



Jersey Sponsorship Effects on the Brand Image of the Sponsored Soccer Club

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to examine the influence of soccer jersey sponsorship on the brand image of the sponsored clubs, with a focus on fan engagement and team identification.

Quantitative research with a 2x3 experimental design was implemented. Six stimuli with jerseys from FC Barcelona and Real Madrid under three different sponsorship conditions were used: UNICEF, Qatar Airways and without any sponsor. Data from 288 participants was collected through an online survey and analyzed using validated scales of fan engagement, team identification and brand image of the sponsored club.

The results indicated that fan engagement significantly influenced the relationship between jersey sponsorship and the sponsored club's brand image, highlighting its important role in promoting a positive brand perception of the club. The initially assumed moderating effects of team identification on the relationships between jersey sponsorship, fan engagement and the club's brand image were not confirmed. This suggests that other factors (contextual or cultural factors) may play a role. The results of further analyses emphasize the influence of interest in soccer, demographics, and team identification level on spending behavior and the perception of sponsorship.

With its findings, this study contributes to the existing literature by providing a differentiated understanding of the interplay between fan engagement, sponsorship, and the sponsored club's brand image. Furthermore, the results provide valuable insights for clubs and sponsors. It is recommended that fan engagement-driven strategies and sponsor-club congruence are prioritized to increase the effectiveness of sponsorship. Limitations and opportunities for future research are also discussed.

Keywords: Jersey Sponsorship, Brand Image, Fan Engagement, Team Identification, Sponsorship Effectiveness, Sports Marketing, Sponsorship Congruence, Sponsorship Perception, Professional Soccer

Título: Efeitos do patrocínio da camisola na imagem de marca do clube de futebol patrocinado

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SUMÁRIO

O objetivo desta tese é analisar a influência do patrocínio de camisolas de futebol na imagem de marca dos clubes, com enfoque no envolvimento dos adeptos e na identificação com a equipa.

Foi realizada uma investigação quantitativa com um desenho experimental 2x3, utilizando seis estímulos com camisolas do FC Barcelona e do Real Madrid em três condições de patrocínio: UNICEF, Qatar Airways e sem patrocinador. Dados de 288 participantes foram recolhidos através de um inquérito online e analisados com escalas validadas de envolvimento dos adeptos, identificação da equipa e imagem de marca.

Os resultados mostraram que o envolvimento dos adeptos influenciou significativamente a relação entre o patrocínio da camisola e a imagem de marca do clube, destacando o seu papel na promoção de perceções positivas. No entanto, os efeitos moderadores assumidos da identificação com a equipa não foram confirmados, sugerindo que outros fatores, como o contexto ou cultura, podem ter influência. Outras análises evidenciaram a influência do interesse pelo futebol, da demografia e da identificação com a equipa no comportamento de despesa e na perceção do patrocínio.

Este estudo contribui para a literatura ao oferecer uma compreensão diferenciada da interação entre envolvimento dos adeptos, patrocínio e imagem de marca. Os resultados destacam a importância de estratégias focadas no envolvimento dos adeptos e na congruência entre patrocinador e clube para aumentar a eficácia do patrocínio. Por fim, limitações e oportunidades para futuras investigações são discutidas.

Palavras-chave: Patrocínio de Camisolas, Imagem de Marca, Envolvimento dos Adeptos, Identificação da Equipa, Eficácia do Patrocínio, Marketing Desportivo, Congruência do Patrocínio, Perceção do Patrocínio, Futebol Profissional

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	II
SUMÁRIO	IV
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	V
TABLE OF CONTENTS	VI
TABLE OF FIGURES	VIII
TABLE OF TABLES	IX
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT	1
1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT	2
1.3 RELEVANCE	2
1.4 RESEARCH METHODS	3
1.5 DISSERTATION OUTLINE	3
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....	5
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	5
2.2 DEPENDENT VARIABLE: BRAND IMAGE	5
2.2.1 DEFINITION AND IMPORTANCE OF BRAND IMAGE	5
2.2.2 BRAND IMAGE IN SPORTS SPONSORSHIP	6
2.2.3 MEASUREMENT OF BRAND IMAGE.....	6
2.3 MEDIATOR: FAN ENGAGEMENT.....	7
2.3.1 DEFINITION AND ROLE OF FAN ENGAGEMENT.....	7
2.3.2 FAN ENGAGEMENT AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION	8
2.3.3 CONNECTION TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES	10
2.3.4 MEASUREMENT OF FAN ENGAGEMENT.....	10
2.4 MODERATOR: TEAM IDENTIFICATION	11
2.4.1 DEFINITION AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF TEAM IDENTIFICATION.....	11
2.4.2 DIMENSIONS OF TEAM IDENTIFICATION	12
2.4.3 IMPACT OF TEAM IDENTIFICATION ON SPONSORSHIP AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOR.....	13
2.4.4 MEASUREMENT OF TEAM IDENTIFICATION	14
2.4.5 IMPLICATIONS OF TEAM IDENTIFICATION FOR SPONSORSHIP SUCCESS.....	15
2.5 DISTINGUISHING FAN ENGAGEMENT FROM TEAM IDENTIFICATION.....	15
2.6 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....	16
2.7 HYPOTHESES	17
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY.....	19
3.1 RESEARCH APPROACH.....	19
3.2 DATA COLLECTION.....	19
3.2.1 PRIMARY DATA	19
3.2.2 SAMPLING METHODOLOGY.....	20
3.3 STIMULI DEVELOPMENT.....	20
3.4 MEASUREMENT AND INDICATORS	21

3.4.1 FAN ENGAGEMENT.....	21
3.4.2 TEAM IDENTIFICATION.....	21
3.4.3 BRAND IMAGE	21
3.4.4 MANIPULATION CHECK.....	22
3.5 DATA ANALYSIS	22
3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	22
3.7 LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE	22
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	24
4.1 RESULTS.....	24
4.2 DATA CLEANING AND PREPARATION	24
4.3 VARIABLE CREATION	25
4.4 SAMPLE CHARACTERIZATION.....	25
4.5 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS.....	26
4.6 RELIABILITY ANALYSIS	26
4.7 HYPOTHESES TESTING.....	27
4.7.1 HYPOTHESIS 1	27
4.7.2 HYPOTHESIS 2	29
4.7.3 HYPOTHESIS 3	30
4.7.4 HYPOTHESIS 4	31
4.8 FULL MODEL TEST	32
4.9 ADDITIONAL RESEARCH.....	32
4.9.1 PERSONA DEVELOPMENT	32
4.9.2 GROUP COMPARISONS	33
4.9.3 INFLUENCE OF DEMOGRAPHICS.....	34
4.9.4 INTEREST IN SOCCER AND SPENDING BEHAVIORS	34
4.10 DISCUSSION.....	36
4.10.1 FAN ENGAGEMENT AS A MEDIATOR.....	36
4.10.2 THE ROLE OF TEAM IDENTIFICATION	36
4.10.3 JERSEY SPONSORSHIP AND BRAND IMAGE.....	37
4.10.4 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS.....	37
4.10.5 EFFECTS ON MANAGEMENT	38
4.10.6 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH	38
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS	39
5.1 MAIN FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS	39
5.2 MANAGERIAL AND ACADEMIC IMPLICATIONS	40
5.3 LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH.....	40
REFERENCE LIST	I
APPENDICES	IV
APPENDIX A: FULL QUALTRICS QUESTIONNAIRE.....	IV
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STIMULI DEVELOPMENT	XI
APPENDIX C: STATISTICAL RESULTS	XIII

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework..... 17
Figure 2: Statistical Model H1 27
Figure 3: Statistical Model H2 29
Figure 4: Statistical Model H3 30
Figure 5: Statistical Model H4 31

TABLE OF TABLES

Table 1: Number of valid answers per Stimulus 24
Table 2: Descriptive Statistics 26
Table 3: Cronbach's Alpha test..... 27
Table 4: ANOVA Descriptives H1 28
Table 5: ANOVA H1 28

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and problem statement

Because sponsorship can create a meaningful connection between brands and a highly engaged and involved audience, it has become an indispensable marketing strategy in the field of professional sports. Within sponsorship opportunities, jersey sponsorship has a particularly high impact as it offers uninterrupted visibility on the pitch. These sponsorships not only generate high monetary income for the sponsored clubs but also influence how fans perceive the brand image of the sponsored club.

According to Plumeyer et al. (2019), this brand image encompasses both cognitive and emotional associations and is crucial for the formation of a club identity in a highly competitive environment. Nevertheless, effective sponsorship is by no means guaranteed, as its effectiveness depends on a number of factors. These include the emotional and psychological connection of the fans and the perceived congruence between the sponsor and the sponsored club.

When looking at professional soccer, the two constructs of fan engagement and team identification are of enormous importance in understanding the effectiveness of sponsorship. Fan engagement reflects the intensity of the emotional, cognitive and behavioral interactions between the fans and their team, while team identification includes the fans' psychological attachment to their team through the perception of their successes and failures as their own (Dimmock & Grove, 2006; Yoshida et al., 2014).

Both constructs not only increase loyalty, but also have an impact on the perception of sponsorship. As a result, morally oriented sponsors, for example, can meet with a greater response from fans compared to commercially oriented sponsors, especially among fans with a high level of team identification.

Even though interest in sports sponsorship is increasing, it is not entirely clear how jersey sponsorship affects the brand image of the sponsored club. In addition, it has not yet been sufficiently observed how fan engagement, team identification and the type of jersey sponsorship affect each other. As the results of sponsorship very often depend on precisely this interaction, it is important to find out more about this.

1.2 Problem Statement

This thesis examines the extent to which fan engagement and team identification together influence the brand image of a club that has a jersey sponsor. Even though the main goal of any sponsorship is to increase brand value, the effectiveness of the sponsorship is strongly related to how fans perceive and identify with the sponsorship.

In order to explore these dynamics in more detail, the following research questions are posed in this study:

1. RQ1: How do fan engagement and team identification jointly influence the brand image of the sponsored soccer club in professional soccer?
2. RQ2: To what extent does team identification moderate the effects of the main jersey sponsor on fan engagement?
3. RQ3: How does the type of jersey sponsorship affect the fans' perception of the brand image of a team with which they identify?

The aim of the research questions is to understand the complex relationships between sponsorship, fan behavior and the brand image of the sponsored club and to provide theoretical insights and practical implications for clubs and sponsors.

1.3 Relevance

From a scientific perspective, this study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on sponsorship in sports, particularly soccer, by closing critical gaps in relation to the mediating and moderating role of fan engagement and team identification. As existing studies have mostly focused on the financial outcomes of sponsorships, the focus of this study is on the psychological and behavioral mechanisms that influence fans' perceptions and reactions.

By integrating fan engagement, team identification and congruence between sponsor and sponsored club into a coherent framework, this study provides a more nuanced understanding of sponsorship effectiveness in professional soccer.

Looking at this thesis from a management perspective, the results can provide practical insights for soccer clubs and their sponsors. From a club perspective, the research findings can be used to create sponsorship deals that are more appealing to their fans. Sponsors can design their branding strategies to maximize brand equity and loyalty. For example, assuming a morally

aligned sponsor, they can benefit from the stronger positive associations of fans with high team identification, again highlighting the importance of congruence between sponsor and club.

1.4 Research methods

The research approach of this study is quantitative. It aims to investigate the effects of jersey sponsorship on fan engagement, team identification and the brand image of the sponsored club. A 2x3 experimental design with six stimuli was used, representing FC Barcelona and Real Madrid jerseys with three sponsorship conditions: UNICEF, Qatar Airways and no sponsor. Participants were randomly assigned one of these stimuli and completed a Qualtrics online survey. The survey included scales validated by existing literature, e.g. by Yoshida et al. (2014) for fan engagement, by Dimmock & Grove (2006) for team identification and by Martínez Salinas & Pina Pérez (2009) for brand image.

Once the data had been collected, it was analyzed comprehensively. Descriptive statistics, reliability tests and inferential methods were used. PROCESS macro models from Hayes were used to perform mediation and moderation analyses, which were then used to examine the assumed relationships between the variables. This methodology ensures reliable and reproducible insights into the dynamics of sponsorship effectiveness.

1.5 Dissertation outline

The structure of this dissertation ensures a comprehensive analysis of the relationships between sponsorship, fan engagement, team identification and brand image of the sponsored club. Chapter 2 consists of a detailed literature review and creates the conceptual framework for the study. It provides theoretical definitions and empirical insights into the constructs of fan engagement, team identification and brand image and their role in the effectiveness of sponsorship. Chapter 3 examines the research methodology, including data collection, the development of the stimuli and the analytical approach. The experimental design is also described in detail to ensure clarity and transparency.

Chapter 4 presents the results of the data analysis and interprets them in relation to the research questions and hypotheses. In the course of the discussion, the extent to which the results agree with or deviate from existing literature is determined and implications for theory and practice are highlighted. Finally, Chapter 5 summarizes the most important results, explains their

relevance for management and science and outlines limitations and directions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed examination of the key concepts of brand image, fan engagement and team identification. All of these are essential to the focus of this study on jersey sponsorship in soccer. This section of the thesis defines the theoretical foundations of these constructs and their respective importance for the research questions and hypotheses formulated in this study.

2.2 Dependent Variable: Brand Image

2.2.1 Definition and Importance of Brand Image

Brand image is an important component of brand equity. It encompasses both cognitive and emotional associations that consumers associate with a brand (Malik et al., 2012; Sukma Wijaya, 2013). In the context of professional soccer, brand image is also influenced by the direct interaction of fan engagement and team identification (Yoshida et al., 2014).

Research question 1 examines the way in which fan engagement and fan identification with the team affect the brand image of the sponsored club. This is also hypothesis 1 (H1) of this thesis, which states that jersey sponsorship contracts have an impact on the brand image of the sponsored clubs. Previous research suggests that successful sponsorship agreements promote brand visibility and improve consumer perception of the sponsor and the sponsored team (Lee et al., 2014).

Thus, a well-coordinated sponsorship can capitalize on the emotional connection of the fan base to the team and create and promote a positive image transfer to the sponsoring brand (Cornwell & Kwon, 2020). According to Plumeyer et al. (2019), the brand image of the sponsored team benefits from additional credibility and financial support if these associations are developed among the fans.

Furthermore, Plumeyer et al. (2019) emphasize that brand image is not static, but develops through consumer interactions and perceptions, especially in dynamic environments such as sports, where sponsorship plays a crucial role in shaping these associations.

As Malik et al. (2012) and Plumeyer et al. (2019) show, consumers' interpretations depend on factors such as product attributes, customer benefits and brand associations and can be either rational or emotional. According to Aaker (1996) and Keller (1993), brand image is defined as a set of associations that are organized in a meaningful way and reflect the meaning of the brand in the consumer's mind (Malik et al., 2012; Plumeyer et al., 2019).

These associations often include attributes, benefits and attitudes that are critical to promoting brand trust, customer satisfaction and overall brand equity (Plumeyer et al., 2019).

2.2.2 Brand Image in Sports Sponsorship

In the sports industry, brand image is crucial for differentiating a brand from its competitors. It also creates a unique brand identity. For example, according to Lee et al. (2014), Nike's brand image is closely associated with innovation and quality by consumers. This is a perception that is reinforced by the company's decision to distance itself from inferior retail partners in order to protect its premium status (Lee et al., 2014).

As consumer perceptions of brand loyalty, especially in sports, can strongly influence market positioning, the strategic management of brand image is particularly important. For example, a morally oriented sponsor such as UNICEF could improve fans' perceptions of brand integrity, while commercially oriented sponsors such as Qatar Airways could elicit mixed reactions depending on their alignment with the team's values (Plumeyer et al., 2019). As noted by Lee et al. (2014), sports brands often focus on the symbolic and experiential dimensions of their image, with companies such as Nike using associations with sporting excellence and cutting-edge technology to reinforce their image. Not only does this strategy create a robust brand image, but it also maintains consumer interest and loyalty in a competitive market.

All in all, it can be said that brand image is a complex construct that is crucial for effective brand management, especially in the sports industry where it has a significant impact on consumer behavior and brand equity (Lee et al., 2014; Malik et al., 2012; Sukma Wijaya, 2013).

2.2.3 Measurement of Brand Image

There are various techniques for evaluating brand image. All of them aim to capture consumers' perceptions and associations. The methods used to date are primarily based on quantitative approaches such as Likert rating scales, in which respondents rate the brands on a scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". Ranking techniques are also used, in which brands are ranked in comparison to their competitors based on certain attributes. Both methods offer a structured way of evaluating brand associations, even if they may not fully capture the more subjective and unconscious elements of brand image (Driesener & Romaniuk, 2006).

To investigate non-verbal and unconscious aspects of brand perception, qualitative and projective techniques were adopted from psychology to overcome the limitations mentioned above. These are techniques such as photo-sorting and other projective methods that aim to gain deeper insights into consumer perceptions that may not be easily articulated (Malik et al., 2012). Both physical and psychological stimuli, such as product features, brand name and advertising, have a formative effect on brand image and all evoke rational and emotional responses in consumers (Sukma Wijaya, 2013).

The brand image construct is multi-layered and includes emotional and symbolic dimensions in addition to cognitive ones. The brand image construct also plays a central role in marketing strategies and brand management (Malik et al., 2012). Although there are now various measurement instruments, there is still a need for systematic reviews and meta-analyses to validate and improve these methods. Insights from disciplines such as anthropology and ethnography must also be included in order to deepen our understanding of brand image (Malik et al., 2012).

Alhaddad (2014) emphasizes that brand image is also a crucial component of brand equity as it influences consumer perceptions and decision-making processes, which subsequently underlines the importance of accurate measurement methods. Although traditional quantitative methods form the basis for measuring brand image, the inclusion of qualitative approaches can provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer perceptions and improve brand management.

While brand image represents consumers' perceptions of a brand based on its attributes and associations (Aaker, 1996), the role of fan engagement in actively shaping these perceptions becomes crucial in the sports context (Yoshida et al., 2014). The following section examines fan engagement in the role of a dynamic mediator that bridges the link between jersey sponsorship and brand image.

2.3 Mediator: Fan Engagement

2.3.1 Definition and Role of Fan Engagement

Building on Keller's concept of brand image (1993), fan engagement is an important component in reinforcing brand perception through active engagement and participation (Vale & Fernandes, 2018). This engagement not only affects how consumers perceive the club as a

brand, but also strengthens their emotional and psychological attachment to the sports club. This engagement, coupled with a strong identification with the team, has a multiplicative effect on improving the club's brand image and the brand loyalty of fans and consumers (Andersson & Karlsson, 2014).

According to Yoshida et al. (2014), fan engagement in sports goes beyond simply attending matches or buying fan merchandise. It encompasses a wide range of behaviors, such as social interactions, digital engagement, and co-creation activities (Yoshida et al., 2014). This concept aligns closely with the COBRA framework, which categorizes engagement into consumption, contribution and creation activities and emphasizes how fans actively shape the brand experience (Vale & Fernandes, 2018). Fan engagement plays a key role in improving the club's brand image, as explored by RQ1 and supported by H2, both suggesting that fan engagement mediates the relationship between jersey sponsorship and the brand image of the sponsored club. According to Yoshida et al. (2014), engaged fans not only interact with the brand, but also create content that can positively influence the brand image. Fan engagement on digital platforms increases brand visibility and loyalty, supporting the idea that a well-executed sponsorship strategy can significantly improve the club's brand image through increased interaction with fans (Santos et al., 2019).

Fan engagement is characterized by transactional and non-transactional behaviors and includes recommending the team, participating in discussions and interacting on social media (Santos et al., 2019; Yoshida et al., 2014).

Fans also actively contribute to creating shared value and participate in discussions - all of which deepen their connection to the team (Vale & Fernandes, 2018). According to Yoshida et al. (2014), fan engagement mirrors customer engagement. This includes spontaneous, interactive and co-creative behaviors that are primarily non-transactional. For clubs, fostering these behaviors is crucial as it can build strong relationships with fans, which subsequently leads to stronger loyalty and long-term support (Santos et al., 2019).

2.3.2 Fan Engagement and Digital Transformation

Given the ever-evolving landscape of digital platforms (Vale & Fernandes, 2018), the scope of fan engagement has also expanded beyond traditional interactions. This offers richer and more diverse forms of engagement. These changes not only improve the fan experience but can also

increase the reach and visibility of the clubs' brand through digital co-creation and fan participation.

Vale & Fernandes (2018) describe that social media has significantly changed fan engagement by providing them with opportunities to interact with teams and other fans through their platforms, which subsequently enhances the overall fan experience and fosters a sense of community. These interactions are consistent with H1, which states that fan engagement acts as a mediator in enhancing the brand image of a sponsored soccer club.

Theodorakis et al. (2010) claim that the psychological connection between fans and their teams, often referred to as team identification, moderates the relationship between sponsorship visibility and fan engagement and furthermore influences behaviors such as attendance at games and social interactions related to the team. This link highlights the moderating effect of team identification on sponsorship visibility and provides a direct link to RQ2 and H4. Both examine how team identification influences the relationship between a jersey sponsorship deal and fan engagement.

Dimmock & Grove (2006) emphasize that fan engagement is driven by various motivations. These include the need for community and the influence of socialization factors that are facilitated by the interactive nature of social media platforms. Despite these factors, many sports organizations find it difficult to effectively engage with their fan base on social media because they lack sufficient knowledge of their motivations and behaviors (Vale & Fernandes, 2018). According to Santos et al. (2019), a comprehensive approach that takes into account the different motivations and behaviors of fans is essential for using social media as an engagement platform. The focus should be on relationships between fans, interactions between teams and fans, and fan co-creation in order to contribute to the overall success of sports organizations.

If these interactions are promoted accordingly by the clubs, the reputation of their own brand can be improved and the relationship with their own fans can be strengthened, which subsequently leads to a more committed and loyal fan base (Yun et al., 2021). H1 and H4 are based on this. They assume that higher engagement and strong identification with the team have a positive influence on brand image and consumer loyalty.

2.3.3 Connection to Research Questions and Hypotheses

Fan engagement has a significant impact on the brand image of soccer clubs. It promotes a strong bond between fans and sports teams, which in turn strengthens the team's brand image. This engagement is characterized by the emotional, cognitive and behavioral interactions of fans with the team and usually goes beyond pure transactional exchange (Pradhan et al., 2020; Yun et al., 2021). According to Yun et al. (2021), a positive brand image is crucial for sports teams as it helps to build a stable and loyal fan base, which is essential for long-term success. Fan engagement can manifest itself in a variety of ways. This includes attending matches, buying fan merchandise, or participating in online communities. All of these contribute to a positive perception of the team (Santos et al., 2019; Vale & Fernandes, 2018). Social media platforms play a central role in facilitating these interactions, as they allow fans to co-create content and share their experiences, which subsequently improves the team's brand image through increased visibility and positive word of mouth (Santos et al., 2019).

These diverse forms of fan engagement allow fans to express their loyalty and support in a variety of ways, which ultimately contributes to a more robust and positive brand image (Huettermann et al., 2022; Pradhan et al., 2020). Engaged fans are more likely to behave in ways that positively influence others. This includes, for example, recommending the team to others and creating positive online content (Huettermann et al., 2022). This engagement forms a system in which a strong brand image further encourages fan engagement, creating a positive cycle of support and loyalty (Yun et al., 2021).

These connections between the individual terms are also part of RQ1, as it is intended to investigate how fan engagement and team identification together influence the relationship between sponsorship and brand image. This also strengthens the hypothesis that increased engagement and identification improve the brand perception of the sponsored club.

All in all, it can therefore be said that fan engagement is a crucial figure for brand image in sports, as it promotes a deeper connection between fans and teams, increases visibility and stimulates positive consumer behaviors that together strengthen the brand image of the sponsored club.

2.3.4 Measurement of Fan Engagement

The topic of fan engagement measurement has already been examined in several research studies and with the help of various dimensions. One of these approaches to measuring fan engagement is to assess the relationship between fans, between teams and fans, and the co-

creation of fans, especially in the context of social networking sites (SNS). According to Santos et al. (2019), this model focuses on interactions between fans, behaviors that result from team actions, and co-creative activities that increase the team's value to fans.

A variant described by Yoshida et al. (2014) focuses on three defining characteristics: Management collaboration, prosocial behavior, and performance tolerance. These dimensions capture fans' collaborative participation in event management, their behavior in developing networks and their loyalty to the team, regardless of its performance. According to Vale & Fernandes (2018), the Consumer's Online Brand-Related Activities (COBRA) framework expands on this aspect by categorizing engagement into consumption, contribution and creation activities on social media platforms and then detecting the motivations and behaviors that drive fans' interactions with sports clubs online.

Another psychometric instrument for assessing the multidimensional nature of fan identification is described by Theodorakis et al. (2010) in the form of the Team Identification Scale (TIS). It represents a crucial component of engagement as this scale takes into account cognitive, affective and evaluative components and provides a comprehensive understanding of how fans connect with their teams.

While fan engagement plays a direct role in influencing brand image through interactions and participation (Yoshida et al., 2014), the strength of this influence is also determined by the degree to which fans identify with their team (Theodorakis et al., 2010). The psychological bond that fans build with a team strengthens the impact of engagement on brand loyalty and perception.

All studies mentioned above highlight the challenges of measuring fan engagement and the need for multi-dimensional models that measure the different ways fans interact with and support their teams in different contexts and on different platforms.

2.4 Moderator: Team Identification

2.4.1 Definition and Theoretical Background of Team Identification

According to Yoshida et al. (2014), team identification is an extension of the concept of fan engagement, which influences the relationship between sponsorship and the brand image of the sponsored club. Fans with a high level of team identification are more likely to transfer positive

brand associations from the club to the sponsor, which in turn improves the sponsor's brand image (Gwinner & Swanson, 2003). This is also the basis for H3, which states that identification with the team moderates the relationship between sponsorship and the brand image of the sponsored club. This connection is strengthened if there is congruence between the sponsor and the club, as Dos-Santos et al. (2023) assume. Furthermore, Dos-Santos et al. (2023) claim that the perceived congruence between the club and its sponsor significantly improves the fans' perception of the sponsorship and contributes to a stronger brand image and brand loyalty.

According to Dimmock & Grove (2006), the concept of team identification is a psychological connection that fans have with a sports team and in the course of which the team's successes and failures are experienced as personal highs and lows. This connection is deeply rooted in social identity theory, which states that fans derive a sense of belonging and self-worth from their connection with the team (Theodorakis et al., 2010).

It can therefore be said that the phenomenon of the complex and multidimensional concept of team identification has already been extensively researched. The term refers to the psychological bond that individuals develop with a sports team, which significantly influences their behavior and emotional reactions (Dimmock & Grove, 2006; Theodorakis et al., 2010). Here, the construct's rootedness in social identity suggests that part of a person's self-concept is derived from their sense of belonging to a group, along with the emotional meaning they attach to this membership (Dimmock & Grove, 2006; Theodorakis et al., 2010). From this, based on Gwinner & Swanson (2003), it can be deduced in the context of jersey sponsorship that a high level of identification with the team can reinforce the positive perception of sponsors, especially those that align well with the team's values. Conversely, this means that sponsors perceived as incongruent weaken the commitment of fans with lower identification.

2.4.2 Dimensions of Team Identification

Based on Dimmock & Grove (2006), as well as Theodorakis et al. (2010), team identification can basically be divided into cognitive, affective and evaluative aspects, with the cognitive and affective components being closely linked, while the evaluative dimension is in turn subdivided into personal and perceived external evaluations. According to Branscombe & Wann (1991), identification with the team can even act as a protective shield against feelings of alienation and depression and promote a sense of self-worth and belonging, which in turn is often able to compensate for the decline in traditional social ties.

The points mentioned also have far-reaching effects on consumer behavior, particularly in the case of sports sponsorship. Fans with strong identification tend to respond more positively to sponsorship, have higher brand awareness, and greater satisfaction and are more likely to buy the sponsor's products (de Amorim & de Almeida, 2015; Gwinner & Swanson, 2003).

Furthermore, congruence between the sponsor and club further enhances this connection by promoting a positive perception of the sponsor's brand. According to Dos-Santos et al. (2023), congruence between sponsor and club significantly increases fans' satisfaction with the sponsorship, which leads to increased behavioral intentions such as purchasing products and advocating for the sponsor within fan communities.

2.4.3 Impact of Team Identification on Sponsorship and Consumer Behavior

RQ2 and H4 address the extent to which team identification moderates the impact of jersey sponsorship on fan engagement, and additionally emphasize the crucial role of team identity in influencing fan reactions. Branscombe & Wann (1991) state that fans with high identification are more likely to engage with sponsor-related content, which further reinforces the impact of fan engagement on brand perception. Research conducted by Gwinner & Swanson (2003) supports this hypothesis and indicates that fans with a high level of team identification are more likely to be loyal to the sponsor and that their emotional connection also has a positive effect on the perception of the sponsor.

Krzyzaniak (2018) describes that fans with high identification are also more likely to respond positively to sponsors that are aligned with moral values, such as philanthropic or charitable organizations like UNICEF, as they respond positively to the philanthropic efforts of sponsors, which can improve their perception of the relationship between team and sponsor. To balance this, Boronczyk & Breuer (2020) claim that sponsors who primarily pursue commercial interests may require a higher level of perceived congruence with the sponsored club in order to elicit a similar level of engagement from fans, as skepticism towards increased commercialization may lead fans to feel that the club prioritizes profit over genuine engagement, which subsequently negatively impacts their attitude towards the sponsor.

It has been observed that fans who perceive a strong match between the sponsor and the club also show increased satisfaction with the sponsor's brand, which then leads to stronger brand loyalty and improved behavioral intentions, such as purchasing and recommending the sponsor's products (Dos-Santos et al., 2023).

These findings suggest that identification with a team not only influences personal and social identity, but also produces measurable economic results. Branscombe & Wann (1991) point out that the level of this identification depends on several factors. These include team success, location and socialization factors. All three influence the emotional attachment and loyalty of fans to their team. Complementing this, Theodorakis et al. (2010) claim that identification with a team is a dynamic and multi-layered framework that influences both individual and collective behavior, thereby having a significant impact on social identity, emotional well-being and consumer behavior.

2.4.4 Measurement of Team Identification

A comprehensive process is required to determine an individual's team identification. This evaluates several facets of a fan's bond with their sports team. One of the most important instruments here is the Team Identification Scale (TIS), which was expanded and revised by Theodorakis et al. (2010) and adapted to different cultural circumstances to increase generalizability and enable cross-national comparisons. This scale generally contains items to measure the cognitive, affective and evaluative dimensions that capture the emotional and value-based aspects of a fan's affiliation (Dimmock & Grove, 2006).

These dimensions are relevant as they reflect the extent to which fans perceive the success and failure of a team as a personal experience. According to Gwinner & Swanson (2003), fans with a high degree of identification are often characterized by unwavering loyalty. They also invest a lot of time and financial resources in supporting their teams (Gwinner & Swanson, 2003). TIS is corroborated by factor analyses showing that the cognitive/affective dimension is a significant predictor of intergroup bias, highlighting its role in understanding fan behavior (Dimmock & Grove, 2006).

Furthermore, previous research has linked the degree of identification with a team to positive psychological and social outcomes, such as improved self-esteem and less depression, particularly among fans of successful teams (Branscombe & Wann, 1991). The ability of the Team Identification Scale to measure precisely these psychological benefits makes it a valuable tool for analyzing the mental health benefits of strong team identification.

2.4.5 Implications of Team Identification for Sponsorship Success

However, TIS is not only of psychological importance for team identification, but it also has a significant impact on the success of a sponsorship. As de Amorim & de Almeida (2015) show, fans with a high level of identification tend to react more positively to sponsors, which subsequently leads to better brand awareness and greater loyalty. Dos-Santos et al. (2023) also claim that this relationship is further strengthened by the congruence between sponsor and club, as the match between the sponsor and the club improves the fans' attitude towards the sponsor, which leads to a higher perceived quality and value of the sponsorship.

Furthermore, they believe that fans are more likely to view the sponsorship as authentic and relevant, which in turn leads to greater loyalty and commitment to the sponsor (Dos-Santos et al., 2023). Therefore, the TIS not only assesses the intensity of a fan's attachment to their team, but also offers insights into the broader social and economic impact of this identification.

Thus, it can be said that the use of scales such as the TIS is essential for understanding the complex relationships between fans and sports teams and the resulting influences on individual and group behavior.

2.5 Distinguishing Fan Engagement from Team Identification

In the area of sports enthusiasm, fan engagement and fan identification are related but still different concepts. Fan engagement refers to the intensity and quality of interactions fans have with their teams, which are often facilitated by social networking sites (SNS). This includes behaviors such as attending games, consuming media and actively participating in fan-team interactions, as well as co-creation activities that increase the value of the team to the fans themselves (Santos et al., 2019). As mentioned by Santos et al. (2019), this engagement is multidimensional and includes cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components. It is also influenced by the interactive nature of SNS. These allow fans to share experiences and content with both the team and other fans.

On the other hand, there is fan identification, which describes the psychological connection that a fan feels with a team, and which can also become a defining aspect of their life (Smart et al., 2015). It indicates the extent to which a fan perceives the team as part of their self-concept and is often associated with social identity theory. As already mentioned before, Theodorakis et al. (2010) explain that this theory assumes that people derive part of their identity from their affiliation with social groups, such as sports teams. The difference in fan engagement is that

fan identification tends to be more stable and enduring, reflecting a deeper, more intrinsic connection to the team, which in turn influences the way fans process victories and defeats (Pan & Phua, 2020; Smart et al., 2015).

Silva (2020) claims that while fan engagement can fluctuate due to external factors such as team performance or social media interactions, fan identification is usually more consistent. Pan & Phua (2020) emphasize that this consistency forms the basis for loyalty and long-term support. Both concepts are crucial to understanding fan behavior, but they operate at different levels: While engagement is about active participation and interaction, identification focuses on psychological attachment and identity alignment with the team.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study combines three important constructs – specific jersey sponsorship, fan engagement, and team identification – to examine their influence on the brand image of sponsored professional soccer clubs. This framework is based on existing literature in the areas of sports sponsorship, fan behavior, and customer loyalty. In addition, it provides a structured model for testing the hypotheses proposed in this work.

The relationship between a specific jersey sponsorship (independent variable) and the brand image of the sponsored club (dependent variable) is the focus of the framework. The basis for this relationship is based on Plumeyer et al. (2019), who argue that if a sponsor is perceived as congruent with the club, the perception of the club from the fans' point of view can be positively influenced because sponsors increase credibility and contribute to the identity of a club through association and visibility. Hypothesis 1 examines this direct relationship and assumes that certain jersey sponsors have an impact on the brand image of the sponsored club.

In this context, fan engagement acts as a mediating variable in this relationship. As a distinct construct, fan engagement encompasses the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses of fans to their own team and offers a way to improve brand image through sponsorship (Yoshida et al., 2014). This is because fans who exhibit more engagement are more likely to interact with and subsequently promote their club's brand, which in turn enhances the effect of sponsorship on the sponsored club's brand image. Hypothesis 2 relies on precisely this dynamic and states that fan engagement plays a mediating role in the relationship between jersey sponsorship and brand image.

Team identification plays a moderating role in this context. According to Dimmock & Grove (2006), team identification refers to the psychological bond that fans develop with their teams by experiencing the team's successes and failures as their own. This moderating effect is important for understanding the interaction between sponsorship and different levels of fan loyalty and fan identification. This is precisely where hypotheses 3 and 4 come in, as they examine the role of team identification in moderating the relationships between jersey sponsorship, fan loyalty and brand image, and assume that stronger identification also strengthens the aforementioned effects.

All the relationships just mentioned are visually depicted in Figure 1. The direct effect of jersey sponsorship on brand image, the mediating role of fan retention, and the moderating role of team identification can be seen.

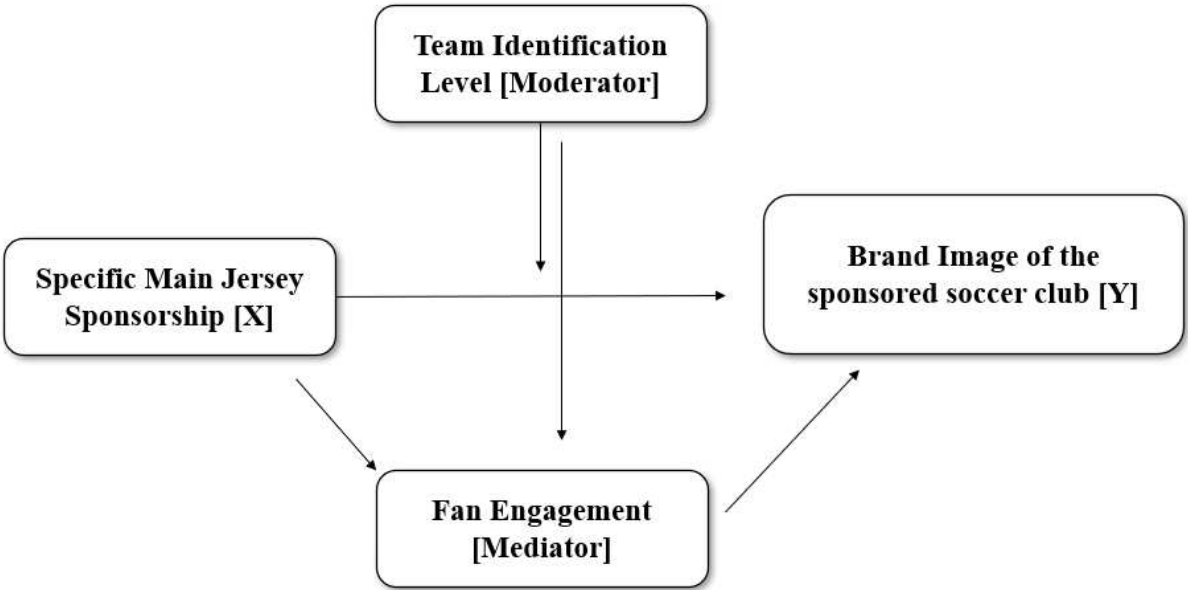


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

This framework is the basis for the hypotheses and also serves as a guide for the research methodology presented in Chapter 3.

2.7 Hypotheses

This thesis contains four hypotheses based on the conceptual framework and the analysis of existing literature. They serve to examine the relationships between kit sponsorship, fan

engagement, team identification and brand image. These four hypotheses are derived from the theories and constructs outlined in the previous sections.

The first hypothesis examines the direct effect of kit sponsorship on the brand image of the sponsored soccer club. Due to the fact that sponsorship increases visibility and evokes associations between the sponsor and the team, it is assumed that it also influences the fans' perception of the sponsored club.

- H1: Jersey sponsorship deals impact the brand image of the sponsored club.

In this context, fan commitment is attributed as a mediating variable. Committed fans are characterized by stronger emotional, cognitive and behavioral interaction with the team and are more likely to react positively to sponsorship. Since this commitment enhances the effect of sponsorship on the brand image of the sponsored club, the second hypothesis is:

- H2: Fan engagement mediates the relationship between jersey sponsorship deals and brand image.

Team identification is added as a moderating variable that influences the fans' response to sponsorship. It is assumed that strongly identified fans who perceive the team as part of their self-concept will also respond more strongly to sponsorship. This is especially true when there is a perceived fit between the sponsor and the club. The following two hypotheses are based on this:

- H3: Team identification moderates the relationship between jersey sponsorship and brand image.
- H4: Team identification moderates the relationship between jersey sponsorship and fan engagement.

In summary, these hypotheses form the basis for the empirical analysis presented in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Approach

This chapter describes the methodology used to investigate the impact of jersey sponsorship on the brand image of soccer clubs, focusing on the mediating role of fan engagement and the moderating role of team identification. As part of this, this research uses a quantitative approach to test the hypotheses, using statistical analysis to understand the relationships between the constructs. The required data is collected through an online survey. All of this is done to ensure that the methodology is replicable and the results are generalizable to a wider population of soccer fans.

To establish cause-effect relationships between jersey sponsorship and brand image as well as to understand how fan engagement and team identification mediate and moderate these relationships, the research design is causal-explanatory. This also facilitates the examination of the relationships specified in the conceptual model.

3.2 Data Collection

3.2.1 Primary Data

The study is based on primary data collected specifically for this research using an online survey with Qualtrics (Appendix A). The survey was designed to collect data on participants' engagement, identification with the team and perception of the sponsored club's brand image after being exposed to one of two specific jersey sponsorship stimuli. The way it worked in practice was that each participant was randomly assigned one of the following six stimuli: FC Barcelona with UNICEF as a sponsor, FC Barcelona with Qatar Airways as a sponsor, FC Barcelona without any sponsor, Real Madrid with UNICEF as sponsor, Real Madrid with Qatar Airways as sponsor or Real Madrid without any sponsor. The inclusion of jerseys without any sponsor provides an additional opportunity to investigate the impact of sponsors on brand perception. Based on the knowledge derived from Ghaemi (2023), randomized stimuli were used to reduce bias in experimental designs, increase reliability, and ensure the validity of the research results. Furthermore, randomization helps to attenuate the influence of confounding variables and additionally ensures that the observed effects are due to the experimental conditions and not to external factors, which in this case allows for a clear comparison of the sponsoring effects (Ghaemi, 2023).

3.2.2 Sampling Methodology

The target population of this study consists of soccer fans who are more or less strongly associated with one of the two teams shown. Due to the existing limitations in terms of access to respondents and the exploratory nature of the study, participants were selected using a non-probability based random sampling technique. The aim is to obtain a sample size that ensures reliable and statistical analysis. According to Kwak & Kim (2017), the distribution of the sample mean approaches a normal distribution as the sample size increases, regardless of the shape of the population distribution, if the sample size is sufficiently large. The sample includes fans of different genders, age groups and geographical locations to ensure diversity.

3.3 Stimuli Development

The stimuli developed for this study consist of digital images depicting FC Barcelona and Real Madrid jerseys with either UNICEF, Qatar Airways or no sponsor. These sponsors were selected based on their different sponsor types, which were investigated in face-to-face interviews and a focus group in the initial phase of this study (Appendix B). The following can be deduced from these qualitative studies: UNICEF is perceived as a morally oriented, charitable organization, while Qatar Airways is seen as a more commercially oriented sponsor, where some of the interviewees expressed concerns about human rights, due to the state behind it.

As previously mentioned, a blank jersey was included in each case to provide an additional layer to examine the impact of sponsors on the brand perception of the sponsored club. This contrast makes it possible to examine how the type of sponsorship influences brand perception. In addition, in the Qualtrics survey, participants who were shown a jersey with a sponsor were explicitly asked to rate their perception of the sponsor depicted using a slightly adapted version of a questionnaire based on a concept by Woisetschläger et al. (2017). This scale captures the participants' perception of how well the sponsor matches the team's values, how positively they rate the sponsorship and whether they believe the sponsor has a positive influence on the image of the sponsored club.

In general, the development of the stimuli therefore first involved qualitative research. Based on this, high-quality images of the jerseys were used and then digitally modified to insert the sponsor logos on the front of the jersey. This was done with the help of a Photoshop program.

3.4 Measurement and Indicators

All constructs presented in this study are measured using validated scales taken from already existing literature.

3.4.1 Fan Engagement

Fan engagement is measured using slightly adapted items from Yoshida et al. (2014), which comprise three dimensions:

- Management Cooperation: Examples include "I try to work cooperatively with (team name)" and "I do things to make (team name)'s event management easier."
- Prosocial Behavior: Examples include "I often interact with other fans to talk about issues related to (team name)" and "I spend time on social media sharing information with other fans of (team name)."
- Performance Tolerance: Examples include "I wear apparel that represents the fans of (team name) even if the team has an unsuccessful season."

3.4.2 Team Identification

Team identification is determined using a slightly adapted team identification questionnaire by Dimmock & Grove (2006). This questionnaire assesses:

- Cognitive/Affective Dimension: Examples include "I think of (team name) as part of who I am" and "(Team name)'s successes are my successes."
- Personal Evaluative Dimension: Examples include "I am proud to be a fan of (team name)" and "(Team name) is worth supporting."
- Other Evaluative Dimension: Examples include "Others have a positive view of (team name)"

3.4.3 Brand Image

Brand image is measured using items developed by Martínez Salinas & Pina Pérez (2009) and includes the following:

- Functional Image: Examples include "(Team name)'s products have a high quality" and "(Team name)'s products have better characteristics than competitors'."
- Affective Image: Examples include "(Team name) has a personality that distinguishes itself from competitors" and "(Team name) doesn't disappoint its supporters."

- Reputation: Examples include "(Team name) is one of the best teams in the league" and "(Team name) is well-established in the competition.

3.4.4 Manipulation Check

In order to verify that participants correctly identify the sponsor shown as either UNICEF, Qatar Airways or no sponsor at all, the survey includes manipulation checks. This simple identification question not only ensures that participants are attentive but also helps to validate the sponsorship stimuli used in the study.

3.5 Data Analysis

The collected data will be analyzed using SPSS and Hayes' Process Macro Model. The following analyses are performed:

- Descriptive Statistics: To provide an overview of respondent demographics and summarize the primary variables.
- Reliability Analysis: To assess the internal consistency of scales, ensuring reliability through Cronbach's alpha.
- Regression Analysis: To test the direct effects of jersey sponsorship on brand image.
- Mediation and Moderation Analysis: To test the mediating role of fan engagement and the moderating effect of team identification using Hayes' Process Macro Models.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Consent is requested from all participants before the survey begins. The consent form provided via Qualtrics informs participants of their rights, including the voluntary nature of their participation and the option to withdraw at any time without consequences. Participants' responses will be anonymized to ensure confidentiality and no personally identifiable information or data will be collected.

3.7 Limitations and Scope

This study has a few limitations. These include the use of random sampling, which could limit the generalizability of the results, as the sample may not be representative of the wider population of soccer fans. The use of self-reported data can also lead to biases, e.g. social desirability bias. Although randomized stimuli are used in this study to reduce bias and increase the reliability of the results, there are still certain limitations that cannot be neglected. For

example, a small sample size may limit the precision of the results, which can lead to misleading results (Gagnon-Bartsch et al., 2023). Kraber (2022), for example, noted that the artificial nature of random stimuli in a controlled environment can reduce external validity and affect the generalizability of results to real-life situations.

This study is limited to examining fan reactions to specific jersey sponsorships (UNICEF, Qatar Airways and no sponsor) for FC Barcelona and Real Madrid, using a 2x3 experimental design with two soccer clubs and the three sponsorship variants just mentioned. The results should provide information about the effectiveness of different types of sponsorship in shaping the brand image of the sponsored club. Nevertheless, this study should not be generalized for all forms of sponsorship or sports contexts, as it focuses on professional soccer and sponsorship on the front of the jersey in particular.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

This chapter of the thesis presents the results of the data analysis conducted to answer the research questions and validate the hypotheses put forward in this thesis. The analysis includes descriptive statistics, reliability tests and inferential statistical methods. It also includes the application of a Hayes PROCESS model to examine the relationships between jersey sponsorship, fan engagement, team identification and brand image of the sponsored club.

4.2 Data Cleaning and Preparation

The first data set originally consisted of 447 responses. After a thorough cleansing process, the final data set, to which the following analysis refers, comprised 288 valid responses. As shown in Table 1, at the end of the data set, at least 31 valid responses were provided for each of the presented stimuli.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Barca_UNICEF	55	19,1	19,1	19,1
	Barca_Qatar	46	16,0	16,0	35,1
	Barca_Without_Sponsor	32	11,1	11,1	46,2
	Real_UNICEF	58	20,1	20,1	66,3
	Real_Qatar	66	22,9	22,9	89,2
	Real_Without_Sponsor	31	10,8	10,8	100,0
	Total	288	100,0	100,0	

Table 1: Number of valid answers per Stimulus

First, the dataset was checked for duplicate IP addresses to ensure unique participation. Any duplicate entries were removed. In addition, it was searched for missing or incomplete data to identify invalid responses, which were also removed. Subsequently, incomplete surveys and respondents who had not given their explicit consent were removed from the list of analyzable participants as well. In addition, a manipulation check was carried out to only include respondents who furthermore had correctly identified the sponsor in the stimuli used. Finally, a Mahalanobis test was performed to identify and exclude potential multivariate outliers - however, no significant outliers were found. The cumulative average values of three variables

- Fan Engagement ("Fan_Eng,"), Team Identification ("Team_ID") and Brand Image ("BrandImg") of the club - were used as a basis for measurement.

4.3 Variable Creation

In order to carry out a reasonable analysis of the collected data in the next steps, some additional variables were created. In addition to all demographic information (age, gender, residence, occupation and level of education), dummy variables were also created for all of the six stimuli. Furthermore, the three variables to be measured - Brand Image, Fan Engagement and Team Identification - were calculated separately for each of the two soccer clubs.

Besides that, their values were put together to calculate the overall impact, regardless of the soccer club shown to the participant. Additional variables were also created for the additional questions asked and their answers.

Finally, the perceived brand perception of the two sponsors was also mapped individually, separately for each club, and once collectively in one variable for each sponsor. All of this was done to look at various correlations in the course of the analysis.

4.4 Sample Characterization

Of the 288 valid responses, 66.3% came from participants who identified themselves as male. 32.6 % perceive their gender as female. Finally, 0.3 % were non-binary/third gender and 0.7 % did not want to give any information about their gender. In terms of age, the largest proportion, 42.4%, were in the 18-24 age category, followed by 38.5% of 25–34-year-olds, with the remainder split between older age groups.

Looking at the geographical distribution of participants, 57.6% of respondents were currently located in Austria, followed by 10.4% in Germany, 6.9% in the UK and smaller proportions in Portugal, Spain and Italy. In addition, 20.1% of respondents chose to reside in an unspecified country.

In terms of respondents' occupational status, 52.8% of respondents were students, 33% were employed full-time, and the remainder were employed part-time (5.2%), self-employed (6.9%) or unemployed (1.7%). The highest educational qualification of the participants was relatively diverse: 30.2% stated that they had a bachelor's degree, 28.5% a master's degree, 21.9% a high school diploma, and a smaller proportion stated other qualifications.

4.5 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were calculated to summarize the central tendencies of the key variables. As depicted in Table 2, Fan Engagement had a mean of 2.51 (SD = 1.40), Team Identification had a mean of 2.76 (SD = 1.30), and Brand Image (of the sponsored club) had a mean of 4.75 (SD = 0.98). These results are based on the three created and added cumulative variables describing fan engagement, team identification and brand image of the club. All of these are the sum of the combined total values given by all participants, not taking into account the team with which they were confronted within the stimulus part.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Average Fan Engagement	288	1,00	7,00	2,5116	1,40195
Average Brand Image	288	1,00	7,00	4,7535	,98323
Average Team Identification	288	1,00	7,00	2,7587	1,30278
Valid N (listwise)	288				

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

4.6 Reliability Analysis

Due to the data set structure, the reliability of the scales was assessed separately for the participants who were shown an FC Barcelona stimulus and those who were shown a Real Madrid stimulus. As depicted in Table 3 the results for participants exposed to the FC Barcelona stimuli, the Cronbach's alpha values showed strong internal consistency for all constructs: Fan engagement ($\alpha = 0.951$), team identification ($\alpha = 0.851$) and brand image ($\alpha = 0.841$). The reliability analysis was similar for the participants who received a Real Madrid stimulus. Comparable values were also observed here: Fan engagement ($\alpha = 0.932$), team identification ($\alpha = 0.824$) and brand image ($\alpha = 0.855$). These calculations show robust reliability within each group, confirming the suitability of the scales for further analysis.

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Fan Engagement (Barca)	9	0.951
Team Identification (Barca)	9	0.851
Brand Image (Barca)	7	0.841
Fan Engagement (Real)	9	0.932
Team Identification (Real)	9	0.824
Brand Image (Real)	7	0.855

Table 3: Cronbach's Alpha test

4.7 Hypotheses Testing

4.7.1 Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis that was formulated as part of this thesis aimed to determine whether jersey sponsorship contracts have a significant effect on the brand image of the sponsored soccer club. In order to test this hypothesis, a simple linear regression analysis was carried out based on the survey data set. The independent variable Stimulus (jersey sponsorship) was analyzed to predict the dependent variable Brand Image (brand image of the sponsored club).

The results, depicted in Appendix C 1 showed a regression coefficient B of 0.010 with a p-value of 0.779. This p-value, which exceeds the threshold of statistical significance ($p > 0.05$), indicates that the effect of jersey sponsorship deals on the brand image of the sponsored club is not statistically significant (Figure 2). Furthermore, the model did not explain any variance in the dependent variable, which is confirmed by an R^2 value of 0.000.

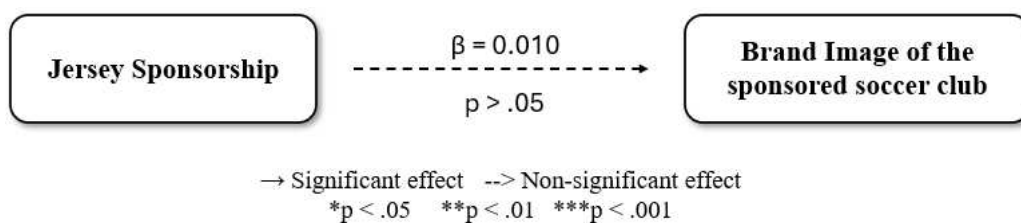


Figure 2: Statistical Model H1

In addition to the linear regression, a one-way ANOVA was carried out to compare the mean values of the six brand image values.

The analysis (Table 4) showed that the mean brand image scores differed only slightly between the groups, ranging from 4.5455 (Barca_UNICEF) to 4.9598 (Barca_Without_sponsor). Despite these differences, the ANOVA results showed no statistically significant differences in brand image scores between the groups, as the F-statistic was 1.162 with a p-value of 0.328, as depicted in Table 5. Because the p-value exceeded the threshold for statistical significance ($p > 0.05$), a direct relationship cannot be assumed. In addition, the effect size, measured by the Eta square, was 0.020. This means that jersey sponsorship only accounted for 2% of the variance in brand image. This effect size is considered small and indicates a minimal influence of sponsorship on the brand image of the sponsored club.

Descriptives

Average Brand Image

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Barca_UNICEF	55	4,5455	1,09803	,14806	4,2486	4,8423	1,00	6,29
Barca_Qatar	46	4,8540	,88088	,12988	4,5924	5,1156	2,29	6,57
Barca_Without_Sponsor	32	4,9598	,83948	,14840	4,6572	5,2625	3,71	7,00
Real_UNICEF	58	4,8670	,99511	,13066	4,6053	5,1286	1,86	6,86
Real_Qatar	66	4,7208	,91916	,11314	4,4948	4,9467	1,00	7,00
Real_Without_Sponsor	31	4,6175	1,13473	,20380	4,2013	5,0337	1,00	6,29
Total	288	4,7535	,98323	,05794	4,6394	4,8675	1,00	7,00

Table 4: ANOVA Descriptives H1

ANOVA

Average Brand Image

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5,599	5	1,120	1,162	,328
Within Groups	271,857	282	,964		
Total	277,456	287			

Table 5: ANOVA H1

Post-hoc analyses were conducted using Tukey HSD and Games-Howell tests to investigate possible group-specific differences further. These further analyses also revealed no significant pairwise differences between the sponsorship conditions.

In summary, it can be said that all the research collected leads to the results not supporting hypothesis 1: Jersey sponsorships do not appear to have a significant direct impact on the brand image of the sponsored soccer club in the context of this study. Although small differences were found in the mean values, these were not supported by statistical data.

4.7.2 Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 claims that fan engagement mediates the relationship between jersey sponsorship (Stimulus) and the brand image of the sponsored soccer club. In order to assess this assertion, a mediation analysis was conducted using the Hayes PROCESS model 4. This analysis assessed both the direct effect of the stimulus shown on the brand image variable and the indirect effect of fan engagement as a mediator.

The analysis (Appendix C 2) indicates that the direct effect of the stimulus on brand image was not significant with a coefficient of -0.0036 and a p-value of 0.910. However, the indirect effect of the stimulus on brand image through fan engagement was significant, with an effect size of 0.0134. The bootstrap confidence interval for this effect [0.0134, 0.0397] did not include zero, supporting its statistical significance. In addition, fan engagement was found to be a reliably strong predictor of brand image, with a coefficient of 0.2584 (p < 0.001) (Figure 3).

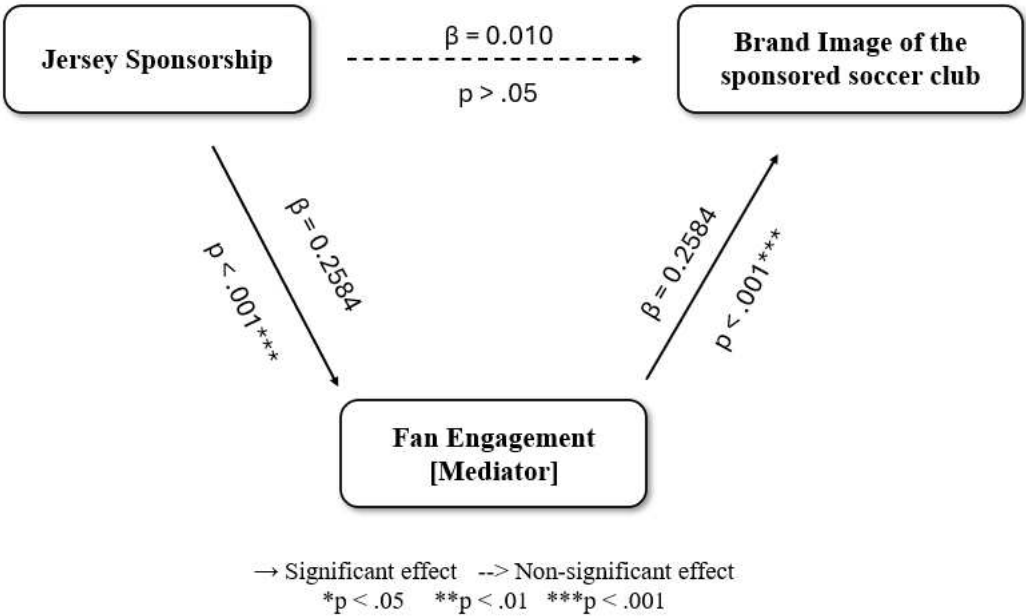


Figure 3: Statistical Model H2

So, all in all, it can be said that these results confirm hypothesis 2. Although there is no direct relationship between jersey sponsorship and brand image, the presence of fan engagement significantly mediates this relationship.

4.7.3 Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 claims that team identification moderates the relationship between jersey sponsorship deals (Stimulus) and the brand image of the sponsored club. To investigate this, a moderation analysis was conducted using Hayes PROCESS Model 1, whereby an interaction term (Stimulus × Team_ID) was created to assess its significance. The moderation analysis examines whether the strength or direction of the relationship between stimulus and brand image depends on the level of team identification (Appendix C 3).

The interaction term turned out to be non-significant, with a coefficient of -0.0083 and a p-value of 0.716. Although team identification was a significant predictor of brand image on its own, with a coefficient of 0.3581 (p < 0.001), the presence of an interaction effect was not confirmed (Figure 4).

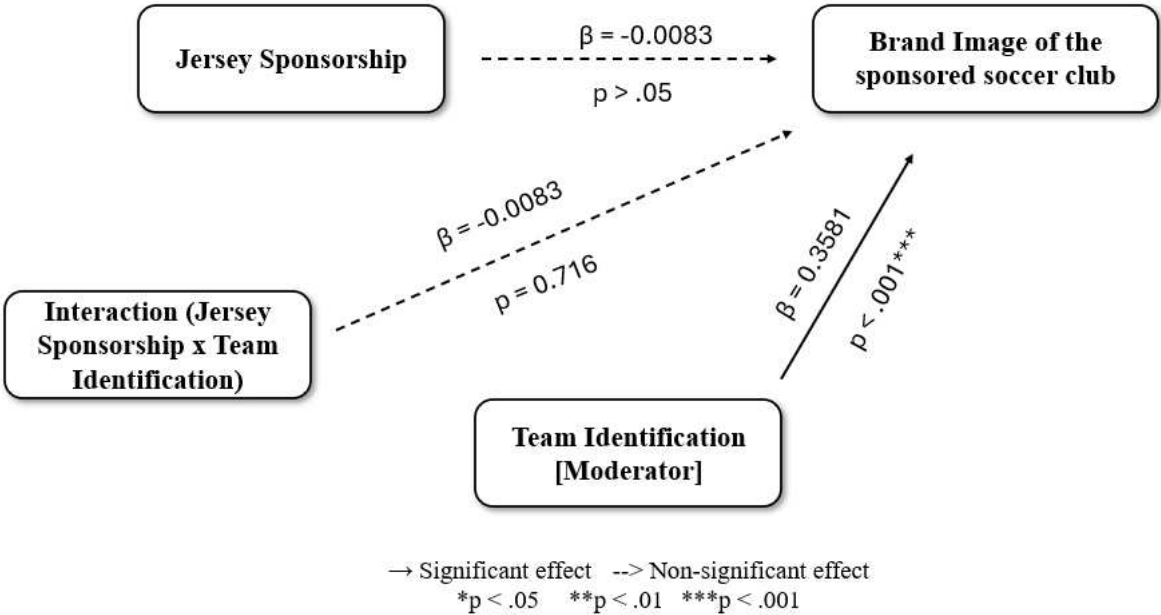


Figure 4: Statistical Model H3

These results suggest that the relationship between jersey sponsorship and brand image does not depend on the level of team identification.

All the calculations above mean that hypothesis 3 cannot be validated. Although team identification is positively related to brand image, it does not act as a moderating variable in this relationship.

4.7.4 Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 was designed to test whether a certain level of team identification moderates the relationship between jersey sponsorship and fan engagement. The approach was similar to the previous hypothesis: By using Hayes PROCESS Model 1, the interaction term (Stimulus × Team_ID) was introduced this time. This tests whether either the strength or direction of the relationship between stimulus and fan engagement depends on the level of team identification present.

The results (Figure 5) show that the interaction term is again not significant with a coefficient of -0.0128 and a p-value of 0.613. However, the main effect of team identification on fan engagement was significant with a coefficient of 0.7854 (p < 0.001). All those numbers (Appendix C 4) indicate that although team identification is strongly associated with fan engagement, it does not attenuate the effect of jersey sponsorship on fan engagement.

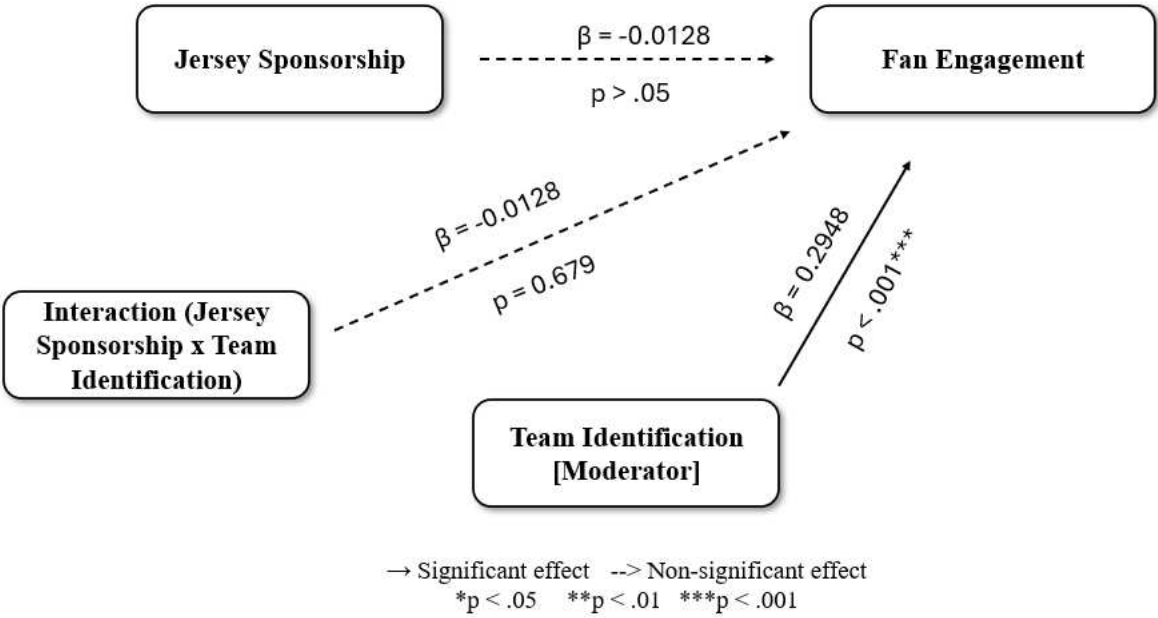


Figure 5: Statistical Model H4

It can therefore be concluded that hypothesis 4 cannot be supported based on the data collected. Team identification influences fan engagement independently but does not change the relationship between jersey sponsorship and fan engagement.

4.8 Full Model Test

Finally, the Hayes PROCESS model 8 was used to integrate the mediation effect of fan engagement and the moderating role of team identification, thus analyzing the initial conceptual model as a whole. This model assessed conditional indirect effects at different levels of team identification and examined whether the mediation effect varied with the moderator.

The results obtained show that the indirect effect of the stimulus on the brand image through fan engagement was only significant at low values of team identification (effect = 0.0007; CI [0.0001, 0.0036]). At medium and high team identification values, the effects were not significant, with confidence intervals including 0. The moderated mediation index, which tests whether the mediation effect varies systematically with the moderator, also showed no significance (coefficient = -0.0002, CI [-0.0032, 0.0020]).

All these results suggest that the mediation effect of fan engagement is only weakly moderated by team identity. Hypothesis 2 is partially supported in this context, while hypotheses 3 and 4 are not supported in the combined framework. Due to their scope, the detailed statistical results of this study are presented in Appendix C 5 - Appendix C 7.

4.9 Additional Research

This chapter is intended to further examine and analyze the knowledge that goes beyond the core hypotheses of the studies. This should provide a broader understanding of fan behavior, sponsor perception and spending habits.

4.9.1 Persona Development

In order to better categorize the participants in the study based on their level of team identification, an analysis was carried out to compare two different groups: Participants with low team identification (group 1) and participants with high team identification (group 2). The analysis examined the differences in fan engagement, brand image, and perception of the sponsoring brands Qatar Airways and UNICEF. The aim was to create personas that reflect different levels of team loyalty and engagement.

More specifically, a T-test for independent samples was conducted to determine whether there were significant differences between the groups for the variables mentioned. The result was that participants with high team identification showed significantly higher fan engagement than

participants with low team identification ($p < 0.001$). Group 1 had a mean score of 1.90 (SD = 0.95), while group 2 had a mean score of 3.62 (SD = 1.41). The effect size for this difference was large (Cohen's $d = 1.134$), suggesting a strong difference between the groups.

The brand image of the sponsored club was also rated significantly more positively by participants with high team identification ($p < 0.001$).

The mean values for the brand image of the sponsored clubs were 4.51 (SD = 0.96) for group 1 and 5.19 (SD = 0.87) for group 2, which shows a significant effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.930$). Besides that, there were also significant differences in the perception of sponsorship, since respondents with high Team Identification scored higher on the Qatar Airways composite scores ($p = 0.002$), with a mean of 3.44 (SD = 1.03), compared to 2.75 (SD = 1.09) for Group 1. Similarly, respondents with high Team Identification were more positive about UNICEF sponsorship ($p = 0.028$), with a mean of 4.57 (SD = 0.83) than those with low Team Identification (4.18 (SD = 0.94)). The illustrations of the descriptive statistics supporting these claims can be found in Appendix C 8 to Appendix C 11.

All in all, these results underline that participants with high team identification are more committed, perceive the brand image of their team more positively and have a more positive attitude towards the sponsors. These findings could be incorporated into marketing strategies that are tailored to the needs and characteristics of the individuals described.

4.9.2 Group Comparisons

This section examines the differences between Real Madrid and FC Barcelona fans in terms of their engagement, the brand image of the sponsored club and perceptions of sponsorship. The aim is to identify differences between the two fan groups and, based on this, develop team-specific branding and engagement strategies.

A T-test was carried out for independent samples to assess that. The independent variable was the team with which the participant was confronted in the survey (coded as 0 = Barcelona, 1 = Real Madrid). The analysis conducted revealed no statistically significant difference in fan engagement between Real Madrid fans ($M = 2.59$, $SD = 1.31$) and Barcelona fans ($M = 2.42$, $SD = 1.49$; $p > 0.05$). The brand image values of the two clubs were also compared, with Real Madrid fans reporting a mean value of 4.75 (SD = 0.99) and Barcelona fans a mean value of 4.75 (SD = 0.97; $p > 0.05$). There were also no significant differences in the perception of

sponsorship. Minimal differences were found in the composite scores of Qatar Airways ($p = 0.630$) and UNICEF ($p = 0.403$), but these were not statistically significant.

The evidence for the above results is shown in Appendix C 12 - Appendix C 16.

Despite the fact that there were no significant differences, the results support the idea that Real Madrid and Barcelona fans have similar levels of loyalty and perception. These similarities suggest that other factors, such as cultural or geographical influences, could be taken into account when studying fan behavior.

4.9.3 Influence of Demographics

The question of the extent to which demographic factors influence identification with the team, fan engagement and perception of the sponsor was to be investigated using a one-way ANOVA. To compute this, the data collected on age, gender, place of residence, and education were used as independent variables. Post-hoc tests (Tukey) were carried out to determine any group differences for significant results.

In the analysis age was found to be a significant factor influencing both team identification ($p = 0.036$) and perception of Qatar Airways ($p = 0.008$). Participants aged 35 to 44 in particular indicated a higher level of team identification compared to other age groups. The place of residence of the participants had a minor influence on the perception of Qatar Airways ($p = 0.026$). Gender showed no significant effect on any of the dependent variables, while education level showed some differences in perceptions of sponsorship, although these results were not consistently significant. The corresponding results of the analysis can be found in Appendix C 17 - Appendix C 24.

The results obtained indicate that demographic factors, particularly age and place of residence, play a role in shaping fan behavior and attitudes toward the two sponsors. Based on this, potential segmentation strategies for marketing and sponsorship campaigns could be developed.

4.9.4 Interest in Soccer and Spending Behaviors

In order to find out whether there is a connection between the participants' interest in soccer and their spending behavior on tickets and fan merchandise, regression analysis and one-way ANOVA were used. The first step was to measure the participant's interest in soccer using a continuous scale and then divide them into three groups: low, medium and high interest

(Appendix C 25). These groupings were used to assess the respective differences in spending behavior, with post hoc tests (Tukey) applied to determine specific group differences for significant results.

The first regression analysis showed that interest in soccer has a significant influence on ticket expenditure. 49.9% of the variance was explained with the help of the model ($R^2 = 0.499$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.498$). The summary of the regression model (Appendix C 26) shows the strength of the relationship ($R = 0.706$) and the standard error (1.165), both of which confirm the accuracy of the model. The baseline expenditure on tickets, with a soccer interest equal to zero, is indicated by the constant ($B = 0.490$, $p < 0.001$), while the regression coefficient for interest in soccer ($B = 0.027$, $p < 0.001$) showed a significant and positive slope. This means that participants with higher soccer interest also spent more on tickets (Appendix C 27).

To confirm these results, a one-way ANOVA was performed (Appendix C 28 - Appendix C 30). This actually confirmed the results obtained. It revealed significant differences in ticket expenditure between the participants with different levels of interest ($F(2, 285) = 118.885$, $p < 0.001$). The participants with the highest interest also spent the most money on tickets on average ($M = 2.49$), while the respondents who indicated the lowest interest also spent the least on average ($M = 0.21$).

The second regression analysis conducted revealed that soccer interest accounted for 33.8% of the variance in the level of merchandise spend ($R^2 = 0.338$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.337$). A summary of the model (Appendix C 31) revealed a strong relationship ($R = 0.581$) and the standard error of 0.956 indicated the mean prediction error. The baseline outputs for Merchandise are reflected by the constant ($B = 0.713$, $p < 0.001$). The regression coefficient ($B = 0.020$, $p < 0.001$) confirms the survey that participants with a higher interest in soccer also bought merchandise more frequently. More details of the regression coefficients can be found in Appendix C 32.

The significant differences between the merchandise expenditure of the three soccer interest levels were confirmed by the ANOVA analysis (Appendix C 28 - Appendix C 30) carried out ($F(2, 285) = 63.959$, $p < 0.001$). Participants who belong to the group with a high level of interest in soccer also stated that they buy merchandise most frequently ($M = 1.77$). In contrast, participants in the group with a low interest in soccer were the least likely to buy merchandise ($M = 0.19$).

All of the above conclusions suggest that participants with a higher interest in soccer are also more willing to spend more money on tickets and purchase merchandise more often. These insights may offer opportunities for targeted marketing strategies. For example, campaigns that highlight exclusive merchandise offers could appeal to and be more effective for fans with a high level of enthusiasm. On the other hand, fans with medium interest could represent a possible segment with growth potential for ticket and merchandise sales. The use of regression analyses and ANOVA results provides usable insights into the spending behavior of soccer fans.

4.10 Discussion

In the following chapter, a critical evaluation of the study results is carried out in relation to the research questions, hypotheses and existing literature. The mediating role of fan engagement, the lack of moderating effects for team identification and the impact on jersey sponsorship and brand image of the sponsored club are highlighted. The discussion concludes with reflections on theoretical contributions, management implications and the existing limitations.

4.10.1 Fan Engagement as a Mediator

The results of the study support H2 to a high degree, which means that fan engagement plays a mediating role in the relationship between jersey sponsorship and the brand image of the sponsored club. Fan engagement, which encompasses emotional, cognitive and behavioral dimensions, significantly influences how sponsorship affects the perception of a club's brand image. This result is in line with the findings of Yoshida et al. (2014), who emphasized the crucial role of fan engagement in promoting sponsorship outcomes.

It can be deduced from this that the type of sponsorship alone does not directly improve the brand image of the club, but that fan engagement plays a decisive mediating role. This finding emphasizes the importance of clubs and sponsors focusing on projects that also have a deeper connection to the fans as a result of promoting this. Here, the use of interactive campaigns, loyalty programs and fan engagement activities can be beneficial for the emotional and cognitive involvement of fans, thereby enhancing the impact of sponsorship deals.

4.10.2 The role of Team Identification

The two hypotheses (H3 and H4), which were dedicated to the moderating role of team identification, were not supported. Contrary to expectations, there was no increased

significance in the observation of whether a higher level of team identification also influences the relationships between jersey sponsorship, team commitment and brand image. This result contrasts with the research already conducted by Dimmock & Grove (2006). They emphasized and highlighted the reinforcing role of team identification in consumers' reactions to team-related stimuli.

The influence of sponsor congruence could be a possible explanation for the result. It is possible that the contrasting nature of the sponsors - UNICEF, perceived as a morally oriented sponsor, and Qatar Airways, perceived as a commercially oriented sponsor - may have overridden the moderating effects of team identification. Fans with a high level of team identification may have reacted more to the perceived match or mismatch between the sponsor and the club than to their level of identification. This means that further research is required in this area in order to decipher these effects. This applies in particular to culturally different contexts or the inclusion of teams with a lower level of recognition.

4.10.3 Jersey Sponsorship and Brand Image

The results for H1 showed no direct effect of jersey sponsorship on the brand image of the sponsored club. This result is therefore in line with those of Plumeyer et al. (2019), who argued that the effectiveness of sponsorship is often dependent on contextual factors such as congruence and commitment. The fact that no direct effect could be identified emphasizes the importance of mediating mechanisms, especially fan engagement, in translating the visibility of sponsorship into positive perceptions of the club as a brand.

Thus, this result highlights the imperative for sponsors to carefully consider a match with a club's values and fan base before entering into a sponsorship deal. A sponsor with a strong moral alignment, such as UNICEF, may evoke stronger positive associations than a more commercially oriented sponsor such as Qatar Airways, which may be met with skepticism. For soccer clubs, it would be better to favor sponsorship agreements that resonate with their fans. This will help to optimize their own brand image.

4.10.4 Theoretical Implications

This study makes a complementary contribution to the existing literature by confirming the mediating role of fan engagement in the effectiveness of sponsorship. Furthermore, it challenges existing assumptions about the universal moderating effects of team identification

and suggests that contextual factors, such as sponsorship congruence, may play a more central role. The results reinforce the importance of considering both mediating and moderating variables to understand the complex dynamics of sponsorship outcomes.

4.10.5 Effects on Management

From a practical perspective, the results obtained offer realistic strategies for both clubs and sponsors. Building on this, clubs should focus on increasing fan engagement through digital campaigns, exclusive content and community-oriented initiatives. If this is done, the emotional and cognitive bond between fans and their teams can be strengthened, as can the subsequent impact of sponsorship contracts.

From a sponsor's point of view, preference should be given to partnerships where the values of their own company are congruent with those of the soccer club they are sponsoring. For morally aligned sponsors such as UNICEF, it is easier to create stronger positive associations, especially with globally recognized teams such as FC Barcelona and Real Madrid. Furthermore, authenticity and congruence should be at the heart of sponsorship strategies to maximize long-term benefits.

4.10.6 Limitations and Future Research

Apart from the fact that this study provides valuable insights, it nevertheless has its limitations. These should be considered in future research. For example, the lack of moderating effects of team identification could be due to limitations in the sample or measurement variability. In addition, relying on self-reported survey data leads to potential biases such as social desirability or recall bias. Thus, future studies could focus on longitudinal studies or include real-time data on fan behavior to gain deeper insights.

Future research should also look at the interplay between sponsor congruence and team identification in different cultural and demographic contexts. Additional results could also be obtained by examining these dynamics in less prominent teams or in sports other than soccer.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS

5.1 Main Findings and Conclusions

In this chapter of the thesis, the research questions already posed at the beginning of the dissertation are answered individually and explicitly with the help of the results and interpretations of the study.

RQ1: How do fan loyalty and team identification jointly influence the brand image of the sponsored soccer club in professional soccer?

From the results of the study, it can be deduced that fan engagement plays a major role in shaping the brand image of sponsored soccer clubs and thereby plays a mediating role in the relationship between jersey sponsorship and the brand perception of the club. The initial assumption that team identification has a moderating effect on this relationship must be rejected due to the absence of significant moderating effects. From this, it can be deduced that fan engagement is the main factor for the results of the brand image of the sponsored club and that the level of team identification plays no role in this.

RQ2: To what extent does team identification moderate the effects of the main sponsor on fan engagement?

It was found that the participants' team identification had no significant moderating effect on the relationship between jersey sponsorship and fan engagement. This result differs from previous research findings, which suggested that fans with stronger identification would also show stronger reactions to sponsorships. The absence of a moderating effect could be explained by the influence of sponsorship congruence. This seemed to overshadow team identification as the decisive factor for fan reactions.

RQ3: How does the type of jersey sponsorship affect the perception of the brand image of a team with which fans identify?

The type of jersey sponsorship has an indirect influence on the brand image of the sponsored club through fan engagement. UNICEF, as a more morally oriented sponsor, evoked a more positive perception than Qatar Airways, a sponsor perceived as more commercially oriented.

From this, we can conclude that the congruence of sponsorship and club is important for the fans' perception of both the club's and the sponsor's brand image.

5.2 Managerial and Academic Implications

Looking at the results from a management perspective, they confirm and emphasize the need for soccer clubs and sponsors to prioritize fan engagement strategies. Here, interactive campaigns, exclusive fan experiences and community-building activities around the club can improve emotional and cognitive connections with fans while increasing the impact of sponsorship. In addition, sponsors should check in advance whether they are in line with the club's values. This helps to strengthen authenticity and brand associations.

From the perspective of academic research, the study confirms the mediating role of fan engagement, while challenging prevailing assumptions about the moderating effect of team identification. The results suggest that future research should examine sponsorship congruence and its impact on fan perception. In addition, it emphasizes the need for more sophisticated methods, including longitudinal and cross-cultural studies, to capture the complex dynamics of sponsorship effectiveness.

5.3 Limitations and Further Research

Apart from the contribution made by this work, it is also important to mention the limitations of the study. Due to the fact that the results are based on self-reported survey data, there are potential biases such as social desirability and recall errors. In addition, the generalizability of the results to smaller and less well-known clubs or other sports is limited by the focus on two well-known soccer clubs (FC Barcelona & Real Madrid).

While the use of a controlled experimental design is beneficial for isolating variables, it can also reduce external validity. In the real world, the dynamics of sponsorship are influenced by many factors such as live match experiences, interactions with the fan base and ongoing media coverage. None of these were taken into account in this study. Finally, the lack of significant moderating effects for team identification suggests the need for more diverse and representative samples to better understand their role in sponsorship effectiveness.

In future research, it would be advisable to focus the study on the interplay of sponsor congruence, fan loyalty and cultural factors in shaping brand image. Observing less prominent

teams or even a sport other than soccer could also provide important insights into the generalizability of the results. In addition, qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews or focus groups, could also be integrated to provide a better understanding of fan behavior and engagement.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Full Qualtrics Questionnaire

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey, which will be a crucial part of my Master's thesis. In the course of the survey, you will be shown the front side of a jersey of a football club and then asked questions about this club. Please answer them as accurately as possible. The survey will take **less than 10 minutes** and your responses will remain **anonymous** and will only be used for academic purposes. There are no right or wrong answers - I am interested in your honest opinions and perceptions.

By clicking "Yes" you agree to participate in this survey. If you do not wish to participate, you may simply close this window. Thank you again for your time and valuable contribution!

Consent



Skip to

End of Survey if No Is Selected

Do you agree to participate in this survey?

- Yes
- No

Interest in football



How interested are you in football?



Page Break

Frequency of match



How often do you watch football matches (live or on TV)?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Rarely
- Never

How do you usually watch football matches? (Select all that apply)

- In a stadium
 - On TV
 - Online streaming services
 - Sports bars
 - Other
-
-

League

Which of the following leagues or competitions do you follow regularly?

- Österreichische Bundesliga
- Deutsche Bundesliga
- Serie A
- La Liga
- Premier League
- Ligue 1
- Champions League
- Europa League
- Conference League
- I don't follow any specific league
- Other

Spending on ticket

How much do you typically spend per year on football match tickets?

- Less than 50€
- 50€ - 200€
- 200€ - 500€
- 500€ - 1000€
- More than 1000€
- I don't buy tickets

Page Break

Merchandise

How often do you purchase football-related merchandise (e.g., jerseys, scarves)?

- Multiple times a year
- Once a year
- Every few years
- Never

Football discussion



How often do you discuss football with your friends or family?

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Rarely	Never
In person	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Online (WhatsApp, social media, forums, ...)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Real Unicef

Please look at this jersey and try to memorize it as best you can, the following questions will refer to it. Furthermore, imagine that the club plays with such a jersey.



Real Qatar

Please look at this jersey and try to memorize it as best you can, the following questions will refer to it. Furthermore, imagine that the club plays with such a jersey.



Real without

Please look at this jersey and try to memorize it as best you can, the following questions will refer to it. Furthermore, imagine that the club plays with such a jersey.



Barca Qatar

Please look at this jersey and try to memorize it as best you can, the following questions will refer to it. Furthermore, imagine that the club plays with such a jersey.



Barca Unicef

Please look at this jersey and try to memorize it as best you can, the following questions will refer to it. Furthermore, imagine that the club plays with such a jersey.



Barca without

Please look at this jersey and try to memorize it as best you can, the following questions will refer to it. Furthermore, imagine that the club plays with such a jersey.



Real Qatar check



Skip to

End of Survey if UNICEF Is Selected

Skip to

End of Survey if No sponsor Is Selected

Skip to

End of Survey if Other/Don't know Is Selected

Which sponsor was shown on the jersey of the football team you just saw?

- UNICEF
- Qatar Airways
- No sponsor
- Other/Don't know

Qatar Perception



For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement regarding the sponsorship by Qatar Airways.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I find the sponsoring brand likable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The sponsoring brand is attractive.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The sponsor is fulfilling a moral obligation by supporting the club.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The sponsor is mainly interested in getting something out of this partnership.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Brand Image Real



Please rate the following statements regarding Real Madrid.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Real Madrid's products have high quality.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Real Madrid's products have better characteristics than competitors'.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Real Madrid is appealing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Real Madrid has a personality that distinguishes itself from competitors.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Real Madrid doesn't disappoint its supporters.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Real Madrid is one of the best teams in the league.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Real Madrid is well-established in the competition.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Fan engagement Real



Please rate the following statements regarding Real Madrid.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I try to work cooperatively with Real Madrid.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do things to make Real Madrid's event management easier	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The employees of Real Madrid get my full cooperation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often interact with other fans to talk about issues related to Real Madrid.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often advise other fans on how to support Real Madrid.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I spend time on social media sharing information with other fans of Real Madrid.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I wear apparel that represents the fans of Real Madrid even if the team has an unsuccessful season.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I display the logo of Real Madrid on my clothing even if Real Madrid does not perform well.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I wear clothing that displays the name of Real Madrid even if Real Madrid has an unsuccessful season.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please rate the following statements regarding Real Madrid.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I think of Real Madrid as part of who I am.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Real Madrid's successes are my successes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attributes that define fans of Real Madrid apply to me also.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Real Madrid has a lot to be proud of.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am proud to be a fan of Real Madrid.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Real Madrid is worth supporting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Others have a positive view of Real Madrid.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Others respect Real Madrid.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most people consider Real Madrid to be better than rival teams.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Age

How old are you?

- Under 18
- 18-24 years old
- 25-34 years old
- 35-44 years old
- 45-54 years old
- 55-64 years old
- 65+ years old

Gender

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary / third gender
- Prefer not to say

Residency

In which country do you currently live?

Austria

Occupation

What is your current occupation?

- Student
- Employed full time
- Employed part time
- Self-Employed
- Unemployed
- Retired
- Other

Education

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- No formal education
- High school
- Some college
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctorate
- Other

Appendix B: Interview Questions for Stimuli Development

Introduction:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. My name is Felix Krisper, and I am conducting this interview as part of my Master's thesis research. The aim of this interview is to understand public perceptions of different types of jersey sponsorships in professional soccer. Your responses will help me determine the appropriate sponsorships to use in an experimental study related to soccer team branding.

Demographic Questions:

What is your age?

What is your gender?

How long have you been a fan of soccer? Which team do you support?

Section 1: Awareness of Sponsorships

Can you name some jersey sponsors that come to mind when you think of professional soccer clubs?

Are there any jersey sponsors that you believe stand out more than others? If so, why?

Section 2: Moral and Economic Perceptions

What type of organizations do you think are appropriate as jersey sponsors for soccer clubs?

How important is it for a jersey sponsor to align with the values of the soccer team?

What would you say are the key differences between jersey sponsors that are driven by social causes versus those that are driven by economic objectives?

Section 3: Emotional Reactions to Sponsorships

How do you feel about soccer teams being sponsored by charitable organizations like UNICEF?

How do you feel about teams being sponsored by companies that are known for their economic interests, such as Qatar Airways?

Do you think there is a difference in how fans perceive the club based on the jersey sponsor? If so, what kind of differences?

Section 4: Sponsor-Club Congruence

In your opinion, how well does a sponsor like UNICEF align with soccer clubs in general?

What about Qatar Airways? Does it align well with soccer clubs, in your view?

Would you say that the type of sponsorship influences your overall perception of the team? How?

Section 5: Preference and Impact

If you had to choose, would you prefer a club to be sponsored by a charity like UNICEF or by a corporate entity like Qatar Airways? Why?

What impact do you believe these sponsors have on the image of the soccer team they sponsor?

Are there any specific concerns you have regarding sponsorship by organizations like Qatar Airways?

Closing Questions:

Based on the types of sponsors we've discussed, do you think the sponsorship impacts fan loyalty or fan engagement? How? Is there anything else you'd like to share about how sponsorships affect your perception of soccer teams?

End:

Thank you very much for your time and for sharing your insights. Your responses will greatly contribute to our research on soccer sponsorships and branding.

Appendix C: Statistical Results

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,017 ^a	,000	-,003	,98481

a. Predictors: (Constant), Type of Jersey Sponsorship Stimulus

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4,720	,132		35,652	<,001
	Type of Jersey Sponsorship Stimulus	,010	,035	,017	,281	,779

a. Dependent Variable: Average Brand Image

Appendix C 1: Linear Regression H1

OUTCOME VARIABLE:
Fan_Eng

Model Summary							
	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
	,0620	,0038	1,9647	1,1028	1,0000	286,0000	,2945

Model							
	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	
constant	2,3337	,1884	12,3849	,0000	1,9628	2,7048	
Stimulus	,0517	,0492	1,0501	,2945	-,0452	,1486	

OUTCOME VARIABLE:
BrandImg

Model Summary							
	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
	,3681	,1355	,8416	22,3416	2,0000	285,0000	,0000

Model							
	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	
constant	4,1169	,1529	26,9329	,0000	3,8161	4,4178	
Stimulus	-,0036	,0323	-,1128	,9103	-,0672	,0599	
Fan_Eng	,2584	,0387	6,6777	,0000	,1823	,3346	

***** DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y *****

Direct effect of X on Y						
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	
	,0036	,0323	-,1128	,9103	-,0672	,0599

Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:					
Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI		
Fan_Eng	,0134	,0135	-,0134	,0397	

Appendix C 2: Hayes PROCESS H2

Model : 1
Y : BrandImg
X : Stimulus
W : Team_ID

Sample
Size: 288

OUTCOME VARIABLE:
BrandImg

Model Summary							
	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
	,4900	,2401	,7423	29,9178	3,0000	284,0000	,0000

Model							
	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	
constant	4,7542	,0508	93,5717	,0000	4,6542	4,8542	
Stimulus	-,0013	,0303	-,0439	,9650	-,0609	,0583	
Team_ID	,3699	,0391	9,4660	,0000	,2930	,4468	
Int_1	-,0085	,0227	-,3738	,7088	-,0533	,0363	

Product terms key:
Int_1 : Stimulus x Team_ID

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):					
R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p	
X*W	,0004	,1398	1,0000	284,0000	,7088

Appendix C 3: Hayes PROCESS H3

Model : 1
 Y : Fan_Eng
 X : Stimulus
 W : Team_ID

Sample
 Size: 288

OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 Fan_Eng

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
,7318	,5355	,9225	109,1491	3,0000	284,0000	,0000

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	2,5127	,0566	44,3625	,0000	2,4012	2,6242
Stimulus	,0280	,0338	,8306	,4069	-,0384	,0945
Team_ID	,7854	,0436	18,0294	,0000	,6996	,8711
Int_1	-,0128	,0254	-,5058	,6134	-,0627	,0371

Product terms key:

Int_1 : Stimulus x Team_ID

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):

R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p	
X*W	,0004	,2558	1,0000	284,0000	,6134

Appendix C 4: Hayes PROCESS H4

Model : 8
 Y : Brandimg
 X : Stimulus
 M : Fan_Eng
 W : Team_ID

Sample
 Size: 288

OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 Fan_Eng

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
,7318	,5355	,9225	109,1491	3,0000	284,0000	,0000

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	2,5127	,0566	44,3625	,0000	2,4012	2,6242
Stimulus	,0280	,0338	,8306	,4069	-,0384	,0945
Team_ID	,7854	,0436	18,0294	,0000	,6996	,8711
Int_1	-,0128	,0254	-,5058	,6134	-,0627	,0371

Product terms key:
 Int_1 : Stimulus x Team_ID

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):

R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p	
X*W	,0004	,2558	1,0000	284,0000	,6134

Appendix C 5: Full Model Test_1

OUTCOME VARIABLE:
BrandImg

Model Summary

	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
	.4903	.2404	.7448	22,3856	4,0000	283,0000	.0000

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	4,7164	,1433	32,9110	,0000	4,4343	4,9985
Stimulus	-.0018	,0304	-.0577	,9541	-.0615	,0580
Fan_Eng	,0151	,0533	,2824	,7778	-.0899	,1200
Team_ID	,3581	,0573	6,2471	,0000	,2452	,4709
Int_1	-.0083	,0228	-.3646	,7157	-.0532	,0366

Product terms key:
Int_1 : Stimulus x Team_ID

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):

	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p
X*W	,0004	,1329	1,0000	283,0000	,7157

***** DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y *****

Conditional direct effects of X on Y

Team_ID	Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
-1,0087	,0066	,0386	-.1718	,8838	-.0694	,0626
-.3837	,0014	,0318	-.0451	,9640	-.0612	,0641
1,2413	-.0121	,0409	-.2948	,7683	-.0926	,0685

Conditional indirect effects of X on Y:

INDIRECT EFFECT:
Stimulus -> Fan_Eng -> BrandImg

Team_ID	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
-1,0087	,0006	,0025	-.0041	,0066
-.3837	,0005	,0021	-.0037	,0054
1,2413	,0002	,0022	-.0048	,0048

Index of moderated mediation:

	Index	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Team_ID	-.0002	,0012	-.0032	,0020

Appendix C 6: Full Model Test_2

***** ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS *****

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:
95,0000

Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals:
5000

W values in conditional tables are the 16th, 50th, and 84th percentiles.

NOTE: The following variables were mean centered prior to analysis:
Team_ID Stimulus

----- END MATRIX -----

Appendix C 7: Full Model Test_3

Descriptive Statistics^a

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Average Team Identification	186	1,00	2,75	1,9973	,51661
Average Fan Engagement	186	1,00	5,33	1,9008	,94584
Average Brand Image	186	1,00	6,43	4,5146	,96059
Composite Score for UNICEF Perception	68	2,00	6,00	4,1875	,94767
Composite Score for Qatar Airways Perception	79	1,00	5,00	2,7500	1,09778
Valid N (listwise)	0				

a. split participants with the mean; (1 = below; 2 = above) = 1,00

split participants with the mean; (1 = below; 2 = above) = 2,00

Descriptive Statistics^a

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Average Team Identification	102	3,00	7,00	4,1471	1,14880
Average Fan Engagement	102	1,00	7,00	3,6253	1,41662
Average Brand Image	102	2,43	7,00	5,1891	,87191
Composite Score for UNICEF Perception	45	2,50	6,00	4,5667	,83666
Composite Score for Qatar Airways Perception	33	2,00	5,75	3,4470	1,03221
Valid N (listwise)	0				

a. split participants with the mean; (1 = below; 2 = above) = 2,00

Appendix C 8: Persona_Descriptives_Low_High_Team_ID

Group Statistics							
		split participants with the mean; (1 = below; 2 = above)		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Average Fan Engagement	1,00			186	1,9008	,94584	,06935
	2,00			102	3,6253	1,41662	,14027
Composite Score for Qatar Airways Perception	1,00			79	2,7500	1,09778	,12351
	2,00			33	3,4470	1,03221	,17968
Composite Score for UNICEF Perception	1,00			68	4,1875	,94767	,11492
	2,00			45	4,5667	,83666	,12472
Average Brand Image	1,00			186	4,5146	,96059	,07043
	2,00			102	5,1891	,87191	,08633

Appendix C 9: Persona_TTest_Result_1

Independent Samples Test											
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Average Fan Engagement	Equal variances assumed	25,867	<,001	-12,335	286	<,001	<,001	-1,72444	,13980	-1,99960	-1,44928
	Equal variances not assumed			-11,020	151,476	<,001	<,001	-1,72444	,15648	-2,03359	-1,41528
Composite Score for Qatar Airways Perception	Equal variances assumed	,110	,741	-3,116	110	,001	,002	-,69697	,22367	-1,14023	-,25371
	Equal variances not assumed			-3,197	63,561	,001	,002	-,69697	,21804	-1,13261	-,26133
Composite Score for UNICEF Perception	Equal variances assumed	1,089	,299	-2,180	111	,016	,031	-,37917	,17397	-,72390	-,03444
	Equal variances not assumed			-2,236	102,099	,014	,028	-,37917	,16960	-,71556	-,04278
Average Brand Image	Equal variances assumed	,005	,944	-5,885	286	<,001	<,001	-,67448	,11461	-,90007	-,44889
	Equal variances not assumed			-6,054	225,628	<,001	<,001	-,67448	,11142	-,89404	-,45493

Appendix C 10: Persona_TTest_Result_2

Independent Samples Effect Sizes					
		Standardizer ^a	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Average Fan Engagement	Cohen's d	1,13463	-1,520	-1,790	-1,247
	Hedges' correction	1,13762	-1,516	-1,786	-1,244
	Glass's delta	1,41662	-1,217	-1,509	-,921
Composite Score for Qatar Airways Perception	Cohen's d	1,07912	-,646	-1,060	-,229
	Hedges' correction	1,08655	-,641	-1,052	-,228
	Glass's delta	1,03221	-,675	-1,109	-,232
Composite Score for UNICEF Perception	Cohen's d	,90530	-,419	-,799	-,037
	Hedges' correction	,91147	-,416	-,793	-,037
	Glass's delta	,83666	-,453	-,839	-,062
Average Brand Image	Cohen's d	,93024	-,725	-,973	-,476
	Hedges' correction	,93269	-,723	-,971	-,475
	Glass's delta	,87191	-,774	-1,036	-,508

a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.
 Cohen's d uses the pooled standard deviation.
 Hedges' correction uses the pooled standard deviation, plus a correction factor.
 Glass's delta uses the sample standard deviation of the control (i.e., the second) group.

Appendix C 11: Persona_TTest_Result_3

Group Statistics					
	Team Name (0 = Barca; 1 = Real)	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Composite Score for Brand Image - Barcelona	1,00	0 ^a	.	.	.
	,00	133	4,7519	,97731	,08474
Composite Score for Brand Image - Real Madrid	1,00	155	4,7548	,99145	,07964
	,00	0 ^a	.	.	.

a. t cannot be computed because at least one of the groups is empty.

Appendix C 12: TTest_BrandImage

Group Statistics					
	Team Name (0 = Barca; 1 = Real)	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Composite Score for Fan Engagement - Real Madrid	1,00	155	2,5935	1,31276	,10544
	,00	0 ^a	.	.	.
Composite Score for Fan Engagement - Barcelona	1,00	0 ^a	.	.	.
	,00	133	2,4160	1,49857	,12994

a. t cannot be computed because at least one of the groups is empty.

Appendix C 13: TTest_FanEngagement

Group Statistics

	Team Name (0 = Barca; 1 = Real)	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Composite Score for Qatar Airways Perception	1,00	66	2,9129	1,14899	,14143
	,00	46	3,0163	1,08832	,16046
Composite Score for UNICEF Perception	1,00	58	4,4095	,89062	,11694
	,00	55	4,2636	,95309	,12851

Appendix C 14: TTest_SponsorshipPerception_1

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Significance		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						One-Sided p	Two-Sided p			Lower	Upper
Composite Score for Qatar Airways Perception	Equal variances assumed	,237	,627	-.479	110	,317	,633	-.10343	,21600	-.53148	,32463
	Equal variances not assumed			-.484	100,206	,315	,630	-.10343	,21390	-.52778	,32093
Composite Score for UNICEF Perception	Equal variances assumed	,403	,527	,841	111	,201	,402	,14585	,17344	-.19784	,48954
	Equal variances not assumed			,839	109,395	,202	,403	,14585	,17376	-.19852	,49021

Appendix C 15: TTest_SponsorshipPerception_2

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Significance		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						One-Sided p	Two-Sided p			Lower	Upper
Composite Score for Qatar Airways Perception	Equal variances assumed	,237	,627	-.479	110	,317	,633	-.10343	,21600	-.53148	,32463
	Equal variances not assumed			-.484	100,206	,315	,630	-.10343	,21390	-.52778	,32093
Composite Score for UNICEF Perception	Equal variances assumed	,403	,527	,841	111	,201	,402	,14585	,17344	-.19784	,48954
	Equal variances not assumed			,839	109,395	,202	,403	,14585	,17376	-.19852	,49021

Appendix C 16: TTest_SponsorshipPerception_3

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Average Team Identification	Between Groups	7,799	6	1,300	,762	,600
	Within Groups	479,304	281	1,706		
	Total	487,103	287			
Average Fan Engagement	Between Groups	4,343	6	,724	,363	,902
	Within Groups	559,742	281	1,992		
	Total	564,085	287			
Composite Score for Qatar Airways Perception	Between Groups	8,267	4	2,067	1,686	,158
	Within Groups	131,135	107	1,226		
	Total	139,402	111			
Composite Score for UNICEF Perception	Between Groups	5,508	5	1,102	1,319	,262
	Within Groups	89,357	107	,835		
	Total	94,865	112			

Appendix C 17: Demographics_ANOVA_Results_Age

		Descriptives							
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Average Team Identification	Under 18	6	3,7083	1,77776	,72577	1,8427	5,5740	2,00	7,00
	18-24 years old	122	2,7500	1,39509	,12631	2,4999	3,0001	1,00	7,00
	25-34 years old	111	2,6937	1,16808	,11087	2,4740	2,9134	1,00	7,00
	35-44 years old	19	2,7895	1,48899	,34160	2,0718	3,5071	1,00	6,00
	45-54 years old	24	2,8333	1,20611	,24620	2,3240	3,3426	1,00	6,00
	55-64 years old	5	2,5500	1,06654	,47697	1,2257	3,8743	1,00	3,75
	65+ years old	1	4,0000	.	.	.	.	4,00	4,00
	Total	288	2,7587	1,30278	,07677	2,6076	2,9098	1,00	7,00
Average Fan Engagement	Under 18	6	3,0926	1,95936	,79991	1,0364	5,1488	1,00	6,11
	18-24 years old	122	2,4918	1,53209	,13871	2,2172	2,7664	1,00	6,44
	25-34 years old	111	2,4845	1,22715	,11648	2,2537	2,7153	1,00	6,22
	35-44 years old	19	2,5263	1,65835	,38045	1,7270	3,3256	1,00	7,00
	45-54 years old	24	2,6435	1,27698	,26066	2,1043	3,1827	1,00	5,78
	55-64 years old	5	2,0444	,98319	,43970	,8237	3,2652	1,00	3,11
	65+ years old	1	3,3333	.	.	.	.	3,33	3,33
	Total	288	2,5116	1,40195	,08261	2,3490	2,6742	1,00	7,00
Composite Score for Qatar Airways Perception	Under 18	0	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
	18-24 years old	52	2,8413	1,15261	,15984	2,5205	3,1622	1,00	5,25
	25-34 years old	45	2,9444	1,03062	,15364	2,6348	3,2541	1,00	5,75
	35-44 years old	7	2,7857	1,34960	,51010	1,5375	4,0339	1,00	4,25
	45-54 years old	5	3,8000	,85513	,38243	2,7382	4,8618	2,50	4,75
	55-64 years old	3	4,0833	1,18145	,68211	1,1484	7,0182	2,75	5,00
	65+ years old	0	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
	Total	112	2,9554	1,12066	,10589	2,7455	3,1652	1,00	5,75
Composite Score for UNICEF Perception	Under 18	5	5,0000	,46771	,20917	4,4193	5,5807	4,25	5,50
	18-24 years old	42	4,4702	,97092	,14982	4,1677	4,7728	2,50	6,00
	25-34 years old	45	4,1389	,91477	,13637	3,8641	4,4137	2,00	6,00
	35-44 years old	7	4,3214	,90960	,34380	3,4802	5,1627	3,00	5,50
	45-54 years old	13	4,4231	,81895	,22713	3,9282	4,9180	2,50	5,50
	55-64 years old	0	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
	65+ years old	1	3,5000	.	.	.	.	3,50	3,50
	Total	113	4,3385	,92033	,08658	4,1670	4,5100	2,00	6,00

Appendix C 18: Demographics_ANOVA_Age_Descr.

		ANOVA				
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Average Team Identification	Between Groups	13,521	6	2,253	1,337	,241
	Within Groups	473,583	281	1,685		
	Total	487,103	287			
Average Fan Engagement	Between Groups	11,197	6	1,866	,948	,461
	Within Groups	552,888	281	1,968		
	Total	564,085	287			
Composite Score for Qatar Airways Perception	Between Groups	9,653	6	1,609	1,302	,263
	Within Groups	129,749	105	1,236		
	Total	139,402	111			
Composite Score for UNICEF Perception	Between Groups	1,943	6	,324	,369	,897
	Within Groups	92,922	106	,877		
	Total	94,865	112			

Appendix C 19: Demographics_ANOVA_Results_Education

Descriptives

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Average Team Identification	No formal education	8	3,1250	1,53530	,54281	1,8415	4,4085	1,50	6,00
	High school	63	3,0595	1,44015	,18144	2,6968	3,4222	1,00	7,00
	Some college	29	2,5948	1,18098	,21930	2,1456	3,0440	1,00	6,00
	Bachelor's degree	87	2,7845	1,39412	,14947	2,4874	3,0816	1,00	7,00
	Master's degree	82	2,6250	1,14817	,12679	2,3727	2,8773	1,00	6,00
	Doctorate	10	2,5000	1,02062	,32275	1,7699	3,2301	1,00	4,50
	Other	9	2,1111	,87599	,29200	1,4378	2,7845	1,00	3,75
	Total	288	2,7587	1,30278	,07677	2,6076	2,9098	1,00	7,00
Average Fan Engagement	No formal education	8	2,4167	1,54845	,54746	1,1221	3,7112	1,00	4,67
	High school	63	2,7866	1,46570	,18466	2,4175	3,1557	1,00	6,11
	Some college	29	2,4789	1,35697	,25198	1,9628	2,9951	1,00	6,00
	Bachelor's degree	87	2,5096	1,44112	,15450	2,2024	2,8167	1,00	6,44
	Master's degree	82	2,4539	1,29650	,14317	2,1691	2,7388	1,00	6,00
	Doctorate	10	1,9667	1,84967	,58492	,6435	3,2898	1,00	7,00
	Other	9	1,9259	,85165	,28388	1,2713	2,5806	1,00	3,67
	Total	288	2,5116	1,40195	,08261	2,3490	2,6742	1,00	7,00
Composite Score for Qatar Airways Perception	No formal education	1	1,2500					1,25	1,25
	High school	23	2,7174	1,08791	,22684	2,2469	3,1878	1,00	4,75
	Some college	12	3,2292	1,16998	,33774	2,4858	3,9725	1,00	4,75
	Bachelor's degree	34	3,1397	1,07519	,18439	2,7646	3,5149	1,00	5,25
	Master's degree	33	3,0152	1,13870	,19822	2,6114	3,4189	1,00	5,75
	Doctorate	5	2,1500	1,02470	,45826	,8777	3,4223	1,25	3,75
	Other	4	2,8750	1,26656	,63328	,8596	4,8904	2,00	4,75
	Total	112	2,9554	1,12066	,10589	2,7455	3,1652	1,00	5,75
Composite Score for UNICEF Perception	No formal education	7	4,6786	,81284	,30723	3,9268	5,4303	3,00	5,25
	High school	25	4,3800	1,09001	,21800	3,9301	4,8299	2,50	6,00
	Some college	13	4,2885	,85297	,23657	3,7730	4,8039	2,75	5,50
	Bachelor's degree	33	4,3939	,76809	,13371	4,1216	4,6663	3,00	6,00
	Master's degree	30	4,1667	1,02203	,18660	3,7850	4,5483	2,00	6,00
	Doctorate	3	4,4167	1,01036	,58333	1,9068	6,9265	3,50	5,50
	Other	2	4,5000	,70711	,50000	-1,8531	10,8531	4,00	5,00
	Total	113	4,3385	,92033	,08658	4,1670	4,5100	2,00	6,00

Appendix C 20: Demographics_ANOVA_Education_Descr.

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Average Team Identification	Between Groups	14,432	3	4,811	2,890	,036
	Within Groups	472,671	284	1,664		
	Total	487,103	287			
Average Fan Engagement	Between Groups	6,298	3	2,099	1,069	,363
	Within Groups	557,787	284	1,964		
	Total	564,085	287			
Composite Score for Qatar Airways Perception	Between Groups	14,539	3	4,846	4,192	,008
	Within Groups	124,863	108	1,156		
	Total	139,402	111			
Composite Score for UNICEF Perception	Between Groups	,747	2	,373	,436	,648
	Within Groups	94,118	110	,856		
	Total	94,865	112			

Appendix C 21: Demographics_ANOVA_Gender

Descriptives

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Average Team Identification	Male	191	2,9005	1,39215	,10073	2,7018	3,0992	1,00	7,00
	Female	94	2,4814	1,05191	,10850	2,2659	2,6968	1,00	6,00
	Non-binary / third gender	1	1,0000	.	.	.	.	1,00	1,00
	Prefer not to say	2	3,1250	1,23744	,87500	-7,9929	14,2429	2,25	4,00
	Total	288	2,7587	1,30278	,07677	2,6076	2,9098	1,00	7,00
Average Fan Engagement	Male	191	2,6056	1,46852	,10626	2,3960	2,8152	1,00	7,00
	Female	94	2,3345	1,24237	,12814	2,0801	2,5890	1,00	6,00
	Non-binary / third gender	1	1,2222	.	.	.	.	1,22	1,22
	Prefer not to say	2	2,5000	2,12132	1,50000	-16,5593	21,5593	1,00	4,00
	Total	288	2,5116	1,40195	,08261	2,3490	2,6742	1,00	7,00
Composite Score for Qatar Airways Perception	Male	71	2,7289	1,14232	,13557	2,4585	2,9993	1,00	5,75
	Female	39	3,4231	,93919	,15039	3,1186	3,7275	1,25	5,00
	Non-binary / third gender	1	2,0000	.	.	.	.	2,00	2,00
	Prefer not to say	1	1,7500	.	.	.	.	1,75	1,75
	Total	112	2,9554	1,12066	,10589	2,7455	3,1652	1,00	5,75
Composite Score for UNICEF Perception	Male	76	4,3586	,92676	,10631	4,1468	4,5703	2,25	6,00
	Female	36	4,3194	,92120	,15353	4,0078	4,6311	2,00	6,00
	Non-binary / third gender	0	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
	Prefer not to say	1	3,5000	.	.	.	.	3,50	3,50
	Total	113	4,3385	,92033	,08658	4,1670	4,5100	2,00	6,00

Appendix C 22: Demographics_ANOVA_Gender_Descr.

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Average Team Identification	Between Groups	8,380	6	1,397	,820	,555
	Within Groups	478,723	281	1,704		
	Total	487,103	287			
Average Fan Engagement	Between Groups	2,678	6	,446	,223	,969
	Within Groups	561,407	281	1,998		
	Total	564,085	287			
Composite Score for Qatar Airways Perception	Between Groups	17,502	6	2,917	2,513	,026
	Within Groups	121,900	105	1,161		
	Total	139,402	111			
Composite Score for UNICEF Perception	Between Groups	6,741	6	1,123	1,351	,241
	Within Groups	88,124	106	,831		
	Total	94,865	112			

Appendix C 23: Demographics_ANOVA_Residency

Descriptives

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Average Team Identification	Austria	166	2,8298	1,37511	,10673	2,6191	3,0406	1,00	7,00
	Germany	30	2,3667	1,06620	,19466	1,9685	2,7648	1,00	4,75
	Portugal	8	2,7500	1,32288	,46771	1,6440	3,8560	1,00	5,50
	Italy	2	2,2500	1,76777	1,25000	-13,6328	18,1328	1,00	3,50
	United Kingdom	20	2,8125	,93145	,20828	2,3766	3,2484	1,00	5,00
	Spain	4	3,5000	2,59005	1,29502	-,6213	7,6213	1,00	7,00
	Other	58	2,7069	1,19771	,15727	2,3920	3,0218	1,00	6,00
	Total	288	2,7587	1,30278	,07677	2,6076	2,9098	1,00	7,00
Average Fan Engagement	Austria	166	2,4685	1,42990	,11098	2,2494	2,6877	1,00	7,00
	Germany	30	2,6111	1,37072	,25026	2,0993	3,1229	1,00	5,33
	Portugal	8	2,3472	1,62480	,57446	,9889	3,7056	1,00	6,00
	Italy	2	2,1667	1,49278	1,05556	-11,2454	15,5788	1,11	3,22
	United Kingdom	20	2,6278	1,26598	,28308	2,0353	3,2203	1,00	4,89
	Spain	4	3,0833	2,16096	1,08048	-,3552	6,5219	1,00	5,11
	Other	58	2,5383	1,35329	,17770	2,1825	2,8941	1,00	6,00
	Total	288	2,5116	1,40195	,08261	2,3490	2,6742	1,00	7,00
Composite Score for Qatar Airways Perception	Austria	63	2,7698	1,10653	,13941	2,4912	3,0485	1,00	5,75
	Germany	13	2,6538	1,08752	,30162	1,9967	3,3110	1,00	4,50
	Portugal	4	3,1250	,85391	,42696	1,7662	4,4838	2,25	4,25
	Italy	1	1,0000	.	.	.	.	1,00	1,00
	United Kingdom	7	3,1786	1,39728	,52812	1,8863	4,4708	1,00	5,00
	Spain	3	3,7500	1,32288	,76376	,4638	7,0362	2,75	5,25
	Other	21	3,5714	,84832	,18512	3,1853	3,9576	2,00	4,75
	Total	112	2,9554	1,12066	,10589	2,7455	3,1652	1,00	5,75
Composite Score for UNICEF Perception	Austria	65	4,2692	,97057	,12038	4,0287	4,5097	2,25	6,00
	Germany	8	4,6563	,35197	,12444	4,3620	4,9505	4,00	5,00
	Portugal	3	4,9167	,14434	,08333	4,5581	5,2752	4,75	5,00
	Italy	1	5,5000	.	.	.	.	5,50	5,50
	United Kingdom	12	4,3958	,88843	,25647	3,8314	4,9603	2,50	5,75
	Spain	1	6,0000	.	.	.	.	6,00	6,00
	Other	23	4,1957	,91066	,18989	3,8019	4,5895	2,00	5,50
	Total	113	4,3385	,92033	,08658	4,1670	4,5100	2,00	6,00

Appendix C 24: Demographics_ANOVA_Residency_Descr.

How interested are you in football? - 0 = "not interested at all"; 100 = "very interested" (Binned)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	98	34,0	34,0	34,0
	2	102	35,4	35,4	69,4
	3	88	30,6	30,6	100,0
	Total	288	100,0	100,0	

Appendix C 25: Interest_Group_Frequencies

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,706 ^a	,499	,497	,962

a. Predictors: (Constant), How interested are you in football? - 0 = "not interested at all"; 100 = "very interested"

Appendix C 26: Regression_ModelSummary_Tickets

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	-,313	,112		-2,801	,005	-,533	-,093
	How interested are you in football? - 0 = "not interested at all"; 100 = "very interested"	,027	,002	,706	16,877	<,001	,024	,030

a. Dependent Variable: Annual spending on football match tickets (1 = Less than 50€, 2 = 50€ - 200€, 3 = 200€ - 500€, 4 = 500€ - 1000€, 5 = More than 1000€, 0 = I don't buy tickets)

Appendix C 27: Regression_Coefficients_Tickets

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Annual spending on football match tickets (1 = Less than 50€, 2 = 50€ - 200€, 3 = 200€ - 500€, 4 = 500€ - 1000€, 5 = More than 1000€, 0 = I don't buy tickets)	Between Groups	240,092	2	120,046	118,885	<,001
	Within Groups	287,783	285	1,010		
	Total	527,875	287			
Frequency of purchasing merchandise (e.g., jerseys, scarves); (1 = Multiple times a year, 2 = Once a year, 3 = Every few years, 0 = Never)	Between Groups	134,754	2	67,377	63,959	<,001
	Within Groups	300,232	285	1,053		
	Total	434,986	287			

Appendix C 28: ANOVA_Results_Tickets_Merchandise

Descriptives

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Annual spending on football match tickets (1 = Less than 50€, 2 = 50€ - 200€, 3 = 200€ - 500€, 4 = 500€ - 1000€, 5 = More than 1000€, 0 = I don't buy tickets)	1	98	,21	,482	,049	,12	,31	0	2
	2	102	1,35	1,208	,120	1,12	1,59	0	5
	3	88	2,49	1,165	,124	2,24	2,74	0	5
	Total	288	1,31	1,356	,080	1,16	1,47	0	5
Frequency of purchasing merchandise (e.g., jerseys, scarves); (1 = Multiple times a year, 2 = Once a year, 3 = Every few years, 0 = Never)	1	98	,19	,713	,072	,05	,34	0	3
	2	102	1,48	1,303	,129	1,22	1,74	0	3
	3	88	1,77	,956	,102	1,57	1,98	0	3
	Total	288	1,13	1,231	,073	,99	1,27	0	3

Appendix C 29: ANOVA_Descriptives_Tickets_Merchandise

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable		(I) How interested are you in football? - 0 = "not interested at all"; 100 = "very interested" (Binned)	(J) How interested are you in football? - 0 = "not interested at all"; 100 = "very interested" (Binned)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Annual spending on football match tickets (1 = Less than 50€, 2 = 50€ - 200€, 3 = 200€ - 500€, 4 = 500€ - 1000€, 5 = More than 1000€, 0 = I don't buy tickets)	Tukey HSD	1	2	-1,139*	,142	<,001	-1,47	-,80
			3	-2,274*	,148	<,001	-2,62	-1,93
		2	1	1,139*	,142	<,001	,80	1,47
			3	-1,136*	,146	<,001	-1,48	-,79
		3	1	2,274*	,148	<,001	1,93	2,62
			2	1,136*	,146	<,001	,79	1,48
	Games-Howell	1	2	-1,139*	,129	<,001	-1,44	-,83
			3	-2,274*	,133	<,001	-2,59	-1,96
		2	1	1,139*	,129	<,001	,83	1,44
			3	-1,136*	,172	<,001	-1,54	-,73
		3	1	2,274*	,133	<,001	1,96	2,59
			2	1,136*	,172	<,001	,73	1,54
Frequency of purchasing merchandise (e.g., jerseys, scarves); (1 = Multiple times a year, 2 = Once a year, 3 = Every few years, 0 = Never)	Tukey HSD	1	2	-1,287*	,145	<,001	-1,63	-,94
			3	-1,579*	,151	<,001	-1,93	-1,22
		2	1	1,287*	,145	<,001	,94	1,63
			3	-,292	,149	,125	-,64	,06
		3	1	1,579*	,151	<,001	1,22	1,93
			2	,292	,149	,125	-,06	,64
	Games-Howell	1	2	-1,287*	,148	<,001	-1,64	-,94
			3	-1,579*	,125	<,001	-1,87	-1,28
		2	1	1,287*	,148	<,001	,94	1,64
			3	-,292	,164	,180	-,68	,10
		3	1	1,579*	,125	<,001	1,28	1,87
			2	,292	,164	,180	-,10	,68

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Appendix C 30: ANOVA_PostHoc_Tickets_Merchandise

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,581 ^a	,338	,335	1,004

a. Predictors: (Constant), How interested are you in football? - 0 = "not interested at all"; 100 = "very interested"

Appendix C 31: Regression_ModelSummary_Merchandise

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95,0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	-,082	,117		-,701	,484	-,311	,148
	How interested are you in football? - 0 = "not interested at all"; 100 = "very interested"	,020	,002	,581	12,074	<,001	,017	,023

a. Dependent Variable: Frequency of purchasing merchandise (e.g., jerseys, scarves); (1 = Multiple times a year, 2 = Once a year, 3 = Every few years, 0 = Never)

Appendix C 32: Regression_Coefficients_Merchandise