorship on brand awareness. For this study we have taken secondary data as our research strategy. The research addressed how the brand image of the sponsors improve when they sponsor the sports event and the effect of that sponsorship on the success on the event. With the ongoing and upcoming development of the sports sponsorship market, it has been increasingly important means of communication to enhance the image of enterprises and highly achieve the enterprise goal. sports sponsorship is a powerful strategy that not only supports events, causes, or organizations but also has a significant impact on brand awareness. In this regard, we will delve into the world of sports sponsorship and explore how it can boost brand awareness.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to Statista 2016 annual report, the global sports sponsorship investment reached \$60.2 billion in 2016, increased by 4.7% compared with the last year. Thus, the sports sponsorship market has been developing rapidly. Sports event sponsorship is one of the effective ways for modern enterprise marketing.

Sports sponsorship is a kind of marketing strategy which helps to promote the athlete and teams by wearing and using their products. This helps the companies to grow with the help of marketing and promotion. And the athlete gets paid for it. This helps the brand to reach the larger audience to sell their products which also helps them to grow their brand. Sports sponsorship is not only promoting athletes but also promoting various sports events such as ISL, IPL and PKL etc.

This sponsorship helps to promote brand awareness among many people. People see their idols wearing and using their products and they also want to use them. This creates the awareness among the customers regarding a particular brand and their products. Example: Cristiano Ronaldo has collaborated with Nike on a lifetime contract with its own perks and benefits like having multiple supplies of shoes and training kits. This brand promotion of Nike by Cristiano Ronaldo has created brand awareness among his fans and followers which has helped Nike to grow rapidly among the sports Enthusiast. Therefore, it is particularly important to study the sports sponsorship effectiveness, its effect factors and how to construct the evaluation model of sports sponsorship effectiveness.

This article will explore how sports sponsorships can drive growth for businesses. By leveraging the unique benefits of sports sponsorships, companies can enhance brand visibility, generate leads, and foster meaningful connections with their target audience.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Meenaghan (1983) defined sponsorship as the provision of financial assistance to an activity by a company in return for exploitable commercial objectives. Mullin et al.(2000) provided a definition as the acquisition of rights to directly associate with a product or event to obtain benefits related to that association. During the past decades, sponsorship has been used as a critical marketing tool and has become a major global industry (Alonso-Dos-Santos et al., 2016).

Researchers have reported that some companies which have invested in sports sponsorship received significant growth in their revenue (Blake et al., 2019). This may be attributed to the enhancement of brand visibility and product consumption among sports participants (Kelly et al., 2017). More recently, Kwon and Cornwell (2020) confirmed that sponsoring sports events can enhance the value of sponsoring firms. Tzetzis et al. (2014) addressed the quality of the sponsored services (such as access, venue quality, and contest quality) contributing to participant satisfaction. More specifically, Koo et al. (2014) proposed a model of event image-satisfaction-behavioural intentions to capture the effect of small-scale sports sponsorship.

From the perspective of consumers, participating in sports events can increase their brand engagement and brand experiences, which will evoke their positive attitude and enhance their brand awareness of the sponsoring company (Wang and Kaplanidou, 2013).

Empirical research on large sports events has combined some variables to frame the effects of the sponsorship. For example, from the perspective of the brand's reputation in large-scale companies, Close et al. (2006) proposed that consumers' knowledge about a sponsor's product and community involvement positively affects their opinion of the sponsor's brand. Likewise, Lacey et al. (2010) also stated that the role of consumers' knowledge of the event sponsor's products would enhance consumers' commitment to the sponsor and intentions to purchase the sponsor's products. In contrast, Lee et al. (2015) emphasized the mediating role of emotion (e.g., pleasure, arousal) in the relationship between the sponsor's event attitude and brand equity. Recently, Quintal et al. (2020) explored and compared the impact of sponsorship and non-sponsorship activation of global brands (e.g., Adidas and Nike) on cognitive, affective, and conative behaviors across countries. They found significant differences in the attitude-purchase intentions of participants from different countries.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data collection

In order to examine the influence of brand awareness on sports awareness this study used secondary data approach. Data on how sports sponsorship have affected the brand awareness of companies with drastic growth in the sports industry itself with the help of multiple articles and internet surveys. Examining research on sports sponsorship, the effect on brand awareness and how it has had a huge impact on the sports industry and how it has grown a lot in the recent times were all part of the study. The main emphasis has been given on electronic data that has been collected from multiple articles on the internet.

Data analysis

Increased brand visibility and recognition is a notable advantage of sports sponsorship, as it allows brands to reach a wider audience and establish a stronger presence in the market. Sponsorship impact on brand awareness is significant, as it enables brands to showcase their logo, name, and messaging on various platforms such as stadiums, uniforms, and promotional materials. This exposure increases the likelihood of consumers recognizing and remembering the brand. Sports sponsorship provides a platform for companies

to showcase their values and connect with their target audience on an emotional level. This can further enhance brand reputation and foster a strong brand identity. Overall, sports sponsorship plays a crucial role in shaping a positive brand image and reputation in the eyes of consumers.

4. SCOPE

The study on ‘The influence of brand awareness in sports sponsorship’ is going to cover various aspects of the on how brand awareness influences in sports sponsorship . Moreover the study is going to cover the limitations, advantages and the changes that have taken place over the years . In order to conduct the research, the secondary method is used. Towards the end, a few references will be given related to the topic. Over the years, brand awareness has influenced sports sponsorship in a very positive way by increasing viewership and overall revenue. Overall the information given in the study is very detailed and tells us a lot about the influence of brand awareness in sport sponsorship.

5. THE OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The corporate firms are engaging in sports sponsorship to achieve their goals and objectives. One of the prime motive of sports sponsorship is to shift the perception of viewers and attendees from stigma, toward creation of a positive picture and credit for the company With the help of sponsorship, it is easy to transfer the image of the event to the sponsored brand, if the correlation between the sponsored brand and event, exist in the mind of the consumer. This can influence the attitude of the consumer toward the event and ultimately their purchase intention. The researchers had identified the strategies that can be used by sponsor companies, to position their sports brands and also influence consumers’ brand associations the success of brand equity and sponsorship.

The current study is attempts to investigate:

1. To identify the factors influencing brand awareness in sports sponsorship
2. Is there any impact of sports sponsorship on the consumer trends(cognitive component, emotional component, behavioural component) toward the sponsor's brand for sporting event?
3. To provide practical recommendations to enhance brand awareness in sports sponsorship.
4. To identify the relationship between brand influence and sport sponsorship and how they benefit each other.
5. To analyse how customers create a relationship based on loyalty with brands indulged in sports sponsorship

6. LIMITATION

1. Sponsorship can be expensive especially for major sporting events. This cost may not be always translate directly into brand awareness
2. Not all sports have the same demographic appeal. Sponsoring a event or a sport does not align with a brand’s target audience an limit the effectiveness of the sponsorship in the terms of brand awareness
3. In highly competitive sports environment there can be clutter of sponsor making it challenging for a brand to stand out and gain brand awareness.

4. If the sponsorship does not align with the brand's value it may not resonate with consumers limiting its effectiveness in building brand awareness
5. Some sports organization have regulations or restrictions on the types of sponsor they can accept limiting opportunities for brand in certain industries.

7. SUGGESTIONS

Sports sponsorship can be an excellent way to increase brand awareness, engagement, and loyalty among fans. Here are some suggestions for effective sports sponsorship and brand awareness:

1. **Align with Relevant Sports:** Choose sports which helps in aligning with your brand value and helps in attracting audience, and marking objective. For example if your brand promotes health and fitness approach for a sponsorship or a team in a sport like swimming, running and cycling could be suitable.
2. **Targeted Sponsorship:** instead of targeting bigger events or sports consider targeting smaller events or local teams which can help in promoting your band and helps brand awareness to the public in the certain areas
3. **Engage Fans:** Create interactive experiences for fans both online and offline. This could include contests, giveaways, or exclusive access to events. Engaging with fans directly can help build brand loyalty.
4. **Content Marketing:** Produce content related to the sports and sponsor. This could be blog posts, videos, or social media content that provides insights, highlights, this not only helps in building brand awareness but also establishes your brand in the sports industry.
5. **Branded Merchandise:** Offer branded merchandise at events or as part of promotions. This can include items like t-shirts, hats, water bottles, or sports equipment. Fans often love to support brands and they admire by wearing or using branded merchandise.

8. CONCLUSION

Sports sponsorship is an effective way to build brand awareness and increase sales. To successfully measure the impact of a sports sponsorship on your business, you need to establish realistic benchmarks and track results throughout the duration of the partnership. It's important to remember that sports sponsorships require long-term investments in order to realise the maximum potential value for your business. With proper planning, research, monitoring and evaluation, successful businesses can move from being spectators on the side lines into achieving success with their own sponsored team or athlete. By aligning your brand with events or causes that resonate with your target audience, you can create meaningful connections, enhance credibility, and extend your reach far beyond traditional advertising methods. When executed effectively, sponsorship marketing becomes a win-win, benefiting both the event or cause and your brand as you collaborate to engage and inspire your shared audience.

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