

Session: **Research for management and marketing I.**

Abstract nr: **EASM-0052**

Neuromarketing – A new theoretical foundation for sport sponsorship?

S. Walzel¹, T. Oidtmann¹, H. Brett¹

¹German Sport University Cologne, Institute of Sport Economics and Sport Management, Köln, Germany

walzel@dshs-koeln.de

Based on the great achievements in neuro science, neuromarketing has been developed to a new school of thoughts in the consumer behavior research in the last years (Kenning et al., 2007; Plassmann et al., 2007; Esch & Möll, 2009; Königstorfer, 2009). Neuro Science is a very complex and young interdisciplinary scientific discipline which aroused from biology, medicine and psychology, and deals with the anatomy and function of the biological nervous system (Esch et al., 2008; Raab et al., 2009). Neuromarketing is based on the knowledge of economics, neuro science and psychology and aims to research and explain the world of human thoughts and emotions. The results help to controvert the inflexible theoretical-economical approach of the ‘Homo Oeconomicus’ and to narrow the gap to the living and objective behavior of the ‘Homo Vivens’ (Raab et al., 2009).

The first research results provided completely new insights about how information is processed in the human brain (Kenning et al., 2007; Plassmann et al., 2007; Möll, 2007; Pedroni et al., 2008). In consideration of an estimated sport sponsorship spending of about 11.8 billion USD in 2009 worldwide (IEG, 2009) and the still existing problems in evaluating how sport sponsorship influence the spectators’ consuming behavior (Meenaghan, 2005; Cornwell & Amis, 2005; Fullerton, 2007; Smith, 2007) the presentation will answer the following main research question: How can the findings from the neuromarketing research help sport marketers to evaluate the sport sponsorship impacts on the spectators more precisely?

One of the main research interests in neuromarketing is the unconscious processing of information. Up to 95 per cent of all human decisions are made unconsciously and are often tried to explain rational afterwards (Zaltmann, 2004). Sport spectators follow the sporting competition for the purpose of watching sport and because of the advertising on the shirts or billboards. Therefore, the sponsorship messages are more unconsciously processed than consciously. So possibly the findings from the neuromarketing can help to explain the sponsorship effects on the spectators, and make it possible to have a look into the “black box”.

To answer the main research question, theoretical and empirical research results are presented and further research questions are deduced from them. Five German researchers in sport marketing and market research with a sound knowledge in this area were confronted with these research questions in expert interviews. The academic experts in sport marketing and sport sponsorship, Prof. Dr. André Bühler (Macromedia University of Applied Sciences, Germany), Dr. Jörg Königstorfer (Saarland University, Germany) und Prof. Dr. Florian Riedmüller (Ostfalia University of Applied Sciences, Germany), were interviewed with the focus on how the findings form neuromarketing can help academics to explain the sponsorship effects in the consumers

mind. Anja Dieckmann (GfK Group, Germany) and Carsten Schröer (Sport+Markt AG, Germany) represent experts from the private market research business and were confronted with questions focussing on the practical application of the neuromarketing findings on sport sponsorship evaluation.

All interviewed experts see great potential in the upcoming neuromarketing stream for the sport sponsorship management. This is not only limited to the analysis of the sport sponsorship effects/impacts. Neuromarketing also offers great potential for the analyzing and planning phase in the sport sponsorship management process. The benefits of neuromarketing can be seen in using and transferring the research results to sport sponsorship as well as to use the methods of measuring impacts out of sport sponsorship.

Based on the theoretical and empirical research results combined with the own findings from the expert interviews two approaches are precisely introduced in order to research how spectators process information from sport sponsorship.

In summary, neuromarketing is not a temporary field of interest, but rather has the potential to give Sport Sponsoring a new theoretical foundation.

References

- Esch, F.-R. & Möll, T. (2009): Ich fühle, also bin ich – Markenemotionen machen den Unterschied, in: *Marketing Review* St. Gallen, 26. Jahrgang, Nr. 4/2009, 22-26.
- Esch, F.-R., Möll, T., Elger, C. E., Neuhaus, C. & Weber, B. (2008): Wirkungen von Markenemotionen: Neuromarketing als neuer verhaltenswissenschaftlicher Zugang, in: *Marketing ZFP*, 30.Jg., Nr. 2/2008, 109-127.
- Kenning, P., Plassmann, H., Ahlert, D. (2007): Applications of functional magnetic resonance imaging for market research, in: *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 135-152.
- Königstorfer, J. (2009): Getting into the Heart of Sport Consumers, in: H.-D. Horch, C. Breuer, G. Hovemann, S. Kaiser & S. Walzel (Hrsg.): *Sport, Medien und Kommunikation*, Köln: Institut für Sportökonomie & Sportmanagement, 131-160.
- Pedroni, A., Koeneke, S., Dieckmann, A., Bosch, V., & Jäncke, L. (2008): Brand preferences modulate neural activity during expectation and evaluation of an uncertain reward. Manuscript submitted for publication.
- Plassmann, H., Ambler, T., Braeutigam, S. & Kenning, P. (2007): What can advertisers learn from neuroscience?, in: *International Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 151-175.

Raab, G., Gernsheimer, O. & Schindler, M. (2009): Neuromarketing. Grundlagen, Erkenntnisse, Anwendungen, 2. Auflage, Wiesbaden: Gabler.

Zaltmann, G. (2004). *How customers think. Essential Insights into the Mind of the Market.* Boston: Harvard Business School Press.