



ASHESI UNIVERSITY

**EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPORTS SPONSORSHIP AND
TEAMS' PERFORMANCE: THE CASE OF FOOTBALL IN GHANA**

Undergraduate Thesis

By

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Supervised by: Dr. Josephine Djan.

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Declaration.

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

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I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this dissertation were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by Ashesi University.

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Abstract

Ghanaian football teams are not perceived to be thriving within the league and this makes it almost uncertain for the players to gain international recognition. This study will help identify the ways football teams position their brand and identify the criteria sponsors consider when venturing into a sponsorship deal. The aim of the paper is to determine whether sports sponsorship can help teams in terms of funding to become more competitive and upgrade their playing skills in order to improve their performances. The study will also help determine the most effective sponsorship tools that can help a team to become sustainable in the long run. Data was collected through a qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews in 3 Ghanaian football teams and 1 sponsor. The findings of the study reveal that without a huge involvement and funding from sponsors, Ghanaian football teams will find it difficult to compete with each other. Clubs really utilize the small amount of sponsorships possessed and are open to more funding. Sponsoring companies factor the team's image, performances, professionalism and the perception of football fans. Sponsors enjoy mileage and brand visibility benefits from sponsoring clubs. The main considerations for sponsorship include the team's history and success, large fans following and images. The major limitation was gaining access to more football teams would have helped emphasize the importance of sponsorships for Ghanaian football teams.

Key words: sports sponsorship, sports, football, football teams.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.

1.1 Background and Overview

Globally, sponsorships exceeded \$26 billion in 2002; two-thirds of this amount was invested in sports (IEG, 2002). Sports sponsorship has come a long way in world sports, as sports sponsorship amounted to \$1.35 billion in 1987 in the United States of America alone. The motive of sports sponsorship was thought to be a charitable act previously, but the motive has changed these recent years. Sports is an avenue where sponsorship continues to grow because within sponsorships as a whole, sports sponsorship accounts for approximately between 50% to 70% in each country depending on the year of study (Lagae, 2005). Sponsorship research and consulting firm IEG stated that North American companies are the biggest investors in the sports sponsorship segment (IEG, 2013). North America is followed by Europe and Asia Pacific with Asia becoming the most important marketplace in sports sponsorship. Mullin, Hardy and Sutton (2007) define sports sponsorship as:

The acquisition of rights to affiliate or directly associate with a product or event for the purpose of deriving benefits related to that affiliation or association. The sponsor then uses this relationship to achieve its promotional objectives or to facilitate and support its broader marketing objectives. (p. 315)

The areas of sports sponsorship according to Lagae (2005) include sport's governing body sponsorship, sports team sponsorship, athletes' sponsorship, broadcast and media sponsorship, sports facility sponsorship and sports event sponsorship.

As a derivative of sports marketing, there are several benefits of sports sponsorship. Schaefer, Parker, and Kent (2010) reports that the benefits are enhanced ad

recall, ability to gain and hold consumers' attention, increased desirability of the product and likelihood of purchasing, and increased brand loyalty.

The impact sports sponsorship has on football teams are all positive to teams internationally. These positive impacts as reported by Melovic, Rogic, Cerovic Smolovic, Dudic, and Gregus (2019) is that sports sponsorship influences the purchasing decisions as the consumers regarding the product of sponsors that creates a loyal base of fans as the consumers. Sports sponsorship is also considered to be an effective approach of promoting companies that are socially responsible, sustainable practices and provides an opportunity to build a customer base that is educated and highly dedicated. It goes without saying that the impact is a two-way street as the team and company benefits.

1.1.1 Sports Sponsorship in Africa.

The importance of sponsorships as far as sports in Africa is concerned cannot be overemphasized. These sponsorships have provided opportunities and exposure for African teams, the players and coaches. In the Northern and Southern part of Africa for instance, club level football has advanced as compared to the football played by West African football teams (Moonda, 2019). Unlike their West African counterparts, the Northern and South African regions have more advanced economies are able to keep some of their talented players, and this accounts for the high standards of the leagues.

Sports sponsorship has come a long way as it has proved to be a large source of financial aid to African football. The agreement between Total and the Confederation of African Football is an example of financial infusion and a demonstration of the confidence that international businesses have in African football. Total in 2016 became the biggest sponsor in African football for a period of eight years. This resulted in the naming of the

African Cup of Nations as the Total African Cup of Nations. According to their Senior Vice President of Corporate Communications, Jacques Emmanuel Saulnier, Total aims for a 20% share on the African continent through the sponsoring of the African Cup of Nations (Total, 2017). Judging from their motive, sports offers the greatest audience and it is their ambition is to be able to interact with these members of the community through football.

Sports sponsorship and the benefits in Africa are mostly concentrated in few areas of Africa. Revenues from sports sponsorships globally reach an estimated \$45 billion which had Africa accounting for less than \$2 billion in 2015 (Toesland, 2016). And a large proportion of the revenue from these sponsorships went to South Africa. The Premier Soccer League (PSL) in South Africa announced that the revenue of the PSL exceeded R1 billion in revenue after the end of the 2018/2019 season (PSL Media, 2019). This record was aided by the funds generated from their seven main sponsors and broadcast partners: SuperSport, Absa, Nedbank, Telkom, MTN, MultiChoice and Glad Africa. This 7% increase in revenue was driven by a raise in broadcast agreements and an inflationary increase of sponsorship revenue.

Kenyan football in the Eastern part Africa has also benefitted largely from sports sponsorships. The Kenyan Premier League recently signed a sponsorship deal with SportPesa, a betting firm in a deal worth 450 million shillings (US\$ 4.5 million). The deal by SportPesa is 60% more than what previous sponsor, Tusker offered- 270 million shillings (US\$ 2.6 million) (Moonda, 2015). The agreements signed by the football association show the development of football in Kenya alongside the faith companies that have to invest in the sport. With their funding arriving in multiple ways, it is hard for other areas of Africa since they don't profit from it. A major one involves not being able to keep

your players as Northern and Southern Africa teams sign them. This means Northern and Southern Africa become attractive football destinations for sponsorships. Skill drain in the context of footballing is not an issue for North and South African club teams because their leagues have talented players from other parts of Africa and they are also able to attract players from other continents (Liwewe, 2010).

Sports in Africa keeps improving in terms of quality and competitiveness as it has shown glimpses of talents that are worthy of investment. The international sponsoring companies have recognized the excellent skills athletes from Africa demonstrate in various sports, and as a result of this, varying sponsorships deals have been secured for them (The Observer Team, 2018). Investment in African sports and athletes is a market that is growing gradually, and corporations look to expand by engaging people on the continent.

1.1.2 Sponsorship in Ghana

Football is the most preferred sport in Ghana with national support that can captivate the whole nation whenever a national team is playing. It has oftentimes called for a presidential intervention to resolve issues (Amenyo, 2016).

Some Ghanaian top division teams in the Ghanaian Premier League have struggled in terms of finding sponsors for their team's operational activities, but one of the most committed corporations that have helped Ghanaian football is MTN. Idowu (2016) asserts that MTN has been one of the most influential brands in Ghana. The biggest Ghanaian telecommunication company has played a key part in the development of Ghanaian football investing over \$23 million between 2008-2014 to the sponsorship of all Ghanaian national football teams and the Ghanaian Premier League (Idowu, 2016). The organization has been headlining sponsors for most events including the MTN FA Cup. The tournament has

provided unknown teams and players with the chance to show their skills and contribute to the development of football in Ghana. One of MTN's crucial sponsorship deal was with one of the Ghanaian football giants, Kumasi Asante Kotoko. And this deal was a deal that had a positive impact on the team improving team performances. The package MTN had for Asante Kotoko was for a combined amount of GHc 1,050,000 (Sports Business, 2012). MTN's contribution to football in Ghana in terms of sponsorship on all levels has been unmatched as it continues to do everything in their power to see football taken to the next level in the country.

1.1.3 Sports Sponsorship.

Sponsorship is a marketing promotional tool that permits an organization to make an impact directly to an attractive event or audience. The ultimate objective of sponsorship is to increase the turnover of the sports event sponsored. Shimp (2003) defines sponsorship marketing as promoting the interest of a company and its brands by associating the company with a specific firm or event. Sponsorship as a key marketing tool has proved to be the most penetrative key marketing tool for sports. And football is one of the sports that possesses many commercial opportunities. It is evident as Joseph (2014) reports that broadcast rights are the largest income stream for clubs in Europe with commercial activities being the second largest contributor.

The aim of sports team sponsorship is to create a mutual beneficial relationship between a sports team and a corporation. The reason for companies to enter into such agreements differ from one organization to another. The impacts of sports team sponsorships from the corporation's perspective is to build the awareness of a brand's goods and services, create new customer relationships, which offers internal benefit to

employees and brand associations with the sports team (Hunter and Schwarz 2008). The use of media and technology have been important in achieving most aims of sports sponsorships. Events such as the Masters golf tournament, FIFA World Cup and the Super Bowl influence the emotion of people around the world (Barroilhet,2016).

Sports sponsorships have aided sports consumers in choosing which brands to purchase and which not to. The name of the athlete or team is what drives sales once the sports fans have ties with athletes and teams. LeBron James and Kobe Bryant with Nike, and Muhammad Ali with Adidas are examples of famous successful athletes and have driven sales for these brands through a sponsorship agreement (Shank and Lyberger, 2015).

1.2 Problem Description.

Ghanaian football was at a standstill since June 2018 as the association went through a normalization phase (Kapoor, 2019). The normalization phase meant the league came to a halt and all the league teams were inactive. The only active initiative then by the Normalization Committee was the formation of a normalization tournament that recently decided which teams can represent Ghana on the continental stage for the CAF Champions League and CAF Confederations Cup tournament. Football in Ghana is the nation's predominant sport as the state serves as its primary contributor (Tackie, 2018). The most popular teams continue to benefit the most in these times of inactiveness such as the normalization period. Traditional teams such as Kumasi Asante Kotoko and Accra Hearts of Oak continuously have external resources to back their teams and also be in good financial standing. The root of the problem is how unattractive the league has been and the non-existence of proper infrastructure in place for teams to utilize (Osei, 2011).

This results in participation in leagues with teams of a low quality who will not be able to contest with the few top teams and this makes the league a substandard one.

There is a huge presence of muscle drain in Africa as the top players on the African continent move to more competitive leagues and little effort has been made to combat the problem (Toesland, 2016). This has been caused by lack of sports sponsorship and football in Africa cannot survive without their sponsorships.

Football is undoubtedly the most popular sport in Ghana that serves as one of the popular sports that bring Ghanaians together. The problem is to specify reasons why smaller clubs lack adequate funding and ways by which these long-term sources of funding can be accessed and disbursed to their benefit.

1.3 Significance of the Study.

The significance of this study is to create guidelines for most of the lower teams in Ghana position themselves strategically to attract sponsorships.

The sponsoring companies will be guided on how to identify eligible teams in Ghana that they can sponsor. The study also aims at improving Ghanaian and African football from a marketing and sponsorship perspective.

The results obtained will be beneficial in the future as Ghanaian football teams can look at financing mainly through sports sponsorships to improve the quality of the Ghanaian league. The research is very crucial for corporate firms to understand the advantages in investing into Ghanaian football teams.

1.4 Research Question.

The paper primarily seeks to answer the following questions:

- I. What are the important factors sponsors consider before partnering with football teams?
- II. Do Ghanaian football teams rely heavily on sports sponsorships?

1.5 Research Objectives.

- I. The paper will determine whether sports sponsorship can help lower-rated teams in terms of funding to become more competitive and upgrade their playing skills in order to improve their performances.
- II. This study will identify some important factors that sponsors evaluate when partnering with football teams.
- III. The study will determine the most effective sponsorship tools that can help a team to become sustainable in the long run.

1.6 Methodology.

The approach will be a qualitative approach as interviews will be mainly used precisely semi-structured ones. Football teams selected were selected through the use of purposive sampling hence two traditional teams and one traditional team Sponsoring companies were visited and examined for their criteria to sponsor various football teams. The information was collected through a detailed summary from the interviews and audio recordings. The football clubs that were examined in this study were Kumasi Asante Kotoko, Accra Hearts of Oak as the traditional teams and Dreams Football Club as the non-traditional team.

1.7 Organization of Study.

This section breaks down each chapter of the paper, highlighting every important part of the paper. Chapter 1 mainly opens up the introduction of sports sponsorship as a marketing tool for Ghanaian football teams.

Chapter two reviews the literature on the use of empirical and theoretical frameworks that can be utilized in order to find the right mix of factors of sponsoring unpopular football teams in Ghana.

Chapter 3 highlights the definite methods and tools that will be used in conducting the research study and the population sample it will be applied to.

Chapter 4 features an in-depth analysis of the qualitative data that were acquired to gain the understanding of the information and identify the aptness of the objectives stated.

Chapter 5 constitutes the conclusion of this thesis. It provides well-detailed responses to the underlying research questions, specifies the limitations of the study, and ends with possible areas for further research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.

This chapter will review and adopt key parts of different papers to explore sports sponsorship as a tool of marketing, the impact that sponsorship plays in the sports industry and outlines the previous research conducted on the objectives of sports sponsorship and the variations of sports sponsorship. Similar works that have been done on sponsorship in sports will be highlighted as well.

2.1 Theoretical Review.

2.1.1 Sponsorship.

According to Waite (1979), sponsorship refers to “a gift or a payment in return for some facility or privilege which aims to provide publicity for the donor.”

Meenaghan (1983) analyzed various definitions of sponsorship from a number of literatures to define it: “...sponsorship can be regarded as the provision of assistance either financial or in kind to an activity by a commercial organization for the purpose of achieving commercial objectives.” (Meenaghan, 1983) The definition of sponsorship at that time was regarded not to have developed fully and the following definitions have been changing since that. Chris Fill in his Marketing Communications book defines sponsorship as: “Sponsorship is a commercial activity, whereby one party permits another an opportunity to exploit an association with a target audience in return for funds, services or resources” (Fill, 2005).

Otker (1998) refers to sponsorship as “buying and exploiting an association with an event, a group, a team etc., for specific marketing (communications) purposes.”

Mullin, Hardy and Sutton (2000), discuss that sponsorship as a promotional license is known as “the acquisition of rights to affiliate or directly associate with a product or event for the purpose of deriving benefits from that association.”

Shank explains the term ‘sponsorship’ as “investing in a sports entity (athlete, league, team or event) to support the overall organizational objectives, marketing and promotional strategies” (Shank,2009).

The distinctive definitions of sponsorship through the years similarly emphasizes on the relationship that is involved between an organization that is offering sponsorship and the product or event receiving the sponsorship. Furthermore, it indicates an investment by organizations into a product or a service whereby the organization will also benefit from the partnership.

2.1.2 Sponsorship and Advertising.

Generally, sponsorship is a term that is often confused with advertising as it was believed that it was synonymous.

Advertising is one of the main elements in the marketing mix (public relations, personal selling, and sales promotion), but is rarely used on its own therefore it is put together with other elements to achieve the best results.

Kotler and Keller (2006) define advertising as:

“Advertising is any form of nonpersonal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor.” (Kotler and Keller, 2006, p.568)

The use of mass media such as television, radio, magazines and the internet are important in advertising to relay a message that is persuasive to a broad and selective

audience. The message must be communicated to the audience and has to convey the same idea across to all potential consumers (Fullerton, 2010).

Sponsorship is a way of introducing a consumer to a company, its goods and services whilst encouraging a one-to-one relationship (Broderick & Pickton, 2005). According to Sleight (1989), sponsorship works because it fulfills the most important requirement of a communication medium—it enables a particular request to be shared by a single community.

There is no direct use of the mass media to convey a message but is a possibility to represent a sport, club or event bringing prestige to the company through association when talking about sponsorship. Through association, there is credibility established from the perspective of the viewer towards the company and a belief the company and product are of high value. (Fullerton, 2010).

These two activities can be used separately or can be combined with other elements in the market communication mix to be effective and will not be considered a standalone activity since integrating all the elements creates synergy improving the marketing communication.

2.1.3 Sponsorship with regards to marketing.

Sponsorship is known to be one of the activities of the marketing communication mix that conveys a message that is clear and consistent about an organization and its products. The marketing mix makes up part of the foundation of marketing and the marketing communication mix forms the base of marketing communications. The term marketing mix was initially invented by Neil Borden in 1948 but the term and its

classifications were made up by E. Jerome McCarthy primarily used in marketing text (Broderick & Pickton, 2005).

Neil Borden's idea behind a marketing mix was combining a range of ingredients that will create products that satisfies customer and consumer specification once the ingredients were properly mixed. The ingredients that will satisfy the customer and consumer comprised of twelve elements: product planning, pricing, branding, advertising, promotions, packaging, display, personal selling, channels of distribution, physical handling, servicing and analysis. McCarthy refined the initial ideas of Borden regrouping the twelve elements to four namely the 4P's: product, price, promotion and place (Borden,1964)

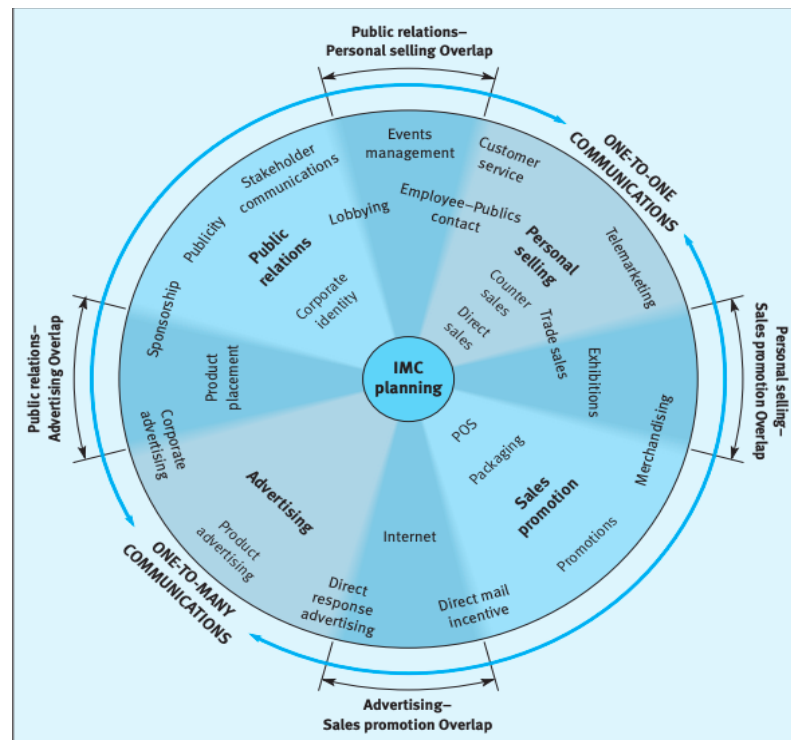


Figure 1. The Integrated Marketing Communication Mix Model. From *Integrated Marketing Communications*. (Broderick & Pickton, 2005).

The Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) model indicates that sponsorship is an activity that lies between public relation and advertisement according to Broderick and Pickton (2005).

According to Shimp (2003), IMC's main aim is to influence the targeted audience's behavior in a direct manner. The customer is the determinant for how the type of messages and channels will be the most suitable to inform, persuade and take action. Sponsorship must be integrated in the overall communication mix to obtain maximum effectiveness (Broderick and Pickton, 2005).

2.1.4 Sponsorship Objectives.

With every sponsorship deal signed between two parties, the rationale behind the closing of the deal must be included in the objectives. The goals of a sponsorship deal must be linked to promotional objectives and the marketing objectives of the organization (Shank, 2009). These objectives can be grouped into direct and indirect objectives: although the direct objectives focus only on raising sales, the indirect objectives target the creation of a solid brand awareness (Shank, 1999). Direct objectives are known as sales increase and competition. Once companies invest into a particular project, there is hope it leads to accelerating profit during the short-term and long-term (Shank, 1999).

The desire by sponsors to increase the level of sales constantly is the main driver of entering sponsorship deals. The parties assess their organizational objectives and marketing aims to conclude which form of sponsorship will suit both parties (Shank, 2009).

The ambition showed by great sponsors over the years has been as a result of the competition. Competition serves to be the one of the main reasons for sponsorship activities because once a firm fails to invest, its competitor takes advantage leading to a market loss

during big events such as the FIFA World Cup and the Olympics (Shank, 2009). Once the competitor takes advantage of sponsoring a global event, a wide customer base is created, sales increase and values are created.

The indirect objectives are the brand awareness, reaching target markets, relationship marketing and image building. Brand awareness is said to be the initial taken under the elements of brand strength. The creation of awareness is necessary prior to interest then desire and action can be initiated (Broderick and Pickton 2005). The authors continue to state that awareness can be prompted and unprompted. While the user is often reminded of a brand name as indicated with prompted awareness, unprompted awareness applies to a brand name which is the most common name until a product category has been introduced. The more valuable one is unprompted as customers are more likely to think about brands in the process of a purchasing decision (Broderick and Pickton, 2005).

Relationship marketing establishes the long-term success of a brand. The thought behind relationship marketing emphasizes how vital the relationship developed between the organization and customers, partners and suppliers (Broderick and Pickton, 2005). There are 3 conditions by which relationship marketing can be an efficient approach according to Mullin, Hardy and Sutton (2007): customer's continuous desire for a type of service, customer's control the service supplier's selection and alternative service suppliers. The conditions are appropriate for a sports marketplace and relationship marketing because sports consumers continuously are the type who have long-term affiliations with a sports team or sports brand (Mullin et al, 2007).

2.1.5 Sports Sponsorship

According to Shank (1999), the term sports sponsorship involves “investing in a sports entity (athlete, league, team or event) to support overall organizational objectives, marketing goals and/or promotional strategies.” (p. 34)

Hunter and Schwarz (2008) state that in 776 BC, sports sponsorship for the Olympic Games ranged from minor financial contributions; to show involvement and political aspirations to Irodis Attikos level of sponsorship where he individually incurred the whole expense of the Kalimarmaro stadium. Sports and marketing began as early as the 1870’s where tobacco companies used baseball players as promotion issuing cards with the players on them (Idugboe, 2012). The development of sports sponsorship improved significantly and has restructured in varying forms as one of the notable ones was a company investing more than \$200 million into the Olympic Games (Idugboe, 2012). The television network American Broadcasting Company paid over \$200 million and this proved to be successful as the 1984 Olympic Games generated an \$225 million profit (Hunter and Schwarz, 2008). All this means that sports sponsorship lacks a precise time of appearance.

2.1.6 Forms of Sports Sponsorships.

Sponsorship in sports come in diverse forms but there are three leading categories are sponsoring competitions and tournaments, sponsoring stadia and sponsoring and sponsoring local clubs and national teams.

Governing bodies of sports activities enter sponsorship deals with corporation who are usually multinational companies and receive and “official sponsor” status with guaranteed exclusivity. An example sponsors of FIFA World Cup 2018 were announced: Coca-Cola,

McDonald's, Visa, Adidas, Gazprom and others ("2018 FIFA World Cup Russia™ - FIFA Partners - FIFA.com," 2015).

Sponsoring a stadium refers to a situation where a company builds an arena and names it after itself. Arsenal Football Club's stadium was sponsored by Emirates Airlines and Imtech Arena, the home of Hamburger SV.

Sponsoring sports clubs could take place in various forms. The sponsorship could be a company providing free transportation services or kit production. An example can be Chevrolet's \$600 million sponsorship deal with Manchester United for a period of seven years since 2012 (Woisetschläger, Backhaus, & Cornwell, 2018). A significant aspect to remember is that it is meant to be advertisement to put a company logo on team sportswear or posters on the stadium, but in reality, it is often considered sponsorship because it is tax-free in various states (Kuhn, 2014).

Athlete sponsorship also refers to when a corporation seeks affiliation with an athlete to secure exclusive marketing rights reaping benefits from that association. And an athlete endorsement is a type of athlete sponsorship meaning the athlete declares their personal association with a brand or product (Hunter and Schwarz, 2008). Corporations have involved more sports celebrities with \$46.3 billion invested into popular athletes in 2010 (Koo, Ruihley, & Dittmore, 2012)

. This is explained by a phenomenon whereby a photograph of Michael Jordan's head was more recognizable than pictures of the face of Jesus Christ or Bill Clinton in a California shopping mall (Andrews & Jackson, 2002).

2.1.7 Benefits of Sports Sponsorship.

The list of potential benefits of sports sponsorships are namely: enhanced ad recall, ability to gain and hold consumers' attention, increased desirability of the product and likelihood of purchasing, and increased brand loyalty (Schaefer, Parker, & Kent, 2010).

Enhanced ad recall is a factor which is intertwined with receiving interest from consumers. The benefit of having a well-known person or a sports club to represent a brand provides a larger possibility of being recognized by a consumer. This results in capturing the attention of you audience requiring less effort and retaining the attention. When the desirability of a product increases, there is a relation formed with the halo effect and sense of the ideal self. The halo effect implies that a person who ranks high on one dimension is seen higher on the other (Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard, & Hogg, 2006). So, finding everything that their role models have done pursues them to be ranked higher themselves. So that adds to the element of enhanced likelihood of purchasing.

Brand loyalty is a smart marketing strategy and an important aim for any company. According to Solomon (2007), the rule of thumb in marketing states that 20% of customers are responsible for 80% of sales. Preferences is rarely shifted when a customer is loyal to a brand and the loyalty results into obtaining a lifetime client. Armstrong and Kotler (2005), stated NASCAR succeeded in creating memorable experiences that created lasting relationships with its customers. The possible exclusiveness from the sponsoring company's perspective is an advantage of sports sponsorship (Mullin, Hardy, & Sutton, 2007).

The concept of building goodwill is another benefit of sports sponsorship to a sponsoring company's benefit. The use of sponsorship is a more personal way of operating

a brand thus the brand image can be positive once sponsors are providing the topmost services Mullin, Hardy, & Sutton, 2007). The entitlement to a sports facility or event is a type of sponsorship that is used. Naming rights are the most expensive sports marketing investment in the present marketplace, and it is also regarded as the less utilized mode of sponsorship” (Mullin, Hardy, & Sutton, 2007).

Corporations dedicate resources in terms of sports sponsorship to achieve a brand that is desirable to engage existing and persuade potential customers. This means the selection of sports club or athlete should have a positive image should be top priority (Shank, 2009).

2.1.8 Threats of Sports Sponsorships.

Pahwa (2019) defines ambush marketing as a marketing strategy in which a company sidesteps marketing efforts by its competitor to gain an upper hand in terms of exposure by stealing the spotlight from it. Ambush marketing serves as a threat to sports sponsorships because it will be difficult for a sponsor to get rid of ambush market happening without paying sponsorship fees. This is because an agreement prevents a competitor from sponsoring a same sporting event or club. Even though the official sponsor of the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing was Adidas, Li Ning-a Chinese sportswear brand outfitted some Chinese, Argentine, Tanzanian and Russian athletes (Tschang, 2008). The media coverage of sports events will provide opportunities for non-sponsors to benefit on the expense of main sponsors.

A threat that is becoming less favorable to corporations in sponsorships are legislation issues. The main concerns are alcoholic and tobacco products which have almost nothing in common with sports. The nations on the European, Asian, and Northern

American continent have different ways of regulating tobacco and alcoholic adverts and its effect on the health of the public is monitored (COM, 2008).

Lastly the image of a brand is dependent on the individuals that it is being promoted by. According to Parulekar and Raheja (2006), the congruency between the image of a brand and that of the athletes that represent is vital for a sponsorship to succeed. Once the celebrity loses trustworthiness, the sponsor faces a big risk affiliating itself with the celebrity. Tiger Woods – an American professional golfer was considered a family man till his scandals went public. This placed his sponsor then, Nike in a trap even though his image affected Nike positively. (“Good sports sponsorships: industry trends, best practice and risk management”, 2014).

2.1.9 Understanding Motive Inferences

This framework is used by people to determine the reason behind a sponsorship between a sports team and a brand. The theory will determine the compatibility between the partners and the reasons behind the relationship (Woisetschläger, Backhaus, & Cornwell, 2018). The framework is a mix of affective, normative and calculative sponsor motives. According to Woisetschläger, Backhaus, & Cornwell (2008): affective motives are inferred as a result of its positive intention towards the sponsored property; normative motives are ascertained once firms are recognized to be carrying out civic duties in supporting property; calculative motives are assumed if firms are regarded to engage in sponsorship basically influence marketing decisions and sell products and services.

The rationale behind the structure is the identification of affective and normative motivations that reaffirm the relationship between the two parties, enhancing property

valuation and preserving brand attitude and loyalty (Woisetschläger, Backhaus, & Cornwell, 2018).

Factors that are used to determine the motives depend on contract length, regional proximity and sponsorship fees. Long-term relationships declare true commitment and regional connection indicates a natural relation and positive sponsor motives. On the other hand, pricey contractual agreements can raise acknowledgements of calculative motives generally. The framework can explain the motive(s) that sponsors have when signing a sponsorship deal with a sports team.

2.1.10 ATR Model

The Awareness Trial Reinforcement model believes that consumers will only pay attention to brands with which there is an existing personal attachment (Ehrenberg, 2000). After gaining the awareness of a brand as a consumer, there will be a trial purchase made. According to Ehrenberg (2000), a repeat-buying sequence by the consumer could happen if the consumer had no problem with the brand during the trial purchase. The ATR method was devised to originally understand classical advertising but may also be suitable or explain the effect of sponsorships as sponsorship stimuli plays a role in all 3 stages. Hoek, Gendall, Jeffcoat and Orsman (1997) propose in the last stage lies the main function of sponsorship namely brand reinforcement. The framework can be used to evaluate the products sports teams offer to their fans.

2.1.11 The AIDA Model

The Awareness, Interest, Desire, Action model was structured to analyze the movement of a consumer from one place stage to the next and how marketing communications affect the behavior of consumers. The model is the basis for a number of

similar hierarchies of effect models due to the straightforward sequence of states that form the model (Broderick & Pickton, 2005).

Awareness is the stage whereby a brand manages to catch consumer's attention through any marketing communication element suitable. The attention can be positive or negative and the sponsors only benefits from the positive perspective. The interest phase is introduced once the sponsor has been able to capture a customer's entire attention. Desire refers to the consumer confidence of discovering a product of high quality with an intention to purchase. The consumer's intention to purchase materializes into an actual buying behavior as the consumer takes action fulfilling the AIDA model's last element.

2.1.12 The Concept of Goodwill

Meenaghan (2001b), defines goodwill as:

“...the perception of the sponsor's behavior toward the activity and the intensity of fan involvement with that activity, [and it] provides the trigger for the consumer's affective response and related behavior in terms of favorability, brand preference, and in some instances, purchase.”

Goodwill serves as the positive attitude consumers have in the direction of a sponsoring company due to the support the company offers to the affiliated consumers. Consumers acknowledge to the support of a sponsoring company and goodwill is formed between sponsor and consumer.

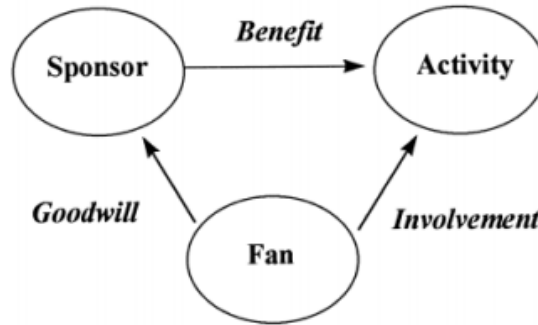


Figure 2. The emergence of goodwill. From Understanding Sponsorship Effects. (Meenaghan, 2001).

Goodwill exists on three level according to Meenaghan (2001b) and they will be discussed.

The generic level: This level involves a customer understanding a company providing values for others whilst not supporting the objects that a sponsoring company supports.

The existence of goodwill is seen to be abstract and not that impactful than the other levels.

The company will then be recognized creating goodwill even though the customer involvement will be absent.

The category level: This level varies according to the category the company is sponsoring.

The category level is vital as it looks at sports sponsorship from a commercial context generates less goodwill than that of corporate sponsorships such as charity. The effect is felt more intensely at the category level than generic level.

The individual level: The effect of goodwill is at its maximum once the customer is interested. The level of goodwill varies depending on the interest level of the consumer. In a scenario where a company sponsors a football club, goodwill amongst passionate fans will be larger than that of a normal fan.

2.1.13 Sponsorship Engagement Process

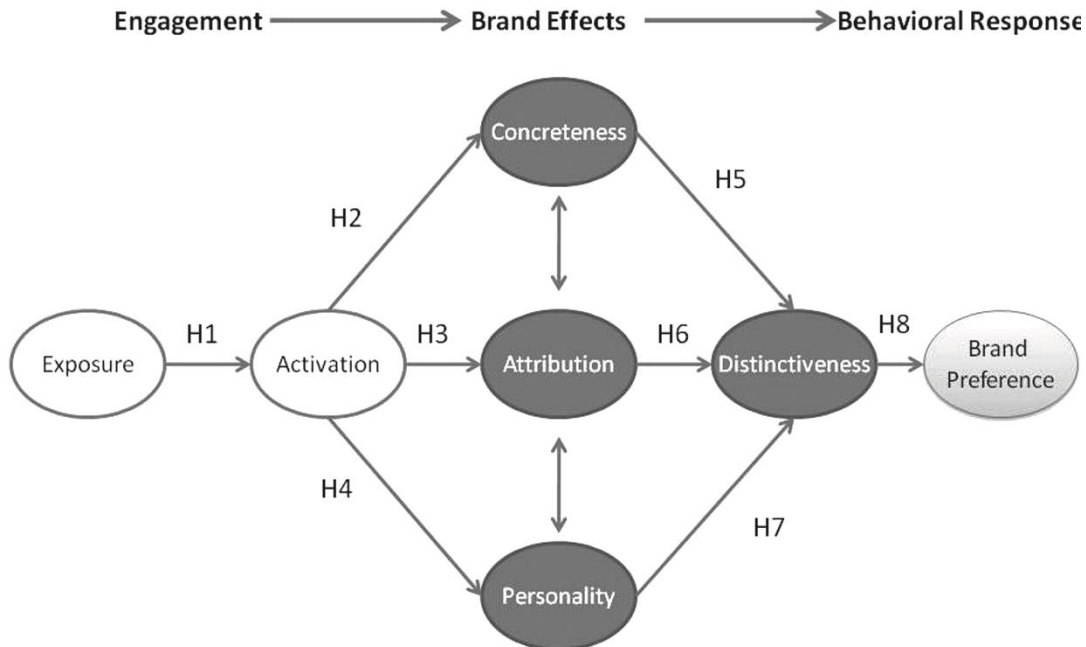


Figure 3. How Sponsorships Work: The Sponsorship Engagement Model. Event Management. (Wakefield, 2012)

The idea behind this framework is to determine how a sponsorship deal is activated between two parties. Wakefield (2012) defines the term sponsorship activation as “encompasses those partnership actions linking the property with the brand to make the brand distinct in the minds of the audience.” (p. 146)

The explanation behind sports activation includes three fundamental components. Initially activation refers to a partnership between property and brand to develop and accomplish the strategy. Activation focuses on combining the property with a brand making the passion of the spectators transfer to the brand. Lastly, the activation must do something to differentiate the brand showing distinctiveness in the audience’s minds.

Hypotheses.

Engagement describes the occurrence of opportunities presented by the property to network with the spectators directly in person or indirectly through media controlled by the property. The correlation between increased engagement, exposure, interaction, and involvement and the audience's capability to detect the linkage between sponsors and the event is well established (Johar, Pham, & Wakefield, 2006). Thus,

H1: Engagement has a positive effect on the audience's perception of sponsor activation.

Concreteness. Concrete words are known as clear words that produce perfect imagery and enable easy recollection and detection. The opposite abstract words do not rapidly produce images of events or merchandises and if they do so encounter some trouble and delay. And among brands there are some that are concrete and others that are abstract. Papaye is a concrete brand as the image of fried rice with grilled or fried chicken is thought of. Sponsorships offer an approach to complement concreteness in the thoughts of the audience as nonexistent associations with other object or words would have no clue what some brands mean. Activation starring the brand name on the center of jerseys (Aon and Manchester United) couples the two images, making the brand name more simply accessible in retention. The more active and operational the activation strategy in linking the sponsors with the property, the more the sponsor's brand lasts in the mind of the audience.

H2: Activation has a positive influence on brand concreteness.

Attributiveness. Heider (1958) implies that the attribution theory is when audiences attribute the pleasure of the event to the sponsor as the audience frequently notices the activities of sponsors when they partner with events or a brand. The audience may evaluate that the efforts of the sponsor benefit the experience or equally do nothing to add to the experience's value. Activation strategies not only deliver unforgettable event activities but distinctly communicate the relationship between the brand and the event as it results in the audience making positive attributions to the sponsor.

H3: Activation has a positive influence on brand attributions.

Personality. Brand personality according to Aaker (1997) is defined as “the set of human characteristics associated with a brand” (p. 347). And the aim for every sports team or established events is to create strong personalities or images. Mountain Dew's aim is to be a bold, irreverent and an action-oriented force in its partnership with extreme sport events. Once audiences cooperate, witness and access brand information communicated by the sponsor, activation promotions will be successful. Chien, Cornwell, and Pappu (2011) discovered a fictitious fabricated brand is meant to be extra interesting and rugged whilst nicely related to sporting occasions. Image transfer is probable to occur the more property and brands are related (Gwinner, & Eaton, 1999). The outcomes intensify the fact activation strategies practiced include more than just simple spotlight.

H4: Activation has a positive influence on brand personality.

Distinctiveness. The quantity to which a brand is given the impression to be awesome, or particular, is an indicator of logo health and capacity sales (Berg, Matthews, & O'Hare,

2007). Brands serve to distinguish product and service alternatives for clients. Essential to a success positioning is the perception that the brand occupies a completely unique space in the minds of customers. Hunt (2003) explains that distinctive processing is the “unique processing of an item at encoding that enhances discriminability of that item at retrieval” (p. 811). People tend to forget about things that can be comparable and familiar because the object (or brand) does no longer stand out in our minds. As an example, common names are hard to accurately recollect until an individual is associated with something else which distinguishes the individual from others. Interestingly, as Hunt (2003) shows through a series of tests, the interpretation of events increases one's capacity to remember details correctly. Applying event-based modeling to products and sponsorships, unassisted brand memory or visualization in any specific category will then be small. Including a case, though, helped recall is higher.

At an event where brand activation is done, viewers should be able to identify a brand uniquely using evident-based processing. Rawson and Overschlede (2007) demonstrate that when combined with NFL-related objects, NFL fans easily remember irrelevant things. When these incentives are placed in context well established to viewers, it leads to an improved memory by categorization and its associate memories. Similarly, creating labels interactively within a framework well-known and well-liked by the crowd at an event will promote a recognizable identity that is retained in the consumer minds.

However, the sponsorship interaction model described here goes deeper than simply matching the sponsor with the case. As advised through H2, H3, and H4, sponsor activation prompts mental strategies producing a greater concrete brand picture, with

effective attributions, and an enhanced brand persona. Taken collectively, the increased concreteness, fine attributions, and enhanced brand personality derived from the activation method will lead to the perception that the sponsor's brand is unique from other manufacturers within the class. Hence

H5: Brand concreteness leads to brand distinctiveness.

H6: Brand attribution leads to brand distinctiveness.

H7: Brand personality leads to brand distinctiveness.

Behavioral Response. Brand preference, positive word of mouth, and buying intentions are typical behavioral responses sought by the brand management. Keller (1999) mentions clients prefer a more unique and distinct image of the brand.

H9: Brand distinctiveness leads to positive behavioral response.

2.2 Empirical Review.

Volozova (2016) examined how the sports sponsorship can be used as a marketing tool by businesses. The collection of data was done quantitatively due to its simple nature. A survey was geared to suit that was analyzed to determine the effectiveness and extent of how sports sponsorship marketing influences customers. The questionnaire was conducted online to reach a broad audience. The study concluded sports sponsorship is able to enhance brand awareness and creating a positive attitude towards a brand. And the sponsorship's effect in creating a constructive attitude to the company is intuitive due to the association with a particular team or celebrity it appears connected to. The study finally described sponsorship as a decent instrument that enhances the community involvement of a company improving its brand image as well.

A study was conducted to measure effectiveness of sports sponsorship by 3 New Zealand scholars in 2008. The Awareness-Trial-Reinforcement model (ATR) was applied for evaluating sports sponsorship by Ehrenberg (1974). The objectives that were being achieved was to evaluate the awareness and impact of team sponsors. The researchers chose to gather information to telephone interviews (Garland, Charbonneau, and Macpherson, 2008) averaging call duration of 10 minutes asking cognitive, probability, behavioral and demographic questions. The research concluded that sponsorship bolsters existing buying behaviors and there is high risk for small businesses to practice sponsorship solely as the brand communication tool.

A study by Ivarsson and Johansson (2004) outlined the most vital importance of sports sponsorships are to increase the company's public awareness and create goodwill to gain media coverage. The study's main purpose as to investigate the manner by which sports sponsorship can be utilized as a promotional tool. In the study, there are factors considered when selecting a sport event known as the potential for image association and the media coverage of sport sponsorship. An evaluation of sport sponsorship is usually carried out in three stages and is conducted through the use of the media and consumers.

A study by Woisetschläger, Backhaus, & Cornwell (2018) evaluated 44 sponsorships in the German football league with 2,787 consumers knowing the existing deals. A proposed relationship was formed by an experimental study of handball which relatively a low-profile sport to football. The study concluded that there is more to a sponsorship deal than its relationship between the sponsor and sports team as the deal's nature relays an indirect message to supporters (Woisetschläger, Backhaus, & Cornwell, 2018). The contract duration, sponsorship fees, regional focus and characteristics of all the

elements needs to be taken seriously by the team's management. A short-term contract possesses greater flexibility but can lead to negative motive inferences. A distant sponsorship in a geographical context will open new markets but can be result in negative motives. Sports agencies must not treat sponsorship as revenue-generating activity but examine these sponsorships may affect fans and stakeholders. Long-term commitments in sponsorship deals is the preferred option and the regional partnerships should be examined differently from multinational sponsors.

2.3 Limitation of the Study.

The literature and models stated have not been used to evaluate sports sponsorship from the perspective of a sports team and a corporation in Africa. Even though the models have been used mainly in Europe, the use of sports sponsorship as a marketing strategy is not explored for African teams - Ghanaian teams to be precise. Therefore, this paper will investigate the factors sponsors consider when signing a sponsorship deal with Ghanaian football teams. The paper will also evaluate the strategies teams can employ to build a good brand that can be promoted to football stakeholders and corporations.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY.

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to investigate the factors which both sponsors, and sports teams consider when choosing a deal that will be beneficial to both parties. These deals would also serve as a sustainable form of finance for Ghanaian football teams. The chapter explains the research design especially the tools and data that will be analyzed as well as the data collection procedure. These procedures adopted play a major role in achieving the objectives of this paper. The chapter will be divided into the various subheadings: research design, scope of study, data collection process, data analysis, limitations and ethical consideration. Objectives of the research are:

- 1) The paper will determine whether sports sponsorship can help teams in terms of funding to become more competitive and upgrade their playing skills in order to improve their performances.
- 2) This study will identify some important factors that sponsors evaluate when partnering with football teams.
- 3) The study will also determine the most effective sponsorship tools that can help a team to become sustainable in the long run.

3.2 Research Design

Lavrakas (2008) defines research design as a general plan that is used to control a research study in examining research questions that are of interest to the researcher. The thesis was conducted using the qualitative research method. This approach provided a greater understanding of sports sponsorship from the context of Ghanaian football, as an in-depth insight was gained. This qualitative approach made use of semi-structured

interviews. Semi-structured interviews are useful as the open-ended question provides access to a lot of information from different perspectives. This was to illustrate how the teams position themselves and the criteria by which sponsors sign deals with them.

3.3 Scope of Study

The population that were in the study will be some of the key stakeholders of Ghanaian football. They included the management of the football teams, the players and the sponsors. The research participants selected is exhaustive enough to achieve the purpose of the paper as it will not be too large or too small. The management team of the football teams are vital as they will be able to explain the operations of the clubs and its marketing decisions they have made. The sponsors are also vital as they will be able to describe what goes in the selection of a team to sponsor and whether their objectives are aligned with that of the team.

3.4 Study Area.

The study was limited to the Greater Accra and the Ashanti Region because of lack of time and money. These regions were also picked because that is where most of the popular teams in Ghana are based. The whole Greater Accra was not used as parts the rival team of Hearts of oak dominates some parts. Ashanti Region because Kumasi Asante Kotoko dominates most parts. The project was conducted during the 2019/2020 academic year at Ashesi University.

3.5 Sampling Strategy.

Purposive sampling was used for the teams selected because this sampling method is used in making premeditated choices due to outstanding elements that these teams possess. The technique does not depend on theories but mostly rely on the information the

researcher has as a result of their knowledge (Etikan, Musa and Alkassim, 2016). This nonrandom technique focused on various groups with varying features who can best help in accelerating research. The data that can be provided through purposive sampling can be robust and reliable despite its inherent bias (Tongco, 2007).

3.6 Data Collection Process and Preparation.

Primary data was collected for this research study. Interviews, particularly semi-structured were conducted with the research participants namely the sponsors and management team to garner information for the study. The data used was primary data through the interviews of sponsors football teams and their players. This data collection processes for the project will provide rich and detailed information to conclude the subject matter. Management of football teams were interviewed as they are the driving force behind every operational activity at the club. Sponsors were interviewed as they provide the teams with monetary and other sponsoring packages that a team can benefit in many ways keeping players and management happy. Football players were not left out of the data collection as their contribution to the survival of the football clubs are very huge. Both face to face interviews and phone interviews were conducted by the researcher.

3.7 Ethical Consideration

The identity of club officials that will participate during the research period will be confidential. The nature of the responses provided by top club officials and their management may be sensitive therefore participation is voluntary and have the right to withdraw from the study if they wish to do so. The participants involved will not be harmed in any way whatsoever and full consent will be sought prior to the study. The

communication in this research will be honest and transparent. All participants involved will be treated with the highest level of respect. During the interviews, the participants were informed about the audio recording which they all did not mind. The questions used for the interview including the questionnaires to the human subjects will be scrutinized by the Institutionalized Review Board of Ashesi University before it will be administered.

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS.

4.1 Introduction.

This chapter presents the qualitative information that was gathered during the research. The data collected are through interviews of participants relevant to this research. The teams that participated in the semi-structured interviews were Accra Hearts of Oak, Dreams Football Club and Kumasi Asante Kotoko. The top management of the teams stated were the ones interviewed thoroughly. Some of the sponsors of the Ghanaian teams were interviewed as well to evaluate sports sponsorship from the corporate perspective. This study investigated how sports sponsorship could help to improve teams through funding; identify some important factors that sponsors consider when partnering with football teams; and to determine the most effective sponsorship tools that can help a team to become sustainable in the long run.

The results achieve the aim of ascertaining the elements corporations evaluate when signing a sponsorship deal with a football team. In addition, the results look at the sponsorship tool that is deemed the most effective and help a team to be financially secure in the long run. The results provide a steppingstone to determine whether sports sponsorship can help football sides to create a more competitive playing field in the league in terms of funding and support in order to improve the performances.

The findings follow actions of well-resourced teams in Africa and the rest of the world practice to make their brands noticeable and land lucrative deals. The findings from the interviews will be in themes to best understand the research.

4.2 Findings and Discussions

The following themes found from the research conducted are Rich and successful history, large following and a Brand image.

4.2.1 Rich and Successful History.

The main question asked was how these teams position their brand to capture various sponsors and one of the most underlying themes was through the rich history of the football clubs.

With an interesting founding date, the oldest football club in Ghana is the Accra Hearts of Oak was founded on November 11, 1911 in the Gold Coast. The Accra-based team has won 20 league cup titles and 10 F.A. Cups and 3 trophies in African tournaments. The Ghanaian side in 2000 won the Ghana FA Cup, Ghanaian Premier League and the CAF Champions League. The rich history of the side has cemented them as one of the most famous and well-respected clubs on the African continent as it is evident when the Confederation of African Football named them as one of the top clubs of the 20th Century.

The rivals of Accra Hearts of Oak are the biggest team from Kumasi, Kumasi Asante Kotoko. The team in Kumasi has been renamed several times but after permission from Nana Sir Osei Agyeman Prempeh II, it was changed finally to Asante Kotoko. The name “Kotoko” means “Porcupine” and represents the official symbol of the Ashanti Nation. The 31st day of August in the year 1935 was the official inauguration date for the club in front of a large gathering of chiefs and other individuals. The Asantehene and the Atipinhene were elected as the patrons of the football team. With their home venue as the

Baba Yara Sports Stadium, Asante Kotoko is the record holder of Ghanaian Premier League titles with 24 of them. They have won 9 F.A. Cups, 3 Ghanaian Super Cups and 2 CAF Champions League which is one more than Accra Hearts of Oak and is the 7th most successful club in Africa.

However, the only non- traditional team in the research Dreams Football Club is a football team that was established in the year 2009 and was promoted to the second division in 2014. The club's office is located at Ogbodjo, a town in the Adentan Municipality in the Greater Accra Region. The club became winners of the Zone 3 of the Division One League gaining qualification to the Ghanaian Premier League in 2015. The club's training ground is located at Kweiman and their stadium is called the Theatre of Dreams in Dawu.

4.2.2 Large Following of teams.

The rich history of the traditional teams played a major role in attracting sponsors to help with funding. And the history provided the traditional teams with a large following that only a few can boast of currently. These answers are to the question of *how traditional teams have positioned themselves to secure brands.*

Accra Hearts of Oak believes their continental and domestic laurels have played a large part in bringing spotlight into the club. Sponsors are motivated to tap into the large following of the team from the Greater Accra Region. These sponsors use it to gain brand equity and sales of their brands as the club can boast of about 5 million supporters nationwide. The image of sponsors is then increased as supporters of the club patronize these sponsors.

Kumasi Asante Kotoko is known as arguably the best followed team nationwide therefore they have the ability to attract the largest crowds in Ghana. The team believes that good performances translates into large crowd attendances to gain revenue from gate proceeds. Sponsors of the club are believed to be interested in the kind of following the team has regularly as they are number one in the country with over 5 million dedicated fans for the club.

4.2.3 Brand Image.

The large following of the two traditional teams in Ghanaian football has set them apart from the rest of the teams in Ghana as they have a great brand image. This image therefore is attractive to corporate companies to sign deals with them. The questions asked to gain these answers were *how funds are generated for the team, how is a sponsor obtained and how many sponsors are on board currently.*

Accra Hearts of Oak believe football is a capital-intensive venture therefore funds are needed consistently to run the club. They provide the forms of revenue and these are transfer fees of players, gate proceeds, sponsorships, television rights, image rights, player rights and selling of merchandise such as replica jerseys, mugs, shirts and others. There are plans of making money through a mobile phone application and a television channel that will broadcast the team's news and matches exclusively. This plan has been adopted from the way European clubs try to raise funding by heightening the brand image. The large brand image of the club has secured sponsors such as MTN, GOIL, Cloud Africa, SAS Ghana, Umbro and StarLife Assurance.

Kumasi Asante Kotoko lays emphasis on gate proceeds during tournaments as it is the most regular source of income. Sports sponsorships and transfer fees are the rest of

the main source of funding. Even though there is a large following, the club does not regard merchandising and paraphernalia. Asante Kotoko states “*There are two main sponsors namely MTN and Hollard Insurance Company.*” They believe even as a big club with a large following, gate proceeds are not sufficient to run the club and forms approximately 35% of the club’s financial requirement. This means the impact sponsorship fees possess on the team is a large one. And one of the ways to elevate the brand image is to bring back formal registration of the Asante Kotoko supporters. There is a mobile application for dedicated fans who cannot go to the stadium and pay to view live matches. The team brands itself on their local and continental titles to draw sponsors.

The only non-traditional team in this study that is Dreams Football Club have used varied ways to put their brand across to the corporate world continuously. As a club founded in 2009 with a few laurels, it is difficult to breakthrough and try to steal the spotlight from Asante Kotoko and Hearts of Oak. As one of the most exciting Ghanaian football teams currently, they have gone about building their brand differently and are making great strides through the use of social media accounts to interact with fans, clarify issues and provide up to date news about the team. You can list the social media handles that they use.

The club does not have a direct marketing team in the club. Investments are made to employ competent individuals that the team sublets the right to serve as agents to work on maintaining a good brand. They suggested unconventional means of providing content such as a club mascot. Also, methods such as Corporate Social Responsibility projects, hiring a musician to sing the club anthem and the brand of jerseys acquired for the club are all means of positioning to persuade corporate bodies.

The club's main source of revenue is through the sale of players, gate proceeds and sponsorships. Merchandizing is a source of revenue, but the benefit is next to nothing. As a team that is not well-resourced sponsorship comes in various forms for them as they provide essential services. These services include painting the club office and stadium, water sponsoring, a sponsor covering match-day entertainment with their Public Address System, jerseys laundry and club apparel. This shows how every form of sponsorship is effectively utilized other than monetary outlays.

In the last five years there have been sponsors for Dreams FC such as Nike, Emwel Microfinance, Ezzy Paint, MyBet.Africa, Nakia Laundry Services, Paradise Pac Mineral Water, M Vison Entertainment and Philteng Medical Centre.

4.2.4 Sponsorship from a Sponsor's Perspective

MyBet.Africa is the main sponsor of Dreams Football Club and have been with them for two years. The factors they considered was the image, their performances, exhibition of professionalism and the perception of football fans towards the club. Regarding the team's image, they looked at whether the team can enhance their publicity and how well can a football team promote the firm to each region in Ghana. The firm also assess the cost implication of sponsoring the team to gain the mileage desired by the firm. The contract was initially for a year and was renewed for another year. The cost incurred when choosing a traditional team such as Asante Kotoko or Hearts of Oak will be very high as it is a key factor. However, choosing Dreams Football Club is a viable option as they are upcoming, perform very well and have exhibited professionalism on all fronts. As a corporate entity, the company is confident their objectives align with that of Dreams Football Club as they are both showing growth and a huge sense of professionalism. The

benefits of sponsoring Dreams Football Club are with their name displayed on their jerseys they gain a lot of recognition as they play football in different regions. The soccer team also honors the sponsor during interviews. And the emotional attachment of the fans of Dream Football Club is used to build an affinity towards MyBet.Africa.

The sponsorship package aids in the management of the team's daily activities from the financial perspective. The benefit of the sponsorship to the team lastly serves as a reminder not to tarnish the image of the team and company in the long run.

4.2.5 Sponsorship Engagement Process between MyBet.Africa and Dreams Football Club.

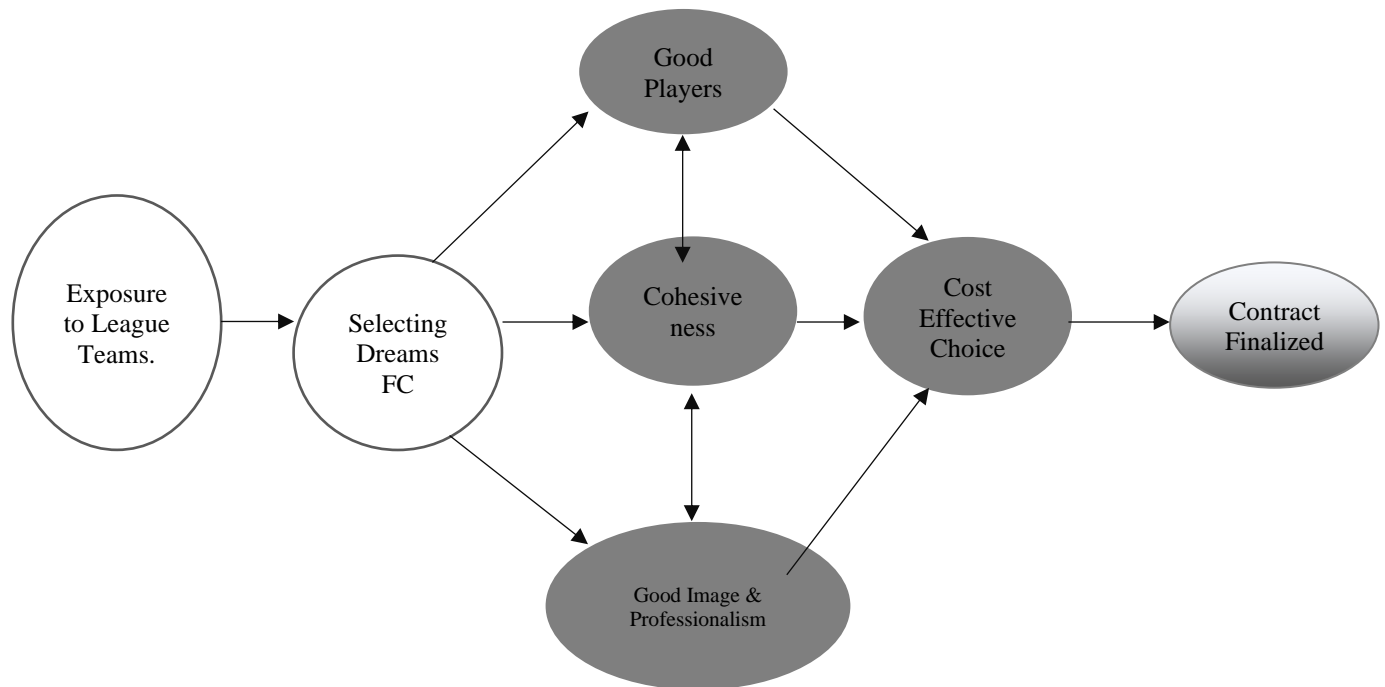


Figure 4. Sponsorship Engagement Process between MyBet.Africa and Dreams Football Club (Field Data, 2020)

Sponsorship Engagement Processes are meant to be between sponsors and the perception of football fans. The framework has been redesigned (in Figure 4) to outline the process of how MyBet.Africa activated a sponsorship deal with Dreams Football Club to be their headline sponsor.

MyBet.Africa aims to be one of the biggest betting companies in Africa starting from Ghana. And one of the ways to make an impression and expanding a customer base is through sponsoring a football team. There were traditional clubs who have large fanbases and non-traditional clubs who relatively possess smaller following.

Dreams Football Club have been chosen because the football club is one of the most consistent clubs as they mostly finish in the top half of the league when the season ends. The team is filled with talented players in every position.

There is cohesiveness in the team as the team has a sense of unity and this is very evident on the pitch as well. The coach, the technical and management teams also exhibit as good leadership and followership has been observed on and off the football field.

Dreams Football Club have displayed a high level of professionalism on the Ghanaian football scene that convinced MyBet.Africa as one of their corporate objectives is to show professionalism on their end. The brand image of the team is very strong as they make use of social media to engage with fans and football lovers and a mascot that performs for fans during home games and give out souvenirs to spectators.

Considering these qualities that are possessed by Dreams Football Club as a young and vibrant club, the partnership deal was the best thing for a company such as MyBet.Africa. This has resulted in a great partnership for the past two years.

Benefits gained by MyBet.Africa through the Sponsoring Dreams Football Club.

Visibility.

Since the deal was signed between MyBet.Africa and Dreams Football Club, both neutral spectators and the club's supporters have been aware of the company. The company has been able to reach out to their target clients that are football fans all over

Ghana who are interested in betting. The company is a growing company and has shown signs of progress with more subscribers. The neutral spectators who have been to home games of Dreams Football Club have experienced free subscriptions to the betting site. The subscribers have also been credited free money to their bet accounts to gamble on sporting events. Also, freebies are offered to all fans at every home match, so a good reputation has been built.

Mileage

During the two-year period of this sponsorship deal, every game played during has gained attention in one way or the other. The football league televised reaches some African countries and this provides audiences interested to know about the company. And once the brand is known in a lot of geographical locations for good reasons, credibility is formed leading to a lot more subscribers from different locations apart from Ghana.

4.3 Discussions.

With the findings from the sponsor's and the football club's perspective there are some factors as to why Ghanaian football may not be attracting numerous sponsorships to help finance the club's activities. During the hiatus, the two traditional teams were supposed to secure some lucrative sponsorships due to their large followings, popularity and their rich history.

The management of the clubs believe the quality of football in Ghana at the moment is high, but the patronage is not. The patronage this time does not include only the spectators but also corporate entities as well. The belief of football being a proper avenue of making brands popular is very evident abroad as most companies are ready to

make that investment. On the other hand, most companies on the Ghanaian scene are not ready to make that investment into football. One club official stated:

“Ghanaian companies do not want to take the risk of sponsoring the team therefore the teams have resorted to what they can control focusing on merchandizing and commercialization of goods of services under the club’s name which does not provide a lot of returns.”

However, a few of them are fully aware of the benefits it comes with. And when these companies willingly partner Ghanaian football teams, the quality of the league automatically improves. The teams know that numerous sponsorships will also solve financial problems the teams face. The investment of many sponsors in football will increase value of television rights as the league will be of the highest standard. Sponsorship money for football teams will help reduce the quality gap between the Ghanaian leagues and the highly rated leagues in Africa.

Another official of a football club also described what usually goes into a sponsorship deal before it is signed.

“There is a pull effect whereby if a club secures a sponsorship, the partner derives some benefits. This effect makes more clubs become appealing to corporate bodies which brings revenues to clubs and enhances the images of corporate bodies as they capitalize on the mileage opportunities of some clubs.”

Club officials also understand why other African leagues are ahead in terms of quality and it is mainly down to the sports economy of the country. Large economies such as South Africa, Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco has a direct impact on the kind of sponsorships they attract. And these countries have relatively larger companies than that

of Ghana. The sports economy is small as football in Ghana and West Africa as football cannot command figures other industries command when it comes to sponsorship where one revenue stream is needed to develop other revenue streams.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

Shank (1999) refers to sports sponsorship as investing in a sporting institution-athlete, competition, team or event to promote general corporate objectives, strategic priorities and/or promotional strategies. The idea of sports sponsorship is one that is still slowly developing in some parts of Africa as it is in its early stages for football and will grow spreading to other sporting disciplines on the continent. Schaefer *et al.* (2010) claims the benefits are enhanced through product ad recalls, ability to gain and hold consumers' attention, increased desirability of the product and likelihood of purchasing, and increased brand loyalty.

The problem was to specify reasons why clubs lack adequate funding and ways by which these long-term sources of funding can be guaranteed. During this period, Ghanaian football went on a hiatus and traditional clubs were still able to secure sponsorships for financial and other purposes.

The objective has been to determine whether sports sponsorship can help teams in terms of funding to become more competitive and upgrade their playing skills in order to improve their performances. Secondly, identify some important factors that sponsors evaluate when partnering with football teams. And determine the most effective sponsorship tools that can help a team to become sustainable in the long run. The study took a qualitative approach as it harnessed semi-structured interviews to answer the intended research question of the study which are:

- (i) What are the important factors sponsors consider before partnering with football teams?

(ii) Do Ghanaian football teams rely heavily on sports sponsorships?

Findings gathered from 2 traditional football clubs and 1 non-traditional Ghanaian football club in the Ghanaian Premier League were integrated to arrive at critical findings. Football clubs in Ghana rely heavily on sponsorships to support daily operational activities of each club. Apart from depending on player sales, clubs really utilize the small amount of sponsorships possessed. Secondly, companies factor the team's image, performances, exhibition of professionalism and the perception of football fans towards the club. Also, football teams attract sponsorships with mainly their history and success, large following as companies can capitalize on that and the brand image of the football team. And it is easier to attract sponsors when you have a successful history and the cost implication is the major factor sponsors consider when selecting a team to sponsor. The benefits obtained by some companies are brand visibility and mileage as they are recognized and reach out to wider audiences.

5.2 Limitations

The study faced a lot of challenges in its execution. The primary limitation was the inability to access more football teams. The access to sponsors were difficult as most of the management could not help in linking me with them to conduct or schedule an interview. Access to players was a problem as they never availed themselves for interviews. Another limitation was limited access to most football teams as it would have helped increase the importance of sponsorships for struggling teams especially. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic too was a serious limitation as it could not help with assessing the benefits sponsors gain properly from the sponsorships because football had to be halted.

Secondary data was not readily available as there are not many articles or literature reviews on sports sponsorships in Ghana and Africa.

5.3 Recommendations

In defining the impact of sports sponsorships more comprehensively in relation to Ghanaian football teams, below are the recommendations of how clubs and sponsors can build on this study to help finance smaller teams and other teams in Ghana. Essentially these suggestions can help domestic clubs gain more revenue through sponsorships.

1. Football teams and companies should continuously assess the finances and projections of sponsorships in not only short periods but also long periods. This is because sponsorship deals usually can benefit one and not the other therefore financially sound and beneficial sponsorships must be entertained.
2. Football teams on the local scene must invest in having marketing experts to promote the team in the best way possible. And once sponsorships deals are signed, teams must do their absolute best to maintain them for the long-term by fulfilling contractual details amidst mutual satisfaction.

5.4 Recommendations for further study.

Further studies on this topic should consist of a quantitative research with regards to correlation to assess the exact impact sponsorships on Ghanaian football teams. And this can also be measured considering the financial impact sponsorship has on the Ghanaian football teams. The modelling of future financial projections of football teams

with and without the element of sponsorship money must also be explored to determine the financial position of the Ghanaian teams.

The element of the football fan's observations - neutral and supporters of the various clubs is the one of the most important. The research did not find the exact number of football enthusiasts and individuals that were drawn onto companies after sponsorship deals were signed. A survey of various fans can also be used to examine their thoughts on sponsorships for analysis. Therefore, it will be relevant to include a study of the percentage rise or decrease of traction Ghanaian football teams and sponsors gain after a sponsorship deal is signed between both parties.

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Appendix 1: Interview Questions

Questions intended for the football team management members:

How are funds generated for the team?

Have you obtained a sponsorship for the team in the last five years?

How many sponsors do you have?

What is the impact of sport sponsorship on the football team?

How does the team position their brand in order to capture various sponsors?

How does sports sponsorship help with solving the problem of financing Ghanaian football teams have in the long run?

Can sports sponsorship be a main source of income for team operations in Ghana?

Even though other African leagues have advanced, can Ghanaian football teams bridge the gap by obtaining long-term sponsorships that will help financing of the team?

Is there a large focus on building a good brand that will land popular and wealthy sponsors?

Can the quality and competitiveness of the league improve once every team is able to land a sponsor?

Outline some benefits teams gain when they land a sponsor?

Questions intended for the sponsors of the football teams/ players:

What inspires a sponsorship deal?

What are the criteria behind for choosing that team?

How is a team chosen to sponsor if two teams have an identical attribute?

In what ways do football teams align with your corporate objectives to agree to a sponsorship deal?

What benefits have you enjoyed when sponsoring the team?

Does the perception of your companies become good ones when sponsoring a football team?

Do you believe sponsoring a football team will help improve the football team in any way?

What factors are evaluated when entering a sponsorship and are the motives behind entering a sponsorship deal with the team positive ones?

Does the period for sponsoring a football team matter?

What factors contribute to lifelong/prolonged period of sponsorship?

Is there a future for Ghanaian football considering their sponsorship provisions?