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**Developing a Framework to Identify and Systematise Sources of
Inefficiencies in Sports Sponsorship from a Sponsee Perspective**

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DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK TO IDENTIFY AND SYSTEMATISE SOURCES OF INEFFICIENCIES IN SPORTS SPONSORSHIP FROM A SPONSEE PERSPECTIVE

ABSTRACT

This paper develops a framework for illustrating why sponsored sports entities, the "sponsees", often struggle to achieve their sponsorship-related goals to maximise sponsorship income, to satisfy their sponsors, and to create positive image or brand effects through the sponsorship. Based on a review of existing literature and a series of interviews with experts from sponsors, sponsees, and sports agencies, we identify six sources of inefficiencies at the sponsee side that can impede the achievement of the sponsorship-related goals. We further disentangle the underlying drivers for the identified sources of inefficiencies, mainly resource constraints, capabilities and know-how issues, communication issues, and the management's "degree of professionalism". While previous research in sports sponsorship has concentrated mainly on the sponsor perspective and marginalised the sponsee perspective, we put the sponsee at the centre of our study.

KEYWORDS

Sports sponsorship; sponsee perspective; model of service quality; management of sporting organisations; sources of inefficiencies; sponsorship-related goals; sponsor satisfaction; sponsorship income maximisation; image effects; brand building

INTRODUCTION

Sports sponsors are not always fully satisfied with the service level offered to them by their sponsored sports clubs. Beginning in 2008, Rehm (2012) biennially surveyed 33 large sponsors in the German professional football league (“Bundesliga”) to assess the service level of sponsored clubs and of intermediate agencies. On a scale from 1 = “very good” to 6 = “insufficient”, sponsors rated the service level of the clubs at 2.48 in 2012, 2.42 in 2010, and 2.54 in 2008. They assessed the service level of sports marketing agencies, which are commissioned by the clubs, at only 3.00 in 2012, 2.89 in 2010, and 2.85 in 2008. Although the rating for clubs is stagnate over the survey period and the rating for agencies has deteriorated, 76% of the sponsors claim they would be willing to invest more if the service level of the clubs or agencies were better.

The view that the service orientation and overall sponsorship performance of sports organisations, hereafter referred to as "sponsees", is worth examining is supported by Stotlar (2009), who discusses various examples of the sponsees' lack of professionalism, e.g., insufficient customisation in sponsor approach, unawareness of sponsor needs, and inadequate maintenance of the sponsor-sponsee relationship.

How do these results fit with the common notion that today top sports clubs are managed more professionally, especially marketing and sponsorship activities? What explains the problem of sponsees struggling to achieve their sponsorship-related goals, for example, to satisfy their sponsors?

Traditionally, academics have investigated sponsorship either as a discrete transaction between sponsor and sponsee or as a relationship between sponsor and sponsee (Farrelly & Quester, 2005; Ryan & Fahy, 2012¹). Either way, previous literature in sports sponsorship focuses on the sponsor perspective and largely marginalises the sponsee perspective. In

contrast, this paper intends to explore the sponsee perspective to understand why sponsees often struggle to achieve their sponsorship-related goals. In other words, we want to identify and analyse sources of inefficiencies and their effects on the sponsee's ability to achieve their sponsorship-related goals.

Because of the scarce knowledge about the sponsee perspective and potential sources of inefficiencies on the sponsee side, we pursue an inductive research approach aiming at theory building. We first compile existing knowledge from the sports management, sponsorship, and service marketing literature. Building on this base, we conduct interviews with experts from the three typically involved parties (sponsors, sponsees, and sports agencies) to discuss the sponsees' goals, determinants to achieve these goals, and potential gaps or inefficiencies in sponsee organisations. Based on a three-step analysis approach by Miles and Huberman (1994), we propose a framework for sports sponsorship from a sponsee perspective.

In this framework, we describe the three main sponsee goals and the relevant determinants for the achievement of these goals. Most important, we identify and systematise six sources of inefficiencies (SOI) which can impede the achievement of sponsee goals. Moreover, we disentangle the underlying drivers for the identified SOI, mainly resource constraints, capabilities and know-how issues, communication issues, and what we call management's "degree of professionalism".

The paper addresses two key audiences. First, for academics it complements the transactional and relational views of sponsorship by examining the sponsee perspective in greater detail. It thereby broadens the field of research and potentially triggers further empirical research about sponsees, potential SOI and their underlying drivers, and professionalism on the sponsee side. Second, the framework is intended to serve as an analysis and management tool for sponsorship managers on either side, for sponsees and sponsors. Sponsees may compare their own situation with the framework presented here and

check whether, and to which degree, the SOI apply to them. Sponsors may benefit from a better understanding of what happens inside the sponsee organisations and how that is related to their potential dissatisfaction.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows: section two reviews the sponsorship literature and the "model of service quality" (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985); section three describes the exploratory research approach; section four addresses the proposed framework, the SOI and their underlying drivers, and research propositions; finally, section five concludes with a brief summary, a discussion on limitations, and directions for further research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Until the 1990s the vast majority of studies in the sponsorship literature analysed sponsorship as a discrete transaction between sponsor and sponsee (Cornwell & Maignan, 1998; Walliser, 2003). According to Bühler (2006), one limitation of this transactional view of sponsorship is that the role of the sponsee is reduced to being the recipient of money in exchange for granting promotional rights. Consequently, most of the studies concentrated on the sponsor perspective and rather neglected the sponsee perspective. Popular fields of research include the sponsors' goals (e.g., Copeland, Frisby, & McCarville, 1996), the measurement of sponsorship effects (e.g., Lardinois & Derbaix, 2001), the sponsorship management organisation at the sponsor side (e.g., Chadwick & Thwaites, 2005) and the sponsor-sponsee fit (e.g., Becker-Olsen & Hill, 2006).

Since the beginning of the new millennium, the research focus in the sponsorship literature has shifted toward a relational view of sponsorship. The business-to-business relationship character of sponsorship is emphasised and, consequently, slightly more attention is on the sponsee perspective (Ryan & Fahy, 2012). At the core of the relational view is the analysis of

success factors in sponsor-sponsee relationships. Trust, mutual understanding, long-term perspective, commitment, communication, and cooperation are among the most frequently mentioned factors (Bühler, Heffernan, & Hewson, 2007; Farrelly & Quester, 2005; Nufer & Bühler, 2010, 2011).

A few research streams in particular take the sponsee perspective into account. Recent studies (e.g., Frederick & Patil, 2010; Milligan, 2009) concentrate on brand building efforts of sponsees, i.e., to build a brand and to position themselves for potential sponsors and other "customers", like fans. Other research (e.g., Doherty & Murray, 2007; Gaede, 2006) investigates the sponsees' organisational setup and sponsorship-related processes like sponsor screening, sponsor approach, sponsorship execution, and sponsorship evaluation.

In addition to the sponsorship literature, we draw on another concept from service marketing literature: the "model of service quality" by Parasuraman et al. (1985). This model describes determinants and causal relationships of quality in services – in contrast to the at that time prevailing research topic of quality in tangible goods. For this purpose, Parasuraman et al. (1985) compile existing knowledge about service quality and then undertake an exploratory study, using interviews with executives and consumers to investigate service quality and formulate a conceptual model. Finally, a number of discrepancies or gaps that affect the service quality as perceived by consumers are identified. The model of service quality has been used rarely in a sports context.² To the authors' knowledge it has not been applied in a sports sponsorship context. When service quality is investigated in a sports context, the focus is on the sports consumers' perception of service quality in sports facilities and sports events (e.g., Bodet & Bernache-Assollant, 2009; Koo, Andrew, & Kim, 2008).

The literature review illustrates the conceptual background of our study. Because existing literature on sponsees and potential SOI in sports sponsorship is scarce, we conduct an exploratory study with sponsorship experts to discuss sponsees' goals, determinants to achieve

these goals, and potential gaps or inefficiencies in sponsee organisations. This information enables us to propose a framework to identify and systematise sources of inefficiencies in sports sponsorship from a sponsee perspective. This research approach is visualised in Figure 1.

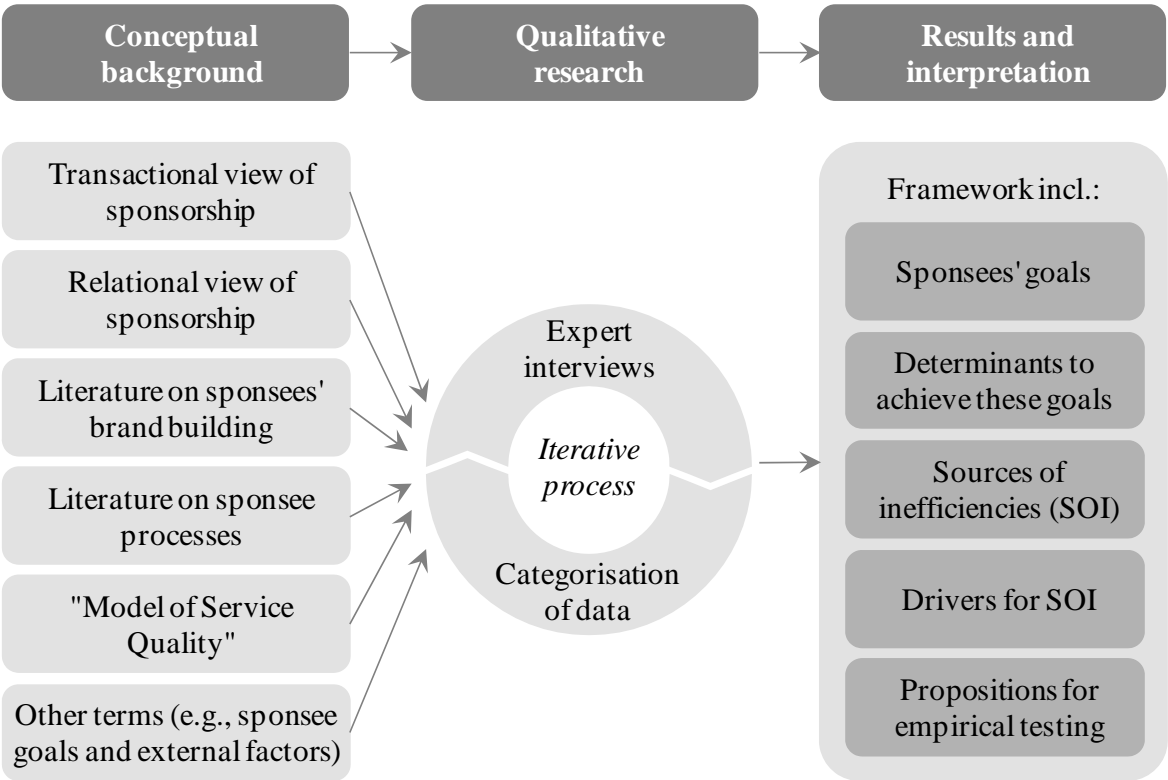


Figure 1: Research approach

METHODOLOGY

Initial Categorisation

Categorisation or coding of data is a classical concept in qualitative research and specifically in theory building (Dey, 1993). We used categories throughout the data collection and analysis process to organise the data and develop the framework.

The review of existing literature about sponsorship, sponsees, and service quality led to an initial categorisation of potentially relevant components of the framework. The initial categorisation scheme is displayed in Table 1.

Initial categorisation scheme	
Layer 1	Layer 2
Building blocks in Model of Service Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management perception of sponsor expectations Translation of perceptions into sponsorship service quality specifications Delivery of sponsorship service External communications to sponsor Perceived sponsorship service Expected sponsorship service Word of mouth communications Sponsor needs Past experience
Gaps in Model of Service Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sponsor expectation - management perception Management perception - service quality specifications Service quality specifications - service delivery Service delivery - external communications Expected service - perceived service
Sponsee processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquisition process and sub-processes Execution process and sub-processes
Relationship quality factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trust Mutual understanding Long-term perspective Communication Cooperation Commitment
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sponsorship concept Maximisation of sponsorship income Image considerations and brand building External factors

Table 1: Initial categorisation scheme

Exploratory Study

Robson (2002) describes an exploratory study as a means of identifying "what is happening; to seek new insights; to ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light" (p. 59). Our initial categorisation scheme served as the starting point for our exploratory study. We decided to conduct semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured in this context means that the "researcher will have a list of themes and possibly some key questions to be covered, although their use may vary from interview to interview" (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012, p. 374). This approach allowed us to ask additional questions to explore topics in more detail and to receive additional information by probing the answers of the interviewees.

The guiding principle for the search for interview partners was to find decision-makers from all three parties (sponsee, sponsor, and agency) that are directly involved in sponsorship planning, acquisition, and execution processes. Regarding the sponsees, the focus was set on sports clubs and sports associations, but not on sports events or individual athletes.

In total, 13 interviews were conducted, which is in line with the statement of Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) that "in common interview studies, the number of interviews tends to be around 15 +/- 10" (p. 113). Of the 13 interview partners, four are classified as "sponsors", five as "sponsees", and four as "agencies". The interviewed sponsors are from two commercial banks, one food and beverage company, and one manufacturing company. All sponsors have been active in different sports and different sponsorships. Three of the interviewed sponsees are football clubs, one is a multi-sports club, and one is a sports association. Three of the interview partners in agencies represent sports marketing agencies and one represents a communication agency. All interview partners are from Germany or Switzerland.

The interviews were conducted face-to-face or via telephone and lasted from 30 to 90 minutes. All interviews were audio-recorded and full confidentiality and anonymity was

guaranteed to the interviewees. Interview transcripts were produced directly after the interviews.

Final Categorisation

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), data analysis consists of three steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction is the transfer of raw data, i.e., the transcribed interviews, into a more manageable and comprehensible form. We applied our initial categorisation scheme to the interviews by attaching all relevant pieces of information from the interviews (paragraphs, sentences, or phrases) to appropriate categories. During the analysis of the interviews, the categorisation scheme was iteratively refined, i.e., previous categories were erased, split, or merged and new categories were added. Our final categorisation scheme is shown in Table 2. For reasons of space, only the first two layers are displayed while layer three is omitted.

Final categorisation scheme	
Layer 1	Layer 2
Goals	PG – Maximisation of sponsorship income SG1 – Sponsor satisfaction SG 2 – Creation of brand/image effects
External factors	E1 - Sponsor expectations E2 - Market conditions E3 - Sponsee specifics
Sponsee processes	P1 - Management perception of sponsorship market and sponsors P2 - Development of a sponsorship strategy P3 - Organisational structure and processes P4 - Approach towards brand building P5a - Operational sponsorship activity – Sponsor acquisition P5b - Operational sponsorship activity – Execution of sponsorship
SOI	SOI 1 - Market and sponsors – management perception SOI 2 - Management perception - sponsorship strategy SOI 3 - Sponsorship strategy - org. structure and processes SOI 4 - Sponsorship strategy - brand building SOI 5 - Org. structure and processes - operational activities SOI 6 - Brand building - operational activities

Table 2: Final categorisation scheme (layer 3 omitted)

An example for refinement from the initial to the final scheme is that concepts like "external communications to sponsor" or "relationship quality factors" are no longer listed in the final categorisation scheme. They are dropped not because they are unimportant; rather they are implicitly covered in the proposed SOI.

In the next section, we move on to the steps "data display" and "conclusion drawing" in the Miles and Huberman (1994) approach. As a result, the final categorisation scheme is converted into the proposed framework and insights and propositions are discussed.

RESULTS

The building blocks and relationships of the framework are shown in Figure 2. The framework is structured in three parts. At the bottom are the sponsee's processes (P1 – P5b) which are targeted at the achievement of the sponsee's sponsorship-related goals (PG, SG1, and SG2). At the top, external factors (E1 – E3), which also affect the sponsee's goal achievement, are displayed. Six sources of inefficiencies (SOI 1–SOI 6) are located at the transitions from one process step to another.

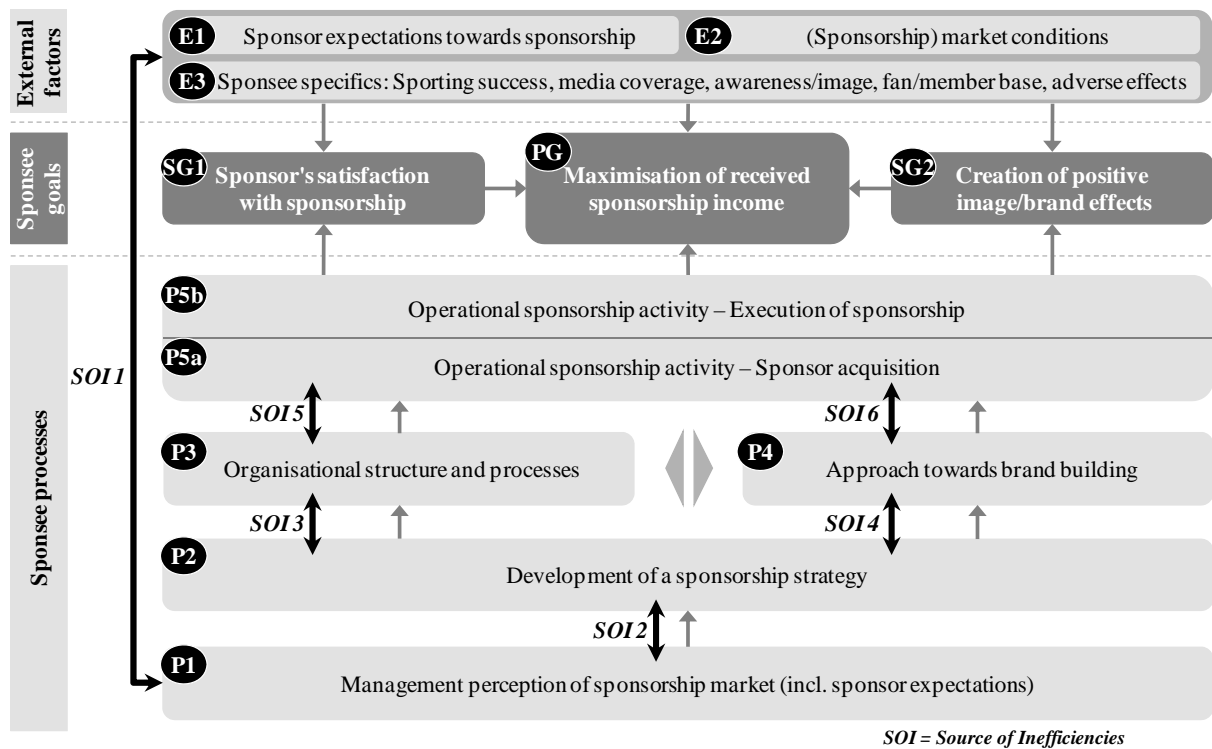


Figure 2: Framework for sports sponsorship (sponsee perspective)

In general, it is important to re-emphasise that the framework takes the perspective of the sponsee, i.e., "management", for example, refers to the sponsee's management if not otherwise stated.

The Sponsee's Goals

The interview partners commonly agree that the primary goal (PG) of sponsees is to maximise their received sponsorship income. While all interview partners point out that there are other goals as well, they agree that any secondary sponsorship-related goal eventually contributes to the financial goal. Two secondary goals (SG1 and SG2) stand out in the discussion with the interview partners and are displayed in the framework: "sponsor's satisfaction with sponsorship" and "creation of positive image/brand effects". Sponsor satisfaction contributes to the primary financing goal, especially because satisfied sponsors tend to continue their sponsorships (and perhaps at higher amounts of money) and there is no need to acquire new sponsors which saves resources. Similarly, a positive image and a strong brand contribute to the primary financing goal because sponsors will likely be willing to invest more and tie more closely to such a sponsee. Hence, we make two propositions.

Proposition SG1: The higher sponsor satisfaction, the higher received sponsorship income.

Proposition SG2: The more positive image effects emerge from sponsorships, the higher received sponsorship income.

SOI and the Sponsee's Processes

In this section we focus on the SOI, which are related to the sponsee's sponsorship processes. Each process step is characterised by a few success factors. Each SOI is based on a few drivers prerequisite for efficient accomplishment of the subsequent process step (and eventual achievement of the sponsee's goals). We discuss each SOI and identify (1) the process steps that the SOI impact, (2) the success factors of these process steps, (3) the underlying drivers of the SOI, and (4) the research propositions regarding the achievement of the sponsee's goals.

SOI 1: Management perception of sponsorship market (and sponsor expectations) doesn't meet real market conditions (and sponsor expectations)

The starting point for the sponsorship process chain at the sponsee side is the "management perception of sponsorship market (including sponsor expectations)" (P1). The first source of inefficiencies (SOI 1) is located between the perception of the sponsee's management about the outside world and the outside world itself. The closer to reality the management's perception of the outside world, the more likely it will set up a sponsorship organisation and architecture which is eventually able to achieve the sponsee's sponsorship goals.

Proposition SOI 1: Inefficiencies between the sponsorship market and the management's perception of it will negatively affect the sponsee's goal achievement.

As shown in Table 3, one success factor for the process step P1 is the management's understanding of what sponsors generally expect from a sponsorship and from a sponsee as contractual partner. That is, what kind of sponsorship strategy, processes, structures, and/or brand characteristics do sponsors expect from their counterparts; what are their needs and targets; which relationship quality aspects (trust, long-term focus, etc.) are important to them; and what connotes high quality service to them. The other success factor is the management's understanding of the (sponsorship) market conditions. This comprises a realistic assessment of the sponsee's own sporting, economic, and image situation; an understanding of the economy as a whole and its effects on sports sponsorship; moreover, a grasp for trends in sponsorship, knowledge about the current climate for sports sponsorship, and information about recent sponsorship contracts from competitors.

Drivers for SOI1	Success factors at P1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management disinterest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding what sponsors generally expect from sponsorships and sponsee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of interconnectedness in the sponsorship community 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient or inadequate upward feedback from sponsorship personnel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of (sponsorship) market conditions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak market research orientation 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to assess own sporting, economic, and image situation 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to assess economic situation and its effects on the sponsorship market 	

Table 3: Potential reasons SOI 1 affects the implementation of success factors at P1

Table 3 shows the drivers for SOI 1 that were identified in the interviews with industry experts. One driver is simply management disinterest in the sponsorship market as a whole or disinterest in trying to understand (potential) sponsors. This may be due to a lack of commitment towards professional sponsorship and is especially prevailing when sponsorship is understood solely as a financing instrument by the sponsee organisation.

If the management is committed to professional sponsorship, it may still be quite far away from the sponsorship community. A lack of interconnectedness in the sponsorship community (actual and potential sponsors, associations, and competitors) is another driver for SOI 1. A complementary mechanism to overcome the distance to the sponsorship community is upward feedback from sponsorship personnel to the sponsee's management. Thus, insufficient or inadequate upward feedback is a third driver for SOI 1.

Weak market research orientation can drive SOI 1 as well, e.g., a lack of receptiveness for (self-initiated or external) market research and relevant publications or the inability to understand and process them.

In addition, we identify two more drivers particularly affecting the understanding of the (sponsorship) market conditions: (1) the management's inability to assess its own sporting,

economic, and image situation and potential and (2) the management's inability to assess the broader economic situation on a regional, national, and global scale and its implications for the sponsorship market. These two drivers for SOI 1 may often reflect management's lack of expertise or experience.

Proposition Drivers 1: The size of SOI 1 is positively related to the drivers displayed in Table 3.

SOI 2: Management perception of sponsorship market (and sponsor expectations) not properly translated into sponsorship strategy

So far, the management interacted with the outside world and developed a perception of the (sponsorship) market and potential sponsors' expectations. In a next step perception must be translated into a "sponsorship strategy" (P2). A sound sponsorship strategy provides the basis to professionally perform subsequent sponsorship-related tasks. The second source of inefficiencies (SOI 2) is located at the transition from management perception of the sponsorship market to development of a sponsorship strategy. Even if no inefficiencies existed at SOI 1, i.e., management perfectly understood the sponsorship market and sponsor expectations, there is no guarantee that it will develop an appropriate sponsorship strategy that is able to improve the achievement of the sponsee's goals.

Proposition SOI 2: Inefficiencies at the transition from management's market perception into a sponsorship strategy will negatively affect the sponsee's goal achievement.

Based on the discussions in the expert interviews, we identify three success factors for an appropriate sponsorship strategy (Table 4). The first success factor is a "quantitative" element: a well-defined sponsorship hierarchy, a rights catalogue for sponsors, and a price list, of which all should be tailored to the specific sponsee's situation. The second factor is a

"qualitative" element: a recorded sponsorship concept or philosophy including a long-term vision, objectives, and sponsee personnel guidelines for how to interact with sponsors and other partners. The third factor is transparency of the sponsorship strategy towards the sponsee's personnel which is necessary to create a common understanding about the sponsorship strategy and to trigger a service mentality in the sponsee organisation. Transparency should not be underestimated because it demonstrates internally and externally that management is fully committed to professional sponsorship and willing to act accordingly to eventually achieve the set goals.

Drivers for SOI2	Success factors at P2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reluctance to change the way sponsorship is approached 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-defined sponsorship hierarchy/rights catalogue/price list • Recorded sponsorship concept/philosophy incl. vision, objectives, and guidelines • Transparency of sponsorship strategy towards sponsee's personnel
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of infeasibility to achieve objectives 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neglect of long-term sponsorship focus in favour of short-term orientation 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource constraints (personal and financial) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient know-how about determinants and implementation of sponsorship strategy 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of communication from management to sponsorship personnel 	

Table 4: Potential reasons SOI 2 affects the implementation of success factors at P2

The drivers for SOI 2 are displayed in Table 4. One driver is the management's reluctance to change the way sponsorship is approached. "We have always done it like this" is a common but critical phrase that shows a lack of courage and commitment to change.

Another driver is the management's perception that it is simply not feasible to achieve all sponsee goals at the same time, i.e., satisfy the sponsors, strengthen its own brand, and receive maximum sponsorship fees. This perception of infeasibility may occur especially in difficult situations like a struggle against relegation in the sporting field.

The next driver, neglect of long-term sponsorship focus in favour of short-term orientation, is closely related. A long-term focus comprises the management's commitment, patience, and persistence to develop a sustainable sponsorship architecture which may be costly (personnel, equipment, etc.), but helps the sponsee in the long run. It contrasts with a relapse into old short-term thinking patterns, e.g., to invest into a new fringe player at the expense of higher future sponsorship income.

The fourth and fifth drivers for SOI 2 are related to resources and capabilities. Resource constraints cover personal and financial constraints. A capabilities issue is: insufficient know-how about the determinants and implementation of a sponsorship strategy, e.g., what a proper sponsorship hierarchy looks like, how to set prices, which guidelines should be set for the sponsorship personnel, and how to embed sponsorship in the sponsee's overall organisation.

Finally, the sixth identified driver for SOI 2 is the lack of communication from management to sponsorship personnel. This driver is clearly linked to the transparency success factor. If the management does not properly communicate the set sponsorship strategy and its commitment towards professional sponsorship, it will be difficult to create a common understanding, achieve broad acceptance, and trigger a service mentality among the sponsee's personnel.

Proposition Drivers 2: The size of SOI 2 is positively related to the drivers displayed in

Table 4.

SOI 3: Sponsorship strategy not properly translated into organisational structure and processes

After the development of a sponsorship strategy the sponsee has to set up "organisational structure and processes" (P3) to execute the set sponsorship strategy. No matter what the sponsorship strategy exactly looks like, to achieve the set goals an organisational structure

and well-defined processes are a necessity for professional sponsorship. The existence of an appropriate sponsorship strategy is no guarantee that proper organisational structure and processes will be established. Hence, the third source of inefficiencies (SOI 3) is located between the sponsorship strategy and the development of organisational structure and processes.

Proposition SOI 3: Inefficiencies between the sponsorship strategy and the development of organizational structure and processes will negatively affect the sponsee's goal achievement.

We identify two success factors for organisational structure and processes (Table 5). First, there is the allocation of clear roles, responsibilities, and tasks to prevent role conflict and role ambiguity. Typically, marketing, sales, and service/execution roles have to be allocated; ensuring sufficient interlinkages between these roles is equally important. The discussions in the expert interviews suggest that there is no standard blueprint for how to design such an organisational structure, but it must incorporate the sponsee's specific situation. One organisational feature that was clearly important to all interview partners is the creation of clear-cut sponsor interfaces, i.e., key accounts, where sponsor and sponsee personnel can build close and enduring relationships. Here the relationship quality aspects mentioned above come into play. Second, all relevant sponsorship processes and sub-processes should be defined, including processes for operational sponsorship activities, processes for internal and external communication, and interlinkages with other business processes (e.g., controlling, reporting).

Drivers for SOI3	Success factors at P3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of understanding that org. structure and processes needed to implement strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear allocation of roles, responsibilities, and tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource constraints (personal and financial) 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient know-how about determinants and implementation of org. structure and processes 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of goal-setting regarding sponsorship activities 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate standardisation of standardisable tasks 	

Table 5: Potential reasons SOI 3 affects the implementation of success factors at P3

Table 5 shows the drivers for SOI 3 that were identified in the interviews. The first driver for SOI 3 is the management's lack of understanding that organisational structure and processes are important factors for professional sponsorship, especially in the long run. "I don't invest into sponsorship architecture – it doesn't score any goals" was a remarkable sponsee statement in one of the interviews and may well explain the occurrence of SOI 3.

Beyond management's understanding and commitment, resource constraints and deficits in relevant capabilities are important drivers for SOI 3. Even if the management is committed to establish a professional sponsorship architecture, there may be personal and financial constraints as well as insufficient know-how about the determinants and implementation of organisational structure and processes, e.g., to what extent are sales, marketing, and service/execution personnel divided and interlinked and which processes need to be defined.

The last two drivers for SOI 3 are closely related to the definition of sponsorship processes and were explicitly highlighted in the interviews. One driver is the absence of goal-setting regarding sponsorship activities. Thorough goal-setting helps the sponsee clarify the roles, responsibilities, and tasks for sponsorship personnel and it serves as an incentive mechanism for service quality towards sponsors and success in sponsor acquisition, for example. Second,

standardisable tasks may be inadequately standardised. Finding the right balance of standardisation versus flexibility in processes is important; processes with sponsor interaction typically need more flexibility than analysis processes.

Proposition Drivers 3: The size of SOI 3 is positively related to the drivers displayed in Table 5.

SOI 4: Sponsorship strategy not properly translated into approach towards brand building

Part of the implementation of the sponsorship strategy is not only the development of organisational structure and processes, but also the development of an "approach towards brand building" (P4). The experts in the interviews emphasised that the sponsees' brand building is an integral part of professional sponsorship. And it is something that most sponsors, whether consciously or not, simply expect from their sponsees. Whether or not the sponsee has actively and consciously developed a brand, brand building plays an important role in the achievement of the sponsee's goals. Even if brand building is covered in the sponsorship strategy, a proper approach to it does not necessarily emerge. Accordingly, the fourth source of inefficiencies (SOI 4) is located between the sponsorship strategy and the development of an approach towards brand building.

Proposition SOI 4: Inefficiencies at the transition from a sponsorship strategy into a brand building approach will negatively affect the sponsee's goal achievement.

Based on the discussions in the expert interviews, we identify three success factors for an approach towards brand building (Table 6). First, the sponsee has to position itself, e.g., define its strengths and its philosophy. Accordingly, its brand positioning should be integrated in the sponsee's communication, e.g., in a claim or a slogan. A sponsee that is able to position itself as a real brand may even largely uncouple its sponsorship success from its sporting

success. Second, the own brand should be promoted actively and continuously, e.g., with Corporate Identity activities, by selecting sponsors that fit to or even push the sponsee brand, or by contractually settling a sponsor's obligation to carry out certain sponsorship activation measures. Third, transparency about the brand positioning within the sponsee organisation is important to make sure that every employee acts accordingly.

Drivers for SOI4	Success factors at P4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of understanding about importance and value-add of strong brand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of brand positioning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource constraints (personal and financial) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous and active promotion of own brand
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient know-how about determinants and implementation of brand building approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparency of brand positioning towards sponsee's personnel
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of communication from management to sponsorship personnel 	

Table 6: Potential reasons SOI 4 affects the implementation of success factors at P4

The drivers for SOI 4 are listed in Table 6. The first driver is management's failure to understand the importance of a distinct sponsee brand or image. An interview partner stated that sponsees should learn to think and behave like brand manufacturers where the whole club structure and communication are designed accordingly. A prominent example of such an approach is F.C. Barcelona with its slogan "Més que un club" (<http://www.fcbarcelona.com>). But also for smaller and less professional sponsees where the term "brand building" may sound somewhat pretentious, the motivation to know and utilise their own strengths and to position themselves is the same – as one interview partner said, "If you don't look at the mirror and comb your hair sometimes, you aren't an attractive partner".

Resource constraints and deficits in capabilities also are drivers for SOI 4, as they are for previous SOI. Resource constraints may impede focused brand building when investments in the brand (own personnel, external agencies, studies, etc.) are subordinated to other

investments. Insufficient know-how about the determinants and implementation of brand building relates to questions such as how to differentiate the own brand from competitors' brands or how to select sponsors that benefit the sponsee brand.

Lack of communication from management to sponsorship personnel is the fourth identified driver for SOI 4; it is linked to the transparency success factor. Without proper communication the sponsorship personnel will not be able to fully grasp and implement the sponsee's brand building efforts.

Proposition Drivers 4: The size of SOI 4 is positively related to the drivers displayed in Table 6.

SOI 5: Operational sponsorship activities improperly executed despite organisational structure and processes

The term "operational sponsorship activities" (P5a and P5b) comprises sponsor acquisition and the execution of activities during the sponsorship. Assuming that defined operational and communication guidelines are established in a sponsorship strategy; that the guidelines are internally communicated, widely understood, and everyone theoretically knows what to do; and that proper organisational structures and processes are in place does not guarantee the operational sponsorship activities will be performed professionally and in a way that the sponsee can achieve its set goals. Hence, the fifth source of inefficiencies (SOI 5) is located between the organisational structure and processes and the operational sponsorship activities.

Proposition SOI 5: Inefficiencies between the organizational structure and processes and the operational sponsorship activities will negatively affect the sponsee's goal achievement.

Based on the discussions in the expert interviews, we identify several success factors for the operational sponsorship activities (Table 7). Success factors for sponsor acquisition refer

to (1) good market knowledge (understanding of sponsorship market, own business, and specific sponsor needs); (2) technically well-executed acquisition processes (screening and approach of sponsors, negotiations, and conclusion of contracts); and (3) the exploitation of own strengths and the own brand to the sponsee's own advantage. Moreover, a good balance regarding the personnel's sales approach, i.e., selling and acquiring new sponsors versus building partnerships and satisfying sponsors, is required.

Similarly, success factors for sponsorship execution refer to (1) compliance with relationship quality aspects (understanding of sponsor needs, communication, trust/reliability, and cooperation); (2) technically well-executed processes (conceptual and tactical support for sponsors, availability of personnel, reliability and flexibility in execution, support in market research and impact measurement, and support beyond mere sponsorship); and (3) the exploitation of sponsors and sponsorships to strengthen the own brand. Additionally, our interviews reveal that managing and communicating the sponsorship agreements internally is as important as externally.

Drivers for SOI5	Success factors at P5a
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of commitment/passion of sponsorship personnel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of sponsorship market, own business, and products
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource constraints (personal and financial) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of specific sponsor needs, targets, and expectations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient know-how/people skills (hard and soft skills) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional screening and approach of sponsors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriate tools and equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to demonstrate benefits of a sponsorship for a potential sponsor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of training for sponsorship personnel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conclusion of "ironclad" sponsorship contracts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient business contacts network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilization of own strengths and own brand
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of teamwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right balance regarding sales approach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of continuity in sponsor-sponsee relationship 	
Drivers for SOI6	Success factors at P5b
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of understanding how to leverage own brand in acquisition and execution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous understanding of specific sponsor needs, targets, and expectations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unavailability or unawareness of sponsee-related information and data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive (conceptual and/or tactical) communication with and support for sponsors
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of sponsorship personnel
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliability and flexibility in execution
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support in market research/impact measurement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to offer benefit to sponsor beyond the mere sponsorship opportunity (e.g., CSR)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilization of sponsors and sponsorships to strengthen own image/brand
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal management and communication of sponsorship activities to entire sponsee organisation

Table 7: Potential reasons SOI 5 and SOI 6 affect the implementation of success factors at P5a and P5b

Table 7 shows which drivers for SOI 5 were identified in the interviews. These drivers show what can impede the professional execution of the operational sponsorship activities despite appropriate organisational structure and processes. The first driver is the sponsee personnel's lack of commitment or passion for the job. Second, personal and financial resource constraints are drivers for SOI 5. Third, the sponsee personnel's hard and soft skills may be insufficient to execute the set processes. This insufficiency may refer to all relevant skills: selling, negotiations, analytics, communication, creativity, marketing, project management, legal affairs, etc. Inappropriate tools and equipment for operational sponsorship activities and a lack of training for sponsorship personnel are additional drivers for SOI 5. An

insufficient business contacts network can particularly impede sponsor acquisition efforts, too. Another driver is the lack of teamwork and coordination, especially between acquisition and execution personnel. Finally, we identify a lack of continuity in the sponsor-sponsee relationship as another reason for SOI 5 to occur.

Proposition Drivers 5: The size of SOI 5 is positively related to the drivers displayed in Table 7.

SOI 6: Brand building not fully leveraged in operational sponsorship activities

The last source of inefficiencies, SOI 6, is located between the brand building and the operational sponsorship activities. The operational sponsorship activities and their success factors are described in the previous sub-section on SOI 5 and can be found in Table 7. Although SOI 6 affects the same process steps as SOI 5, the rationale for SOI 6 is different and revolves around the sponsee's brand building approach. Even if a sponsee brand is well positioned, there is no guarantee that it can be utilised appropriately in the sponsor acquisition and execution processes.

Proposition SOI 6: Inefficiencies between the brand building approach and the operational sponsorship activities will negatively affect the sponsee's goal achievement.

There are two relevant drivers for SOI 6, also displayed in Table 7. First, there is the lack of understanding how to actually leverage the own brand in the operational sponsorship activities although it has been defined and positioned. This driver is apparent if sponsee personnel are unable to utilise the brand either to acquire sponsors that are willing to pay a premium to a sponsee with special brand characteristics or to acquire sponsors that have particular profiles or plans for activation measures that support the sponsee's brand. Second, unavailability or unawareness of sponsee-related information and data is a driver for SOI 6.

For example, if the sponsee does not have any information or any pertinent information about its members or fans, it simply cannot use it for sponsor acquisition.

Proposition Drivers 6: The size of SOI 6 is positively related to the drivers displayed in Table 7.

External Effects

In addition to the performance of the sponsee, which is induced from the abovementioned process steps, external factors affect the achievement of the sponsorship-related goals. First, the "sponsor expectations towards sponsorship" (E1) are determined by the sponsor's expectations from past sponsorships and by its marketing-related needs and targets. Obviously, E1 predominantly affects the sponsor satisfaction goal. E1 also indirectly affects the sponsee processes through SOI 1.

Second, the "(sponsorship) market conditions" (E2) include the state of the economy as a whole, the current climate for sports sponsorship, and recent sponsorship contracts from competitors. E2 is arguably most relevant for income maximisation and sponsor satisfaction.

Third, "sponsee specifics" (E3) and their development over time include the sponsee's sporting success, media coverage, its image and awareness levels, its fan and member base, as well as adverse effects like bad fan behaviour or scandals. E3 is relevant for all of the three sponsee goals.

Proposition EE: External effects will (positively or negatively) affect the sponsee's goal achievement.

Extended Framework with Research Propositions

Figure 3 shows an extended version of the proposed framework covering all the research propositions we have set up in the course of this paper. All of these propositions target the

achievement of the sponsee's sponsorship-related goals. The extended framework is proposed as a starting point for further research on sponsees and sources of inefficiencies in sports sponsorship.

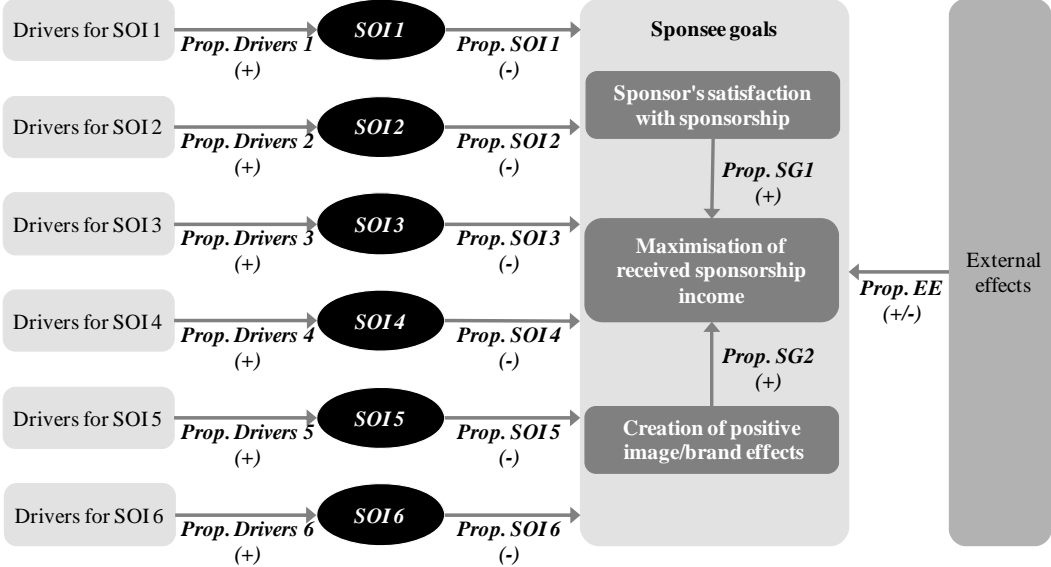


Figure 3: Extended framework including research propositions

CONCLUSION

The intention of this study is to explore the sponsee perspective of sports sponsorship to understand why sponsees often struggle to achieve their sponsorship-related goals. The exploratory research (interviews with industry experts) detailed in this paper offers various insights and propositions regarding the sponsee's goals and the determinants that affect the achievement of these goals. Within the presented framework we identify six sources of inefficiencies (SOI) on the sponsee side – analogous to the gaps in the "model of service quality" by Parasuraman et al. (1985). First, the SOI affect the achievement of the sponsee's goal of sponsor satisfaction. Hence, the SOI can help to explain the reported dissatisfaction with service quality among sponsors. Second, the SOI also affect the achievement of the sponsee's other goals: income maximisation and creation of positive brand effects from sponsorship.

We also disentangle the drivers of the SOI in this paper. Across all SOI, these drivers mainly involve personal and financial resource constraints, capabilities and know-how issues, communication issues, and what we call management's "degree of professionalism". Degree of professionalism refers to the sponsee management's *understanding* that the development of a sponsorship strategy, organizational structure, processes, and brand building approach is essential for successful sponsorship in the long run. It also refers to the sponsee management's *commitment* to act, and, if necessary, to invest accordingly in qualified personnel and infrastructure (equipment, training, etc.). Hence, we offer an extensive and systematic set of reasons for why and how sponsees struggle to achieve their sponsorship goals.

By explicitly taking the sponsee perspective this paper complements the classical transactional and relational views of sponsorship where the sponsee perspective often has been marginalised. To our knowledge, the proposed framework is the first to identify and systematise SOI (and the drivers or reasons behind them), indicating why sponsees often struggle to achieve their sponsorship-related goals. We hope this study will spawn more academic interest to examine in greater detail the sponsee perspective and (sources of) inefficiencies in sports sponsorship. The proposed framework and associated propositions should serve as a starting point for further research projects.

The framework could be a valuable tool for practitioners as well. Managers at sports clubs and associations can (1) review their sponsorship setup, e.g., compare their goal setting, sponsorship architecture, and processes with those described in the framework, and (2) check whether, and to which degree, the proposed SOI may be applicable to their own situation. Managers at sponsoring organisations, in turn, benefit from the framework as it may provide them with a better understanding of sponsees and of arising difficulties, like sponsor dissatisfaction.

A number of limitations to this study need to be mentioned. As in any qualitative study the generalisability of the results is limited. Further limitations regarding generalisability exist due to the background of the interview partners: (1) the framework may convey a German/Swiss perspective to sports sponsorship because it does not incorporate interview partners from other regions of the world; (2) the interviews focus on team sports as opposed to sports events or individual athletes; (3) we talked to large sponsee organisations and to sponsors that have experience working with large sponsee organisations – in contrast to the majority of small and smallest sponsees in the world.

Finally, there are ample opportunities for further research. Primarily, methods should be developed to accurately measure the identified SOI and their underlying drivers. Reliable measures are necessary to empirically test the propositions set up in this paper. Moreover, it is worth examining the quality of the different SOI. Are certain SOI more likely than others? Is the occurrence of one SOI more critical than the occurrence of another? And given the limitations of the study, how can the framework be applied to other countries, events, and individual athletes, as well as to smaller sponsees?

NOTES

¹ In fact, Ryan and Fahy (2012) separate five approaches in the sponsorship literature including the most recent "relationships and networks approach".

² Daumann and Römmelt (2012) apply the model to sports associations and its stakeholders. Welling and Dirks (2005) apply a modified GAP model of brand management to a professional German football team.

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