

Sponsorship Linked-Marketing: Image Transfer and Co-Branding Strategies

by

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ABSTRACT

SPONSORSHIP-LINKED MARKETING: IMAGE TRANSFER AND CO-BRANDING STRATEGIES

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This research aims to enhance the understanding of image transfer and co-branding strategies in sponsorship portfolios. The research methodology of this study consisted of a document review and a case study analysis to comprehend a historical perspective of sponsorship and recognize how this marketing communications tactic has evolved to present day contexts. The findings of this thesis research highlight the application of image transfer in a sponsorship arrangement and the way in which it can alter perceptions of the brand and property. Despite tobacco sponsorship no longer being permissible in Canada, the findings from this thesis remain applicable to other potentially controversial industries such as cannabis, alcohol, or gambling. Findings from the study can be applied in marketing practice to identify types of sponsorship engagement that mutually benefit brands and properties which maximize return on investment.

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PREFACE

The idea for this thesis originated from my personal interest in sports. As seen through television or social media outlets, sponsorship-linked marketing is a common form of promotional marketing which provoked my desire to further explore this field of research.

This thesis was completed under unusual circumstances. Despite successfully proposing my research, soon thereafter COVID-19 concerns arose, thus requiring my research approach to be modified and completed remotely. Although this research was undertaken within such unusual circumstances, I was able to alter my methodology to execute my project through use of a historical document review and case study analysis. Looking forward, people may be somewhat unaware of how unusual the times of COVID-19 have been, but I am hopeful that my thesis still provides valuable theoretical and managerial insights to this area of study.

CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction

Sponsorship has become a primary funding source for sports, arts, charitable, and social events. Sponsorship marketing became popular in the late 1980s and early 1990s and has since vastly evolved as a form of indirect marketing (Cornwell, 2008). Sponsorship-linked marketing is defined as “the orchestration and implementation of marketing activities for the purpose of building and communicating an association to a sponsorship” (Cornwell, 1995, p.15).

Sponsorship occurs across different types of activities and for various purposes. Masterman (2007) reasons that sponsorship of professional sporting activities is undertaken to attain brand awareness and image, whereas amateur sports, arts, or charitable cause sponsorship arrangements aim to enhance corporate image through community goodwill (Mack, 1999). Engagement in sponsorship has been shown to deliver long-term consumer-based brand equity through developing increased awareness and improving consumer perceptions of a brand (Cornwell, 2008).

Previous literature in this field of study has identified that, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, sponsorship-linked marketing was evolving and being integrated to become an increasingly important component of the promotional mix (Dewhirst, 2004). Tobacco companies were at the forefront of investing significant promotional expenditures towards sponsorship due to promotional restrictions facing the industry at the time. In 1988, the Tobacco Products Control Act (TPCA) banned tobacco product advertising in Canada, although sponsorship was permitted with restrictions. The manufacturer’s name was required in the use of promotional activities. Thus, Canada’s three major tobacco companies registered their brands as corporate entities (i.e.,

Imperial Tobacco Ltd. formed the entities of Player’s, du Maurier, and Matinée) for the purpose of event sponsorship using the cigarette brand’s identity as opposed to the corporate identity. The tobacco industry became a prevalent source of funding for cultural and sporting events, contributing \$65 million by 1995. Although, in June 1998, an amendment to the Tobacco Act proposed a five-year transition before a tobacco sponsorship ban would become implemented in Canada (Dewhurst, 1999). By 2003, tobacco sponsorship became prohibited, thus many event entities dependent on tobacco sponsorship were scrambling for replacement sponsors to continue operating (“Many Reasons to Celebrate the End of Tobacco Sponsorship,” 2003).

Results of the IEG Sponsorship Decision-Makers Survey and annual sponsor spending review are depicted in Figure 1, which highlights the prevalence of sponsorship marketing in comparison to other

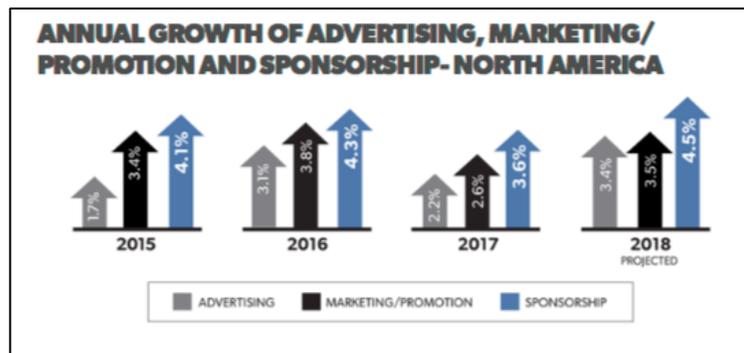


Figure 1: Sponsorship Growth
 Source: (“What Sponsors Want and Where Dollars Will Go in 2018,” 2018)

standard marketing communications practices employed by brands (“What Sponsors Want and Where Dollars Will Go in 2018,” 2018). As this communication tactic has become widely used, concurrent sponsorship has become very prevalent despite receiving minimal attention within this stream of literature. This can be acknowledged by the \$57.5 billion spent worldwide on sponsorship arrangements including an array of events and brands in 2015 (Carillat, Solomon, & d’Astous, 2015). Additionally, in 2011 it was estimated that 68% of all sponsorship spending worldwide was allocated to sporting event sponsorship (Lee & Cho, 2012). Therefore, this thesis aims to provide an extension to the literature by exploring multiple sponsorship brands within a

practical context that also considers multiple tiers of sponsorship (i.e., varying levels of prominence and corresponding investment). Through an exploratory investigation of multi-tier sponsorship portfolios with the involvement of a tobacco brand, this thesis aims to provide insight about brand associations and meaning transfer occurring between sport entities and multiple sponsors. This thesis aims to better understand how consumers develop corresponding or complementary identities among co-sponsoring brands of a given sporting event.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Literature Review

2.1 Sponsorship Marketing

2.1.1 Sponsorship Engagement

Javalgi, Traylor, Gross, & Lampman (1994) define sponsorship as “the underwriting of a special event to support corporate objectives by enhancing corporate image, increasing awareness of brands, or directly stimulating sales of products or services” (p.48). Sponsorship is used as a form of promotion but can be differentiated from advertising as the channel and creative messages are not controlled by the sponsor (Javalgi et al., 1994). Similarly, Meenaghan (2001) argues that consumers view sponsorship as an indirect form of communication, where consumers are more willing to respond to sponsorship than they would be to advertising.

A firm deciding to engage in sponsorship should take precautionary measures to ensure that involvement will not pose a threat to the brand. Ray (1973) provides a suggestive list of probing questions that firms should consider when pursuing a sponsorship arrangement. Corporations need to consider the market’s receptiveness to sponsorship, objectives of entering a sponsor partnership, and whether or not past or current associations of sponsors will have a carryover effect to their brand (Ray, 1973). It is valuable for brands to analyze direct competitor sponsorship to determine the types of sponsorships to partake in to maximize effectiveness (Ray, 1973). Engaging in sponsorship can be impactful to the brand and the sponsored property, therefore it is critical to comprehend how sponsorship marketing works to alter consumer perceptions.

2.1.2 Image Transfer

Enhancing brand image is an important objective of sponsorship and brand image transfer occurs through marketing-related activities (Smith, 2004). According to Cornwell and Maignan (1998), firms participate in sponsorship to increase brand awareness and to establish, strengthen, or rework their brand image. Understanding the development of image transfer in sponsorship is imperative, as it has been found that misaligned images between a sponsor brand and event can be detrimental to both sides of the sponsorship arrangement. Through associating a brand name with an event, it presents the potential for the brand to share in the image of the event. Stevens (1984) identifies this concept as “brandstanding,” which contends that associating a product or service with an event that captures consumers’ interest will generate excitement amongst the target audience, which will enrich consumers’ perception of the brand.

Gwinner and Eaton (1999) examine the influence of sporting event sponsorship on the brand’s image, and findings suggest that brand positioning goals can be achieved through event sponsorship. Brand image is defined as “how customers and others perceive the brand” (Aaker, 1996, p.69). Brand image is most vulnerable to the positive and negative effects of engaging in sponsorship marketing as firms need to be cautious about the potential to transfer an image inconsistent with the brand positioning objectives. This is exemplified in McCracken’s (1989) perspective of the celebrity endorsement process where the theory of meaning transfer affirms that the meaning associated with the celebrity becomes ascribed to the product in the advertisement, which is then conveyed to the user. Gwinner and Eaton (1999) propose that sponsorship budgets should be allocated based on image transfer and pursuing sponsor partnerships that exemplify image- or functional-based similarity are valuable. Functional-based similarity is present when the sponsored brand is being used by participants of the event, whereas

image-based similarity occurs when the event and the brand have related images (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999). Similarly, McDonald (1991) emphasizes the importance of product relevance to the event, whether it occurs directly (functional) or indirectly (image). Gatorade sponsoring the Ironman Triathlon illustrates functional similarity due to the demonstrated use of the product by athletes at the event, whereas a partnership between the Master’s Golf Tournament and Cadillac automobiles elicits image-based similarity due to the prestige image that both the brand and event convey (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999). Image transfer is exemplified by Meenaghan and Shipley (1999) who found that consumers view brands sponsoring sports as being “healthy, young, energetic, fast, vibrant, and masculine” (p.342).

Gwinner (1997) presents the following model (Figure 2) of image creation and image transfer in event sponsorship. As outlined in Figure 2, event type, event characteristics, and other variables play a role in developing the event image. Engaging in sponsorship presents the potential for the event image to be dissimilar among consumers’ perceptions and transferred through association,

therefore Gwinner (1997) suggests conducting frequent event image studies to assess how the event

image has been altered over time. From the brand’s perspective, it is valuable to consider the degree of similarity, level of sponsorship engagement, and frequency of event occurrence to further understand the potential of image transfer occurring and its influence on consumer attitudes and purchase intent (Gwinner, 1997). In addition, Grohs and Reisinger (2014) provide support by identifying event image, event-sponsor fit, and sponsorship exposure as factors that

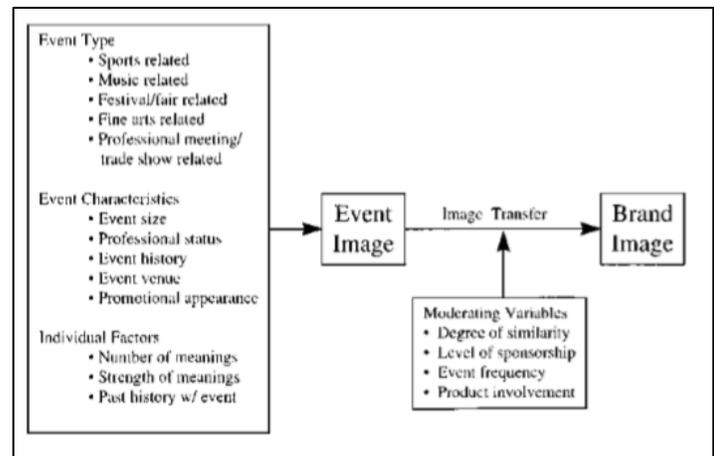


Figure 2: Image Creation and Transfer
Source: (Gwinner, 1997)

impact the brand's image. Findings dictate that a positive event image and greater perceived fit are beneficial to the sponsor image, whereas increased sponsorship exposure induced a less positive image of the sponsor if event-sponsor fit is low (Grohs & Reisinger, 2014).

McCracken (1989) examines the meaning transfer of celebrity endorsement from a cultural perspective, where it is argued that the endorsement process is largely dependent on the symbolic properties of the endorser. He outlines that cultural meaning is developed through categories and principles of culture, which then progresses to consumer goods and the consumer. Through advertising, the meaning transfer is delivered, where the advertiser induces the cultural meanings anticipated for the products (e.g., gender, status, age, and lifestyle). In this instance, a celebrity is employed as the endorser, thus when a celebrity becomes associated with a product through advertising, the meanings of the celebrity are transmitted to denotations of the product and eventually transferred to the consumer to develop symbolic and cultural meanings. Applying this notion to sponsorship marketing enhances the understanding of how the meaning of brands and properties becomes associated through sponsorship.

McDaniel (1999) investigates the similarity between an event and sponsor brand on the basis of involvement, which provides evidence that a sponsored advertisement is evaluated more positively when a high involvement product (e.g., automobile) is paired with a high involvement sporting event (e.g., Olympics) rather than a low involvement event (e.g., bowling). Nevertheless, the relationship between event and product involvement did not present an effect on consumer buying behaviours or evaluations.

In the context of sport-team sponsorship, research by Aiken, Sukhdial, Kahle, and Downing (2015) examine the connection between fan values and their awareness and perception of team sponsors. The study provides evidence that firms need to determine the projected values

of the team they sponsor as it can alter the image, where value-based connections are prevalent and long-lasting (Aiken et al., 2015). These findings can be applied to event sponsorship where the occurrence of a negative image transfer can deteriorate viewers' relationship with brands and the event.

2.1.3 Sponsor Fit

Consumer evaluations of sponsorships are commonly assessed based on the fit between the sponsor and sponsored entity. Simmons and Becker-Olsen (2006) define event-sponsor fit as the observation by the consumer that an event and its sponsor have a similar image, values, and exemplify a logical connection. Pappu and Cornwell (2014) provide a valuable extension by examining sponsor and property similarity and fit using separate measures. Similarity is developed through shared associations (Pappu & Cornwell, 2014), whereas fit is the degree to which the sponsor's brand associations are relevant to the property's product category (Spiggle, Nguyen, & Caravella, 2012). For example, Titleist, as a producer of golf equipment, demonstrates relevance and functional-based similarity, strategically as a sponsor-event pairing, by engaging in sponsorship of a golf championship. Pappu and Cornwell (2014) found that high similarity between the brand and property prompted the positioning to be unclear for low-fit partnerships, whereas high-fit sponsorships were not influenced by the adverse effect of similarity. In addition, Pappu and Cornwell (2014) conclude that fit affects the clarity of positioning positively when high levels of similarity are present, and improvement in fit does not enhance the positioning clarity in low-similarity arrangements. The terms fit and similarity are commonly used interchangeably in sponsorship-marketing research, but Pappu and Cornwell

(2014) identify how these constructs function differently to further comprehend the sponsorship process.

Alternatively, Close and Lacey (2013) provide an examination of sponsor fit and found that a consumer has a positive perception of the sponsor when they perceive greater fit with the event. Although fit does not have an influence on consumers' attitudes towards the event and therefore does not impact how consumers assess the event, fit affects the perception of the brand itself (Close & Lacey, 2013). Consumers desire cognitive consistency among thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, which is known as congruity theory, thus providing an explanation for how sponsor fit enhances consumer perceptions (Close & Lacey, 2013). Consistent with these findings, Simmons and Becker-Olsen (2006) postulate that a natural fit in a partnership is more valuable because the sponsor does not have to promote messages with the purpose of generating congruity. For example, a cause-related sponsorship partnership between DenTek Oral Care and the American Diabetes Association exemplifies the need to create fit, therefore information about diabetes-related dental problems was communicated to viewers, otherwise the arrangement might be perceived as unfit. Nevertheless, findings confirm that created fit in a partnership can provide similar benefits to the presence of a more natural fit (Simmons & Becker-Olsen, 2006). Despite this, research does exist which exemplifies that mild incongruence in the sponsor pairing can generate an increase in sponsor recognition due to the attention and elaboration required (Olson & Thjømmøe, 2009).

Similarly, congruence influences the memory and perceptions formed by a consumer. Cornwell, Humphreys, Maguire, Weeks, and Tellegen (2006) find support for the role of congruency and articulating a relationship between a sponsor and an event in memory. Congruence is found to be advantageous in consumer memory, where articulation can enhance

memory for incongruent event-sponsor combinations. Articulation is defined as “the act of explaining the relationship between entities” (Cornwell et al., 2006, p. 312). Becker-Olsen and Simmons (2002) reason that incongruence reduces the favourability of attitudes toward the sponsorship pairing and therefore diminishes brand value because it is unclear what the brand truly represents. It can be concluded that congruence modifies the image of the event-sponsor pairing and as a result can alter how consumers identify the brand’s image. These findings are supported by Keller (1993), which suggests that when a brand becomes associated with an event, the associations become linked through memory. Therefore, firms need to ensure that association with an event does not result in a negative effect on the brand as the favourability, uniqueness, and strength of associations are critical to the success of a brand (Keller, 1993).

Extensive research in this area has examined fit as a predictor of sponsorship effects, although minimal research has investigated how perceptions of fit are formed by the audience. Olson and Thjømmøe (2011) employ a mixed-methodology approach to identify dimensions used to form perceptions of fit, and the ability of these dimensions to accurately detect fit in a sponsorship arrangement. Four dimensions were identified as being able to predict the overall fit: use by participants (i.e., athlete’s use of athletic shoes), audience similarity (i.e., the sponsored object’s audience is the brand’s target segment), geographic similarity (i.e., national brand and national team), and attitude similarity (i.e., equivalent liking of the brand and the sponsored object) (Olson & Thjømmøe, 2011). Consistent with Olson (2010), fit is identified as a valuable predictor of the effects in sports and non-sport sponsorship contexts. In addition, Olson and Thjømmøe (2011) provide insight on the effects of sponsorship articulation, where findings contradict Cornwell et al. (2006) in that select articulation messages can formulate a negative perception of fit as opposed to saying nothing, depending on the context. Olson and Thjømmøe

(2011) found that effective articulation of the sponsorship pairing increased the perception of fit by 30% compared to “bad” articulation, which implies that event promoters need to determine which types of firms would best fit them as a sponsor, and understand resonant messages to display to the audience to enrich the perception of fit in the partnership.

2.1.4 Sponsorship Portfolios

Considerable literature examines the effect of sponsorship between an event and a single sponsor. Due to the success of sponsorship, it has become increasingly popular for corporations to have an extensive sponsorship portfolio, whereas events similarly will concurrently employ an array of brands. Chien, Cornwell, and Pappu (2011) define a sponsorship portfolio as the assortment of brand sponsorships (sequential or simultaneous) which include events, individuals, or charities for the purpose of communicating with different audiences. Gwinner (1997) proposes that despite the emphasis on a single sponsorship context, “sponsorship arrangements can run the gamut from a single sponsor to hundreds of sponsors at many different levels” (p.153). The impact of multiple-brand marketing activities has been vastly explored through other areas of branding and marketing communications research (e.g., bundling or cooperative advertising), while the effect of multiple-brand sponsorship has received minimal attention. Concurrent sponsorships are not always strategic brand alliances, as commonly brands become associated with little concern for other co-sponsors contained in the portfolio (Gross & Wiedmann, 2015). Therefore, Keller (2001) outlines the need to consider commonality and complementarity of a sponsorship portfolio to understand how the addition of a new sponsor alters consumers’ perception of the brands and property when a portfolio exists.

Carillat et al. (2015) investigate an entitativity-based model of concurrent sponsorships to reveal the way in which each sponsor's brand associations are generalized to all other sponsors (image transfer) through stereotypes. The concept of entitativity, applied to sponsorship, refers to how information associated with each brand individually is processed stereotypically across all brands involved with a sponsored event. Sponsorship partnerships more commonly possess agency entitativity where the partnership is formed on the basis of common goals and outcomes (sponsoring the same event), rather than essentialist entitativity, which is identified through the similar characteristics of members in order to form a single entity (Crawford, Sherman, & Hamilton, 2002). Carillat et al. (2015) suggest that the stereotype formed by the consumer is construed from the images of concurrent brands, thus it is valuable to consider the effects of sponsor-to-sponsor and sponsor-event engagement. In addition, findings revealed that similar brands were categorized together, regardless of whether they were concurrent sponsors, but only sponsors that formed an entitative group were stereotypically categorized (Carillat et al., 2015).

Ruth and Simonin (2003) investigate the impact of pre-existing attitudes associated with each individual sponsor (in a two-sponsor case) on the evaluation of the event, also controlling for complementarity, inclusion of controversial products as sponsors, and engagement of domestic versus foreign brands. Meenaghan (1998) indicates that government prohibitions on tobacco and alcohol advertising have resulted in growth in sponsorship spending and using alternative forms of marketing communications to capture consumer attention. For example, Dewhirst and Hunter (2002) provide an examination of exposure that tobacco brands receive through co-sponsors' third party advertising in auto racing. Through attaining visibility from co-sponsors, the symbolic imagery associated with tobacco brands may become enriched when associated with other products that retain similar symbolic characteristics (Dewhirst & Hunter,

2002). This can be explained through the notion of “Diderot unities,” as presented by McCracken (1988), which accentuates that the meaning of products is commonly identified through their relationship with other goods, therefore brands may be willing to be associated with controversial goods where symbolic complementarity exists.

Investigating consumer attitudes towards controversial brands is important for co-sponsors and events as often brand familiarity exists for alcohol and tobacco brands, but they may be subject to negative attitudes from consumers which can impact the sponsorship partnership (Fombrun, 1996). In addition, Ruth and Simonin (2003) postulate that brands are receptive to a variety of effects associated with country-of-origin, which can include home country bias or perceptions formed on the basis of country stereotypes. They found that complementarity does not present an influence on consumers’ evaluations of sponsorships and controversial products do not contribute to the formation of positive event evaluations, although prior attitudes towards each brand correspond to the attitudes formed towards the event. The effects of country-of-origin were found to be context specific, although evaluations of events are negatively impacted by the sponsoring of domestic brands in which their products are controversial. There is a need for further research on country-of-origin effects in multiple sponsor settings in order to develop an understanding on the context-specific situations where the impact of country-of-origin arises. Ruth and Simonin (2003) provide support for Cornwell and Maignan’s (1998) finding that sponsorship communications develop an association between the brand and event, instead of focusing on the sponsor brand’s product category. Furthermore, Gross and Wiedmann (2015) provide support in that it is more beneficial for brands to engage in sponsor partnerships with dissimilar but complementary brands, rather than those that operate in the same industry.

Gwinner and Eaton (1999) previously outlined that event-to-sponsor associations commonly occur. Research by Carillat, Harris, and Lafferty (2010) provides a comprehensive extension to this area through the use of categorization theory to comprehend the presence of both event-to-sponsor and sponsor-to-sponsor associations in a sponsor portfolio accounting for the moderating roles of brand familiarity and brand concept similarity. Research proposes that concurrent sponsorships induce the “concurrent sponsorship side effect,” which outlines that brands are affected by the perceived image of the sponsored event as well as the concurrently sponsoring brands (Carillat et al., 2010). In concurrent sponsorships, brands are grouped together and simultaneously capture consumer’s attention through signage or media (Ruth & Simonin, 2003). Therefore, consumers associate perceptions of one brand with the other(s). The transfer of brand image is the way in which one entity becomes associated with another, and Keller (2003) denotes that concurrent sponsorships activates the “borrowing” of an event’s image as well as concurrent sponsors’ image(s). Brand concept similarity incorporates symbolic meanings associated with a brand, which are formulated from a firm’s effort to generate meaning from brand features (Park, Milberg, & Lawson, 1991), which is relevant in understanding how consumers categorize concurrent sponsors. Furthermore, brand familiarity is developed through a consumer’s experience with a brand in which they form associations (e.g., images, attitudes, beliefs), which contributes to brand knowledge, and as a result alters consumers’ information processing and evaluation (Keller, 2003).

Carillat et al. (2010) provide evidence to suggest that image transfer of concurrent sponsors can have present a positive or negative effect depending on the brand’s positioning and images of concurrent sponsors. Results dictate that brand familiarity moderates image transfer, which suggests that the images between two familiar brands as concurrent sponsors of the same

event can be transferred when they have similar concepts (e.g., Gatorade and Nike), but the images contrast when they possess different concepts (e.g., Gatorade and Budweiser) (Carillat et al., 2010). This is because Gatorade and Nike are mutually associated with the brand-concept of competitiveness (Park et al., 1991), whereas Budweiser delivers an incongruent image with Gatorade (Carillat et al., 2010). Consequently, concurrent sponsorship engagement poses many threats and opportunities to brands but can provide the opportunity to alter a brand's image and positioning.

Boronczyk, Rumpf, and Breuer (2018) provide an alternative extension to current research by examining concurrent sponsorships through identifying the determinants of viewers' attention. Colour of concurrent sponsors' signage, brand familiarity, and sport involvement all impacted viewers' attention (Boronczyk et al., 2018). The role of concurrently visible sponsors has been ignored in prior studies, therefore Boronczyk et al. (2018) finds that viewers allocate less time to signage of familiar brands than to signage of unfamiliar brands, which is consistent with prior research on advertising effectiveness (Pieters & Wedel, 2004). Viewers that are highly involved with the sponsored object place greater emphasis on the sporting event, and therefore focus less on other stimuli such as signage (Boronczyk et al., 2018). Sponsor signage generated more attention when placed next to a concurrent sponsor sign that instigates a greater level of colour contrast (Boronczyk et al., 2018). This research provides practical implications for maximizing sponsor viewer attention and understanding audience characteristics when multiple sponsors are present at an event.

Through reviewing the existing literature that highlights the effects of a sponsorship portfolio, it is evident that there are circumstances in which engagement is opportunistic for brands and properties but can also be a threat. Further research in this area would provide

insightful managerial implications for brand and event managers to successfully build a sponsor portfolio that maximizes the relationship between all parties involved. To enhance the managerial understanding of sponsor portfolios, it is also essential to comprehend the tiers of sponsorship involved (i.e., title sponsor versus presenting sponsor) within an event, which has received minimal consideration in this stream of literature. For example, the 2020 World Junior Hockey Championships contained three levels of sponsorship within their portfolio that were classified as follows: premier partners, funding partners, and official partners. This thesis aims to provide insight about concurrent sponsorships by also accounting for the different tiers (level of prominence) of sponsorship at a sporting event.

2.1.5 Level of Sponsorship

Brands can leverage their involvement with a sponsored property through engagement at varying tiers of sponsorship. Johar and Pham (1999) indicate that a brand's market prominence and positioning can impact sponsor recall in a multi-sponsor setting, as consumers are not likely to use effortful processing and accordingly will use heuristics to recollect information. Through use of a prominence heuristic, it can be inferred that major brands in the market are most likely to engage in sponsorship due to availability of funds (Johar & Pham, 1999). In an extension to prior work, Pham and Johar (2001) conclude that it is probable that prominence bias will transpire in a highly cluttered environment where it becomes too demanding for consumers to process information about all of the associated brands.

Comparably, Gwinner (1997) provides insight to suggest that the level of sponsorship can affect a consumer's response to the partnership. Investment in higher levels of sponsorship led to greater exposure in conjunction with the sponsored property, which will likely lead to the

occurrence of stronger image transfer. Similarly, Wakefield, Becker-Olsen, and Cornwell (2007) assert that less prominent sponsors are not contained in consumer's memory due to their attention being split between the event and other stimuli. Empirical support illustrated that recall of a title sponsor was significantly higher than a middle or lower level of sponsorship, which suggests that consumers place greater emphasis on evaluating the title sponsor as opposed to other presenting sponsors within the portfolio (Wakefield et al., 2007). Furthermore, incongruence at the title sponsor level signifies greater incongruence compared to incongruence occurring at the presenting level of sponsorship (Groza, Cobbs, & Schaefer, 2012). O'Reilly et al. (2019) provide evidence that title sponsorship status is valuable to the sponsor, where it can undermine the benefits provided to non-title sponsors.

2.2 Branding

2.2.1 Co-Branding

The utilization of event sponsor portfolios has led to the advancement of corporate co-branding, which presents the potential to enhance the symbolic values of brands and maximize the value of the relationship (Farrelly, Quester, & Greyser, 2005). For example, Adidas' strong associations to World Cup soccer translated into an increase in the brand's market share from 2% to 5% in four years, which is credited to the co-branding partnership formed through sponsorship (Keller, 1999). Through an event's sponsor portfolio, it is critical for brands to recognize how engagement with co-sponsors can be impactful, as not all co-branding partnerships have proven to be a success.

Tsiotsou, Alexandris, and Cornwell (2014) present comprehensive research on co-branding and co-branded equity in the context of sport sponsorship, as a lack of research in this area has been identified. Using evaluative conditioning, Tsiotsou et al. (2014) aim to recognize how attitudes are formed between corporate brands to transform sponsorship alliances into co-branded partnerships. Consumer attitude formation was analyzed through brand familiarity, brand personality, and brand image as components of brand equity acknowledged by Keller (1993). Consumer involvement, self-expression, and attachment were employed as constructs to understand consumer relationships (Thomson, 2006). Tsiotsou et al. (2014) illustrate that the pairing of a sport brand (team) to a sponsor brand can result in more positive consumer evaluations toward the sponsor brand, which will enhance sponsor brand equity and positive word of mouth. The study also identified that, in a sponsorship context, forward and backward conditioning can simultaneously occur, which enables partner brands to mutually benefit from the sponsor arrangement. Additionally, sponsorship is an appropriate context where mature and high-equity brands are paired to develop co-brands (Tsiotsou et al., 2014). Through the investigation of consumer relationships formed through attachment and personality, findings exemplify that when consumers' self-concept is articulated through a sponsor brand, the individual generates attachment and therefore associates information with co-sponsoring brands (Tsiotsou et al., 2014). From the brand's perspective, sponsorship opportunities should be evaluated based on consumers' involvement levels, emotional connections, and the symbolic properties the brand portrays, as this will enrich attitude formation (Tsiotsou et al., 2014).

Dewhirst and Hunter (2002) exemplify how strategic alliances are formed through a tobacco brand's sponsorship of auto racing that hold an assortment of co-sponsors. The partnerships generated with co-sponsors gives tobacco manufacturers the opportunity to gain

exposure through co-sponsors' third party advertising, where it is suggested that the symbolic imagery associated with cigarette brands has the opportunity to be augmented when accompanied with products that elicit similar and favourable symbolic qualities, known as "Diderot unities" (Dewhirst & Hunter, 2002). For example, Budweiser and Marlboro are identified as complementing co-sponsors as they are perceived as macho, rugged, and independent brands. Consequently, symbolic complementarities justify why brands are willing to become associated with controversial product sectors such as tobacco (Dewhirst & Hunter, 2002). Due to the regulation of tobacco advertising and the occasionally negative perceptions correlated with the controversial product, other corporate brands that participate in auto racing sponsorship do not actively seek involvement with tobacco brands due to risk adversity of potentially harming their brand. Rather, co-sponsors seek the benefits of association with auto racing, but through third-party advertising, a co-branding partnership is conveyed despite no consensual agreement occurring between tobacco and co-sponsoring brands (Dewhirst & Hunter, 2002). Comparatively, from the perspective of tobacco manufacturers, co-sponsors can provide cigarette brand exposure despite circulating in potentially stringent regulatory environments and ideally be associated with products or services possessing complementary functions, brand images, or identities (Dewhirst & Hunter, 2002).

2.2.2 Brand Personality

Brand personality is a fundamental component of determining the fit between a sponsor and an event. As brands make additions to their sponsorship portfolio, new attributes and beliefs arise that may or may not be consistent with the image of existing sponsorship arrangements. It has been suggested that categorically related sponsorships lead to an increase in brand meaning consistency as opposed to categorically unrelated sponsorships, and sponsorship category relatedness formulates a unified brand personality (Chien et al., 2011). Therefore, it is necessary for brands and properties to comprehend how brand personalities are communicated to the audience and alter consumer perceptions, especially when there are multiple sponsors present. Diversified brand personalities can affect the way in which consumers perceive an event's sponsor portfolio and understanding about how brands fit with each other and the event.

Brand meaning and brand personality are essential indicators of brand image as they establish consumers' associations with the brand. Brand personality encompasses "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand" (Aaker, 1997, p.347). For example, traits used to characterize the Coca-Cola brand include cool, all-American, and real, which are used to differentiate from their competitor, Pepsi, which is perceived as young, exciting, and hip (Aaker, 1997). Prior research by Aaker (1997) has identified five brand personality dimensions: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness.

Brand personality is developed through the users, product-related attributes, product category associations, brand name, logo, advertising, price, and distribution channel (McCracken, 1989). Through the sponsoring brands of an event, a personality is developed where it "typically originates from the status, activities, and participants of an event" (Chien, Cornwell, & Pappu, 2012, p.119). Prior research suggests that the personality of sponsored

properties originates from the type of event (i.e., sports or arts) and the categorization (i.e., golf, tennis, festival, concert), in addition to tradition and history of the event (Gwinner, 1997).

Research on the application of brand personalities to event sponsorship by Lee and Cho (2012) proclaims that human personality traits attributed to sports and sporting events contain five dimensions: diligence, uninhibitedness, fit, tradition, and amusement. Findings illustrated that sporting event personality characteristics were correlated to consumer attitudes toward the sporting event, consequently positive evaluation of the sponsorship arrangement and the sponsoring brands occurred (Lee & Cho, 2012). Similarly, Meenaghan (2001) confirms that sponsored events each have unique personality characteristics which are transferred to the brands.

Malhotra (1988) suggests that congruity between human characteristics descriptive of a consumer's actual or ideal self, and the humanlike characteristics portrayed by a brand, elicits increased brand preference. Similarly, Lee and Cho (2009) suggest that sponsor brands with a specific personality fit better with events that share personality trait(s), which is also supported by McDaniel's (1999) postulation that a match between a sporting event and a brand are necessary to communicate the appropriate message to target consumers. In addition, findings illustrated that when certain brand personality dimensions (Aaker, 1997) were combined with specific sporting event characteristics (Lee & Cho, 2012), the sponsoring brand received greater favourability. Combining sincere brands with diligent sporting events generated greater brand-event personality fit and led to increased sponsorship effectiveness (Lee & Cho, 2009). Overall, Lee and Cho (2009) concluded that personality congruence produced more favourable consumer attitudes toward the brands, which led to higher purchase intention.

2.2.3 Brand Equity

In prior research on brand equity it has been highlighted that “anything that causes the consumer to ‘experience’ or be exposed to the brand has the potential to increase familiarity and awareness” (Keller, 1993, p.10). As prior research suggests that sponsorship is valuable in enhancing brand awareness and image, it is fundamental to understand the effects of sponsorship engagement on building brand equity. Gwinner and Eaton (1999) argue that corporate marketers engage in sponsorship to enhance brand equity through developing positive brand associations. This is beneficial as brands with strong customer-based equity distinctively capture consumers’ attention, evaluation, and purchase decisions (Hoeffler & Keller, 2003).

Nevertheless, it has been proposed that the use of sponsorship as a communications tool does not enable a detailed product-based message to be conveyed to the audience, as do traditional advertising methods (Meenaghan, 1991). Therefore, Cornwell, Roy, and Steinard (2001) postulate that sponsorship marketing is effective in developing brand awareness, brand image, and corporate image as they are classified as general elements of brand equity. On the contrary, the following are defined as distinctive components of brand equity: communicating brand personality, differentiation from competitors, delivering an image of quality, and enriching brand loyalty (Cornwell et al., 2001). Sponsorship is found to make a greater perceived contribution to general elements of brand equity as opposed to distinctive ones (Cornwell et al., 2001). In addition, sponsor relationships with a longer duration tend to exhibit stronger perceived effects on brand equity, although sponsorship length requires further research to comprehend if repeated partnerships register with the consumer and function similarly to the use of repetition in advertising (Cornwell et al., 2001).

Groza et al. (2012) suggest that incongruence between a sponsor and an event will negatively affect the brand equity of the sponsored entity. Their research provides a unique perspective on examining the impact on the sponsored event, as considerable research in this area examines the perspective of the brand. It was found that the presence of a single incongruent sponsor at the presenting level, amongst a sponsorship portfolio where the remainder of sponsors are congruent, enhanced the evaluation of brand equity of the sponsored event (Groza et al., 2012). This is supported by congruity theory, which proposes that a mild degree of incongruence presents the potential for more positive evaluations (Meyers-Levy & Tybout, 1989). In addition, Groza et al. (2012) illustrate that an incongruent title sponsor can negatively affect the brand equity of a sponsored entity. Their research provides valuable implications for understanding the role of sponsorship portfolio size and levels of sponsor engagement on brand equity, although the study was limited to the examination of a single title sponsor and a maximum of five presenting sponsors, which does not fully capture the complexity of most event sponsor portfolios. For example, the 2016 Olympic Games, held in Brazil, had multiple tiers of partnership with a total of more than 50 corporate sponsors (“The Olympic Partner Programme,” 2019)

Yousaf, Mishra, and Gupta (2018) investigate the dynamics of image transfer when there are multiple sponsors through use of brand equity. In their research, brand equity is defined as “the differential effect that brand knowledge has on customer response to brand’s marketing activity, in this case sponsoring a property” (Keller, 2016, p.3). Yousaf et al. (2018) confirm that a sponsored property, with high equity, needs to consider the occurrence of image transfer through their sponsors and particularly where perceived similarity exists. Findings also concluded that brands exhibiting high consumer-based brand equity seek greater benefits from

concurrent sponsorship, especially in cases where the event has similar associations to the brand (Yousaf et al., 2018). Conversely, brands with low consumer-based brand equity seek greater benefit from a single sponsorship condition (Yousaf et al., 2018).

2.2.4 Brand Associations

Aaker (1996) postulates brand associations that consumers have with a brand generate value, as these associations are “anything linked in memory of the brand” (p.68). For example, TELUS is a sponsor of amateur hockey, where a strategic relationship between the audience of amateur

hockey and telecommunications may not be clear or obvious. Nevertheless, a hypothetical associative

network establishes the transfer of brand associations between the brand and property, as illustrated in Figure 3. This implies that brand managers should use a concept to develop support for the correlation between a sponsor-event pairing, such as national identity in the partnership of TELUS and amateur hockey (Cornwell, 2008). Brand associations present relevance in sponsorship marketing as brands partnering with a well-liked team or event generates the opportunity for those positive associations to be transferred to the brand (Gwinner, 1997). Therefore, brands aligning themselves with appropriate co-sponsors and entities can formulate unique, strong, and favourable associations (Keller, 1993). The transfer of associations is supported by McCracken’s (1989) image transfer research, where endorsement effectiveness is explained through the meanings that consumers associate with the celebrity and consequently

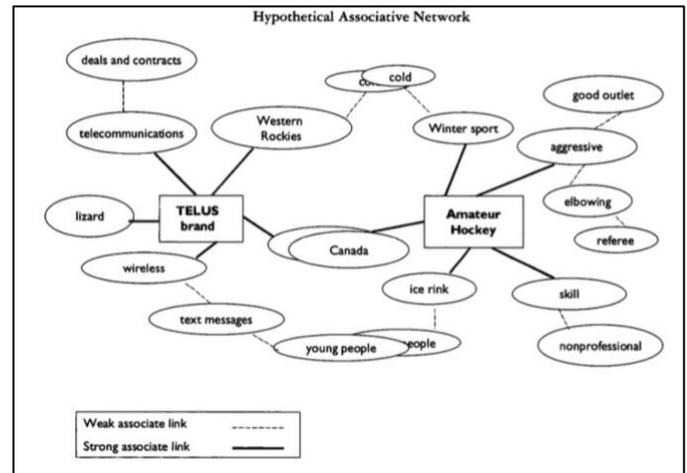


Figure 3: TELUS & Amateur Hockey
Source: (Cornwell, 2008)

transfer to the brand. McCracken (1989) uses the term “meaning” to depict consumers’ overall assessment of what a celebrity represents, which can include social class, gender, age, personality, and lifestyle. This can be applied in sponsorship marketing where the meaning and attributes of co-sponsoring brands can be transferred to the other brands involved in the sponsorship arrangement.

Zdravkovic and Till (2012) highlight that the strength of the associative link between the brand and the event is positively correlated to the transfer of associations from the sponsored entity to sponsor. Therefore, brand managers aiming to build a positive image of their brand are advised to interact with brands viewed positively by consumers, as it can alter their own customer’s perceptions. Additionally, Gwinner and Eaton (1999) postulate that perceived congruence between the brand and property is fundamental for sponsorship to enhance brand associations.

Brand associations can be used to identify comparable or dissimilar brands in a sponsorship portfolio. Categorization theory suggests that information is cognitively organized into meaningful categories or mental schemas to simplify a cluttered situation, which is relevant in concurrent sponsorship and the way consumers perceive brand attributes (Carrillat et al., 2010). In terms of consumers’ categorization of brand associations across an array of sponsors, the similarity and distinctiveness of brand features will be important components of the way in which consumers categorize co-sponsoring brands (Groza et al., 2012). The following section will further examine the interaction of brands in a sponsorship portfolio through the application of product constellations.

2.2.5 Product (and Brand) Constellations

Limited literature examines product interrelationships, which identifies the ways that consumers expect products or brands to “go together.” Product interdependence can occur in two ways: functional complementarity and symbolic complementarity. Functional complementarity arises when a product is jointly consumed along with another product to facilitate effective usage (Solomon & Buchanan, 1991). For example, the purchase of new golf clubs may also provoke the purchase of golf balls. On the contrary, according to Solomon and Buchanan (1991), symbolic complementarity consists of two or more products that transmit a message which each product independently does not. This is valuable in determining how consumers perceive “clusters of complementary products, specific brands, and/or consumption activities used by consumers to define, communicate, and enact social roles” (Solomon, 1988, p.235), known as product or brand constellations.

This phenomenon is important in understanding how consumers derive meanings of products and associate them with social roles. Research suggests that consumers organize information about product and person associations similar to other types of cognitive categorization, therefore using product attributes to assign it to a category (Solomon, 1988). For example, it is observed that a consumer who owns a Burberry trench coat, Rolex watch, and Gucci loafers is classified as a “Yuppie,” based on consumers’ prior knowledge of these product attributes (Solomon, 1988). Categorization can occur based on consumers’ associations of brands within a product category, such as cars or clothing. A consumer that drives a BMW may be categorized accordingly (in contrast to driving a Honda Civic), due to the image and status the brand elicits. There is recognition about the need to understand how sets of consumption stimuli are utilized by consumers for the purpose of self-definition and categorization of others

(Solomon, 1988). Prior research shows that products and brands are a fundamental source of communicating social information about the user (Solomon, 1983), therefore product usage and consumption activities can be used to infer social roles, personality traits, and lifestyle habits (Solomon, 1988). Current research commonly investigates the effect of product symbolism at the individual product category level but understanding the effects of product and brand constellations presents important implications for marketers in a sponsorship context where multiple brands are present.

Seminal to the literature on product and brand complementarity, McCracken (1988) discusses the cultural phenomenon known as the “Diderot unity” and “Diderot effect.” Diderot unities are the consistent consumption of complementing consumer goods, which suggests that products are linked through some element of commonality to form product constellations. Consumer goods are perceived to “go together” due to their meaning, origins, and communication of cultural significance. The interaction of cultural categories and consumer goods determines product complements, which can be exemplified through the comparison of product categories. For example, brands or products, which hold relative positioning in their respective product categories, can be perceived as complementary goods. In identifying the reasoning for the expression that goods “go together” and contain cultural consistency, McCracken (1988) postulates that the meaning of consumer goods is defined through the product’s place within a system of goods and the relationship of the system to cultural categorization (e.g., class, gender, age, and occasion). This is exemplified in the product categories of cars and watches, where BMW and Rolex are identified as structural equivalents and therefore classified as complementing brands. Marketing efforts emphasize the way in which goods capture their meaning; for example, in advertising, marketers incorporate organizational

counterparts to illustrate that the meaning is transferred to other goods incorporated, which allows the consumer to gain an understanding of what products go together. Meaning is also drawn from social groups (e.g., hippies, yuppies, and punks) in which patterns of product consistency are illustrated to consumers. It is suggested that products presented to consumers individually or in heterogeneous groups do not effectively communicate meaning, thus a complement of goods that carry comparable significance will enhance the meaning to consumers. Consequently, through symbolic properties and cultural forces, products are perceived to “go together,” which exhibits the Diderot unity (McCracken, 1988).

In conjunction with the Diderot unity, McCracken (1988) identifies the Diderot effect as the force that maintains the complementarity of goods. The Diderot effect functions in three different ways: promotes the use of culturally consistent products, transformation of product complements, and consumer experimentation of complements. The Diderot effect works to maintain consumption of culturally consistent products which contributes to the maintenance of experiences and self-concept of the consumer. On the contrary, the introduction of a new good, which exhibits inconsistency, presents the demand for new accompanying goods that redevelop cultural consistency (this is known to be driven by impulse purchases). As a result of an impulse buy, the consumer’s action can be reclassified as a departure purchase, where they have abandoned typical consumption patterns. Marketing efforts employed by a brand can work to reserve or alter consumption patterns of consumers. Moreover, the Diderot effect functions to promote personal experimentation, where the consumer purposefully seeks products that convey dissimilar meanings. This can be exemplified through a consumer’s desire to achieve greater social status, with purchasing goods outside of their habitual consumption patterns to acquire a desired image or social categorization. This can include purchasing new types of products or

different brands within the same product category. The purpose of this type of consumer behaviour is to attribute new symbolic meaning to materialistic belongings and themselves (McCracken, 1988).

The Diderot unity and effect operate in conjunction to either stimulate consist consumption patterns or alter consumer preferences and purchase behaviours. This cultural phenomenon presents significant implications for marketers, as there is an opportunity to change consumer preferences resulting in new patterns of consumption, which imposes the need and desire to purchase. Despite this, when the Diderot effect works to advocate consistency, the consumer can become oblivious of marketing influences as they are driven to remain within their habitual buying behaviours (McCracken, 1988).

Similar to branding research, existing literature in the area of sponsorship marketing focuses on single brand contexts. Yet, consumers are most frequently presented with “a complex plurality of brands” (Jevons, Gabbott, & Chernatony, 2005, p.300), which is relevant in the case of events where an array of sponsors exist. Through the inclusion of multiple brands from a diverse range of product categories, constellations are formed, which can alter consumer perceptions. Therefore, it is vital to examine the entirety of an event’s sponsorship portfolio and the impact it presents on both the brand and the event. From the perspective of the event entity, there is a need to comprehend the reason for involving similar or distinct brands and how consumers perceive the event based on the brands contained in the sponsorship portfolio. On the contrary, it is beneficial for brands to identify both threats and opportunities of sponsor engagement where a portfolio of co-sponsors exists due to the formation of brand constellations by consumers. Further research is needed to determine whether brand constellations and

symbolism in consumer consumption patterns remain in the context of sponsorship-linked marketing.

2.3 Research Objectives

The purpose of the present study is to explore the presence and impact of image transfer in a sports event sponsorship portfolio where multiple levels of engagement exist. Due to the prominence of sponsorship marketing, it is most common that an assortment of brands will exist for a single event, yet considerable research in this area focuses on single-sponsor contexts. Another limitation of existing research is the lack of consideration concerning the level or tier of sponsorship held by the brand. Higher levels of sponsorship provide superior entitlement in terms of positioning, visibility, and presence at an event, although it is incurred at a greater expense to the brand. Consequently, this thesis research provides further insight about how engagement in higher levels of sponsorship can potentially enhance the benefits of sponsorship. This thesis research considers the use of multi-level sponsorship portfolios to provide an extension to current research in this area where there is a lack of consideration for tiered arrangements. For example, if brands exhibit differentiating images concurrently sponsoring an event at varying levels, it would be valuable to consider how image transfer remains or is enhanced in this context. In addition, this thesis research aims to highlight the use of articulation in a sponsorship arrangement where misaligned co-sponsoring brands and event pairings exist. Contradictory findings currently exist – Olson and Thjømmøe (2011) and Cornwell et al. (2006) – thus, this thesis aims to further explore the role of communicating unfit partnerships. In practice, further examination of multi-leveled concurrent sponsorship arrangements will provide firms with fundamental evidence that informs the return on investment in sponsorship marketing.

Various brand concepts have been explored in a sponsorship context, which present indicative measures of examining effectiveness in a sponsor relationship. Keller (1993) expresses that brand concepts incorporate tangible (i.e., what the brand offers) and intangible (i.e., abstract perceptions of the brand) aspects of a brand, which are valuable considerations when studying a sponsorship arrangement or portfolio. This thesis research extends sponsorship literature to examine how brand constellations are applied in sponsorship marketing. Through the exploration of brand constellations, the study provides insight about how co-sponsoring brands and event pairings “go together” and develops an understanding about how consumers might organize and categorize co-sponsoring brands to formulate group identities and generalizations of concurrent sponsors. Accordingly, the present study provides consideration for image transfer in sponsorship portfolios containing concurrent sponsors and various levels of engagement, as this has received limited attention (despite its prevalence). Findings from the study can be applied in marketing practice to identify types of sponsorship engagement that mutually benefit brands and entities.

CHAPTER THREE

3. Present Study

3.1 Methodology

My thesis uses secondary research to conduct a document review and case study analysis. Through a review of internal tobacco industry documents and advertisements and a case study analysis of du Maurier's (corporate entity of Imperial Tobacco Ltd.) sponsorship involvement with golf and tennis, the goal of this thesis is to identify fit amongst an array of co-sponsoring brands in a concurrent multi-tiered sponsorship arrangement. This is valuable as sport sponsorship provides co-sponsorship opportunities and tobacco companies are rarely the exclusive sponsor of an event (Dewhirst & Hunter, 2002). This thesis aims to provide an extension to current literature, which is typically limited to examining single sponsor partnerships. Rather, this thesis explores, from a historical perspective, brands involved in a multi-sponsor and multi-tier context.

3.1.1 Document Review & Case Study

Anderson, Dewhirst, and Ling (2006) acknowledge that, through the analysis of document archives and advertising collections, meanings throughout various forms of communication are developed to depict an accurate representation of the entire process. Since the use of tobacco documents focuses on historical occurrences, it has been recognized that patterns of activity commonly repeat within the industry. Consequently, the use of historical information is valuable in developing future marketing strategies (Anderson, Dewhirst, & Ling, 2006). Despite tobacco sponsorship no longer being a permissible form of marketing – at the cigarette brand level – it is still important to understand the association between sporting events and co-

sponsoring brands. A case study approach aims to research and understand a single industry or corporation (Ticehurst & Veal, 2000), which will be used to examine du Maurier's sponsorship engagement. Through the availability of information from tobacco documents, findings can be applied to present-day sponsorship contexts to better understand brand associations and the development of complementary identities among co-sponsoring brands.

A case study analysis of du Maurier's sponsorship of golf and tennis events in Canada is provided by reviewing marketing planning documents and advertisements that are publicly available through litigation. In particular, documents were accessed from the Truth Tobacco Industry Documents database that is housed by the University of California, San Francisco (industrydocuments.ucsf.edu). The ability to obtain internal documents makes the study of tobacco firms unique to other industries, as it provides the opportunity to gain insight on the way tobacco companies utilize marketing activities to develop brand-building strategies (Dewhurst & Davis, 2005). Specifically, the Canadian Tobacco Industry Collection was used for review. Initial search terms included "du Maurier," "marketing," "sponsorship," "golf," and "tennis." Specifically, documents published by Imperial Tobacco Ltd., the producer of du Maurier, were identified as highly relevant for the undertaken research. Appendix A outlines the search terms used to explore the Canadian Tobacco Industry Collection.

Exploring du Maurier's sponsorship presence in golf and tennis was used to develop an understanding of the branding and positioning objectives of its sponsorship-linked marketing. Du Maurier also engaged in sponsorship arrangements with arts events, but the scope of this research will focus on sporting event sponsorship. The period of analysis spans the mid-1980s through the 1990s, when du Maurier was an active sponsor of golf and tennis events in Canada, prior to the prohibition of tobacco companies sponsoring major sporting events ("Women's

British Open replaces du Maurier Classic as fourth major,” 2000). Given the implementation of the Tobacco Products Control Act, the period of analysis for this study is applicable as this time saw a transitional period of increased promotional investments being allocated to sponsorship from the tobacco industry in Canada. Du Maurier was the sponsor of the Canadian Women’s Open golf from 1988 until 2000 and the Canadian Open women’s tennis from 1995 until 2000, with the location changing on an annual basis. In 1979, Imperial Tobacco Ltd. became involved with tennis sponsorship in Canada and the Player’s International was created. At the time, “Imperial Tobacco was not just a title sponsor, they were committed to growing the sport across the country, a quality we still value in the corporate partners we boast today” (Tennis Canada, 2015). In 1995, the event changed Imperial Tobacco trademarks and became the du Maurier Open (Summerfield, 1996). The championship was a nine-day event held annually at the National Tennis Centre at York University in Toronto, Ontario and the du Maurier Stadium in Montreal’s Jarry Park Tennis Centre (Summerfield, 1996).

The simultaneous analysis of du Maurier’s golf and tennis sponsorship was selected to enhance the understanding of du Maurier’s marketing strategy during this time and to ascertain co-sponsors’ objectives of engaging in concurrent sponsorship arrangements. In addition, golf and tennis are known to elicit similar images and obtain spectators with alike demographic and psychographic characteristics, thus providing the ability to identify how the sponsorship arrangements helped build the du Maurier brand (“Canadian Golf Consumer Behaviour Study,” 2012; Summerfield, 1996). These sports were integrated to provide an illustration of an event that employs a sponsorship portfolio with the inclusion of tiers. This is important in the exploration of co-sponsoring brands, their engagement at varying levels of sponsorship, and the impact it presents on fit amongst brands and the sporting event.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Findings

4.1 Tobacco Brand Sponsorship Engagement

Canadian amateur sport organizations that accept tobacco sponsorships had been denied funding through Sports Canada due to the inconsistent meaning between sports and tobacco sponsorships, although the policy did not specify that sporting events cannot be sponsored (Manifest Communications Incorporated, 1996). Consequently, many high-profile sporting events did engage in sponsorship with tobacco brands, including the du Maurier Open tennis tournaments and the du Maurier Classic golf tournament (Manifest Communications Incorporated, 1996). For tennis and golf, the sanctioning bodies for the national sport organizations are Tennis Canada and Golf Canada, respectively, which would oversee the promotional guidelines of these sporting events.

Sponsoring sports and arts events became an integral component of advertising and promotion in the Canadian cigarette market and played a pivotal role in attracting smokers to specific brands (Harris, 1989). Due to the promotional restrictions that tobacco brands faced, sponsorship became viewed as a way of “circumventing the spirit of the law” (p. 21), although tobacco manufacturers’ engagement in sponsorships has been identified as acceptable when they are considered in relation to an organization and providing support for an event (Saine Marketing, 1990). By 1982, Imperial Tobacco Ltd. had invested \$5.7 million in sponsorship, compared to \$137,800 by competitor, RJR-Macdonald (Harris, 1989). Since the implementation of marketing restrictions in the tobacco industry, brands were willing to pay a premium for sponsorship, leading to higher demand for sponsoring events and increased prices, where it is

estimated that major sporting events were overpriced by 30% (Manifest Communications Incorporated, 1996). On the contrary, the marketing restrictions in the tobacco industry led to a change in competitor dynamics given there was less opportunity for brand differentiation, where consumers placed greater emphasis on price (Imperial Tobacco Limited, 1994). As Imperial Tobacco Ltd. brands are identified as low-cost producers, this was advantageous as they could continue investing their promotional expenditures in sponsorship-linked marketing while remaining competitive within the market (Imperial Tobacco Limited, 1994).

Du Maurier had been identified as a good brand for sponsorship as “they have money, they still have a place in society, they should continue to show their commitment to the public” (Saine Marketing, 1990, p.52). Through participating in sponsorship, du Maurier aimed to associate themselves with the image of the sporting event and its participants. For example, du Maurier’s professional golf sponsorship portrayed the image of greater socio-professionalism and personality traits of independence, successful, aspirational, and self-reliant (Saine Marketing, 1990). The promotional strategy of du Maurier was “to communicate that du Maurier is a progressive company involved in cultural/sporting entertainment activities through an expression of contemporary classic quality, depicted as an aspirational, attainable lifestyle as it pertains to a quality of life which is relevant to the target group” (Imperial Brands Limited, 1996, p.34929). The longstanding sponsorship of golf and tennis under the du Maurier trademark of Imperial Tobacco Ltd. was aligned with the objective of growing the brand among younger smokers (Imperial Tobacco Company Limited et al., 1989).

4.2 Image Transfer: Sponsor and Event Pairing

Sponsorships were regarded as “good for both the event and the sponsor” (p.51), where the event benefits from the support provided in addition to gaining reputation of the sponsor, which can include enhanced credibility, awareness, success, or profitability (Saine Marketing, 1990). From the alternative perspective, the sponsor obtains less tangible and immediate benefits, where their image could reflect the image of the events and its participants (Saine Marketing, 1990). An increasingly important factor in consumers’ buying decisions was the impression of the brand behind the product being purchased, which exemplifies the importance of engaging in sponsorship-linked marketing activities that would enhance the du Maurier trademark as well as the entity of Imperial Tobacco Ltd. (Project Lexus, 1994). Du Maurier’s brand personality traits were characterized as a fun, active, and competitive brand which provides justification for their involvement with professional sporting events due to the similar traits conveyed through this form of sponsorship-linked marketing (Project Lexus, 1994). In addition, sporting event sponsorship aided in establishing the du Maurier brand with their personality traits. Du Maurier was known as a brand that aimed to portray an upscale image, therefore sponsoring performing arts, golf, and tennis events were deemed a logical fit (Stevens, 1988). Du Maurier was classified as a brand that simply positioned themselves at the upscale end of mainstream (Qualitative Science Incorporated, 1994).

Sylvestre Marketing (1994) found the relationship between cigarette brands and active sports unsuitable, with highly aerobic activities such as tennis identified less appropriate for tobacco manufacturers than other types of sponsorship (Qualitative Research, 1995). The misfit identified in tobacco sponsorships is due to the ability “to advertise as though it were an ordinary - and not deadly product” (“Tobacco feels the heat,” 1997, p.1). Despite this, support was found

for du Maurier's sponsorship involvement with golf and tennis. Through participating in the sponsorship of professional sports, du Maurier intended to associate themselves with the image of the event and its participants, which has been identified as an educated and affluent crowd between the ages of 35 and 45 (Summerfield, 1996).

Du Maurier's golf involvement elicited the image of high socio-professionalism with the personality traits of independence, successful, aspirational, and self-reliant (Saine Marketing, 1990). The 1986 CPGA (Canadian Professional Golf Association) survey outlined that 77% of attendees of professional golf events in Canada are over the age of thirty-five with television viewers of the event being 55% men and 45% women ("Sponsorships Communications Plans 1992," 1992). There is an appropriate relation among event demographics, although the market of golf events is older than the identified target group for du Maurier. Therefore, upon completion of the 1993 event, du Maurier reduced their involvement with the Canadian Open to seek out co-sponsorship opportunities that would not diminish the du Maurier brand or the credibility of the golf event (Imperial Tobacco Limited, 1992). Refer to Appendix B for du Maurier sponsorship advertisements of golf events in Canada.

Golf and tennis events were found to attract a similar audience with the image of quality, class, male or female over the age of thirty (Imperial Brands Limited, 1996). As previously mentioned, the Player's International transitioned to the du Maurier Open in 1995, as tennis players were characterized as sophisticated, upscale, fitness-oriented, which did not align with the Player's main brand attribute of independence (Imperial Tobacco Limited, 1992). Imperial Tobacco Ltd. wanted to remain involved with tennis due to its gender-neutrality as it had been identified as a professional sport which equally highlights male and female players in alignment with the demographics of du Maurier's target market (Imperial Tobacco Limited, 1992). In

addition, it was found that tennis is classified as a contemporary and dynamic sport that interests a broader audience than those playing the sport, which was favourable for du Maurier, as they aimed to meet the needs of a broader target market (Imperial Tobacco Limited, 1992). In 1995, du Maurier was advised to retain their current sponsorship portfolio, but it was recommended to add tennis events if long-term commitment could be secured (Imperial Tobacco Limited, 1995), indicating that tennis events were valuable to the image of the du Maurier brand. This suggestion contradicts the 1991 marketing plan where it was apparent that the sponsorship portfolio of du Maurier at the time elicited the brand as being less youthful and modern than desired, with the exception of their dance and theatre partnerships (Imperial Tobacco Limited, 1990).

4.3 Image Transfer: Co-Sponsorship

As Tennis Canada aimed to reposition the du Maurier Open tennis championships to expand their spectator base, their sponsorship portfolio experienced steady growth to include brands beyond the existing upscale brands such as Mercedes-Benz Canada, rado (premium watch brand), and BMW Canada (Summerfield, 1996). Lever 2000 promoted their deodorant soap with the championship due to the logical fit between soaps and sporting events but increased their involvement to include participatory activities and television advertising. The Lever 2000 brand manager stated, “tennis is a fun and affordable sport, and it fits Lever 2000 and its healthy family image” (Summerfield, 1996). Similarly, Tropika was looking to enhance their presence at the event as they “wanted to promote in a sports environment that was family-oriented, rather than sponsoring football or basketball” (Summerfield, 1996). Evian bottled water identified the du Maurier Open as an appealing event due to the similarity between the demographic and

psychographic characteristics of spectators and the brand. Through the analysis of co-sponsoring brands of the du Maurier Open tennis championship, there was no identified justification of engaging in concurrent sponsorship with the co-sponsoring brands and there was no apparent concern of the title sponsor being a tobacco brand. Sponsors of the event emphasized the necessary correspondence amongst the brand and the image of the event and sport.

On the contrary, du Maurier wanted to decrease their level of engagement with golf but wanted to ensure that co-sponsorship opportunities would not present harm to the brand or the event (Imperial Tobacco, 1992). Du Maurier expressed concerns over their title sponsorship of golf, with the event sponsor portfolios becoming overcrowded, therefore the brand was losing ownership of the event (Imperial Tobacco Limited, 1997). Du Maurier appeared cautious about the number of co-sponsors within an event portfolio, although they did not raise concern over what other types of brands they concurrently engaged in sponsorship with.

When the ban of tobacco sponsorships was in the foreseeable future, it was claimed that golf events would not suffer if tobacco companies were forced to end their sponsorship arrangements. Specifically, companies in the telecommunication and financial services industries expressed interest in sponsoring golf events. Golf was classified as a growing sport within Canada, where during the five-year period of 1991 to 1996, 1.1 million Canadians took up the sport, which produced a total of five million golfers in the country. In addition, the game was growing amongst the female population, therefore making the sponsorship of women's golf events attractive for sporting event sponsorship. This led to a heightened interest of brands to invest in women's golf sponsorship, therefore presented overcrowding concerns to du Maurier. In 1997, Whirlpool signed on as the title sponsor of the Canadian Women's Open with co-

sponsoring brands including Bank of Montreal, *Chatelaine* magazine, and Gillette (“Golf gets new sponsors: AT&T replaces du Maurier on Senior Open,” 1997).

4.4 Product Constellations

Through the analysis of marketing plans of du Maurier and competitor brands, limited consideration of the co-sponsoring brands engaged in concurrent sponsorship arrangements was given. As previously discussed, there was acknowledgement of overcrowded sponsorship portfolios (Imperial Tobacco Limited, 1997), but the concept of whether co-sponsoring brands were appropriately paired together was minimal. This could indicate that du Maurier did not have interest in leveraging the use of brand associations with co-sponsoring brands. From the examination of image transfer between brands and the sporting event, it was evident that brands identify fit and aligned image as essential criterion for investing in sponsorship. Although, when du Maurier sponsored the Canadian Open Tennis Championships, BMW Canada, Mercedes-Benz Canada, and rado (premium watch brand) were co-sponsors of the event, which demonstrates alike co-branding and corresponding images that are associated with sponsorship opportunities. This example of brand matching is consistent with McCracken’s (1988) notion of “Diderot unities” where the meaning of du Maurier is identified through their relationship to co-sponsors. In this instance, these brands hold the structural equivalents within their product category, hence concurrent sponsorship promotes the complementary use of these brands to consumers, in affiliation with du Maurier’s goal to be perceived as upscale (Qualitative Science Incorporated, 1994). The brand associations also align with the attendees of the event, being classified as an affluent crowd (Summerfield, 1996). As the sponsorship of the tennis event had seen steady growth, it was expanding its portfolio beyond upscale companies to include brands

such as Lever 2000, Tropika, and Evian, which elicit image matching with the tennis event. For du Maurier, the opportunity to extend their co-sponsors to include lifestyle brands is valuable in reaching a broader target market in agreement with du Maurier positioning objectives (Imperial Tobacco Limited, 1997). Similarly, in du Maurier's involvement with golf sponsorship, co-sponsors included Whirlpool, Bank of Montreal, *Chatelaine* magazine, and Gillette, which also captures the interest of an extensive and broad market. From the examination of Imperial Tobacco Ltd. and du Maurier documents, it can be concluded that there is a lack of awareness about the way in which brands are perceived to "go together."

4.5 Multi-Tiered Sponsorship

When tobacco brands were permitted to be involved in sponsorship-linked marketing, multi-level sponsorship existed, but not to the extent in which it does presently at sporting events. Therefore, limited understanding of the interaction between brands engaged at different levels of sponsorship was identified in the reviewed historical marketing documents. Despite this, du Maurier outlined their interest in focusing on single-sponsor arrangements to achieve greater brand awareness, or in the case of concurrent sponsorship arrangements, it was valuable to hold the title sponsor position to maximize the promotional effectiveness (Saine Marketing, 1990). Du Maurier also acknowledged the need to explore co-sponsor opportunities that would not weaken the brand or alter the credibility of the sponsored property (Imperial Tobacco Limited, 1992). Through this, it is apparent that du Maurier acknowledges the value in holding title sponsorship and the effects of image transfer amongst co-sponsoring brands. No apparent concern was raised over the level of sponsorship held by other brands, meaning that du Maurier's title sponsorship was considered valuable in achieving their communications objective.

4.6 Outcomes of Tobacco Sponsorship

With the sponsorship of sporting events being highly sought after in the tobacco industry, it is valuable to understand the effectiveness of this form of marketing. Environics Research Group Limited (1996) conducted an analysis of the influence of tobacco sponsorships from 1,259 Canadians for the health industry. Although the conducted research was for the health industry, it provided the opportunity for tobacco companies to evaluate their investment in sponsorship-linked marketing. This research report, prepared by Environics Research Group Limited (1996), gave insight about consumer awareness and perceptions of tobacco brands engaged in sponsorship arrangements.

4.6.1 Awareness of Tobacco Sponsorships

Overall, 64% of Canadians were able to identify specific events that were sponsored by tobacco companies, with most events named being sporting events. This is imperative in a brand's decision of the type of property they choose to sponsor (i.e., sports, arts, festivals). Alternatively, Harris (1989) found that smokers were aware of the sponsorship of sporting events, but less likely to associate brand names (e.g., du Maurier) with specific sporting events. With sporting events achieving the greatest awareness, brands could capture consumers' interest best by sponsoring these events. Through a demographic analysis it was found that 77% of those between the ages of 18 and 24 were able to classify a tobacco sponsored event, higher than the average Canadian. In addition, men and more educated individuals indicated greater awareness of tobacco sponsorship (Environics Research Group Limited, 1996). With golf and tennis audiences containing highly educated individuals, du Maurier's sponsorship partnerships played a valuable role in attaining brand awareness.

4.6.2 Support of Tobacco Sponsorship

When participants were asked about whether or not the government should allow tobacco companies to engage in sponsorship of sporting and cultural events, there was 51% support found with 43% opposing the idea, and 7% of participants were neutral on the topic. Despite this, the finding of greater support than opposition suggests that Canadians were likely in agreement with providing sporting and cultural groups with resources instead of the promotional benefits that tobacco companies gain from sponsorship-linked marketing. Geographically, residents of Toronto and Montreal had stronger support for tobacco sponsorship than other regions of Canada, which was the location of du Maurier's golf and tennis sponsored events. Nevertheless, the marketing communications objective for du Maurier was national in scope, reflected in the engagement of major co-sponsoring brands (as opposed to local brands established in the host city). Additionally, there was strong opposition from residents between the ages of 55 and 64 that do not smoke, but younger Canadians (18-24) largely supported the idea (Environics Research Group Limited, 1996). Findings suggest that using sponsorship-linked marketing to capture the interest of a younger target audience would have been useful for tobacco brands.

4.6.3 Tobacco Sponsorship Impact on Opinions of the Brand & Property

Canadians were also asked about how their opinion of a sporting or cultural event changes because of tobacco sponsorship, with 76% saying it has no effect, whereas 21% become less favourable, and only 2% claim that it enhanced their perception of the sponsored property. In correspondence of their opposition to tobacco sponsorship, Canadians over the age of 55 were more likely to view the tobacco brand and the sponsored events as less favourable. It is valuable

for properties to understand how their image is affected by accepting tobacco sponsorships as it can alter consumer perceptions.

4.6.4 Perceived Reasons for Tobacco Engagement in Sponsorship

Through investigating Canadians' perception of why tobacco brands decided to invest in sponsorship-linked marketing, it was found that 49% believe it was for promotional purposes, 25% thought it was to increase the social acceptance of smoking by associating it with healthy and desirable activities (i.e., tennis), and 20% deliberate that it was to be a good corporate citizen by supporting cultural and sporting causes (Environics Research Group Limited, 1996). Through these findings, it is evident that consumers had various perceptions about the purpose of tobacco sponsorships but had awareness about how tobacco brands used sponsorship to leverage their brand image and associations. It is evident that du Maurier's purpose of sponsorship is to take on the image of the sporting event and its participants through the promotional benefits of sponsorship-linked marketing (Saine Marketing, 1990).

Through the study conducted by Environics Research Group Limited, findings identified the perceptions of Canadian consumers, but also disclosed the underlying motivations of tobacco sponsorships. The conclusions also supported competitor marketing documents which state that younger smokers tend to be more aware of sponsorships than older smokers (RJR-Macdonald, 1997). In addition, the association between increased market share and engagement in high profile sponsored events by the tobacco industry was valuable as a strategic consideration when choosing to invest in sponsorship-linked marketing (RJR-Macdonald, 1997).

CHAPTER FIVE

5. Discussion & Conclusion

The findings present a historical perspective on corporate motivations for engaging in sponsorship-linked marketing. Through a documents review and a case study analysis, the marketing aims and objectives behind sponsorship-linked marketing, for the du Maurier cigarette brand from a specified time period, were revealed, which gives perspective to the way in which present-day sponsorship has evolved. It is vital to understand the extent to which sponsorship-linked marketing has developed to become a fundamental source of building and promoting a brand. As the use of this type of marketing has become more prominent, there is a need to understand intended branding outcomes, where the analysis of a historical sponsorship context has provided insight that remains relevant.

The application of the du Maurier case studying findings can be generalized to other tobacco companies which hold similar positioning (i.e., a premium, upscale brand). This is because of the comparable image elicited by direct competitors of du Maurier. Similarly, beyond the tobacco industry, findings can be applied to other brands positioned as premium within their product category. This is exemplified through the concept of “Diderot unity” (McCracken, 1988) and the way in which product constellations are formed. Complementing brands, which are structural equivalents to du Maurier, can gain valuable understanding of the image transfer process through engaging in sponsorship-linked marketing. In addition, findings can be generalized to alcohol brands due to the similar perceptions that consumers have of these types of products. This research did not find resistance from co-sponsoring brands where a tobacco

brand was engaged, otherwise alcohol brands could benefit from understanding the effects of this type of marketing.

Despite the relevance of this thesis research, it is acknowledged that sponsorship-linked marketing has vastly evolved. Due to the heightened interest of brands engaging in this form of marketing, sponsored properties have taken on extensive portfolios. This means that the interaction between brands and the property can influence consumer perceptions. In addition, multi-tiered sponsorship has become more prominent, as brands can determine their level of investment and presence at an event. Despite this not being as common in a historical sponsorship context, more recent research reveals consistent findings where brands obtain greater benefits of engaging in a sponsorship portfolio at the title sponsor level (O'Reilly et al., 2019). Furthermore, O'Reilly and Lafrance Horning (2013) highlight that the growth of sponsorship has created the need for advanced understanding of this new component of marketing and communications strategy, *sponsorship activation*. More recent research in the field of sponsorship-linked marketing has focused on activation, which is defined as “the marketing activities that a company conducts to promote its sponsorship” (O'Reilly & Lafrance Horning, 2013, p.3) that are beyond the fees paid to the sponsored property. As overcrowding of sponsorship portfolios is more prominent in current partnerships, brands are required to engage differently with the property to benefit from their investment in sponsorship-linked marketing. O'Reilly and Lafrance Horning (2013) advise that, for brands to develop an effective activation strategy, it is important to find properties that fit with the brand and then devise a marketing communications plan based upon the selected activation techniques. This can include a combination of marketing activities at the sporting event or social media outlets to reach target consumers. Social media engagement has also evolved to be an integral component of investing

in sponsorship-linked marketing, which because of the time-period of the case study conducted, this was not relevant. Current research in this area also supports the notion that shared objectives of brands and properties are valuable in achieving outcomes (Cornwell et al., 2001; Bagramian et al, 2019). It can be concluded that many aspects of sponsorship-linked marketing have remained relevant as the marketing communications tactic has experienced steady growth. Nevertheless, it has also introduced the demand for brands and properties to understand sponsorship-linked marketing to effectively reach consumers.

Due to the measures of the Tobacco Act taking effect in 2003, tobacco companies were no longer allowed to use sporting events to advertise cigarette brands in Canada. Tobacco companies can provide money to sporting events, but they are not able to display brand names, logos, or promotional material (“Many Reasons to Celebrate the End of Tobacco Sponsorship,” 2003). The changes to the regulatory environment altered the sponsorship industry as tobacco companies were a significant funding source for sporting events, therefore causing uncertainty of how these events would proceed in the future. The women’s Canadian Open golf (Canadian Pacific [CP] Open) and tennis (Rogers Cup) events continue to operate successfully using multi-tiered sponsorship portfolios (refer to Appendix C). Du Maurier’s previous sponsorship of these events, with their image of an upscale, premium brand, aligns with many of the sponsors within the event’s current portfolio. For example, the 2019 Rogers Cup partnered with BMW as a platinum level sponsor and Audi became associated with the 2019 CP Women’s Open as a premium sponsor. This exemplifies how these sporting events have worked to sustain their event image in accordance to targeted event attendees. Through the inclusion of lifestyle brands, these events also aim to capture the interest of a broader target audience similar to the historical sponsorship portfolios.

Additionally, contradictory to previous literature outlining a concern for sponsorship engagement with a tobacco brand (Ruth and Simonin, 2003), minimal apparent concern was raised over du Maurier's sponsorship involvement. In fact, Lever 2000, a co-sponsor of the du Maurier Open, engaged in sponsorship and associated with the event due to a healthy family image, despite a cigarette brand being the title sponsor. Although the case study analysis of du Maurier did not reveal apprehension from the sponsored properties about becoming associated, the affiliation between cigarette brands and active sporting event was classified as improper (Sylvestre Marketing, 1994).

When tobacco companies were no longer permitted to sponsor sporting events, tobacco brands and properties raised concern that these events were unlikely to survive without the funding provided, but evidently the golf and tennis events du Maurier were involved with still operate with extensive sponsor portfolios. Although, upon the termination of du Maurier's sponsorship with the Canadian Open golf tournament, the event did lose its status as a major. This signifies how sponsorship-linked marketing has become an integral component of brands' integrated marketing communications plan due to the opportunity for return on investment.

From previous research in this field of study, geographical origin of properties and brands have been found to impact consumer perceptions. Prior research has suggested that the effects of a brand's country of origin are context specific, but consumer evaluations of an event are negatively impacted by domestic brands in which products are controversial (Ruth & Simonin, 2003). From the case study analysis of du Maurier, it is evident that the co-sponsoring brands are brands with national presence, as opposed to local brands originating from the sporting event's geographical location. In this research, du Maurier was not identified as harmful to their properties, despite being a controversial domestic brand.

This research provides evidence of how sponsorship-linked marketing has evolved. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought new concerns to the sponsorship industry which may cause it to never be the same. During this time, 120,000 active sponsorship agreements and more than 5,000 brands are being forced to recover the lost value. The sports and entertainment sponsorship sector saw a \$14 billion loss in value because of the pandemic (“Resumption vs. Reinvention,” 2020). Looking ahead, it is expected that sponsorship spending will notably decline, and marketers will need to measure and demonstrate the results and effectiveness of engaging in this type of marketing. Future sponsorship partnerships will be designed and executed differently in response to the effect the pandemic has brought to the industry (“IEG Outlook 2020: Future of the Sponsorship Industry,” 2020).

5.1 Theoretical Contributions

Through conducting a review of documents and a case study analysis, findings reveal a historical evaluation of du Maurier’s involvement with sponsorship-linked marketing and provide an extension to existing literature on image transfer as a marketing strategy and the perception of how co-sponsoring brands and sporting event pairings “go together.” Prior case study analyses highlight the effects of sponsorship-linked marketing on the brand under study, whereas this research focuses on understanding image transfer amongst co-sponsoring brands in addition to the brand and property pairing. This thesis also accentuates how the brand benefits from investing in title sponsorship of sporting events, which has seen limited examination. The use of a historical case study provides a unique perspective about how image transfer works to impact the brand and property, which remains relevant in current contexts. It is evident through this study that Imperial Tobacco Ltd. identified du Maurier as an appropriate sponsor of golf and

tennis sporting events due to image matching. Gwinner and Eaton (1999) suggest that image transfer applies in both directions to the brand and property, therefore brands may be apprehensive about engaging in co-sponsorship with a tobacco brand. This research provided support for the importance of image fit between the brand property to reach the appropriate target market.

The application of product constellations (McCracken, 1988) is novel to this field of study, and there is a need to further understand how brands “go together” in sponsorship-linked marketing. In this thesis research, there was little concern apparent about misaligned images of co-sponsoring brands. Although the targeted age demographics of the property and brand differentiated, which du Maurier did strategically express apprehension about, the application of image matching remained present. Du Maurier was faced with a dilemma of how their co-branding would formulate product constellations that reflect occupied, aspirational, and avoidance groups. This is because of the strategy that the properties employed to engage with co-sponsoring brands would enable reaching a broader target audience, but ultimately brands were appropriately paired to enhance the image of the brand and property. Brand complementarity plays a valuable role in enriching the value of sponsorship-linked marketing, where this concept provides a valuable extension to this area of research.

5.2 Managerial Contributions

Managerially, this thesis research provides brands, seeking present-day sponsorship of sporting events, insight about the type of partnerships that mutually benefit the brand and the property. The analysis of du Maurier’s marketing documents provides evidence of their objectives for engaging in sponsorship-linked marketing, and how the brand becomes associated

to co-sponsoring brands and the sponsored property. This thesis research delivers further examination of concurrent sponsorship arrangements to inform firms about maximizing the return on investment of sponsorship marketing. Despite the historical analysis of sponsorship-linked marketing, it presents knowledge about how this form of marketing has evolved since tobacco sponsorship was no longer permissible and findings can be applied to current arrangements. The study of a controversial brand (Fombrun, 1996) enables these findings to be applicable to other brands with the equivalent classification (i.e., alcohol, gambling, cannabis). Marketers in these fields can apply the insight provided from historical tobacco sponsorship to their objectives and strategies when investing in sponsorship-linked marketing. It is valuable for brands to identify sponsorship arrangements which will enhance their brand image and understand the underlying motives of co-sponsoring brands and properties being involved with a sponsorship portfolio.

5.3 Limitations & Future Research

Although valuable insight can be gained from understanding sponsorship-linked marketing when tobacco brands were permitted to engage in this type of promotional activity, it is acknowledged that sponsorship-linked marketing has vastly evolved and not all findings may be applicable to the present-day context. In addition, the involvement of the tobacco industry in sponsorship marketing does not hold the same relevance today, therefore analysis of a more pertinent industry (e.g., alcohol or the financial sector) may present enriched managerial implications.

As this thesis research examined historical tobacco sponsorship, current sporting event sponsorship may better reveal product constellations in a sponsorship context. During the time of

analysis, tobacco brands were highly involved in sponsorship-linked marketing due, in part, to the promotional restrictions facing the industry, therefore they may not have been as apprehensive of partaking in sponsorship agreements where co-sponsoring brands did not “belong together.” Product constellations are commonly developed through consumer perceptions, therefore the methodology employed in this study did not provide a consumer perspective on the sponsorship arrangements du Maurier was involved with or current sponsorship scenarios. Additionally, the use of multi-tiered sponsorship has evolved to be more prominent in current day sponsorship, therefore the understanding of this in a historical context was more limited.

The research approach used for this thesis research was altered given COVID-19 concerns which suddenly made doing my proposed consumer research project challenging to carry out. Accordingly, future research to further understand product constellations, which was the main objective of this thesis, could employ the approach initially proposed by using in-depth interviews with the use of the projective technique to gain insight about consumer perceptions of sponsorship-linked marketing. Through combining projective techniques with semi-structured in-depth interview questions, the goal would be to identify how participants perceive fit amongst an array of co-sponsoring brands in a concurrent multi-tiered sponsorship arrangement. Authentic brands that represent various product categories, images, and personalities will be paired with sporting events that exhibit differentiating associations to participants. In the study, participants would be presented with laminated cue cards that display the title and description of sporting events and authentic brands selected from each of the event’s portfolios. Participants would be prompted to identify sponsor-event and co-sponsor pairings at different tiers of sponsorship. The aim of the study would be to enhance the understanding of perceptions of fit

between sponsoring brands and event properties, events selected to demonstrate a diversity of sports and characteristics, which consequently attract distinctive target audiences and consumers. This would provide an extension from current literature, which is typically limited to examining single sponsor partnerships. Rather, this methodology would explore consumer perceptions of brands involved in a multi-sponsor and multi-tier context to enhance the understanding of how consumers organize and categorize co-sponsoring brands to formulate group identities and generalizations of concurrent sponsors.

5.4 Conclusion

It is vital for brands and properties to comprehend the value of engaging in sponsorship-linked marketing. The historical perspective provided through this thesis research emphasizes how sponsorship-linked marketing has prevailed as an element of promotional marketing, which presents a need for marketers to understand brand complementarity within a sponsorship portfolio. This thesis research introduces the concept of product constellations in sponsorship-linked marketing to highlight the application of image transfer and co-branding strategies used by brands and properties. Valuable brand insight was also provided on concurrent and tiered sponsorship as this is more prevalent in current day contexts. Despite tobacco sponsorship no longer being permissible in Canada, the findings from this thesis remain applicable to other potentially controversial industries such as cannabis, alcohol, or gambling. The insights presented in this thesis research pertain to present day sponsorship arrangements that inform to maximize the return on investment for the brand and property, which will become increasingly important as the industry faces challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

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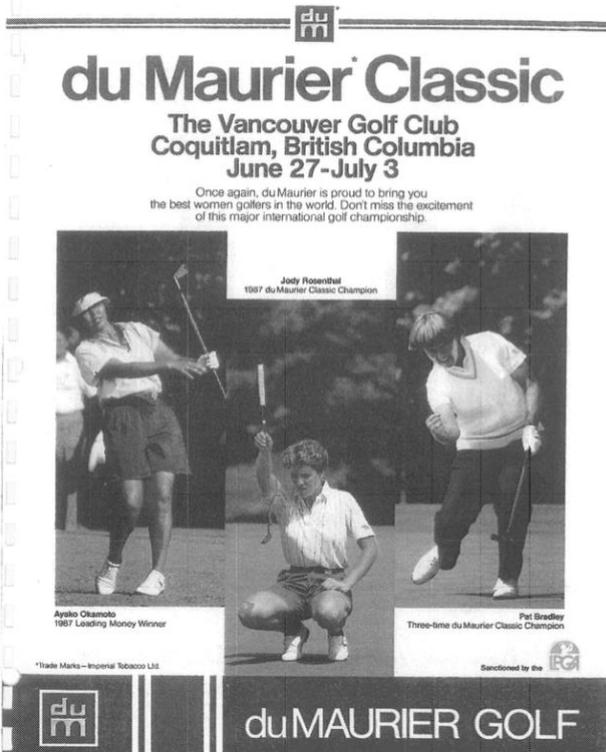
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Appendices

Search Terms	Collection	Results
“du Maurier” AND “sponsorship” AND “golf” AND “tennis”	Canadian Tobacco Industry Collection	165
“du Maurier” AND “sponsorship” AND “marketing” AND “golf” AND “tennis”	Canadian Tobacco Industry Collection	154
“du Maurier” AND “sponsorship marketing”	Canadian Tobacco Industry Collection	7
“du Maurier” AND “sponsorship” AND “sport”	Canadian Tobacco Industry Collection	300
“du Maurier” AND “sponsorship” AND “sport” AND “golf” AND “tennis”	Canadian Tobacco Industry Collection	136
“du Maurier” AND “marketing” AND “sponsorship” AND “sport” AND “golf” AND “tennis”	Canadian Tobacco Industry Collection	127
“du Maurier” AND “marketing” AND “sponsorship” AND “sport” AND “golf” OR “tennis”	Canadian Tobacco Industry Collection	266

Appendix A: Truth Industry Tobacco Document Search Terms

Appendix B: Du Maurier Sponsorship Advertisements



du Maurier Classic
The Vancouver Golf Club
Coquitlam, British Columbia
June 27-July 3

Once again, du Maurier is proud to bring you the best women golfers in the world. Don't miss the excitement of this major international golf championship.

Jody Rosenthal
1987 du Maurier Classic Champion

Ayako Okamoto
1987 Leading Money Winner

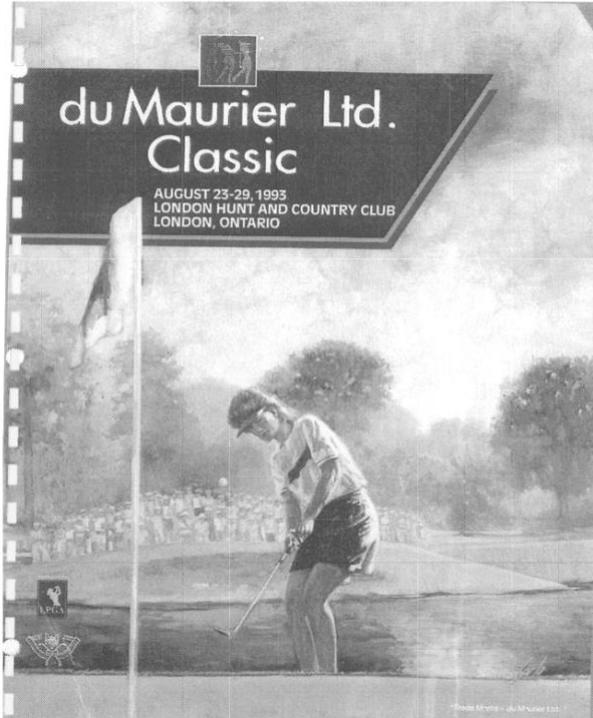
Pat Bradley
Three-time du Maurier Classic Champion

*Trade Marks—Imperial Tobacco Ltd. Sanctioned by the LPGA

du MAURIER GOLF

This advertisement features three black and white photographs of female golfers. The top photo shows Jody Rosenthal in mid-swing. The bottom left photo shows Ayako Okamoto in a crouching position. The bottom right photo shows Pat Bradley in mid-swing. The text is arranged in a clean, professional layout with a small du Maurier logo at the top center.

(Imperial Tobacco Limited, 1988)



du Maurier Ltd. Classic
AUGUST 23-29, 1993
LONDON HUNT AND COUNTRY CLUB
LONDON, ONTARIO

LPGA

Trade Marks—du Maurier Ltd.

This advertisement features a large black and white photograph of a golfer in mid-swing on a golf course. The golfer is wearing a light-colored shirt and dark shorts. The background shows a line of trees and a clear sky. The text is positioned in the upper left corner, and the LPGA logo is in the lower left corner.

(Imperial Tobacco Limited, 1993)

Appendix C: 2019 Sponsorship Portfolios

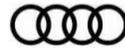
CP Open (Golf) PARTNERS

Supporters of the CP Women's Open, in association with Golf Canada, help to promote and grow the game of golf across Canada.

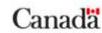
Title Sponsor



Premier Partner



Partners



Rogers Cup (Tennis)

TITLE PARTNER



PRESENTING PARTNERS



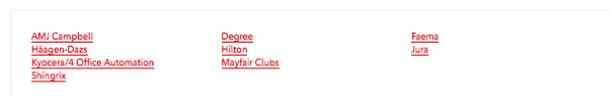
PLATINUM PARTNERS



SILVER PARTNERS



BRONZE PARTNERS



I R I S		
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GOLD PARTNERS