

The Applicability of the Belief Scale about Advertising to Sponsorship in Sport: Evidence from Two Different Consumer Groups

Pyun, Do Young¹; Leng, Ho Keat² and Cho, Heetae²

1: Loughborough University, United Kingdom; 2: Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

D.Pyun@lboro.ac.uk

Aim

Sport promotion is now a major component of the marketing mix in the global market (Schwarz, Hunter, & Lafleur, 2013). This study examines two important components in sport promotion, advertising and sponsorship. Since the conceptual framework on attitude towards advertising through sport was first developed (Pyun & James, 2011), numerous studies have sought to explore consumers' cognitive structures, which are employed in determining consumers' decision-making processes by testing the relationship between beliefs and attitude in advertising and sponsorship (e.g., Cheong et al., 2016; Pyun et al., 2012). They have employed the seven-dimensional belief scale particularly designed for advertising (Pyun & James, 2009) when measuring people's beliefs about sponsorship. This study was motivated by the proposition that consumers may perceive these advertising item statements differently when they are used in the sponsorship context. One possible reason may be that advertising refers to a two-party communication process between advertiser and consumer, while sponsorship includes a three-party communication process among sponsor, property, and consumer (Cameron, 2009). Therefore, the study aims to examine whether the factor structure of the belief scale is invariant between the advertising and sponsorship measurement models.

Literature Review

Since the first systematic study of attitude toward advertising in general by Bauer and Greyser (1968), researchers have sought to better explain the relationships between belief and attitude toward advertising in general (Andrew, 1989) and in specific mediums such as television (Alwitt & Prabhaker, 1992), outdoor signage (Bhargava et al., 1995), direct marketing (Korgaonkar et al., 1997), or online (Burns, 2003). One significant medium that has also grown dramatically but remains underexplored is attitude toward advertising in sport. Pyun and James (2011) conceptualised seven belief dimensions which include four positive (i.e., product information, social role and image, hedonism/pleasure, and good for the economy) and three negative (i.e., materialism, falsity/no sense, and annoyance/irritation) beliefs about advertising through sport. Further studies supported its psychometric properties and examined the impact of the beliefs on attitude in sport advertising (e.g., Pyun et al., 2012). Recently there has been a new attempt to apply this concept in both advertising and sponsorship to compare how consumers form different cognitive structures embedded in both domains; this could explain the complex nature of the process of establishing their attitude and behaviour (Cheong et al., 2016). While Cheong et al. (2016) showed satisfactory global and internal model fits to each advertising and sponsorship data, they failed to provide evidence of the model invariance. According to Cameron (2009, p. 134), one conceptual difference between advertising and sponsorship is that a consumer receives a sponsor's message through the property in a "passion" mode while s/he receives an advertiser's message through the media in an "interruption" mode. Thus, it is assumed that the advertising scale may not operate in exactly the same way when used for sponsorship. The equivalence of the scale across two different models will provide justification of its validity in utilising in future research.

Methodology

Two independent samples were recruited in Singapore: college student consumers ($n = 290$) and general consumers ($n = 324$). The study used the belief scale about advertising through sport with 26 items, developed by Pyun and James (2009): product information (three items), social role/image (three items), hedonic/pleasure (four items), annoyance/irritation (five items), good for the economy (three items), materialism (three items), and falsity/no sense (five items). To test the invariance of the pattern of factor loadings in the scale between the advertising and sponsorship models across the two groups, the researchers employed Byrne's (2004) multi-steps for testing multigroup invariance. The data analysis was conducted in two stages. In the first stage, identification of the baseline advertising and sponsorship models which best fitted the data of each consumer group was conducted. In the second stage, tests of invariance of the factor loadings in the regression paths across the two models for each consumers group were conducted. All analysis employed in the present study were conducted by LISREL 8.80 and determined at the .01 probability level.

Results and Conclusions

For the generic consumer groups, the invariance test using a series of chi-square difference test showed one item in annoyance/irritation ('*advertising/sponsorship through sport is too loud*') was non-invariant between advertising and sponsorship models ($\Delta\chi^2[1] = 7.40, p < .01$). For the student consumer groups, the test revealed two items in Falsity/no sense with lack of invariance between the two models: '*advertising/sponsorship in general is misleading*' ($\Delta\chi^2[1] = 8.72, p < .01$); '*advertising/sponsorship is deceptive*' ($\Delta\chi^2[1] = 8.80, p < .01$). In conclusion, out of 26 items, three items were non-invariant between the two models, requiring further item development. Further discussions on why the problematic items did not operate the same for advertising and sponsorship models as well as some managerial implications will be discussed. The paper ends with suggestions on future research along this line of inquiry.

References

- Bauer, R. A., & Greyser, S. A. (1968). *Advertising in America: The consumer view*. Boston: Harvard University Press.
- Byrne, B. M. (2004). Testing for multigroup invariance using AMOS: A road less traveled. *Structural Equation Modeling*, 11(2), 272-300.
- Cameron, N. (2009). Understanding sponsorship and its measurement implications. *Journal of Sponsorship*, 2(2), 131-139
- Pyun, D. Y., & James, J. D. (2009). Enhancing advertising communications: Developing a model of beliefs about advertising through sport. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 2(1), 1-20.
- Pyun, D. Y., & James, J. D. (2011). Attitude toward advertising through sport: A theoretical framework. *Sport Management Review*, 14(1), 33-41.
- Schwarz, E. C., Hunter, J. D., & LaFleur, A. (2013). *Advanced theory and practice in sport marketing* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.