

Sport Marketing

Track Chair: Tim Ströbel, University of Bern

Attitudes Toward The Restriction Of Alcohol Sponsorship In Sport

Brooks, Lloyd; Dickson, Geoff; Naylor, Michael

Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand

E-mail: lloyd.brooks@live.com

Aim

This study explores New Zealanders' acceptance and perceived effectiveness of proposed policies to restrict alcohol sponsorship in sport, and the extent that these attitudes vary according to demographic, behavioural and psychological variables. The aim of the study is therefore to generate insights that will be useful for various stakeholders associated with alcohol sponsorship in sport.

Literature review

Sponsorship is a key source of funding for sport organisations (Lamont, Hing & Gainsbury, 2011) and alcohol features prominently in these relationships. According to McDaniel, Kinney and Chalip (2011), alcohol has an institutionalized connection to sport, in which it is often hard to find one without the other.

In New Zealand, there is concern over the embedded role that alcohol has in society and how this is perpetuated through alcohol sponsorship in sport. Many developed countries including New Zealand have policies to restrict alcohol consumption and reduce alcohol related harms (Seo, Chun, Newell & Yun, 2015). To this end, a New Zealand Ministerial Forum has produced a series of recommendations that aim to restrict alcohol sponsorship in the sport community. The recommendations included alcohol sponsorship bans across all broadcast sport, and for naming rights at sport venues.

In the public opinion literature, older people, parents, women and lighter drinkers have been found to be more supportive of alcohol-related restrictions (Lund, Halkjelsvik & Storvoll, 2016). Those with a "self interest" (i.e., engaged behaviourally or psychologically within a sport community that depends on alcohol sponsorship for survival) may be less in favour of restrictions as smokers were during the implementation of anti-tobacco policy.

Due to the crucial role public opinion has in a democratic society, proposed policies benefit from the public's acceptance and understanding (Seo, et al., 2015). Despite numerous related studies, no research has looked specifically at public opinion towards restrictive alcohol policies with relation to sponsorship in sport. So, this research adds to the body of literature on government policy, alcohol and sport sponsorship while also contributing directly to the current debate in New Zealand about the proposed recommendations.

Methodology

Eight hundred and ninety-two adult New Zealanders comprised a sample that was skewed female and older. Analyses conducted to produce a "nation-wide" snapshot of views on this important issue were duly weighted to control for these skews. An online questionnaire was circulated electronically with the assistance of a market research firm. The questionnaire consisted of 28 items including demographics, alcohol consumption patterns, sport participation, and items measuring acceptance and perceived effectiveness of the proposed restrictive policies. In addition, to assess the "self-interest" phenomenon, psychological involvement in sport was measured using the three dimensional scale of Beaton, Funk & Alexandris (2009). The three dimensions are pleasure, centrality and sign.

Results and discussion

The key finding of this research is that neither New Zealanders considered collectively nor any subset based on age, gender, demographics or underlying psychology reported strong views towards the Ministerial Forum's recommendations. Questionnaire respondents reported descriptively higher levels of acceptance for the proposed recommendations than they did perceptions of how effective they might already be, which perhaps reflects a mixture of tolerance and scepticism. Although moderate, most results were consistent with extant literature (e.g., Lund et al., 2016) insofar as young males, those who drink, participate and/or reported being psychologically involved in sport were most strongly opposed to alcohol sponsorship restriction, whereas the elderly, females and non-drinkers were the most supportive of alcohol restriction.

Contrary to previous literature, parental status was not significantly related to acceptance and perceived effectiveness of the recommendations. The results of the study are useful for government officials attempting to gauge public opinion on the recommendations as well as sport managers, prospective sponsors and other sport policy makers.

References

- Beaton, A., Funk, D., & Alexandris, K. (2009). Operationalizing a theory of participation in physically active leisure. *Journal of Leisure Research*, *41*, 177–203.
- Lamont, M., Hing, N., & Gainsbury, S. (2011). Gambling on sport sponsorship: a conceptual framework for research and regulatory review. *Sport Management Review*, *14*, 246–257.
- Lund, I., Halkjelvik, T., & Storvoll, E. (2016). Overlap in attitudes to policy measures on alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, *28*, 60–66.
- McDaniel, S., Kinney, L., & Challip, L. (2001). A cross-cultural investigation of the ethical dimensions of Alcohol and Tobacco sponsorships. *Teaching Business Ethics*, *5*, 307–330.
- Seo, S., Chun, S., Newell, M., & Yun, M. (2015). Korean public opinion on alcohol control policy: a cross-sectional international alcohol control study. *Health Policy*, *119*, 33–43.