The congruity effects of commercial brand sponsorship in a regional event

Hakseung Shin, Hoon Lee, Richard R. Perdue

Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Pamplin College of Business, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24061, United States

School of Tourism, Hanyang University, 17 Haengdang-dong, Seongdonggu, Seoul, 133-791, Republic of Korea

An integrative congruity model was tested examining sponsoring brand effects in a regional event. Event visitors with high self-congruity with event image have favorable attitudes toward the event. Event image is transferred to brand image through the influence of event attitudes on brand attitudes. High self-congruity with brand image influenced brand loyalty by forming favorable brand attitudes. Event-brand image congruity influenced brand loyalty by fully mediating brand attitudes.

Abstract

Reduced funding and support from governments have turned regional events and festivals to seeking commercial sponsorships to maintain their financial viability. However, few studies have examined how sponsorship brand effects are formulated. Using congruity theory, the purpose of this research was to examine sponsorship brand effects in an integrative model based on the relationships among event image, sponsoring brand image, and visitors’ self-images. Using a sample of 258 visitors to the Hwacheon Tomato Festival sponsored by the Ottogi brand in South Korea, structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to test the study hypotheses. The findings indicate that self-congruity with sponsoring brand image influences sponsoring brand attitude, which, in turn, influences sponsoring brand loyalty. The congruity between event image and sponsoring brand image influences sponsoring brand loyalty by mediating the effects of event attitude and sponsoring brand attitude. Self-congruity with event image influenced sponsoring brand loyalty by mediating event attitude and sponsoring brand attitude.

© 2018 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

In regional tourism management, events are considered important assets for growing visitor flows and revenues. In particular, local events can attract visitors, extend lengths of stay, and increase visitor spending (Getz & Page, 2016; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018; Panyik, Costa, & Rätz, 2011). To make regional events and festival more viable, commercial sponsorships have become increasingly important (Gwinner, 1997). Historically, festivals and events have often been subsidized by governments with...
the goals of improving destination competitiveness and creating local jobs and incomes (Getz, 2007; Lamont & Dowell, 2008; Lee, 2016). However, there is increasing criticism of these subsidies leading both to funding restrictions (Kelly & Fairley, 2018) and in some cases to significant funding reductions (Oh, 2013). As a result, many events have turned to the difficult task of seeking commercial sponsorships to maintain their financial viability (Mack, 1999). Importantly, there is a lack of research examining the brand effects and benefits of sponsoring regional events. This lack of research limits the abilities of both regional event organizers seeking such sponsorships and of corporations making sponsorship decisions. Sponsorship planning and development requires effective matching of the correct brands with appropriate events (Mack, 1999; Meenaghan, 1991); that matching requires an understanding of effects of sponsorships both for the brand and the event.

The financial viability of many regional festivals and events increasingly relies on commercial brand sponsorships as a primary source of revenue (Cornwell & Maignan, 1998; Getz, 2002; Lamont & Dowell, 2008). While existing research has focused on the management of event sponsorships (O’Reilly & Madill, 2008), the sponsorship brand effects on consumers are not well understood (Gwinner, Larson, & Swanson, 2009; McDaniel, 1999; Roy & Cornwell, 2004). Such research is needed by both the sponsoring brand corporations seeking to grow the return on its sponsorship investments and by regional event managers attempting to effectively market the benefits of sponsorships to potential sponsors (McDonald, 1991; Meenaghan, 1998). Moreover, most studies on commercial sponsorship brand effects have been in the context of large and major sporting events (Abreu Novais & Arcodia, 2013; Rifen, Choi, Trimble, & Li, 2004; Sirgy, Lee, Johar, & Tidwell, 2008; Walliser, 2003). Only a few studies have examined the brand effects of commercial sponsorship for regional events (Lamont & Dowell, 2008; Rowley & Williams, 2008). There is a significant gap in the tourism research literature examining commercial sponsorship effectiveness in regional events, including its impacts on regional tourism development (Deng, Li, & Shen, 2015; Getz, 2005) and local communities (Mack, 1999).

One theoretical construct for examining sponsorship brand effects is image congruity. The successful association of sponsoring brand images with event images has been regarded as essential to brand images with event images has been regarded as essential to 

2. Literature review

2.1. Commercial sponsorship of events and festivals

Sponsorship is defined as “a cash and/or in-kind fee paid to a property (typically a sports, entertainment, non-profit event or organization) in return for access to the exploitable commercial potential associated with that property” (IEG, 2017; Meenaghan, 1991). Generally, two types of sponsorship, i.e., philanthropic sponsorship and commercial sponsorship, exist. While philanthropic sponsorship implies assistance for a cultural or social cause with no commercial benefits expected, the purpose of a commercial sponsorship is to gain direct commercial benefits associated with brand awareness, image, and sales (Astous & Bitz, 1995). Although commercial sponsorship is a form of advertising, there are some distinct features that differentiate commercial sponsorships from advertising. First, as an indirect and subtle marketing communication, commercial sponsorships are perceived as more favorable compared to advertising. Furthermore, while advertising is more oriented to short-term objectives, such as sales, sponsorships are more concerned with long-term benefits, such as awareness and image. Lastly, unlike advertising, sponsorships are assumed to benefit society with a goodwill factor (Meenaghan, 2001b). With these benefits, commercial sponsorships of events have, in recent years, been increasingly recognized as an effective marketing strategy for corporations (Luonila, 2016; Meenaghan, McLoughlin, & McCormack, 2013). Global sponsorship spending for the past five years shows a steady growth with more than four percent increase in each year. In 2017, sponsorship spending is projected to $62.8 billion from the $60.1 billion in 2016 (IEG, 2017).

Commercial event sponsorship refers to the sponsorship of various commercial activities in events related to sports, arts, and other causes (Meenaghan, 2001a). Commercial event sponsorships yield mutual benefits for both events and sponsors by exchanging resources on a reciprocal basis. For event organizations, securing sponsors is vital both as a source of initial revenue (Lamont & Dowell, 2008), and to assure sustainable growth (Getz, 2005, 2008); in fact, commercial sponsorships are often regarded as the ‘financial backbone’ for events (Lamont & Dowell, 2008). For commercial sponsors, events can be an ideal venue to implement marketing strategies since events provide corporations with an effective way to reach key target markets (Getz, 2005) and to create a favorable brand images (Getz, 2005; Lamont & Dowell, 2008).

In recent years, the importance of commercial sponsorships for events has grown significantly as traditional funding sources have declined (Getz, 2005). In particular, the dependence of regional events on government subsidies (Lamont & Dowell, 2008) has created financial vulnerability. Commercial sponsorships are...
دریافت فوری
متن کامل مقاله

امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات