

DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

The Influence of Sponsorship on Consumer Behaviour in Ghana Football

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The Influence of Sponsorship on Consumer Behaviour in Ghana Football

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ABSTRACT

Sports sponsorship is a vital marketing strategy where companies provide financial support, resources, or products to sports entities in exchange for brand exposure. This practice boosts brand visibility taps into passionate fan bases, and fosters customer loyalty. However, Ghana's Premier League (GPL) faces sponsorship challenges despite its significance. This study investigates sponsorship's impact on purchase intentions among Ghanaian soccer fans.

The research aims to bridge the gap in understanding how sponsorship influences fans' behavior, specifically their purchase intentions. Objectives include assessing fan attitudes, evaluating fan involvement's impact, measuring sponsor-event fit's effect, gauging brand image's role, understanding sponsor brand perception's influence, and examining soccer fan characteristics' moderating role.

The literature review critically analyses sports sponsorship's effect on fans' purchasing intentions. Drawing from theories and foundational works, the study's framework delves into core variables, rooted in prior literature. Hypotheses are derived from a rigorous synthesis of theories and literature.

The research design is explanatory, and the approach is quantitative. A non-probability sampling technique, specifically, convenience sampling, is used to select participants from the two clubs, found within a 50-kilometer radius of the club's home base. Using survey data from 389 respondents in Accra and Kumasi, a conceptual framework is developed and validated. Data was collected using a questionnaire, with items used in the questionnaire sourced from previous studies. Collected data was entered in Excel and transferred into SPSS version 26.0 and Smart PLS for further analysis. The analyses employed both descriptive and inferential statistics.

Findings indicate fan attitude significantly influences purchase intention. Sponsor-event fit doesn't significantly impact purchase intention, but sponsor brand perception does. Moreover, customer characteristics don't moderate sponsorship's effect on purchase intention.

This study informs practitioners about effective sponsorship strategies from a fan's perspective. It expands sports marketing literature in emerging economies. Recommendations include building emotional connections, aligning with fan values, and leveraging user-generated content.

In conclusion, this research advances the understanding of fan attitudes, involvement, brand perception, and image in shaping purchase intentions among Ghanaian soccer fans. It contributes to both theoretical knowledge and practical strategies in sports marketing.

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, certify that I am familiar with the rules regulating higher qualifications at the Durban University of Technology (DUT) and understand the seriousness with which DUT addresses ethical violations in research. I have correctly referenced the work of others in the proposal and the references. Any similar research used in the development of my project is also properly cited.

This project has not been submitted to any other educational institution for qualification purposes. All subsidy-earning outputs (artefacts and publications) from my postgraduate studies will comply with DUT's Intellectual Property Policy. Patents developed under DUT supervision involving institutional expenditure will be considered joint property, entitling DUT to its share per DUT's Management and Commercialisation of Intellectual Property Policy.

I acknowledge that I am expected to publish an article based on my research results. I also understand that plagiarism is wrong and carries severe penalties.

I HEREBY DECLARE THE ABOVE FACTS ARE CORRECT.

Signed

Date: 12 July 2024

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDA	Attention, Interest, Desire, Action
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CDP	Consumer decision-making process
CFI	Comparative Fit Index
CI	Confidence Interval
CRM	Customer relationship management
EFA	Exploratory factor analysis
ELM	Elaboration Likelihood Model
GFI	Goodness of fit index
GPL	Ghana Premier League
IEG	Independent Evaluation Group
PLS	Partial Least Square
PSL	Premier Soccer League
RMSEA	Root mean square error of approximation
ROI	Return on Investment
SA	South Africa
SEM	Structural equation modeling
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UK	United Kingdom
VIF	Variance inflation facto

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the scope of the study, which is divided into five sections: the study context and background of the study, the research problem and its purpose, a review of the literature, the research methodology, and a conclusion. Despite the rapid growth in sponsorship utilization and spending, there is a lack of academic research that thoroughly explains efficient sponsorship practices. Additionally, research supporting sponsorship development is not as easily accessible as other marketing disciplines, despite the dynamic and constantly evolving corporate environment. Therefore, this study focuses on assessing the influence of soccer sponsorship on consumer behavior among the Ghanaian soccer fanbase.

The study sets the following objectives: first, to assess the impact of fan attitude on purchase intention; second, to evaluate the influence of fan involvement on purchase intention; third, to measure the effect of sponsor-event fit and brand image on purchase intention; fourth, to determine the impact of sponsor brand perception on purchase intention; and fifth, to examine the moderating role of consumer characteristics in the relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention.

The epistemological viewpoint of this study is positivist, and a quantitative research design with an explanatory approach was employed. To ensure scientific sample selection techniques, the unit of analysis focused on registered members of the two supporter groups, namely the official supporter groups of Kumasi Asante Kotoko SC (Circles) and Accra Hearts of Oak SC (Chapters). Non-probability sampling techniques, specifically convenience sampling, were utilised to select 398 participants within a 50-kilometer radius of the clubs' home bases. The quantitative data were interpreted after collection, capturing, and processing, and the results were summarized.

The anticipated findings of this study will have implications for both practice and theory. For practitioners, it is expected that the findings will provide support for incorporating purchase intention and sponsorship into a communications strategy, recognizing the importance of engaging fans at the cognitive level and the role of product knowledge in shaping fan attitudes and purchase intentions.

1.2 Context and background of the Study

Sports sponsorship has emerged as a powerful tool for increasing brand awareness, shaping consumer attitudes, and enhancing corporate image (Dinh, Nguyen-Viet, & Phuong Vo, 2023). This study aims to develop a model of consumer purchasing intention in the context of significant soccer events in Ghana. Therefore, the analytical unit of this study is the "soccer fan." In this context, a consumer refers to an individual who intends to purchase or has already purchased goods and/or services for personal consumption (Yao et al., 2023).

Consumers play a crucial role as one of the key stakeholders in sponsorship. Sponsorships are designed to connect a brand with a specific event, group of people, or action, in order to enhance brand reputation and ultimately increase sales (Bai et al., 2021). Consumers are the target audience for this brand-building endeavor and play a significant role in determining the effectiveness of the sponsorship. Additionally, consumers may have a personal connection to the sponsored event, team, or individual, further underscoring the importance of their opinions on the sponsorship, in addition to the sponsor and the sponsored property (Kast, Kerwin & Burton, 2023).

In this study, the sponsored property is referred to as the "event." The sponsor is an organisation that supports an activity, either financially or in-kind, with the aim of achieving business objectives (Groza, Zmich, & Groza, 2022). This study investigates the perceptions of consumers towards the sponsored property, the sponsor, and the sponsorship activity. It is implied that these relationships will contribute to advancing knowledge on developing sponsorship strategies that yield favorable consumer purchasing intentions.

Despite ongoing efforts, the conceptual understanding of sponsorship is still evolving in rigorous research (Sharei & Zare, 2023). Therefore, the lack of consumer awareness regarding sponsorship underscores the significance and value of this research (Steiner, Pittman, & Boatwright, 2023). Moreover, a significant proportion of recent studies have focused on analyzing sponsorship in relation to a limited set of factors, with only a few studies investigating sponsorship as an integrated process, including its impact on consumer purchasing behavior. The fundamental basis for this behavior lies in the consumer's desire to purchase a sponsor's goods or services (Hautbois, Djaballah & Desbordes, 2020).

1.3 Research Problem Statement

Sports sponsorship has shown a strong correlation between fans and purchasing intentions (Koronios et al., 2022). Business case studies conducted in the United Kingdom (UK) indicate that sponsorship is not merely a charitable cause but must demonstrate a good return on investment (ROI) (Dixon, Lee & Scully, 2019). Thus, it becomes crucial to determine the appropriateness of the proposed event considering the sponsor's brand and offerings, using established evaluation standards. Well-chosen sponsorships can provide various advantages to sponsors, such as brand exposure, customer engagement, community alignment, increased sales, and market research (Pillay & Sibiya, 2021).

Using sports as a medium has emerged as a potent strategy for mass consumer dissemination. Companies often employ sponsorship, endorsement, and advertisement techniques to have a significant impact on the local environment, community, economy, and sales operations (Bo et al., 2023). Sports sponsorship, with its ability to attract a larger audience, break cultural barriers, and cater to various niches, allows organisations to reach a broader target market and foster stakeholder interaction (Boyd et al., 2011; Sleight, 1989; Hulubei & Avasilcai, 2020).

Engaging fan emotions through sponsorship requires in-depth study and a cooperative partnership between rights holders and sponsors (Christian et al., 2022). Major soccer leagues worldwide have shown the popularity of corporate sponsorship (Buck & Ifland, 2022). Notably, sponsorship deals worth millions of dollars have been struck between teams and companies in various European leagues (Bello, 2016; Chadwick, Widdop, & Burton, 2022; Dreisbach et al., 2021; Söderman & Santomier, 2019).

There is global growth and commercialisation of sports sponsorship, however, Ghana's Premier League (GPL) and its headline sponsorships have faced challenges. The Ghana Premier League (GPL) has struggled to secure consistent headline sponsors, despite its rich history, massive fan support, and media coverage (Maanda, Abratt, & Mingione, 2020; Shezi, 2022). This lack of sponsorship has raised concerns about the financial burden on clubs and the overall development of the league (Akowuah, 2020; Kwaw, 2021).

Despite the recognition of sponsorship as potentially instrumental in enhancing consumer purchase intention, the extent to which these variables relate appears to have received little attention in the marketing literature. To date, it is still unclear how sports sponsorship could drive purchase

intention of fan base, especially in the context of developing economies like Ghana. Though few studies (Smith et al., 2008; Biscaia et al., 2013; Koronios et al., 2016) have attempted to show how sports sponsorship could drive purchase intention, the mechanism through which this occur remain unknown. Thus, the main question which this study seeks to answer is: what is the relationship between sports sponsorship and purchase intention of fan base?

Additionally, drawing from the view of Donaldson (2006) it is not sufficient to examine a bivariate relationship because there could be other variables which may influence the interaction between the independent and the dependent variables. It could be a moderating or mediating variable. Hence, for the purpose of valid generalisation, researchers must at least propose and examine a trivariate causal relationship (Saeidi et al., 2019). In this study, fan attitude, fan involvement, event-fit, brand image and brand perception have been proposed in the research model as mediators.

In the current sports sponsorship landscape, prior research has underscored the significance of fan attitude, fan involvement, event-fit, brand image, and brand perception as crucial determinants of consumer behavior. However, a notable gap exists in the literature concerning the nuanced relationship between sports sponsorship and these variables in influencing the purchase intention of the fan base. This study, drawing on the AIDA model theory, Heider's Balance theory, and Schema congruity theory, contends that sports sponsorship could be a pivotal factor in shaping the purchase intention of the fan base. The nature of this relationship, however, is posited to be contingent upon the fan's attitude, involvement, event-fit, brand image, and brand perception of the sponsoring organizations.

To address this research gap, the study aims to explore the influence of sponsorship on consumer behavior within the Ghanaian soccer fanbase. By delving into the unexplored dynamics of sports sponsorship and consumer responses in the Ghanaian context, the research seeks to contribute valuable insights into the behavioral patterns of soccer fans. This focus gains further significance given the limited attention to purchasing intention and sponsorship from the fans' perspective in Ghana, potentially hindering the Ghana Premier League (GPL) from attracting consistent sponsors. The dearth of research in this area not only poses a challenge for the GPL but also impedes a comprehensive understanding of the unique characteristics of the Ghanaian soccer fanbase. The study, therefore, aims to bridge this knowledge gap by investigating the behavioural responses of Ghanaian soccer fans to sponsorship. The goal is to provide practical insights that can aid the GPL in attracting and retaining sponsors. By analysing the causal impact of sponsorship on soccer fans'

behavioral responses, the research intends to offer companies strategic information for positively influencing fans' purchase intentions.

In essence, this study goes beyond theoretical constructs to address real-world challenges faced by the GPL in consistently securing sponsorships. Through a meticulous analysis of consumer involvement, attitude, event fit, brand image, brand perception, and customer characteristics, the research aims to empower football clubs with actionable insights. This approach is poised to assist the industry in optimizing sponsorship partnerships and ensuring maximum return on investment for sponsors, thereby advancing the overall discourse on sports sponsorship within the Ghanaian context.

1.4 Theoretical contribution

The aim of this study is to make theoretical and practical contributions to the fields of sponsorship and marketing. By adopting a sponsorship-centric approach to the consumer decision-making process (CDP), this research provides a deeper understanding of sponsorship response, which differs from previous insights in the sponsorship literature. The thoroughness of this investigation highlights the challenges in characterizing consumer decision-making in sponsorships using the general procedure outlined in the original CDP model. The complexity of relationships among the customer, sponsor, and sponsored goods introduces multiple variables into the analysis.

This study explores the transfer of sentiments and meanings that occur during the sponsorship process, as evidenced by the links drawn from stimuli exposure to purchase (Pradhan et al., 2019). The conceptual model utilised in this research sheds light on the significant role of classical conditioning in this process. While most research in this area has focused on how sponsorship affects advertising, this study contributes to the lesser-known impacts of classical conditioning on sponsorships, building on previous work (Speed & Thompson, 2000, cited by Thomas et al., 2022). The primary contribution of this research lies in advancing our understanding of sponsorships as a comprehensive process with the consumer at its core. It expands our knowledge of customer reactions to event sponsorships, including perceptions before, during, and following an event. It is important to note that customer reactions can vary significantly depending on the nature of the event, the target audience, and various other factors (Morgan et al., 2020).

By adopting a sponsorship-centric perspective and exploring the dynamics of customer responses, this study adds to the existing literature on sponsorships and enhances our understanding of the

underlying mechanisms at play. The findings provide valuable insights for practitioners in developing effective sponsorship strategies that consider the consumer's perspective throughout the sponsorship process.

In summary, this research contributes to sponsorship and marketing theories by offering new insights into consumer decision-making in sponsorships and shedding light on the role of classical conditioning in this context. Furthermore, it expands our understanding of customer reactions to event sponsorships, considering the varying nature of events and target audiences. These contributions provide a foundation for developing more effective and consumer-centric sponsorship strategies.

1.5 Research aims and objectives.

The study seeks to assess the influence of sponsorship on consumer behaviour amongst the Ghanaian Soccer fanbase.

1.5.1 Objectives of the study

The outlined objectives have been structured to guide and facilitate the accomplishment of the study's aims, providing a clear roadmap for the research execution and analysis.

- To assess the influence of sports sponsorship on purchase intention
- To evaluate the mediating influence of fan attitude in the relationship between sports sponsorship and purchase intention.
- To evaluate the mediating influence of fan involvement in the relationship between sports sponsorship and purchase intention.
- To measure the mediating influence of sponsor-event fit in the relationship sports sponsorship purchase intention.
- To measure the mediating influence of brand image in the relationship between sports sponsorship and purchase intention.
- To determine the mediating role of sponsor brand perception in the relationship between sports sponsorship and purchase intention.

1.6 Hypotheses

Taking the research aims and objectives into consideration, the study proposes the following main hypotheses:

- **H1:** Sports sponsorship has direct influence on purchase intention.
- **H2:** The hypothesis suggests that sports sponsorship positively influences fan attitudes, playing a crucial role in shaping purchase intentions. Moreover, it proposes that fan attitudes mediate the relationship between sports sponsorship and purchase intention, emphasizing its crucial role in consumer decision-making.
- **H3:** It is hypothesized that sports sponsorship has a positive influence on fan involvement, which, in turn, influences purchase intentions. Furthermore, Fan involvement acts as a mediating factor in the link between sports sponsorship and purchase intention.
- **H4:** The hypothesis posits that sports sponsorship significantly influences the success of an event-fit, which, in turn, affects purchase intentions. That, Event fit acts as a mediating factor in the relationship between sports sponsorship and purchase intention.
- **H5:** The hypothesis suggests that sports sponsorship has a significant positive influence on brand image, which, in turn, influences purchase intentions. Furthermore, brand image acts as a mediating factor in the relationship between sports sponsorship and purchase intention.
- **H6:** Sports sponsorship significantly influences brand perception, which, in turn, affects purchase intentions. Furthermore, brand perception serves as a mediating factor in the relationship between sports sponsorship and purchase intention.

Collectively, these hypotheses highlight the connections between sports sponsorship, which is the independent variable, fan attitude, fan involvement, event-fit, branding, and perception which also serves as mediating factors, and purchase intention which is the dependent variable.

1.7 A Brief review of related literature

The literature review examined the influence of sports sponsorship on soccer fans' purchasing intentions by analyzing the structure of arguments. The theoretical framework of the study encompasses various theories and foundational works that helped elaborate the core variables and their support in previous scholarly literature. The hypotheses of the study were formulated based on critical backing from theories and other relevant literature, ensuring their validity. The literature review thoroughly explores the key variables, including the impact of sports sponsorship on the sponsor's brand and fans' purchase intentions. It establishes a correlation between the independent and dependent variables, providing clear direction for the study. The explanatory variables considered in this research encompass fan attitude, fan involvement, sponsor-event fit, brand image, brand perception, and customer characteristics. These variables are supported by extensive literature, highlighting their interconnectedness with the criterion variable, which is purchase intention.

1.8 Methodology

The research paradigm selected for this study is positivism, as it is based on the idea that only objective, observable facts can form the basis for science. A quantitative approach is employed in this study, as it aligns with the positivist paradigm. This approach aims to establish links between research variables in a representative sample of the population through statistical and mathematical techniques. An explanatory research design is used to gain deeper insights into the research problem by measuring the causal effect of soccer sponsorship on consumer behavioural responses, specifically purchase intention.

The target population of the study consists of the official supporter groups of Kumasi Asante Kotoko SC (Circles) and Accra Hearts of Oak SC (Chapters). To ensure scientific sample selection techniques, the unit of analysis focuses on registered members of these two supporter groups. Convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, is employed to select participants from the two clubs within a 50-kilometer radius of their home bases, as the population under study cannot be controlled. The sample size of the study is determined using the formula developed by Yamane (1967) with a 95 percent confidence interval (CI), resulting in a sample size of n=398. Data collection takes place at Osu in Greater Accra, the traditional home of Accra Hearts of Oak

Sporting Club, and Manhyia in the Kumasi Metropolis, the traditional home of Kumasi Asante Kotoko.

The data is collected from registered fans above the age of 18 at the meeting grounds of supporter base groups within the specified radius. Exclusions from the study include non-registered fans, fans under 18 years old, fans unwilling or unable to sign a consent form, and those who are unable to read. A 5-point Likert scale ranging from '1' (strongly agree) to '5' (strongly disagree) is used in the questionnaire, allowing for non-metric data transformation to a metric type for quantitative analysis using a regression model.

The collected data is subjected to principal component analysis to group it into uncorrelated components. Model analysis and structural analysis are performed to assess the goodness of fit, including the absolute model fit, incremental model fit, and parsimonious model fit. The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and goodness of fit index (GFI) are examined. The structural model is analysed using structural equation modelling (SEM), which utilizes regression analyses to demonstrate the relationships between the independent, moderating, and dependent variables. The study tests the mediating role of purchase intention in the relationship between sponsorship and purchase behaviour using SmartPLS software. All six hypotheses are tested.

To address internal validity, control variables are incorporated into the model. External validity is ensured by considering no less than 80 percent of the recognized fanbase, enabling generalizability of the findings. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is conducted to test the validity of the constructs in the questionnaire, determining if the individual questions align with the constructs. The pilot respondents include expert opinions from chief marketing officers of companies that have previously sponsored the Ghana Premier League, as well as experts from the business School of Takoradi Technical University. Cronbach's alpha value is calculated to assess the reliability of the model and ensure that the assumption is met.

Voluntary participation, informed consent, and confidentiality of participants are ensured throughout the study. Participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. COVID-19 protocols are observed to prioritize the safety of all participants. It is important to note that this study is limited to the Ghana Premier League and its former sponsors, which may affect the generalizability of the results to other soccer settings. Future research is recommended to include additional samples with fans from different teams to enhance the generalizability of findings.

1.9 Structure of the Thesis

The study is divided into six interrelated chapters. A structure of how the study will unfold is briefly outlined below.

Chapter One:

Provided background to the study, along with the context of the study, the problem statement, a brief methodology, the objectives, and the hypotheses set for the study.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The chapter focuses on reviewing the various journals, articles, and documents that lay the literature grounds for the study. Concepts and models on sponsorship and consumer buying behaviours are dealt with to a larger extent. In furtherance, the theoretical frameworks, which include Schema Congruity theory, AIDA Model, and Heide's' Balance theory that lay the theories backing the research, are given the necessary in-depth exposition.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

This chapter will describe how the data were gathered and analysed. Any limitation of the research investigation will be highlighted in this chapter. A description of the sampling method is provided, as well as the data collection method and the techniques used to analyse the data.

Chapter Four: Presentation of Results

This chapter will present the statistical analysis of the data obtained by means of the questionnaire, processed into meaningful results to make sense to the reader. Furthermore, this chapter offers an analysis of the data using structural equation modeling (SEM).

Chapter Five: Discussion

Discussion of key findings regarding the literature review per research objectives

This chapter involves discussion of the key study findings, managerial implications for the sponsors, as well as study limitations.

Chapter Six: Recommendations and Conclusions

This chapter will outline the conclusions drawn from the findings in chapter five. It will also contain various recommendations that could lead to further research.

1.10 Chapter Conclusion

The overview of the study foundation presented is followed by a summary of the research problem and its purpose. An explanation of the literature review structure was provided. In addition, the population to be studied, the sampling design, research method suitable for the research, as well as the instruments to be used to collect data, and the type of data to be collected, along with the checks and balances to ensure reliability and credibility in the process of data collection and analysis, were all covered in the study methodology. An outline of the chapter organisation was additionally set out to help the reader follow the study. The next chapter focuses on the review of literature on the topic under study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The study seeks to assess sponsorship influence on consumer behaviour amongst the Ghanaian Soccer fanbase. This research aims to understand how soccer fan attitudes, fan involvement, event fit, and brand image, as well as brand perception, and customer characteristics influence the purchase intention of sponsor brands, considering the case study of the Ghanaian Soccer fanbase. In the process of conducting this study, this chapter of the literature review is included to significantly analyse and evaluate all the most important works of literature based on the research topic and objectives. Through assessing these works of literature, significant information was collected that aided the process of conducting this research.

The chapter focuses on reviewing the various journals, articles, and documents that lay the literary grounds for the study. Concepts and models on sponsorship and consumer buying behaviours are dealt with, to a larger extent. In addition, the theoretical frameworks, which include Schema Congruity theory, the AIDA Model; and Heide's Balance theory, as the theories backing the research, are given the necessary in-depth exposition. Moreover, previous works regarding the concept and objectives of sponsorship, consumer purchase intention, and Soccer sponsorship in Ghana are discussed. Finally, the hypotheses are formulated to show support for the entire research, with the empirical studies, conceptual frameworks, and related variables that constitute the research also provided.

2.2 Theoretical foundation of the research

The theoretical framework underpinning this study was chosen based on their relation and interdependency on the issue of consumer buyer decisions and sponsorship activities. Various theories were investigated, where the following theories were selected: Schema Congruity theory, AIDA model theory, and Balance theory. Several articles have examined the theories that serve as the background to drive research in this field (Koronios *et al.* 2022).

The justification for this study was grounded on the fact that the propounds of the theories considered the necessary factors that drive consumer buyer behaviour; accounting for consumer decision-making, as well as internal and external factors noted as the key constructs to improve purchasing decisions. This is central to the research construct, that no theories were overlapping

in the stance of their idea and construct, or none resulted in the same understanding or objective. The theories seek to explain some or all the variable constructs for this research study. One underlying assertion regarding these theories is the ability of sponsorship or marketing strategies that are being adopted to improve or influence the consumer purchasing decision-making process.

2.2.1 Schema Congruity theory

Advocated by Mandler in 1982, Schema congruity theory centres on how humans process new information based on their existing expectations or schemas (Mandler, 1982, cited by; Huang & Yoon 2022). To explain further, Vashisht et al. (2021) posited that the schema in this context refers to the cognitive structure representing a domain that comprises an event, person, or place and explains in detail the pattern of thought or behaviour that organises specific bits of information according to the relationship between them. Thus, at every event or domain, the related variables are grouped as having a relationship and, likewise, treated as part of the association. This also assists in indicating the schema of one can have a correlative effect on the other. Furthermore, Fiske et al. (1982) explain a schema refers to active organising of past reactions and experience, which operates exceedingly well in any appropriately adapted organic response.

According to Mandler's schema-congruity theory (1982), humans process new information based on their existing expectations or schemas. Information congruent to the schema is considered familiar, processed effortlessly, and leads to a positive evaluation. Hence, in relation to sports sponsorship, teams with sponsorship are aligned to their sponsor's products, which leads to higher patronage of their products from those teams' supporters or fans. Congruity theory predicts, when there are two contradicting people, sets of information, or concepts on which a judgment must be made by a single observer, the observer will experience pressure to change his or her judgment on one of the sides (Kang & Matsuoka 2022).

The component of schema congruity thrives on the concept of association; more of an associative network, thus one network of attributes is linked to another in a seemingly memorable way. One of the distinguished descriptions of schema congruity theory comes from Anderson and Bower (1973, cited in Chan 2022), who explained the theory is more of a knowledge stored in the memory, depicting a form of interconnected nodes of information. Hence, activation of a single node through some form of sponsorship or simulation generally leads to the retrieval of stored

information. This means when sports fans remember their team in any form of activity, they recollect the association of sponsors and other related accompanying engagements. Therefore, supporting sponsors in divergent areas with association of their team. In schema congruity theory, one must consider the differences, congruent stimuli, and incongruous stimuli.

In critical explanation, Anderson and Bower (1973, cited in Chan 2022) posited that stimuli congruent in the context of their existing associative network structures, as well as the schemas, possess more retrievable attributes when stored, compared to incongruous stimuli. In their work on advertising and marketing, researchers such as Lopez et al. (2021), depend on utilizing this conceptualised system extensively, in which their studies showed sponsorship, in different forms and contexts, pushes the enhancement of brand knowledge.

Such knowledge is referred to as “brand nodes” in the memory of people who have different segments of the associative network (Keller & Brexendorf 2019). Besides this factor, it is generally accepted experience with specific brands, in addition to the related attributes and linkages, leads to a much broader associative strength within the memory of interconnected brand nodes (Berker et al. 2023). This translates into a segment where one brand node is seen as having a strong relationship with the other and choosing one meaning, while optioning for the other. Schema congruity theory deals with stimuli congruity and will, therefore, always want a form of stimulation of one node, with the brand within the network enhanced as a form of choice.

In the sponsorship environment, there are a few core objectives, in which some are: developing positive brand images, ensuring excellent experiences on game day, and other forms of stimulation hinged on the linkages in the memory of every consumer. These linkages of schema attributes are built over time; this refers to structures regarding the sponsoring brand and object, linked in association. These brand associations (linkages) comprise a consumer’s schema developed from a variety of sources including brand and product category experiences, product attributes, price information, positioning in previous promotional communications, packaging, user imagery, and usage occasion (Keller & Brexendorf 2019). Consequently, any new information concerning a specific sponsor is compared to the schema, which is in the memory of every person in that context. These schemas are the driving force in making decisions and judgments regarding sponsor or event appropriateness (Pappu & Cornwell 2004).

The role of schemas and congruity in different contexts, in relation to the effect on information processing, have opened new areas of marketing research, thus considering the impact on memory, psychology, attitude, and marketing in different settings, which has led to improvement in the development of schema congruity theory in diverse contexts. There is, therefore, an undeniable interrelationship between memory, psychology, and marketing with schema congruity theory, how the choice among different brands is made, and considering specific factors relating to the interconnected brand nodes in memory. In addition, schema congruity theory helps in the organisation of a collection of findings among disciplines and discovers the difference between congruous or incongruous stimuli processed by consumers, integrated within existing schemas for decision-making (Berker et al. 2022).

According to Keller and Brexendorf (2019), Schema congruity theory is also closely linked with Associative memory network theory and this concept has been expanded to include elaboration as a moderating variable when examining how congruity is linked to affect while incongruity leads to negative affect.

Findings by (Mandler, 1982, cited by; Huang & Yoon 2022) support the linkages to the associative network model and offer those congruent relationships that are not very noteworthy and therefore do not prompt extensive elaboration or are deeply processed. Additionally, it has been proposed “thoughts generated after elaboration incongruent conditions are favorable because people like objects that conform to their expectations and allow predictability, and that these thoughts are typically mild rather than extreme” (Mandler 1982: 3).

Consequently, fans are expected to react positively to their team matches and sponsors when schema congruity theory is applied. The interest in schema congruity among researchers, marketers, and advertisers has reached a higher stage concerning the evaluation of its role in shaping attitudes, feelings, and behaviours among fanbase groups.

2.2.2 AIDA Model Theory

The AIDA model theory was developed by Ambler in 2010; the model is an acronym for Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action. This contemporary theory was aimed at developing a proper model, to be used to evaluate sponsorship deals and ascertain how they can impact consumer purchasing decisions. Notably, the model focuses on the most generally known and utilised hierarchy-of-effects model. The theory model supports the need to create awareness to drive the interest of individuals. This assumption was very important to the need to support sponsorship at different levels. The AIDA theory has been evaluated as one of the critical aspects of sponsorship concerning various sports events and the expectation of returns for the sponsors. The theory also notes every product needs to be enhanced and presented to the public to elevate customer interest to exercise purchasing preferences. Thus, awareness and attention to the product have to be created in order to drive up customers and individual interest.

The AIDA theory model, nevertheless, centres around which message can garner the necessary attention and interest. Lough and Greenhalgh (2019) supported the theory and noted not all messages can create awareness, hence, sponsors have to delve into strategies that can produce memorable messages, images, text, or video. The message must, additionally, be related to the event generating the sponsorship; this is critical for the short- and long-term. The AIDA model centres around the message, which can enhance or derail any activity of the sponsorship. In the early days when the model was formulated, it was regarded by other disputants as a traditional marketing communication, rather than a theory that can be adopted across various fields (Fortenberry & McGoldrick 2020).

In this regard, Stakeberg & Stakeberg (2020) elaborated further that the AIDA model should have the ability to attract attention, hold interest, arouse desire and get action in the sponsorship domain context. This will determine whether consumer purchasing behaviour can be impacted or derailed. One critical area the AIDA theory model really focuses on, involves the fans or supporters of specific teams, in the context of sponsorship for a sports team, in elaborating on messages that resonate with fans in relation to either their team or specific details in that regard (Stakeberg & Stakeberg 2020). Furthermore, the theory emphasises the significance of fan attitude as a key factor for the success of the entire process. In this regard, crafting messages that fans can resonate with and present as sponsorship messages becomes important in designing the desired awareness.

In view of this, the theory has seen resistance in the context that it fails to address the long-term, mutually beneficial relationship between the sponsor and the event or company receiving the sponsorship. Instead, it focuses on increasing real purchase intention for the sponsor as a means of driving up ROI. Traditional marketing communications models, such as the AIDA model, concentrate on individual purchasing behaviour. The theory has been adopted in creating a short-term impact on consumer decision-making, as well as developing a long-term relationship for all concerned parties/stakeholders (Shin et al. 2018).

Despite its limitations, the AIDA Model offers significant advantages in enhancing marketing strategies and driving successful outcomes. This model allows professionals to craft persuasive messages that captivate their audience's attention, generate interest and desire, and ultimately encourage action. By implementing the AIDA Model, marketers can measure the effectiveness of their campaigns and make informed decisions to optimize their marketing efforts. (Lee & Trim 2022). In addition, the recent increase in development and interest in relationship-marketing in recent years has to also be considered (Akowuah 2020).

Notably, most research has factored in the process of recognising the need to retain customers and improve customer loyalty across different segments of the business product offerings (Angell et al. 2016). The AIDA model posits one of the critical strategies to achieve customer loyalty and retention in the digital space, is improving on creating awareness, providing mutual relationships, and creating value. Customer retention is developed based on the relationship between products and customers. Thus, the need for awareness is important and accompanied by the appropriate information in that context. When new relationships develop with customers and organisations reaching a mutual understanding, there is the need for adequate information to ensure retention and positive attribution (Abd Ghani & Tuhin 2018).

According to Biscaia et al. (2017), the absence of information in the AIDA model theory creates a gap in crafting appropriate message for awareness. Therefore, excessive negative perceptions on the customer's part are, on the one hand, likely to prompt mistrust within the relationship, and the relationship will not grow. On the other hand, as companies become familiarised with customers, they may opt to create differentiation of quality to potential and existing customers to make profits. These decisions are made from information collected through exchanges with customers (Charlton & Cornwell 2019).

The AIDA model theory not only focuses on awareness, but the information associated with the awareness and how it impacts sponsorship or marketing event performance. Al-Nsour & Al-Otoun (2020) identified from the AIDA model that the need to retain customers is critical and also improves on lapses of the model, which centres around short-term goals of product development, to be used for building relationships between products and customers. Thus, customer attitudes are critical in developing an information model to enhance their patronage. The AIDA model sought to empower organisations to use information in that model to personalize marketing communications, this is done based on previous purchases that might attract customers' attention to their products. The root of these transactions and exchanges is the use of available information (Weng, Huang & Bao 2021).

The AIDA model theory is critical in this study since it helps to evaluate the role of sports sponsorship as a promotional strategy through the information that targets customers and builds long-term relationships of retaining customers. As elaborated by Boronczyk & Breuer (2020), adopting the AIDA model theory offers much detail regarding the need and processes to inform and impact the customer purchasing decision-making process through awareness, information, desire, and action.

2.2.3 Balance Theory

According to (Heider 1958, cited by Sahar 2023), the Balance theory was developed to ascertain the psychological claim that people prefer balance in their life and activities. The initial focus of the theory was to help psychologists understand how people maintain mental stability. In psychology, the need to have order, harmony, and balance, among many other things, is what has pushed civilisation forward.

Consequently, this argument has been addressed by consumer psychologists Eagly & Chaiken (1993, cited by Bossler, Noeltner, & Kroenung 2022), who supported balance theory, asserting it has proven one of the most enduring of the theories applied to attitudinal phenomena, and pursued with considerable rigour. The idea was that researchers want to maintain psychological stability, to form relationships that balance our likes and dislikes.

Heider's balance theory has been linked to many sponsorship deals that focus on consumer returns in different situations. Balance theory claims every time there is an imbalance, people would change their attitudes and/or behaviour in a way that would restore balance. As a result, individuals will tend to like whatever is associated with what they already like and will tend to dislike whatever is associated with what they already dislike; otherwise, there will not be balance. The commonly known statements "my friends' enemies are my enemies" and "my enemies' enemies are my friends" aptly illustrate the key premise of balance theory. Balance theory has had much support from consumer behaviour scholars including (Lin et al 2019). Lin, Fu & Chen (2019) support the proposition that, people think narratively rather than argumentatively or paradigmatically. The conclusion of Lin et al' is corroborated by Ertz et al. (2021).

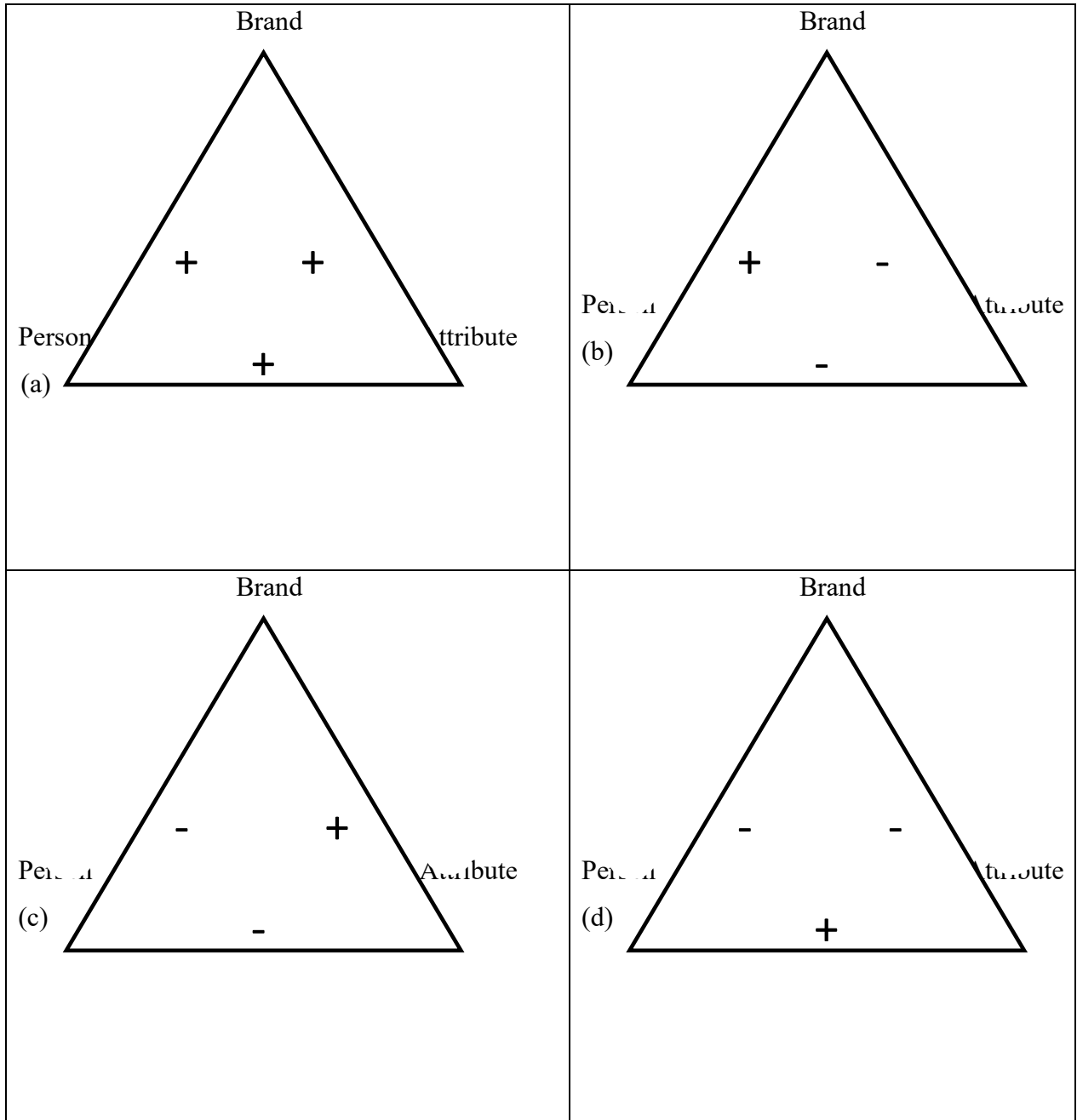
Balance theory, from the Fritz Heider assertion, which developed the P-O-X triangle to examine relationships, is illustrated in figures 2.1 and 2.2 below. Each corner of the triangle represents a different element: brand, person, and attributes. In this triangular relationship, two types of relationship dynamics take place. First, are the unit relationships, or how much the different elements of the triangle belong together. The more similarities between each element, the more likely psychological balance will occur. We may think of people as belonging together when they are from the same family, attend the same school, or have some other common bond. The second type of relationship is sentiment relationship, or how we feel about something. Heider categorises all feelings in one of two areas: liking or disliking.

Most of Heider's (1958) presentations are on balanced/unbalanced states. Self-perceptions of disliking oneself or a family member are examples of a DL and U combination. According to Heider, 'U' denotes the cognitive unit between two entities, and 'notU' is the fact the two entities are segregated. A sentiment relationship refers to the positive (L) or negative (DL or) feelings or valuations one gives to an entity, such as a person, activity, or object (Seidel et al. 2021).

Displayed for consumer-brand-attribute contexts, Figure 2.1 summarises four sets of relationships in triads, resulting in balanced states: (a) all three relations are positive and (b), (c), and (d) two relations are negative and, one is positive. In Figure 2.1(a), the relation between the person and the attribute is positive; that is, the consumer likes the attribute. For example, a consumer likes manual transmission in automobiles. The unit U, shown in Figure 2.1(a)] relation is positive between the

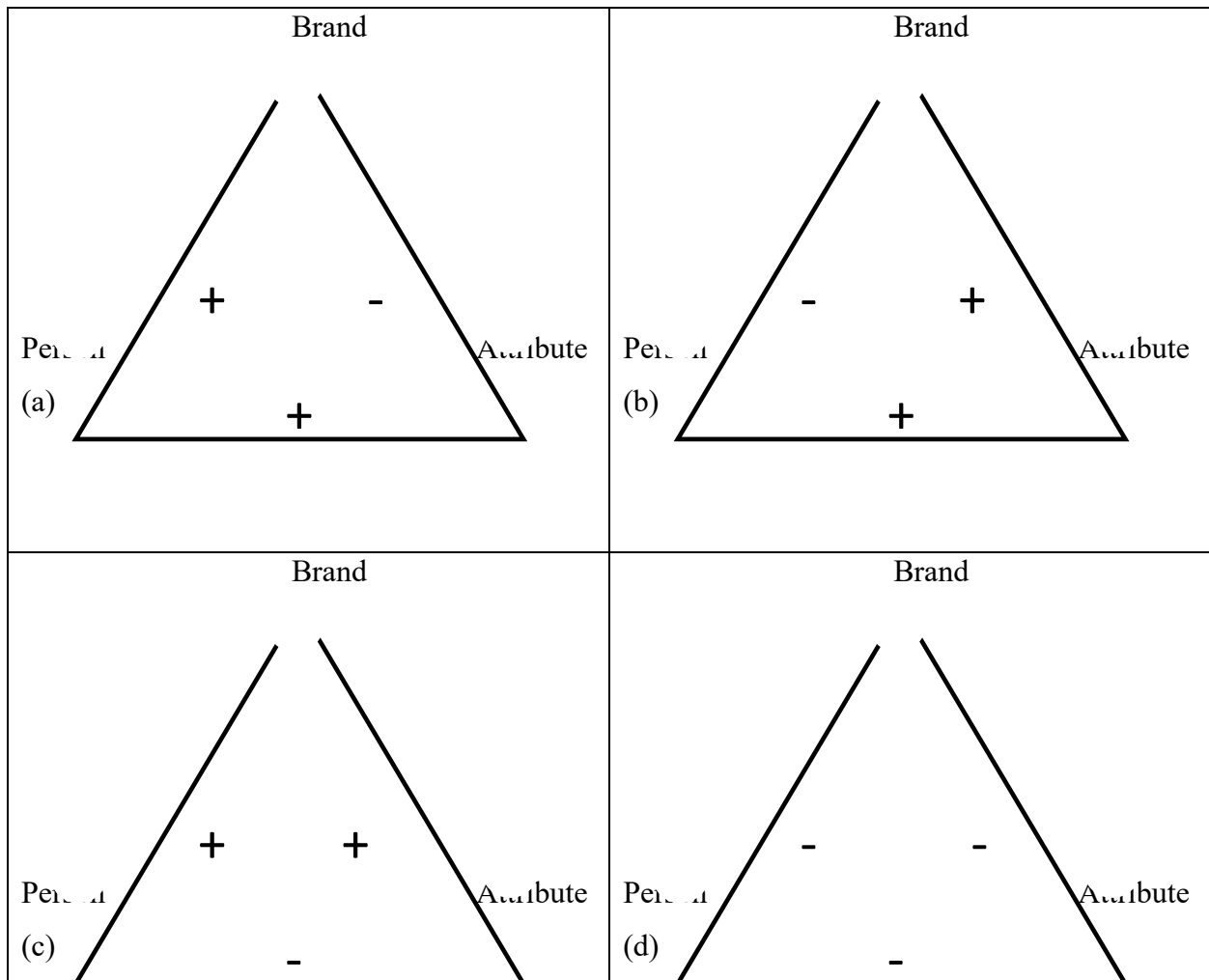
brand and the attribute, for example, the brand is available with manual transmission. The person likes the brand. Consequently, the three relations are harmonious in Figure 2.1(a).

Figure 2.1a-d: Balanced states among person, brand, and attribute



Source: Heider's Balance theory (1958, cited by Rim, Xu & Dong 2022)

Figure 2.2a-d: Unbalanced states among person, brand, and Attribute



Source: Heider's Balance theory (1958, cited by Rim et al. 2022)

Other contexts are appropriate for consumer psychology perspectives, for example, Imbalance occurs when two of the relations are positive and one is negative. Figures 2.2(a), 2.2(b), and 2.2(c) depict the parallel unbalanced states for a person, with respect to brand and attribute. The case of three negative relations depicted in Figure 2.2(d), is somewhat ambiguous and reflects associations unlikely to influence balanced or unbalanced states.

Heider (1958) is careful to emphasise relations between entities are not always symmetrical: (p L o) does not necessarily imply (o L p). However, Heider proposes such relations tend to become symmetrical. For example, “We want people we like to like us, and we tend to like people who like us—and the parallel is true for negative sentiments” (Heider’s Balance theory 1958, cited in Rim et al. 2022 :210).

Proposing non-symmetrical situations in consumer psychology is useful for extending Heider's theory; doing so helps achieve Becker's symbolic interaction (1998, cited in Segre 2019). Nevertheless, Manning & Smith (2009) and Segre (2019) recommend theory and data sampling should be done to maximise "the possibility of finding what you had not even thought to look for". Two additional sets of propositions from Heider need to be explored more fully in consumer psychology. First, "the possibility of a negative attitude toward the self (p DL p) must also be considered. If p dislikes himself, he might reject a positive x as too good for him; a negative p and a positive x do not make a good unit" (Heider 1958: 210). This view reflects the argument that using a very attractive model in an advertisement may backfire, because the intended customer perception of a positive relationship between him/herself and the model, is not possible (Rim et al. 2022).

Second, the possibilities of a neutral attitude and a disunion unit relation are described by (Heider's Balance theory 1958, cited in Rim et al. 2022 :202). Heider (1958: 201–202). Although stereotypical thinking and affective responses occur automatically, exposure to unknown entities may generate neutral attitudes and non-categorisation, at least momentarily (Kurdi, Ratliff & Cunningham 2021).

2.2.4 Theoretical Contributions

Conceptually, the Schema Congruity theory, which proposes consumers are more likely to prefer products that match their existing mental schemas, is limited to certain types of products and consumer groups and may not be applicable to all situations, or across cultures, as different cultures may have different mental schemas. Moreover, the theory failed to account for other factors that may impact consumer preferences, such as individual differences, involvement, and personal experience, other than limited empirical evidence to support the theory.

The AIDA model, furthermore, oversimplifies the decision-making process of a consumer and does not consider the complexity of human behaviour towards brand image. In other words, the model does not address the emotional and psychological factors that influence buying behaviour. Additionally, the AIDA model does not account for the role of social influence and recommendations from friends, family, and online communities in the decision-making process. Finally, Heider's balance theory is too simplistic and does not accurately reflect the complexity of social relationships. People's perceptions and attitudes towards others are influenced by a

multitude of factors, not just the balance of positive and negative relationships., the theory additionally lacks empirical evidence to support its claims and lack of consideration for individual differences and cultural influences.

Overall, while all these theories have been very influential in the early development of social psychology, it is more important they are revised and expanded upon to better capture the complexity of human relationships to fully understand their validity.

This research fills a gap in the literature by examining the effect of consumer characteristics, consumer involvement, consumer attitude, event fit, brand image, and brand perception on consumers' acceptance and responses to sports sponsors' products. This study represents an investigation into the sets of triadic relationships. Based on the above discussion, a conceptual model is proposed to illustrate the various relationships that establish the link between the independent variable (Sponsorship), the mediating variable (fan attitude, fan involvement, even fit, and brand image, as well as brand perception), and the dependent variable (purchase intention).

2.3 Concept of Sponsorship

The growing interest in sports sponsorship has been directly attributed to the correlation between the fan base, supporters, and investment involved (Habitzreuter & Koenigstorfer 2021). Consequently, sports with a higher population of followers tend to be provided with more sponsorship and returns in the process; this has proven critical in various sponsorship deals. Sports sponsorship has, additionally, been ascertained to vary widely from sponsoring an entire sporting event, or providing sponsorship to specific teams in the sports event, to promoting team paraphernalia (Lee 2021).

Among different types of sponsorship, sports funding and patronage are seen as a powerful tool for brand communication and improving the on-brand experience. Sports sponsorships make up a significant proportion of the general sponsorship market. For example, in the 2022 US Super Bowl sports commercial, Coinbase company spent approximately \$ 5 million for 30 seconds commercial, aimed at sponsoring the programme and attracting the higher-level customer base of their competitors (Setiawan, Wibisono & Purwanegara 2022). This has proved essential to driving customer engagement and enthusiasm regarding their product.

Various academic works have been published on the direction of the growing sports sponsorship relevance and the related consumer purchasing activities. In a study conducted by Brown, Pope, and Voges (2018, cited by Sarah et al,2021), it was established that sponsorship can improve company reputation and image, which supports previous findings by (Gamage & Ashill 2023). It is estimated more than 60 percent of the money exchanged through sponsorships is injected into sports and sporting events; equivalent to more than double the sponsorship dollars expended towards charities (Badukina, Gavrilova, & Selivanova 2019). The overt commercial nature of sponsorships in modern business practice presents an ironic contention to the philanthropic nuance associated with sponsorship in past literature (Brown-Devlin, Devlin, & Peña 2022).

Li (2022) posits, despite the array of opportunities for sponsors to engage their target market at sporting events, its impact on the consumer cannot be guaranteed. The major issues that cloud sponsorship effectiveness at sporting events include the negligence of companies to continuously monitor campaign progress, in addition to activity assessment relative to business aims and objectives. The importance for businesses to acknowledge is that sponsorship comprises more than simply exchanging money for exposure. This has never been more crucial than now, with such intense competition and clutter, this type of 'traditional and simplistic' understanding of sponsorship is problematic and, subsequently, ignores the significant role the consumer plays as a stakeholder in sponsorship.

In the views of Morgan et al (2020), in the process of understanding the connection and impact of sponsorship on consumer behaviour regarding Soccer fanbase, it is important to evaluate the spectrum of sponsorship and its connection and impact on Soccer. According to Silva (2020), in recent years sponsorship (mainly sports sponsorship) has seen substantial growth. Silva's study suggests various important brands and organisations have, over the years, included sponsorship as a significant marketing strategy and without the support of sponsorship, many sports events would not survive. The process of sponsorship generates profit for various high visibility sporting events and assists with exposure to a vast majority of the audience and media. The study of Silva (2020) also describes this aspect of Soccer, as event exposure is the main aspect that dominates most expenditure.

Abril, Sanchez & Recio (2018) explain Soccer is, arguably, one of the most influential sports in the world; in this regard, fans play significant roles as they aid in generating both value and revenue for the Soccer clubs. As part of their evaluation of how social and cultural aspects control the economic aid of Soccer, Abril *et al.* (2018) confirm the Soccer industry generates a significant amount of revenue based on fan loyalty. Therefore, through leveraging the huge Soccer club fanbase, brands initiate sponsorships that help them to also grow their revenues. This connectivity of sponsorship and Soccer very significantly creates the foundation of the sponsorship and consumer behaviour scenario.

Findings from a study by Coelho, Amorim & Almeida (2019) agree several reasons motivate an organisation to initiate sponsorship for a Soccer club or individual Soccer player, such as to expand brand awareness and the public image of the organisation. However, Coelho *et al.* (2019). stresses the main reason behind initiating the sponsorship process is consumer behaviour, as there is a tendency by consumers to buy or re-purchase any product or service of the sponsorship company when it sponsors a sporting event, club, or player. Amoako and Boateng (2022) find these outputs grow dramatically when the sponsorship is connected to sporting events that reach large groups of the public or fans, as in the case of Soccer.

2.3.1 Objectives of Sponsorship

Various studies contribute to assessing the objectives and effectiveness of sponsorship programmes. Among these, Schönberner, Woratschek and Ellert (2021) suggest the main objective of sponsorship is to influence consumer choices in the process of decision-making for purchase. Nonetheless, further studies also consider the objectives of sponsorship have developed over the years and now, most sponsorship practices take place within the sporting world of Soccer, mainly to generate more brand awareness. This objective helps the brands to portray the goodwill and values of the organisation within the public eye, which automatically generates more brand awareness. It is evident the spectrum of Soccer sponsorship and fanbase is connected (Maanda *et al.* 2020); however, these important aspects somehow influence each other effectively. The study further asserts the sponsorship process within the sport of Soccer has seen development over time, and now sponsorship has become very important for Soccer clubs. In many respects, sponsorship fulfills the need for funds necessary to ensure the club can continue. Through sponsorship, clubs also acquire the label of being professional clubs, which is a significant aspect of the sponsorship relationship.

From this perspective, another context becomes more prominent, with Huettermann et al. (2020) finding the effectiveness of sponsorship depends on the consumers and their response, again highlighting the importance of the fanbase. Without setting a proper connection with the audience or the Soccer fanbase, the sponsorship agenda cannot be fulfilled. Therefore, the influential relationships between fanbase and sponsorship become more prominent. In this regard, Asante Kotoko can be addressed as arguably the biggest Soccer club in Ghana, with a fanbase of approximately 10 million, both registered and non-registered, with a huge list of sponsorships, where the fanbase plays a significant part in the process of generating effective sponsorship processes (Akowuah 2020).

An event sponsor is a company that supports an event, usually by providing funds, in exchange for something valuable (Melovic et al. 2019). This “something valuable”, frequently comes in the form of increased brand exposure, access to attendee data, speaking opportunities at the event, or discounted event tickets. However, according to Goldman et al. (2022), a sponsorship typically involves an investment by an organisation into an event or activity, in return for some benefit supporting corporate or marketing objectives. Louw et al. (2018) propose one of the features of sponsorship is its ability to contribute to a wide range of objectives at both corporate and brand level.

Media, corporate and marketing objectives are the three broad categories of objectives commonly examined within sponsorship literature (Okpalaoka & Olaniyi 2022; Akowuah 2020; Chiweshe 2019). While it is not unusual for these three categories to intertwine, Ogunnubi (2019) suggests there is a sheer lack of evidence examining the impact and results of the latter two objective categories.

The breadth of the mentioned studies demonstrates the expanding strategic importance of sponsorship, which has a considerable impact on marketing and, consequently, business strategy. Although sponsorship has advantages difficult to express in numerical terms, these advantages are undeniable. Further academic study is obviously necessary and likely to support the growing significance of the function of this commercial communications instrument. Additionally, the range and variety of objectives seem extensive, varying from organisation to organisation, from industry to industry, and from large to small enterprises. Many companies now sponsor events

routinely as part of their promotional activities; however, Blake et al. (2018) suggest these objectives tend to be vague. The authors argue there is little consensus on whether event sponsorship is a 'successful' strategy and what 'success' means or should mean. Blake et al. (2018) further argued, in one way, it is no surprise, since every event and each sponsorship is unique. In general, there needs to be more research on the impacts of sponsorship from the event participants' point of view and from the larger social frame.

Moyo, Duffett & Knott (2020), furthermore, concede little research has investigated how sponsorship participation benefits a firm; whilst sponsorship strategies are used to reach a variety of marketing objectives. Regarding previous studies in literature, several have reached different conclusions on sports sponsorship being a suitable marketing communication tool to reach business objectives. Consequently, it is important for further studies to investigate sports sponsorship from the fans' point of view.

Several studies have, nevertheless, found the primary objective of many sponsors is to increase brand awareness and enhance brand and/or corporate image (Aboagye & Opoku 2022; Chowdhury, Khan & Dhar 2022). These objectives are consumer-based outcomes a sponsor can measure to determine a sponsorship's effectiveness in communicating with the target audience(s). Achievement of these objectives would mean sponsorship was successful in strengthening and shaping consumer brand knowledge structures.

More specifically, Osei-Frimpong, Donkor & Owusu-Frimpong (2019), opined sponsorship is the underwriting of a special event with the aim of supporting organisational objectives. This is achieved by enhancing corporate image as the impressions of a particular company held by some segment of the public (Mahothan et al 2022). Recent interest amongst scholars has started to focus on managing corporate reputation through sponsorship initiatives. Gamage & Ashill (2023), note some empirical works examine intangible returns to sponsorship and classify these in various dimensions, as indicated in the subheading details below.

2.3.2 Gaining Publicity

Sponsorship provides an opportunity to create publicity in the news media (Siipola 2022). Worldwide events such as major golf, Soccer, and tennis tournaments, supply the platform for global media coverage, with millions watching these events. Sponsorship of such events can thus provide brand exposure to an extensive audience, with some events such as golf and tennis having a more upmarket profile. Publicity opportunities of sponsorship can produce major awareness shifts (Setiawan et al. 2022).

Sponsorship can also create entertainment opportunities for customers, with music, the performing arts, and sports event sponsorships particularly effective in this regard. Additionally, attendance at sponsored events can be used to reward successful employees, customers, and trade partners.

2.3.3 Fostering favourable Brand and Company Associations

Sponsoring a mega-event such as the Olympics or Soccer World Cup ensures almost instant international recognition (Nordin et al. 2011; Kapoor, Lal & Yadav 2021; Park & Sihombing 2020). There is a huge amount of prestige associated with sponsoring such big events, since the sponsoring companies' credibility greatly improves. They are considered as big as the events they are sponsoring as it is known that big money is involved in sponsorship deals of such events. A company advances to the big league as soon as it associates with a mega event. Nonetheless, a company can also foster favourable brand associations by sponsoring special events such as some arts or charities. The patrons of the events will start viewing the sponsoring company favourably (Kang, Kim & Yang 2019).

2.3.4 Improving Community Relations

Sponsoring an event or an organisation that will help the community where the event is being organised or where the organisation functions is always a good idea. Sponsorship of schools, for instance, by providing low-cost computers and supporting community programmes, can foster a socially responsible, caring reputation for a company (Lee 2021). Developing community relations is typically the sponsorship objective for both industrial and consumer companies, with many such opportunities to help a community.

2.3.5 Creating Promotional Expenditure

Promotional expenditure is an important aspect of marketing that helps businesses to increase brand awareness, drive sales, and ultimately, grow their customer base (Krizanova et al. 2019). According to Jhally (2022), a promotional expenditure is a certain sum of money allotted to advertise a company's or organisation's goods or services. Expenditure for promotions accounts for the necessary expenses involved in expanding a company or upholding a brand.

Pramanik & Rakib (2020) posit promoting products involve various marketing activities such as advertising, public relations, sales promotions, and personal selling, as well as sponsorship. These activities aim to inform and persuade the target audience regarding the benefits and unique selling points of the product, as well as create a positive image of the brand. Effective promotion not only helps increase sales and revenue, it also builds brand loyalty and trust among customers, and can help businesses stay ahead of their competitors by creating a distinctive image and positioning in the market (Kethan & Basha2022).

2.3.6 Objectives of promotional expenditures

It is important for businesses to have clear objectives and goals for their promotional expenditure. By identifying what they want to achieve with their promotional activities, businesses can create more effective and targeted campaigns more likely to achieve their desired outcomes. Having clear objectives for promotional expenditure, businesses can better measure their success and adjust their strategies accordingly, while it also helps ensure promotional activities are aligned with the overall business strategy and goals (Childers, Lemon & Hoy 2019).

The primary objectives of promotional expenditure can vary depending on the specific goals of a business or organisation. However, it is important to set and plan for promotional objectives. In other words, prior to deciding what you would offer as incentives, decide what you want to achieve (Cornwell & Kwon 2020). Furthermore, any promotions that further the overall aims, should offer real benefits to prospective consumers in order for the business to establish trust and lay the groundwork for long-term success (Dumitriu et al. 2019).

The marketing operations expenditure of a business is often determined by its marketing goals and objectives (Deepak & Jeyakumar 2019). A business can establish its marketing expenditure using

any number of allocation techniques, for example, the task and objective strategy, which is a way of allocating money for advertising. When using this strategy, the advertising budget must consider the target goal and the promotional objectives (Kukartsev et al. 2020).

Free trial samples, money-saving coupons, sponsorships, and competitions for full-size products are examples of popular and effective promotions used to promote the introduction of new products or brands (Nangin, Barus & Wahyoedi 2020). This not only sparks curiosity but also provides a way to increase the number of loyal customers that subscribe to email newsletters, as well as fans and followers on social media. Hence, this promotional goal benefits both the company and the consumer, creating a win-win situation (Andreski 2022). Loyalty is a promotion goal that successful firms with well-known products may use in a marketing campaign. As a result, incentives would provide existing consumers with exclusive deals based on prior purchases (Taoana, et al 2021).

Offering current customers free or significantly discounted items in exchange for purchases by friends, family, or at the very least, email newsletter subscribers, would be another incentive to encourage loyalty (Sohn & Kim 2020). Every marketing strategy must be tailored to the company's needs, and achieving sales targets depends on a number of factors that can only be identified with time and occasionally, by experiments. Developing strategies based on practical objectives and available resources is the key (Zoltners et al. 2021).

Extant literature has proven there are many promotional expenditures employed by organisations. However, the following typical promotional goals are the common approaches:

Increasing sales: One of the primary goals of promotional expenditure is to increase sales. By promoting a product or service, businesses can increase awareness and interest among potential customers, which can lead to more sales (Rajagopaul, Magwentshu & Kalidas 2020).

Building brand awareness: Promotional expenditure can also be used to build brand awareness. By using marketing and advertising techniques, businesses can establish their brand and make it more recognisable to potential customers (Chadwick et al. 2022).

Encouraging repeat business: Another way promotional expenditure can be used is to encourage repeat business from existing customers. By offering promotions or discounts, businesses can incentivise customers to return and make additional purchases (Al-Nsour & Al-Otoum 2020).

Launching new products or services: When launching new products or services, promotional expenditures can be particularly effective. By creating a “buzz” and generating interest, businesses can increase the chances of a successful launch (Desbordes 2019).

Differentiating from competitors: To differentiate a business from its competitors, promotional expenditure can also be used by highlighting unique features or benefits, allowing businesses to set themselves apart and attract customers looking for something different (Moyo, Knott & Duffett 2022).

Overall, the objectives of promotional expenditure are to increase sales, build brand awareness, encourage repeat business, and launch new products or services, while also differentiating from competitors.

2.4 Sponsorship and Soccer

In the process of understanding the connection and impact of sponsorship on consumer behaviour regarding the Soccer fanbase, it is important to evaluate the spectrum of sponsorship and its connection and impact on sports. Declercq et al. (2021) agree with Silva (2020) that, in recent years, sponsorship (mainly sports sponsorship) has experienced significant growth. It is suggested various important brands and organisations have included sponsorship as an important marketing strategy, while also considering many sports events would not survive without sponsorship support. The sponsorship process generates profit through a range of highly visible sporting events, assisting with exposure to most of the audience and media. Therefore, this aspect of Soccer sponsorship is also described, as it contributes most to expenditure.

Soccer is concluded by Abril et al. (2018), as, arguably, one of the most influential sports in the world, with fans contributing significantly to generating value and revenue for Soccer clubs. A significant amount of revenue is generated in the Soccer industry based on fan loyalty. The study of Abriel et (2018), also furthermore, evaluates how social and cultural aspects control the economic aid of Soccer. Furthermore, through leveraging the extensive Soccer club fanbase,

brands introduce sponsorships that aid in revenue growth. The sponsorship and consumer behaviour scenario foundation is thus created through the connectivity of sponsorship and Soccer. Coelho et al. (2019) concur various reasons exist for sponsorship by any organisation for a Soccer club or individual player; these include increasing brand awareness and the public image of the organisation. However, consumer behaviour is emphasised as the main reason for initiating the sponsorship process, because when the company sponsors a sporting event, club, or player, consumers are inclined to buy or re-purchase any of the sponsor company's products or services. When this sponsorship is connected to sporting events that reach large groups of the public or fans, there is notable growth of these outputs, as in the case of Soccer (Amoako & Boateng 2022).

Sponsorship has been a driving force in influencing consumer purchasing behaviour (Amoako et al. 2012; Osei-Frimpong et al. 2019). The study of Coelho et al. (2019) determined several reasons an organisation would initiate sponsorship for a Soccer club or individual player, such as enhanced awareness of the brand and the organisation's public image. The study emphasises consumer behaviour as the main motivation for initiating the sponsorship process, since any products and/or services of the sponsorship company are bought or re-purchased when sponsoring a Soccer event, club, or player. Moreover, when this sponsorship is of sporting events with large groups of the public or fans in their reach, as with Soccer, the purchase re-purchase output grows exponentially.

As Schönberner, Woratschek & Buser (2022) noted, the need for businesses to spend money to influence decision-making to buy products and services is very important. However, consumers have the choice to determine the products they associate with and those that fulfill their needs. Therefore, to address the need for a business to be ahead of the competition, and improve on their revenue generation, requires finding a passion or sports that people love and admire, to associate themselves with in the short- or long-term (Martey 2020).

According to Thomas et al (2022), the concept of sponsorship is to provide an association between businesses and realise some short- or long-term returns. Pragasen & Mxolisi (2021) and Brito (2019) agreed sponsorship refers to a business relationship that involves the provision of funds, resources, or services for an event, activity, or organisation, expected to offer returns in the form of purchases, rights, and association that can be of commercial advantage to the sponsor.

In a similar but divergent concept of sponsorship, Sung et al (2020) and Muchemi (2021) indicated sponsorship allows a business to demonstrate its affiliation to the individual, event, or organisation it has chosen to associate with. Furthermore, the sponsor stakeholder aims to impact those who patronise such activities or events they are sponsoring. As noted by Girma (2018), this is done to ensure they use their purchasing power as a return on the sponsorship investment. Thus, sponsorship is aimed at the patrons or enthusiasts of the sport, event, organisation, or individual the business is sponsoring, who should be current or prospective customers of the business and feel grateful to the business for helping their favourite individual, event, sport, or organisation (Goldman et al. 2022). In contradiction, the scholarly works of Amoako et al. (2012) indicated few sponsorships only focused on partnership or association with specific events, without targeting the event customer or patrons.

Conventionally, various works by (Reimann et al 2021, Ueda et al,2019), found it becomes imperative to be a sponsor through association and support to attract goodwill from customers of a specific event. Going further, assertions made by Jensen and Cornwell (2017) explain the idea of sponsorship is to develop strong relationships between the business and its customers due to their common ties with the sponsored individual, event, sport, or organisation. In addition, the authors noted winning customer or patron confidence can be done through sponsorship, while Kotler et al. (2018) reiterated consumer purchasing behaviour is tightly associated with their interest and passion or things they are attached to. Hence, businesses that can sponsor such passions, automatically become favourites of the patrons or fans. Sponsorship is one of the core attributes of marketing that aims at driving specific brands and improving communications (Osei-Frimpong et al. 2019). Kapoor et al. (2021) highlight consumer purchasing behaviour is dynamic and very important to driving expenditure. Some descriptions such as by Qazzafi (2020), describe consumer buying behaviour as a process of choosing, purchasing, using, and disposing of products or services by individuals, in order to satisfy their needs and wants. A similar definition of consumer buying behaviour is offered by Stankevich (2017), who describes it as behaviour consumers express when they select and purchase the products or services, using their available resources, to satisfy their wants and desires. Donkor, Mbeche & Mithöfer (2021) indicated consumer buyer behaviour is considered inseparable from marketing sponsorship-related activities. Thus, it is the interrelationship between the various variables that drives consumer buyer behaviour from sponsorship activities.

Kotler et al. (2018) indicate consumer buying behaviour is the study of the ways of buying and disposing of, goods, services, ideas, or experiences by, individuals, groups, and organisations, to satisfy their needs and wants. Buyer behaviour is explained by Donkor et al. (2021) to refer to the process of consumer inputs and actions throughout the buying process that leads to satisfaction of needs and wants. In the same vein, consumer buying behaviour refers to the buying behaviour of final consumers, both individuals and households, who buy goods and services for personal consumption (Stankevich 2017).

To influence specific customers and non-customers to purchase or buy products, there is the need to highlight brand awareness concerning the product, particularly as a means of association with specific customer interests and passions (Omorodion & Osifo 2019). This association provides much credence to the product in driving buyer behaviour. Therefore, consumer behaviour refers to the individual's decision regarding whether, when, where or how, and from whom they are ready to purchase goods and services.

2.4.1 Consumer Purchase Intention

Keeping and tracking purchase intent is a very important component of the numerous operational programmes of firms in any competitive market. Customer purchase intentions may be assessed by studying their behavioural aspects, which helps organisations build stronger customer relationships and increase revenue (Khamitov, Wang & Thomson 2019). The authors add it is not only important to increase income, but also to keep brand reputation in the market in good shape. Buying intention is very significant in the sports sector, particularly in Soccer. As the study of Akowuah (2020) demonstrates, buying intention plays a critical role in sponsorship strategies. Any sponsoring organisation cannot achieve significant sponsorship outcomes unless it focuses on the purchase intents of fanbases around the world. The study also reveals, in choosing to sponsor a club or team with a high level of fan loyalty and attachment, it helps sponsorship businesses to succeed. The impact of sports sponsorship is most obvious from performance evidence during the 2008/9 economic recession (Alonso 2021), reflecting the severe negative effect on sports sponsorship figures post 2009 in comparison to preceding years. Being a sponsor of a Soccer team or organisation has numerous advantages. Sponsors, for example, can raise brand recognition and boost their image. They can also utilise this channel to build relationships with both new and old clients. Kit manufacturers, for example, would entice people who would not typically purchase their items to do so, since they manufacture the outfits for the teams these customers support.

Customers may, additionally, develop an affinity for the product as a result of this, following which, should the club change kit suppliers, customer familiarity with the product will result in reluctance to switch. Low sponsorships are common in a club with low relationship marketing tactics and a team that continues to perform poorly (Tuškej & Podnar 2018). The authors add that sponsorship businesses tend to focus on teams with a stronger bond with their fan base, which can be achieved through long-term relationship planning with the fanbase. Moreover, when businesses link with teams that have poor performance rates, they are more likely to develop negative brand images, which will obstruct the process of achieving the desired sponsorship goal. Tuškej & Podnar (2018), concludes that club fanbases are formed all over the world because of the link that develops between the team and its players, therefore, the importance of team performance, in this regard, cannot be overstated (Khamitov et al. 2019).

2.4.2 Relationship Sponsorship

Commercial soccer sponsorship is possible in a corporate or relational model, according to Akowuah (2020). This means some donors will enter a deal for a limited period to reap some of the rewards of advertising, while others will do so to build a deep connection with the Soccer organisation (Khamitov et al. 2019). Partnership branding is defined by Yu et al (2021), as all marketing actions aimed at building, creating, and serving the best relational exchanges. This phrase is increasingly significant in sales and sponsoring, since it is not only important to attract sponsored associates or companions, but it is also important to keep them. The relationship between clubs and fans improves when the team performs better, while the relationship is expected to erode when the team performs poorly. Fans should persist with the team, even when they play poorly, according to successful relationship management programmes.

However, both sides must devote more time and resources to the process. Akowuah (2020) finds relationship marketing is a practice of customer relationship management (CRM) that mainly focuses on the process of acquiring customer loyalty by establishing long-term customer relationships. With the changed objective of recent sponsorship trends, relationship marketing is also gaining much attention, as this practice does not focus on short-term goals such as customer acquisitions or individual sales. It is apparent engaged fans are more responsive to sponsorship, which could have ramifications in specific areas. To effectively approach the target audience and elicit their affective connections, there may also be a solid fit between the advertiser and the

Sponsor. When the cultural image identified with a specific sport or event does not align with a sponsor's intended market, the corporation may suffer serious consequences. After selecting the appropriate sporting events to promote the brand's image, more powerful promotion is used to capitalise on it.

2.4.3 Soccer sponsorship in Ghana.

In Ghana, sports sponsorship mostly goes to Soccer events, most prominently, the Ghana Football Association (GFA). This is conventional, due to the large number of followers and teams involved in GPL activities. This means the ROI for the organisation sponsoring has to be commensurate with the investment being made. Other than this, there is also a need for essential exposure in terms of reaching different markets, due to the nation's love and passion for Soccer. This is confirmed by Akowuah (2020), who noted Soccer events represent the passion of the nation and every corporate organisation deems it lucrative to make the investment of sponsoring such events in the short- or long-term.

In most cases, Kwaw (2021) found the GPL attracts the necessary attention from the public in Ghana, hence, sponsorship is much more profound. However, a divergent view on the sponsoring of Soccer in Ghana comes from the inability by most teams to raise the necessary capital to maintain a formidable league, and hence, purchasing the sponsor company product(s) becomes less attractive. In addition, most corporate institutions that have sponsored sports in Ghana have been deeply involved in one way or another in terms of selling the company's products and gaining the necessary awareness and exposure in the short-term. As Hinson et al. (2020) pointed out, most companies that sponsored sporting events in Ghana have generated long-term relationships with team fans and supporters and have proved beneficial in the long-term.

There are a few considerable issues concerning sponsoring sports activities in Ghana that are well documented by Aboagye and Rocha (2018), and Darko (2021). These researchers noted, depending on the organisation and handling of the GPL, companies and organisations that sponsored such events have either withdrawn or canceled their sponsorship contracts based on performance agreement clauses (Akowuah 2020).

However, in relation to sponsoring teams within the GPL, there have been massive sponsorship and support for both Kumasi Asante Kotoko and Accra Hearts of Oak Soccer clubs that did not generate commensurable return on investment (ROI) by the sponsoring organisation. Consequently, Kwaw (2021) noted sponsorship companies have bonded with the team support base and fans and attempt to increase their patronage in the short- or long-term. This is realised, because most companies make their products and services available during sporting events to create more awareness.

According to Yeboah (2019), many Ghanaian Football administrators have expressed a desire over the years to see the game's future as extremely attractive, nonetheless, many of the difficulties have been caused by the league's persistent inability to obtain significant sponsorships. Talking about the same story incessantly and making little progress may become a little tiresome, particularly to soccer fans. In 1993, however, efforts to commercialise the league were successful, with clubs becoming corporate organisations, initiating their commercialisation (Yeboah 2019). Between the 2000–2001 and 2002–2003 seasons, ABC Golden Lager served as the new GPL first title sponsor, after which Kinapharma, a pharmaceutical firm, committed to sponsor the league for a single season in 2004. Between 2004 and 2006, Ghana Telecom took over as sponsor for two seasons. Later, the sponsorship agreement was extended under the title One Touch, for an additional two seasons. (Yeboah 2019).

The GPL and Globacom Ghana agreed to a 5-year sponsorship agreement before the end of the 2007–2008 season, yet, after the end of the 2012–2013 season, the GPL declined to extend the agreement, leaving the league without a sponsor for the 2013–2014 campaign. Following this, the GPL and First Capital Bank agreed to a \$10 million, five-year sponsorship on February 4, 2014. (ibid). After First Capital Plus Bank left the country's Premier League in 2017, the Ghana Football Soccer Association posits that no company has been willing to sponsor the league, despite repeated efforts and setting up agencies to hunt for sponsors to persuade corporations to invest in Ghana's top Soccer division Dara (2017). In addition, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, confirmed the ministry is actively looking for sponsors for the GPL, which has been without a title sponsor since Capital Bank decided to end its agreement with the Ghana Soccer Association only two years into the 5-year deal it had signed with the GPL. Further to this, due to their excessive operating costs, several Soccer clubs threatened to quit the league Plahar (2017).

There are many opinions regarding the hotly debated Sports bill and what Ghanaian businesses stand to gain should it be passed, in addition to raising concerns with regard to tax rebates. However, it is necessary to employ a scientific approach to establish what caused companies such as ABC Lager Beer, Kinapharma, Onetouch, as well as Globacom Ghana, and, until recently, First Capital Plus Bank, to renege on their sponsorship agreements with the Ghana Soccer Association.

2.5 Conceptual framework and Hypotheses development

The conceptual framework of this study systematically addresses the criteria and explanatory variables critical for achieving the research objectives. Following the establishment of the theoretical framework and hypotheses, grounded in literature and theory, the conceptual framework serves as the next layer of detailed exploration (Cornwell & Kwon 2020). (Fechner et al (2023), posits that hypotheses articulate the relationships among the key variables captured in the conceptual framework. This serves as a motivation for investigating the intricate dynamics of sports sponsorship in influencing consumer purchase intentions within the context of Ghanaian football.

The criterion variable, central to the study's focus, is consumer purchase intentions, with considerations given to brand image. The core explanatory variables identified include fan attitude and involvement in sponsorship decisions, the alignment between sponsors and events in specific scenarios, and brand image. Additionally, brand perceptions and their impact on consumer purchase intentions, coupled with customer characteristics and situational positions, are integral components assumed to influence purchase intentions. These variables, visually represented in the conceptual framework (Figure 2.3), are earmarked for rigorous testing to establish the relationships and interconnections orchestrated by sponsorship.

The study's objectives are delineated to guide the comprehensive exploration of the research's overall context. These objectives are assessing the influence of sports sponsorship on purchase intention, evaluating the mediating effects of fan attitude and involvement, and scrutinising the role of a sponsor-event fit, brand image, and sponsor brand perception in shaping the relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention.

To provide a clearer understanding of the hypotheses, the researcher outlines the main hypotheses and their respective sub-hypotheses related to the relationship between the independent variable (sponsorship) and the mediating variables, as well as the dependent variable (Purchase intention).

These hypotheses and sub-hypotheses provide a structured way to test and analyse the relationships between sponsorship as the independent variable and the various mediating variables and dependent variables in the study.

To activate the set objectives, the following set of hypotheses are posited, aligning with the research aims:

H₁: Sports sponsorship has a direct influence on purchase intention.

H₂: The positive influence of sports sponsorship on fan attitudes is hypothesised to be a key determinant in shaping purchase intentions. Additionally, fan attitudes are proposed to act as a mediating factor in the relationship between sports sponsorship and purchase intention, emphasizing their crucial role in the consumer decision-making process.

H₃: The hypothesis suggests that sports sponsorship positively influences fan involvement, subsequently impacting purchase intentions. Additionally, fan involvement is proposed as a mediating factor in the relationship between sports sponsorship and purchase intention.

H₄: Sports sponsorship is hypothesised to have a significant impact on the success of an event-fit, subsequently influencing purchase intentions. It is proposed that event fit acts as a mediating factor in the relationship between sports sponsorship and purchase intention.

H₅: Sports sponsorship is hypothesised to influence brand image significantly and positively, subsequently impacting purchase intentions. Additionally, brand image is proposed to act as a mediating factor in the relationship between sports sponsorship and purchase intention.

H₆: Sports sponsorship is hypothesized to exert a significant positive influence on brand perception, subsequently impacting purchase intentions. Moreover, we propose that brand perception plays a crucial mediating role in the relationship between sports sponsorship and purchase intention.

The proposed study hypotheses highlighted above are also visually represented in the form of a diagram (refer to Figure 2.3 on the next page).

Figure 2.3: Conceptual framework

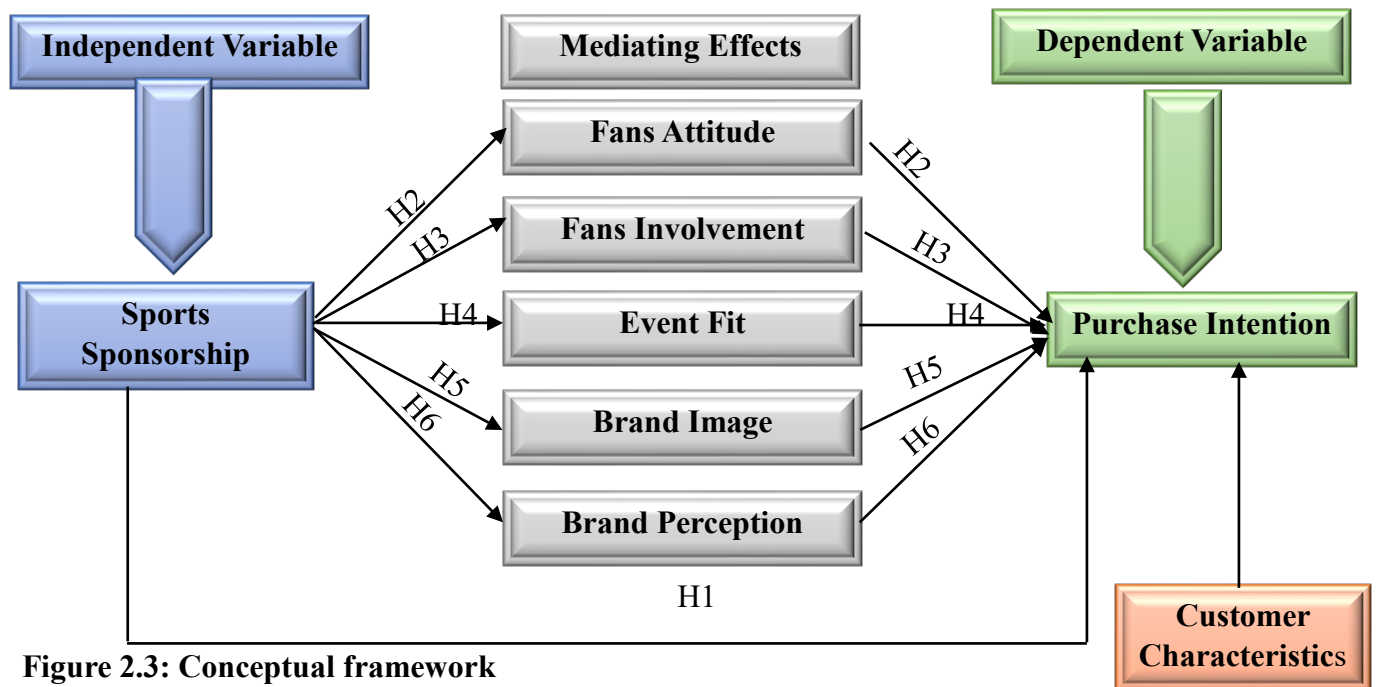


Figure 2.3: Conceptual framework

Source: Proposed by Author

In summary, this conceptual framework as shown in Figure 2.3, provides a structured and comprehensive roadmap for the investigation, encompassing variables critical to understanding the nuanced dynamics of sports sponsorship and its influence on fans' purchase intention within the unique context of Ghanaian football. The hypotheses, rooted in the study's objectives, set the stage for empirical testing and validation, aiming to contribute substantively to the scholarly discourse on sports sponsorship and consumer behaviour. Furthermore, Figure 2.3 also includes customer characteristics as a control variable are captured in the conceptual framework to enables more precise examination of the primary variables of interest. This strategic inclusion enhances the study's validity by isolating the effects of other variables, facilitating a clearer understanding of the specific influence of targeted factors on fans' purchasing behaviour.

2.5.1 Influence of sports sponsorship on purchase intention

The concepts of sponsorship and fanbase are very significant within the world of Soccer. This is particularly true in Ghana, where Soccer is more than merely a sport and has a huge fanbase of local clubs, with fan attitude and involvement making quite the impression on purchase intentions, regarding the sponsorship brand services or products. This is a crucial aspect, where the significant marketing approaches of the Soccer clubs generate better fan connection with the club, eventually aiding the sponsorship brand to initiate better purchase intentions from the fanbase. In this respect, the spectrum of sponsorship effectiveness once again comes within view.

According to a study by Trivedi & Yadav (2020), the effectiveness of sponsorship approaches can be assessed through the indicators related to product sales and stock prices. The study also found not only these, but certain attitudinal elements are some significant factors that help to measure sponsorship effectiveness. Attitudinal and behavioural factors were also revealed, including the aspects of media exposure, brand awareness and recognition, sponsor image, and recall rates, as well as word-of-mouth communication, and purchase intentions, which are all assessed as significant effective sponsorship outcomes.

The study suggests some important elements in this scenario, such as Soccer team performance, fan attachment, attitude, and involvement, can significantly affect the outcomes of sponsorship, particularly where purchase intentions are concerned. Furthermore, fan intentions to purchase the product or services of a sponsoring brand were found to potentially be based on the teams and how these are perceived by their fans. When the team is perceived as a winning team, the sponsorship brand can expect better purchase intentions from fans. In addition, the negative attitude of fans towards the team, to state it more prominently, when the fan base suddenly starts to perceive the team as failing, the sponsorship brand can also face some negative outcomes.

Al-Nsour and Al-Otoum (2017) suggest the main influencing components behind sponsorship outcomes, particularly in the context of purchase intentions, are fan attitudes, involvement towards the sponsored club and teams or events, sponsorship efficiency, and even brand image. Evidently, all these elements cannot be managed or maintained by the sponsors, and, for this reason, certain risks always remain in the process of practicing sponsorships. Nonetheless, it is clear some efficient approaches can be considered to overcome these risks, as suggested by Pinto et al. (2019). However, as this study is focused on understanding how significant elements influence fanbase

purchase intentions; as a first step, the aspect of purchase intentions needs to be properly assessed. Based on the discussion above, the first hypothesis states that;

- *H₁: Sports sponsorship has a direct influence on purchase intention.*

2.5.2 Influence of fan attitude on purchase intentions

Client attitude can be described as an individual's favourable or unfavourable feelings toward a product. For example, people with a positive mindset are more inclined to acquire an item, which leads to the likelihood of enjoying or disliking it. Consumer behavioural intentions reveal how people intend to use things. This is sometimes, but not always, a logical outcome of sentiments. A person may, for instance, dislike a particular event but attend anyway, since it is a favourite hangout spot of his friends (Loureiro et al. 2019). Furthermore, shoppers have strong opinions regarding some commodities or brands, with these views often founded on specific beliefs that affect their feelings, and later result in intention to act as depicted (Figure 2.4) below.

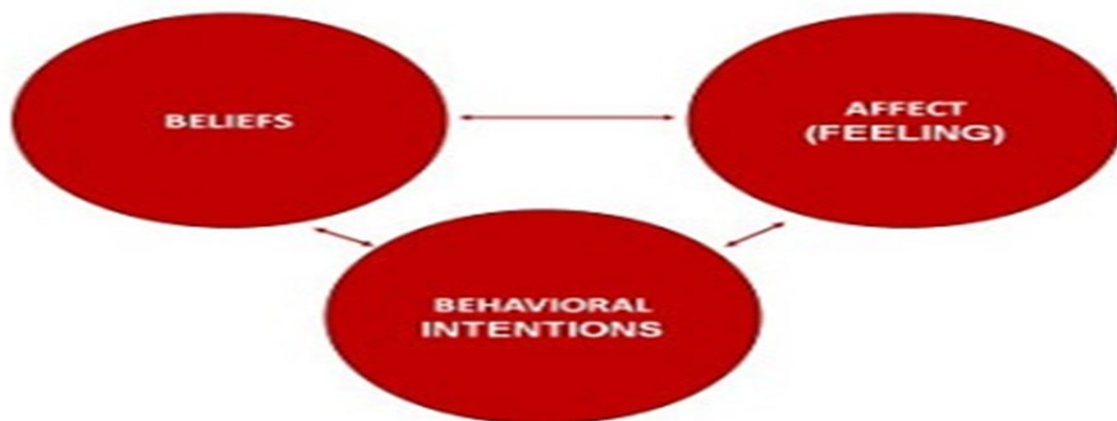


Figure 2.4: Framework of Behavioural influence

Source: Created by Author (2023)

Prior research in branding and marketing has demonstrated that attitude regarding a commercial/ advertisement has a large and favourable influence on mindset where the brand is concerned, and indirectly impacts purchase intention by changing buyer attitude toward the company. Furthermore, according to numerous experts, the mechanisms through which consumers evaluate sponsors can differ based on the type of event (Skard, Adam & Engdahl 2020).

Companies and non-profit organisations (NPOs) have been collaborating more recently, although the characteristics of these collaborations differ from business-to-business (B2B) collaborations. While developing new marketplaces and goods is a primary goal of B2B interactions, commercial

sponsors may be more concerned with achieving a public relations goal or being ethically aware through such merger partnerships (Martín-Consuegra et al. 2019).

Through analysing the study of Blake et al. (2018), various individual components that describe the entire fan attitude aspect became evident, as well as how it impacts the purchase intention of the sponsorship brand. The study further evaluates fan loyalty and attachment towards the sponsored team or club to determine whether they are the deciding factors of purchase intention, because these aspects effectively present the fans' attitudinal approach. Fanbase and loyalty in the scenario of Soccer are often related to each other.

Kruger, Goldman and Ward (2014) describe loyalty in a sports consumer context as "the outcome of a process by which individuals develop stronger emotional responses to, more functional knowledge about, and greater symbolic value for attributes and benefits associated with a sports team. Tsiotsou (2019) agrees with (Kruger et al 2014) on sports consumers' loyalty, where the personal experience of the fan of the specific club or team is the main generator of loyalty. The study suggests the exceptional emotional connections with the clubs create the most significant loyalty, which also helps the sponsor brands, as they are also associated with the clubs. In a more specific way, fan loyalty influences fans in becoming more connected with the sponsoring brands and this generates positive purchase intentions.

According to Scheinbaum, Lacey & Drumwright (2019), in the context of generating loyalty among fans, Soccer clubs play a significant part. Through practicing efficient relationship marketing they tend to create long-term, loyalty-based relationships with their fans, which also enhances brand awareness for all. The study also suggests the concept of fan loyalty, in the Soccer fan context, should be interpreted in both behavioural and attitudinal dimensions. According to the authors, the behavioural context of fans analyses the focus of fans on various Soccer events. Behavioural loyalty aids the sponsors as the fans, through their behavioural loyalty, tend to repeatedly purchase. This can be asserted as one of the most efficient purchase intentions that provide both the sponsors and the Soccer clubs with significant support and better revenue over the years. Moreover, as fan loyalty increases, they become more attached to the club and team.

A study by Ewanlen & Obeki (2021) analyses that attachment is a significant aspect of the consumer-brand relationship. The implementation of relationship marketing also helps to create a better and long-term attachment to the fans. As explained by Shin et al. (2018), team attachment

can be defined as a form of psychological connection toward a sports club, introducing the connectedness of an individual's self-concept and the anticipation of the sports club's success and failures as one's own. The conclusion of Shin et al (2018) corresponds with that of the findings by Akwensivie, et al 2014). Through preserving fan attachment, loyalty is generated within the attitudinal aspects of fans, which effectively helps the sponsor. The study also suggests as the attachment level of fans heightens, they can connect their teams or favourite club with significant sponsoring brands. Furthermore, brands leverage this attitude to generate more positive purchase intentions, which automatically aid effective sponsorship.

Two basic core variables have been established to derive purchase intentions, with one of the variables being fan or customer attitudes, which significantly impact purchase intentions (Cheong, Pyun & Leng 2019). Thus, it is the attitude of fans toward the brand image and the attributions they have in associating or purchasing products related to the brand that impact their purchase intention. Fan attitude regarding advertisement or sponsorship has a significant and positive influence on the attitude toward the brand. Inherently, the attitude of fans, therefore, has an indirect bearing on the purchase intentions of the brand product. In other words, when companies or brands sponsor specific sports events or teams, they generate positive fan attitudes (Melovic et al. 2019). In addition, it is quite notable that customer and fan attitudes toward a specific brand are an important mediator variable in brand choice (Cho, Lee & Chiu 2021). There have been some scholarly works and recent research to support the two variables (fan attitudes and purchase intentions) are interrelated (Rose et al. 2021).

The other variable is fan involvement, practiced in diverse ways toward the purchase of a brand's product. As indicated by Moura & de Souza-Leão (2020), fan involvement is related to the personal connection and relevance with the brand in diverse ways. Some fans feel they are directly accountable or involved with a specific sports event or team activities and, hence, must help in the sale or purchase of their products; this happens when the team has provided social support to the fans in diverse ways. Customer involvement is also critical and highly related to customers' inherent attitudes, interests, and needs (Klaus & Zaichkowsky 2020). In addition, several authors have noted customer and fan purchase intention situations are directly mediated by the amount of information they will process, and this depends on their involvement (Trivedi 2020; Cho et al. 2021; Park & Sihombing 2020).

This is critical and businesses have to make such information notable. Thus, the involvement is mostly thriving from the standpoint of information relevant to the audience and circulated through advertisement and sponsorship activities to increase credibility. Involvement increases the interest of the customers, and this increased interest can develop positive attitudes toward the company and ultimately purchase intention (Rai et al 2021). Thus, furthering the argument in relation to the variable of involvement on brand and purchasing intentions, the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) assists to expatiate the involvement with the causes that potentially influence how customers or fans engage with purchasing decisions.

The ELM helps to understand the process of cause-related marketing messages and can determine their behavioural responses (Müller & Christandl 2019), whereas social cause has an association with the responses (Jung, Choi & Oh 2020). A study conducted by Riva, Uddin and Rubel (2019), showed one-third of customers have the intent and interest to purchase specific offerings from various companies, because of the positive impact in supporting the social cause in their communities. Hence, there is a positive relationship between customer involvement and purchase intention at various levels.

While this is not limited to social intervention activities of the companies, fan involvement can also be expressed in diverse ways in context to the involvement of fans towards sponsorship messages, advertisement, and purchase decisions (Liu, Liu & Jiang 2022), as well as social causes. Several studies have been conducted to determine the influence of cause involvement on purchase intention (Trivedi 2020; Cho et al. 2021; Park & Sihombing 2020; Rai et al. 2021; Klaus & Zaichkowsky 2020). Thus, with this conceptualisation, the second hypothesis are postulated:

- **H₂:** *The positive influence of sponsorship on fan attitudes is hypothesised to be a key determinant in shaping purchase intentions. Additionally, fan attitudes are proposed to act as a mediating factor in the relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention, emphasizing their crucial role in the consumer decision-making process.*

2.5.3 Influence of fan involvement on consumer purchase intentions

The factor of fan involvement is very closely connected to the aspects of fan loyalty and attachment. Skard et al. (2020) suggested, with heightening loyalty and attachment, fans tend to involve themselves more with the various event and activities related to their favourite club and teams; this provides sponsorship brands with more exposure to the audience and generates better awareness.

According to the study of Skard et al. (2020), involvement in a business context is a very significant component that leads the customers to become more engaged with the brand or the business. In this scenario, it is also important to state it is only when the service or product has a high relevance to customers and their behaviours that better involvement can be generated.

Furthermore, the spectrum of involvement is directly connected to the purchase intentions of customers, where high involvement has generated better purchase intentions and customers tend to buy more products.

As the concept of involvement is significant within the business context, fan involvement within the sports context also becomes very important. The study additionally states fan involvement can be interpreted as the high level of attachment of any individual to a team, which leads to more participation in the various events related to the team or club. Within the sports spectrum, the involvement perspective is connected to the facts regarding how much time any individual fan invests in viewing Soccer events, attending events, following the teams and clubs on social media, and reading of them. The study evaluates further that these types of involvement help the sponsoring brands to spread their brand and messages to the fans more efficiently. It is thus evident the level of involvement is more connected to purchase intentions. The more exposed any individual fan is to the sponsor brand, the more positive a perspective they tend to create about the brand connected with their favourite club or team, to which they are loyal too.

According to Trivedi (2020), in Soccer specifically, fan loyalty and involvement are very significant elements that aid sponsorships to generate positive purchase intentions. Through analysing a recent study by Tsordia, Papadimitriou & Parganas (2018), it can be stated within the sports perspective, two types of involvement are found. These comprise enduring involvement and situational involvement.

On the one hand, enduring involvement is based on the long-term relationship a fan has with a significant club or team. It can also depict how much time and value the fan is connected with the certain club emotionally. On the other hand, situational involvement depicts the extent of fan involvement in a certain occasion or Soccer event. In both these scenarios, the higher the involvement, the higher the chances of the sponsoring brand to create better awareness amongst the fans (Tsordia et al. 2018), which is the main reason behind the positive purchase intentions of the fanbase.

Through this assessment, it is significant to state fan attitude and involvement are the most important element with an extensive impact on purchase intention. Furthermore, should these elements be assessed by the sponsorship brands prior to the sponsorship practice, it will help the brand acquire better recognition within the huge Soccer fanbase of Ghana or globally.

Klaus & Zaichkowsky (2020) indicate influencing consumer purchasing behaviour is critical to most products of corporate organisations that engage in sports sponsorship. As argued by Malhotra & Birks (2017), fan involvement has been adjudicated by various scholarly works, such as Hsiao, Tang & Su (2021), as one of the critical factors in improving sports sponsorship outcomes and the necessary factors in this regard. Consumer purchasing behaviour is crucial to the short- and long-term objectives and outcomes of sports sponsorship. Thus, consumers support the sponsorship of their teams and sports events through purchases and patronage of the sponsored products and services.

When analysing customer reactions to sponsorships, the psychological components of consumer behaviour are frequently selected as the most significant factor over all other impacts. To present a comprehensive and clear perspective, this study seeks to regress from a single or dyadic assessment of psychological effects. In the future, it is suggested research into individual and environmental variations may serve to further advance our understanding of psychological processes. One factor that has to improve fan involvement in sports sponsorship is technology. Sohn, Han & Lee (2012) assert technology now allows fans to be connected with their teams 24/7, creates many contact points, as well as two-way communication, allowing clubs to shape fan behaviours, and sports organisations to shape their strategy. The same technology has opened opportunities for fans to communicate easily and most sustainably with the corporate organisation sponsoring their teams and their products (Alonso Dos Santos et al. 2016).

Sports fan involvement in sponsorship activities comes in the form of including fans in the designs and initiation of messages of sponsorship and the channels to disseminate these (Pitts 1998). This assertion was supported by Malhotra & Birks (2017), who indicated sports fans are an integral part of every sports-related sponsorship, therefore, their consumer characteristics have to be considered when deciding what can impact them in the short- or long-term. One of the major assertions or points made by Zdravkovic & Till (2012), is fans are able to articulate which areas of the sponsorship message resonate with the entire fanbase and CDP. In addition, within communities where sports events take place, fans need to be involved to evaluate every investment decision to support the society or communities within which impact is expected.

Consumer purchase intentions thrive on fan feedback and engagement in the short- or long-term. Thus, Koloba (2020), states purchase intention denotes consumer willingness to purchase a particular product in specific conditions. Purchase intention usually relates to the behaviour, perception and attitudes of consumers (Tomalieh 2016). In this regard, Liu, Zhang & Zhang (2020) agree with Sohn et al. (2012) that fan involvement creates a strong intention to purchase; therefore, relying on corporate brands alone does not have such a huge, short- or long-term impact.

Fan involvement in sponsorship engagement is intermediated by the brand of the company. There are fanbases that associate with a specific class of corporate brand impact, therefore, the need to evaluate which of the fanbase could yield the necessary purchase intentions has been ascertained as critical, both in the short- and long-term. While the brand is critical in various settings, there is a need to evaluate fan involvement as a key part of the process, where involvement can be ascertained regarding what fans do during such sporting events and how sponsorship can be used to elaborate the ability of such activities to influence consumer purchasing intentions (Shin et al. 2018).

Malhotra & Birks (2017) agreed fan involvement is based on giving meaning to this connection between sports organisations, athletes, sponsors, and stakeholders, as well as fans, in the context of sports sponsorship and purchasing intention or consumer purchasing decisions.

Nevertheless, Chan-Olmsted & Xiao (2019) asserted fan involvement in sports sponsorship is not only limited to ensuring messages and communications are good, but also having close contact and engagement of interaction between the teams, sponsors, and consumers, which concurs with findings by Tufail et al. (2014). Speed & Thompson (2020) indicated product development relationships are critical in this regard, as is engagement with community buildup and support, to

ensure fan involvement results in loyal brand and product enthusiasts in the long run. Therefore, with this conceptualisation, therefore the third hypotheses are postulated:

H₃: The hypothesis suggests that sponsorship positively influences fan involvement, subsequently impacting purchase intentions. Additionally, fan involvement is proposed as a mediating factor in the relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention.

2.5.4 Influence of sponsorship-event fit on consumer purchasing intentions.

According to Tuffour et al. (2016), the aspect of event-sponsor fit can be described as the extent to which a fan assesses that the sponsoring brand and the sponsorship event have the same identity. In agreement, Wilterson et al. (2020) argue sponsorship-event fit is the consumer approach in assessing the brand and the event with a singular identity or how fans assess that both the sports event and the brand are appropriately matched. The study states event-sponsor fit has significant relevance to the aspects of purchase intentions; to where fan loyalty and involvement are important but more than that, targeted corporate sponsorship approaches of brands become more important.

Findings by Tuškej, Golob & Podnar (2013) suggest sponsorship is used as a primary communication vehicle for many brands, which leads the brands to link their brand with a sports event, particularly in Soccer, to attract audiences. For this reason, sponsorship became a significant part of various sports events, wherein the connection between the brand and the fanbase becomes more prominent and authentic. In this regard, advertisement efficiency of sponsoring brands gains more relevance, as how the brand represents itself to the customers, turns into the main element that helps to measure the effectiveness of the sponsorship practices, by generating positive purchase intentions.

Wilterson et al. (2020) state the elements that bring out the effectiveness of sponsorship, such as positive purchase intentions, higher revenue, and better brand awareness, are effectively connected. Moreover, with the effective presence of one element within the approach of the brand's sponsorship brand, better outcomes become more eminent.

2.5.4.1 Relevance of event sponsor fits on the purchase intention

Shin et al. (2018) state the aspect of congruence becomes significant in the process of assessing the impact and relevance of event-sponsor fits on the purchase intention within the Soccer sponsorship context. As the equivalent transfer effects from the various events are not guaranteed for the event and can be linked with different companies, the congruence effect between the event and the sponsoring brand is becoming more relevant in recent studies. Yasrebdoost, Etemedjazi & Parilti (2019) suggest the word “congruence” is used in the sense of words such as “Fit, compatibility, and relevance”; in this respect, the presence of congruence within sponsorship approaches becomes important.

In the process of achieving the most relevant and significant sponsorship results, it becomes important for the brand to be portrayed effectively while sponsoring events. With fans being attached to significant clubs and teams, it is important for the fanbase to acknowledge the congruence of the sports event and brand, to develop an appropriate awareness of the brand, which will lead the fanbase towards acquiring positive purchase intentions.

2.5.4.2 Impact of congruence on sponsorship

Some significant impacts of event sponsor congruence or fit on the sponsorship process and its effectiveness are evident. Wilterson et al. (2020) suggest, through Schema theory, the effectiveness of the congruence on sponsorship can be correctly explained. Wilterson et al. (2020) concur that Schema is a significant hypothetical memory structure that helps people to relate to prior experiences and memories. Furthermore, according to this theory, the attention of the fanbase on the event and the brand is created through stimulating previous experiences with the brand(s). Therefore, previous advertisement and exposure of fans to the brand also play an important role in the process of creating relevance or fit between the event and the brand.

Abdulkader (2018) suggests the concept of event-sponsor fit or congruence is connected with the aspect of how the brand is presented, not within the events alone but also prior to the events, with fan involvement again becoming relevant. Abdulkader (2018) concur that through proper indulgence only the fans can invest more time watching and joining various events, where they will be exposed to the brand more often, creating a preconception of the brand strongly connected to the sponsored club. In this situation, an advertised event will significantly attract fans to the brand and the club. According to the study of, Abdulkader (2018), the main aspect of event-sponsor fit

is to make significant approaches throughout the sponsorship process, so that brand and club identities become one; this will enable fans to connect the brand with their favourite team or club.

Pradhan, Malhotra & Moharana (2020) emphasise the process of acquiring the event-sponsor fit, requires significant steps to leverage fanbase team loyalty, thus ensuring fans become and remain loyal to the brand. In this process, merely sponsoring the clubs and aiding them with financial support is insufficient. Both in individual Soccer and club sponsorship, the sponsorship brands need to connect to the values and journey of the club or players, thus, allowing the fan base to become attached to the brand as well. A study by Girma (2020) illustrated this process of sponsorship is not appropriate for any short-term development. Therefore, major long-term objectives for sponsorship need to be pursued by brands to have significant long-term sponsorship effectiveness.

2.5.4.3 Relationship between Sponsor-Event Congruence and purchase intention

According to Pradhan et al. (2020), sponsor-event congruence and fit are very relevant within the study context, in creating a more positive attitude of fans towards the sponsorship brands. The study Pradhan et al. (2020), suggests through the sponsor-event congruence or fit measurement, fan attitude and intention towards the brand can be measured efficiently. In this context, the sponsor-event fit can be analysed as a significant factor that influences the sponsorship response effectively. Favourable sponsorship response is driven by sponsor-event fit, sponsor sincerity, and the attitude toward the sponsor (Kim & Kim 2018).

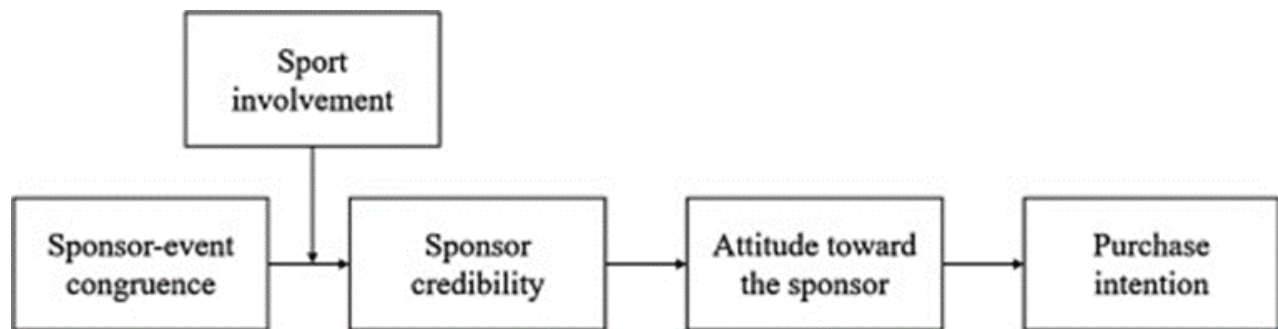


Figure 2.5: Sponsor-event congruence and purchase intention

Source: Kim and Kim (2018)

How the brand is presented and perceived thus becomes very relevant. Various studies suggest the two aspects of “sponsor-event fit” and “fan attitude” are eminently connected (Hirschfelder, 2015, Rabale,2012). In this context, it is evident that sponsor-event congruence has a significant impact

on fan attitude towards the sponsoring brand. As earlier stated, fanbase attitude has a significant impact in the process of generating positive purchase intention for sponsorship brands or organisations. Vance-Gadagbui (2020) finds, when a brand with significant approaches can acquire a significant sponsor-event fit, it is more likely to generate better purchase intention than any other advertisement or programme with low sponsor-event fit. More accurately, the process of congruency has better effects on purchase intentions and these two aspects are connected. Vance-Gadagbui (2020), study further suggests brand image and brand perception become very relevant, as significant perception can be generated through proper presentation of brand image.

2.5.4.4 Sponsorship-event-fit on consumer purchasing intentions.

The instance of brand image association with a specific event leads to higher improvements in brand image, which tend to be stronger. This means when individuals and fans learn their brand is associated with sponsoring an event, it leads to higher association with and affection for the brand image. Cho (2016) confirmed this, indicating the event–sponsor fit product tends to be more positively associated and derives favourable attitudes toward a sponsoring brand, which leads to a much higher purchasing intention in the long run. Thus, when a brand sponsors an event, its products within the context of the event are what is put on display, and which attracts the necessary purchase intentions. As noted by Jung, Kim & Ko (2015), such sponsor fits lead to much higher purchase intentions, compared to advertisements with low event–sponsor fit.

Wijaya, Soehadi and Sumarlin (2020) found by incorporating congruency in the model as a moderator, this helps to identify effects relative to establishing the interrelation between sponsorship and linked purchases. The authors revealed a more positive relationship between these variables.

In addition, Papadimitriou, Kaplanidou & Papacharalampous (2016) revealed the indirect influence by sponsor–event fit on sponsor-brand purchase intentions via brand attitude and brand quality. Congruency, therefore, has an immediate effect on purchase intention. In this context, sponsor-event fit refers to the degree that the sponsor’s brand-specific associations can be applied or benefit the product category of the sponsee (Spiggle et al. 2012).

It is thus important for a brand with a positive image and the rank at which it is associated, either luxury, economy, or low-level stage, to prioritise the fit of the event with the sponsorship. The Rolex watch company is an example of this, as it sponsors events related to prestige sports events,

such as golf and tennis tournaments, targeting their mostly high-end purchasing power holders in the short- and long-term (Cho 2016; Hutabarat & Gayatri 2014; Tomalieh 2016; Khuong & Kim Chau 2017).

The fourth hypothesis has been structured in detail below. This distinction impacts the clarity of a company's positioning strategy and, to some extent, how sponsorship information is processed to affect how effectively the sponsorship is received. As a result, the following hypotheses are put forth: *H₄: Sponsorship is hypothesised to have a significant impact on the success of an event-fit, subsequently influencing purchase intentions. It is proposed that event fit acts as a mediating factor in the relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention.*

2.5.5 Brand image on purchase intentions

In the process of analysing the relevance of the sponsor-event fit, the concepts of brand image and brand perception become very important. Even within the spectrum of sponsorship and its effectiveness, the main aspects become how the brand is presented to the fan base and how the fan base perceives the brand. This not only suggests connectivity between the components of brand image and perceptions but also helps to analyse how these two aspects become important in the process of influencing fanbase purchase intention toward the sponsorship brands. In this scenario, the concepts of brand image, awareness, and goodwill become connected to the purchase intention. Another significant concept within this context is the approach of the club. In creating a significant bond with both the fan base and the sponsorship, the approach of the club is important to develop a proper and efficient brand image for the fan base (Kunkel & Biscaia 2020).

Kunkel & Biscaia (2020), moreover, posits that when clubs can maintain significant relationships with the sponsorship brands that have meaningful values, both the sponsorship brand and the clubs can acquire profit from the better perception of the brand. (Rai et al 2021) concur that a significant relationship of brand image and purchase intention can be detected within this scenario, and relative to this, how the brand is perceived by the Soccer fanbase thus becomes important.

Huettermann et al. (2020) assert a sponsorship brand with a significant image is more likely to attract more fans. The brand image creation process is a significant aspect of the sponsorship process, because it decides how the fan will perceive the brand. The consumer will generate a more positive attitude towards the brand with a good image, which creates higher purchase intentions. An enhancement in the brand image thus significantly develops the purchase intention of the customers and in the sports scenario of fans.

Throughout the analysis, the sense of connectivity within the various elements of sponsorship is a recurring theme of the study. Supporting this concept, Huettermann et al. (2020) state the brand image creates the attitude of the Soccer fanbase, and this attitude can be interpreted as the perception of the brand by the fanbase. Furthermore, through acquiring a significant perception of the brand, the fanbase decides to engage with the sponsoring brand individually and opts to buy their products and services. This presents the sponsors with significant revenue over the years.

It is for all these reasons the sponsorship industry is providing more focus on Soccer sponsorship, because only through these sports can the significant attachment of the fanbase become the reason behind the effectiveness of the sponsorship practices. As example, the television rights sponsorship in South Africa’s PSL and Ghana’s premier league are compared (Figure 2.7).

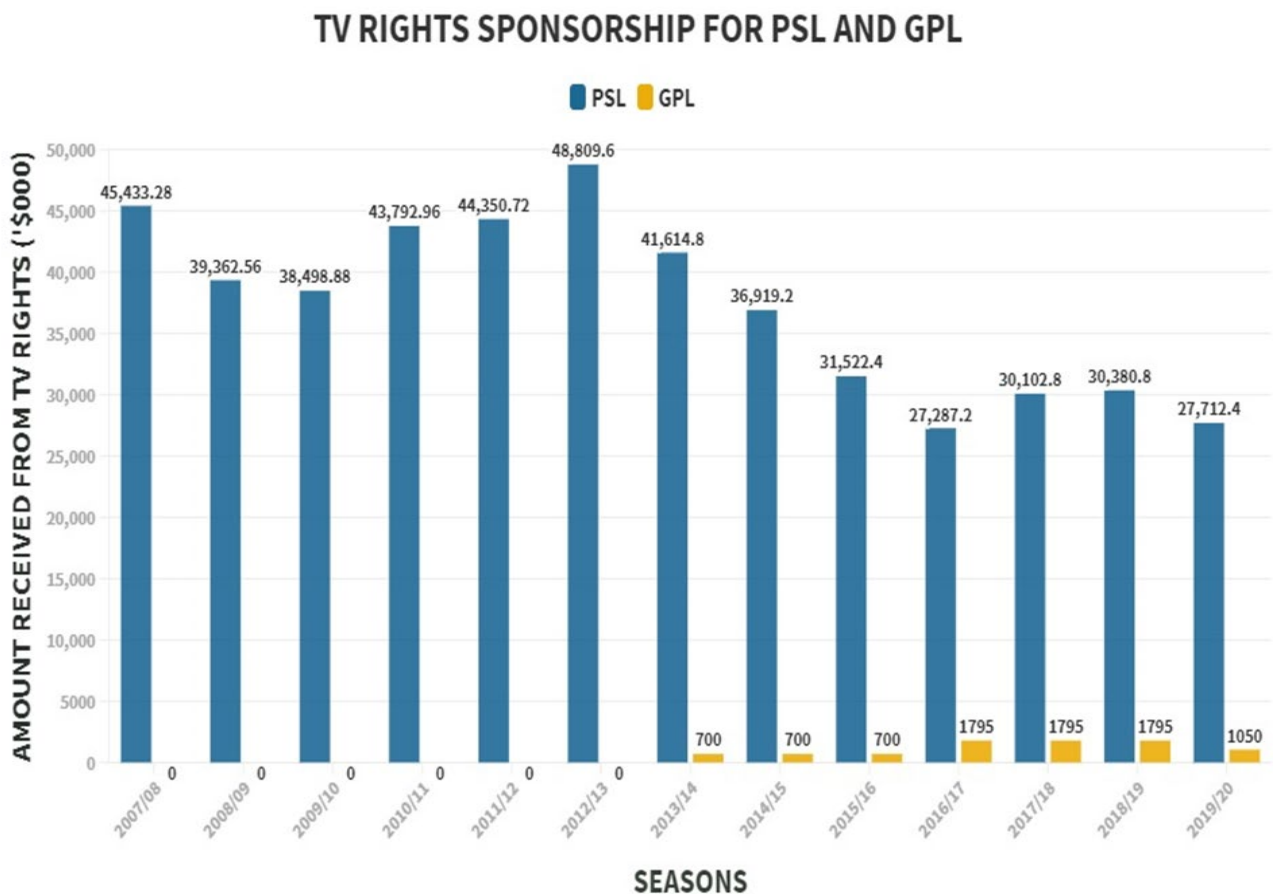


Figure 2.6: Comparison of financial difference between Ghana and South Africa in terms of Soccer sponsorships

Source: Blake et al. (2019).

The significance of brand image and brand perception of fans within the sponsorship scenario also assists in understanding the sponsor-consumer behaviour relationship in depth. Significantly, the components, brand image and brand perception, are the main key elements within the sponsorship industry. According to Tsordia et al. (2018), through relationship marketing of the clubs and the sponsoring brand, an image is created with the fans regarding the sponsoring brand, which is connected with the values of the club and emotions of fan loyalty. The authors also suggest the impression it creates on fans, also known as brand perception, depicts fan attitude towards the brand, denoting the main reason behind positive purchase intention that sponsoring brands aim to acquire through sponsorship.

2.5.5.1 Brand image on consumer purchase intentions

According to Tyagi & Tyagi (2022), brand image is seen as the sum of the emotional and aesthetic impressions that occur to the consumers about the product. Various characteristics, such as what the brand reminds consumers of, and the emotions it evokes in them, contribute to shaping the overall perception and impression of the brand. Brand image is very important and has a great effect on brand equity as well as brand awareness (Cheung et al 2019). Furthermore, brand image can be seen as all the different awareness, beliefs, opinions, and behaviours of customers related to their brand, whether created purposefully by the corporation or not (Keller 2001, cited by Hsieh et al 2023). Various characteristics such as what the brand reminds, what it evokes in the eyes of the consumer as well as the buying behaviour of the consumer must be dealt with to determine the brand image Cherubino et al (2019).

Hutabarat & Gayatri (2014) were able to incorporate congruency in the model as a moderator, which helps to identify effects relative to determining the interrelation between sponsorship and linked purchases. This is agreed to by Wijaya et al. (2020), who found a higher positive relationship between these variables. Study results from Papadimitriou et al. (2016) reveal sponsor–event fit indirectly influences sponsor-brand purchase intentions via brand attitude and brand quality. In other words, congruency immediately has an effect on purchase intention. In this context, Spiggle et al. (2012) explained the sponsor-event fit denotes the applicable or beneficial degree of the sponsor’s brand-specific associations to the sponsee’s product category, which is confirmed by Carrillat and Grohs (2019). This is important when the brand has a positive image and impacts the rank at which it is associated, whether luxury, economy, or low-level.

An example is the Rolex watch company, which sponsors events related to prestige, such as golf sports tournaments and tennis that mostly have short- and long-term high-end purchasing power holders (Cho 2016; Hutabarat & Gayatri 2014; Tomalieh 2016; Khuong and Kim Chau 2017). Therefore, the fifth hypotheses have been structured in detail below. This distinction impacts the clarity of a company's positioning strategy and, to some extent, how sponsorship information is processed to impact how effectively the sponsorship is received. As a result of the above discussions, the following hypotheses are put forth:

- *H5: Sponsorship is hypothesised to influence brand image significantly and positively, subsequently impacting purchase intentions. Additionally, brand image is proposed to act as a mediating factor in the relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention.*

2.5.6 Brand perception on consumer purchase intentions

Brand perception is much more powerful than previously assumed since it produces the assertions and associations that come with the brand. Park & Sihombing (2020) indicate brand perception occur when a brand takes root in the consumer's subconscious, creating a connection between the brand and the consumer's self-concept. Since consumer association of brand perception is with either luxury or medium-cost products, creating a relatable and reliable brand perception is critical in the short- and long-term (Agmeka, Wathoni & Santoso 2019).

Researchers point out consumers often try to associate their self-concept with brand prestige, exclusivity, and fashion; thus, symbolic benefits are quite important for socially visible brands (Westre 2016). The clarity on brand perception as an influence to purchase intentions is crucial (Dash, Kiefer & Paul 2021), whereas Kang & Matsuoka (2022) noted brand perception is what customers believe a product or service represents, not what the company owning the brand says it does. Therefore, brand perception is much more effective than the public relation of the brand, in terms of what it says it represents. When the brand represents health and wellness, the brand is seen in that regard, irrespective of statements (Hutabarat & Gayatri 2014).

2.5.6.1 Generating Goodwill and Brand exposure.

After reviewing extant Literature, the researcher found out that, it is established that sponsorship brands assess the fan base to approve of their activities with the team through goodwill and in that process, brand perception is generated. Stated more generically, the process of generating goodwill is also a practice to create better brand perception by the fanbase. As a result, brand exposure becomes important, since brand exposure of sponsorship activities can be portrayed to the fanbase. According to Haapalainen (2022), it is important to familiarise the fan base more with the brand and its sponsorship approaches, not only through supporting the teams but also in the process of presenting sponsorship activities in the limelight to generate significant brand perception; the significance of exposure, in this context, becomes important (Sibiya 2019).

It is imperative for the sponsorship brand to create a significant bond with the Soccer club and team, because to generate exposure of goodwill, it is essential the fanbase recognises the benefits of the sponsorship events and activities. Westre (2016) suggests goodwill is generated when the fanbase recognises the connectivity of the sponsorship brand with the team and can understand how the sponsorship deal supports the team. Recognised activities to generate goodwill can assist the team economically and socially, making an event possible, promoting an event, and supporting the Soccer community in some way.

According to Westre (2016), the study, the fanbase can perceive the benefits of sponsorship at the category level, with this level indicating the aspect where the fanbase feels connected and attached to an area of sponsorship. In connecting with the sponsorship deal of any Soccer club, fans recognise the efficacy of the sponsorship deal for the team or the club and when they distinguish the significant benefits of the deal, goodwill is automatically generated, and a perception of the brand created. Therefore, the commercialisation approach of the sponsorship process also becomes very important. While fans support sponsoring brands, significant sponsorship deals have some commercial advantage. However, when fans perceive that a brand prioritises commercial advantages over the benefits it provides, the context of goodwill diminishes. Consequently, sponsorship deals characterised by excessive commercialisation are prone to experiencing reduced effectiveness and generating lower levels of purchase intention.

Sibiya (2019) states, in generating goodwill, all significant sponsorship elements such as fan involvement, fan attachment, and emotional connection with the club, and so on, are seen to be

connected throughout the process of sponsorship, where a pattern can be seen where every element is not only connected but also impacts on the other significant sponsorship elements. A significant relationship marketing process within the club and sponsoring brand creates significant fan attachment, which generates significant goodwill and brand reputation that, eventually, leads to good brand perception and higher purchase intention. Every element is thus crucial. All these aspects eventually lead to the effectiveness of the sponsorship approaches of the significant brand. Nevertheless, it is vital to use several significant approaches to create the most relevant brand image and perception, in order to generate significant positive purchase intentions from the sponsorship process.

Many research studies have constructed a positive relationship between brand perception of the image and the intention to purchase when sponsorship activities are made available in that regard (Biscaia et al. 2017). Other scholars have noted brand perception comes from customer use, experience, functionality, and reputation, as well as word-of-mouth recommendation - on social media channels as well as face-to-face. This is critical, since brand perception is built over time and is not an instantaneous activity. Consumers will generate a more positive attitude toward the brand with good brand perception and thus generate higher purchase intention; therefore, an increase in the brand image enhances the purchase intention of the customers (Solihin, Ahyani & Setiawan 2021).

Therefore, the sixth hypotheses have been constructed:

- *H₆: Sponsorship is hypothesized to exert a significant positive influence on brand perception, subsequently impacting purchase intentions. Moreover, we propose that brand perception plays a crucial mediating role in the relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention.*

2.5.7 Customer Characteristics and purchase intention

Consumer characteristics are key factors when planning a sponsorship event to drive purchase intentions, as noted by Hutabarat and Gayatri, (2014), since these characteristics have a bearing on short- and long-term influence of consumer behaviour. Thus, to a large extent, these factors explain whether the customer buys a specific product or chooses to pick a competitor. Shamir (2017) states consumer characteristics come from the influence of cultural, social, personal, and psychological attributes of the sports team fans or supporters of a sports event being sponsored. In this regard, the message and communication must be in sync with the majority of the characters, if not all, to influence the purchase intentions positively. As example, sponsoring of sports events in Saudi Arabia should consider the cultural significance of specific activities and not contravene these. Stathopoulou, Quansah & Balabanis, (2022) indicated sponsoring events in the Western world should follow cultural and psychological attributes to improve purchase intentions.

Cavusgil et al. (2022) found word-of-mouth is a customer characteristic quite notable in the influence of purchase intentions, where dealing with brands at different levels is concerned. Thus, Kim et al. (2015), point out most purchasing decisions have been highly influenced based on word-of-mouth, as opposed to promotion and other corporate-generated activities.

A UK study conducted by Dickson, Naylor & Phelps (2015), was indicative of word-of-mouth is a consumer characteristic efficient in a brand-positive relationship that affects purchase intentions positively. Some notable studies such as (Gomes et al 2022, Cobbs et al, 2020). have linked the need for sponsorship to focus on customer characteristics to drive purchase intentions as critical in the short- and long-term. A few studies support these assertions and positive relationships within the variables, including Osei-Frimpong et al. (2019).

2.6 Conclusions

The literature review considered all the structure arguments for sports sponsorship's impact on fans' decision-making processes and purchasing behaviour. The theoretical framework of the study comprised various theories and foundational works that help to elaborate the core variables of the research and how these are supported by previous scholarly works. There was a need to ascertain the various hypothetical models to be used for the research.

Thus, these hypotheses were critically backed by theories and other literature to ensure strong support for their formulation.

The key variables expatiated in the literature review were the influence of sports sponsorship on the brand of the sponsor and fans' purchase intentions. In addition, a correlation between the independent and dependent variables was drawn to provide clear direction toward the work.

The explanatory variables taken into consideration were fan attitude, fan involvement, sponsor even fit, and brand image, along with brand perception, and characteristics. These variables were supported with adequate literature to ascertain their interrelation with the criterion variable, namely purchase intention.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The study seeks to assess the influence of sports sponsorship on consumer behaviour amongst the Ghanaian Soccer fanbase. To be able to achieve the overall purpose of the study, the following objectives have been set: to assess fan attitude toward purchase intention, to assess the influence of fan involvement on purchase intention, to measure the effect of sponsor-event fit and brand image on purchase intention, and to determine the effect of sponsor brand perception on purchase intention, as well as to examine the moderating role of consumer characteristics on the relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention. This section of the research study focuses on the methods and procedures used in gathering data, sampling responses, and data analysis and presentation. The chapter ensures the research design is established, the target population for sample size detection is made known, and likewise, the various instruments and tools used for data collection and the software for data analysis, aside from many other various parameters used in the research methodology, are presented.

3.2 Research Paradigm

According to Kamal (2018), a research paradigm refers to a set of beliefs, assumptions, and methodologies that guide and shape the way research is conducted within a particular field. It represents a framework researcher use to understand the nature of knowledge, how it is acquired, and how it should be used to produce new knowledge (Kuhn 1970, cited in Veasna 2021). There are several research paradigms, including positivism, interpretivism, critical theory, and pragmatism (Graziul et al. 2022). Each of these paradigms emphasise different ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions regarding what constitutes valid knowledge and how it can be generated (Firdaus, Zulfadilla & Caniago 2021). Researchers may adopt one or more of these paradigms, depending on the nature of their research questions, the phenomena they are investigating, and their personal beliefs and values (Otoo 2020). The choice of paradigm can have significant implications for the design, methods, and interpretation of research results (HR & Aithal 2022).

Positivism is a paradigm that accentuates empirical observation, measurement, and verification of hypotheses through rigorous experimentation. The goal of this paradigm is to establish the “what” and “why” of the phenomena as objectively as possible, by discovering facts and laws to define

cause-and-effect correlations with regard to phenomena in the world (Corsi 2020). According to positivism's epistemological premise, social and behavioural facts can be identified by quantitative measurements when the researcher is disinterested in the facts being seen. These presumptions serve as the foundation for the technique, which in this case includes tests, questionnaires, structured interviews, and objective interviews, along with experiments, quantification, and statistical procedures (Usher 2021).

For the purposes of this study, positivism is chosen as the research paradigm. The positivist research paradigm is chosen, in part, because it is predicated on the notion that only objective, observable facts can serve as the foundation for science. Additionally, this paradigm has the benefit of allowing data to be generalised (Kumatongo & Muzata 2021).

3.2.1 Research Approach

A research approach is a plan or strategy used by researchers to conduct a study. It refers to the way in which researchers gather and analyse data to answer their research questions or test their hypotheses (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2016). There are two common, well-known research methodologies: qualitative and quantitative research (Hart & Hart 2020). However, researchers, academics, and scholars might utilise a mixed method that combines qualitative and quantitative research techniques (Otoo 2020). Boateng (2014), acknowledges both qualitative and quantitative analysis techniques have drawbacks. The choice of research approach depends on the research question, the nature of the research problem, and the preferences and skills of the researcher. Each approach has its own strengths and limitations and may be more appropriate for certain research questions than others (Brasof & Levitan 2022).

A quantitative study is a research method that involves the collection and analysis of numerical data to describe or explain a phenomenon. This type of study typically follows a structured and standardised approach to data collection, such as surveys, experiments, or statistical analyses, and is often used to test hypotheses and make generalisations with regard to a population (Wahyuni 2012). Furthermore, quantitative research is based on the principles of objectivity, validity, and reliability, and often employs statistical methods to analyse the data. Researchers using quantitative methods seek to quantify and measure variables, and to draw conclusions based on numerical evidence (Mulisa 2022). Aithal & Aithal (2020) provide examples of quantitative studies to include opinion polls, experiments, surveys, and statistical analyses of large datasets.

According to Mishra & Alok (2022), in quantitative analysis, the researcher primarily gathers quantitative data after formulation of hypotheses. The hypotheses describe the relationship and predict the correlation of the variables. Controlling the relationship between an independent variable and a population-dependent variable or outcome variable, is the primary goal of quantitative study design (Boateng 2014). To find cause-and-effect linkages, quantitative researchers replicate and test their studies on a variety of subjects in various settings, such as description, forecast, regulation, and justification, or a query regarding the connection between two or more variables (Spry & Pich 2021).

This study aims to explain the causal effect of the influence of sponsorship on Soccer fans' purchase intention. Therefore, a quantitative approach has been adopted as it has roots in positivism. The intention of using this approach is to originate the links between research variables in a representative sample of the population, by means of statistical techniques. Furthermore, this quantitative approach is also concerned with building precise and reliable measurements that allow for statistical measurement. Moreover, it is intended this study would contribute to an appropriate knowledge of consumer behavioural responses.

3.2.2 Research Design

A research design is simply the outline, framework, or plan for conducting a research project (Madzunya, Viljoen & Cilliers 2021). In addition, Ranganathan & Aggarwal (2018) described research design as a framework, or the set of methods and procedures used to collect and analyse data on variables specified in a particular research problem. The authors added research study designs are of many types, each with their advantages and limitations.

Boateng (2014) posits having a framework will ensure the research is pertinent and allow the researcher to accomplish the goals in the most effective and inexpensive way possible. The type of study design used to answer a particular research question is, however, determined by the nature of the question, the goal of the research, and the availability of resources (Chmielewski & Kucker 2020). The primary goal of research design is to lessen the ambiguity of the research evidence, by offering a step-by-step approach to the complete study plan, hence, lowering the likelihood of mistakes (Rashid et al. 2019). There are many different research designs, from the simplest to the most intricate. The three most used by researchers are, exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory (Makhitha et al 2021). The following categories of research queries are commonly asked by social

scientists: What is going on? (Descriptive research); Why is it going on? (Explanatory research); and How is it that it is going on? (Exploratory research).

Explanatory research is a method or approach to conducting research, where the main goal is to comprehend the characteristics that underlie relationships between independent and dependent variables. It makes complex questions accessible by demonstrating how their components fit together in accordance with theories (Ngulube 2022). This kind of research focuses on finding and offering a connection between two or more occurrences. For instance, low salaries, deprivation, and poor management all contribute to a population exodus. As stated by Ngulube (2022), it is a hallmark of explanatory research to identify and define a causal link that is substantively important and meaningful.

In this type of research, people typically create or construct hypotheses that will be tested and evaluated in the context of the existing literature, and then they will determine whether the data created and gathered can be used to either support or refute those assumptions (Saunders et al. 2016). Quantitative methods, typically a survey, are more appropriate for explanatory research (Ngulube 2022).

In this study, an explanatory research design was used, as it assisted the researcher to gain more insight into the research problem, because the study measured the causal effect of Soccer sponsorship on consumer behavioural responses. The reason for this choice was to proffer a deeper understanding of the sponsorship-purchase intention nexus. The data collection and analysis methods were underpinned by the overall research design, as it forms the basis for the direction of the research activities and data collection. Since the design serves as a framework or blueprint that provides structure and direction to demonstrate how all the primary components interact to answer the hypotheses (Corsi 2020), the study design is impacted by a variety of circumstances. Its primary goal is, nevertheless, to address the research problem: understanding the influence of sports sponsorships on soccer fans' purchase intention in Ghana. Additionally, it was important the design phase instrument incorporates every aspect of the conceptual framework (Figure 2.4) mentioned in Chapter Two and the items be quantifiable and relevant to the study objectives.

3.2.3 Target population of the study

According to Corsi (2020), a research population is typically a sizable group of people or things that serve as the principal subject of a scientific inquiry. Furthermore, Awe (2022) explains the term “target population” as the group of individuals whom the researcher intends to conduct research on and draw conclusions from. In a research project, choosing a target population is mostly done so the results can be applied to the subsequent analysis (Sileyew 2019). Additionally, it enables the researcher and other readers to evaluate how well the study aims and population meet any evidence-based gaps in the literature (Awe 2022). To clearly define who should be included in or excluded from the study population, a description of this population is required. The validity of the study will be in jeopardy when the study population is inadequately defined or poorly recruited and contains ineligible people. Therefore, study validity is increased by clear definition (Firdaus et al. 2021). The definition by Awe (2022) will be adopted for the purposes of this study, with the study population Ghanaian football fans. The target population will include the official Kumasi Asante Kotoko SC (Circles), and Accra Hearts of Oak SC (Chapters) supporter groups to ensure scientific sample selection techniques, as the focus of the unit of analysis will be on registered members from the two supporter groups.

3.3 Sampling Methods

A sampling method is a technique used to select a representative subset, or sample, of a population for research or analysis purposes (Basti & Madadzadeh 2021). The goal of sampling is to obtain data that accurately reflects the characteristics of the larger population, while minimising bias and errors (Singh 2022). The group from which the sample will be collected is referred to as the "study population." Typically, the population is found to be exceedingly large, making it difficult or impossible to study the entire population in any research study. A controllable and representative subset of the population is thus provided to researchers via the sample unit (Kamal 2018).

There are many different sampling methods, which include Simple random, Stratified, Cluster, and Purposive sampling, as well as Convenience sampling (Obilor 2023). It is important to select a sampling method appropriate for the research question and population being studied, and to use appropriate statistical techniques to analyse the resulting data (Pandey & Pandey 2021). A Convenience sampling method involves selecting readily available individuals willing to participate in the study. This method is often used when time and resources are limited (Bhardwaj 2019).

3.3.1 Sampling Type

A sampling type refers to the method used to select a sample of individuals or units from a larger population for research or analysis purposes (Obilor 2023). Sampling types are important, because they determine the extent to which the sample represents the population and the level of bias that may be present in the sample (Bhardwaj 2019). Different sampling types have their own strengths and weaknesses, and the choice of sampling type depends on the research question, the population being studied, and the available resources (Dawadi, Shrestha & Giri 2021). Among the sampling types are: Probability, Cross-sectional, Longitudinal, and Cluster Sampling, as well as Stratified, Snowball, and Non-probability Sampling (Dawadi et al. 2021). It is important to select an appropriate sampling type to ensure the sample is representative of the population and to minimise bias (Griffith et al. 2020).

Non-probability sampling is a sampling type where the probability of selecting each member of the population is unequal or unknown. This includes techniques such as convenience, purposive, and quota sampling (Dawadi et al. 2021).

For the purposes of this study, a non-probability sampling technique, specifically, convenience sampling, is used to select participants from the two clubs, found within a 50-kilometer radius of the club's home base, since the population under study is infinite, and therefore, cannot be controlled (Bloomfield & Fisher 2019). To ensure scientific sample selection techniques, the target population is made up of members from the official supporter groups of Kumasi Asante Kotoko SC (Circles) and Accra Hearts of Oak SC (Chapters), with the unit of analysis focused on the registered supporter group members.

3.3.2 Sample size

Armstrong and Kotler (2006), define sample size as the number of elements to be included in a study. According to Roscoe (1975 cited in Sekaran and Bougie 2010) the appropriateness of sample size is between 30 and 500, while a population size of 75 000 and 1 000 000 should have a sample size between 382 and 384. Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2016) posit the larger the sample size, the lower the likely error in generalisation to the population. Furthermore, practical considerations such as time and cost must be considered by the researcher (Maree 2007).

Justifying the sample size used is a crucial stage in the design of an empirical investigation, with an explanation of how the obtained data are anticipated to yield useful information, considering the researcher's inferential objectives, being the main goal of a sample size justification for such studies (Rashid et al. 2019). Many researchers use convenience sampling techniques to gather data quickly when they have time restraints (Firdaus et al. 2021).

In comparison to methods such as systematic, stratified, and simple random sampling, the rules for collecting the samples via a convenience sampling technique are the least complex. Data collection is quick because of its simplicity (Chmielewski & Kucker 2020).

Brynard, Hanekom, & Brynard (2014), furthermore, stated there are no fixed rules for determining sample sizes - only guidelines that suggest what a representative percentage of the population to be studied would be. In addition, Saunders et al. (2016) suggested a sample size of 398 is appropriate for a population that is infinite.

There are 18 clubs in the GPL, each with a supporter base, however, the researcher focused on only two clubs, namely the Circles branch of Kumasi Asante Kotoko, and Chapters branch of Accra Hearts of Oak. The Circles and Chapters were a convenient choice, since both have a clear and well-defined organisational structure and both experience high spectator turnout at their respective 40 000-seater stadiums, where they play on a regular basis.

A recent fans mobilisation drive by the Kumasi Asante Kotoko National Circles Council recorded 76 342 fans on the fabucensus app, a digital platform launched by the Kumasi Asante Kotoko football club to mobilise funds and support from fans. The app allows fans to potentially make donations to the club or purchase merchandise and tickets directly from their mobile devices

(Ghana soccernet 2023). Accra Hearts of Oak, on the other hand, revealed a maximum of 33 658 supporters have signed up for its Phobian4Life supporter mobilisation initiative (Ghana sportsonline 2020).

The researcher considered all the aforementioned factors to determine the sample size for this study. Hence, Yamane’s (1967) formula with a CI of 95 percent is used to determine the sample size. Yamane's formula is widely used in survey research to determine the minimum sample size needed to estimate the characteristics of a population with a given level of precision and confidence (Nanjundeswaraswamy & Divakar 2021). Moreover, Yamane's formula is preferred by researchers as it is simple and easy to use and does not require any prior knowledge of the population parameters or the population variability level (Oribhabor & Anyanwu 2019).

Therefore, the sample size of this study was determined with the formula Yamane (1967) developed, which has a 95 percent CI:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N \cdot (e)^2} \text{ -----equation (1)}$$

Where: n – sample size; N – population size = 110,000; e – 0.05 (margin of error).

$$= \frac{110,000}{1 + 110,000 \cdot (0.05)^2}$$

$$= \frac{110,000}{276}$$

$$n = 398$$

The sample size for the study is thus n = 398.

3.3.3 Recruitment strategy and process

Recruitment strategy in research refers to the plan or approach used to identify and select participants for a research study (Fisher & Bloomfield 2019). This strategy outlines the methods researchers will use to recruit participants who meet the specific inclusion and exclusion criteria for the study (Stratton 2021). Recruitment strategies can vary depending on the nature of the research, the target population, and the available resources (Fisher & Bloomfield 2019).

The researcher recruited respondents from Osu, in the Greater Accra Region, which is the traditional home of Accra Hearts of Oak Soccer Club, as well as from Manhyia, in the Kumasi Metropolis of the Asanti Region, which is the traditional home of Kumasi Asante Kotoko Soccer Club. The researcher identified the eligible participants at the monthly meeting grounds of registered supporters during the re-opening of the season after the Qatar 2020 World cup Tournament, held between November and December 2022. There are 18 clubs in the Ghana's premier league, each with a supporter base, however, the researcher focused on only two clubs, namely the Circles branch of Kumasi Asante Kotoko, and the Chapters branch of Accra Hearts of Oak. The Circles and Chapters were a convenient choice, since both have a clear and well-defined organisational structure and both experience high spectator turnouts at their respective 40 000-seater stadiums, where they play on a regular basis.

The decision to engage the Circles and the Chapters was, therefore, based on convenience and judgmental sampling. In judgmental sampling design, the choice of sample subjects is based on the ability to provide the type of relevant information needed to service the study objectives. This enabled the researcher to adequately explain the study to the potential participants, who were all above the age of 18 years, with an adequate sample subsequently recruited, based on the study objectives, in addition to obtaining informed consent, while maintaining ethical standards.

3.3.4 Inclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria are the specific characteristics or attributes participants must possess to be eligible for inclusion in a research study. These criteria are used to ensure the study sample is representative of the population being studied and to help researchers answer their research questions (Denton, Borrego & Boklage 2020). Inclusion criteria may vary depending on the nature of the research, but some common examples include age, gender, medical conditions, and treatment status, as well as behaviour or lifestyle factors (Mollborn, Lawrence & Saint Onge 2021). Inclusion). Inclusion criteria are important in research, since they help ensure the study sample is representative of the population being studied and the research question is answered effectively. These criteria also help ensure the safety of participants is considered and they are not exposed to unnecessary risks (Denton et al. 2020). Specifically, used to select the respondents was age, starting at 18 years, and all registered members of the fanbase found within a 50 kilometre50-kilometre radius from their home ground, specifically, within Kumasi and Accra. These inclusion criteria allowed the researcher to obtain a higher response for the analysis. Moreover, it enabled the researcher to collect data from participants who can provide relevant information to serve the study objectives.

3.3.5 Exclusion Criteria

Mengist, Soromessa & Legese (2020) posit exclusion criteria are those traits that preclude potential study participants from involvement. Common exclusion criteria include traits of eligible persons that make them very likely to be lost to follow-up, miss scheduled data collection appointments, submit erroneous data, or have comorbidities that could bias the study findings, in addition to raising their risk for adverse events, and respondents with no access to android phones (Valentine 2019).

In defining reasons for respondent exclusion from the target population of the study, those identified were non-registered fans, fans under 18 years, fans unable or willing to sign a consent form, and unable to read, as well as those without android phones.

Many soccer apps now offer free access to live streaming on their websites and mobile applications for both new and existing fans. It is quickly taking over as the preferred method for watching important games in Ghana as observed by the researcher.

3.4 Instruments for data collection

In a survey, secondary and primary data are two types of data sources that can be used to inform the research (Fisher & Bloomfield 2019). Secondary data refer to data already collected by someone else for a different purpose (Oribhabor & Anyanwu 2019). This type of data can be obtained from various sources, such as government records, organisational databases, or published literature (Fisher & Bloomfield 2019). Secondary data were used in this research to provide background information, confirm or refute research findings, and for primary data comparison.

Primary data refer to original data collected for a specific research study (Fisher & Bloomfield 2019). This type of data is collected directly by the researcher or research team, usually in the form of raw data (Basti & Madadzadeh 2021). Primary data can be collected using various methods, such as surveys, interviews, observations, and experiments (Sileyew 2019). The choice to use primary data for this study was because it provided more control over the data collection processes and ensured the data are tailored to the research hypotheses.

The data collection source choice depends on the research question, type of data needed, and the resources available to the researcher (Stratton 2021). For this study, the researcher relied on both primary and secondary data. Both data types are useful in a survey and should be used in conjunction with one another to help inform the research and provide a comprehensive understanding of the studied topic. The research relied on a structured questionnaire as the instrument used for primary data collection (Creswell 2016).

3.4.1 Questionnaire

Schensul (2012) concludes a questionnaire is the best instrument for data gathering when dealing with a large number of participants and the research approach is broadly descriptive or explanatory. The structured questionnaire enabled the researcher to accumulate a large amount of valuable data that gave deep insights into the minds of the study participants on the research objectives. The questionnaire was structured into different segments to capture the various hypotheses set for the study. A 5–point Likert scale was used to grade responses for each statement and question, using an ordinal scale, where Strongly agree = 1, Agree = 2, Neutral = 3, Disagree = 4 and Strongly Disagree = 5. Thus, the scale was necessary to help rank the means and test the hypotheses on their relationships among the variables of interest.

The structured questionnaire was the main instrument for gathering data from participants. It was carefully structured, taking the research problem, the objectives of the study and how the hypotheses of the study is to be answered into consideration. Einola and Alvesson (2021) state a questionnaire forms one of the most important and used instruments for data gathering, when dealing with a quantitative approach to data gathering and analysis. This means the use of a questionnaire satisfies this research study. Asenahabi (2019), pointed out the most used data collection and measurement instrument in education and social science research, is a questionnaire. The questionnaire played the role of helping to solicit necessary information for the analysis, including socio-demographic information of participants. The questions for the research focus on customer characteristics, fan attitude, fan involvement, and event-fit, as well as brand image, brand perception, and purchase intention toward sponsors of their Soccer teams. A questionnaire was selected because it has a high response rate, while it also provides a satisfactory timeframe for participants to answer the questions at their own pace.

3.4.2 Measurement Scale

This study's measurement items were revised from earlier research. The wording of the earlier scales was substantially modified to meet the setting of the current research, with measurements then evaluated in accordance with the standards for scale development (Gliem & Gliem 2003). The questionnaire measured customer characteristics with nine items, sponsorship with eleven (11) items, attitude toward the sponsor with eight (8) items, and fan involvement with eight (8) items, while event fit was measured with four (4) items, brand image with six (6) items, brand perception with ten (10) items, and purchase intentions with seven (7) items (see Appendix A: Questionnaire). However, item BP7 was reverse coded to reduces biases in participants responses (see Appendix: Questionnaire).

There were Fifty -seven (57) items in all, measuring both the independent and dependent variables. Five (5) questions regarding respondent demographics were included in the questionnaire's first segment. For data analysis, these responses were coded and entered numerically. Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, means, standard deviations, and reliability indicators, as well as correlations, and regression analysis, were all used in the study to analyse the data. Customer characteristics and brand image measures were developed specifically for this inquiry, after a review of the relevant literature by Meenaghan (2001).

The attitude toward the sponsor items were modified from attitudinal measures used by Quester & Thompson (2001) in their study of arts sponsorship effectiveness. The fan involvement and purchase intention items were modified from Madrigal's (2001) study of the belief-attitude-intentions hierarchy, which included the concepts of fan identification, as well as purchase intentions.

The purchase intention of fans was thus measured with seven (7) items by Biscaia et al. (2017), while the scale of sponsor-event fit was measured by four (4) items that Speed and Thompson (2000) developed. To measure the perception toward the sponsor's brand, the author used the scale "perception toward event association with sponsors" of Lee & Cho (2009) with ten (10) items.

The variables in the analysis were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly agree) to 5 (Strongly disagree). Reliability measures were calculated for each of the instrument variables. Additionally, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated for each construct; results ranged from .742 to 0.881. Therefore, coefficient alpha reliability tests run for each factor satisfied Gliem & Gliem (2003) criterion of .60 or higher as a standard for an explanatory research study.

3.4.3 Procedure for Data Collection

Davis & Marquis (2005) concurs instrument design is very much an art, and it is pivotal researchers do not lose focus of the primary study objective. Therefore, the instrument design process in this study was driven by the seven major constructs of the conceptual framework, as detailed in Chapter Two. To restate, these are: Customer characteristics, fan attitude, fan involvement, and event-ft, as well as brand image, brand perception and, purchase intention. These seven major constructs were chosen based on previous sponsorship research, which highlighted the importance for each construct on consumer behaviour, both collectively and individually.

The researcher was faced with the challenge of reaching a large but defined population. Therefore, an e-survey with direct contact through the fanbase leaders was decided on for time- and cost-efficiency purposes (Oyovwe-Tinuoye & Adomi 2019). Grant-Muller et al. (2015) posit there have been dramatic advances in the development of web-based data collection instruments. A better approach to data management was enabled through web-based data collection, producing a user-friendly web-based questionnaire, providing data validation during the entry process, delivering a coding manual that could be used as a reference document, and generating basic statistics that

could be viewed through the web during the entry phase of the questionnaire. In addition, web-based data collection produced the Statistical Analysis System (SAS) and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) programme files that enabled the researcher to generate more advanced statistics once the questionnaire was completed, as it allows use of a Microsoft Access database to access the questionnaire table and the data.

Fitriani (2021) argued, because online data collecting offers a relatively short time for the collection of responses and is time and cost-saving, it is an effective and convenient alternative to the more traditional technique of data gathering. Additionally, according to Grant-Muller et al. (2015), an e-survey provides researchers with access to a broad, diverse, and worldwide population, with the potential to produce enormous amounts of data.

This study collected data from registered Kumasi Asante Kotoko and Accra Hearts of Oak fans in Kumasi and Accra, respectively. More specifically, the study collected data through an e-survey distributed and shared through each group's official WhatsApp platform. This was after the researcher had met with the fanbase groups at Manhyia and Osu on 14th and 21st January 2023, respectively. After being introduced to the fans at the meeting grounds, the researcher explained the rationale behind the study and responded to several questions from the members. The questionnaire, which had already been forwarded to the group leaders through WhatsApp, was finally forwarded to the various platforms. It was estimated respondents would complete the questionnaire in between 10 to 15 minutes.

The high-level status of both meetings was a focal point for the research and ensured a high response rate, as well as capturing an extensive collection of data examining the same set of variables. In this study, the unit of analysis is the fanbase. They were a mix of diverse backgrounds and professions, ages, and genders, allowing for a comprehensive and wide representation of the broader fanbase. The constructs adapted for the questionnaire design by the researcher are all directly linked to each research objective highlighted in this dissertation. Each of these objectives is known as a variable; all constructs are from the relevant academic literature relating to sports sponsorship and the influence it has on fanbase purchase intention.

The e-survey system automatically generated a number for each participant that can only be used once, ensuring respondents can only complete the questionnaire once. The researcher does not have access to the user numbers and cannot trace the participants to the email addresses. This system of secured information not only guaranteed participant anonymity, because of the use of user numbers, the system could be used to send reminders to members of the population who had not completed the questionnaire. Finally, the system automatically gathered the data from the respondents and compiled them in an Excel file and a Word report.

3.5 Data Analysis

In this study, an advanced analytical approach was employed to gain deeper insights into the relationships and dynamics among the collected data. The researcher conducted a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) to group the data into uncorrelated components, setting the stage for a more nuanced exploration. Subsequently, both model analysis and structural analysis were carried out to assess the goodness of fit.

To measure the goodness of fit, the researcher employed a multifaceted approach, checking the absolute fit, incremental fit, and parsimonious fit. This involved scrutinizing metrics such as the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI). These analyses were conducted within the framework of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), a robust statistical technique that allows for the examination of complex relationships among variables. Within SEM, the researcher utilised SmartPLS software, version 3.3, for analysing the structural relationships between the variables and intermediate parameters. SmartPLS is particularly well-suited for exploratory research and is known for its flexibility and ease of use in handling complex models (Benitez et al 2020). The SEM approach facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the interplay among sponsorship, purchase, and intention.

Furthermore, regression analyses were performed to delineate the relationships among independent, moderating, and dependent variables. This comprehensive analysis allowed for the identification and quantification of the influence of sponsorship on both purchase intention and purchase behaviour.

The study also incorporated a mediation analysis within the SEM framework, specifically testing the mediating role of purchase intention in the relationship between sponsorship and purchase

intention. SmartPLS was the chosen tool for this analysis, emphasizing its capability to handle mediation models effectively. For descriptive and preliminary regression analysis, SPSS version 24 was employed. SPSS is a widely used statistical software that is well-suited for handling basic statistical analyses and is often employed in the initial stages of data exploration.

In summary, the study leveraged the strengths of both SmartPLS and SPSS, with SmartPLS being the primary tool for SEM due to its versatility and suitability for complex structural modeling. The choice of SmartPLS aligns with the exploratory nature of the study, allowing for a detailed examination of the relationships and mediating effects among the variables of interest.

3.5.1 Data Cleaning

Data cleansing, also known as data cleaning or data scrubbing, is the process of identifying and correcting or removing errors, inconsistencies, and inaccuracies from a dataset (Aithal & Aithal 2020). The goal of data cleansing is to improve the quality of the data and to ensure it is accurate, complete, and consistent (Pandey & Pandey 2021). Data cleansing is an important step in data analysis, as it helps to ensure analysis results are accurate and reliable (Bhardwaj 2019). This is particularly important when working with large datasets, which are often prone to errors and inconsistencies (Pandey & Pandey 2021).

Missing data were filled with the moving average of the datasets. There is, therefore, a need to ensure each dataset or data point is available for analysis. This is done in the case of participants or respondents who answered the questionnaire with error values, to generate an efficient dataset.

3.5.2 Testing of Data

Data testing is the process of evaluating data to ensure it is accurate, complete, consistent, and reliable (Bhardwaj 2019). This is an important step in the data management process and is often performed before data is used for analysis or other purposes (Aithal & Aithal 2020). The testing of data helps identify and resolve issues with the data and assists in improving overall data quality, thus increasing confidence in its use for analysis and other purposes (Bhardwaj 2019).

To move into data analysis, there is a need to test the structure of the data gathered from the participants. Hence, the test for multicollinearity is crucial. According to Otoo (2020), the test for multicollinearity is done to check and correct the existence of inter-association or inter-relation between two or more independent variables in a model. Consequently, due to the availability of

several independent variables, there was a need to test multicollinearity. Two variables are considered perfectly collinear when their correlation coefficient is ± 1.0 . Multicollinearity among independent variables resulted in less reliable statistical inferences. The variance inflation factor (VIF) was used to test the multicollinearity of the independent variables in the model Otoo (2020),

3.6 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics are a set of statistical techniques used to summarise and describe the basic features of a dataset (Mengist et al. 2020). It is used to provide a summary of the data in a clear and meaningful way, and helps identify patterns, trends, and relationships within the data (Kumari et al. 2023). According to Mishra et al. (2019), descriptive statistics is often used to gain an initial understanding of the data before more advanced statistical techniques are applied, as well as to identify outliers, detect patterns or trends, and provide a basis for hypotheses testing and further analysis.

The study takes the use of descriptive statistics into consideration to help bring out the meaning of the dataset and provide basic results. This is done through proper data analysis using descriptive analysis, mean ranking, expatriation on the variance, and standard deviation.

3.6.1 Regression Analysis

The analysis of the various objectives and hypotheses of the study made use of multiple regression analysis, due to the existence of continuous criterion variables and two or more predictors. Thus, the reliance on Pearson's correlation analysis to test the relationships between variables. This reflects the assertion made by Hall (2013), indicating one needs to adopt multiple regressions for analysis while analysing data, considering the variables needed for the analysis, when there are continece-dependent data and many predictors. In addition, the adoption of Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) is assuring, as it is useful in different stages of the hypotheses testing, when categorical data are ascertained with one or more predictors and the outcome is expected to be quantitative.

3.6.2 Goodness of fit, Mediating role and structural equation modeling (SEM)

To test for the hypotheses, regression analysis was carried out using multiple regression analysis. The researcher performs model analysis and structural analysis to measure the goodness of fit by checking the absolute, incremental, and parsimonious model fit.

This involves checking the RMSEA and GFI. The structural model was analysed using SEM, which was performed to show the relationships between the independent, moderating, and dependent variables. The study tested the mediating role of purchase intention in relation to sponsorship in a SEM using SmartPLS software. All the study hypotheses were tested with different tools.

3.6.3 Validity

Validity explains the extent to which the results really measure what they are supposed to (Saunders et al. 2016). To address internal validity, the researcher used control variables in the model. Furthermore, to ensure external validity, the researcher considered not less than 80 percent of the recognised fanbase to enable generalisation of the findings. To test the validity of the constructs in the questionnaire, EFA was performed to determine whether the individual questions lead to the constructs in the questionnaire.

Several types of validity are found; however, content validity signifies whether the concepts being addressed are measured by the representative set of measurement items (Saunders et al. 2016; Hair et al. 2020). This can be ensured by grounding research questions in the literature review. Content validity is the degree to which a test or assessment instrument evaluates all aspects of the topic, construct, or behaviour it is designed to measure (Hair et al 2020). Furthermore, face validity indicates whether the items in the questionnaire are understandable and clear, which was ensured by means of a pilot test of the questionnaire on several different respondent groups, to establish their grasp of what was asked. The pilot respondents include expert opinions from the chief marketing officer of a company that previously sponsored the GPL, as well as from the Business School of Takoradi Technical University. Implications for further research were provided. In performing the model analysis, the absolute, incremental, and parsimonious model fit would be performed to ensure the models have statistically passed all the necessary assumptions prior to their adoption.

Validity explains the extent to which the results really measure what they are supposed to measure (Saunders et al. 2016). The content validity of the study was ensured by estimating the convergent validity and discriminant validity scores of participants. SmartPLS was used to measure all the direct and indirect relationships between the study variables.

Goodness of fit test was performed using Chi-square, RMSEA, Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and PLS-SEM tools were used to estimate coefficients of the paths that define the theoretical framework of the study. Implications for further research were provided. In performing the model analysis, absolute model fit, incremental model fit, and parsimonious model fit were performed to ensure the models have statistically passed all the necessary assumptions before it's adoption.

Validity was critical for the questionnaire to provide an efficient and effective outcome for analysis. Creswell (2016) has further explained it is what enables a person to draw meaningful and useful information from the results in an instrument. This study adopted the content validity strategy to ensure the questionnaire and information necessary for the conclusion are provided by the research instruments. This was critical to ensure there is not much disparity in the outcome or findings of the research instruments. Regarding the validity of the research instruments, it was necessary to make certain the capability of the research instruments accurately measured the theoretical construct in the literature; thus, the level at which findings are congruent with literature findings.

3.6.4 Reliability

According to Saunders et al. (2016), reliability is the extent to which the results can be reproduced when the research is repeated under the same condition. To measure the reliability of the model, Cronbach's alpha value was calculated to ensure the assumption is met.

Every research instrument needs to show consistency in the results. The reliability of the research instruments was to ascertain the level of consistency when applied to data gathering and analysis (White & McBurney 2012). Accordingly, the instrument tested for reliability was to ensure, when repeated, the instruments could provide the same scores when administered to the same participants of the study, iteratively, in the future. As a result, internal consistency was the best approach adopted to test the reliability of the questionnaire. To measure the reliability of the model, the Cronbach alpha value was calculated to ensure the assumption was met (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Moreover, the researcher designed an interview guide reflecting the hypotheses conceptualisation. In addition, the internal consistency for the Cronbach alpha was tested on all the core variables for the hypotheses.

3.6.5 Pilot test

The pilot test is critical to ascertain whether the questions formulated in the questionnaire can provide the necessary responses to meet the objectives of the study. Thus, to ascertain whether the pilot test of the research instrument is appropriate, the questionnaire was given to non-sample respondents with the same characteristics, to test whether the responses are valid and reliable. This ascertained the validity and reliability of the research instruments. The pilot-test questionnaire was developed before administering it to the research sample or participants (Hilton 2020).

The use of pre-testing of the research instruments is supported by Hilton (2020), who explains that pre-testing is a method of checking a questionnaire works as intended and is understood by those individuals likely to respond. This is backed by Krosnick (2018), who stated pre-testing helps detect any problem with the questionnaire design leading to the ambiguity of words, misinterpretation of questions, inability to answer a question, use of sensitive questions, and many other problems associated with the questionnaire, as well as the process of administering the survey. Subsequently, unclear questions were rephrased to ensure the questions were simple and clear to the respondents.

To determine the validity and reliability of the chosen instrument and procedure, regarding methodological flaws in the design, a pilot test was conducted, with 20 participants identified as soccer enthusiasts, drawn from the staff of the Faculty of Business Studies, Takoradi Technical University. The feedback from pre-testing was incorporated and amendments made to the final version of the questionnaire. For the purposes of this study, the questionnaire was pre-tested prior to distribution.

3.6.6 Ethical considerations

According to the Durban University of Technology (DUT) requirements, ethical considerations must be included during the planning and design phases of the study. Avoiding dishonesty, being transparent regarding the study purpose, obtaining respondent consent, preserving their right to privacy, and ensuring they do not suffer emotionally or socially, were all part of the researcher's ethical duty (Creswell 2014).

Permission was sought from the leadership of the fanbase groups and granted. A consent form was drafted by the researcher and provided to each participant, advising them participation was entirely voluntary and posed no risk to them. Participants also had the option to discontinue participating in the study at any time. Additionally, the form guaranteed information privacy and identity security (Hirose & Creswell 2023). COVID-19 protocols were strictly observed for the safety of all participants during the first meeting, which included social distancing, mask wearing and sanitising.

Comprehensive explanations of all ethical issues were provided to participants. At each stage of the study, ethical considerations were considered. In the data analysis, for instance, measures were taken to record all points of view, and participants were identified using code names. The researcher thanked the volunteers for their cooperation and appreciated their efforts (Hirose & Creswell 2023). It was explained that the study was for a Ph.D. Marketing student from the DUT. Participant understanding of the research purpose was enhanced as it was carefully explained by the researcher.

The study project does not contain all the participants' identity-related information, while participants were also fully aware their comments and opinions would only be used for this project. The participants were informed they were eligible for a copy of the accepted study and copies would be made available and put on display at the JB Patel library on the ML Sultan campus of the DUT. The study findings will also be published in journals and presented at conferences to disseminate the research results. To facilitate various ways of obtaining copies of the study, contact information was provided at the end of the survey.

3.6.7 Limitations of the study

This study is limited to the fanbase of two clubs in the GPL and its former sponsors, and thus, the results will lack generalisability to other Soccer settings. Additional samples with fans from different teams will be recommended in future research. Furthermore, use of a non-probability sample, which restricts the capacity to generalise the findings to other athletic events and to other contexts, was a specific weakness of this study. To validate the results, it would be advantageous to ensure future research in this area is based on a probability sample.

3.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter begins by introducing the purpose and objectives of the study. It highlights the significance of the research problem and provides a rationale for adopting a quantitative approach. The chapter also outlines the hypotheses to be investigated. Furthermore, it elaborates on the specific research design chosen and justifies its suitability for the research objectives, Population, and Sampling, and the process of selecting a representative sample is explained. It discusses the sampling technique employed and sample size determination.

Moreover, it provided an overview of the data collection methods used as well as the specific instruments or tools employed and standardized tests. The statistical techniques employed for data analysis are outlined. Ethical Considerations are addressed as it discusses informed consent, confidentiality, and data protection measures implemented to ensure the privacy and well-being of participants. Any ethical approvals obtained from relevant institutions are mentioned.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

Chapter four of this study presents the analysis and discussion of the data collected, utilizing the procedures outlined in the previous chapter. This chapter is divided into five main sections, namely: exploratory data analysis, test for biases, demographic and descriptive analyses, exploratory factor analyses, confirmatory factor analyses, and evaluation of the structural model. Each section focuses on different aspects of the data analysis process to provide a comprehensive understanding of the findings. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of the key findings, where the results are interpreted and contextualized within the broader research framework.

4.2 Preliminary Data Analysis

4.2.1 Response Rate

Prior studies have shown a low response rate could lead to non-response bias, because response rates are typically used to evaluate data quality (Giromini, Young, & Sellbom 2022; Jeon & Boeck 2019). The test for response rate is necessary, particularly for extended surveys that go on for a while. Data for this study were gathered for a period of one month. A total of 398 responses were recovered and deemed appropriate for analyses through web-based data collection. Fitriani (2021) argued that, because online data collecting offers a relatively short time for the collection of responses and is time and cost-saving, it is an effective and convenient alternative to the more traditional technique of data gathering. This constitutes a response rate of 100 percent, which is sufficient for further analysis. According to Bloomfield et al (2019), a more than 50 percent response rate in business management research is considered good for analysis. Therefore, the 100 percent response rate reported for this study served as a sufficient basis from which to draw conclusions.

4.2.2 Non-response Bias

Non-response bias exists when the number of participants taking part in the survey is lower than the number of non-participants in a population. This non-response bias normally occurs due to low response rates to the survey, which may lead to poor sampling and, therefore, influence the reliability of the research and its data analysis. Therefore, to reduce the non-response bias for this study, a non-response bias was assessed by comparing the responses between the early and late

respondents. Early respondents would complete and return the questionnaires within the short response window, whereas the late respondents refer to those who returned the questionnaires after the remainder had been sent (thus after three days).

In this study, the form was distributed online and filled out instantly. The result did not show any statistically significant differences between the two groups for any of the variables used in this study, as suggested by Oppenheim & Smith (2001) and confirmed by Brasof & Levitan (2022). The result confirms non-response bias is not a problem in this study, and the samples represent the targeted group. Specifically, the first 199 responses and the last 199 responses were considered early and late, respectively. T-test analysis was employed to test for non-response bias. The results of the t-test analysis did not indicate any significant difference (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Non-Response Bias (Independent Sample T-Test)

Constructs	F	Sig	t
✓ Brand Image	0.075	0.784	1.224
✓ Brand Perception	0.088	0.767	1.302
✓ Customer Characteristics	1.075	0.504	1.725
✓ Event Fit	0.438	0.508	1.878
✓ Fan Attitude	0.290	0.591	0.117
✓ Fan Involvement	0.678	0.411	1.601
✓ Purchase Intention	0.134	0.145	0.104

4.3 Demographic Information

The demographic characteristics of the participants were displayed in this section, with 398 participants who responded to the questionnaire. The results are displayed in the tables and figures below.

4.3.1 Composition of participant gender

Participants were asked to indicate their gender, with results shown (Figure 4.1) below.

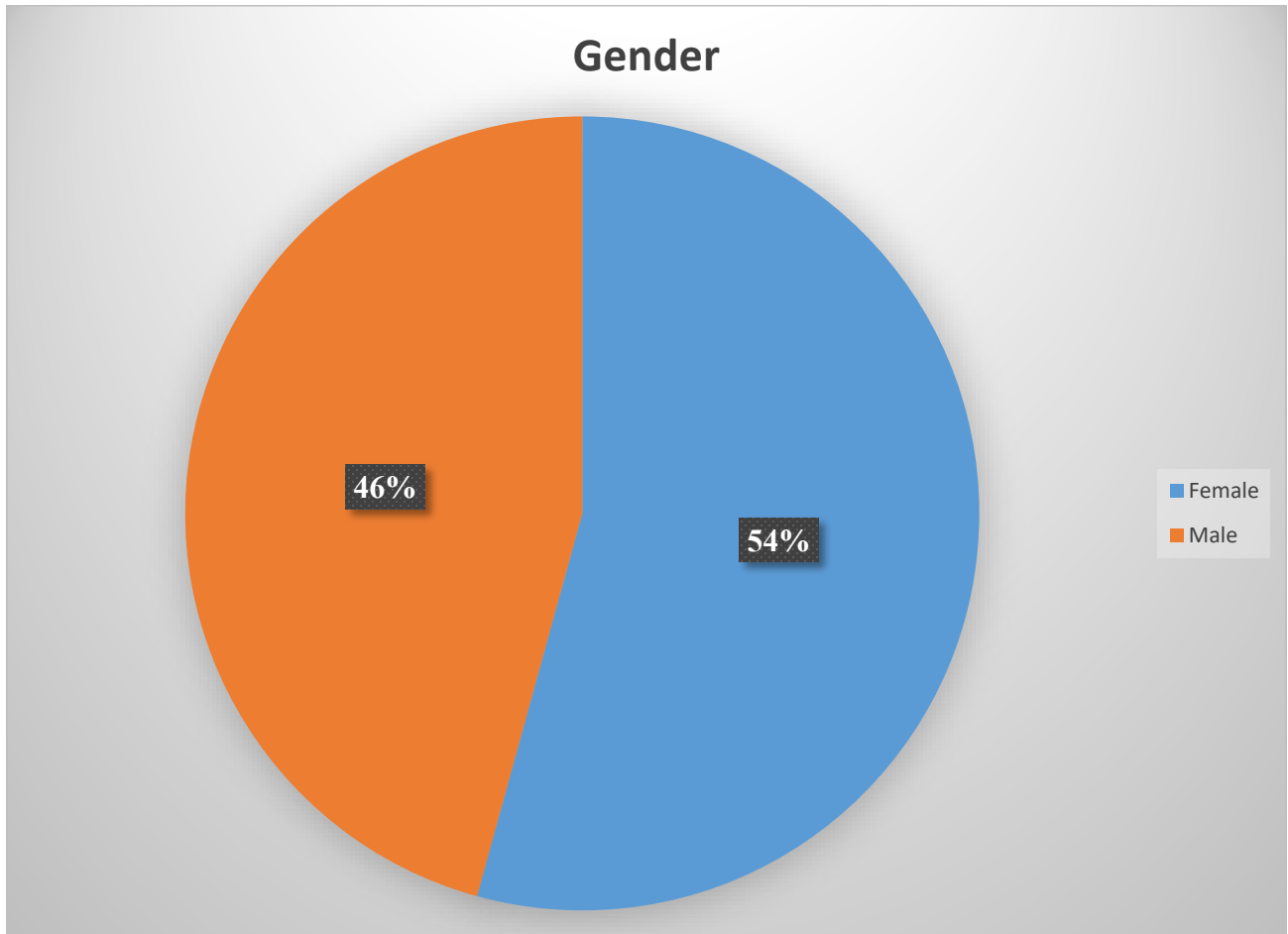


Figure 4.1 Gender

The results, as illustrated in Figure 4.1, depict a gender distribution among participants, revealing that 216 of the respondents are female, and the remaining 182 are male. This indicates that a majority of the study participants, accounting for 54%, identify as female whilst the male population accounts for 46%.

4.3.2 Marital Status

Participants were asked to indicate their marital status, with results shown (Figure 4.2) below.

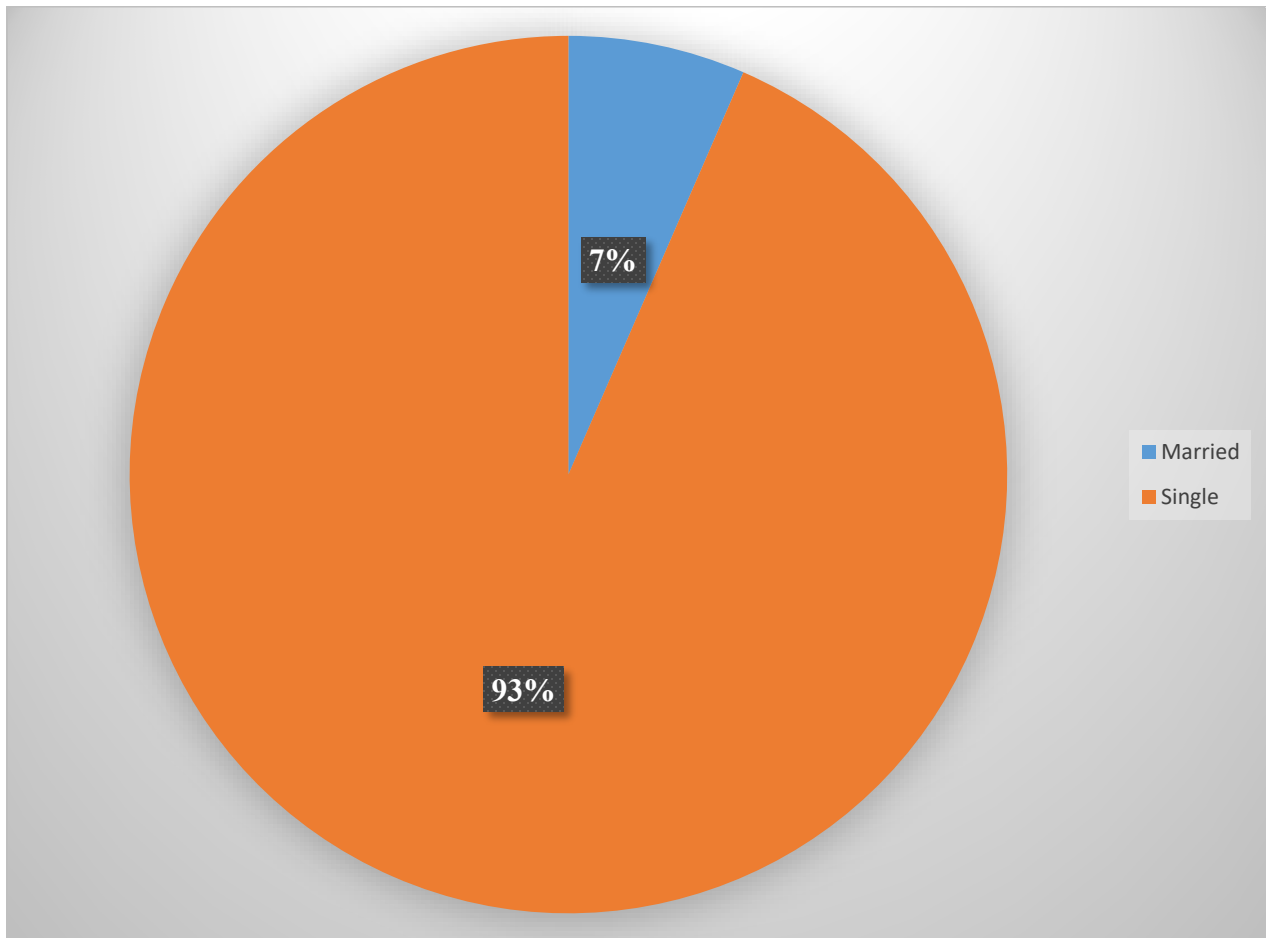


Figure 4.2: Marital Status

The results (Figure 4.2) provide an overview of the marital status distribution among the study participants. The data reveals that the majority of respondents 372, constituting 93.5%, identified as single, while a smaller proportion 26, accounting for 6.5% reported being married. This distribution underscores a significant prevalence of single individuals within the sampled population. The high percentage of single participants suggests a demographic skew toward individuals who are not currently married. Such insights into marital status can have implications for understanding the demographic composition of the study's target audience.

4.3.3 Age of participants

Participants were asked to indicate their age, with results shown (Figure 4.3) below.

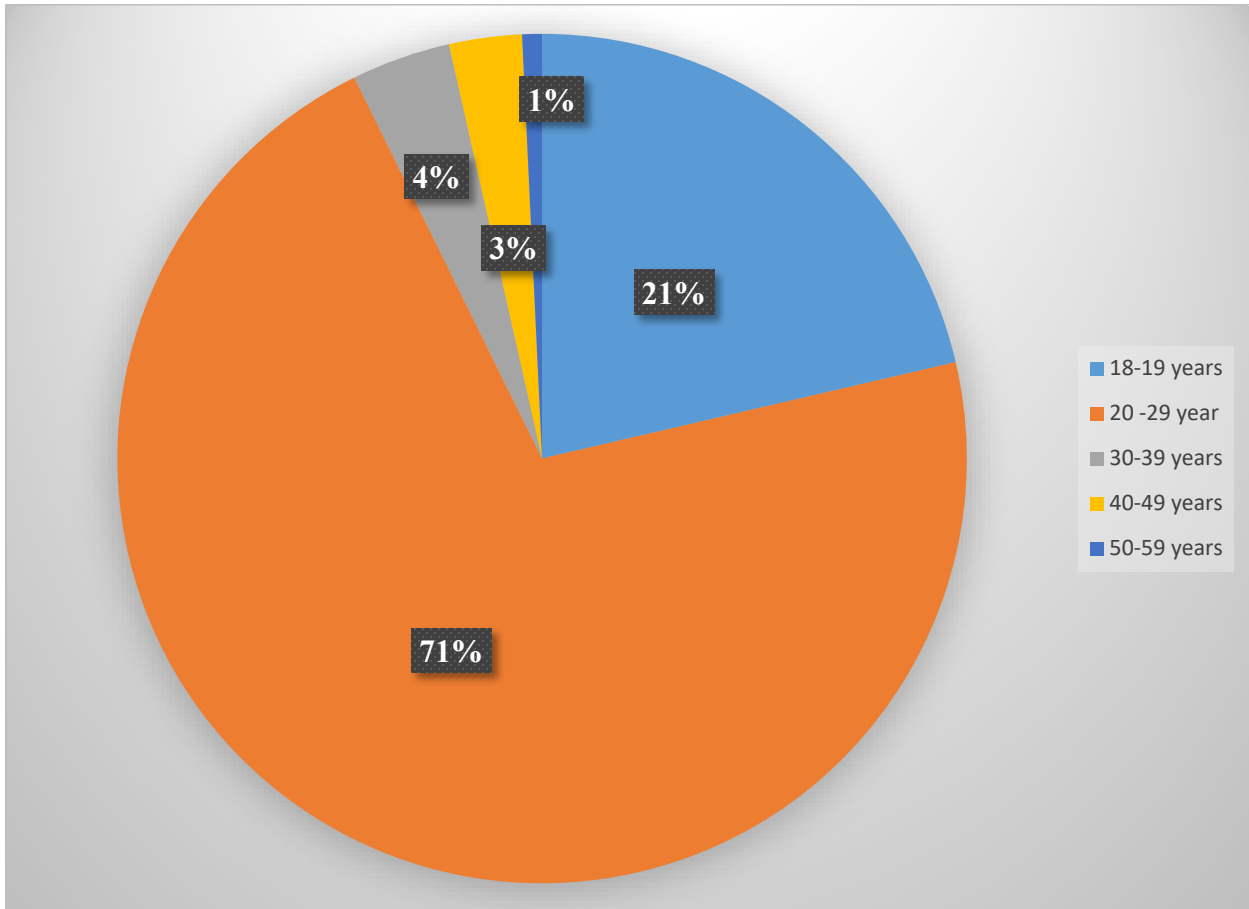


Figure 4.3: Age of Participants

The above (Figure 4.3) provides a comprehensive breakdown of the age distribution among the study participants, offering insights into the demographic composition of the sampled population. The data indicates a predominant presence of younger individuals, with 92.8% falling within the age range of 20 to 29 years. Specifically, 71.4% of participants are aged between 20 and 29 years, while 21.4% fall within the 18-19 years bracket. This skew towards the younger age groups suggests a significant youth representation in the study. On the other hand, the older age categories (30-39 years, 40-49 years, and 50-59 years) collectively account for a smaller proportion, with 7.4% of participants falling into these ranges.

4.3.4 Participants Level of education

Participants were asked to indicate their level of education, with results shown (Figure 4.4) below.

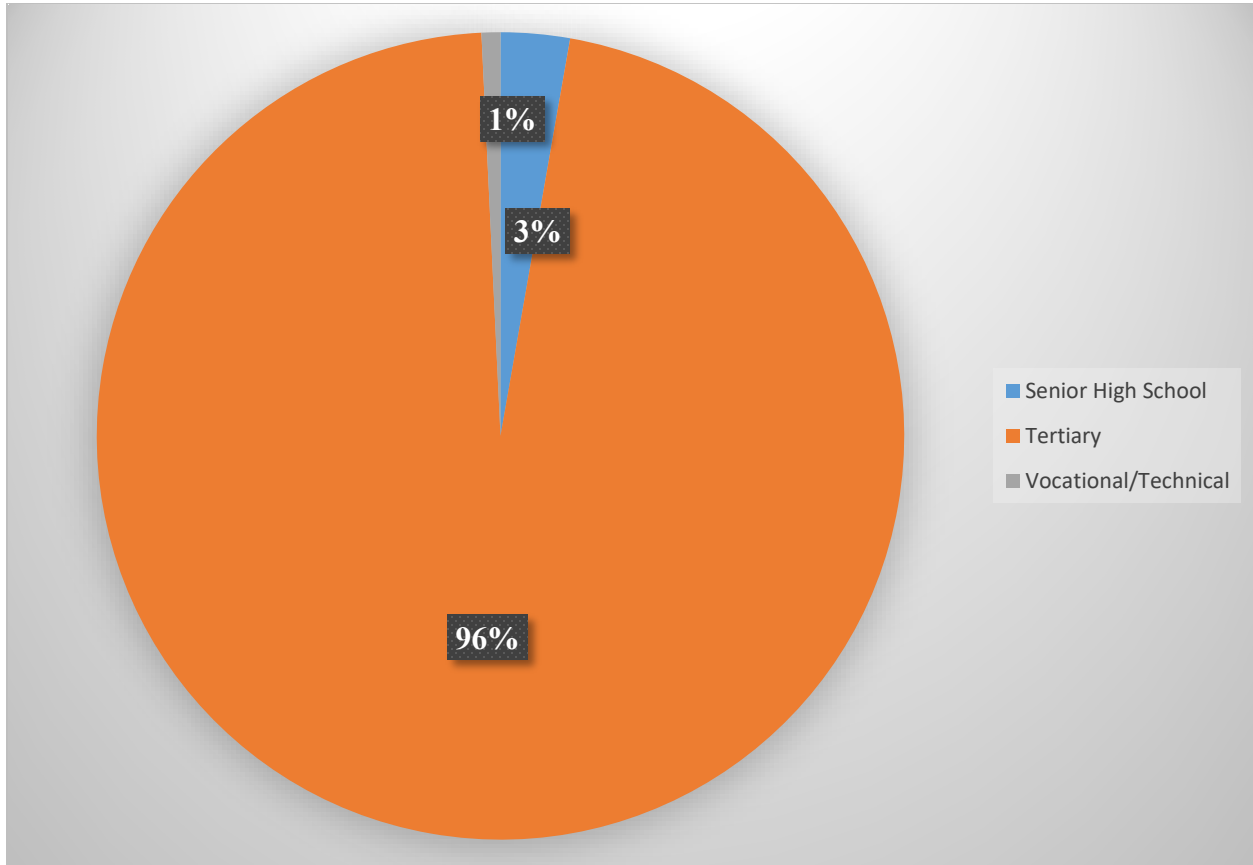


Figure 4.4: Participants' Level of Education

The results (Figure 4.4) indicate a detailed breakdown of the participants' level of education, offering valuable insights into the educational background of the sampled population. The data reveals a significant dominance of individuals with tertiary education 384, constituting 96.5% of the participants. This suggests a highly educated study sample, with the majority having pursued education beyond the secondary level. Specifically, only a small proportion 11, 2.8%, reported having completed Senior High School, emphasising the prevalence of higher educational attainment among the respondents. Only 3 representing 0.8% were reported to have finished vocational/technical level.

4.3.5 Participant Occupations

Participants were asked to indicate their occupation, with results shown (Figure 4.5) below.

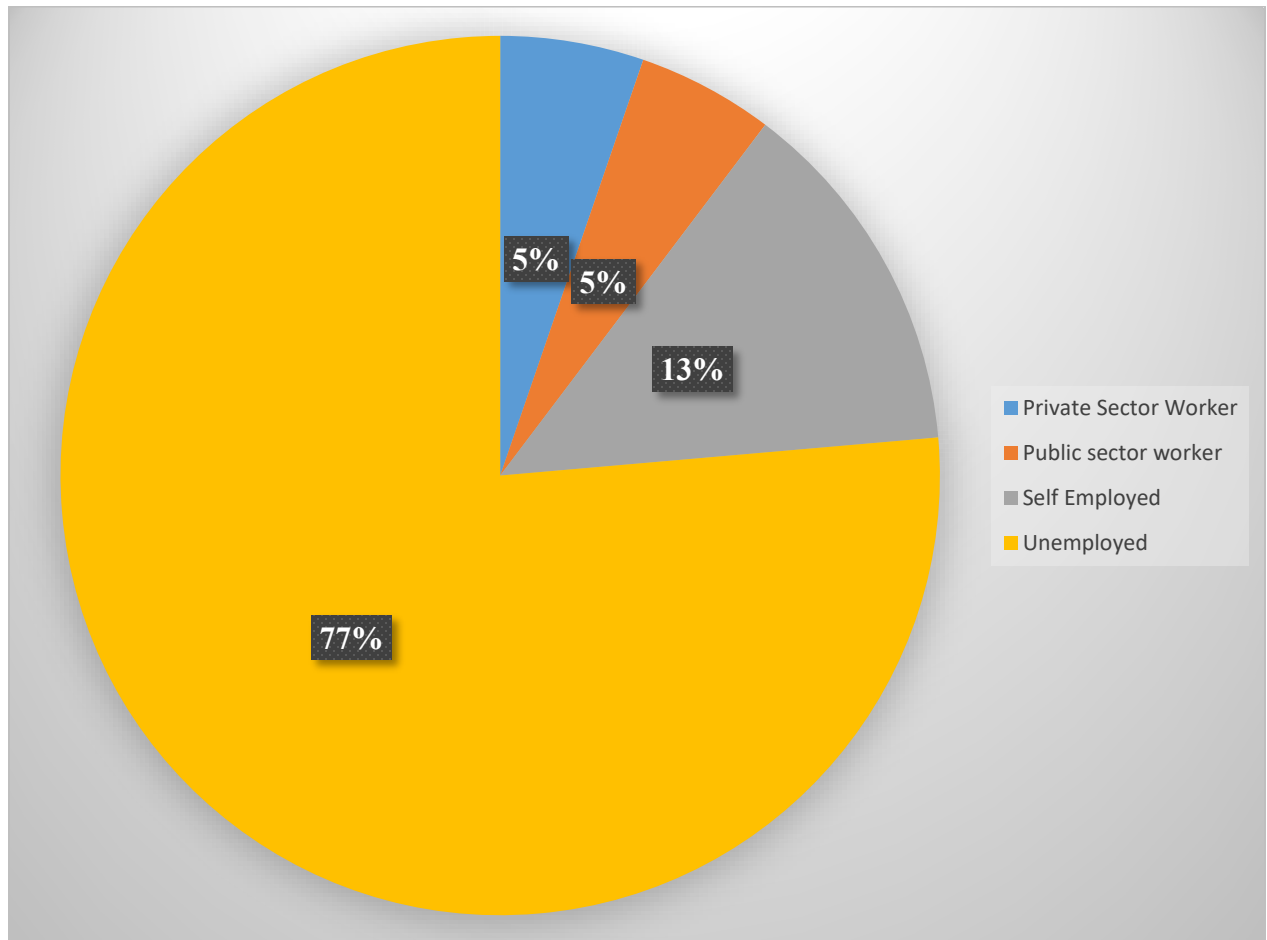


Figure 4.5: Participant Occupations

Figure (4.5) provides an insightful breakdown of the participants' occupations, shedding light on the occupational diversity within the sampled population. The data indicates a considerable prevalence of unemployment among the participants 304, with 76.4% identifying as unemployed. This finding underscores the socioeconomic landscape and challenges faced by a significant portion of the study's participants. In terms of employed participants, there is a relatively balanced distribution across different sectors. Self-employed individuals, 53, constitute 13.3% of the sample, reflecting entrepreneurial activities within the study population. Private sector workers and public sector workers constitute 21 and 20 each representing 5.3% and 5.0%, respectively.

4.4 Descriptive Analysis of Variables

This section provides the descriptive statistics for all the constructs, made up of customer characteristics, sponsorship, fan attitude, and fan involvement, as well as event fit, brand image, brand perception, and purchase intention. Average responses to the questions under each section varied from the maximum score of 1 (strongly agree) to a minimum score of 5 (strongly disagree). The results for each construct are displayed in the tables below.

4.4.1 Customer Characteristics

This section of the study provides an overview of the overall mean and standard deviation for customer characteristics in relation to their purchase intentions of sponsor products. The assessment of customer characteristics in this study involved the use of demographic and situational factors. These factors were employed to measure the customer characteristics of the study participants.

Table 4.2: Customer Characteristics: Demographic Characteristics

Demographic characteristics				
Items	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
✓ Gender influences the purchased intention of sponsors' product	1	5	2.13	1.16
✓ Age background influences the purchased intention of sponsors' brand	1	5	2.24	1.125
✓ Educational background contributes to your intention to patronize the sponsors' products	1	5	2.24	1.237
✓ Marital status is an important determinant for choosing a sponsor's product	1	5	2.96	1.311
✓ Income levels are an important determinant for choosing a sponsor's product	1	5	2.07	1.231
✓ Occupation is an important factor when choosing a sponsor's product	1	5	2.24	1.163
Average Mean			2.31	1.205

The results presented in Table 4.2 highlight the average mean (M=2.31; SD=1.205), where (M=mean and SD is the standard deviation) which measures the participants' demographic characteristics in relation to their purchase intentions of sponsor products. Notably, all ratings for the items under demographic characteristics were below the neutral median score of 3, indicating a strong perception among participants regarding the influence of various factors. For instance, participants highly recognised the importance of income levels as a determinant for choosing a sponsor's product (mean = 2.07), acknowledged the impact of gender on the purchase intentions of sponsor products (mean = 2.13), and perceived that age background (mean = 2.24), educational background (mean = 2.24), and occupation (mean = 2.24) are significant contributors to their intention to patronize sponsor products. These measurements provide valuable insights into participants' demographic characteristics and their implications for purchase intentions of sponsor products. However, it is noteworthy that only the item "marital status is an important determinant for choosing a sponsor's product" recorded a mean of 2.96, which is close to the median score of 3. This suggests that participants are uncertain about the significance of marital status as a determinant for their choice of sponsor products.

Table 4.3: Customer Characteristics: Situational Characteristics

Situational characteristics				
Items	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
✓ Product experience influence the intention to patronize the sponsors' brand	1	5	2.06	1.074
✓ Nature of patronage (voluntary/involuntary)	1	5	2.21	0.932
Average Mean			2.19	1.048

The results depicted in Table 4.3 demonstrate the average mean (M=2.19; SD=1.048), which measures the situational characteristics of the participants in relation to their purchase intentions of sponsor products. Notably, all ratings for the situational characteristics' items were consistently below the neutral median score of 3. This indicates that participants strongly perceived the influence of product experience (mean = 2.06), the nature of patronage (voluntary/involuntary) (mean = 2.21), and the length of the relationship with the sponsor (mean = 2.29) on their intention

to patronize the sponsors' brand. These findings shed light on the situational characteristics influencing the purchase intentions of sponsor products.

Looking at Table 4.3, it can be interpreted that the standard deviations in the context of the responses for each item: The standard deviation of 1.074 suggests a considerable amount of variability in the responses. It suggests that soccer fans' ratings for this item vary widely, with some respondents indicating a strong influence of product experience on brand patronage intention, while others indicating a weak influence. The relatively large standard deviation suggests a diverse range of opinions or experiences among the respondents regarding the impact of product experience on brand patronage intention. The standard deviation of 0.932 suggests a moderate amount of variability in the responses. It means that the fans' ratings for this item show some degree of variation, but not as much as the previous item. The smaller standard deviation implies a relatively narrower range of opinions or experiences among the respondents regarding the influence of the nature of patronage on brand patronage decisions.

4.4.2 Sponsorship Measurement

This section focuses on the measurement of sponsorship offers for participants in relation to sponsor products, with the mean and standard deviation provided for analysis. The results presented in Table 4.4 reveal an average mean of 2.26 with a standard deviation of 1.066. These metrics are utilised to gauge the extent of sponsorship offers received by participants in the context of sponsor products.

Table 4.4: Measurement of Sponsorship

Items	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
✓ The sponsor offers products to my favourite club (players)	1	5	2.17	1.066
✓ The sponsor helps deliver campaign programs for my team	1	5	2.19	1.057
✓ The sponsor provides logistics that my football team needs	1	5	2.26	1.051
✓ This sponsorship makes my team look much better in terms of publicity	1	5	2.04	1.036

✓ The sponsor supports the communities in which the team is based	1	5	2.38	1.091
✓ The sponsor provides financial support each season	1	5	2.00	1.014
✓ The cash sponsorship for each season is enough	1	5	2.52	1.077
✓ My club has the biggest sponsorship value	1	5	2.46	1.087
✓ The sponsor organizes awards schemes for outstanding players in the season	1	5	2.33	1.091
✓ The sponsor pays cash bonuses when my team wins a trophy	1	5	2.22	1.089
Average Mean			2.26	1.066

The following items were rated by participants to assess the sponsorship offer provided by their sponsors in terms of sponsor products: "the sponsor provides financial support each season" (mean = 2.00), "this sponsorship makes my team look much better in terms of publicity" (mean = 2.04), "the sponsor offers products to my favorite club (players)" (mean = 2.17) as shown in Table 4.4, "the sponsor helps deliver campaign programs for my team" (mean = 2.19), "the sponsor pays cash bonuses when my team wins a trophy" (mean = 2.22), "the sponsor provides logistics that my football team needs" (mean = 2.26), "the sponsor organizes awards schemes for outstanding players in the season" (mean = 2.33), "the sponsor supports the communities in which the team is based" (mean = 2.38), and "my club has the biggest sponsorship value" (mean = 2.46). Participants generally agreed with these items, indicating that they perceive these aspects as measuring the sponsorship offer provided by their sponsors in relation to sponsor products. However, the item "the cash sponsorship for each season is enough" recorded a mean of 2.52, which is in close proximity to the neutral median score of 3 (shown in Table 4.4). This suggests participants have some uncertainty about whether the cash sponsorship provided is sufficient to meet their club's needs. Furthermore, the standard deviation of 1.066 suggests a considerable amount of variability in the responses. It means that individual ratings for this item vary widely, with some respondents indicating significant product offerings from the sponsor, while others perceive minimal offerings.

4.4.3 Fan Attitude

This section applies mean and standard deviation to analyse participants' fan attitude towards the sponsorship they receive from their sponsors. Mean and standard deviation was also used in this section to examine participants' attitude (fan attitude) concerning the sponsorship they receive from their sponsors. It can be seen (Table 4.5) the mean and standard deviation for the item “my general attitude towards the sponsor following this sponsorship is positive” is 2.11 and 0.949; for the item “this sponsorship would make me more likely to remember the sponsor’s brand” these are 2.13 and 1.048; for “this sponsor now first comes to mind when thinking of the products/services they offer” these are 2.18 and 1.053; and for “when I think about this event, I am reminded of this sponsor” these are 2.19 and 1.048. The mean and standard deviation for the item “this sponsorship would make me more likely to notice the sponsor on other occasions” are 2.21 and 1.018; for “this sponsorship makes me feel more favourable towards the sponsor” these are 2.24 and 0.963; for “I know more about the sponsor because of this sponsorship” these are 2.32 and 1.077 and for “have more interest in the sponsor following this sponsorship” these are 2.32 and 1.073. All these items were rated as 2 (agreed), indicating the participants agreed these items measure their attitude (fan attitude) concerning the sponsorship they receive from their sponsors. Furthermore, the average mean measuring the overall fan attitude indicates the deviation from the mean is not too wide.

Table 4.5: Fan Attitude

Items	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
✓ I have more interest in the sponsor following this sponsorship."	1	5	2.32	1.073
✓ I know more about the sponsor because of this sponsorship	1	5	2.32	1.077
✓ This sponsorship would make me more likely to notice the sponsor on other occasions.	1	5	2.21	1.018
✓ This sponsorship would make me more likely to remember the sponsor’s brand.	1	5	2.13	1.048
✓ This sponsor now first comes to mind when thinking of the products/services they offer.	1	5	2.18	1.053

✓ When I think about this event, I am reminded of this sponsor.	1	5	2.19	1.048
✓ This sponsorship makes me feel more favourable towards the sponsor.	1	5	2.24	0.963
✓ My general attitude towards the sponsor following this sponsorship is positive.	1	5	2.11	0.949
<i>Average Mean</i>			<i>2.21</i>	<i>1.029</i>

Table 4.5 provides a summary of responses regarding Fan Attitude. The average mean for this variable is 2.21. However, it is noteworthy that the standard deviation score is 1.09.

4.4.4 Fan Involvement

Fan involvement was assessed using descriptive statistics, specifically mean and standard deviation. Table 4.6 presents the findings. Participants consistently rated the items on a scale of 2 (agreed) for measuring fan involvement. For instance, the item "my interest in this football match exceeds that of a general spectator" received a mean rating of 2.27. Similarly, the item "being a fan of this event is important to me" had a mean rating of 2.24, and "I am a fan of a club or organisation associated with this event" had a mean rating of 2.32. Additionally, participants rated the item "my friends see me as a fan of football" with a mean of 2.40, indicating agreement that these items captured fan involvement. However, some items received neutral ratings of 3 (Neutral) and indicated uncertainty regarding their measurement of fan involvement. For instance, the item "I enjoy following coverage of GPL matches" had a mean rating of 2.72. Similarly, the item "I strongly support these GPL matches" received a mean rating of 2.68. Participants also gave a mean rating of 2.54 for the item "this game is my favorite sporting event," and a mean rating of 2.52 for the item "this game is important to me." These neutral ratings suggest that participants were somewhat unsure about the extent to which these items captured fan involvement.

Table 4.6: Fan Involvement

Items	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
✓ My interest in this football match exceeds that of a general spectator.	1	5	2.27	1.041
✓ I am a fan of a club or organisation associated with this event.	1	5	2.32	1.051
✓ Being a fan of this event is important to me.	1	5	2.24	1.04
✓ My friends see me as a fan of football.	1	5	2.4	1.227
✓ I strongly support this GPL matches	1	5	2.68	1.245
✓ I enjoy following coverage of GPL matches.	1	5	2.72	1.262
✓ This game is important to me.	1	5	2.52	1.187
✓ This game is my favourite sporting event.	1	5	2.54	1.238
<i>Average Mean</i>			<i>2.46</i>	<i>1.161</i>

4.4.5 Event Fit

Event fit was also measured using mean and standard deviation. The average mean and standard deviation (Mean=2.28; SD=0.989) measures the event fit rated by participants. It can be observed (Table 4.7) participants attached 2 (agreed) ratings to all the items, that is; “It makes sense to me that this company sponsors this event” with a mean of 2.22; “A fit between the event and a sponsor is important” with a mean of 2.24; “I see a strong logical connection between the event and the sponsor” with a mean of 2.25, and “The image portrayed by the event and the sponsor are similar” with a mean of 2.40. This implies participants agreed these items measure event fit.

Table 4.7: Event Fit

Items	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
✓ I see a strong logical connection between the event and the sponsor.	1	5	2.25	0.994
✓ The image portrayed by the event and the sponsor are similar.	1	5	2.4	0.998
✓ It makes sense to me that this company sponsors this event.	1	5	2.22	0.979
✓ A fit between the event and a sponsor is important.	1	5	2.24	0.986
<i>Average Mean</i>			2.28	0.989

4.4.6 Brand Image

Brand image was also measured using mean and standard deviation. The average mean and standard deviation (Mean=2.33; SD=1.031) measures the brand image for the sponsor products. It can be observed (Table 4.8) participants attached 2 (agreed) ratings to all the items, namely; “This sponsor was immediately noticeable” with a mean of 2.25; “I clearly remember the sponsor’s message” with a mean of 2.28; “The sponsorship tool used was valuable” with a mean of 2.3; “This sponsor was immediately noticeable” with a mean of 2.34; “The last time I watched this event was from start to finish (full game/match)” with a mean of 2.39, and “I clearly remember the sponsor’s message” with a mean of 2.40. This implies participants agreed these items measure the brand image for the sponsor products.

Table 4.8: Brand Image

Items	Minimu m	Maximu m	Mea n	Std. Deviation
✓ This sponsor was immediately noticeable	1	5	2.25	0.999
✓ The last time I watched this event was from start to finish (full game/match)	1	5	2.39	1.128
✓ The sponsorship tool used was valuable	1	5	2.3	0.99
✓ This sponsor was immediately noticeable	1	5	2.34	1.009
✓ I clearly remember the sponsor’s message	1	5	2.4	1.088
✓ This sponsor stood out	1	5	2.28	0.973
<i>Average Mean</i>			2.33	1.031

4.4.7 Brand Perception

The researcher employed mean and standard deviation to evaluate participants' brand perception regarding sponsorships received from their sponsors. The average mean and standard deviation (Mean=2.35; SD=1.015) were used to measure participants' brand perception. Table 4.9 illustrates that participants consistently rated all the items with a mean score of 2, indicating agreement. Specifically, the following items received the following mean scores: 'When I think about this event, I am reminded of this sponsor' (2.29), 'My interest in the event has led me to be interested in the sponsor' (2.31), 'This sponsor now first comes to mind when thinking of the products/services they offer' (2.31), 'I have more interest in the sponsor following this sponsorship' (2.34), 'I like the sponsor more because of this sponsorship' (2.35), 'This sponsorship makes me feel more favorable towards the sponsor' (2.35), 'I hold a different view about the company following the sponsorship' (2.37), 'This sponsorship has improved my perception of the sponsor' (2.37), 'I hold a different view about the company's product following the sponsorship' (2.40), and 'I only recall this sponsor as a sponsor of this event and nothing more' (2.44). These results indicate that participants agreed that these items effectively measure their brand perception regarding sponsorships from sponsors. In the next page, respondents Brand Perceptions were presented.

Table 4.9: Brand Perception

Items	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
✓ I have more interest in the sponsor following this sponsorship.	1	5	2.34	1.047
✓ My interest in the event has led me to be interested in the sponsor.	1	5	2.31	0.992
✓ I hold different view bout the company following the sponsorship	1	5	2.37	0.97
✓ I hold a different view about the company's product following the sponsorship	1	5	2.4	1.003
✓ I like the sponsor more because of this sponsorship.	1	5	2.35	1.014
✓ This sponsor now first comes to mind when thinking of the products/services they offer	1	5	2.31	1.037

✓ When I think about this event, I am reminded of this sponsor.	1	5	2.29	1.024
✓ I only recall this sponsor as a sponsor of this event and nothing more.	1	5	2.44	1.074
✓ This sponsorship makes me feel more favourable towards the sponsor.	1	5	2.35	1.009
✓ This sponsorship has improved my perception of the sponsor.	1	5	2.37	0.984
<i>Average Mean</i>			2.35	1.015

The above Table 4.9 highlights the respondent's responses on Brand Perceptions. The average perception of Brand Perceptions is 2.35, suggesting a tendency towards a particular level on the scale. However, the standard deviation of 1.015 indicates that there is some variability in how respondents perceive the brand, with certain individuals deviating more from the average perception.

4.4.8 Purchase Intention

The measurement of participants' purchase intention was conducted using mean and standard deviation. As shown in Table 4.10, participants consistently rated all items with a score of 2 (agreed), indicating their agreement that these items effectively measure their purchase intention for sponsor products. Consequently, participants expressed their belief that when a firm sponsors the event, it significantly influences their purchase decision. They also believe that they are inclined to purchase products from the sponsor due to the positive impact of their sponsorship. Additionally, participants expressed their intention to support the sponsors by purchasing their products or services. Moreover, they anticipate increasing their future purchases from the sponsor. Participants also believe that, all else being equal, they are more likely to choose the sponsor's product or service over alternatives. Lastly, they expressed their commitment to consistently purchasing the sponsor's product or service as a means of supporting similar events.

Table 4.10: Purchase Intention

Items	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
✓ In general, the fact that a firm is a sponsor of this event weighs heavily on my purchase decision.	1	5	2.26	0.987
✓ I will now actively seek products and services sold by this sponsor.	1	5	2.4	1.04
✓ All else being equal, I am more likely to purchase products/services from this sponsor than from non-sponsors.	1	5	2.31	1.018
✓ I will try to buy products from this sponsor because their sponsorship had a positive effect.	1	5	2.27	1.081
✓ I always purchase the sponsor's product/service to show support for this event.	1	5	2.34	1.03
✓ I will purchase the sponsor's product/service to show support for the sponsor.	1	5	2.28	1.046
✓ In future, I will try to purchase more products/services from this sponsor.	1	5	2.3	1.025
<i>Average Mean</i>			<i>2.31</i>	<i>1.032</i>

4.5 Exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

The main purpose of the study was to evaluate the applicability Watkins' (2018) of exploratory factor analysis (EFA), which included a thorough review of the correlation matrix data. To determine the dimensionality of the scale and improve the reliability of its sub-scales, principal components analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation method was used. The main goal was to create reliable sub-scales by establishing the ideal number of variables connected with the study's primary subjects. Varimax orthogonal rotation method is noted for its simplicity and ability to maximize variance of the squared of loadings in each factor. Orthogonal rotation assumes that the factors are uncorrelated (independent) from each other. Thus, factor loadings are independent from the other. Likewise, components generated from EFA rotated component matrix are not the conceptualized constructs of the researcher but factors inherent in the pattern of the data (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). It is also very popular and most used in PCA analysis. PCA was selected due to its ability to analyse total variance and identify major components, enabling an evaluation of whether survey results were impacted primarily by a single dominating factor or a range of variables. Items with factor loadings of at least 0.50 were kept, as recommended by Maskey et al. (2018). Furthermore, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) values, which indicate sample adequacy, were expected to exceed 0.50. According to Watkins (2018), the cumulative total explained variance should be more than 50%, and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity should have a significance level less than 0.05.

The study's key variables were customer characteristics, fan attitude, fan involvement, event fit, brand image, brand perception, purchase intention and sponsorship. These eight critical components were identified via factor analysis. During the first evaluation of communalities, all items satisfied the 0.50 threshold. Nonetheless, three items, BP1, BP2, and BP10 failed to load on any dimension or component significantly in the rotated component matrix; thus, they were excluded for further analysis. The Bartlett's test ($p < 0.05$) was significant. Table 4.11 shows that six out of the eight, six components had eigen values more than 1. However, the two components (Fan attitude and brand perception) were included based on the theory and the conceptual framework developed and supporting the study (Fabrigar et al., 1999). Fabrigar et al. (1999) argued that, despite EFA "a researcher should always consider relevant theory and previous research when determining the appropriate number of factors to retain" (p.281). Additionally, the study considers factor loading above 0.5 as recommended by Tabachnick and Fidell (2013). Loadings below 0.5 are not significant (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Furthermore, the Cronbach's alpha values for each

variable exceeded Nunnally's (1978) suggested threshold of 0.70. The factor loadings varied between 0.519 and 0.894.

4.5.1 Common Method Bias

Participants in the survey filled out questionnaires to add to the dataset. Despite the use of known and tested procedures, the possibility of inherent survey bias persists. To improve respondent understanding, many survey questions were supplemented by short explanations aimed at reducing technical issues and giving contextual information. Harman's one-factor test was used by Podsakoff et al. (2003) to investigate common method biases (CMB). Table 4.11 shows the eigenvalues. Notably, the first component, which accounts for 41.579% of the variation, falls below the halfway point, indicating that there is no major problem with CMB.

To determine the sample's representativeness, the researcher used the Bartlett sphericity test and the KMO measure of sampling adequacy. The estimated KMO score of 0.941 indicates that the sample size is more than enough for factor analysis. The result of Bartlett's test was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 5857.140$, df: 300, $p < .000$), confirming the appropriateness of the dataset for factor analysis. These results, which are described in Table 4.11, confirm the sample's representativeness.

Table 4.11 Exploratory Factor Analysis

Constructs	Items	Component							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Customer Characteristics	CC1	0.184	0.894	0.022	0.109	0.003	0.073	0.146	0.147
	CC2	0.193	0.894	0.028	0.117	-0.003	0.074	0.148	0.151
	CC3	0.183	0.656	0.404	0.213	0.067	0.136	0.011	0.191
	CC4	0.199	0.639	0.248	0.162	0.009	0.147	0.177	0.120
	CC5	0.120	0.656	0.260	0.090	0.037	0.157	0.179	0.058
	CC6	0.250	0.556	0.329	0.087	0.052	0.134	0.274	-0.025
	CC7	0.178	0.537	0.390	0.129	0.027	0.159	0.145	0.136
	CC8	0.342	0.633	0.363	0.071	-0.037	0.266	0.233	0.099
	CC9	0.249	0.606	0.453	0.194	-0.058	0.218	0.192	0.084
Fan Attitude	FA1	0.270	0.170	0.219	0.213	0.046	0.300	0.228	0.659
	FA2	0.266	0.197	0.163	0.172	0.046	0.314	0.241	0.647
	FA3	0.274	0.285	0.146	0.133	-0.110	0.181	0.063	0.701
	FA4	0.079	0.153	0.238	0.156	-0.034	0.187	0.210	0.717
	FA5	0.175	0.180	0.261	0.213	-0.001	0.200	0.197	0.611
	FA6	0.038	0.160	0.348	0.289	0.025	0.133	0.019	0.575
	FA7	0.164	0.239	0.205	0.242	-0.012	0.262	0.092	0.519
	FA8	0.148	0.198	0.221	0.261	-0.006	0.268	0.126	0.681
Fan Involvement	FI1	0.093	0.132	0.066	0.072	0.915	0.074	0.190	0.155
	FI2	0.160	0.088	0.156	0.100	0.921	0.119	0.112	0.217

	FI3	0.242	0.133	0.155	0.128	0.918	0.154	0.249	0.283
	FI4	0.205	0.154	0.156	0.123	0.865	0.125	0.151	0.237
	FI5	0.216	0.225	0.101	0.120	0.869	0.075	0.266	0.161
	FI8	0.195	0.187	0.275	0.408	0.690	0.442	0.050	0.306
Event Fit	EF1	0.225	0.234	0.251	0.010	-0.017	0.765	0.322	0.113
	EF2	0.293	0.176	0.151	0.060	0.071	0.790	0.220	0.106
	EF3	0.262	0.214	0.211	0.011	0.075	0.618	0.268	0.196
	EF4	0.395	0.142	0.155	0.038	0.100	0.722	0.222	0.163
Brand Image	BI1	0.359	0.237	0.190	0.614	0.101	0.165	0.166	0.164
	BI2	0.403	0.165	0.242	0.769	0.041	0.124	0.184	0.212
	BI3	0.098	0.038	-0.005	0.698	0.002	0.061	-0.052	0.051
	BI4	0.094	-0.073	0.065	0.701	0.040	-0.006	-0.045	-0.002
	BI5	0.143	0.013	-0.002	0.699	0.103	0.110	-0.017	0.012
	BI6	0.135	0.059	0.077	0.646	0.037	0.025	-0.017	0.030
Brand Perception	BP3	0.163	0.056	0.041	0.097	0.081	-0.006	0.680	0.056
	BP4	0.394	0.329	0.062	0.202	0.125	0.077	0.744	0.102
	BP5	0.390	0.312	0.103	0.222	0.110	0.137	0.656	0.088
	BP6	0.244	0.237	0.112	0.282	0.090	0.230	0.639	0.172
	BP7	0.237	0.217	0.133	0.101	0.166	0.189	0.653	0.056
	BP8	0.191	0.211	0.134	0.147	0.223	0.175	0.597	0.069
	BP9	0.179	0.202	0.156	0.096	0.166	0.222	0.595	0.086
Purchase Intention	PI1	0.713	0.165	0.191	0.223	0.072	0.205	0.093	0.072

	PI2	0.704	0.109	0.233	0.208	0.006	0.141	0.092	0.160
	PI3	0.702	0.057	0.197	0.160	0.117	-0.033	0.117	0.250
	PI4	0.690	0.071	0.267	0.141	0.045	0.073	0.089	0.258
	PI5	0.724	0.103	0.261	0.160	0.073	0.034	0.022	0.225
	PI6	0.707	0.095	0.026	0.118	-0.002	0.073	0.145	0.150
	PI7	0.706	0.221	0.401	0.213	0.069	0.135	0.007	0.189
Sports Sponsorship	Sponsorship1	0.313	0.224	0.632	0.187	0.041	0.084	0.213	0.170
	Sponsorship2	0.271	0.211	0.673	0.217	0.012	0.203	0.209	0.112
	Sponsorship3	0.263	0.204	0.693	0.180	0.049	0.063	0.182	0.199
	Sponsorship4	0.233	0.167	0.664	0.149	0.081	0.144	0.267	0.119
	Sponsorship5	0.319	0.190	0.676	0.137	0.063	0.117	0.163	0.152
	Sponsorship6	0.160	0.187	0.674	0.123	0.067	0.122	0.235	0.236
	Sponsorship7	0.183	0.338	0.559	0.070	0.045	0.265	0.160	0.108
	Sponsorship8	0.307	0.153	0.723	0.209	0.036	0.220	0.160	0.253
	Sponsorship9	0.169	0.167	0.896	0.163	0.054	0.248	0.169	0.155
	Sponsorship10	0.343	0.138	0.654	0.182	0.012	0.291	0.179	0.253
Variance Explained (%)		41.579	4.549	2.983	2.639	2.149	1.727	1.395	1.128
Eigenvalues		26.19	2.87	1.88	1.66	1.35	1.09	0.88	0.71
Cronbach alpha		0.902	0.908	0.922	0.895	0.891	0.860	0.939	0.896
KMO = .941; $\chi^2 = 5857.140$; df = 300; p = .000									

4.6 Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) is a statistical tool used to distinguish and analyze various constructs (Hair et al., 2016). It combines elements of factor analysis and multiple regression analysis, making it a powerful multivariate analysis technique. In this study, SEM was chosen as the data analysis method to assess the strength of relationships between dependent and independent variables (Hair et al., 2016). Furthermore, SEM allows for model measurement assessment, enabling the evaluation of measurement reliability and validity within the model (Hair et al., 2016). It offers a comprehensive approach to test the model, simultaneously examining multiple aspects. By leveraging factor analysis and multiple regressions, SEM aims to examine complex equations that describe the linkages between variables and test hypotheses (Hair et al., 2016).

To examine the factors influencing the purchase intention of sports products, this study employed SEM for data analysis, as described in Chapter three. Smart PLS, a statistical data analysis technique, was selected for its flexibility in handling various sample sizes, including smaller ones, and accommodating an unlimited number of formative indicators (Hair et al., 2013-2020). The researcher utilised Smart PLS 3 due to its ability to estimate the empirical measures of association among constructs (model measurement) and assess the data's fitness. It offers features to determine the relationships between constructs in the structural model and evaluate the data's fit.

The outcomes from the PLS-SEM were further reviewed and evaluated using a systematic process to enhance the explained variance of the endogenous latent construct (R² value). Model evaluation focused on the measurement and structural predictive capabilities. The measurement model demonstrated the relationship between responded items and their latent causal variables, which were assessed for unidimensionality, validity, and reliability before developing the structural model.

4.6.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

This section discusses the techniques used to ascertain the validity of the instruments and verify construct reliability. In quantitative studies, assessing the measurement model is critical, since it ensures the study validity and outcomes. However, researchers must focus on enhancing the quality of work (Hair *et al.* 2020). Likewise, there are two critical elements to consider when evaluating a measurement model: construct reliability and validity (Saunders *et al.* 2016).

4.6.1.1 Reliability and Validity

Assessing the reliability of constructs is a critical aspect of examining the measurement model. It ensures that the latent variables under consideration are consistently and accurately represented. Cronbach's Alpha (CA) and Composite Reliability (CR) are widely used reliability indicators for this purpose. A CA or CR score of 0.7 or higher indicates good internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978). The study's variables demonstrated CA and CR values that were significantly above the threshold. The CA values ranged from 0.860 to 0.939, while the CR values ranged from 0.905 to 0.950. The findings provide strong support for the measurement model's robust internal consistency. Higher CA and CR values indicate that the indicators within each construct effectively measure the same underlying latent variable, ensuring data consistency and accuracy (Cortina, 1993).

A crucial aspect of research is ensuring the instrument created to assess specific concepts, actually and accurately measures the concepts. According to Guenther et al (2023), validity relates to the extent to which an instrument assesses its intended emphasis. The validity of the research instrument measures includes face-to-face, content, convergent, and discriminant validity (Hair et al 2021, Kock 2020, & Mersha 2022). Content validity, as emphasized by Churchill (2001), depends on the methodology used to develop the questionnaire. In this study, content validity was assessed based on previous empirical and theoretical work on the constructs. Face validity was evaluated through a pre-test exercise with selected taxpayers, and expert reviews by supervisors determined the applicability and suitability of the questionnaire for achieving the study objectives. Convergent and discriminant validity were established using methods proposed by Kock (2020) and Shrestha (2021).

Convergent validity, an important feature of this evaluation, is assessed using two key metrics: Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Factor Loadings (FL). With a suggested threshold of 0.5 or above, AVE measures the percentage of variation explained by the indicators compared to the total variance. Factor loadings, which indicate the strength of the association between indicators and their respective constructs, generally exceed 0.7. Initially, two items measuring fan involvement (FI6 and FI7) and three items measuring brand perception (BP1, BP2 and BP10) were below the threshold (at least 0.7) and were discarded. As presented in Table 4.12, all of the factor loadings in the study exceed the suggested 0.7 threshold.

Table 4.12: Reliability and Validity

Constructs	Items	Loadings	CA	CR	AVE	VIF	Tolerance
Brand Image	BI1	0.758	0.895	0.920	0.657	2.053	1.88
	BI2	0.766					
	BI3	0.822					
	BI4	0.872					
	BI5	0.831					
	BI6	0.807					
Brand Perception	BP3	0.804	0.939	0.950	0.731	2.297	2.33
	BP4	0.883					
	BP5	0.850					
	BP6	0.856					
	BP7	0.867					
	BP8	0.855					
	BP9	0.870					
Customer Characteristics	CC1	0.763	0.908	0.924	0.575	2.232	1.02
	CC2	0.780					
	CC3	0.787					
	CC4	0.753					
	CC5	0.744					
	CC6	0.769					

	CC7	0.765				2.080	
	CC8	0.755				2.023	
	CC9	0.703				2.073	
Event Fit	EF1	0.836	0.860	0.905	0.704	1.884	1.66
	EF2	0.858				2.216	
	EF3	0.848				2.508	
	EF4	0.814				2.280	
Fan Attitude	FA1	0.762	0.896	0.917	0.579	2.391	1.89
	FA2	0.779				2.453	
	FA3	0.770				1.958	
	FA4	0.764				2.169	
	FA5	0.804				2.100	
	FA6	0.716				2.171	
	FA7	0.723				2.070	
	FA8	0.766				2.497	
Fan Involvement	FI1	0.779	0.891	0.917	0.650	2.682	2.00
	FI2	0.773				3.047	
	FI3	0.834				1.767	
	FI4	0.837				2.276	
	FI5	0.869				2.599	
	FI8	0.737				2.305	
Purchase Intention	PI1	0.761	0.902	0.923	0.630	2.667	2.15
	PI2	0.811				2.410	
	PI3	0.809				2.390	
	PI4	0.837				2.500	
	PI5	0.822				2.321	
	PI6	0.759				2.218	
	PI7	0.755				1.928	
Sports Sponsorship	Sponsorship1	0.762	0.922	0.934	0.588	2.520	1.98
	Sponsorship10	0.801				3.033	
	Sponsorship2	0.751				2.508	

Sponsorship3	0.734	2.378
Sponsorship4	0.744	2.410
Sponsorship5	0.745	2.101
Sponsorship6	0.739	2.405
Sponsorship7	0.815	3.135
Sponsorship8	0.777	2.597
Sponsorship9	0.796	2.657

Furthermore, the average AVE for each construct is greater than 0.5. These results provide strong evidence for the convergent validity of the data, confirming that the indicators effectively correspond with the structures under consideration (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). This assurance confirms that the measurement model effectively represents the underlying theoretical ideas, improving the study's quality and validity. Also, VIF was used to assess multicollinearity in the study. VIF is a measure of the degree of multicollinearity in a collection of multiple regression variables. The results in table 4.12 showed that VIF levels were below the 3.3 criteria suggested by (Kock, 2015; Wulandari, 2022). Furthermore, this provides proof that the predictors do not suffer from multicollinearity problems.

Figure 4.6 below illustrates the analysis of direct relationships in the study revealing a significant relationship between sponsorship and various constructs related to sports product purchase intention.

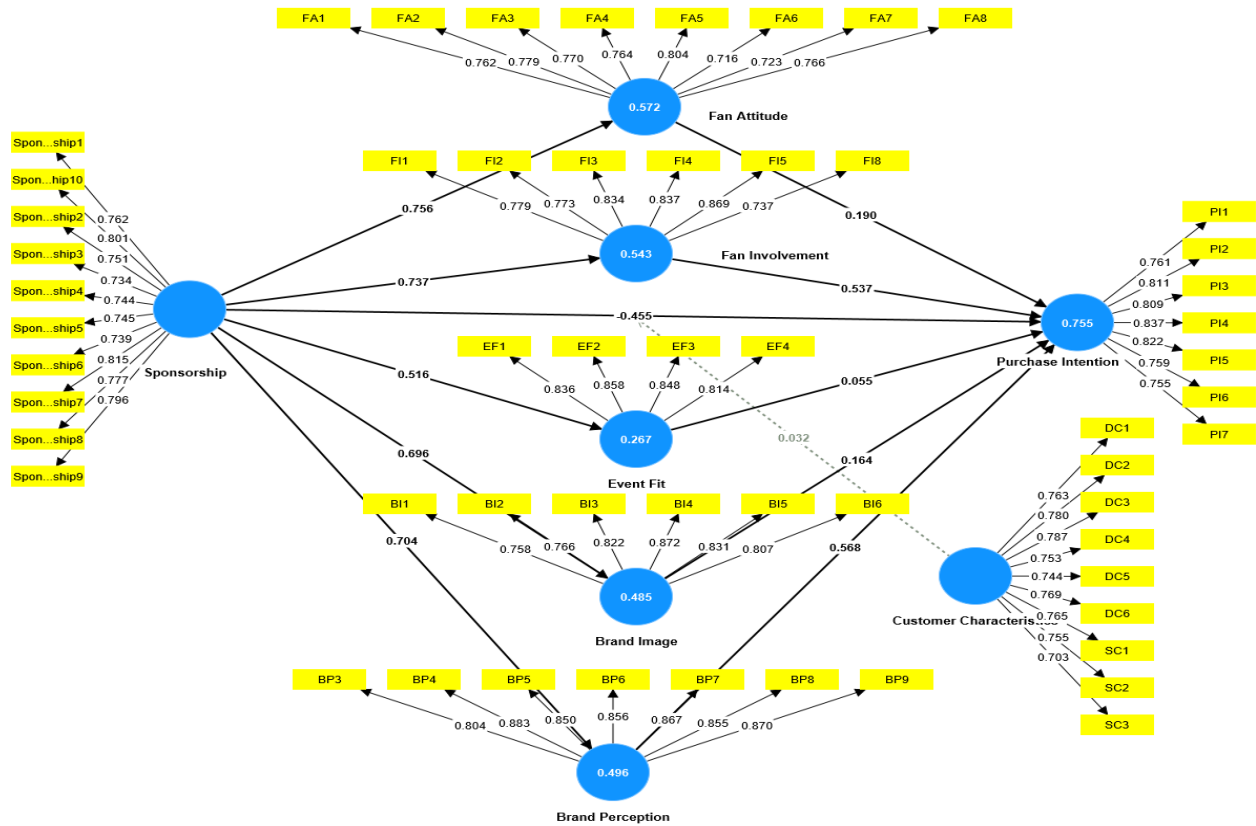


Figure: 4.6: Measurement Model

Positive and significant links are observed between sponsorship and purchase intention, fan attitude, fan involvement, brand image, and brand perception. However, the relationship between sponsorship and event fit does not prove significant for influencing purchase intention. Furthermore, customer characteristics that serve as control variables are not found to have a significant direct connection with purchase intention. The study delves into mediating roles, identifying that both fan attitude and fan involvement positively enhance the impact of sponsorship on purchase intention. Additionally, brand image and brand perception serve as significant mediators in strengthening the effect of sponsorship on purchase intention. Event fit, however, does not exhibit a significant mediating role in this context.

4.6.1.2 Discriminant Validity

4.6.1.2.1 Fornell-Larcker criteria

To examine the discriminant validity of the constructs, the Fornell-Larcker criteria, a commonly used approach in structural equation modelling, were used. This criterion compares the square root of each construct's AVE with its correlations to all other constructs in the model. To show discriminant validity, the square root of a construct's AVE must be greater than its correlations with other constructs. When the square root of a construct's AVE exceeds its associations with other constructs in the model, this suggested criteria for discriminant validity is met (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The findings in the table 4.13 showed that the square roots of the AVE for each construct consistently exceeded their correlations with other constructs, indicating the existence of discriminant validity. This finding is consistent with the literature-based criteria for verifying discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 4.13: Fornell-Larcker test

Constructs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Brand Image	0.810							
Brand Perception	0.640	0.855						
Customer Characteristics	0.659	0.484	0.758					
Event Fit	0.656	0.564	0.731	0.839				
Fan Attitude	0.552	0.548	0.689	0.455	0.761			
Fan Involvement	0.527	0.542	0.649	0.439	0.753	0.806		
Purchase Intention	0.583	0.738	0.486	0.514	0.646	0.717	0.794	
Sponsorship	0.696	0.704	0.748	0.516	0.756	0.737	0.565	0.767

4.6.1.2.2 Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

The constructs' discriminant validity was further evaluated using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) - Matrix, which offers a comprehensive approach to evaluating discriminant validity by examining the correlations between constructs and their AVE values. According to Henseler et al. (2015), the HTMT-Matrix values should be less than 0.9 to demonstrate appropriate discriminant validity. The HTMT-Matrix values are a useful tool for identifying possible discriminant validity concerns. When the HTMT values fall below the threshold, it indicates that the constructs are different from one another, supporting the discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015). As shown in Table 4.14, all constructs had HTMT values less than 0.9, indicating that they have sufficient dissimilarity and meet the recommended threshold for acceptable discriminant validity, in accordance with the established standards and guidelines for assessing discriminant validity using the HTMT method (Henseler et al., 2015).

Table 4.14: HTMT Test results

Constructs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Brand Image								
Brand Perception	0.698							
Customer Characteristics	0.725	0.522						
Event Fit	0.743	0.625	0.830					
Fan Attitude	0.618	0.592	0.764	0.517				
Fan Involvement	0.592	0.592	0.720	0.500	0.877			
Purchase Intention	0.644	0.799	0.532	0.575	0.706	0.791		
Sponsorship	0.770	0.752	0.817	0.575	0.827	0.813	0.614	

4.7 Resampling Technique and Model Fitness

The structural model has also been termed an “inner model,” which enables researchers to determine the model's capability and anticipate one or more target constructs. Regarding the measurement model coefficients, the study further tests the mediating and moderating model using bootstrapping 5 000 with replacement and standard error (Hair *et al.* 2021). Below the structural model, the study considers measures including collinearity, f value, p-value, and path coefficient, as well as coefficient of determination, effect size (f²) and effect size (g²). Collinearity occurs when two indicators are highly correlated. The study used the VIF to assess the collinearity among the latent variables. The threshold value will include $VIF \geq 5$ in depicting potential collinearity issues (Hair *et al.* 2021). In the structural model, the path coefficient utilises the value +1 to indicate a strong link. The study employed P- and T-values for the structural path coefficients, when the path coefficients strongly rely on standard error using bootstrapping. The estimated T-value, at the five percent level of significance, is 1.96.

4.7.1 Coefficient of Determination and Predictive Power

Henseler and Schubert (2020) noted that R-square values ranging from 0.75 to 0.50 are highly significant indicators. Additionally, Chicco *et al.* (2021) emphasized the importance of understanding the practical implications of R-square. In this study, Table 4.15 illustrates the model's satisfactory R-square values in predicting brand image, brand perception, event fit, fan attitude, fan involvement, and purchase intention. The results reveal that sponsorship and customer characteristics account for 48.5%, 49.6%, 26.7%, 57.2%, 54.3%, and 75.5% of the variance, respectively (as shown in Table 4.15).

Table 4.15: Coefficient of Determination and Predictive Power

Endogenous Constructs	R-square	Q ² predict
Brand Image	0.485	0.480
Brand Perception	0.496	0.491
Event Fit	0.267	0.260
Fan Attitude	0.572	0.566
Fan Involvement	0.543	0.537
Purchase Intention	0.755	0.297

Q^2 , representing the squared correlation, is commonly used to assess the predictive capacity of the PLS path model, as highlighted by Chin et al. (2020). Moreover, Hair et al. (2021) mentioned that in certain situations, an internal, data-driven structural model can achieve favorable results even prior to the completion of the second quarter. Table 4.15 demonstrates the robustness of the model, as evidenced by Q^2 values of 0.480 for brand image, 0.491 for brand perception, 0.260 for event fit, 0.566 for fan attitude, 0.537 for fan involvement, and 0.297 for purchase intention. These findings provide further support for the model's predictive power.

4.7.2 Goodness of Fit

Table 4.16 below presents the goodness of fit indices for two models: the saturated model and the estimated model. The indices include the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), the Unweighted Least Squares discrepancy function (d_ULS), the Geodesic discrepancy function (d_G), the Chi-square statistic, and the Normed Fit Index (NFI). These indices are used to evaluate how well the models fit the data. In this case, the values for the goodness of fit indices are the same for both the saturated and estimated models, indicating that the estimated model fits the data as well as the saturated model. NFI should be $> .90$ (Byrne, 1994; "byrne1994") or $> .95$ (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004; "schumacker2004"). This suggests that the estimated model is a good fit for the data (Hooper et al., 2009; Shodeinde et al., 2023).

Table 4.16 Goodness of Fit Indices

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.071	0.071
d_ULS	0.864	0.864
d_G	0.635	0.635
Chi-square	2081.256	2081.256
NFI	0.942	0.942

4.8 Section analysis: Constructs Direct Relationship

This section presents the findings of the study, which focus on the direct relationships between the following constructs: sponsorship and purchase intention, sponsorship and fan attitude, fan attitude and purchase intention, sponsorship and fan involvement, fan involvement and purchase intention, sponsorship and event fit, event fit and purchase intention, sponsorship and brand image, brand image and purchase intention, sponsorship and brand perception, brand perception and purchase intention, and customer characteristics and purchase intention of sports products. The results, depicted in Table 4.17 below, provide valuable insights into the influence of sponsorship on consumers' intention to purchase sports products.

Table 4.17: Constructs Direct Relationship:

Hypotheses and Control variable	Original sample	T statistics	P values	Decision
Hypotheses:				
Sports sponsorship -> Purchase Intention	0.455	5.307	0.000	Supported
Sports sponsorship -> Fan Attitude	0.756	29.622	0.000	Supported
Fan Attitude -> Purchase Intention	0.190	3.097	0.002	Supported
Sponsorship -> Fan Involvement	0.737	25.258	0.000	Supported
Fan Involvement -> Purchase Intention	0.537	9.610	0.000	Supported
Sponsorship -> Event Fit	0.516	11.844	0.000	Supported
Event Fit -> Purchase Intention	0.055	0.790	0.429	Not Supported
Sponsorship -> Brand Image	0.696	19.065	0.000	Supported
Brand Image -> Purchase Intention	0.164	2.366	0.018	Supported
Sponsorship -> Brand Perception	0.704	18.418	0.000	Supported
Brand Perception -> Purchase Intention	0.568	7.136	0.000	Supported
Control Variable:				
Customer Characteristics -> Purchase Intention	-0.066	0.738	0.460	Not Supported

The following paragraphs comprise a comprehensive analysis of the constructs that have a direct relationship:

The results displayed in Table 4.17 indicate a significant relationship between sponsorship and the purchase intention of sports products ($B=0.455$, $t=5.307$, $p\text{-value}=0.000 <0.05$). Thus, supporting the first hypothesis that sponsorship significantly drives purchase intention of sports products.

The study examined the association between sponsorship and fan attitude, revealing a positive and significant relationship ($B=0.756$, $t=29.622$, $p\text{-value}=0.000 <0.05$). These findings support the hypothesis that sponsorship significantly influences fan attitude, suggesting that an increase in sponsorship improves fan attitude.

The study assessed fan attitude's impact on purchase intention, showing a significant predictive effect ($B=0.190$, $t=3.097$, $p\text{-value}=0.002 <0.05$). These findings provide evidence to support the hypothesis (H1b) that fan attitude significantly influences purchase intentions of sports products. Thus, an increase in fan attitude is likely to improve purchase intention.

The influence of sponsorship on fan involvement was examined, revealing a significant positive relationship ($B=0.737$, $t=25.258$, $p\text{-value}=0.000 <0.05$). This suggests that an increase in sponsorship positively impacts fan involvement.

The study also investigated the influence of fan involvement on the purchase intention of sports products, finding a significant predictive effect ($B=0.537$, $t=9.610$, $p\text{-value}=0.000 <0.05$). These results indicate that fan involvement significantly influences purchase intention, implying that an increase in fan involvement has the potential to improve purchase intention.

In addition, the study explored the impact of sponsorship on event fit, revealing a significant and positive relationship ($B=0.516$, $t=11.844$, $p\text{-value}=0.000 <0.05$). The findings suggest that an increase in sponsorship enhances event fit.

The influence of event fit on purchase intention was assessed, but the results showed no significant connection ($B=0.055$, $t=0.790$, $p\text{-value}=0.429 >0.05$). These findings do not support the hypothesis that event fit influences purchase intention. The research indicates that an increase in event fit does not improve purchase intention.

The study also measured the influence of sponsorship on brand image, finding a significant and positive association ($B=0.696$, $t=19.065$, $p\text{-value}=0.000 <0.05$). These findings provide evidence to support the hypothesis that the two variables are related, suggesting that an increase in sponsorship improves brand image.

The influence of brand image on purchase intention was evaluated, and the results demonstrated a significant positive relationship ($B=0.164$, $t=2.366$, $p\text{-value}=0.018 < 0.05$). This research provides evidence to support the hypothesis that brand image significantly influences purchase intention, indicating that an increase in brand image improves purchase intention.

The study additionally explored the influence of sponsorship on brand perception, revealing a significant and positive association ($B=0.704$, $t=18.418$, $p\text{-value}=0.000 < 0.05$) as shown in Table 4.17. These findings support the hypothesis that sponsorship significantly influences brand perception, suggesting that an increase in sponsorship improves brand perception.

The influence of brand perception on purchase intention was assessed, and the results showed a significant positive relationship ($B=0.568$, $t=7.136$, $p\text{-value}=0.000 < 0.05$) as shown in Table 4.23. This research provides evidence to support the hypothesis that brand perception significantly influences purchase intention, indicating that an increase in brand perception improves purchase intention.

The study evaluated the influence of customer characteristics on purchase intention. As illustrated in Table 4.17, customer characteristics are not significantly connected with purchase intention ($B=-0.066$; $t=0.738$; $p\text{-value}=0.460 > 0.05$). This study found customer characteristics do not explain any variation in purchase intention. The research suggests an increase in customer characteristics will not improve purchase intention.

4.9 Section analysis: Constructs Indirect Relationship

This section presents the findings of the study, which investigates the mediated indirect relationships between several constructs. The focus is on understanding the mediating effects of specific constructs on the relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention. The examined mediators include fan attitude and purchase intention, fan involvement and purchase intention, event fit and purchase intention, brand image and purchase intention, brand perception and purchase intention, as well as the interaction between customer characteristics and sponsorship in relation to the purchase intention of sports products. The results shed light on the complex interplay between these constructs and their influence on consumers' purchase intention. These results are presented in Table 4.18, followed by a comprehensive analysis.

Table 4.18: Hypotheses for Indirect Relationship

Hypotheses	Original sample	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Decision
Sponsorship -> Fan Attitude -> Purchase Intention	0.144	3.122	0.002	Supported
Sponsorship -> Fan Involvement -> Purchase Intention	0.396	8.963	0.000	Supported
Sponsorship -> Event Fit -> Purchase Intention	0.029	0.783	0.434	Not Supported
Sponsorship -> Brand Image -> Purchase Intention	0.114	2.315	0.021	Supported
Sponsorship -> Brand Perception -> Purchase Intention	0.400	6.956	0.000	Supported

The study aimed to examine the mediating role of fan attitude in the relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention. The results revealed a significant mediation effect ($B=0.144$; $t=3.122$; $p\text{-value}=0.002 < 0.05$) as shown in Table 4.18, indicating that fan attitude positively enhances the impact of sponsorship on purchase intention.

Similarly, the study investigated the mediating role of fan involvement in the relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention. The findings showed a significant mediation effect ($B=0.396$; $t=8.963$; $p\text{-value}=0.000 < 0.05$) as presented in Table 4.18, suggesting that fan involvement positively enhances the effect of sponsorship on purchase intention.

In contrast, the study evaluated the mediating role of event fit in the relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention. The results indicated that event fit does not play a significant

mediating role ($B=0.029$; $t=0.783$; $p\text{-value}=0.434 >0.05$) as shown in Table 4.18, suggesting that event fit does not improve the effect of sponsorship on purchase intention.

Moving on, the study examined the mediating role of brand image in the relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention. The findings revealed a significant mediation effect ($B=0.114$; $t=2.315$; $p\text{-value}=0.000 <0.05$) as presented in Table 4.18, indicating that brand image positively enhances the impact of sponsorship on purchase intention.

Likewise, the study assessed the mediating role of brand perception in the relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention. The results showed a significant mediation effect ($B=0.400$; $t=6.956$; $p\text{-value}=0.000 <0.05$) as presented in Table 4.18, suggesting that brand perception positively improves the effect of sponsorship on purchase intention.

4.10 Chapter summary

This chapter unveils the findings of the structural equation modeling analysis, which examined the influence of customer characteristics, fan involvement, fan attitudes, sponsor-event fit, brand image, and consumer perception on fans' purchase intention. The initial model was formulated to test the proposed hypotheses and was subsequently refined to enhance its fit with the collected data. Through the use of structural equation modeling (SEM), a comprehensive examination of the relationships between these variables was conducted. In the next chapter, a more detailed analysis of the results will be presented.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF KEY RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

The study aimed to assess the influence of sponsorship on consumer behavior within the Ghanaian soccer fanbase. Its primary objective was to understand the impact of sponsorship on attitudes, fan involvement, event fit, brand image, brand perception, and customer characteristics, and how these factors influence the purchase intention of sponsor brands. To achieve this, a case study approach was adopted, focusing on the Ghanaian soccer fanbase.

The following section presents a comprehensive discussion of the findings derived from the analysis, which have been organized according to the research objectives. The main purpose of this research is to evaluate the effect of sponsorship on the purchasing decisions of Ghanaian soccer fans. The specific results corresponding to the research objectives are discussed in the subsequent sub-sections. This analysis not only validates the initial hypothesis but also provides a nuanced understanding of the strength and significance of this relationship, offering valuable insights for both academic research and practical applications in the dynamic landscape of sports marketing. Understanding the significant role of sponsorship in driving purchase intention has practical implications for marketing strategies within the sports industry (Koronios et al 2022).

5.2 Sponsorship and purchase intention

The first objective of the study was to assess the influence of sponsorship on purchase intention. The findings demonstrated a significant and positive relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention. These findings align with and validate the initial hypothesis that posited that Sponsorship has direct influence on purchase intention. The results imply that consumers exposed to sports-related sponsorships are more likely to exhibit an increased intention to purchase sports products. This influence could stem from various factors, including enhanced brand awareness, positive associations with sponsored sports entities, or perceived credibility and quality associated with the sponsorship. This confirms the assertion that sponsorship has a direct influence on the consumer decision-making process (Wakefield et al 2020).

Understanding the significant role of sponsorship in driving purchase intention has practical implications for marketing strategies within the sports industry (Koronios et al 2022).

The results displayed in Table 4.18 indicate a significant relationship between sponsorship and the purchase intention of sports products ($B=0.455$, $t=5.307$, $p\text{-value}=0.000 < 0.05$). Thus, supporting the first hypotheses that sponsorship significantly drives purchase intention of sports products.

5.3 Sponsorship, fan attitude, and purchase intention

The second objective of the study was to evaluate the mediating influence of fan attitude in the relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention. The findings demonstrated a significant and positive connection between fan attitude and purchase intention. These findings provide support for the hypotheses that the two are related. Specifically, this study found that fan attitude explained 19 percent of the variation in purchase intention. Therefore, increasing fan attitude is likely to improve purchase intention. These results are consistent with a study by Putri & Haryanto (2023), which found that consumer attitude towards advertisements significantly influenced brand opinions and purchase intentions. They also align with prior studies by Manzoor (2023), Astuti & Risqiani (2020), and Wirya & Syah (2022), where attitude showed a strong and positive correlation with purchase intent for brands.

The concept of the fanbase remains highly significant in the world of soccer, particularly in emerging countries like Ghana. Soccer is more than just a sport in these countries and has a large fan base supporting local clubs. Fan attitude and involvement greatly impact the purchase intentions of the sponsorship brand's products or services. This aspect is crucial, as effective marketing approaches by soccer clubs create stronger connections with fans, ultimately leading to better purchase intentions for the sponsorship brand. Trivedi & Yadav (2020) demonstrated the effectiveness of sponsorship approaches through indicators such as product sales and stock prices. Additionally, this study identifies certain attitudinal elements as significant factors in measuring sponsorship effectiveness.

Furthermore, the research findings indicate that various attitudinal and behavioural factors, including brand awareness, sponsor image, brand recognition, and purchase intentions, are considered significant outcomes of sponsorship. The study reveals that factors such as football team performance, fan attachment, attitude, and involvement can exert a significant influence on sponsorship outcomes, particularly in terms of purchase intentions. The analysis conducted in this study suggests that fans' perception of the teams they support can influence their purchasing intentions towards the sponsoring brand. If fans perceive a team as successful, it positively impacts their purchase intentions towards the sponsorship brand. Conversely, if the fanbase views the team as unsuccessful, the sponsorship brand may face adverse consequences due to the fans' negative attitude towards the team. Al-Nsour & Al-Otoun (2017) propose that fan attitudes, involvement towards the sponsored clubs, teams, or events, sponsorship efficiency, and brand image are the main influencing components behind sponsorship outcomes, particularly in relation to purchase intentions. While these elements cannot be entirely controlled by sponsors, certain risks are inherent in the sponsorship process. However, efficient approaches can be implemented to mitigate these risks, as suggested by Loureiro et al. (2019). This study confirms the significant influence of fanbase purchase intentions.

5.4 Sponsorship, fan involvement and purchase intention

The third objective of the study was to evaluate the mediating influence of fan involvement in the relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention. The findings indicated a significant and positive connection between fan involvement and purchase intention. These findings provide support for the hypotheses that the two variables are related. Specifically, the study revealed that fan involvement explained 53.7 percent of the variation in purchase intention. Therefore, increasing fan involvement is likely to improve purchase intention.

This finding aligns with the research conducted by Carlson et al. (2018), who emphasised the significant impact of fan participation on consumers' purchasing desire.

Brand engagement, according to Hirschman's (1970) basic paradigm, refers to customer actions that either restrict or expand their association with a particular brand (Hirschman, 1970; cited by Fleck, 2022). The findings also support the notion that actively involved consumers in a product or service are more likely to feel empowered, connected, and committed to that brand (Hollebeek, 2011).

Fan involvement, as indicated by Moura & de Souza-Leão (2020), is connected in various ways to personal connection and relevance with the brand. Some fans feel directly responsible or involved in specific sports events or team activities and therefore believe they should contribute to the sale or purchase of related products. This often occurs when the team has provided social support to the fans in various ways.

Customer involvement is also critical and strongly linked to inherent customer attitudes, interests, and needs (Klaus & Zaichkowsky, 2020). Furthermore, customers' and fans' purchase intentions are directly influenced by the amount of information they process, which in turn depends on their level of involvement (Trivedi, 2020; Cho et al., 2021; Park & Sihombing, 2020). This highlights the importance for businesses to make relevant information prominent. Involvement primarily thrives when the audience is exposed to information that is pertinent to their interests and is communicated through advertisements and sponsorship activities to enhance credibility. Increased involvement generates customer interest, which, in turn, can cultivate positive attitudes toward the company and ultimately drive purchase intention (Rai et al., 2021).

Moreover, in relation to involvement and its impact on brand and purchase intentions, the ELM (Elaboration Likelihood Model) suggests that involvement with causes has the potential to influence how customers/fans engage with purchasing decisions. The findings of this study support previous research on the influence of involvement on purchase intention (Trivedi, 2020; Cho et al., 2021; Park & Sihombing, 2020; Rai et al., 2021; Klaus & Zaichkowsky, 2020).

5.5 Sponsorship, sponsor-event fit and purchase intention.

Objective four of the study aimed to measure the mediating influence of sponsor-event fit in the relationship sponsorship purchase intention. The results indicated that sponsor-event fit is not significantly connected with purchase intention. The study found no variation in purchase intention explained by event fit, and the research suggests that increasing event fit will not improve purchase intention.

These findings contradict those of Papadimitriou et al. (2016), who discovered a strong correlation between the fit of a sponsor with an event and attendees' propensity to make a purchase.

Interestingly, sponsorships that are a good match with the event do not necessarily increase the likelihood of consumers making a purchase of the sponsoring brand (Blake et al., 2019; Akowuah, 2020). This finding contradicts the research of Khuong & Kim Chau (2017), who investigated the impact of event fit on consumers' short- and long-term purchase intent, through the lens of familiarity with the sponsoring company's brand and observed a significant impact of event fit on purchasing intention.

Additionally, as noted in the study results by Papadimitriou et al. (2016), sponsor-event fit indirectly influences sponsor-brand purchase intentions through brand attitude and brand quality. In other words, the influence of congruency on purchase intention is immediate, with sponsor-event fit referring to the extent of applicability of the sponsor's brand associations or its product category value to the sponsee (Spiggle et al., 2012). When the brand has a positive image, along with its associated rank (luxury, economy, or low-level), this becomes important. This explains the motivation of companies like Rolex in sponsoring prestigious sports events such as golf and tennis tournaments, as these events predominantly attract short- and long-term high-end purchasers (Cho, 2016; Hutabarat & Gayatri, 2014; Tomalieh, 2016; Khuong & Kim Chau, 2017).

5.6 Sponsorship, brand image and purchase intention

Objective five of the study was to measure the mediating influence of brand image in the relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention. The findings showed that brand image is significantly and positively connected with purchase intention. The research found that brand image explained 16.4 percent of the variation in purchase intention, suggesting that increasing brand image will improve purchase intention.

These findings support the work of Wang & Tsai (2014), who established that brand image has a significant influence on purchasing intention. The findings also lend credibility to the notion that a company's brand image serves as an indicator that encourages current or future consumers to engage with it (Mazzarol et al., 1998). Moreover, according to Nguyen & Vu (2022), customers' opinions of the company and its actions, including the company's name, traditions, operational ambitions, and product offerings, can significantly impact brand image and improve their intention to make purchases. Tuškej et al. (2013) suggest that sponsorship serves as a primary communication vehicle for many brands, leading them to associate their brand with sports events, particularly in soccer, to attract audiences. As a result, sponsorship has become a significant aspect of various sports events.

In this context, the connection between the brand and the fanbase becomes more prominent and authentic, while the advertising effectiveness of sponsoring brands gains more importance. How the brand presents itself to customers becomes a key factor in measuring the effectiveness of sponsorship practices in generating positive purchase intentions. Wilterson et al. (2020) state that elements such as positive purchase intentions, higher revenue, and improved brand awareness are effectively connected to the effectiveness of sponsorship. Moreover, with the effective presence of one element within the brand's sponsorship approach, better outcomes become more prominent.

5.7 Sponsorship, Brand perception and purchase intention

The sixth objective of the study aimed to determine the mediating role of sponsor brand perception in the relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention. The findings demonstrated a significant and positive connection between sponsor brand perception and purchase intention. These findings provide support for the hypotheses that the two variables are related. The results indicate that brand perception accounted for 56.8 percent of the variation in purchase intention, suggesting that increasing brand perception will improve purchase intention. These results align with the research by Cornwell (2022), who found that positive brand perception increases consumers' propensity to make a purchase.

Consumer cognitive and emotional responses to brands have been studied separately and referred to as the "thinking and feeling" elements of the decision-making process (Cheung et al., 2021). Furthermore, these results corroborate the claims by Cuesta-Valiño et al. (2022) that consumer evaluations of brand quality serve as an indicator of perceived quality. The term "emotional value" describes how a product makes its target audience feel (Joshi et al., 2021). In elicitation sessions, participants often express their overall impressions of brands, such as "this brand makes me feel wonderful." Brand perceptions can range from neutral to highly favorable or negatively charged (Kauffmann et al., 2020).

Moreover, emotional reactions to a brand account for more than twice the variation of cognition, making it a strong predictor of purchase intention (Joshi et al., 2021). Given that commercial communications about companies are pervasive, appealing to consumer emotions can have a significant impact on their inclination to make a purchase (Kauffmann et al., 2020).

Brand perception is more powerful than previously assumed, as it shapes the associations and assertions that are connected to the brand. Park & Sihombing (2020) indicate that brand perception occurs when a brand establishes a connection with the consumer's subconscious, creating a link between the brand and the consumer's self-concept. This is particularly important in the short- and long-term, and the association of brand perception with luxury or medium-cost products becomes critical (Agmeka et al., 2019).

Researchers point out that consumers often try to align their self-concept with brand prestige, exclusivity, and fashion, making symbolic benefits crucial for socially visible brands (Westre, 2016). According to Dash et al. (2021), it is crucial to have a clear understanding of brand perception as an influencer of purchase intentions. Kang & Matsuoka (2022) note that brand perception is not merely what the company owning the brand claims it represents, but rather what customers believe the product or service represents. Therefore, brand perception holds more significance than the brand's public relations in terms of its perceived representation. If a brand is seen to represent health and wellness, it is regarded as such, regardless of any statements made (Hutabarat & Gayatri, 2014).

5.8 Sponsorship, customer characteristics and purchase intention

The study also examined customer characteristics as a control variable to determine its moderating role of the connection between sponsorship and purchase intention. However, the results of the study suggest that customer characteristics do not act as a significant moderator between sponsorship and purchase intention. This finding contradicts previous studies that provide support for the hypothesized connection. In other words, customer characteristics do not moderate the effect of sponsorship on purchase intention. The results imply that customer characteristics do not always serve as a condition under which the effect of sponsorship on purchase intention may vary.

This finding disagrees with Trivedi, (2020), who claimed that customer characteristics moderate the relationship between online consumer reviews and sales. Furthermore, the findings contradict the work of Pyun, Kwon, & Lee (2011), who determined that customers' cultural identity moderates the impact of a brand's global perception on their willingness to buy. However, this finding aligns with Shimp & Sharma (1987), who argue that some customers view the purchase of imported goods as unethical and unpleasant and may even overlook the benefits of imported items in favour of native brands.

Kaynak & Kara (2001) found that customers with these characteristics had fewer positive opinions, attitudes, and intentions toward purchasing imported items. Consumer characteristics are key factors to consider when planning a sponsorship event to drive purchase intentions, as noted by Hutabarat & Gayatri (2014), who state that consumer characteristics have a significant influence

in the short- and long-term, impacting consumer behavior. These factors largely determine whether a customer chooses a specific product or opts for a competitor's offering. Shamir (2017) indicated that consumer characteristics develop from the influence of cultural, social, personal, and psychological attributes of sports team fans or supporters of a sponsored sports event. In this regard, the message and communication must align with the majority, if not all, of these characteristics to positively influence purchase intentions. Sponsoring sports events in Saudi Arabia, for example, should consider the cultural significance of specific activities and ensure they do not go against cultural norms. Stathopoulou et al. (2022) indicated that sponsoring events in the Western world should align with cultural and psychological attributes to enhance purchase intentions.

Cavusgil et al. (2022) noted that word-of-mouth is a customer characteristic that significantly influences purchase intentions when it comes to dealing with brands at different levels. As highlighted by Kim et al. (2015), word-of-mouth has a significant impact on purchasing decisions, often surpassing the influence of promotion and other corporate-generated activities. A study conducted in the UK by Dickson, Naylor, and Phelps (2015) demonstrated the effectiveness of word-of-mouth as a consumer characteristic in fostering positive relationships with a brand and positively affecting purchase intentions. Therefore, focusing on customer characteristics is crucial for sponsorship to drive purchase intentions in both the short and long term, despite limited studies supporting these relationships and assertions (Osei-Frimpong et al., 2019).

5.9 Chapter Summary

In conclusion, the study focused on evaluating the influence of sports sponsorship on consumer behaviour among Ghanaian soccer fans. The results were discussed in relation to the research objectives, which were to assess the effect of fan attitude, fan involvement, sponsor-event fit and brand image, and sponsor brand perception on purchase intention. Additionally, the study examined the moderating role of consumer characteristics on the relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention.

Regarding fan attitude, the findings showed a significant and positive connection with purchase intention. This indicates that fans' attitudes toward sponsors' brands have a significant influence on their purchase intentions. Similar findings have been reported in previous studies, highlighting the importance of fan attitude in driving purchase intent.

Fan involvement was also found to have a significant and positive influence on purchase intention. The level of fan involvement explained a substantial portion of the variation in purchase intention. This suggests that fans who are actively engaged with a soccer team or event are more likely to have higher purchase intentions. This finding aligns with previous research emphasizing the role of customer involvement in shaping attitudes and purchase intentions.

In terms of sponsor-event fit and brand image, the results showed that sponsor-event fit did not have a significant influence on purchase intention, while brand image had a significant and positive connection. This implies that the alignment between the sponsor and the event does not necessarily influence purchase intentions, but a positive brand image plays a crucial role. Fans' perceptions of a brand significantly influence their purchase intentions.

Sponsor brand perception was found to have a significant and positive connection with purchase intention. Positive brand perceptions, including cognitive and emotional responses, were shown to increase consumers' propensity to make a purchase. The study emphasised the importance of brand perception and its influence on purchase intentions.

However, the study did not find significant moderating effects of consumer characteristics on the relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention. This contradicted previous research

suggesting that consumer characteristics, such as cultural identity and word of mouth, can moderate the impact of sponsorship on purchase intentions.

The findings highlight the significance of fan attitude, fan involvement, brand image, and sponsor brand perception in influencing purchase intentions among Ghanaian soccer fans. These factors play crucial roles in shaping consumer behaviour and should be considered in sponsorship strategies aimed at increasing purchase intentions.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Introduction

This is the concluding chapter of the thesis. It is divided into three parts. The first part provides a summary of the key study findings, offering a comprehensive overview of the entire thesis, including the significant findings. This section will synthesize the main outcomes of the research, highlighting the key insights derived from the data analysis. The second part focuses on the recommendations drawn from these key findings, specifically addressing the study's objectives. These recommendations will provide actionable insights for marketers, sponsors, and practitioners looking to leverage sponsorship strategies to engage with the Ghanaian soccer fanbase and drive desired consumer behaviour. Lastly, the third part of this chapter discusses the contribution of this study to theory and practice. It presents relevant suggestions derived from the major findings, highlighting their implications and potential impact on both academic research and practical applications within the field of sports marketing and sponsorship.

6.2 Summary of the key findings

The key findings of this study are summarised as follows:

- The results (Figure 4.1), indicating that approximately 54 % of participants are female and 46 % are male have notable implications for understanding the demographic composition of the soccer fanbase in Ghana. The higher representation of female participants challenges traditional stereotypes associated with sports fanbase, reflecting a shift towards increased inclusivity in the soccer fan community. This finding is particularly significant in the context of gender dynamics in sports, suggesting a growing presence and engagement of female fans in soccer.
- The results (Figure 4.2) show that 7% of participants are married, while 93% are single, provide valuable insights into the marital status of the soccer fanbase in Ghana. The overwhelming majority of single participants suggests that the fanbase comprises predominantly unmarried individuals. This demographic characteristic may influence consumer behaviour, as single individuals may allocate their discretionary income differently compared to married individuals who may have additional financial responsibilities.

- The results of (Figure 4.3) indicate 21% of participants were 18-19 years of age, 71% of participants between 20-29 years, 4% were in the 30-39 year age category, while 3% were 40-49 years, and the remaining one 1% was 50-59 years of age. The results show most participants were within the 20-29 years age bracket. The distribution of participants across different age categories, as depicted in Figure 4.3, provides valuable insights into the age demographics of the soccer fanbase in Ghana. Notably, a significant majority, 71%, falls within the 20-29 years age bracket. This concentration suggests that the soccer fanbase is predominantly composed of young adults, reflecting a demographic trend commonly associated with sports fanbase.
- The high representation of individuals aged 20-29 years aligns with the global trend where young adults often exhibit heightened enthusiasm and engagement with sports, including football. This age group is typically characterised by a strong affinity for fan culture, active participation in social media discussions, and a greater likelihood of attending live events.
- The results (Figure 4.4) indicate 3% of participants had attained a senior high school certificate, 96% had a tertiary certificate and 1% achieved vocational/technical certificates. The findings depicted in Figure 4.4 reveal a notable educational trend within the soccer fanbase in Ghana. A substantial majority, comprising 96% of the participants, had attained a tertiary education, indicating a high level of academic qualification among the fanbase. This educational profile aligns with broader global trends where sports fanbase often attracts individuals with higher educational attainment. The prevalence of tertiary education among the soccer fanbase suggests a certain level of intellectual engagement and socio-economic status within this demographic. Fans with higher education levels may bring a nuanced perspective to their engagement with football, contributing to discussions, analyses, and critiques that go beyond mere spectatorship.
- The breakdown of participants' occupations in Figure (4.5) reveals a notable 76.4% unemployment rate within the sampled population, emphasizing the prevailing socioeconomic challenges. Among employed participants, a balanced distribution is observed, with 13.3% being self-employed, 5.3% working in the private sector, and 5.0% in the public sector. This

data highlights the diversity in occupational statuses and sheds light on the entrepreneurial activities and employment landscape within the study's demographic.

The prevalence of unemployment within the fanbase highlights an important socioeconomic factor that sponsors and marketers should consider. Understanding the economic circumstances of the target audience is paramount for devising sponsorship strategies that align with their financial realities.

- The Study assessed the influence of sponsorship on purchase intention. The presented results signify a substantial correlation between sponsorship and the purchase intention of sports products, as evidenced by the statistical parameters ($B=0.455$, $t=5.307$, $p\text{-value}=0.000 < 0.05$). This analysis aims to delve deeper into the implications of these findings.
- The findings of the study reveal a significant positive correlation between sponsorship and the purchase intention of sports products, as indicated by the statistical parameters ($B=0.455$, $t=5.307$, $p\text{-value}=0.000 < 0.05$). This implies that sponsorship activities in the context of sports exert a noteworthy influence on consumers' intention to purchase related products. The substantial positive coefficient ($B=0.455$) suggests that as the level of sponsorship increases, there is a corresponding increase in the purchase intention of sports products among the studied participants. The statistically significant t-value ($t=5.307$) further supports the robustness of this relationship. These results carry important implications for sports marketers and sponsors, emphasizing the effectiveness of sponsorship in driving consumer purchase intentions.
- Furthermore, the study evaluated the mediating influence of fan attitude in the relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention, uncovering a substantial positive relationship ($B=0.737$, $t=25.258$, $p\text{-value}=0.000 < 0.05$). This signifies that fan attitude plays a crucial mediating role, influencing the impact of sponsorship on consumers' intention to make a purchase.

- The high positive coefficient ($B=0.737$) indicates a strong positive mediation effect, implying that as sponsorship increases, the positive influence on purchase intention is magnified through the mediating mechanism of fan attitude. The statistically significant t-value ($t=25.258$) underscores the robustness and reliability of this mediating relationship. These findings suggest that fostering a positive fan attitude becomes an essential component for sponsors aiming to maximise the impact of their sponsorship activities on consumers' purchase intentions. This insight provides actionable guidance for sponsors looking to optimise their sponsorship investments by strategically leveraging the mediating role of fan attitude in driving purchase intentions.

- The study explored the mediating role of fan involvement in the connection between sponsorship and purchase intention, discovering a noteworthy predictive effect ($B=0.537$, $t=9.610$, $p\text{-value}=0.000 < 0.05$). This signifies that fan involvement serves as a substantial mediator, exerting an impact on the relationship between sponsorship and consumers' intention to make a purchase. The positive coefficient ($B=0.537$) indicates that an increase in sponsorship is associated with a positive influence on purchase intention, and this effect is intensified through the mediating factor of fan involvement. The statistically significant t-value ($t=9.610$) attests to the reliability and strength of this mediating relationship. These findings suggest that sponsors seeking to maximise the impact of their sponsorship initiatives on purchase intentions should strategically enhance fan involvement.

- The study investigated the mediating role of sponsor-event fit in the relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention, but the results demonstrated a lack of significant connection ($B=0.055$, $t=0.790$, $p\text{-value}=0.429 > 0.05$). This outcome suggests that, in this particular context, the perceived alignment or congruence between the sponsor and the sponsored event did not exert a statistically significant influence on consumers' purchase intentions. The low coefficient ($B=0.055$) and non-significant t-value ($t=0.790$) imply that changes in sponsor-event fit were not reliably associated with changes in purchase intention. The p-value exceeding the conventional significance level ($p\text{-value}=0.429$) further supports the notion that the observed relationship between sponsor-event fit and purchase intention may

be attributable to chance. These findings highlight the precision nature of sponsor-event fit and its varying impact across different contexts or industries.

- The findings of the study unveil a noteworthy and affirmative association between brand image and the relationship linking sponsorship and purchase intention. The statistical parameters ($B=0.164$, $t=2.366$, $p\text{-value}=0.018 < 0.05$) indicate the significance of this connection. This suggests that the perceived image of the sponsoring brand plays a pivotal role in influencing the purchase intentions of consumers. A positive brand image, as shaped by the sponsorship activities, contributes significantly to fostering favourable purchase intentions among the target audience. This underscores the importance of strategic sponsorship initiatives in cultivating a positive brand image, which, in turn, can act as a driving force in motivating consumers toward purchasing the sponsored products.
- The investigation into the mediating influence of sponsor brand perception in the linkage between sponsorship and purchase intention has yielded compelling results, indicating a substantial and positive association. The statistical parameters ($B=0.704$, $t=18.418$, $p\text{-value}=0.000 < 0.05$) affirm the significance of this relationship. This signifies that the way consumers perceive the sponsoring brand plays a pivotal role in shaping their purchase intentions. A favorable perception of the sponsor's brand, cultivated through effective sponsorship strategies, is linked to heightened purchase intentions among consumers. The positive relationship suggests that consumers are not only influenced by the direct impact of sponsorship but also by the perceptions they hold regarding the sponsoring brand.
- The examination of customer characteristics (demographics and situational factors) as control variables in the relationship between sponsorship and consumer purchase intention has culminated in noteworthy findings. The results indicate that customer characteristics are not significantly linked to purchase intention ($B=-0.066$; $t=0.738$; $p\text{-value}=0.460 > 0.05$). This implies that the demographic and situational factors considered in the study, such as age, gender, marital status, occupation, and education, do not exert a substantial direct impact on the purchase intentions of consumers in the context of sports sponsorship. The non-significant relationship suggests that, when evaluating the effect of sponsorship on purchase intention,

the influence of these customer characteristics is not statistically significant. It underscores that the sponsorship strategies and their impact on consumer behaviour, as gauged by purchase intention, are relatively independent of demographic and situational differences among the consumers in the study. While these customer characteristics may still play a role in shaping overall consumer behaviour, their direct impact on purchase intention, within the framework of sports sponsorship, appears to be limited.

6.3 Conclusions on research objectives

In the following sections, conclusions are presented to each of the research objectives. As indicated in the next sub-section, conclusions are based on a scientific, statistical analysis of the empirical findings. The following are conclusions drawn from the study objectives:

6.3.1 Objective 1: To assess the influence of sports sponsorship on purchase intention.

Objective 1 has been pursued with the aim of assessing the relationship between sports sponsorship and purchase intention. Drawing from the discourse presented in chapter 5, a compelling conclusion emerges that there exists a significant relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention. Thus, the acceptance of Hypotheses 1: affirming the relationship between sports sponsorship and purchase intention which underscores the achievement of Objective 1. The confirmation of a significant relationship between sports sponsorship and purchase intention, as supported by the acceptance of Hypothesis 1, substantiates the research's foundational objective. This outcome not only validates theoretical frameworks but also provides actionable insights for marketers and contributes to the scholarly discourse on sports sponsorship's impact on consumer behaviour.

6.3.2 Objective 2: To evaluate the mediating influence of fan attitude in the relationship between sports sponsorship and purchase intention.

Objective 2 has been pursued with the aim of evaluating the mediating influence of fan attitude in the relationship between sports sponsorship and purchase intention. Drawing from the discourse presented in the preceding chapter 5, a compelling conclusion emerges that there exists a significant and positive mediating effect of fan attitude in the relationship between sports sponsorship and purchase intention. Thus, the acceptance of Hypotheses 2: affirming the positive impact of fan attitude on the sports sponsorship- purchase intention relationship which underscores the achievement of Objective 2. The acknowledged positive mediating effect of fan attitude on the sports sponsorship-purchase intention relationship, as supported by the acceptance of Hypothesis 2, signifies the accomplishment of Objective 2. This finding illuminates the intricate dynamics between fan attitude and purchase intention, enhancing the understanding of the sports sponsorship-consumer behaviour nexus in the sports context.

6.3.3 Objective 3: To evaluate the mediating influence of fan involvement in the relationship between sports sponsorship and purchase intention.

Objective 3 was pursued meticulously by evaluating the mediating influence of fan involvement in the relationship between sports sponsorship and purchase intention. The findings unequivocally indicate a substantial and favorable correlation between fan involvement and purchase intention. The initial hypotheses, proposing a positive influence of fan involvement on purchase intention, has been conclusively validated. Consequently, Hypotheses Three has been affirmed, thereby underscoring the successful realization of objective 3.

6.3.4 Objective 4: To measure the mediating influence of sponsor-event fit in the relationship sports sponsorship purchase intention:

The objective 4 was pursued carefully to measure the mediating influence of sponsor-event fit in the relationship sponsorship purchase intention. The study results showed that sponsor-event fit is not significantly connected with purchase intention. The study's findings indicated that there is no relationship between purchase intention and sponsor-event fit. The original hypothesis, which suggested a favourable relationship between sponsor event-fit on purchase intention, has been categorically refuted. As a result, Hypotheses 4 has been rejected. Interestingly, the research findings did not align with the initially proposed hypotheses. Contrary to the initial hypotheses, the study's findings reject the notion of a significant relationship between sponsor-event fit and purchase intention. Hypothesis 4 is unequivocally rejected, challenging the anticipated positive connection between sponsor-event fit and consumer purchase intention in the context of sports sponsorship.

6.3.5 Objective 5: To measure the mediating influence of brand image in the relationship between sports sponsorship and purchase intention.

Objective 5 has been pursued to measure the mediating influence of brand image in the relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention. A strong conclusion is drawn from the discussion offered in the previous chapter 5: The study showed a significant and positive connection between sponsor brand image and purchase intention. As a result, the realisation of Hypotheses 5, which confirms the positive impact of brand image on purchase intention underscores the accomplishment of Objective 5. The study unequivocally supports Hypothesis 5, confirming a substantial and positive relationship between sponsor brand image and purchase intention. This outcome strongly reinforces the accomplishment of Objective 5, highlighting the pivotal role of brand image as a mediating factor in the sponsorship-purchase intention relationship.

6.3.6 Objective 6: To determine the mediating role of sponsor brand perception in the relationship between sports sponsorship and purchase intention.

To determine the mediating role of sponsor brand perception in the relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention, objective 6 has been determined. A firm conclusion is drawn from the discussion offered in chapter 5: The study found a significant and positive connection between sponsor brand perception and purchase intention. Consequently, Hypotheses 6 has been affirmed, thereby underscoring the successful realisation of objective 6. The empirical investigation, conducted to ascertain the mediating role of sponsor brand perception in the sponsorship-purchase intention relationship, yielded conclusive results. The study robustly establishes a significant and positive association between sponsor brand perception and purchase intention. This empirical support not only validates Hypothesis 6 but also substantiates the fulfillment of Objective 6, contributing valuable insights to the existing body of research on sports sponsorship and consumer behaviour.

In summary, this study successfully achieved five out of the six objectives related to sports sponsorship. Purchase intention, fan attitude, fan involvement, sponsor brand image, and sponsor brand perception were all identified as significantly and positively correlated with each other. These findings underscore the substantial impact of sports sponsorship on influencing consumers' purchase intentions. However, one notable exception emerged, as the sponsor-event fit was not found to have a significant relationship with purchase intention. Despite this, the overall positive connections between other variables emphasise the importance of carefully considering various aspects of sports sponsorship, such as fan attitudes and sponsor brand perceptions, to effectively drive purchase intentions. These insights contribute valuable information to marketers and organisations involved in sports sponsorship, offering fair perspectives on the factors that most strongly influence fans behaviour in this context.

6.4. Recommendations from Key findings

6.4.1 The results, as illustrated in Figure 4.1, depict a gender distribution among participants, revealing that 216 of the respondents are female, and the remaining 182 are male. This indicates that most of the study participants, accounting for 54%, identify as female whilst the male population accounts for 46%. The dominance of females in the soccer fanbase in Ghana, as revealed by the study results, holds significant implications for sponsors of the Ghana Premier League (GPL). Recognising the demographic composition allows sponsors to tailor their marketing strategies more precisely, catering to the preferences and behaviours of the majority audience. In this context, sponsors can develop promotional campaigns, activations, and sponsorship materials that resonate specifically with female soccer fans, maximising the impact and relevance of their efforts. Understanding this demographic makeup aids sponsors in creating a more inclusive and targeted sponsorship approach, fostering a deeper connection with the diverse fanbase. Additionally, sponsors may explore partnerships and initiatives that align with the interests and preferences of female fans, contributing to a more comprehensive and engaging sponsorship strategy within the Ghanaian soccer landscape.

6.4.2 The results (Figure 4.2) provide an overview of the marital status distribution among the study participants. The data reveals that the majority of respondents 372, constituting 93.5%, identified as single, while a smaller proportion 26, accounting for 6.5% reported being married. This distribution underscores a significant prevalence of single individuals within the sampled population. Sponsors can capitalize on this demographic insight by tailoring campaigns that resonate with the lifestyle and preferences of single individuals. Initiatives such as relationship-themed promotions, social engagement events, and online platforms fostering connections among singles can enhance sponsorship impact. Additionally, sponsors should consider inclusivity in branding to appeal to both single and married fans. By aligning sponsorship strategies with the predominant demographic, sponsors can forge stronger connections, boost fan engagement, and maximize the effectiveness of their partnerships within the Ghana Premier League.

6.4.3 The comprehensive breakdown of the age distribution among the study participants, offers insights into the demographic composition of the sampled population. The data indicates a predominant presence of younger individuals, with 92.8% falling within the age range of 20 to 29 years. Specifically, 71.4% of participants are aged between 20 and 29 years, while 21.4% fall within the 18-19 years bracket. This skew towards the younger age groups suggests a significant youth representation in the study. On the other hand, the older age categories (30-39 years, 40-49 years, and 50-59 years) collectively account for a smaller proportion, with 7.4% of participants falling into these ranges. The concentration of Ghana Premier League fans within the 20-29 age bracket, comprising 71.4% of participants, holds crucial marketing implications for potential sponsors. Sponsors can tailor their promotional strategies to align with the preferences and interests of this predominant age group. Leveraging digital platforms, social media, and tech-savvy initiatives could enhance sponsor visibility and engagement. Campaigns that resonate with the youthful and dynamic characteristics of the 20-29 age demographic, such as innovative fan experiences, interactive content, and e-sports collaborations, would likely yield higher effectiveness. Sponsors should prioritise trends and preferences that appeal to this age group, ensuring a strategic alignment between marketing efforts and the demographic composition of the Ghana Premier League fanbase.

6.4.4 The data reveals a significant dominance of individuals with tertiary education 384, constituting 96.5% of the participants. This suggests a highly educated study sample, with the majority having pursued education beyond the secondary level. Specifically, only a small proportion 11, 2.8%, reported having completed Senior High School, emphasising the prevalence of higher educational attainment among the respondents. Only 3 representing 0.8% were reported to have finished vocational/technical level. The predominance of participants with tertiary education (96 %) among Ghana Premier League fans presents significant marketing implications for potential sponsors. Sponsors can design campaigns and communications that appeal to the educational background and aspirations of this well-educated demographic. Initiatives focusing on intellectual engagement, innovation, and leveraging academic themes could resonate effectively. Collaborations with educational institutions, intellectual property, or scholarship programs might align with the interests and values of this audience, enhancing the sponsor's image. Furthermore, sponsors could explore partnerships with academic institutions to foster a connection with this educated fanbase, contributing to a positive brand perception within the Ghana Premier League community.

6.4.5 The high percentage of unemployed participants (76.4%) among Ghana Premier League fans implies that potential sponsors should tailor their marketing strategies to address the economic realities of this demographic. The data indicates a considerable prevalence of unemployment among the participants 304, with 76.4% identifying as unemployed. This finding underscores the socioeconomic landscape and challenges faced by a significant portion of the study's participants. In terms of employed participants, there is a relatively balanced distribution across different sectors. Self-employed individuals, 53, constitute 13.3% of the sample, reflecting entrepreneurial activities within the study population. Private sector workers and public sector workers constitute 21 and 20 each representing 5.3% and 5.0%, respectively. Sponsors could explore initiatives that provide affordability, such as discounted ticket prices, merchandise, or exclusive fan experiences. Collaborations with job training programmes, career development, or entrepreneurial schemes might resonate positively, addressing the socioeconomic context of the majority of fans. Additionally, sponsors could engage in community development projects, focusing on job creation or skills training, reinforcing their commitment to the well-being of the fanbase and contributing to positive brand associations within the Ghana Premier League community.

6.4.5.1 The study's findings pertaining to the first research objective and hypotheses highlight a significant correlation between sports sponsorship and purchase intention of sponsors' products and offer valuable insights for sponsors and club owners in Ghana. Based on these results, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the effectiveness of sponsorship strategies:

- Sponsors and club owners should focus on aligning the sponsorship activities more strategically with the target fans' preferences and values. Understanding the specific aspects of products that resonate with fans can enhance the perceived value and positively impact purchase intention. To capitalise on the observed correlation, sponsors should invest in comprehensive activation strategies. This involves leveraging sponsorship beyond mere visibility, incorporating engaging and interactive elements that forge a stronger emotional connection between the brand and consumers. Club owners can facilitate these strategies by actively collaborating with sponsors to create meaningful fan experiences.
- Sponsors should seek deeper integration of their brand within the football context, weaving it seamlessly into the fan experience. This integration not only reinforces brand visibility but also enhances the overall appeal of sports products, thereby positively influencing purchase intention.
- Both sponsors and club owners should consider forging long-term partnerships. Consistency in sponsorship fosters familiarity and trust, potentially amplifying the influence on purchase intention over time. Establishing enduring relationships can contribute to sustained consumer loyalty and support.
- Sponsors should actively participate in inter-community soccer tournaments which are normally organised by opinion leaders. This not only enhances the sponsor's visibility but also fosters a sense of community support, positively influencing consumer attitudes and purchase intentions.

- Sponsors and club owners should be agile in adapting their strategies to align with evolving consumer behaviours, ensuring that the sponsorship remains relevant and impactful over time. Both sponsors and club owners must utilize data analytics to gain insights into consumer behaviour and preferences. Sponsors and club owners can leverage data-driven decision-making to tailor their strategies, ensuring a more targeted and effective approach to influencing purchase intention.
- Club owners, with support from sponsors, should invest in grassroots development programmes. By nurturing talent at the grassroots level, sponsors contribute to the long-term growth of the sport and create a positive association with their brand, thereby influencing purchase intention.
- To conclude, the study's findings underscore the importance of a strategic and collaborative approach between sponsors and club owners. Implementing these recommendations can not only strengthen the existing correlation between sponsorship and purchase intention but also foster a mutually beneficial and enduring partnership in the Ghanaian sports landscape.

6.4.5.2 The findings pertaining to the second research objective and hypotheses underscore a robust and positive correlation between fan attitude and purchase intention. With this definitive link established, the researcher presents a series of strategic recommendations:

- Sponsors should proactively devise strategies to capitalize on this insight, thereby bolstering sales and revenue.
- Central to this effort is the imperative for sponsors to cultivate a compelling brand identity that resonates deeply with their target demographic. Constructing a brand that fans can wholeheartedly identify with has the potential to foster a profound emotional bond, ultimately translating into heightened purchase intention.
- Active engagement with fans across diverse communication platforms, including social media and email marketing, is crucial. By nurturing a sense of community and consistently delivering value, businesses can further fortify the emotional connection and subsequently enhance purchase intention.

- Additionally, businesses could introduce exclusive promotions and discounts tailored for their fan base, effectively incentivizing purchase decisions. This may encompass tailored offers for social media followers, email subscribers, or precision-targeted advertising based on prior purchase intention.
- Furthermore, forming strategic partnerships with influencers boasting a substantial and aligned following can serve as a dynamic method to attract fresh fans and amplify purchase intention. Capitalising on an influencer's audience and credibility empowers businesses to cultivate trust and authenticity among potential customers.
- Ultimately, businesses should seize upon this research insight as an opportunity to devise comprehensive strategies harnessing the potential of fan attitude. By doing so, they can magnify purchase intention and propel growth with an unwavering focus.

6.4.5.3 The findings pertaining to the third research objective and hypotheses of this study demonstrate a significant and positive correlation between fan involvement and purchase intention. Based on these insightful outcomes, the researcher proposes a range of actionable recommendations:

- Organisations should prioritize the enhancement of fan involvement by facilitating opportunities for meaningful interactions with the brand, such as through engaging contests, dynamic social media campaigns, and captivating promotional events. By fostering direct engagement with fans, businesses can effectively fortify the emotional connection with the brand, thereby contributing to a notable increase in purchase intention.
- Management can further elevate their marketing strategies by adeptly tailoring them to resonate with fans, making them feel genuinely valued. This might entail precisely targeted advertising, utilising insights from fan attendance, behaviour, and historical purchases. Additionally, crafting personalized email marketing campaigns that address fans by name and offer well-aligned product recommendations can create a more compelling purchasing proposition.
- In a proactive effort to augment purchase intention, management should actively encourage fans to create and share user-generated content, encompassing reviews, testimonials, and vibrant social media posts. This practice holds the potential to establish and nurture trust

and credibility among potential customers, consequently influencing a higher purchase intention.

- Furthermore, the establishment of a distinct brand community that resonates with fans and fosters a sense of belonging should be a key focus for management. By fostering a genuine community, businesses can effectively nurture a profound emotional connection with their fans, ultimately translating into an elevated purchase intention.
- Ultimately, management should seize this research finding as an invaluable opportunity to devise comprehensive strategies that leverage the intrinsic power of fan involvement to foster an amplified purchase intention and catalyze sustainable growth. By nurturing fan involvement, implementing personalized marketing initiatives, encouraging user-generated content, and cultivating a cohesive brand community, businesses can cultivate a devoted fanbase that is primed to enthusiastically embrace their products and services.

6.4.5.4 The fourth objective of this study aimed to measure the mediating influence of sponsor-event fit in the relationship sponsorship purchase intention. Accordingly, the fourth hypotheses formulated for this study is as follows: H4: Sponsorship-event fit is significantly related to purchase intention. However, the findings indicate that there is no statistically significant connection between sponsor-event fit and purchase intention. Considering these outcomes, the researcher puts forth the following recommendations:

- Organisations should conduct a comprehensive reassessment of their sponsorship strategy to ensure alignment not only with the brand's core values but also with the preferences of the fanbase. A lack of congruence between the sponsorship and either the brand or the fanbase could diminish its effectiveness in boosting purchase intention.
- Secondly, organisations should consider redirecting their efforts towards alternative marketing channels where the impact of sponsor-event fit on purchase intention is less pronounced. Examples of such channels include social media engagement, targeted email campaigns, or collaborations with influential figures.
- Thirdly, it would be prudent for management to undertake a thorough analysis of competitors in the field to glean insights into how they effectively engage with their fan base to drive purchase intention. These insights can potentially uncover alternative marketing strategies that yield stronger results.

- Moreover, management should consider the contextual factors surrounding the sponsorship to ascertain whether other variables might be exerting influence on fanbase purchase intention. For instance, in instances where the sponsorship coincides with a major event, the heightened excitement and anticipation surrounding the event itself could overshadow the direct impact of sponsor-event fit on purchase intention.
- Considering the research's findings, which suggest an absence of significant correlation between sponsor-event fit and purchase intention, management should contemplate a comprehensive review of the sponsorship strategy. Furthermore, an exploration of alternative marketing avenues that exhibit a higher potential for driving purchase intention should be actively pursued.

6.4.5.5 The fifth objective of the study was to measure the mediating influence of brand image in the relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention. Therefore, the fifth hypotheses was constructed as follows: H5: Brand image has a significant increase in purchase intention. The findings demonstrated sponsor brand image is significantly and positively connected with purchase intention. Based on the findings of objective four, the researcher recommends the following:

- First, management should focus on enhancing the sponsor's brand image by promoting positive brand attributes and values. This can be achieved through targeted advertising, influencer partnerships, and other marketing channels that reach the target audience.
- Second, management should leverage sponsorship to increase brand awareness among the fanbase. This is possible through prominently displaying the brand logo and messaging at the sponsored event, creating social media content around the sponsorship, and other promotional activities that highlight the sponsorship.
- Third, management should measure the impact of the sponsorship on brand image and purchase intention by using surveys, social media analytics, and other data sources that provide insights into sponsorship effectiveness.
- Fourth, management should ensure the sponsorship is aligned with the brand values and mission. By aligning the sponsorship with the brand values, businesses can enhance the emotional connection between the brand and the fans, which can lead to increased purchase intention.

6.4.5.6 The study's 6th objective delved into determining the mediating role of sponsor brand perception in the relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention. Consequently, the formulated hypotheses for this objective reads as follows: H6: Brand Perception significantly increases purchase intention.

The findings unequivocally demonstrated a substantial and affirmative correlation between sponsor brand perception and purchase intention. Considering these results, the researcher proposes a set of prudent recommendations for brand sponsors to contemplate, aiming to bolster brand perception and consequently amplify purchase intention:

- Ensuring a coherent, consistent, and harmonized brand message across all marketing communication tools stands pivotal. Such uniformity not only forges a robust brand identity but also nurtures trust within the fan base.
- Sponsors should ardently focus on comprehending the fan base's needs and preferences, tailoring products and services to impeccably align with a fan-centric approach.
- Nurturing transparency in business operations and upholding honesty regarding product capabilities and limitations remains paramount. This entails refraining from deceptive advertising or extravagant claims.
- Forging partnerships with influencers or brand ambassadors who seamlessly resonate with the brand's values and target audience can exponentially extend brand outreach and enhance brand credibility.
- Displaying an unwavering commitment to social responsibility and sustainability resonates profoundly with soccer fans, who increasingly gravitate towards brands contributing positively to society and the environment.
- To establish the brand as an eminent industry authority and cultivate a sanguine brand perception, curating insightful and captivating content that educates, entertains, or resolves fan base predicaments becomes imperative.
- Rendering exceptional customer support and service tailored to soccer fans can leave an indelible mark, effectively transforming dissatisfied consumers into fervent advocates.

Consistently adhering to these recommendations enables sponsors to elevate brand perception, foster a sanguine brand image within the fan base, and ultimately propel purchase intention to new heights.

6.4.5.7 Furthermore, the study investigated the potential moderating role of customer characteristics in the relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention. However, the study's findings indicate that customer characteristics do not significantly moderate the connection between sponsorship and purchase intention. This finding diverges from prior research that had previously supported the anticipated relationship. Considering these findings, the researcher offers the following practical recommendations:

- Firstly, sponsors should consider expanding their sponsorship outreach to encompass a broader fan base, moving beyond the confines of specific customer characteristics. By extending the reach of the sponsorship, sponsors have the potential to heighten purchase intention across a more diverse fanbase.
- Furthermore, sponsors should prioritize the enhancement of sponsorship visibility to maximize its impact on purchase intention. This might involve prominent placement of the brand logo and messaging during sponsored events, strategic creation of sponsorship-centric social media content, and other promotional initiatives designed to spotlight the sponsorship.
- To assess the effectiveness of sponsorship, sponsors are advised to measure its impact on purchase intention. This can be achieved through comprehensive surveys, analysis of social media metrics, and leveraging other data sources to gain valuable insights into the tangible effects of sponsorship.
- Moreover, sponsors are encouraged to ensure strong alignment between the sponsorship and the brand's core values and mission. This alignment has the potential to foster a heightened emotional connection between the brand and soccer fans, potentially translating into increased purchase intention.
- Lastly, sponsors should leverage these research findings as an opportunity to craft strategies that enhance sponsorship visibility, quantify its impact, and align it harmoniously with the brand's values, all of which can collectively boost purchase intention. By focusing on a broader fan base and accentuating enhanced sponsorship visibility, sponsors can amplify the sponsorship's influence on purchase intention, even when customer characteristics play a limited moderating role.

6.5 Contribution of the Study

The outcome of this research sufficiently addresses all the six objectives set out at the onset of the research, by examining the influence of sponsorship on consumer behaviour amongst the Ghanaian Soccer fan base.

This research was conducted to understand how soccer fan attitudes, fan involvement, event fit, and brand image, as well as brand perception, and customer characteristics influence the purchase intention of sponsor brands, considering the case study of the Ghanaian Soccer fanbase. An extensive literature review was conducted to cover conceptual, theoretical, and empirical literature. Based on the review, a conceptual framework was developed. The framework was validated using survey data collected from 389 respondents from Osu in Greater Accra, which is the traditional home of Accra Hearts of Oak Sporting Club, and Manhyia in the Kumasi Metropolis, which is the traditional home of Kumasi Asante Kotoko. Data were collected using a questionnaire, with items used in the questionnaire sourced from previous studies.

Data gathered were entered in Excel and transferred into SPSS version 26.0 and Smart PLS for further analysis. The analyses employed both descriptive (frequencies, percentages, mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics (EFA, CFA and hypotheses testing). The findings demonstrated fan attitude is significantly and positively connected with purchase intention, while fan involvement was demonstrated to be significantly and positively connected with purchase intention. The results further indicated sponsor-event fit is not significantly connected with purchase intention, with sponsor brand perception shown to be significantly and positively connected with purchase intention. However, the findings show customer characteristics do not moderate the effect of the sponsorship on purchase intention. The results suggest customer characteristics do not always act as a condition under which the effect of sponsorship on purchase intention may be contingent upon.

Just as the study implication is important for discussion, it is also pertinent to deliberate on this research's practical and theoretical contributions.

6.5.1 Contribution to theory

The outcome of this study significantly contributes to the sports marketing literature, specifically in the domain of sponsorship and consumer behaviour. While previous studies have paid little attention to purchasing behaviour in emerging economies, this study fills the gap by examining the causal effect of sponsorship on soccer fans' behavioural responses in Ghana. By adopting a sponsorship-centric approach to the Consumer Decision Process (CDP), this study offers unique insights into consumer attitudes towards sponsors, which diverges from previous findings in sponsorship literature.

The findings of the study presented contribute significantly to both existing theories and the broader understanding of sports sponsorship and consumer behaviour. The following are the theoretical contributions of the study:

The observation that a significant proportion of the soccer fanbase in Ghana comprises females challenges conventional stereotypes about sports fanbase. This insight adds depth to the broader discussion on gender dynamics in sports and emphasises the evolving nature of fan demographics, promoting inclusivity in the sports domain.

The predominant presence of young adults (20-29 years) in the soccer fanbase reinforces existing theories that link youthfulness with heightened enthusiasm and engagement in sports. This finding reaffirms the global trend and provides empirical evidence specific to the Ghanaian context, highlighting the age-related dynamics of sports fanbase.

The high representation of individuals with tertiary education among the fanbase supports existing theories suggesting that sports fanbase often attracts individuals with higher educational attainment. This finding deepens the understanding of the correlation between education, intellectual engagement, and sports fanbase, throwing light on the potential for nuanced perspectives and active participation among educated fans.

The robust positive correlation between sponsorship and purchase intention, along with the mediating roles of fan attitude and involvement, contributes to the theoretical understanding of sponsorship effectiveness. These findings offer empirical evidence that sponsorship activities significantly influence consumers' purchasing decisions, emphasising the mediating mechanisms through which sponsorship impacts consumer behaviour.

The findings of the sponsor-event fit suggest that, in this particular context, the perceived relationship between the sponsor and the sponsored event did not exert a statistically significant influence on consumers' purchase intentions. The low coefficient further supports the notion that the observed relationship between sponsor-event fit and purchase intention may be attributable to situational sources of self-relevance. These findings highlight the precision nature of sponsor-event fit and its varying impact across different contexts or industries.

The study's insights into the influential role of brand image and consumer perception of the sponsoring brand enrich existing theories on brand management and sponsorship effectiveness. These findings emphasise the importance of strategic sponsorship initiatives in cultivating a positive brand image and shaping consumer perceptions to drive purchase intentions effectively.

The results regarding the non-significant relationship between customer characteristics (demographics and situational factors) and purchase intention challenge existing assumptions about the direct influence of demographic variables on consumer behaviour in the context of sports sponsorship. This finding suggests that sponsorship strategies may exert a more substantial influence on purchase intention than individual demographic or situational factors, highlighting the need to reconsider traditional segmentation approaches in sports marketing.

To conclude, the study's findings contribute to theory by providing empirical insights into the evolving demographics of sports fanbase, the effectiveness of sponsorship strategies, and the mediating mechanisms influencing consumer purchase intentions. These insights deepen the theoretical understanding of sports marketing, sponsorship dynamics, and consumer behaviour, offering valuable implications for practitioners, researchers, and stakeholders in the sports industry.

6.5.2 Development of a Framework for Sports Sponsorship -Purchase Intention

According to Chen & Antonelli (2020), a framework serves as a conceptual structure or model, offering a systematic approach to organizing, analyzing, and comprehending complex information, data, or ideas. It provides a guiding template that outlines the essential components, relationships, and principles within a specific system, process, or issue (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). Frameworks take on conceptual or practical forms, designed to simplify intricate concepts or tasks, making them more manageable and comprehensible (Hendriarto et al., 2021). By providing a shared language and structure, frameworks foster effective communication and collaboration, facilitating goal attainment for both individuals and organisations (Caena & Redecker, 2019). Drawing from the study's findings, the researcher proposes a framework as shown in Figure 6.1 below that outlines the relationship between sports sponsorship and purchase intention.

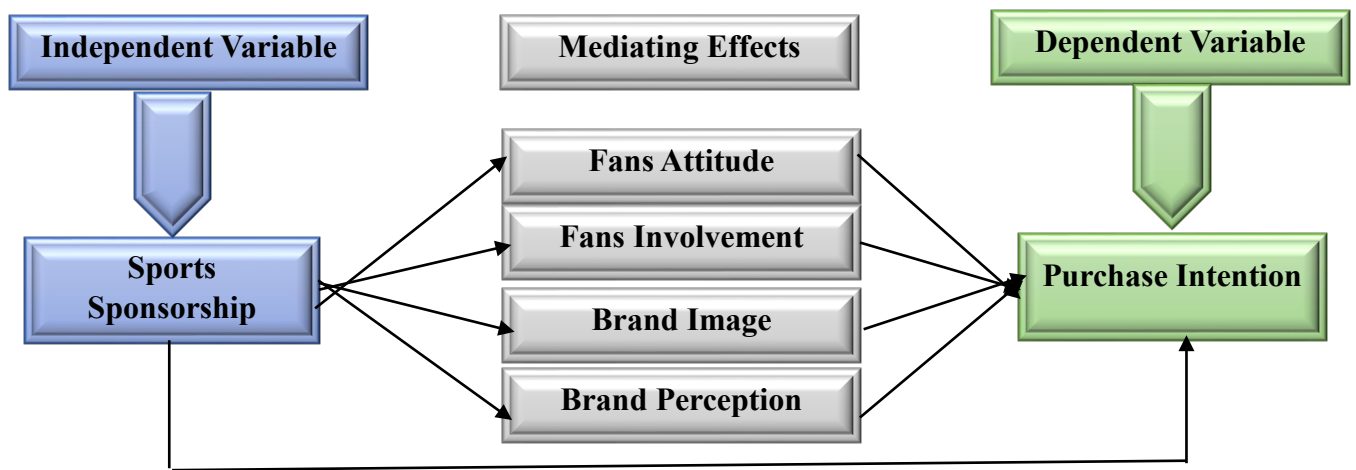


Figure 6.1 A framework Sports sponsorship and purchase intention

This structured framework offers insights into the factors influencing the purchase intention of sports products. It establishes the significance of fan attitudes, involvement, sponsor brand image, and perception in shaping purchase intention. By considering these factors, sports organisations and sponsors can make informed decisions to refine their marketing strategies, enhancing consumer engagement and boosting product sales. The framework's objective is to illustrate how sponsorship impacts consumers' purchase intention toward sponsors' brands. It comprises three key components: Sponsorship (dependent variable), Mediators, including Fan Attitude, Fan Involvement, Brand Image, and Brand Perception, and Purchase Intention (dependent variable). It

is important to highlight that the mediator factor which is event-fit was removed from figure 6.1. This decision stems from the study's findings, which indicate a lack of statistically significant connection between sponsor-event fit and purchase intention. Therefore, the researcher proposes the framework below as a guide. Central to the framework is the emphasis on strategic planning and execution of sponsorship activation initiatives to positively influence soccer fans' purchase intention. A well-executed sponsorship activation can elevate brand image, cultivate a deeper emotional connection with soccer fans, and ultimately drive purchase intention. For marketers and sponsors, mastering this framework aids in crafting more effective sponsorship strategies. This involves focusing on activities resonating with fans, aligning with brand values, and fostering a positive perception within the fan base. Consequently, this approach can lead to heightened fan loyalty, brand preference, and ultimately, increased sales and business growth.

6.5.3 Contribution to practice

First and foremost, the aim of this study was to provide a deeper understanding of how the relationship between a sponsor and a soccer club influences customer perception and behaviors towards the sponsor, particularly for soccer clubs and corporations seeking to sponsor a sports team. Additionally, this research aimed to investigate the attitudes and behaviors of both passionate and non-fanatical individuals towards sponsors and clubs, as well as the potential impact of attachment on the perception of different types of soccer team sponsors. The study identified one major effect and three minor covariate effects on the dependent variable; however, it did not find interaction effects for all hypotheses. These findings provide valuable insights into the factors that shape consumer attitudes, behaviours, and perceptions. It is important for soccer teams and businesses to recognize that supporting a sports team has a significant influence on purchase intentions, regardless of the type of sponsor. The study reveals that the type of sponsor has little to no impact on customer attitudes and behaviours. Therefore, sponsoring a soccer team can shape people's perceptions and attitudes towards the brand, irrespective of the sponsor type. Furthermore, companies and soccer clubs should consider the influence of an individual's attachment to a sports team on their attitude towards the sponsor. The study demonstrates that stronger attachment to a team is associated with more favourable attitudes towards the sponsor, which, in turn, can impact purchase intentions positively. Lastly, brand familiarity is another crucial aspect that marketers in both business and athletic organisations should consider. Brand awareness and familiarity directly

influence consumers' purchase intentions. Therefore, when sponsoring a soccer team, commercial firms should consider geographical factors and brand recognition, as consumer awareness and familiarity play a significant role in shaping their purchasing intentions.

6.6 Limitations of the study

As with any research, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study, which in turn provide opportunities for future research. While this study offers valuable insights into the impact of sports sponsorship on purchase intention and the mediating role of fans' attitudes, it is crucial to acknowledge its limitations.

Firstly, it is worth noting that this study relied on cross-sectional survey data, which limits the researchers' ability to establish causal relationships. To gain a deeper understanding of the long-term implications of sports sponsorship on purchase intention, it would be beneficial for future research to employ longitudinal or experimental designs that can capture changes over time and establish causal relationships more effectively. Additionally, the use of surveys introduces the possibility of cognitive biases and social desirability effects. Therefore, future studies could consider incorporating alternative research methods, such as qualitative interviews or mixed methods approaches, to complement and strengthen the findings.

Secondly, the current study focused specifically on soccer fans, which may restrict the generalisability of the findings to fans of other sports. Future researchers could broaden their investigations to include fans of different sports and even consider conducting comparative analyses to examine potential differences and similarities across sporting contexts. This would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships between sports sponsorship while this study offers valuable insights into the impact of sports sponsorship on purchase intention and the mediating role of fans' attitudes, it is crucial to acknowledge its limitations and purchase intention within diverse fan bases.

Thirdly, while this study has offered valuable insights into sports sponsorship in the Ghanaian soccer context, there is a need for future research to enhance the external validity of findings. Therefore, employing random sampling techniques in future studies can contribute to a more

representative and generalisable understanding of the relationships explored. Random sampling ensures a diverse selection of participants, allowing for broader applications of the selected patterns to a larger population. By adopting random sampling methodologies, future studies can strengthen the robustness of findings to facilitate comparisons across different demographic or organisational contexts. Furthermore, while this study explored fans' attitudes as a mediator in the relationship between sports sponsorship and purchase intention, there are other variables that could serve as moderators or mediators in this relationship. Future research could explore the influence of additional factors such as brand loyalty, perceived value, or social influence to gain a more nuanced understanding of the underlying mechanisms and boundary conditions.

Fourthly, the occupational status and possible income levels of the respondents needs an attention in future research. The fan base of football clubs is youth-dominated, most of whom are students and unemployed. Therefore, the subject of purchase behaviour could be different depending on one's income level. This thesis emphasizes on fan-base support and therefore no attention was given to income levels. A recommendation has been made to address this limitation in future.

In conclusion, Future research should strive to address these limitations by employing more robust research designs, expanding the scope of the investigation to different sports and fan bases, and considering additional variables that can further elucidate the dynamics of sports sponsorship effects.

6.7 Recommendations for further Research

There are several implications for future research in the scope of this work. Nevertheless, the suggestions provided below might be useful.

First and foremost, the context in which sponsorship was examined in this study binds the research conclusions. This study focused on the fan bases of two top soccer clubs in the GPL, as well as sponsorship activities. The findings of this study are, therefore, more likely to be relevant to fan base responses to sponsorship efforts in Ghana. The results may not have been as generalisable because the study was limited to Ghana. As a result, certain findings may be exclusive to the Ghanaian market.

Future studies should, moreover, analyse and validate the final model proposed in this work. Further study is required to prove the model validity, because it is a novel contribution to the field of sponsorship literature and research. The phrasing and design of the survey instrument that will gather data to support the final model should also be validated during this process. The application of the model has its limits, since not all antecedents of purchase intentions have been empirically examined prior to this work.

Event-fit was considered in preliminary conceptual models for the model created in this study, as well as in Speed and Thompson's (2000) study of sports sponsorship response. Although the study findings suggest event-fit is not significant it could, nonetheless, have relevance for future sponsorship studies. This study, however, demonstrated event-fit has no influence on a customer's decision to buy a sponsor's good or service. Furthermore, Speed and Thompson (2000) discovered it had absolutely no influence on how sports sponsorships were received.

Initially, event-fit was considered in the models, due to numerous well-known sponsorship programmes worldwide that are connected to major events. One such instance is the FIFA world cup games. Yet, there seems to be some inconsistency between the attraction that huge, high-profile events have for sponsors and the actual impact that influence has on successful sponsorship. It is important to comprehend the discrepancy between the benefits of event-fit that are really experienced and those perceived to be beneficial. This would represent a step forward in sponsorship research, which is still in its early stages.

While variance testing was performed utilising the demographic information gathered from the questionnaire, more study on demographics and psychographics is required. Given the male-based orientation of soccer fans in Ghana, the specifics relating to females constituting the majority of the fanbase present an interesting field of inquiry.

Furthermore, this study's quantitative design, to some extent, has limitations, although the research approach was ideal in terms of convenience and time restrictions. The time range, however, limited the study's ability to comprehend changes and developments in consumer perceptions and behavioral intentions.

The study recommends that future research should consider unemployment as a sensitive variable to purchase behaviour. Even though the Ghanaian soccer fan-base is predominantly taken-over by the youth, most of whom are students and unemployed, the selection of the sample could be stratified to observe how the results of employed respondents differ from those unemployed. Last, a representative sampling of all the fanbases of the premier league clubs, on the other hand, might produce more generalised results and findings.

6.8 Conclusions

In conclusion, this research aimed to examine the influence of sponsorship on consumer behaviour within the Ghanaian soccer fanbase. The key findings of the study are summarized as follows:

Purchase intention was found to be significantly and favourably influenced by fan involvement and fan attitude. This suggests that promoting positive attitudes and raising the involvement of fans can increase customers' propensity to buy sponsors' products.

The lack of a significant connection between sponsor-event fit and purchase intention suggests that the fanbase's intentions to buy sponsors' products are not necessarily influenced by the relationship between sponsors and particular events. However, it was discovered that sponsor brand perception had a huge and favourable influence on purchase intention, underscoring the significance of sponsor brand image in shaping soccer fans' behaviour.

The lack of evidence of customer characteristics moderating the relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention suggests that personal characteristics like age or gender have no influence on how sponsorship affects soccer fans' behaviour.

Several recommendations have been made for marketers, sponsors, and practitioners looking to use sports sponsorship strategies to communicate with Ghanaian soccer fans and influence intended customer behaviour in the context of these findings:

Furthermore, this research makes significant contributions to both theory and practice in the field of sports marketing and sponsorship, particularly within the Ghanaian soccer fanbase. The study sheds light on the influence of sponsorship on consumer behaviour, emphasizing the importance of fan attitude and involvement in driving purchase intention. It also highlights the significance of sponsor brand perception and the limited impact of sponsor-event fit on purchase intention.

Additionally, the study demonstrates that customer characteristics do not play a significant moderating role in the relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention.

The theoretical contribution of this research lies in its examination of the causal effect of sponsorship on soccer fans' behavioural responses, providing insights into consumer attitudes towards sponsors. It also challenges previous findings by uncovering the limited impact of customer characteristics as moderators. These contributions enhance the understanding of sponsorship and consumer behaviour within the Ghanaian soccer fanbase, filling a gap in the literature.

In terms of practical implications, the research offers recommendations for marketers, sponsors, and practitioners to leverage sponsorship strategies effectively. These recommendations include focusing on fan attitude and involvement, enhancing sponsor brand perception, re-evaluating sponsor-event fit, and targeting a broader audience. The findings emphasize the importance of building a strong brand identity, engaging with fans, and creating a sense of community to increase purchase intention.

In general, this study offers important information that can inform marketing and sports sponsorship plans for Ghanaian soccer fans and provide the groundwork for future studies in the area of sports marketing and sponsorship. Businesses may create effective tactics to communicate with fans, encourage buy intention, and ultimately accomplish their marketing goals by understanding the aspects that affect soccer fans' behaviour.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire

Questionnaire

My name is Appiah Sarpong, a Doctoral student at Durban University of Technology. As part of my Doctor of Philosophy programme in Management Sciences, specialising in Marketing at the Department of Marketing and Retail Management, I am undertaking a study titled “The influence of Sponsorship on Consumer Behaviour in Ghana Football.” The National Circles/ National Chapters executive committee has given me permission to undertake a field survey and you are one of the people I have selected for interviews. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, discontinue participation, or skip any questions you do not wish to answer. The information you will provide will be treated with confidentiality and no personally identifying information will be disclosed.

Kindly provide your responses by selecting the corresponding number that best represents your level of agreement or disagreement with the statements regarding football sponsorship in the following questionnaire. Your input is invaluable to this research, and I appreciate your thoughtful responses.

Please tick the applicable box with (√)

Section A: Respondent Demographics

1. Gender:

i. Male	
ii. Female	

2. Age Group:

(i)		(ii)		(iii)		(iv)		(v)	
18-19		20 – 29		30 – 39		40 – 49		50 and	
years		years		years		years		above years	

3.Educational Level:

i. Middle School leaving Certificate/ Junior High School	
ii. Senior High School	
iii. Vocational/ Technical	
iv. Tertiary	
v. No formal education:	

4.Occupation

i.Self Employed	
ii.Public Sector Worker	
iii.Private Sector Worker	
(4) Unemployed	
(5) Other please specify:	

5.Marital Status:

i.Married	
ii.Single	

6.Which team do you support?

i.Asante Kotoko	
ii.Hearts of Oak	

7. How long have you supported your football team?

i. Less than 5 years	
ii. 5-10 year	
iii. 11-20 years	
iv. 21-30 years	
v. 41-50years	
vii. 41-50 years	
viii. 51years+	

The following statements relate to your assessment of sponsorship of the football. Please indicate the number that best describes your ‘agreement’ or ‘disagreement.’

Section B:

8: Customer Characteristics

	Demographic characteristics (DC)	Strongly agree 1	Agree 2	Neutral 3	Disagree 4	Strongly disagree 5
CC.1	Gender influences the purchased intention of sponsors’ product	1	2	3	4	5
CC.2	Age background influences the purchased intention of sponsors’ brand	1	2	3	4	5
CC.3	Educational background contributes to your intention to patronize the sponsors’ products	1	2	3	4	5
CC.4	Marital status is an important determinant for choosing a sponsor’s product	1	2	3	4	5
CC.5	Income levels are an important determinant for choosing a sponsor’s product	1	2	3	4	5
CC.6	Occupation is an important factor when choosing a sponsor’s product	1	2	3	4	5
CC.7	Length of the relationship of the sponsors influence your intention to patronize their products	1	2	3	4	5
CC.8	Product experience influence the intention to patronize the sponsors’ brand	1	2	3	4	5

CC.9	Nature of patronage	1	2	3	4	5
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9: Sponsorship

	Statements	Responses (Scale of 1-5) <i>1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Neutral, 4=Disagree, 5=Strongly Disagree</i>				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
SP 1	The sponsor offers products to my favourite club (players)	1	2	3	4	5
SP.2	The sponsor helps deliver campaign programmes for my team	1	2	3	4	5
SP.3	The sponsor provides logistics that my football team needs	1	2	3	4	5
SP.4	This sponsorship makes my team look much better in terms of publicity	1	2	3	4	5
SP.5	The sponsor supports the communities in which my team is based	1	2	3	4	5
SP.6	The sponsor provides financial support each season	1	2	3	4	5

SP.7	The cash sponsorship for each season is enough	1	2	3	4	5
SP.8	My club has the biggest sponsorship value	1	2	3	4	5
SP.9	The sponsor organizes awards schemes for outstanding players in the season	1	2	3	4	5
SP.10	The sponsor pays cash bonuses when my team wins a trophy	1	2	3	4	5

10:Fan Attitude

	Statements	Responses (Scale of 1-5) 1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Neutral, 4=Disagree, 5=Strongly Disagree				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
FA.1	My curiosity about the sponsor has increased because of their involvement in this sponsorship.	1	2	3	4	5
FA.2	I know more about the sponsor because of this sponsorship	1	2	3	4	5
FA.3	This sponsorship would make me more likely to notice the sponsor on other occasions.	1	2	3	4	5
FA.4	This sponsorship would make me more likely to remember the sponsor's brand.	1	2	3	4	5
FA.5	The sponsor's brand is now the initial brand I think of when considering their products or services.	1	2	3	4	5
FA.6	Reflecting on this event brings the sponsor to my mind.	1	2	3	4	5
FA.7	This sponsorship has enhanced my positive feelings towards the sponsor.	1	2	3	4	5
FA.8	My general attitude towards the sponsor following this sponsorship is positive.	1	2	3	4	5

11: Fan Involvement

	Statements	Responses (Scale of 1-5) 1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Neutral, 4=Disagree, 5=Strongly Disagree				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
FI.1	My interest in this football match exceeds that of a general spectator.	1	2	3	4	5
FI.2	I am a fan of a club or organisation associated with this football event.	1	2	3	4	5
FI.3	Being a fan of this event is important to me.	1	2	3	4	5
FI.4	My friends see me as a fan of football.	1	2	3	4	5
FI.5	I strongly support this GPL matches	1	2	3	4	5
FI.6	I enjoy following coverage of GPL matches.	1	2	3	4	5
FI.7	This game is important to me.	1	2	3	4	5
FI.8	Football is my favourite sporting event.	1	2	3	4	5

12: Event Fit

	Statements	Responses (Scale of 1-5) 1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Neutral, 4=Disagree, 5=Strongly Disagree				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutra l	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
EF.1	I see a strong logical connection between the football event and the sponsor.	1	2	3	4	5
EF.2	The image portrayed by the event and the sponsor are similar.	1	2	3	4	5
EF.3	It makes sense to me that this company sponsors this event.	1	2	3	4	5
EF.4	A fit between the event and a sponsor is important.	1	2	3	4	5

13: Brand Image

	Statements	Responses (Scale of 1-5) 1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Neutral, 4=Disagree, 5=Strongly Disagree				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutra l	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
BI.1	This sponsor is noticeable every time I watch football	1	2	3	4	5
BI.2	This sponsor stood out	1	2	3	4	5
BI.3	I clearly remember the sponsor's message	1	2	3	4	5
BI.4	The sponsorship tool used was valuable	1	2	3	4	5
BI.5	The last time I watched this event was from start to finish	1	2	3	4	5
BI.6	This sponsor was prominent throughout the event	1	2	3	4	5

14: Brand Perception

	Statements	Responses (Scale of 1-5) 1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Neutral, 4=Disagree, 5=Strongly Disagree				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutra l	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
BP.1	I have more interest in the sponsor following this sponsorship.	1	2	3	4	5
BP.2	My interest in the event has led me to be interested in the sponsor.	1	2	3	4	5
BP.3	I hold different view bout the company following the sponsorship	1	2	3	4	5
BP.4	I hold a different view about the company's product following the sponsorship	1	2	3	4	5
BP.5	This sponsor now first comes to mind when thinking of the products/services they offer.	1	2	3	4	5
BP.6	When I think about this event, I am reminded of this sponsor.	1	2	3	4	5
BP.7	I only recall this sponsor as a sponsor of this event and nothing more.	1	2	3	4	5
BP.8	This sponsorship makes me feel more favourable towards the sponsor.	1	2	3	4	5
BP.9	This sponsorship has improved my perception of the sponsor.	1	2	3	4	5

BP.10	I like the sponsor more because of this sponsorship.	1	2	3	4	5
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15: Purchase Intention

	Statements	Responses (Scale of 1-5) 1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Neutral, 4=Disagree, 5=Strongly Disagree				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutra 1	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
PI.1	In general, the fact that a firm is a sponsor of this event weighs heavily on my purchase decision.	1	2	3	4	5
PI.2	I will now actively seek products and services sold by this sponsor.	1	2	3	4	5
PI.3	All else being equal, I am more likely to purchase products/services from this sponsor than from non-sponsors.	1	2	3	4	5
PI.4	I will try to buy products from this sponsor because their sponsorship had a positive effect.	1	2	3	4	5
PI.5	I always purchase the sponsor's product/service to show support for this event.	1	2	3	4	5
PI.6	I will purchase the sponsor's product/service to show support for the sponsor.	1	2	3	4	5

PI.7	In n future, I will try to purchase more products/services from this sponsor.	1	2	3	4	5
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Thank you for your time.

Appendix B: Ethics Certificate



Zertifikat Certificat Certificado Certificate

Promouvoir les plus hauts standards éthiques dans la protection des participants à la recherche biomédicale
Promoting the highest ethical standards in the protection of biomedical research participants

Certificat de formation - Training Certificate

Ce document atteste que - this document certifies that

Appiah Sarpong

a complété avec succès - has successfully completed

Introduction to Research Ethics

du programme de formation TRREE en évaluation éthique de la
recherche of the TRREE training programme in research ethics
evaluation

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[REV : 20170310]



Appendix C: Letter of Information

Title of the Research Study: The Influence of Sponsorship on Consumer Behaviour in Ghana Football.

Principal Investigator/s/researcher: Appiah SARPONG, MBA Marketing, and Corporate Strategy

Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s: Dr. Nkululeko PraiseGod ZUNGU, D Phil in Management Sciences Specialising in Marketing.

Hello!

Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study:

My name is Appiah SARPONG, as part of my Doctor of Philosophy programme in Management Sciences, specialising in Marketing at the Department of Marketing and Retail Management, Durban University of Technology in South Africa, I would like to invite you to participate in this study. The study seeks to assess The Influence of Sponsorship on Consumer Behaviour in Ghana Football. The objectives set for this study are as follows: To be able to achieve the overall aims of the study, the following objectives of the study are set:

To assess the influence of sports sponsorship on purchase intention

To evaluate the Mediating influence of fan attitude in the relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention.

To evaluate the mediating influence of fan involvement in the relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention.

To measure the mediating influence of sponsor-event fit in the relationship sponsorship purchase intention.

To measure the mediating influence of brand image in the relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention.

To determine the mediating role of sponsor brand perception in the relationship between sponsorship and purchase intention.

The proposed sample size for the study would be 398. The research instrument will be an adopted structured questionnaire consisting of a 5-point Likert scale of '1' strongly disagree to '5' strongly agree. The study proposes a quantitative approach. Key findings of the study, managerial implications for the sponsors, limitations of the study, as well as various recommendations that could lead to further research will be discussed.

The exercise is for academic purposes only and, any information obtained in connection with this study that can be identified with you will remain confidential. Upon your request, the findings of the study will be made available to you once the study has been accepted by the Durban University of Technology.

Find below, information about the study and what your involvement would entail. Kindly indicate in this letter should you decide to participate in this study.

Outline of the Procedures:

Participants are required to complete a questionnaire designed on a 5-point Likert scale which requires between 15 and 20 minutes to complete. Participation is voluntary.

Risks or Discomforts to the Participant:

Participants will not perform any acts or make statements that might cause discomfort, compromise them, diminish self-esteem, or cause them to experience embarrassment or regret. The study has no risk to the participant. Participants can freely indicate any discomforts.

Benefits:

It is envisaged that the findings of the study will be published in refereed journals and presented at an academic research conference. The researcher will provide contact information through which any of the participants can reach out for a copy of the findings. Benefits would include a sense of empowerment, as well as an increase in knowledge that came about because of being part of the study.

Reason/s why the Participant May Be Withdrawn from the Study:

There will be no adverse consequences for any participant who chooses to withdraw from the study. Participation is voluntary, and participants may withdraw from participating at any point.

Remuneration:

There is no remuneration that will be received by the participant for participating in the study.

Costs of the Study:

There is no cost that will or should be covered by the participant in this study.

Confidentiality:

To ensure the confidentiality of participants, the researcher will use codes to label data instead of using names and keep a separate list of code-to-name matchups. Participants will sign a consent form, and computer-based files will be encrypted whilst paper documents will be locked in a file cabinet.

Research-related Injury:

The researcher anticipates no injury to participants since participants will perform no physical activities.

Persons to contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:

Please contact the researcher: Appiah Sarpong (tel no: +233 243452133 or 22175053@dut4life.ac.za), my supervisor, Dr. NP Zungu (tel no: +27 31 373 6404 or nkululekoz1@dut4life.ac.za) or the Institutional Research Ethics Administrator on 031 373 2375. Complaints can be reported to the Acting Director: Research and Postgraduate Support Prof K Motaung at TtiDirector@dut.ac.za

Appendix D: Turnitin Report

Appendix E: Editor's Letter

Helen Richter
Advanced Editing, Proofreading
& Copywriting
feetjeding@gmail.com
+27 729538169

20 June 2023

To whom it may concern

CERTIFICATE OF EDITING & AUTHENTICATION

I have proofread and language edited the PhD thesis titled:

"The Influence of Sponsorship on consumer behaviour in Ghana Football"

by

Appiah SARPONG

To the best of my knowledge, the work is free of spelling, grammar, structural and stylistic errors and the contents are certified as the author's own work.

With thanks.

H. S. Richter



Appendix F: Gate keepers letter

The screenshot shows a Gmail interface with the following details:

- Browser:** Chrome, address bar: mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/FMfcgzGrbHndPHdXgKlgDRjGGWImhx8
- Search:** Search in emails
- Left Sidebar:** Compose, Mail (31), Chat, Spaces, Meet, Labels (+)
- Selected Email:**
 - From:** Faculty of Management Science, Durban University of Technology, South Africa
 - Subject:** RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH
 - Body:**

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

This is to inform you that Appiah Sarpong's (Mr.) request for permission to conduct a study titled "The influence of sponsorship on consumer behaviour in Ghana Football," using registered supporters of the national Circles Council of Asante Kotoko Football Club has been granted.

Yours Faithfully,

.....signed.....
Daniel Nana Kwame Dankwah
(Vice Chairman, Finance & Administration)
National Circles Council
Cell: +233244668830/+233267668830

Sent from my iPhone
 - Sender:** Appiah Sarpong <appiah.sarpong@ttu.edu.gh> to Nana
 - Date:** Mon, 21 Nov 2022, 22:09

The screenshot shows a Gmail interface with a search bar at the top. The left sidebar contains navigation options: Compose, Mail (31), Chat, Spaces, and Meet. The main content area displays an email titled "Greetings" from Jones Asante (cobbyjones200k@gmail.com) dated Monday, 21 Nov 2022, 13:51. The email text includes the sender's affiliation with the National Chapters Council of Accra Hearts of Oak and a request for research permission. The body of the email states: "This is to inform you that Applah Sarpong's (Mr.) request for permission to conduct a study titled 'The influence of sponsorship on consumer behaviour in Ghana Football,' using registered supporters of the national chapters council of Accra Hearts of Oak has been granted." The email concludes with "Yours Faithfully,".

Appendix G: Descriptive Statics

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
The sponsor offers products to my favorite club (players)	2.20	1.031	0.500	0.102	-0.354	0.203
The sponsor helps deliver campaign programs for my team	2.25	1.031	0.564	0.102	-0.140	0.203
The sponsor provides logistics that my football team needs	2.28	1.014	0.453	0.102	-0.315	0.203
This sponsorship makes my team look much better in terms of publicity	2.12	1.027	0.643	0.102	-0.202	0.203
The sponsor supports the communities in which the team is based	2.40	1.040	0.328	0.102	-0.463	0.203
The sponsor provides financial support each season	2.05	0.995	0.742	0.102	0.108	0.204
The cash sponsorship for each season is enough	2.55	1.030	0.270	0.102	-0.333	0.203
My club has the biggest sponsorship value	2.51	1.067	0.239	0.102	-0.461	0.204
The sponsor organizes awards schemes for outstanding players in the season	2.35	1.053	0.472	0.102	-0.215	0.204
The sponsor pays cash bonuses when my team wins a trophy	2.28	1.063	0.600	0.102	-0.066	0.203
I have more interest in the sponsor following this sponsorship."	2.37	1.050	0.457	0.102	-0.228	0.203
I know more about the sponsor because of this sponsorship	2.42	1.059	0.420	0.102	-0.303	0.203
This sponsorship would make me more likely to notice the sponsor on other occasions.	2.25	0.978	0.492	0.102	-0.121	0.203

This sponsorship would make me more likely to remember the sponsor's brand.	2.17	1.030	0.6 30	0.1 02	- 0.19 3	0.2 03
This sponsor now first comes to mind when thinking of the products/services they offer.	2.24	1.028	0.6 04	0.1 02	- 0.08 1	0.2 03
When I think about this event, I am reminded of this sponsor.	2.28	1.027	0.5 20	0.1 02	- 0.20 7	0.2 03
This sponsorship makes me feel more favorable towards the sponsor.	2.31	0.964	0.4 30	0.1 02	- 0.11 4	0.2 03
My general attitude towards the sponsor following this sponsorship is positive.	2.17	0.930	0.4 98	0.1 02	- 0.04 7	0.2 03
My interest in this football match exceeds that of a general spectator.	2.29	1.015	0.5 93	0.1 02	0.03 2	0.2 03
I am a fan of a club or organisation associated with this event.	2.35	1.035	0.5 61	0.1 02	0.01 1	0.2 03
Being a fan of this event is important to me.	2.27	1.033	0.5 62	0.1 02	- 0.08 7	0.2 03
My friends see me as a fan of football.	2.41	1.199	0.5 65	0.1 02	- 0.49 3	0.2 03
I strongly support this GPL matches	2.75	1.188	0.2 81	0.1 02	- 0.64 5	0.2 03
I enjoy following coverage of GPL matches.	2.79	1.217	0.2 22	0.1 02	- 0.77 7	0.2 03
This game is important to me.	2.57	1.168	0.3 62	0.1 02	- 0.59 8	0.2 03
This game is my favorite sporting event.	2.57	1.196	0.4 24	0.1 02	- 0.59 1	0.2 03
I see a strong logical connection between the event and the sponsor.	2.30	0.980	0.4 81	0.1 02	- 0.06 7	0.2 03

The image portrayed by the event and the sponsor are similar.	2.44	0.984	0.3 10	0.1 02	- 0.23 5	0.2 03
It makes sense to me that this company sponsors this event.	2.27	0.956	0.4 03	0.1 02	- 0.18 2	0.2 03
A fit between the event and a sponsor is important.	2.25	0.948	0.5 43	0.1 02	0.22 0	0.2 03
This sponsor was immediately noticeable	2.28	0.994	0.5 34	0.1 02	- 0.05 4	0.2 03
The last time I watched this event was from start to finish (full game/match)	2.43	1.099	0.5 03	0.1 02	- 0.24 4	0.2 03
The sponsorship tool used was valuable	2.35	0.988	0.4 49	0.1 02	- 0.08 1	0.2 03
This sponsor was immediately noticeable						
I clearly remember the sponsor's message	2.45	1.065	0.3 85	0.1 02	- 0.34 7	0.2 03
This sponsor stood out	2.33	0.971	0.4 13	0.1 02	- 0.12 6	0.2 03
This sponsor was prominent throughout the event	2.44	1.051	0.4 65	0.1 02	- 0.12 5	0.2 03
I have more interest in the sponsor following this sponsorship.	2.38	1.034	0.5 89	0.1 02	0.13 5	0.2 03
My interest in the event has led me to be interested in the sponsor.	2.38	1.001	0.3 85	0.1 02	- 0.17 3	0.2 03
I hold different view bout the company following the sponsorship	2.43	0.971	0.2 56	0.1 02	- 0.30 7	0.2 03
I hold a different view about the company's product following the sponsorship	2.46	0.986	0.2 85	0.1 02	- 0.17 9	0.2 03
I like the sponsor more because of this sponsorship.	2.38	1.004	0.4 73	0.1 02	0.01 4	0.2 03

This sponsor now first comes to mind when thinking of the products/services they offer	2.36	1.013	0.504	0.102	-0.127	0.203
When I think about this event, I am reminded of this sponsor.	2.33	0.999	0.457	0.102	-0.086	0.203
I only recall this sponsor as a sponsor of this event and nothing more.	2.52	1.049	0.259	0.102	-0.552	0.203
This sponsorship makes me feel more favorable towards the sponsor.	2.41	0.998	0.337	0.102	-0.239	0.203
This sponsorship has improved my perception of the sponsor.	2.39	0.950	0.258	0.102	-0.114	0.203
In general, the fact that a firm is a sponsor of this event weighs heavily on my purchase decision.	2.32	0.980	0.586	0.102	0.277	0.203
I will now actively seek products and services sold by this sponsor.	2.45	1.020	0.445	0.102	-0.097	0.203
All else being equal, I am more likely to purchase products/services from this sponsor than from non-sponsors.	2.36	1.000	0.481	0.102	-0.099	0.203
I will try to buy products from this sponsor because their sponsorship had a positive effect.	2.31	1.039	0.620	0.102	0.064	0.203
I always purchase the sponsor's product/service to show support for this event.	2.41	0.989	0.400	0.102	-0.120	0.203
I will purchase the sponsor's product/service to show support for the sponsor.	2.32	1.002	0.438	0.102	-0.280	0.203
In future, I will try to purchase more products/services from this sponsor.	2.34	1.018	0.494	0.102	-0.101	0.203