



## CHANGING NEGATIVE ATTITUDES THROUGH SPORT SPONSORSHIP IN BRAZIL

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### Abstract

**Objective:** The research has as objective to assess if sports sponsorships can change previous negative attitude towards a sponsoring brand, also investigating implications on consumption intentions.

**Methodology / Approach:** The study was structured in experimental design, using a one-group pre-test/post-test variation to compare different effects of an independent variable. An online questionnaire was elaborated using a repeated measure design to assess participant attitudes and consumption intentions, employing a scenario-based experimental survey. The first scenario brought negative information about a sponsoring fake brand/company. It was only accepted in the final sample (295 Brazilians citizens) people that presented negative attitudes in the first scenario. In the sequence, they were submitted to subsequent sports sponsorship scenarios, having their attitudes and consumption intentions measured after each scenario. The second scenario associated the brand with sponsorships to football. The third one also linked the brand to football but focusing on a community perspective. The last context approached a different sport (volleyball), contextualizing the sponsorship in an Olympic/Paralympic frame.

**Originality / Relevance:** This study is justified due to the lack of similar studies, insofar as no other article was found with the same objective, method, premises or culture investigated (country).

**Main results:** The study provided evidence that sports sponsorship can change previous negative attitudes towards a brand, mitigating or turning it into a positive one. The research also reports a positive effect of sports sponsorship on purchase intention. Among all scenarios, the second one showed the biggest influence on attitude and consumption intention.

**Theoretical / methodological contributions:** The findings are important to marketing and sports managers as they offered evidence that sports sponsorship can support brand and organizations to face crises and scandals situations, as a prevention or as a recovery strategy.

**Keywords:** Sport sponsorship. Attitude. Consumer behaviour. Marketing.

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## ALTERANDO ATITUDES NEGATIVAS POR MEIO DO PATROCÍNIO ESPORTIVO NO BRASIL

### Resumo

**Objetivo do estudo:** A pesquisa tem como objetivo avaliar se o patrocínio esportivo pode mudar uma atitude negativa anterior frente a uma marca patrocinadora, investigando também implicações nas intenções de consumo.

**Metodologia/abordagem:** O estudo foi estruturado em um delineamento experimental, utilizando uma variação de pré /pós-teste em um único grupo para comparar diferentes efeitos de uma variável independente. Um questionário on-line foi elaborado utilizando-se um modelo de medidas repetidas para se avaliar as atitudes dos participantes e suas intenções de consumo, empregando-se uma *survey* de caráter experimental baseada em cenários. O primeiro cenário trouxe informações negativas sobre uma falsa marca/empresa patrocinadora. Apenas foram aceitas na amostra final (295 brasileiros) pessoas que demonstraram atitudes negativas no primeiro cenário. Na sequência, os participantes foram submetidos a cenários subsequentes de patrocínio esportivo, tendo suas atitudes e intenções de consumo mensuradas após cada cenário. O segundo cenário associou a falsa marca a patrocínios ao futebol. O terceiro também vinculou a marca ao futebol, mas focando-se em uma perspectiva comunitária. O último cenário abordou um esporte diferente (voleibol), contextualizando o patrocínio da marca ao movimento olímpico/paralímpico.

**Originalidade/Relevância:** Este estudo se justifica pela falta de pesquisas semelhantes, na medida em que nenhum outro artigo foi encontrado com o mesmo objetivo, método, premissas ou cultura investigada.

**Principais resultados:** O estudo forneceu evidências de que o patrocínio esportivo pode mudar atitudes negativas anteriores frente a uma marca, mitigando ou transformando a atitude em positiva. A pesquisa também relata um efeito positivo do patrocínio esportivo sobre intenção de compra. Entre todos os cenários, o segundo mostrou a maior influência sobre atitude e intenção de consumo.

**Contribuições teóricas/metodológicas:** Os resultados são importantes para os gestores esportivos ou profissionais de marketing, pois oferecem evidências de que o patrocínio esportivo pode auxiliar marcas e organizações a enfrentar situações de crises e escândalos, como uma forma prevenção ou como estratégia de recuperação.

**Palavras-chave:** Patrocínio esportivo. Atitude. Comportamento de consumo. Marketing.



## EL CAMBIO DE ACTITUDES NEGATIVAS A TRAVÉS DEL PATROCINIO DEPORTIVO EN BRASIL

### Resumen

**Objetivo:** La investigación tiene como objetivo evaluar si una marca patrocinadora puede cambiar la actitud negativa previas mediante patrocinios deportivos, de igual forma se investigaron las implicaciones en las intenciones de consumo.

**Metodología / Enfoque:** El estudio se estructuró en un diseño experimental, utilizando una variación pre-prueba / post-prueba de un grupo para comparar diferentes efectos de una variable independiente. Se elaboró un cuestionario en línea utilizando un diseño de medidas repetidas para evaluar las actitudes de los participantes y las intenciones de consumo, empleando una encuesta experimental basada en escenarios. El primer escenario trajo información negativa sobre una marca / patrocinadora (compañía falsa). Solo se aceptó en la muestra final (295 ciudadanos brasileños) personas que presentaron actitudes negativas en el primer escenario. En la secuencia, fueron sometidos a escenarios de patrocinio deportivo posteriores, midiéndose sus actitudes e intenciones de consumo después de cada escenario. El segundo escenario asociaba la marca con patrocinios al fútbol. El tercero también vinculó la marca al fútbol pero se centró en una perspectiva comunitaria. El último contexto se acercó a un deporte diferente (voleibol), contextualizando el patrocinio en un marco olímpico / paralímpico.

**Originalidad / Relevancia:** Esta investigación se justifica debido a la falta de estudios similares, en la medida en que no se encontró ningún otro artículo con el mismo objetivo, método, premisas o cultura investigados (país).

**Resultados clave:** El estudio proporcionó evidencia de que el patrocinio deportivo puede cambiar las actitudes negativas anteriores hacia una marca, mitigándola o convirtiéndola en positiva. La investigación también informa un efecto positivo del patrocinio deportivo en la intención de compra. Entre los cuatro escenarios, el segundo mostró la mayor influencia en la actitud y la intención de consumo.

**Contribuciones teóricas / metodológicas:** Los resultados son importantes para los gerentes deportivos o profesionales porque proporcionan evidencia de que el patrocinio deportivo puede ayudar a las marcas y organizaciones lidiar con situaciones de crisis y escándalos, como una forma de prevención o como una estrategia de recuperación.

**Palabras clave:** Patrocinio deportivo, actitud, comportamiento del consumidor, marketing.



## INTRODUCTION

Organizations have been using sports as a platform to develop their corporate image (Farrelly & Quester, 2005). Speed and Thompson (2000) argued that sports sponsorships have the potential to add value and change consumer attitude toward a sponsoring brand. Additionally, Mason (2005) claims that the key to the effectiveness of sponsorships is the understanding of how consumer attitudes are formed and changed, also explaining that attitudes impact on consumer behaviour. Positive attitudes towards sponsors have positively been associated with favourable perceptions and intentions to purchase products of the sponsors (Speed & Thompson, 2000). In this way, the understanding of the implications of sports sponsorships on attitudes is crucial to the success of sponsorship initiatives.

Organizations and brands usually have to deal with crises and scandals that may create negative attitudes towards them (Bennett & Kottasz, 2012; Coombs, 2007; Tao, 2017; Shim & Yang, 2016; Kuzma, Veltri, Kuzma & Miller, 2003). For instance, in several countries corruption has been an issue which affects organizations, brands and the attitude of their citizens towards them (Torgler & Valev, 2010; Cameron, Chaudhuri, Erkal & Gangadharan, 2006; Anderson & Tverdova, 2003; Sims & Gegez, 2004). Certainly, favourable corporate reputation is one of the most important intangible assets driving company performance (Jung & Seock, 2016) and the credibility of a sponsoring brand influences consumers attitude toward it (Low & Pyun, 2016). Therefore, it is essential for companies to face crises and scandals with a proper strategy and tools.

Kuzma et al (2003) revealed that negative information about a sponsor can result in negative attitudes towards that sponsor, negatively impacting purchase intention as well. When facing non-positive situations, organizations should plan marketing efforts to reverse or minimize the negative consequences of these scenarios. In fact, sports sponsorships can be useful tools to combat negative evaluations (Cardia, 2004; Kim, Kwak & Babiak, 2015). This study aims at assessing if sports sponsorships can change a negative attitude towards a brand, turning it into a neutral or positive one, also investigating the influence of sports sponsorships on consumption intentions.

The most important point that justified this article was the lack of similar studies. Firstly, to verify whether the objective of this article had already been

studied, six important sports marketing journals were observed coming from a list of 12, called International Ranking of Sport Management Journals (Woratschek, Schafmeister & Schymetzki, 2009). The Brazilian online library platform, known as "Periódicos Capes", was checked as well. The search considered articles from 2000 to 2016, with the terms "sports marketing", "sponsorship" and/or "attitude" in the title (in English or Portuguese). As a result, no article was found with the same objective, method, premises or culture investigated (country). Some studies, such as Speed and Thompson (2000), Toledo and Andrade (2014), Kuzma et al (2003), Parker and Fink (2010) and Jung and Seock (2016), have addressed the issue of sport sponsorship and negative attitudes, but through different frames. However, none have started their investigations with negative attitudes towards as a premise.

According to Low and Pyun (2016), there is also a lack of studies touching small-scale amateur sporting events benefits (e.g.: community events). Furthermore, the effects of multiple sponsorships from a sponsoring brand also need more investigations (Doyle, Pentecost & Funk, 2014). As a whole, the impact of sports sponsorships on attitudes towards sponsoring brands is a gap to be further investigated (Walraven, Koning & Bottenburg, 2012).

In addition, Jung and Seock (2016) affirm that more studies from non-European countries and the USA are necessary. For this reason, Brazil is the focus of this investigation. Francisco, Fagundes, Sampaio, Sousa and Lara (2010), Fagundes, Francisco, Veiga, Sampaio and Sousa (2012) and Mazzei, Oliveira, Rocco Junior and Bastos (2013) illustrate the importance of more articles about sports marketing in Brazil.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Attitude*

Attitude is a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favourable manner with respect to a given object (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Triandis (1971) explains attitude being composed of three factors: affective, cognitive and behavioural. Specifically, the cognitive category refers to thoughts, beliefs and perceptions about an attitudinal object. The affective one, on the other side, refers to feelings and emotions (evaluative connotation). The last category, behavioural, regards to intentions to act, such as a purchase decision (Neiva & Mauro, 2011).



Furthermore, there is no common sense of how the structure of attitude should be observed. Authors such as Rosenberg and Hovland (1960) consider the concept as being three-dimensional, but others such as Zajonc and Markus (1982) and Eagly and Chaiken (1993) claimed the concept is two-dimensional (cognitive and affective elements) or one-dimensional (just affective).

Theories about how attitude can be changed are still focused on the affective and cognitive elements. Heider (1958) and Eagly and Chaiken (1993) present a Balance Theory, which reveals that people prefer to have balance, order and harmony in their lives. Therefore, every time that there is an imbalance people would change their attitudes (and/or behaviour) in a way that would restore “balance”. Torres (2012) describes the Cognitive Dissonance Theory, in which cognitive consistency is a desirable condition and inconsistencies generate feelings of displeasure. Thus, people are induced to reduce these feelings by amending their cognitions. More elaborated, the Affective-Cognitive Consistency Theory of Rosenberg (1956) examines the relationship between “attitudes” and beliefs, stating that an unstable state occurs when an individual's attitudes toward an object and the knowledge about that object are inconsistent. According to the Theory, the provision of new information (persuasion) that changes the cognitive component can cause an overall change in the attitude toward an object, bringing knowledge and affect into harmony. In general, in all these theories the cognitive element is always preceded, in somehow, by an affective response (Heath, 2007). As a consequence, the affective component of attitude should receive special attention to change attitudes towards a brand.

#### *Attitudes impact on purchase intentions (PI)*

Kim, Ko and James (2011) showed that consumer's attitude is an important predictor of behavioural intentions, such as consumption. However, an attitude towards a brand does not necessarily correspond to the consumption behaviour related to it, characterizing a non-dependent relation (Alfinito & Torres, 2012; Alfinito, Siqueira & Torres, 2016; Torres & Allen, 2009). According to Biscaia et al (2013), positive attitudes toward a sponsor showed a significant positive effect on the intentions to purchase products of that sponsor. Additionally, other theories can be observed to clarify how attitude can influence intentions and behaviours. For example, the Reasoned Action Theory (Ajzen & Fischbein, 1980)

describes that people act in accordance with their intentions and perceptions of control over their behaviour, being intentions (such as to consume) influenced by attitudes (Kim, Ko & James, 2011). Nonetheless, the Planned Behaviour Theory (Ajzen, 1991) discusses that behaviour is not always under control (rational and voluntary), but still keeping attitude as a significant part in predicting behavioural intentions. In this way, it is clear that attitude can influence or even change a consumption intention.

#### *Sports sponsorship and attitude*

Sports sponsorships are considered investments in an event, athlete or team to ensure the sponsor access to commercial potentialities associated with sports properties (Fahy, Farrelly & Quester, 2004). Kim and Choi (2007) affirm that sports events sponsorships have been a popular communication tool among companies. Speed and Thompson (2000) pointed out that sponsors who are perceived as sincere in their sponsorship and are motivated by philanthropy will achieve superior responses to their efforts. Then, consumers who perceive a sports sponsorship as an activity strictly related to commercial objectives will less likely develop positive responses toward the sponsor (Alexandris, Tsaousi & James, 2007).

Generally, in terms of objectives, authors such as Cornwell and Maignan (1998) and Fahy, Farrelly and Quester (2004) claim that one goal of sponsorships is to create or maintain a positive attitude toward the sponsor. Sports sponsorships are also characterized by increasing the frequency of exposure of the sponsor message or brand (Mason, 2005). However, the exposure degree also needs to be controlled and monitored. After all, when it is considered excessive the repetition of the stimulus can change the attitude in a negative way (Neiva & Mauro, 2011).

As brands are affected by a mix of elements, the applied strategy around how the brand will be communicated is crucial. As an example, Dalakas and Levin (2005) concluded that sponsoring one sports property (e.g.: a football team) can evoke positive attitudes from fans of that property, but may also create negative attitudes by fans of other properties/teams. Scandals or underperformance in a team or athlete that is sponsored by a brand may also negatively affect the sponsor's image (Areska, 2012).

The introduction of negative information about a sponsor negatively affects the consumer's attitudes towards that sponsor and the related consumption intention (Kuzma et al, 2003). Kim and Choi (2007), for example, observed a correlation between the



judgment of the credibility of the sponsoring company and a subsequent effect on attitude toward that company brand. Taking into account this relation, new information or scenarios that negatively affect the image of the brand (its credibility in this case) cause damages on the attitude towards it. Under these circumstances, this study aims to assess in what extent a sports sponsorship can change/minimize a negative attitude towards a brand and also the effects of it on purchase intention.

## METHOD

The structure of this study is based on experimental design, using a one-group pre-test/post-test variation to compare the different effects of an independent variable (Williams, 2003).

### *Participants and sample profile*

Brazil is the population of this research, particularly, Brazilian citizens. The sampling process was a non-probability sampling (Cooper & Greenaway, 2015; Moura & Ferreira, 2005), with characteristics of convenience (Baker, Brick, Bates, Battaglia, Couper, Dever, Gile & Tourangeau, 2013). The number of participants was primarily estimated based on Field (2009) and Cohen (1992). For an effect size of 0.1 (related to a minimum effect of an observed phenomenon in a population), with a power of 0.95, at least 216 participants were necessary to verify a relevant effect of the independent variables. 544 respondents participated in the study. However, only 54% of the total (295) respected the inclusion criteria (described later). This final sample had 52.5% of male and 46.8% of female respondents, whereas few participants preferred not to claim a gender. Notably, the sample was concentrated in a zone between 26 to 36 years-old (45.8%), followed by people from 37 to 47 years (22.4%) and 48 to 58 (16.9%) years old. Moreover, about the levels of education, they were segmented in 9 levels and only the first two did not have representatives ("Never went to school" and "Primary school partially completed"). The majority of the participants have achieved a post-graduation level (54.9%), having as the second position people with Bachelor degrees (26.1%).

In terms of consumption power, the sample was observed based on the average earnings in Brazil. As a result, 77.3% of the respondents claimed to receive salaries (per capita) above or too much above the Brazilian average. The region where the respondent came from (current residence) was also asked, in

which 73.6% of the sample was concentrated on 2 areas of the country (Midwest and Southeast), which represents 8 states of the Union, including the three most important Brazilian cities: São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and the federal capital, Brasília. In terms of representativeness, the sample was (in percentage) aligned with the distribution of the Brazilian population along the country for the South and Southeast regions. However, it might be possible to consider that the percentage difference related to the North and Northeast was compensated by the massive figure of participants from the Midwest, in which a significant number of its population came from those regions (Francisco, 2016; Cunha, 2005).

### *Instrument (Questionnaire)*

A questionnaire was structured using a repeated-measure design to attitude and purchase intention, employing a scenario-based experimental survey. The independent variable was defined as sports sponsorships in the form of sets of information (scenarios) described to the respondents. The dependent variable was the attitude towards the sponsoring brand and the related purchase intention. Other studies, such as Parker and Fink (2010) and Mielli and Mantovani (2014), have used the same definitions of variables in their methods.

The instrument was divided into seven parts. The first one described the objective of the study and highlighted that the participation was voluntary. Besides that, it was assured that all responses would be kept confidential. At the end of the page, there was an agreement term to be accepted. The next section presented a fictitious brand of home appliances and TVs, being positively contextualized with information around the 4 P's of the marketing mix (McCarthy 1964). This step aimed to avoid any previous bias around the "brand" in this first moment, such as possible confused past experiences or conditioned responses (Speed & Thompson, 2000). In the sequence, the following section provided negative information about the fake brand and company, which configured the Scenario 1 (S1) of the study. The pieces of information were presented in short, middle and long-term perspectives (e.g.: last month, last year, and 5 years ago), associating the brand with negative allegations of corruption, mass layoffs and pollution, in which a negative attitude towards the fake brand was intended. After that, the attitude towards the brand was measured.

The fourth section brought the first independent variable, in which the sports sponsorship was



implanted through a set of information, Scenario 2 (S2). The context refers only to football and the brand was associated with sponsorships activities in short, middle and long terms. The scenario mentioned partnerships of the brand with clubs and national teams, bringing a more commercial connotation. After that, attitude and purchase intention were evaluated through a 5 point Likert scale (pattern kept for the other scenarios as well). The following section, Scenario 3 (S3), described a new context, in which the brand was associated with sponsorships to football (in short, middle and long terms) as well, but supporting only projects to the youth, creating a more community sense. After that, attitude and consumption intention were assessed.

The sixth section presented another set of information, Scenario 4 (S4). The fake brand was linked to sponsorship to a different sport (volleyball) and its athletes, in an Olympic and Paralympic contextualization. Similarly, the new context was described in those time perspectives. At the end of the section, the participant was asked to express their attitudes and consumption intention.

The final section of the questionnaire brought complementary questions about the respondent's socioeconomic indicators and sports preferences. The educational question was guided by a model from Unesco (Siniscalco & Auriat, 2005), and the level of earning was based on an average figure provided by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (Agência Brasil, 2015). The participants were also asked about their three favourite sports in order of importance. The questionnaire was created in an online platform, being submitted to a pre-test with

some students and civil servants in Brazil (twelve people). As pointed out by the Management Study Guide (2013), this initiative aimed to identify and correct possible misunderstandings and structural issues. On average, the instrument took seven minutes to be completed.

**Measures**

The measures were based on previous studies. In particular, the Semantic Differential scale (5 points) was chosen to measure attitude. In fact, the literature presents different numbers and meanings of items that would represent the construct (Speed & Thompson, 2000; Batra & Ray, 1986; Mackenzie, Lutz & Belch, 1986; Shimp, Stuart & Engle, 1991; Spears & Singh, 2004; Kim & Choi, 2007; Biscaia et al, 2013; Kim, Ko & James, 2011; Mao & Zhang, 2013; Doyle, Pentecost & Funk, 2014; Parker & Fink, 2010). Notably, the work of Speed and Thompson (2000), which directly deals with sports contexts, gathers items constantly employed by other studies, such as Low and Pyun (2016). For this reason, attitude was measured using the items provided by Speed and Thompson (2000), that is, four items that would represent the construct.

Purchase intention measure was also elaborated following Speed and Thompson (2000), keeping a logical coherence. According to that research, consumption intention can be measured through 3 affirmatives, on a Likert scale, associating sports sponsorship to the intention to buy a sponsor's product in the future. Tables 1 and 2 summarize the measurements and the codes utilized along this research.

Table 1: Codes of items of attitude

Items of attitude	Scales (5 points Likert)
A1	From Bad (1) to Good (5)
A2	From Unfavourable (1) to Favourable (5)
A3	From Dislike (1) to Like (5)
A4	From Unpleasant (1) to Pleasant (5)

Source: The author.





Table 2: Codes of affirmatives of purchase intentions

Questions (affirmatives)		Scales (5 points Likert)
Q1	The sport sponsorships made me more likely to use the sponsor's products	1 - Completely disagree 2 - Partially disagree 3 - Do not agree or disagree 4 - Partially agree 5 - Completely agree
Q2	The sport sponsorships made me more likely to consider this company's products in a future purchase	
Q3	I am more likely to buy from the sponsor as a result of the sport sponsorships	

Source: The author.

**Procedure**

The questionnaires were collected from July 5 to 21, 2016, spread in all the 5 regions of Brazil. The participants were reached through social media, professional networking groups (e.g.: Hospitals), federal institutions emails and mobile messages. Groups and communities of national or regional relevance were chosen (by convenience) to reach people with different characteristics and backgrounds, such as age and level of education.

**Data Analysis**

The data set was cleaned and analysed through IBM Statistics SPSS 22. As the questionnaire was constructed with mandatory questions, there were no missing values to deal with. Furthermore, non-Brazilian citizens were excluded from the research. The sample was also submitted to inclusion criteria, that is: rightly answered questionnaires (misunderstandings or non-sense answers were not considered) and participants who negatively assessed the brand in the first scenario of the instrument, that is, those who have marked 1 or 2

in the Likert scale for attitude (point 3 was considered a neutral point and, above it, positive evaluations). Because of the inclusion criteria, purchase intention was only verified after Scenario 2.

**Factorial Analysis**

In reason of previous studies had a variety of ways and structures to assess attitude and purchase intention and to confirm the factorial structure of the elaborated questionnaire (Brown, 2006), an exploratory factorial analysis was run. All the 4 items for attitude were assessed considering all respective scenarios.

Therefore, evaluating whether those items were measuring one factor (attitude) per scenario. As a result, all items had high levels of correlation (R) between the elements of the same scenario. Additionally, the achieved Pearson's P coefficients were higher than the recommended 0,5 (Field 2009), with no singularities found and all tests significant at  $p < 0,05$ . The determinants of the R-matrix showed values higher than 0,00001, which characterizes the absence of multicollinearity (Field, 2009). Table 3 demonstrates the figures.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix results for items of attitude

Correlation Matrix									
Items / Scenarios	A1 - S1	A2 - S1	A3 - S1	A4 - S1	Items / Scenarios	A1 - S3	A2 - S3	A3 - S3	A4 - S3
<b>A1 - S1</b>	1	0.675	0.664	0.643	<b>A1 - S3</b>	1	0.925	0.931	0.942
<b>A2 - S1</b>	0.675	1	0.736	0.811	<b>A2 - S3</b>	0.925	1	0.934	0.946
<b>A3 - S1</b>	0.664	0.736	1	0.769	<b>A3 - S3</b>	0.931	0.934	1	0.951
<b>A4 - S1</b>	0.643	0.811	0.769	1	<b>A4 - S3</b>	0.942	0.946	0.951	1
Items / Scenarios	A1 - S2	A2 - S2	A3 - S2	A4 - S2	Items / Scenarios	A1 - S4	A2 - S4	A3 - S4	A4 - S4
<b>A1 - S2</b>	1	0.924	0.923	0.911	<b>A1 - S4</b>	1	0.956	0.947	0.964
<b>A2 - S2</b>	0.924	1	0.906	0.921	<b>A2 - S4</b>	0.956	1	0.94	0.953
<b>A3 - S2</b>	0.923	0.906	1	0.922	<b>A3 - S4</b>	0.947	0.94	1	0.95
<b>A4 - S2</b>	0.911	0.921	0.922	1	<b>A4 - S4</b>	0.964	0.953	0.95	1

Source: The author.





The scenarios were also analyzed by the KMO test. The four contexts reached values higher than 0.8, significant at  $p < 0,05$  (Field, 2009; Bacha & Souza, 2010). The Eigenvalues and the Jolliffe's criterion indicated that it was possible to extract one factor per scenario (Field, 2009). Besides that, both Component Matrix and Pattern Matrix confirmed that in each scenario the items were components and measuring the same construct ( $r > 0.8$ ). With regard to the purchase intention affirmatives, the same logic and tests were used. The results were similar, elements with high correlations ( $r > 0.7$  at  $p < 0,05$ ) and no multicollinearity, having one factor extracted per

scenario (Jolliffe's criterion) and KMO higher than 0.76 (Field, 2009).

A confirmatory factorial analysis was also produced by AMOS, running the tests on the elaborated scenarios. Table 4 brings the figures, which illustrated a good fit of the data describing the models based on Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black (1998), Byrne (2000) and Gouveia et al (2010). That is, CMIN/DF values inferior of 5.0, GFI (Goodness-of-Fit Index), AGFI (Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index) and CFI (Comparative-of-Fit-Index) values larger than .90 and RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) values no bigger than .06.

Table 4: *Confirmatory Factorial Analysis in all scenarios*

CFA	S1 (A)	S2 (A+PI)	S3 (A+PI)	S4 (A+PI)
CMIN/DF	4.82	1.9000	1.5900	1.4700
GFI	0.985	0.9780	0.9810	0.9820
AGFI	0.924	0.9530	0.9580	0.9600
CFI	0.991	0.9950	0.9980	0.9980

The author.

### Reliability

About reliability, all the items of attitude and affirmatives of purchase intention were evaluated. In

short, the *Cronbach's alpha* indicated good/acceptable values, on average,  $\alpha > 0.75$  (Field, 2009; Hair et al., 1998). Table 5 brings the results.

Table 5: *Cronbach's alpha for attitude and purchase intention*

Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Affirmatives	Cronbach's Alpha
A1	0.758	Q1	0.903
A2	0.759	Q2	0.913
A3	0.766	Q3	0.901
A4	0.761		

Source: The author.

## RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

### Descriptive statistics

Table 6 presents the figures for each item of attitude per scenario. As expected, in the first scenario (negative set of information) the majority of the participants evaluated the fake brand at the lowest point possible (1) considering all attitude items. Table 6 also shows the results regarding purchase intention. Table 6 and 7 illustrate offer evidence that both

(attitude and intention to consume) had their scores positively improved by the sequential sets of information (scenarios). Those contexts were able to enhance the general mean of every item and affirmative, that is, they were capable of minimizing a negative evaluation.

The third scenario seemed to be more determinant with regard to the observed level of improvement. Thus, medians and modes had relevant improvements in many items and affirmatives.



Table 6: Descriptive results of the items of attitude per scenario

Items	A1-S1	A2-S1	A3-S1	A4-S1	A1-S2	A2-S2	A3-S2	A4-S2	A1-S3	A2-S3	A3-S3	A4-S3	A1-S4	A2-S4	A3-S4	A4-S4
Mean	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9
Median	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Mode	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Std. Dev.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.2
Variance	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.6

Source: The author.

Table 7: Descriptive results of the affirmatives of purchase intention per scenario

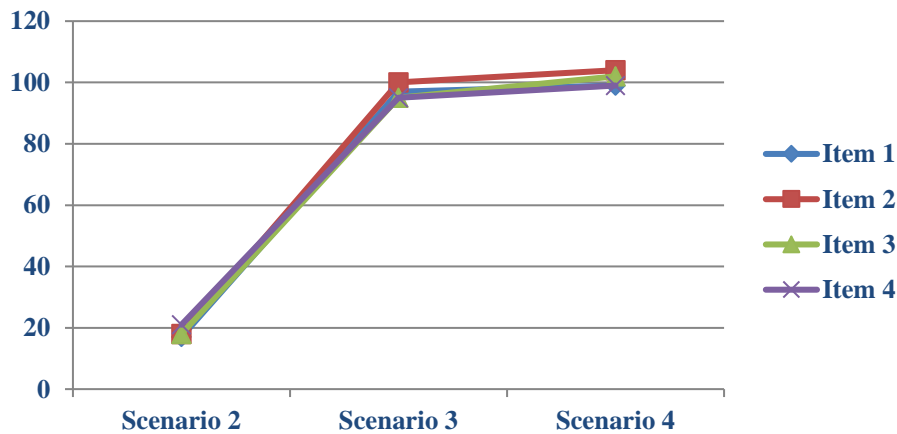
Items	Q1-S2	Q2-S2	Q3-S2	Q1-S3	Q2-S3	Q3-S3	Q1-S4	Q2-S4	Q3-S4
Mean	2.21	2.4	2.18	2.61	2.74	2.62	2.73	2.86	2.74
Median	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
Mode	1	1	1	1	4	1	4	4	1
Std. Dev.	1.25	1.33	1.26	1.29	1.28	1.31	1.34	1.33	1.35
Variance	1.56	1.77	1.59	1.66	1.65	1.72	1.80	1.78	1.82

Source: The author.

Based on the results of attitude items, it is possible to observe a rising of the scores around the points 4 and 5 of the scales (positive connotations) in scenarios 2, 3 and 4. Notably, there were a salient and a slight

improvement of these scores in the third and fourth context, respectively. Below, Graph 1 demonstrates these improvements.

Graph 1: Evolution of the positive scores (points 4 and 5) of the items of attitude along the scenarios



Source: The author.

**Complementary statistical tests**

Kurtosis and Skewness, histograms and the Kolmogorov-Smirnova and Shapiro-Wilk tests results did not support the use of parametric tests. Consequently, non-parametric tests were used in this study. At this moment, it is essential to emphasize that a parametric test would only be more powerful than a non-parametric one only if the parametric assumptions would have been met (Field, 2009),

which is not the case. Therefore, to compare two related conditions, a Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test (WSRt), appropriate to repeated measures (Field, 2009), was run in pairs in all items and scenarios. The results of the test supported the previous notions obtained in the descriptive statistics, that is, there was a significant difference ( $z > 1,96$  at  $p < 0,05$ , Monte Carlo Sig) in the attitude levels taking into account the distinct scenarios. Table 8 demonstrates the numbers (average) comparing 2 scenarios at a time.





Table 8: Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test results of the attitude items per scenario

	A - S2xS1	A - S3xS2	A - S4xS3
Z	-8.81	-11.4	-2.325
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0	0.02775
Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0	0.02525
Monte Carlo Sig. (1-tailed)	0	0	0.0135

Source: The author.

The findings of WSRt brought a pattern related to the overall tendency of the effect of the scenarios on attitude. The scenarios two and four were able to improve the level of the construct, but most of the respondents (mode) in these contexts kept equal scores compared to the previous context. Essentially, the scenario three was the only one that not only improved attitude towards the brand (less 1 and 2 points) but also the majority of the subjects marked more positively their scores in that scenario. With regard to purchasing intention, the test also revealed significant variations in the level of agreement on the affirmatives when the scenarios were compared. In short, the values of Q1, Q2 and Q3 had higher

variances in the scenario 3. Additionally, WSRt also showed a similar pattern of variation of the affirmatives in all scenarios; on average, there were 30% and 17% of more positive scores between S3 x S2 and S4 x S3, respectively.

About the effect size regards WSRt, calculations were done following Field (2009). To sum up, a *r* value of 0.1 means a small effect of the intervention, *r*=0.3 a medium one and 0.5 represents a large effect (Cohen, 1992). Certainly, S3 exhibited the greatest effect on the subjects. Besides that, the variance in S4 was characterized as a small one. The table below brings the results.

Table 9: Effect size of WSRt for attitude items and WSRt for purchase intentions affirmatives

Items/Scenarios	S1XS2	S2XS3	S3XS4	Affirmatives/Scenario	S2XS3	S3XS4
A1	0.35	0.49	0.1	Q1	0.29	0.11
A2	0.36	0.48	0.1	Q2	0.25	0.15
A3	0.37	0.47	0.1	Q3	0.29	0.14
A4	0.38	0.46	0.1			

Source: The author.

To confirm the correlation between attitude and purchase intention a Spearman' correlation was tested. The figures achieved (Table 10) report a

significant correlation at <0.01, in a bivariate correlation, in all items and affirmatives.

Table 10: Spearman' correlation for relations of attitude (A) and purchase intention (PI)

PI vs A	A1-S2	A2-S2	A3-S2	A4-S2	PI vs A	A1-S4	A2-S4
Q1-S2	0.417	0.388	0.424	0.397	Q1-S4	0.622	0.604
Q2-S2	0.423	0.409	0.45	0.431	Q2-S4	0.597	0.576
Q3-S2	0.4	0.354	0.384	0.371	Q3-S4	0.617	0.602
PI vs A	A1-S3	A2-S3	A3-S3	A4-S3	PI vs A	A3-S4	A4-S4
Q1-S3	0.522	0.537	0.544	0.545	Q1-S4	0.632	0.628
Q2-S3	0.525	0.528	0.543	0.55	Q2-S4	0.606	0.612
Q3-S3	0.574	0.594	0.595	0.609	Q3-S4	0.629	0.639

Source: The author.



Analyzing the results through means per scenario, the Spearman's  $r$  coefficient in S2 reached an approximated mean of .4. In S3 and S4 the values were around .55 and .61, respectively. In this sense, based on Cohen (1992), S2 might have its coefficient representing medium effects (correlation), whereas the others had large effects.

Last results, regarding the three favourite sports of the respondents, a list of 23 different sports was achieved. In absolute numbers, football was the favourite sport for the majority of the participants, followed by volleyball. As the third option (favourite), most of the participants claimed that they did not have a third favourite sport.

## DISCUSSION

First, it is worth mentioning the characteristics of the sample. In terms of age and educational level, the majority was related to a relevant cognitive capacity (45% above 37 years old and 88% with, at least, a bachelor degree). In reason of a high number of participants were, in somehow, involved with sports (around 90%), it may also be assumed a certain emotional relation with sports. In fact, being football and volleyball the first two sports more quoted as favourites, the choices previously made around the sports described in the scenarios were reinforced. In this way, the questionnaire was appealing to emotional connections, which could have had an impact in terms of persuasion (Farley & Stasson, 2003) and fan identification (Dalakas & Levin, 2005). Consequently, both affective and cognitive components of attitude seem to be demanded by the scenarios.

Overall, observing the cumulative effect of the independent variables, the findings show evidence that sports sponsorship was capable of changing (minimize) a negative attitude towards a brand. Scenario 2 improved the marks of attitude, obtaining a medium effect size (WSRt). However, the magnitude of the effect from the S3 got highlighted, insofar as the context almost reached a large effect. In contrast, the Olympic frame (S4) presented only a small effect in enhancing the attitude level. The low Olympic/Paralympic positive effect might be related to the recent over-commercialization of it (Lee, Sandler & Shani, 1997).

In this sense, the sports sponsorship when presented as supporting youth communities showed a significant potential to change (or at least minimize) a negative attitude towards a sponsor. Taking into account the symbolic and affective content of this

marketing initiative (Ferrand & Pages, 1999; Bal, Quester & Plewa, 2008), the results corroborate with Kim, Ko and James (2011), Speed and Thompson (2000) and Alexandris, Tsaousi and James (2007), which defended that sponsorships when perceived more philanthropic than commercial would likely conquest more positive attitude and enhance the willingness to consume the sponsor's product. Based on Kim and Choi (2007), the highest scores of S3 can also be explained by the importance of actions socially valued, in accordance with concepts such as CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility), which could have influenced both cognitive and affective components of attitude.

In the light of sports sponsorship being able to change negative attitudes, some theories might help to interpret the findings. First, when in front of the potential positive information of sports sponsorships, the participants in S2 had their mental harmony affected. Based on the Balance Theory (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993), Dissonance Cognitive Theory (Torres, 2012) and Affective-Cognitive Consistency Theory (Rosemberg, 1956), in this kind of situation, the respondents tend to change their attitude to restore their harmony, in this case, turning part of the negative thought or feeling into a neutral or positive one as a effect of the positive sportive stimuli.

Regarding purchase intention, WSRt revealed significant positive differences between the levels of purchase intentions along the scenarios. The results presented a high correlation with attitude in all contexts (Spearman' correlation). Due to these facts, even after a negative starting point, it might be claimed that sports sponsorship (affecting attitude) also had a positive impact on purchase intentions. Observing also the frequencies of the scores, from S3 it is possible to notice that most of the participants left negative scales zones, having more neutral and positive marks in all affirmatives. These findings corroborate with previous studies indicating that sports sponsorships could affect purchase intentions (Kim & Choi, 2007; Kim, Ko & James, 2011; Kuzma et al, 2003; Meenaghan, 2001).

It is important to realize that the frequencies and the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test illustrated a simultaneous positive improvement of attitude and purchase intention along the scenarios. Spearman's coefficient showed a significant correlation between the constructs, which gradually got higher. Consequently, once sports sponsorship changed the negative attitude it was implicit a similar positive effect on purchase intention. As a whole, the results



achieved offer indicators that sports sponsorship, when used in a macro and lasting strategy, is able to change a negative attitude towards a sponsor, also positively affecting purchase intention. In other words, similar to the findings of Zardini Filho (2017) about consumer behaviour, sponsors using sports as competitive differentials can improve the attitude towards them or, possibly, create a barrier against negative scenarios. Moreover, assuming that the association with sports affected the affective element of the attitude, the impact on purchase intention may be understood on the basis of behaviour being predicted by affections without a cognitive process (Porto & Oliveira-Castro, 2013).

Surely, the findings of this research are important to marketing and sports managers insofar as they offered evidence that sports sponsorship can support brands and organizations to face crises and scandals situations, as a prevention and/or recovery strategy (Fearn-Banks, 2011). Additionally, considering the necessity to maximize financial investments, the results can indicate resources (like sports properties to be sponsored) that are more worthy to invest, in a

Resource-based view (Fahy, Farrelly & Quester, 2004).

## CONCLUSION

The study presented initial evidence that sports sponsorships can change negative attitudes towards a sponsor. In general, statistical tests demonstrated a positive and significant impact of sport sponsorships scenarios on attitude items. When presented as supporting projects to the “community” (Scenario 3), the sponsorship to football was determinant to change an initial negative perception of a fake brand. The third context also showed better results than the following one (S4, sponsorship of Olympic/Paralympic sport) in terms of improving the attitude scores. Finally, the research also reported a positive effect of sports sponsorships on the purchase intentions, presenting a high correlation between attitude and purchase intention in all scenarios as well. As a consequence, in line with Parker and Fink (2010), it seems like a sponsoring brand can be ‘protected’ against their bad behaviour insofar as they use sports sponsorships in a macro and lasting strategy.

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