

Measuring sponsorship effects in intercollegiate sport: A comparison of Nike and Adidas

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Over the past few decades companies have invested significant amounts of sponsorship money in major commercialized sports (e.g., Olympic Games, NFL). Sponsorship has also become an important revenue source for intercollegiate athletic programs. Statistics from the NCAA (2008) reveal that median sponsorship income contributed about 7% (or \$1.3 million) of the total generated revenue to each Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) school. Among many other sponsors, two sport footwear and apparel giants - Nike and adidas - are key contributors. Some examples include adidas' \$26.6 million deal with KU and Nike's nearly \$12 million deal with OSU (Berman, 2006).

Because of the rise in sport sponsorship as an important marketing tool, scholars have examined the relationships among sponsorship influence factors (e.g., demographics, image congruence, team identification) and sponsorship effects (e.g., brand awareness, brand attitude, purchase intention). However, most studies (e.g., Ko et al., 2008) have focused on sponsorship in commercialized sports and only a few studies (e.g., Dees et al., 2008) have examined sponsorship activities in intercollegiate sport. It is surprising that no published study in sponsorship research could be found to have examined intercollegiate athletics' most prominent sponsors (i.e., Nike and adidas) to determine if their sponsorship efforts influence sport fans' preferences and behaviors.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine if Nike's and adidas' sponsorship initiatives on college campuses affect consumers' brand preferences and behaviors. Based on the image transfer (Meenaghan, 2001), social alliance (Madrigal, 2001), and mere exposure (Lee, 2010) models, this study investigates the relationships among three independent variables (IVs) - school affiliation, game attendance, and team identification - and three dependent variables (DVs) - brand awareness, attitude toward the brand, and buying behavior. This research hypothesizes that all IVs have positive relationships with all DVs. Thus, a subject from an adidas-sponsored school is expected to have higher brand awareness of adidas, a more favorable attitude toward adidas, and more buying experience of adidas compared to a subject from a Nike-sponsored school. Various statistical analyses (e.g., MANOVA, factor analysis) will be applied to the results of the survey - which is administered to students attending Big Ten Conference universities. In addition to building the body of knowledge in marketing research and further developing sponsorship models, this investigation is significant because it is the first known study to measure the sponsorship effects of Nike's and adidas' sponsorship investments in intercollegiate athletics.