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BUSINESS & ECONOMICS

The Impact of Political, Moral and Commercial Sponsorship Controversies on Fan Trust, Willingness to Pay and Word of Mouth Communication in German football clubs.

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Dissertation written under the supervision of Professor Pedro Miguel Torres Tavares.

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the MSc in Management with Specialization in Strategic Marketing, at the Universidade Católica Portuguesa, June 2025.

Abstract

Title: The Impact of Political, Moral and Commercial Sponsorship Controversies on Fan Trust, Willingness to Pay and Word of Mouth Communication in German football clubs.

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This study examines how moral, political, and commercial sponsorship controversies influence important behavioral responses of fans in German professional football: fan trust, willingness to pay (WTP), and word-of-mouth communication (WOM). While sponsorship is an important tool for brand positioning and financial stability in modern sports, inappropriate or ethically questionable partnerships can trigger controversies, especially in a value-oriented environment such as German football. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study combines qualitative insights from 21 in-depth interviews with a scenario-based survey of 137 football fans of different age groups and fan levels. This study aims to close the gap in behavior-based fan reactions and present a way of differentiating between sponsorship controversies. The results show that political and commercial controversies have a significantly stronger negative impact on fan trust than moral controversies. Willingness to pay (WTP) was generally unaffected, but fans clearly rejected the purchase of fan merchandise when the sponsor's logo was prominently displayed. Word-of-mouth (WOM) was also most negatively affected by commercial controversies, especially among highly engaged and older fans. Furthermore, the effects varied depending on age and fan loyalty, highlighting different influences across fan segments.

Keywords: Sponsorship Controversy, Fan Trust, Willingness to Pay, Word of Mouth, German Football, Sports Sponsorship, Consumer Behavior

Resumo

Título: O impacto das controvérsias políticas, morais e comerciais relacionadas com patrocínios na confiança dos adeptos, na disposição para pagar e na comunicação boca a boca nos clubes de futebol alemães.

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Este estudo examina como as controvérsias morais, políticas e comerciais relacionadas ao patrocínio influenciam respostas comportamentais importantes dos adeptos do futebol profissional alemão: confiança dos adeptos, disposição a pagar (WTP) e boca a boca (WOM). Embora o patrocínio seja uma ferramenta importante para o posicionamento da marca e a estabilidade financeira nos desportos modernos, parcerias inadequadas ou eticamente questionáveis podem desencadear controvérsias, especialmente num ambiente orientado para valores, como o futebol alemão. Utilizando uma abordagem de métodos mistos, o estudo combina insights qualitativos de 21 entrevistas aprofundadas com uma pesquisa baseada em cenários com 137 adeptos de futebol de diferentes faixas etárias e níveis de torcida. Este estudo visa preencher a lacuna nas reações dos adeptos baseadas no comportamento e apresentar uma forma de diferenciar entre controvérsias de patrocínio. Os resultados mostram que as controvérsias políticas e comerciais têm um impacto negativo significativamente mais forte na confiança dos adeptos do que as controvérsias morais. A disposição a pagar (WTP) não foi afetada de forma geral, mas os adeptos rejeitaram claramente a compra de produtos oficiais quando o logótipo do patrocinador estava em destaque. O boca a boca (WOM) também foi mais afetado negativamente pelas controvérsias comerciais, especialmente entre os adeptos mais engajados e mais velhos. Além disso, os efeitos variaram dependendo da idade e da lealdade dos adeptos, destacando diferentes influências entre os segmentos de adeptos.

Palavras-chave: Controvérsia sobre patrocínio, confiança dos fãs, disposição para pagar, boca a boca, futebol alemão, patrocínio desportivo, comportamento do consumidor

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List of abbreviations

WOM..... Word of mouth

WTP Willingness to pay

1. Introduction

Sponsorship is one of the most important components of modern sports marketing. In addition to numerous financial benefits, it also offers brands the opportunity to use a platform for building and communicating their brand. Sponsorship activities play a particularly important role in football, as the combination of emotionality and mass attention can lead to extraordinary commercial success and increased public awareness. However, the growing importance of sport has also led to increased public monitoring. If sponsorship activities are not in line with the values of the club or social expectations in general, this can lead to controversy. The results can be backlash, as well as reputational damage for both the sponsor and the club itself.

Such controversies have become more frequent in professional football in recent years. Sponsorship deals with companies or organizations that are considered politically sensitive or ethically questionable have led to public discussions in the press and, above all, among fans. This highlights a particular difference between the commercial interests of the clubs and the expectations of the fans, especially in very sensitive environments such as German professional football which is particularly influenced by the identity, authenticity, and moral standards of a club.

Although there is a wide range of literature on the impact of sponsorship in sport on fans, no study has yet examined how specific fan behavior relates to different types of sponsorship controversies. This study therefore examines in detail how fans react to morally, politically or commercially controversial sponsorship agreements and how those influence three of the most important fan behaviors in German professional football: fan trust, willingness to pay, and word-of-mouth communication. Since previous studies have focused primarily on club image or brand perception, this study aims to close the gap in behavior-based reactions and present a way of differentiating between sponsorship controversies.

In addition, the moderators' age and fan loyalty are considered to examine whether these factors influence the effects. By applying a mixed-methods approach consisting of a qualitative phase in the form of in-depth interviews for hypothesis formation and a scenario-based survey as a quantitative approach, this study provides a differentiated basis for understanding how fans react to different controversies. The aim of this thesis is therefore to provide practical implications for club management and to add value to research on brand management in a sports context.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Sponsorships

Sponsorship can be defined as the provision of support, often financial, by a commercial organization (the sponsor) to an organization (the sponsored party) with the aim to be associated with this organization to gain economic and strategic advantages (Tripodi, 2001). This aspired association can be based on one of the most important theories in the context of sponsoring, the image transfer theory. This theory states that consumer perception can be influenced by sponsorship through continuous exposure to a sponsored entity, which can lead to the transfer of its image to the sponsoring brand. This is especially successful if there is a perceived match between the two parties (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999).

Sponsorship has changed a lot over the last few decades. Modern definitions state that, in addition to the sponsor and the sponsored, there is a third entity that must be considered when defining sponsorship: the consumers. Because each of these three entities has a variety of different interest groups and all have different characteristics that can influence the effectiveness of sponsorship (Wakefield et al., 2020).

Also, it changed from a predominantly charitable activity to one of the most important components of strategic marketing and corporate communication (Dolphin, 2003). Meanwhile, sponsorships are used almost exclusively as a marketing or advertising tool, as they are highly suitable for commercial purposes. This is because the opportunity to communicate alongside traditional media includes great advertising potential. As a result, brands use sponsorships as a platform that matches their communication objectives to reach a broad range of potential target groups (Cornwell, 2020).

2.2 Sponsorships in sports

The use of sport sponsorship as an advertising tool is very common and is used in various forms. There are five forms by which sport can be sponsored: sponsorship of sport in general, sponsorship of a sport in particular, sponsorship of a competition within a sport, sponsorship of a team within a competition and sponsorship of an individual sportsman (Abratt et al., 1987). In this case the focus is on sponsorship of teams in the highest professional football league in Germany the “Bundesliga”.

Due to its high public appeal and high visibility, sports sponsorship is one of the best known and most successful forms of sponsorship (Morgan et al., 2014). This effectiveness lies primarily in its ability to attract large audiences and generate an emotionally charged atmosphere that promotes intense viewer engagement. For brands seeking to achieve both reach and emotional engagement, these characteristics make sports an ideal sponsorship platform. That is why it has become a key element in integrated marketing strategies, especially for companies operating in highly competitive markets (Wang & Kaplanidou, 2013).

This is also reflected in the investments. The global market for sports sponsorship is expected to reach around USD 144.9 billion by 2034, up from USD 64.1 billion in 2024, growing at a compound annual growth rate of 8.5% over the forecast period from 2025 to 2034 (Market.us, 2025).

The Image Transfer Theory, which is used to explain sponsorship effects, primarily refers to the psychological mechanism by which associations are transferred to the sponsoring unit (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999). However, other factors must be taken into account when it comes to sports sponsorships. There are five determinants of sports sponsorship response: the general attitude of consumers towards the sponsor, the individual commitment to the sport, the perceived fit between the sponsorship entities, the perceived sincerity of the sponsor's intentions and the degree of visibility of the sponsor. When all these determinants are met, the sponsorship holds strong advertising potential (Speed & Thompson, 2000).

2.3 Sponsorship controversies

Sports sponsorships are often entered into with the expectation that the strong emotional bond between fans and the sponsored entity will transfer to the advertising brand (Madrigal, 2001). Whether this transfer will be perceived positively or negatively, depends mainly on three of the five determinants of sports sponsorship response: the general attitude of consumers towards the sponsor, the perceived fit between the sponsorship entities and the perceived sincerity of the sponsor's intentions (Speed & Thompson, 2000).

These three factors therefore primarily determine the direction of the consumer response. It is the consumers who decide whether the sponsorship is seen as credible and appropriate or as opportunistic and misplaced. The other factors, such as the affinity with the sport and the visibility of the sponsorship, mainly influence the strength and intensity of the sponsorship.

(Speed & Thompson, 2000). In emotional situations such as sports, where fan identity and loyalty are strongly anchored, an inappropriate or unsuitable sponsorship deal could lead to strong negative emotions and reactions (Kim et al., 2011).

The negative emotions that arise from questionable partnerships can lead to public controversy. Especially in the age of social media, where negative emotions and moods spread quickly, the risk of reputation loss and the associated consequences is very high (Pope et al., 2009). The effect is especially pronounced in sports, where fans are not only consumers but also identify with the sponsored entity. Controversial sponsors can therefore significantly impair brand perception if the sponsor's motive is perceived as profit-oriented rather than value-oriented (Mazodier & Merunka, 2011). As soon as the integrity or loyalty of the sponsored entity is questioned by such an association, this could have a negative impact on important factors. This is precisely the gap where this work focuses on, examining the effect of different controversial sponsorship deals on fan behavior and perception towards the sponsored entity.

2.3.1 Moral sponsorship controversies

One of the most controversial sponsorship categories are morally charged deals, which are perceived as particularly sensitive and emotional. Controversies in this category arise primarily when partnerships are perceived as a violation of ethical or social norms. This is often due to the industry, reputation or business practices of the sponsoring entity. If, in addition to a general mismatch between the two entities, which can already lead to critical reactions, a moral concern arises, this can lead to a strong conflict of values between fans and the sponsored entity (Pope & Voges, 2000).

This is particularly important in sport, as fans not only expect their club to perform well, but also to act as a role model. This is because the club symbolizes shared values for the fan. If sponsorship deals are entered into with companies or organizations that are known to be harmful to health (e.g. alcohol, fast food or gambling) or known for unethical behavior (e.g. poor working conditions or environmental pollution), this could be seen as a breach of these values (Kelly et al., 2010). In these cases, the negative emotions are not only based on the lack of fit between the sponsoring entities or the opportunism, but above all on the moral discrepancy. Consumers are said to react more negatively to sponsorship if it does not match their social values (Close et al., 2006).

This type of sponsorship controversy will from now on be referred to as a moral sponsorship controversy. To ensure consistency in the following empirical research, the following definition will be used: “A moral sponsorship controversy arises when a club works with a company or organization that is considered unethical or harmful to health. This often concerns companies that sell unhealthy products such as alcohol, fast food or tobacco, or are known for poor working conditions.”

2.3.2 Political sponsorship controversies

In the recent past, the debate about controversial sponsors has intensified, which has shown that a distinction must also be made within these morally questionable deals. The existing literature deals exclusively with the influence of the ethical challenges of sponsors with questionable labor practices or from industries such as alcohol, tobacco and fast food on the sponsored entities (Kelly et al., 2011; Close et al., 2006; Peluso et al., 2019). Cases in which political dimensions trigger fan reactions and the associated controversies have been neglected. Two recent examples that have received a lot of attention are Borussia Dortmund's sponsorship deal with the German arms manufacturer Rheinmetall (Rheinmetall.com, 2024) and the long-standing partnership between FC Schalke 04 and the state-controlled Russian energy company Gazprom (deutschlandfunk.de, 2022).

These partnerships have gained political significance insofar as they are directly influenced by the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. In this context, the partnership between Schalke 04 and Gazprom became the subject of a politically motivated debate, which ultimately led to the termination of this agreement because Gazprom is a Russian state-controlled energy company (schalke04.de, 2022). At the same time, the sponsorship deal between Borussia Dortmund and Rheinmetall became politically relevant. Not only because of the nature of the industry itself, but also because of the timing within a European security discourse (Bark & Best, 2024).

In view of the geopolitical situation and in the case of German professional football, specifically the Russia-Ukraine conflict, it becomes clear that sponsorship controversies cannot all be labeled as morally inappropriate. The connection between sponsors and governments or political agendas therefore differentiates this research from others. To further unify this support, the following definition is used: “A political sponsorship controversy arises when a football club is sponsored by a brand that

is primarily associated with political issues, governments or controversial political organizations.”

2.3.3 Commercial Sponsorship Controversies

Commercialization in sports, or specifically in the context of football, means that the platform provided is used for non-sporting purposes, such as marketing and sponsoring. However, it also means that sponsors who have no direct connection to the sport can create the conditions for the sporting success of sponsored entities (bpb, 2021).

The German Bundesliga is at the center of such controversies, as it is one of the few professional leagues in the world where the 50+1 rule applies, which ensures that external control by commercial partners is limited and that fans and members retain control (German Bundestag, 2018). This shows the importance of tradition and values in German football. Therefore, some clubs are the reason for controversies surrounding commercial sponsorship. Clubs such as RB Leipzig and Bayer 04 Leverkusen, which achieved their sporting success through the support of their main sponsors (Red Bull and Bayer) are highly criticized for "buying" their success (deutschlandfunkkultur.de, 2015).

Although the original intention was to focus on moral and political controversies, at the end of the qualitative research it was decided to include commercial sponsorship controversies as well.

2.4 Fan Behavior and Perception

The basis for research into fan behavior is rooted in the social identity theory. It states that individuals define themselves not only by personal values and characteristics, but above all by their affiliation to social groups (Tajfel & Turner, 2000). In this context, sports fans are part of such a group. When belonging to a group becomes a relevant part of an individual, it can have a strong influence on behavior, emotions, and attitudes. Furthermore, the intensity of the reaction or emotional engagement is linear to the strength of identification with the group. Accordingly, the stronger the identification, the more emotionally an individual will react (Tajfel & Turner, 2000).

Sports fans are clearly different from passive consumers, because they are highly engaged individuals, whose teams often represent part of their social identity (K. Gwinner & Swanson, 2003). The connection between identity and sport can therefore influence the loyalty or behavior of sports fans (Funk & James, 2001). Such behavior influence can

express itself in different ways, often in a stronger form than with traditional consumers. The reactions can range from loyalty and public advocacy to protest and disengagement (Funk et al., 2009). The most influential factors causing those reactions are on the one hand internal factors such as team identification or personal values, and on the other hand external factors such as team performance or organizational decisions such as sponsoring (Trail & James, 2001).

For this research, three specific behavioral responses of German football fans are selected and tested in relation to the influence of controversial sponsorship decisions. The fan trust, willingness to pay and word of mouth communication are tested and explained in more detail below.

2.4.1 Fan trust

Trust can be defined as the result when one party has confidence in the reliability and integrity of a partner (R. M. Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Trust therefore indicates the extent to which people are willing to rely on an organization, both in terms of actions and intentions, especially in uncertain times (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). In relationship marketing, trust is described as a more important component than satisfaction, for example. Especially for high-relationship individuals because satisfaction describes the short-term fulfillment of expectations, while trust has a significant influence on future intentions (Garbarino & Johnson, 1999). This explains why trust is also an important factor in the relationship between the team and fans, as it plays a crucial role in how decisions from the club are reacted to, which is very important in an emotional environment such as professional sports. (Pan & Phua, 2020)

As already discussed, there are several elements besides the team's performance that are important when it comes to the connection between fans and teams. In particular, factors such as the club's tradition, fan culture and consistent club communication play a role. All of this provides the foundation for long-term commitment (Bauer et al., 2008). While fan trust is an attitudinal state, which will be tested, it is not a fan behavior as such. These are discussed in the following chapters.

2.4.2 Willingness to pay

“The willingness to pay (WTP) denotes the maximum price a buyer is willing to pay for a given quantity of a good. It is a ratio-scaled measure of the subjective value the buyer assigns

to that quantity.” (Wertenbroch & Skiera, 2002, p.1) Consumers' perception of or connection to a brand is also decisive in determining how high the WTP will be. Accordingly, WTP is a fundamental factor in determining and measuring changes in consumer behavior (Netemeyer et al., 2003).

In the context of sports, the connection to a brand and the resulting WTP play a special role. This is because fans' identification with their team and the emotionality mentioned above have a significant influence on their willingness to support the team at the cost of own personal finances (Lintumäki et al., 2022). Fan behavior can manifest itself through a range of behavioral responses in sport. Four responses are frequently cited in the literature: personal attendance, media-based participation, purchase of fan merchandise, and word-of-mouth advertising. WTP primarily refers to the first three factors, with word-of-mouth communication being differentiated and examined in more detail in the next chapter (Gray & Wert-Gray, 2011).

2.4.3 Word of mouth communication

Word-of-mouth (WOM) communication can be understood as an informal recommendation passed on between consumers. It is often based on emotional and subjective perceptions and has a significant influence on consumer behavior (East et al., 2008). There are various forms of WOM communication. Historically, a distinction has been made between negative and positive WOM and the synergies that result from them. However, there are other forms that should not be neglected when measuring consumer or fan behavior and the implications that can be derived from it. This refers specifically to defensive WOM, which describes the phenomenon of consumers spreading positive WOM in response to negative WOM (Lai et al., 2024).

WOM is a particularly relevant factor in the field of sports and is of importance in this research, as it is the result of various components. These include satisfaction with the results, identification with the team or club, emotional attachment to the team, and the perceived social responsibility of the club (Asada & Ko, 2016). Team identification and social responsibility will be particularly relevant to this research, as these factors are directly linked to potential sponsorship controversies. Therefore, in relation to these factors changes in fans' WOM communication specifically regarding recommendation (positive & negative WOM) and defense (defensive WOM) behavior are examined.

2.5 Moderating Variables

This research examines three main variables: fan trust, WTP, and WOM. However, various factors, based on individual fan characteristics, can influence the results of the data collection. Therefore, two moderators are used to capture these influences. The first is the age of the fan, which can influence decision-making processes (Yoon et al., 2009). Second, the level of involvement or identification with the club, which, as described above, is an important element in research on fan behavior (Funk & James, 2001; Trail & James, 2001, Trail & James, 2001). The methodology section explains in more detail how these moderators will be used. To ensure simplicity in the further course of the study, fans are therefore divided into two categories. The basic requirement for both categories is that they are fans of a German professional football club. They are then divided into official members (high involvement) and fans without official membership (lower involvement).

3. Research Purpose

The dissertation focuses on the behavioral reactions of German football fans to controversial sponsorship deals. The focus is on distinguishing between moral and political controversies and their impact on fan trust, WTP, and WOM communication. This aims to close the gap in existing literature, which mainly refers to the effects of sponsorship on the sponsoring entity and, above all, does not consider the newly emerging political influences of sponsorship. Furthermore, support as such is usually used as the dependent variable and is not further differentiated. This research therefore aims to highlight the possible effects of such deals in relation to the most important fan reactions and to serve as a basis for future research in this area (figure 1).

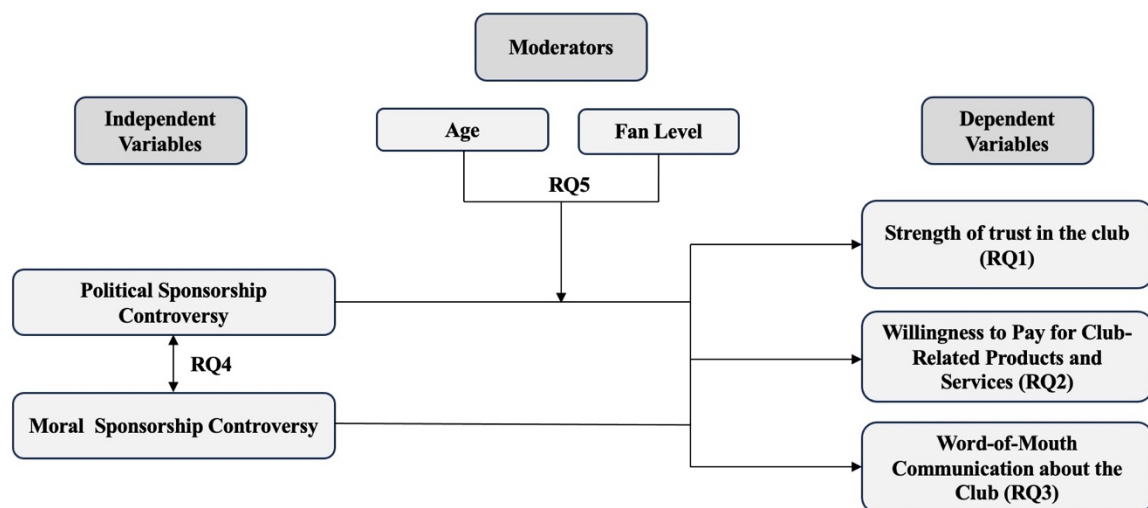


Figure 1: Conceptual model before Qualitative Research

The following research questions arise in the context of this study:

RQ1: What is the overall effect of sponsorship controversies on fans' trust in their club?

RQ2: How do sponsorship controversies influence fans' willingness to pay for club-related expenditures, including merchandise and stadium attendance?

RQ3: How do sponsorship controversies affect fans' word of mouth communication, including to publicly defend their club and recommend their club to others?

RQ4: Do political and moral controversies differ in the strength of their impact on fans' attitudes and behavioral intentions?

RQ5: To what extent do fan-level and age group moderate the effects of sponsorship controversies on fan trust, willingness to pay and word of mouth communication?

4. Methodology

The research design consists of a two-stage approach and uses mixed methods to obtain both qualitative and quantitative insights and build on them. In the first phase, in-depth interviews were conducted to gain relevant qualitative insights into the emotionally charged topic. This was intended to enable insights that were not taken into account by reviewing the existing literature. Based on the qualitative research, hypotheses were developed, which were then tested in the second phase, the quantitative research. With the help of these insights, a structured survey was designed to provide a broader perspective and, above all, quantitative data relating to the research variables. The combination of both research approaches enables robust and valid research into an emotionally charged topic such as the one addressed in this paper.

4.1 Sampling Strategy

The sampling strategy was significantly influenced by the moderators of this research. Therefore, a multi-layered stratified sampling method was used, in which the strata were formed along age groups and club/fan level. The basic prerequisite for this research is being a fan of a German professional football club. The respondents were then divided into four different age groups according to generation. The generations are divided into 16-28 years (Gen Z), 29-44 years (Millennials), 45-60 years (Gen X), and over 60 years (Baby Boomers). In addition, each of these age groups was divided into club members and supporters without a membership to ensure differentiation between fan levels. They will be referred to as “Members” and “Supporters” in the following. This resulted in eight different strata (table 1).

	Strata 1	Strata 2	Strata 3	Strata 4	Strata 5	Strata 6	Strata 7	Strata 8
Fan Level	Club member	Supporter	Club member	Supporter	Club member	Supporter	Club member	Supporter
Generation	Generation Z	Generation Z	Millenials	Millenials	Gen X	Gen X	Baby Boomer	Baby Boomer
Age group	18-26	18-26	27-42	27-42	43-58	43-58	60+	60+

Table 1: Sampling strategy

It is important to note that Generation X (45 – 60 years) was not included in the qualitative part of the research due to a lack of suitable interview partners. However, they were included in the quantitative part of the survey.

4.2 Primary Data Collection

4.2.1 In-Depth Interviews

An interview questionnaire was developed to ensure that qualitative insights into fan behavior and perceptions regarding potential sponsorship crises could be gained. For this purpose, various real-life examples were used to simulate how the respondents would react if it involved their club (appendix 1).

A semi-structured method of online data collection in the form of personal interviews was used to gather qualitative data. The interviews were conducted using a questionnaire containing a total of 16 open-ended questions plus demographic questions. This was intended to ensure that a common thread runs through the interviews (appendix 1).

A total of 21 interviews were conducted across six strata. All included three respondents, except for Gen Z (members and supporters) and millennials (members), where there were four respondents in each strata.

The interview analysis is based on the interview transcripts (appendix 1). This approach provided the basis for developing different clusters based on the individual strata, which then formed the basis for the analysis process (Chapter 5.1).

4.2.2 Online Survey

The quantitative part was conducted in the form of an online survey, incorporating the findings from the qualitative research. It was developed to ensure that quantitative insights could be gained to verify the findings of the qualitative research. For this purpose, the same real-life examples were used to simulate how the respondents would react if it involved their club. After collecting information about the general fan intentions, the respondents answered the same 7 questions for every scenario. Accordingly, the political sponsorship controversy is scenario 1, the moral sponsorship controversy is scenario 2 and the commercial sponsorship controversy, which will be added in the course of the research, is scenario 3. To maximize the participation rate, the questionnaire was distributed via various social media platforms and made available in both German and English. However, due to the focus on German professional football, the German-language questionnaire was used primarily (appendix 2).

To ensure that the responses were complete, all questions were marked as mandatory. The survey begins with a screening question to determine whether the user is a fan of a German

football club. If this was not the case, the survey was terminated immediately. This ensured that the respondents were relevant to this research. Almost all questions in the survey used a Likert scale to enable qualitative data analysis.

During the data collection period between April 5, 2025, and April 28, 2025, a total of n=168 responses were recorded. Of these participants, n=155 answered the screening question at the beginning with “Yes.” Among these respondents, there was a dropout rate of 7.74 %, resulting in a final data set of 137. A comprehensive analysis of descriptive statistics was carried out on all other relevant indicators to characterize the sample. Football fans from 24 different German professional clubs took part, with most participants being fans of Eintracht Frankfurt (n=26) and Borussia Dortmund (n=23) (Table 5). The distribution between members and supporters was very balanced, with 48.9 % (n=67) being registered members and 51.1 % (n=70) being football fans without official membership (Table 4). Among the 137 valid participants, 38.7 % (n=53) belonged to Gen Z and were therefore between 16 and 28 years old, and 17.5 % (n=24) were in the 29-44 age range. The remaining participants were evenly distributed across the 45-60 age range, accounting for 21.9 % (n=30) and the age category over 60, also with 21.9 % (n=30). In addition, 83.9 % (n=115) of the participants were male and 16.1 % (n=22) were female (Table 5).

4.3 Secondary Data collection

Existing research already shows possible expectations for the results. The moral appropriateness of the sponsor and the self-team connection have a direct influence on support for the club and thus on the sponsor entity. Attitudes toward the sponsored team are also directly related to the moral appropriateness of the sponsoring entity. There is also talk of a stronger effect when the self-team connection is weaker, which reinforces the assumption that fan level moderates these effects (Peluso et al., 2019). The research of Peluso et al. also shows the connection between prosperity to support and fan loyalty as such.

These findings are also reinforced in further literature, as this often refers to a perceived fit and sincerity between two sponsorship units (Speed & Thompson, 2000; Madrigal, 2001). Accordingly, if fans feel that such a deal is opportunistic and does not fit with the actual values of the club, this can lead to negative emotions (Kim et al., 2011; Mazodier & Merunka, 2011). Especially in the emotional environment of professional sports, such sponsorship controversies could impact important relational factors like trust (Chaudhuri &

Holbrook, 2001; Garbarino & Johnson, 1999), willingness to financially support the club (Netemeyer et al., 2003; Lintumäki et al., 2022), and word-of-mouth communication (East et al., 2008; Asada & Ko, 2016) negatively.

The literature thus points to a possible direction that can be expected in the results of this research, namely a negative effect of sponsorship controversies on the defined dependent variables and a moderating effect of fan level. However, these assumptions are purely theoretical and reveal some gaps, particularly regarding the lack of discussion of political controversies and the diversification of fan groups. Therefore, no valid hypotheses can be formed on the basis of this secondary data, but rather a basis for comparison that can be used after completion of the data collection and analysis phase to confirm possible results.

5. Results and Analytics

5.1 In-depths interviews

After dividing the interview participants into the respective strata, the results will be analyzed in chronological order according to the five question blocks in the questionnaire. For each of the questions, the key message will be highlighted, along with relevant differences between individual strata and any notable findings. This approach enables a structured procedure and provides qualitative insight into the statements made by the respondents. In order not to exceed the scope of this paper, two sample interviews of the two extremes are included in the appendix. A more detailed insight into the transcripts of the other interviewees can be provided on request (appendix 1).

General understanding of sponsorship and controversies in football

The first two set of questions was primarily intended to filter out how sponsorship and related controversies are perceived, capturing intuitive perceptions before using the insights of the following questions to formulate the hypotheses. To this end, respondents were first asked about the main objectives of a sponsorship agreement between a football club and an organization. Across all strata, sponsorship is defined as a financial tool and a necessity to ensure competitiveness. Particularly striking is the attitude of the “baby boomers,” who increasingly describe sponsorship as a “necessary evil” and see no further added value in it. In comparison, the younger generations (Gen Z & Millennials) highlight the communication factor in addition to the financial aspect. Image and reach are cited as important secondary factors, and ethical compatibility is increasingly mentioned as a necessity.

Participants were then asked to give specific examples of controversial sponsorship deals that had occurred in the past. Across all strata, at least one example could almost always be named, with the examples mentioned being very similar. The most frequently cited example was the sponsorship deal between Borussia Dortmund and Rheinmetall, which was examined in more detail in section 2.3.2. One notable finding was that the members were significantly more knowledgeable than the supporters, as they were often able to name several examples and explain them in detail. In addition, baby boomers in particular cited commercially driven examples alongside political and moral controversies. These mainly included examples such as the highly commercial clubs RB Leipzig and Bayer Leverkusen, which are directly linked to large industrial companies. There is talk of an alienation from “real football”. This is the reason why the 'commercial' sponsorship controversies will also

be included as an independent variable in the quantitative data collection even though they were excluded at the beginning.

Finally, respondents were asked what makes a sponsorship deal controversial. The primary response was that the sponsor must be compatible with the club's values in order to preserve the club's identity. Certain industries were fundamentally rejected, such as the arms industry and cooperation with right-wing political parties. It is noteworthy that club members from Generation Z showed a high level of sensitivity to ethical deals. Industries such as the meat industry and “generally environmentally harmful” industries were also cited as incompatible with the club's values. In direct contrast were the supporters of the baby boomers, who tended to be willing to accept questionable deals if the financial benefits were sufficient.

Definition of different sponsorship controversy

As already mentioned, the second set of questions also serves to investigate perceptions of various controversies in general and, above all, to classify the respondents' level of knowledge and the relevance of the topic.

Club members from the younger generation (Millennials & Gen Z) demonstrated the most fundamental ability to distinguish between the two types of controversy and were able to describe them separately. The association members of the baby boomer generation also understood the difference in principle but were less clear in their wording and used examples to explain their answers. In contrast, supporters, especially those of the older generation, showed a significantly weaker distinction between the terms and often mixed them up. This pattern can also be seen in the relevance attributed to such controversies. Here, too, it is the younger members who show a high degree of sensitivity and perceive such deals as a direct “attack” on the club's identity. This attitude decreases not only in relation to club membership but also with the age of the respondents, as older supporters were more willing to compromise and tend to perceive such deals as incidental and not central issues. These findings suggest that both fan loyalty and fan age correlate with the perception and classification of different types of controversies.

Perceived effects of sponsorship controversies on fan perceptions and behavior

Questions about the perceived effects of sponsorship controversies are a central component of the research and are fundamental to the formulation of hypotheses for the research questions 1, 4 and 5. At the beginning, respondents were asked openly whether a controversy, regardless of its nature, would have any effect on their fan behavior. It is

striking in this context that although the strength of the reactions did not differ between members and supporters, the type of reactions showed patterns. Members tend to relate their behavioral reactions to the club, while supporters speak of their own feelings.

An important part of this research is exploring the change in fans' trust in their club. The qualitative statements show a clear negative influence of controversial sponsorship deals on fan trust. The strongest behavioral reactions are shown by young members (Gen Z), as this strata reports a possible complete loss of trust. The older generations appear slightly more resilient in their trust but also report negative influences and reactions. However, one striking feature is the distinction made by the older generation (baby boomers) between a loss of trust in the club as such and a loss of trust in the club's management. This strata sees the decision-makers as primarily responsible, and the negative reactions are directed at them. This is therefore taken into account in the quantitative analysis in order to examine a possible differentiation more closely.

The difference between the two types of controversy is clear. The responses reveal a surplus of negative reactions to politically reprehensible sponsorship deals. The core message that runs through all strata is that “politics has no place in football.” Here, too, there is a stronger tendency in the responses of younger respondents, as these are seen as a way of positioning the club. Respondents are more differentiated in their views on moral controversies, especially older fans and supporters. The contrast between the controversy and the financial benefits plays a greater role in the assessment than in political controversies.

Perceived effects of sponsorship controversies on WTP

In order to capture the voices and opinions of respondents on the topic of WTP, they were asked openly whether their willingness to pay for tickets, merchandise, or stadium visits would be influenced by either a political or moral sponsorship controversy. As described in the literature review, WTP is composed of several factors. In this context, the focus is primarily on physical attendance at team games and the purchase of merchandise, especially jerseys from the team or club.

The interviews clearly show that primarily the willingness to pay for merchandise is significantly affected. But in most cases, this was linked to a certain visibility of the sponsor on the item in question. One response that was found almost exclusively in all strata was that respondents would refrain from purchasing the current jersey if the sponsor in question was

printed on it. It became apparent that attendance and interest in the club were less easily influenced than the active purchase of club-related items.

Even though opinions were very similar across the strata, a trend can be seen in the statements that shows that younger generations would be more willing to boycott the purchase of jerseys or other merchandise. Older generations tend to attach less importance to such controversies when it comes to their willingness to pay. The differences between members and supporters within the generations were very marginal and therefore not sufficient to identify a possible trend or pattern. Particularly noteworthy is the repeated mention of a willingness to pay more for jerseys when the sponsor has a very positive image in the eyes of the respondent. However, this finding is not taken into account in the further course of the research and will only become relevant for future research in this area.

Perceived effects of sponsorship controversies on WOM communication

The last set of questions deals with the impact of potential controversies on WOM communication. Here, too, a clear distinction is made between defending the club and recommending it to others. Respondents were also asked to what extent they had already participated in public or private discussions in the past. The majority of respondents stated that controversies have an influence on the way they talk about the club. Hardly anyone would be willing to defend their club if they themselves did not agree with the sponsorship. The respondents did not indicate any special treatment for their club in terms of public communication and tended to be more willing to criticize their own club for questionable sponsorships than other clubs. The only exceptions were the baby boomer members, who expressed largely unconditional support for their club compared to “outsiders.”

Some respondents also had difficulty distinguishing between defending the club and recommending the club, as they believed that there was no such thing as recommending a football club as such. Nevertheless, the question was answered by the majority of respondents, and it became apparent that recommendation also suffered from controversies. Above all, respondents described a reluctance to recommend the club to young people.

It is striking that no distinction is made between the association and its management when it comes to public communication. There is often talk of critical discussions that took place in the past. However, the majority of those respondents spoke exclusively of private conversations among friends and hardly ever mentioned participating in online discussions.

Research Questions	Results
RQ1 Fan trust	All groups report a negative impact of sponsorship controversies on trust, especially regarding club management. Younger members (Gen Z) express the strongest emotional reactions, including full loss of trust. Baby Boomers mostly differentiate between the club and its leadership, with trust in the club remaining more stable.
RQ2 WTP	Willingness to pay for merchandise (especially jerseys) are strongly affected across all strata if the sponsor is perceived as controversial. Stadium attendance remains largely unaffected, particularly for older generations. Younger fans are more willing to boycott merchandise purchases.
RQ3 WOM	Fans across all segments expressed reduce willingness to recommend or defend their club during sponsorship controversies. Most discussions occur in private, not online. Members are more likely to express criticism or engage in protest; supporters show passive disapproval.
RQ4 Scenario Difference	Political controversies trigger the strongest emotional responses, particularly among younger members. Moral controversies are seen as more subjective. Commercial controversies are mostly raised by Baby Boomers and link to alienation from "real football."
RQ5 Moderators	Age and membership status influenced sensitivity: younger and more involved fans (members) show more critical and emotionally charged reactions. Older fans and supporters accept sponsorship as economic reality but expect basic value alignment.

Table 2: Qualitative Research Result Summary

The insights gained from qualitative research therefore influence the further course of quantitative research, resulting in the following conceptual framework (figure 2):

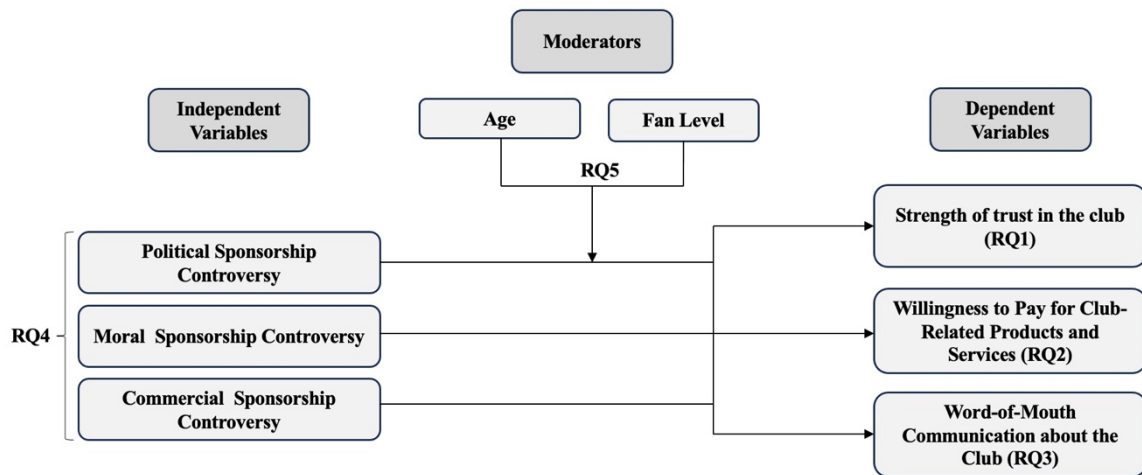


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework after Qualitative Research

5.2 Research Hypotheses

The evaluation of qualitative research now allows clear hypotheses to be formed for the respective research questions. These will be tested in the further course of the project with the help of a survey and quantitative data.

RQ1: What is the overall effect of sponsorship controversies on fans' trust in their club?

H1: Sponsorship controversies negatively affect fans' trust in their club and the clubs' management.

RQ2: How do sponsorship controversies influence fans' willingness to pay for club-related expenditures, including merchandise and stadium attendance?

H2: Sponsorship controversies reduce fans' WTP for merchandise but have little to no effect on willingness to pay for stadium attendance.

RQ3: How do sponsorship controversies affect fans' word of mouth communication, including to publicly defend their club and recommend their club to others?

H3: Sponsorship controversies reduce fans' willingness to recommend their club to others and decrease fans' willingness to publicly defend their club.

RQ4: Do political, moral and commercial sponsorship controversies differ in the strength of their impact on fans' attitudes and behavioral intentions?

H4: Political and commercial controversies have a stronger negative impact on fans' attitudes and behavioral intentions than moral controversies.

RQ5: To what extent do fan-level and age group moderate the effects of sponsorship controversies on fan trust, willingness to pay and word of mouth communication?

H5: The effects of sponsorship controversies on fan trust, WTP, WOM communication are stronger among younger fans and among official club members than among older fans and non-members.

5.3 Online Survey

General Fan Intentions

At the beginning, general fan intentions were surveyed to create a basis for comparison for the relevant independent variables. Overall, there is fundamental agreement with all statements, with all mean values above the neutral mean (3). The statement "I would recommend my club to friends" receives the strongest approval (M = 4.31). The lowest mean value and thus the lowest approval rating is for the statement "I regularly buy official club merchandise" (M = 3.11). Fans also tend to trust their club's decisions (M = 3.77) and to attend games whenever possible (M = 3.31). The willingness to publicly defend the club against criticism also received strong approval (M = 3.90) (Table 6; Table 7).

RQ1: What is the overall effect of sponsorship controversies on fans' trust in their club?

To test the extent to which the various scenarios influence fan trust, a one-sample T-test was conducted for both trust-related survey items for each of the three scenarios (Independent Variable (IV) – Sponsorship Scenarios; Dependent Variable (DV) – Fan trust). The purpose

of the one-sample T-test was to test the mean of the fan response against the neutral scale midpoint (test value = 3) to determine whether there is a significant difference which would indicate a perceived loss of trust. The items are the question of whether such a scenario would have a negative impact on trust in the club (item 1) and the question of whether such a scenario would have a negative impact on trust in the club management (item 2). The latter item was included based on the findings of the qualitative research, as the distinction between the club and club management was often mentioned there.

Scenario 1: Political Sponsorship Controversy

For item 1, the average agreement is $M = 3.31$ ($p = .003$). The effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.26$) indicates a small but significant effect. This shows that, on average, fans perceive the political sponsorship scenario as moderately negative for their general trust in the club. The effect is even stronger for item 2. The test yields a highly significant result ($p < .001$), with a mean value of $M = 3.58$. The effect size is Cohen's $d = 0.47$, indicating a moderate effect. This implies that fans see the club management as more responsible than the club itself for political sponsorship controversies (Table 8; Table 9).

The results show that political sponsorship controversies can have a significant negative impact on fan trust, with the tendency being stronger toward a loss of trust in club management.

Scenario 2: Moral Sponsorship Controversy

For item 1, an average agreement of $M = 3.07$ was measured, which is only slightly above the neutral mean. Furthermore, the result is not significant ($p = .477$), meaning that the moral sponsorship controversy does not have a significant negative influence on general trust in the club (Table 10).

A similar pattern emerges in item 2, which relates to the influence of controversies on trust in club management. The mean value is $M = 3.10$ and is not statistically significant ($p = .336$). Both results suggest that moral sponsorship controversies have no significant influence on fan trust (Table 10).

Scenario 3: Commercial Sponsorship Controversy

For item 1, the average agreement was $M = 3.45$, and the result can be considered significant ($p < .001$). The effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.32$) also indicates a small to moderate effect. This implies a clear influence of commercial sponsorship controversies on general fan trust. In

comparison, item 2 shows a slightly stronger effect, with a mean value of $M = 3.53$. These results are also significant ($p < .001$) and indicate a moderate effect (Cohen's $d = 0.37$) (Table 11).

Both items suggest that commercial sponsorship controversies have a measurable negative impact on fan trust.

The results for RQ1 show that there is a measurable influence of sponsorship controversies on fan trust. In two of the three scenarios tested, a significant negative influence on fan trust in both the club and the club management is observed. Accordingly, hypothesis (H1) can be partially confirmed, as distinctions must be made between the different types of controversy. However, this distinction is focused on in RQ4, where the strengths of the different controversies are compared with each other.

RQ2: How do sponsorship controversies influence fans' willingness to pay for club-related expenditures, including merchandise and stadium attendance?

The influence of the various sponsorship scenarios on WTP follows the same procedure as in RQ1. There are two items for the willingness to spend money on club-related articles: one asks whether the willingness to buy official club merchandise is influenced (item 1) and the other asks whether respondents would be willing to buy a jersey with the sponsor's logo printed on it as described in the scenario (item 2). This was also the result of the qualitative research findings. Finally, it was determined whether the willingness to attend games at the stadium is influenced (item 3). One-sample t-tests are used for the evaluation to test the mean value of the fan responses against the midpoint of the neutral scale (test value = 3).

Scenario 1: Political Sponsorship Controversy

For item 1, the mean value is $M = 2.93$, which is slightly below the neutral mean. However, the result is not significant ($p = .486$). No significant effect size is measured (Cohen's $d = -0.06$), suggesting that it cannot be proven that fans tend to change their willingness to purchase club-related merchandise despite politically controversial sponsorship deals. In contrast, a significantly stronger result is measured for item 2, with a mean of $M = 2.18$ and a highly significant result ($p < .001$). In addition, the effect size Cohen's $d = -0.74$ indicates a strong negative effect. This shows that although fans generally tend not to change their behavior regarding club-related items, they are clearly unwilling to purchase a jersey with

the sponsor involved in this controversial scenario, reflecting a strong contrast in the two items (Table 12).

For item 3, which reflects the influence on the willingness to go to the stadium, the mean value is $M = 2.15$, which is significantly below the neutral mean value of 3 and can also be classified as highly significant ($p < 0.001$). This suggests that the respondents do not believe that politically controversial sponsorships have any influence on their willingness to go to the stadium. It can therefore be assumed that there is no direct connection between the two variables (Table 12).

Scenario 2: Moral Sponsorship Controversy

In the moral sponsorship controversies, the results are very similar to those in scenario 1. Although item 1 shows a mean value of $M = 2.91$, this cannot be proven statistically significant ($p = 0.396$). Therefore, no statement can be made as to whether moral controversies have an influence on the willingness to purchase club-related items. In contrast, there is again a clear result regarding the willingness to purchase a jersey with a branded sponsor, as the mean value is $M = 2.29$, which is also statistically significant ($p < .001$). It is therefore clear that fans are clearly not willing to purchase jerseys with a morally reprehensible sponsor, which has a direct influence on the WTP (Table 13).

We also recognize familiar patterns for item 3, as the mean value is $M = 2.32$ and thus below the neutral value with statistical significance ($p < .001$). Therefore, the statement is consistent with scenario 1, because it can be stated that fans tend to disagree with the statement that their willingness to go to the stadium is influenced by such a controversy (Table 13).

Scenario 3: Commercial Sponsorship Controversy

Scenario 3 differs slightly from the previous results because in contrast to the previous scenarios, a slight statistical significance ($p = .025$) could be demonstrated for item 1 for a mean value of $M = 2.27$. This means that it can be demonstrated that fans tend not to believe that such a scenario influences their willingness to buy club-related items. However, the contradiction that arose previously is most evident here, as item 2 shows the strongest discrepancy from the neutral mean value measured so far. The mean value for the question of whether respondents are willing to buy a jersey with a sponsor's logo is $M = 2.18$ with a strong statistical significance ($p < .001$). This shows clear discrepancies between the general WTP and the WTP for branded items (Table 14).

Item 3 again shows the result of the first two scenarios, as the mean value is $M = 2.66$ with a slight significance. Accordingly, the same statement can be made, namely that fans do not tend to believe that their willingness to go to the stadium and buy tickets changes as a result of such a sponsorship controversy (Table 14).

The hypothesis based on qualitative research can also be partially confirmed. Although the influence on the general willingness to purchase club-related articles cannot be proven for political and moral controversies and no influence can be assumed for commercial controversies, the consistent agreement in the rejection of a jersey printed with a controversial sponsor shows that there is a conditional negative influence on the WTP. This condition is directly related to the public visibility of the controversial sponsorship partner. Regarding stadium attendance, H2 is fully confirmed, as fans across all scenarios tend to believe that these controversies would not influence their willingness to go to the stadium.

RQ3: How do sponsorship controversies affect fans' word of mouth communication, including to publicly defend their club and recommend their club to others?

WOM communication and the influence of various controversies consist of two items. The first item measures the extent to which respondents are willing to recommend their club to others (item 1), while the second item measures their willingness to defend the club in public discussions (item 2). One-sample t-tests are also used here to compare the mean values of the items with the neutral mean value of the Likert scale (mean value = 3), which means neither agreement nor disagreement.

Scenario 1: Political Sponsorship Controversy

The first item describing the influence on the willingness to recommend the club in the event of such a controversy shows that the respondents do not believe that such a controversy would influence them in this regard ($M = 2.68$). The result is significant ($p = .002$) and it can therefore be assumed that there is no direct influence on the recommending part of WOM communication (Table 15).

Although a neutral mean value ($M = 2.99$) is determined for the second item, which generally indicates a balanced range of opinions, no statistical significance ($p = .947$) could be demonstrated, which is why no statement can be made in this regard. Accordingly, no direct influence can be identified in WOM communication regarding politically controversial sponsorship deals (Table 15).

Scenario 2: Moral Sponsorship Controversy

A similar conclusion can be drawn for the second scenario. For item 1, a neutral mean value of $M = 2.72$ is obtained, with statistical significance ($p = 0.005$). Accordingly, the same statement can be made, namely that moral sponsorship controversies tend to have no influence on the willingness to recommend the club to others. The same applies to item 2, because despite a neutral mean value ($M = 2.88$), no statistical significance can be demonstrated ($p = .237$). Therefore, the results for scenario 2 also reflect the statements made in the political example (Table 16).

Scenario 3: Commercial Sponsorship Controversy

In the last scenario, the results differ from the previous scenarios. This is because a mean value of over three was determined for both items, which indicates that such sponsorship has an influence on WOM communication. However, for item 1, where the mean value is slightly above the neutral value at $M = 3.07$, no statistical significance could be determined ($p = .245$) (Table 17).

For the second item, however, the mean value is $M = 3.36$, which indicates a clear influence of commercial sponsorship controversy on the willingness to defend the club publicly. This result was also confirmed by statistical significance ($p = .003$) (Table 17).

In view of the results, H3 cannot be confirmed. For scenarios 1 and 2, the mean values for item 1 are below the neutral mean value of 3, which shows that such scenarios have little influence on the willingness to recommend the club to others. The third scenario does not show any significance at all. The same applies in part to the second part of the hypothesis. This is because no statistical causality between commercial sponsorship controversies and the willingness to publicly defend the club can be proven for scenarios 1 & 2. Only the third scenario shows a significant influence on WOM communication in relation to defense, which signals a higher relevance of such a scenario for German football fans.

RQ4: Do political, moral and commercial sponsorship controversies differ in the strength of their impact on fans' attitudes and behavioral intentions?

Differences in the impact on Fans' trust

To investigate whether different scenarios of sponsorship controversies have different effects on trust in the club and its management, two separate repeated measures ANOVAs

were conducted. This method was used because the same participants evaluated each of the two trust items within the sample (political, moral, and commercial scenarios), allowing for a direct comparison of their effects.

The repeated measures ANOVA shows that fan confidence for item 1 differed significantly between the three scenarios ($F(1.91, 259.48) = 4.33, p = .016, \eta^2 = .031$). Due to the violation of the sphericity assumption (Mauchly's test: $p = .035$), the Greenhouse-Geisser correction was used (Table 18). Post hoc tests with Bonferroni correction reveal that the effect on trust is significantly higher in commercial controversies ($M = 3.45$) than in moral controversies ($M = 3.07$) ($p = .027$). There are no significant differences between political controversies ($M = 3.31$) and the other two scenarios (Table 18).

The second ANOVA with repeated measurements reveals a significant difference in trust in club management (item 2) between the three scenarios ($F(1,83, 248.59) = 8.34, p < .001, \eta^2 = .058$). Due to the violation of the sphericity assumption (Mauchly test: $p = 0.001$), the Greenhouse-Geisser correction is applied again (Table 18). Pairwise comparisons show that the effect on trust in moral controversies ($M = 3.10$) is significantly lower than in political ($M = 3.58, p < .001$) and commercial controversies ($M = 3.53, p = .013$). There is no significant difference between political and commercial scenarios (Table 18).

In summary, hypothesis 4 is partially confirmed by the data. Both political and commercial sponsorship controversies trigger more negative reactions in terms of trust than moral sponsorship. This suggests that fans are more sensitive to commercial and political motives in sponsorship decisions and perceive them as more damaging to their relationship with the club.

Differences in the impact on WTP

The same procedure was used to determine whether and to what extent the three sponsorship scenarios differ in terms of their influence on willingness to pay. A repeated measure ANOVA was used for this purpose, which compares the three items (willingness to buy merchandise; willingness to buy a jersey with the sponsor on it; willingness to attend games in the stadium) for each scenario in order to identify differences.

Due to the violation of the sphericity assumption (Mauchly test: $p = .001$), the Greenhouse-Geisser correction was used ($F(1.77, 241.01) = 4.551, p = .015, \eta^2 = .032$), which describes a small but significant effect. The pairwise comparison (Bonferroni) shows that the commercial scenario has a significantly stronger influence on the willingness to buy

merchandise than the political scenario ($p = .045$). The difference in the mean is 0.328. It also shows that the commercial controversy has a marginally significant stronger influence on item 1 compared to moral controversies ($p = .057$), although the value is slightly outside the confidence interval. Here, the mean difference is 0.35. No significant difference in the influence on the willingness to buy club merchandise can be measured between political and moral controversies (Table 19).

For item 2, the willingness to purchase a jersey with the sponsor's logo printed on it, there is no significant difference between the scenarios. Mauchly's test was not significant, so the assumption of sphericity is not violated ($p = .398$). However, the results of the ANOVA do not show any significance, which is also evident from the similar mean values. Accordingly, the willingness to purchase jerseys or items with the respective sponsor on them is similarly low for all three scenarios, and it makes no difference whether the sponsorship deals are politically, morally, or commercially controversial (Table 19).

For the last item, the assumption of sphericity is again violated ($p < .001$) and therefore the Greenhouse-Geisser correction was used, which demonstrated significance ($F(1.80, 244.82) = 12.146, p < .001, \eta^2 = .082$) with a moderate effect. The pairwise comparisons show that commercial controversies have a significantly greater influence on the respondents' willingness to go to the stadium than political controversies (mean difference = 0.511; $p = .001$). They also show that they have a significantly stronger influence than moral controversies with a mean difference of 0.343 ($p = .011$). No significant result can be obtained for the comparison between scenarios 1 and 2 ($p = .162$). However, since all mean values are below the neutral value of 3, it can be assumed that although the willingness to go to the stadium is influenced to different degrees by the sponsorship scenarios described, all three scenarios have a very weak to no main effect (Table 19).

Here too, hypothesis 4 can only be partially confirmed, as commercial sponsorship has a stronger influence on reactions related to WTP. Political and moral controversies, on the other hand, show no statistically significant differences in the strength of their influence. Hypothesis 4 for WTP can therefore now be described as follows: Commercial controversies have a stronger negative impact on fans' attitudes and behavioral intentions than moral and political controversies.

Differences in the impact on WOM communication

Finally, the influence of sponsorship controversies on the elements of WOM communication is measured. Another repeated measure ANOVA was performed for the two WOM items across all three scenarios. Item 1 describes the influence on the willingness to recommend the club, while item 2 describes the influence on the willingness to defend the club in public discussions.

The Greenhouse-Geisser correction is used for the first item, as Mauchly's test was not significant ($p = .018$). This shows a small to moderate and significant difference in the different scenarios ($F(1.89, \dots) = 8.973, p < .001, \eta^2 = .062$). The pairwise comparison shows that commercial controversies again have a significantly greater influence than the other two scenarios. The mean difference compared to moral is 0.35 ($p = .003$) and compared to political is 0.39 ($p = .002$). Only the mean value of commercial is above the neutral value of 3 ($M = 3.07$). Once again, no statistically significant difference can be demonstrated for the other two scenarios (Table 20Table 19).

The same result can be seen for item 2, as a significant difference (Mauchly $p = .062$) with a medium to small effect size is measured ($F = 10.217, p < .001, \eta^2 = 0,070$). Here, too, commercial controversies have a significantly stronger influence on the willingness to defend the club publicly. Compared to political controversies, the mean is 0.37 higher ($p = .008$) and compared to moral controversies, it is 0.48 higher ($p < .001$). No statistically significant difference was measured between those two. This means that commercial scandals are perceived as significantly more influential. The mean values indicate that commercial scenarios are more frequently perceived as influential (Table 20Table 19Table 19).

In conclusion, hypothesis 4 can only be partially confirmed here, because, as with the other dependent variables, only a significantly stronger influence on WOM communication can be seen in scenario 3 (commercial) compared to the other two. This suggests that this scenario would have the greatest influence on fan behavior and fan intention in the overall context.

RQ5: To what extent do fan-level and age group moderate the effects of sponsorship controversies on fan trust, willingness to pay and word of mouth communication?

A mixed-design MANOVA was chosen to answer RQ5, as it allows for the simultaneous analysis of interaction effects between a within-subjects factor (scenario) and several

between-subjects factors (age and fan level). At the same time, the design allows us to examine whether different groups of people (age groups or membership status) react differently to the scenarios in regard of trust, WTP and WOM communication. This method is therefore ideally suited to investigating the extent to which person-specific characteristics influence the effect of the scenarios on trust. If significant interactions are found, conclusions about the hypothesis can then be drawn using the mean values of the individual strata.

Moderation effects on Fans' Trust

The mixed-design MANOVA shows that the influence of the three sponsorship scenarios on the two trust items (trust in the club in general and in the management) is moderated by the age of the respondents. The significant interaction effect (scenario \times age group) shows that the impact pattern of the scenarios across both trust dimensions differs depending on the age group, with a slight to moderate effect (Pillai's trace = 0,096; $F(12, 516) = 2.177$; $p = .012$). The same is found for the interaction effect between the scenario and the fan level (Scenario \times Fan Level) (Pillai's Trace = 0,091; $F(4, 516) = 6.157$; $p < 0,001$). However, there is no triple interaction effect between age, fan level, and the scenarios (Pillai's Trace = 0,024; $F(12, 516) = 0.514$; $p = .906$) (Table 21).

However, in view of the mean values, H5 cannot be completely confirmed. Although there is an interaction effect for both moderators, the effects are not as linear as assumed in the hypothesis. It appears that younger generations are more sensitive to moral controversies ($M = 3.34$) than respondents aged 60+ (2.80) when it comes to trust in club management. In contrast, the older generations aged 45+ consider commercial and political issues to be significantly more damaging to trust than the younger generations. In terms of fan loyalty, club members were more sensitive to both items in political and commercial scenarios and showed stronger effects. In the moral scenario, however, non-members were at the same level for item 1 (mean = 3.07) and more strongly affected for item 2. It can therefore be seen that no specific statement can be made about a linear progression with age, but rather that each scenario has an individual effect in combination with age and club membership (Table 22; Table 23).

Moderation effects on WTP

To assess whether there is also a moderating effect of age and fan level on WTP, the mixed-design MANOVA must be performed for the three corresponding items of this dependent variable. This shows that there is a significant interaction between the scenarios and age

group (Pillai's Trace: $F(18, 774) = 2.082, p = .005, \eta^2 = .046$), from which it can be concluded that the influence of the sponsorship scenarios on willingness to pay differs depending on the age group, with a moderate effect. There is also a significant interaction between the scenarios and membership of a club (Pillai's Trace: $F(6, 514) = 3.353, p = .003, \eta^2 = .038$) with a smaller effect size. There is also no triple interaction for WTP ($p = .905$) (Table 24).

The mean values of the different strata reveal different findings across the three scenarios. On the one hand, across all items, club members are more strongly affected in political and commercial scenarios, whereas non-members are more strongly influenced for all items in moral controversy scenarios. The largest discrepancy is in commercial scenarios, where members have a mean value of 3.49 for item 1 and non-members have a mean value of 3.03. Regarding age, the older groups are mostly affected. This is particularly evident in the commercial scenario with regard to stadium attendance, with a mean difference of 0.79 between Generation X (45-60) and Generation Z (16-28). In order not to exceed the scope of this paper, it will be refrained from a detailed display of the figures and only use the results to test the hypothesis. Therefore hypothesis 5 can be partially confirmed for the WTP, as an interaction and thus also a moderation effect was found for both moderators. However, club members are only more affected across the political and commercial scenarios, while non-members are consistently more affected by the moral scenario. Furthermore, no behavioral pattern can be identified with regard to age; there are only tendencies for the older strata to be more strongly influenced than the younger ones, which clearly contradicts H5 (Table 25; table 26; table 27).

Moderation effects on WOM communication

Finally, it is examined whether the moderation effect also applies to WOM communication. Another mixed-design MANOVA was used for this purpose. The results show that, as for the first two variables, reactions to controversial sponsors differed significantly between age groups. The effect is moderately pronounced (Pillai's Trace = .116, $F = 2.643, p = .002$, Partial $\eta^2 = .058$). Fan level also significantly moderates the effect of scenarios on WOM. The effect is somewhat smaller than for age, but still significant (Pillai's Trace = .064, $F = 4.274, p = .002$, Partial $\eta^2 = .032$). There is also no triple interaction between the two moderators and the items (Table 28).

For the evaluation of the mean values of WOM communication, a detailed elaboration of the mean values is not provided and the results are only used to verify the hypothesis. The data

show that for both items, the mean values and thus the influence of the scenarios on the fans and their behavior increase with age up to the 45-60 age group, where they then peak. The 60+ age group then ranks third behind Generation Z. We see the highest mean value for willingness to defend the club in the commercial scenario with 4.03 for Generation X, which signals a very strong influence. In terms of fan loyalty and thus club membership, the same pattern as for the first two variables holds true, as non-members are only more strongly affected by scenario 2 (moral) and significantly less influenced than club members in the other two scenarios. This also partially confirms hypothesis 5. We see significant moderating effects due to age and fan loyalty, but not in the way as assumed in the qualitative research. The results vary depending on age and fan level, with some patterns becoming apparent across all variables (Table 29; Table 30).

Research Questions	Results
RQ1 Fan trust	Political and commercial controversies significantly reduce trust in both the club and its management. Moral controversies have no significant impact.
RQ2 WTP	Willingness to buy jerseys with controversial sponsors is significantly reduced across all scenarios. General merchandise WTP and stadium attendance remain mostly unaffected.
RQ3 WOM	Commercial controversies significantly reduce willingness to publicly defend the club. Recommendation behavior remains mostly unaffected across all scenarios.
RQ4 Scenario Difference	Commercial controversies have significantly stronger negative impacts than moral and political controversies, especially on trust and WOM. No significant difference between political and moral types.
RQ5 Moderators	Both age and membership status significantly moderated effects. Older fans are more sensitive to political and commercial scenarios. Members are more influenced by political and commercial scenarios and Non-Members by moral scenarios.

Table 3: Quantitative Research Summary

6. Managerial Implications

This paper specifically examined various sponsorship controversies in German professional football, as the results reveal relevant implications for managers. These can be used by managers in charge to make more informed decisions about sponsorship in the future. Above all, a distinction must be made between different types of controversies, as political and commercial controversies can have a significantly more negative impact on fan behavior and intentions. Potential partners that fall into this category should be examined with caution. Also, the visibility of relevant sponsors on jerseys is generally more susceptible to potential rejection, which should be of particular importance in managers' decision-making. Managers should also be aware that fans make a clear distinction between the club itself and its management, which can lead to a shift in fan reactions that managers in the sports industry should be aware of. The variable WOM communication showed a particularly strong reaction, which was especially affected by commercially oriented deals. This could be an indicator for managers in the future of emerging changes in fan behavior, as these can be quickly observed on social media. In addition to other findings that could be valuable for managers in German professional football, these are the first important insights. A detailed classification of the results is provided in the conclusion.

7. Conclusion

This study examines the extent to which political, moral, and commercial sponsorship controversies influence relevant fan intentions and behavior in German professional football. The influence of such controversies on fan trust, willingness to pay (WTP), and word-of-mouth communication was examined. A mixed methods approach was used, combining in-depth interviews and quantitative data collection based on three different real-life scenarios. This approach was used to gain a differentiated insight into fan reactions themselves and the moderating effects of age and fan loyalty. The conclusion of the topic and research questions are summarized below. Research questions 4 will be part of the conclusions on research questions 1, 2, and 3.

The Impact of Political, Moral and Commercial Sponsorship Controversies on Fan Trust, Willingness to Pay and Word of Mouth Communication in German football clubs.

The results show that sponsorship controversies, especially commercial ones, have a significant impact on the dependent variables examined. When fans perceive sponsorship as inappropriate or incompatible with their club's identity or values, this can have a negative impact on their trust in the club, their willingness to purchase sponsorship-related fan merchandise, and their willingness to publicly defend the club. However, it is clear that fans do not withdraw their support completely, as stadium attendance and willingness to recommend the club remain unchanged. In addition to the nature of the controversy, reactions also depend on the fans themselves, especially their age and level of involvement as fans.

RQ1: What is the overall effect of sponsorship controversies on fans' trust in their club?

First, the results show that sponsorship controversies do indeed have a measurable impact on fan trust. However, a distinction must be made here, while political and, above all, commercial controversies had a moderate negative influence on fan trust and especially the trust in the management, moral controversies did not lead to any significant influence on trust. This clearly shows that fans make a clear distinction between the club as such and its management, with political involvement and commercially motivated deals playing a particularly damaging role.

RQ2: How do sponsorship controversies influence fans' willingness to pay for club-related expenditures, including merchandise and stadium attendance?

Second, the analysis of the data regarding the influence of sponsorship controversies on WTP showed that these had no relevant influence on the basic willingness to purchase merchandise or attend stadium visits. This shows a fundamentally loyal attitude of fans toward the club, especially in the face of reputation problems. However, a relevant finding of the research is that fans are nevertheless not willing to buy branded fan merchandise, especially jerseys, on which the controversial sponsor is explicitly visible. This reflects the relevance of visibility and symbolic representation as influential factors in such sponsorship controversies.

RQ3: How do sponsorship controversies affect fans' word of mouth communication, including to publicly defend their club and recommend their club to others?

The influence on WOM communication showed differentiated results. Commercial controversies had a strong influence on fans' willingness to defend their club publicly against criticism. It appears that this type of controversy, which is perceived as contradicting traditional values, has a particularly strong influence on communication behavior. The effect is slightly stronger among older fan segments who are official members of their club, demonstrating the strong communicative resistance of fans to the advancing commercialization of professional football in Germany. In comparison, the other scenarios show no influence on WOM communication.

RQ5: To what extent do fan-level and age group moderate the effects of sponsorship controversies on fan trust, willingness to pay and word of mouth communication?

A particularly noteworthy finding emerged from the analysis of the moderators, age, and fan loyalty (membership). Contrary to the original hypothesis that younger fans and members would be more strongly influenced, the evaluation revealed a more differentiated result. In the political and commercial scenarios in particular, older fans and club members were more strongly affected, while supporters (non-members) showed a significantly stronger influence regarding moral controversies, which may be due to different expectations of the club. However, this finding shows above all that it is essential to distinguish between the different scenarios and to consider the moderators when researching fan behavior in sponsorship.

In summary, the results show that fans' reactions to sponsorship controversies are strongly dependent on context. Football clubs should therefore not only consider whether a sponsor is morally or politically acceptable but also think about who their fans are and how different groups might react. The results show that authenticity, political neutrality, and shared values

play an important role in maintaining fan loyalty and engagement. Especially in today's world, where sponsorship decisions are closely watched and quickly discussed online, clubs must choose their partners carefully to protect trust and strengthen their relationship with their fan base.

8. Limitations

In the course of the study, several limiting factors came to light that must be taken into account to enable a well-founded classification of the results. First, the sample size for quantitative research ($n = 137$) must be mentioned, as although it is sufficient for an exploratory analysis, it limits the significance of detailed comparisons between subgroups.

Second, to simplify the research, fan loyalty was reduced to two factors based solely on official fan membership. While this is sufficient for simple segmentation and basic differentiation, it does not fully capture the complexity of factors such as loyalty, which are interlinked with many other influences. In future research, more in-depth breakdowns of this moderator should therefore be used to overcome this limitation.

The independent variables in this research are also based on two items (three in the case of WTP). This enabled a structured examination of the factors but also limited the depth of insight into a complex topic such as fan behavior. Trust, WTP, and WOM communication are multidimensional and can be influenced by a variety of cognitive and emotional factors. Future research should therefore use multidimensional models for the individual variables in order to examine the scope of the responses in even greater detail.

Moreover, the reliance on self-reported data through surveys introduces the possibility of response bias. Participants may provide responses influenced by social desirability or may not accurately reflect their actual behaviors. This potential bias introduces a degree of uncertainty into the accuracy and reliability of the study's findings.

Cultural differences within fan segments were not examined in detail in this study. Cultural nuances can influence fans' perceptions and behavior, as well as ethical concerns or perceptions of various controversies. This should be considered in future research.

Finally, the timing of the study must also be listed as a limiting factor. The survey was conducted during a period when various sponsorship controversies were already being discussed publicly. This topicality may have influenced respondents and made their answers more emotional, thereby amplifying or weakening them.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1 – In depth Interviews

Interview Questionnaire

Introduction

"This interview is being conducted to gather qualitative information for a study being carried out by a student at the Católica Lisbon School of Business and Economics. The aim of this interview is to gather information about your behavior in relation to sponsorship crises in German football.

This session will be recorded with your consent so that your answers can be evaluated with a high degree of accuracy later on. Your answers will remain anonymous and confidential and will be used exclusively for research purposes. This is an informal interview—there are no right or wrong answers; we are primarily looking for honest assessments. The interview should not take longer than 30 minutes."

Screening questions:

1. Do you support a German football club?
2. Are you an official member of the club?

Demographic and psychographic insights

3. How old are you?
4. What is your gender?
5. What is your current occupation or job?
6. What is your highest level of education?
7. Which club do you support?
8. How long have you supported your club?
9. How often do you attend games?
10. How do you usually find out about your club?

Part 1: General understanding of sponsorship and controversies

11. In your opinion, what are the main objectives of sponsorship deals between companies or organizations and football clubs?
12. Have you ever heard of a sponsorship deal that was considered controversial or controversial? If so, can you describe it?
13. In your opinion, what makes a sponsorship agreement controversial?

Part 2: Definition of sponsorship controversy

14. How would you define political and moral sponsorship controversies?
15. How do these types of controversies differ in your view?
16. Can you think of any specific examples of political or moral sponsorship controversies in football or even in your club? If so, can you describe them?

Definitions for participant to understand for the following questions:

*A **political sponsorship controversy** arises when a football club is supported by a sponsor associated with political issues, governments, or controversial political organizations. This can trigger protests or criticism because fans feel that the club is indirectly taking a political stance or placing financial interests above social values.*

Example:

Borussia Dortmund's sponsorship by Rheinmetall, a leading arms manufacturer, sparked discussions about the ethical implications of working with a company that is active in the arms industry and could be involved in geopolitical conflicts.

*A **moral sponsorship controversy** arises when a club collaborates with a company that is considered unethical or harmful to health. This often affects companies that sell unhealthy products such as alcohol, fast food or tobacco, or are known for poor working conditions. Fans may criticise the club for ignoring its social responsibility and setting a bad example by financially supporting such companies.*

Example:

Werder Bremen's long-standing sponsor, Wiesenhof, has frequently been criticized for animal welfare violations, leading to a negative attitude among fans who support ethical food production. Similarly, FC Bayern Munich's partnership with Qatar Airways has been the subject of heated debate, as Qatar has been criticized for human rights violations.

Part 3: Perceived effects of sponsorship controversies

17. How would your behavior toward the club change if it were involved in a moral or political sponsorship controversy? Can you give specific examples of how you would react?
18. How would a moral or political sponsorship controversy change your perception of your club? (Use the examples above as a guide.)
19. How does a political or moral controversy affect your trust in the club?
20. In this context, does it make a difference to you whether the controversy is political or moral?

Part 4: Influence on willingness to pay

21. Would a political or moral sponsorship controversy influence your willingness to pay for tickets, merchandise, or other offers? Why or why not?
22. Have you ever boycotted a football club's products or services because of a sponsorship controversy?

Part 5: Influence on recommendation and defense

23. Would a sponsorship controversy change the way you talk about the club? Why or why not?
24. Would a sponsorship controversy influence whether you continue to represent the club positively or publicly advocate for it?
25. Have you ever participated in discussions (online or offline) about a football club's sponsorship controversy? If so, can you describe your involvement?

In-Depth Interviews Examples

Interview 1 (Generation Z – Supporter)

00:00:02 Speaker 1

Let's start with a brief introduction.

00:00:06 Speaker 1

This interview is being conducted to gather qualitative information for a study being carried out by a student at the Católica Lisbon School of Business and Economics.

00:00:16 Speaker 1

The purpose of this interview is to gather information about your behavior in relation to sponsorship crises in German soccer.

00:00:21 Speaker 1

This session will be recorded with your consent so that your answers can be evaluated with a high degree of accuracy later on.

00:00:27 Speaker 1

Your answers will remain anonymous and confidential and will be used exclusively for research purposes.

00:00:32 Speaker

This is an informal interview. There are no right or wrong answers; we are primarily looking for your honest assessment. The interview should not take longer than 15 minutes.

00:00:44 Speaker

To begin with, there are two screening questions. These are to ensure that you are part of my target group.

00:00:52 Speaker 1

Do you support a German soccer team?

00:00:56 Speaker 2

Yes.

00:00:58 Speaker 1

Are you an official member of this team?

00:01:02 Speaker 2

No.

Demographic information

00:01:10 Speaker 1

How old are you?

00:01:13 Speaker 2

26 years old.

00:01:14 Speaker 1

What is your gender?

00:01:17 Speaker 2

Male.

00:01:20 Speaker 1

What is your current occupation or job?

00:01:22 Speaker 2

Student.

00:01:26 Speaker 1

What is your highest level of education?

00:01:26 Speaker 2

High school diploma.

00:01:27 Speaker 1

Which soccer team do you support in Germany?

00:01:31 Speaker 2

FC Bayern Munich.

00:01:32 Speaker 1

How long have you been supporting this team?

00:01:38 Speaker 2

For 20 years.

00:01:47 Speaker 1

How often do you go to your club's games?

00:01:51 Speaker 2

I've been to the stadium five times when Bayern played.

00:01:58 Speaker 1

How do you mainly get your information about the club?

00:02:01 Speaker 2

Through OneFootball, YouTube, and Instagram.

Part 1: General understanding of sponsorship and controversies

00:02:18 Speaker 1

In your opinion, what is the main goal of a soccer club when it enters into a sponsorship deal with a company or organization?

00:02:35 Speaker 2

First and foremost, to generate capital for the club in order to sign players or expand its reach.

00:02:49 Speaker 1

Are there any other added benefits that a sponsorship deal could offer?

00:02:55 Speaker 2

Yes, for example, it can strengthen identification with the club. Clubs such as Hoffenheim and Bayer Leverkusen have a direct connection to the region through their sponsors, for example through many employees of the companies. This strengthens the club's brand.

00:03:08 Speaker 1

Have you ever heard of a sponsorship deal that was considered controversial or controversial?

00:03:21 Speaker 2

Yes, for example, Qatar Airways' sponsorship of FC Bayern Munich. Many fans were upset about this because Qatar has been criticized for human rights violations.

00:03:56 Speaker 2

Another example is Borussia Dortmund's partnership with Rheinmetall, a weapons manufacturer.

00:04:19 Speaker 1

What do you think makes sponsorship controversial?

00:04:23 Speaker 2

When the values of the sponsor don't match the values of the club or its fans. For example, when a club is committed to human rights but cooperates with a company that is known for violating them.

Part 3: Impact on fan behavior

00:09:21 Speaker 1

Would such a sponsorship deal change your behavior as a fan?

00:09:25 Speaker 2

Yes, I think so. With the Qatar Airways deal, I noticed that my interest in Bayern waned at times because I didn't want to be constantly preoccupied with these discussions. Football should be a distraction. It also makes me lose more and more trust in my club because I hold my club to a certain standard. And then I would believe that Bayern, for example, could also do other immoral things.

Part 4: Influence on willingness to pay

00:11:29 Speaker 1

Would a sponsorship controversy influence your willingness to pay for tickets, merchandise, or other offers from your club?

00:11:33 Speaker 2

Yes, if there was a controversial sponsor on the jersey, I probably wouldn't buy it.

00:12:03 Speaker 1

Have you ever boycotted a soccer club's products or services because of a sponsorship controversy?

00:12:10 Speaker 2

Not directly, but I would pay attention to which sponsors are on the jersey.

00:12:18 Speaker 1

Would you be more likely to support your club financially if it publicly distanced itself from controversial sponsors?

00:12:23 Speaker 2

Yes, if it's not just for financial reasons, but because the club is consciously choosing not to accept sponsorship that is incompatible with its values.

Part 5: Influence on communication and attitude

00:13:20 Speaker 1

Would a sponsorship controversy influence how you talk about the club?

00:13:25 Speaker 2

Yes, I would continue to speak positively about the club, but I would be more critical of the club's management and sponsorship decisions.

00:14:09 Speaker 1

Have you ever participated in discussions about a sponsorship controversy?

00:14:19 Speaker 2

Yes, with friends. Especially in discussions with Dortmund fans, the focus was on the fact that both clubs had problematic sponsors.

00:14:56 Speaker 1

Thank you for your time!

Interview 2 – (Baby Boomer – Member)

00:01:02 Speaker 1

How old are you?

00:01:05 Speaker 2

I am 60 years old.

00:01:08 Speaker 1

What is your gender?

00:01:10 Speaker 2

Male.

00:01:12 Speaker 1

What is your current occupation or job?

00:01:15 Speaker 2

I am a self-employed businessman.

00:01:17 Speaker 1

What is your highest level of education?

00:01:21 Speaker 2

High school diploma.

00:01:22 Speaker 1

Which club do you support in Germany?

00:01:26 Speaker 2

You can probably guess—Borussia Mönchengladbach.

00:01:27 Speaker 1

Yes, I can answer that very easily. Then the last three questions in this section: How long have you been a fan of the club?

00:01:37 Speaker 2

Since 1970—so for about 55 years.

00:01:49 Speaker 1

How often do you go to games each year?

00:01:57 Speaker 2

More than every other game.

00:01:59 Speaker 1

And how do you stay informed about your club?

00:02:09 Speaker 2

Mainly through the official Borussia Mönchengladbach website and Facebook.

Part 1: Sponsorship motivation

00:02:16 Speaker

Now we want to get a general understanding of your views on sponsorship in soccer and discuss possible controversies.

00:02:36

In your opinion, what is the main goal of a soccer club when it enters into sponsorship deals?

00:02:46

The main goal is, of course, to get capital into the club, especially into the licensed team.

00:02:59 Speaker 2

You have to differentiate here: there is the e.V., which includes the non-profit departments such as table tennis or handball, and the licensed team, which is all about professional soccer.

00:03:08 Speaker 2

Sponsorship brings financial independence and enables investment – whether in the team, infrastructure or other areas of the club.

Part 2: Sponsorship controversies

00:03:30 Speaker 1

Have you ever heard of sponsorship deals that were considered controversial or controversial?

00:03:37 Speaker 2

Of course.

00:03:44 Speaker 2

Red Bull and RB Leipzig, or the Hoffenheim story. The clubs are often seen as nothing more than marketing tools for companies.

00:04:09 Speaker 2

That means the club itself serves only as a platform to sell products or raise awareness of companies.

00:04:20 Speaker 1

In your opinion, what makes a sponsorship agreement controversial or questionable?

00:04:25 Speaker 2

For me, alcohol advertising is particularly problematic.

00:04:34 Speaker 2

I don't think it's good when beer or other alcoholic beverages appear as sponsors – not even for Borussia Mönchengladbach.

00:05:01 Speaker 1

What would you say is the difference between a political and a moral sponsorship controversy?

00:05:08 2

Political? Off the top of my head, I'm not sure what you mean.

00:05:15 1

Morally, I find sponsors such as alcohol companies or betting providers problematic.

00:05:27 Speaker 2

It makes a difference whether you're advertising chocolate or beer.

Part 3: Impact on fan behavior

00:08:03 Speaker 1

If Borussia Mönchengladbach were to sign a sponsorship deal like Dortmund with Rheinmetall or Schalke with Gazprom, would your fan behavior change?

00:08:15 Speaker 2

I don't think so.

00:08:20 Speaker 2

I would be more bothered if an alcohol manufacturer were a sponsor.

00:08:35 Speaker 2

Without Gazprom, we wouldn't be able to heat our homes, and Rheinmetall builds tanks – but they're needed for national defense.

00:09:30 Speaker 1

And what about Qatar Airways?

00:09:32 Speaker 2

I would find that more problematic because human rights are being violated.

00:09:44 Speaker 2

I don't think something like that has any place in German soccer.

Part 4: Influence on willingness to pay

00:11:14 Speaker 1

Would you spend less money on tickets or merchandise?

00:11:21 Speaker 2

I would still go to the stadium.

00:11:25 Speaker 2

But I wouldn't buy a jersey with a sponsor like that on it.

Part 5: Influence on communication and attitude

00:12:11 Speaker 1

Would it change how you talk about the club in public or with friends?

00:12:15 Speaker 2

No, I would continue to defend Borussia Mönchengladbach.

00:12:19 Speaker 2

Blood is thicker than water.

00:12:31 Speaker 1

Have you ever taken part in discussions about sponsorship controversies?

00:12:37 Speaker 2

Yes, of course.

00:12:43 Speaker 2

Among fans or with club officials—I discuss it regularly.

Appendix 2 - Online Survey

Online Survey Questions

„Welcome and thank you for taking part in this survey.

This study is part of academic research at the Católica School of Business and Economics. It explores how football fans perceive different types of sponsorship agreements involving their favorite clubs.

Your responses will remain completely anonymous and strictly confidential. There are no right or wrong answers — we are interested in your personal perspective as a football fan.

The survey takes approximately 7 minutes to complete. We appreciate your time and your valuable input. “

Block 1: Screening & Fan Profile

To begin, we would like to ask you a few short questions about your connection to professional football in Germany.

This will help us ensure that the survey is relevant to your experience and perspective as a football fan.

Q1. Are you a fan of a German professional football club (e.g., Bundesliga, 2. Bundesliga)? (Yes; No) / **Terminate if No**

Q2. Which club do you support? (**Dropdown**)

Q3. Are you an official member of this club? (Yes; No)

Q4. How old are you? (Dropdown Generation brackets: 15-27; 28-40; ...)

Block 2: General Fan Intentions (Control / Baseline)

In the following section, we are interested in your general attitudes and behaviors as a fan of your club — independent of any specific sponsorship or recent event.

Please answer based on how you typically feel or behave in relation to your club.

Q5. I trust the decisions made by my club.

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Q6. *I regularly buy official club merchandise, such as the current season's jersey.*

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Q7. *I try to attend home matches at the stadium whenever possible.*

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Q8. *I would recommend this club to friends.*

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Q9. *I would publicly defend the club against criticism.*

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Block 3: Scenario 1 (Political Sponsorship Controversy)

The remainder of this survey consists of three sections based on different scenarios or examples. All scenarios are to be assessed independently of each other and are not related.

Please imagine the following situation as if it were your own football club:

Your club signs a sponsorship deal with a company from the political or defense sector. This type of sponsorship has emerged in professional football in recent years—for example, partnerships with companies such as Gazprom (Schalke 04), a state-owned energy supplier, or Rheinmetall (Borussia Dortmund), a large weapons and arms manufacturer based in Germany.

Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement:

Q10. *Such a sponsorship deal would reduce my trust in the club.*

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Q11. *Such sponsorship would have a negative impact on the level of trust I have in the club's management.*

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Q12. *This sponsorship influences my willingness to buy official club merchandise.*

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Q13. *I would consider buying a jersey with this sponsor's logo on it.*

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Q14. *Such sponsorship influences whether I would want to attend games at the stadium.*

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Q15. *Such sponsorship would influence the extent to which I would recommend my club to others.*

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Q16. This sponsorship influences whether I would support the club in public discussions.

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Block 4: Scenario 2 (Moral Sponsorship Controversy)

Imagine the following situation as if it were your own football club:

Your club signs a sponsorship deal with a company from an industry that is sometimes controversial in terms of ethical, cultural, or social values. In recent years, such sponsorship deals have been signed in professional football with Qatar Airways, a state-owned airline from a country criticized for its labor and human rights conditions. (FC Bayern Munich).

Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement:

Q17. Such a sponsorship deal would reduce my trust in the club.

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Q18. Such sponsorship would have a negative impact on the level of trust I have in the club's management.

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Q19. This sponsorship influences my willingness to buy official club merchandise.

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Q20. I would consider buying a jersey with this sponsor's logo on it.

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Q21. Such sponsorship influences whether I would want to attend games at the stadium.

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Q22. Such sponsorship would influence the extent to which I would recommend my club to others.

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Q23. This sponsorship influences whether I would support the club in public discussions.

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Block 5: Scenario 3 (Commercial Sponsorship Controversy)

Imagine the following situation as if it were your own football club:

Your club signs a sponsorship agreement with a large commercial enterprise that becomes an important financial and strategic partner. In some cases, such sponsors are closely involved in the operation, identity, or long-term direction of the club. In professional

football, there are examples such as Red Bull (RB Leipzig), SAP (TSG Hoffenheim), and Volkswagen (VfL Wolfsburg), where sponsors play an important role that goes beyond mere branding or advertising.

Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement:

Q24. Such a sponsorship deal would reduce my trust in the club.

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Q25. Such sponsorship would have a negative impact on the level of trust I have in the club's management.

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Q26. This sponsorship influences my willingness to buy official club merchandise.

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Q27. I would consider buying a jersey with this sponsor's logo on it.

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Q28. Such sponsorship influences whether I would want to attend games at the stadium.

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Q29. Such sponsorship would influence the extent to which I would recommend my club to others.

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Q30. This sponsorship influences whether I would support the club in public discussions.

(1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Descriptive Statistics

Data Sampling

Are you an official member of this club? * What is your gender? Crosstabulation

Count		What is your gender?		Total
		Male	Female	
Are you an official member of this club?	Yes	61	6	67
	No	54	16	70
Total		115	22	137

Table 4: Data Sampling - Membership & Gender

Which club do you support? * How old are you? Crosstabulation

Count

Which club do you support?	How old are you?				Total
	16-28 years	29-44 years	45-60 years	60+ years	
1. FC Heidenheim	1	0	1	0	2
1. FC Kaiserslautern	0	0	1	0	1
1. FC Köln	0	1	1	1	3
1. FSV Mainz 05	0	0	1	1	2
1. FC Union Berlin	0	0	1	1	2
Arminia Bielefeld	1	0	0	1	2
Bayer 04 Leverkusen	0	1	0	1	2
Bayern München	8	2	4	3	17
Borussia Dortmund	11	8	2	2	23
Borussia Mönchengladbach	1	1	3	4	9
Darmstadt 98	0	0	2	3	5
Eintracht Frankfurt	12	3	2	9	26
Erzgebirge Aue	0	0	1	0	1
FC Schalke 04	8	4	4	2	18
FC St. Pauli	0	0	1	0	1
Fortuna Düsseldorf	0	0	1	0	1
Hamburger SV	0	0	1	0	1
Hertha BSC	0	1	0	0	1
RB Leipzig	0	0	1	0	1
SC Freiburg	0	1	0	1	2
VfB Stuttgart	1	0	1	1	3
VfL Bochum	1	1	0	0	2
SC Preußen Münster	6	0	1	0	7
SV Werder Bremen	3	1	1	0	5
Total	53	24	30	30	137

Table 5: Data Sampling - Club & Age

Data General Fan intentions

How old are you?		Statements: – I trust my club's decisions.	Statements: – I regularly buy official club merchandise, such as the current season's jersey.	Statements: – I try to attend games at the stadium whenever possible.	Statements: – I would recommend this club to friends.	Statements: – I would publicly defend the club against criticism.
16-28 years	Mean	3,64	3,04	3,45	4,47	3,70
	N	53	53	53	53	53
	Std. Deviation	,942	1,208	1,381	,823	1,067
29-44 years	Mean	3,75	3,08	3,42	4,63	3,92
	N	24	24	24	24	24
	Std. Deviation	,676	1,349	1,349	,770	1,060
45-60 years	Mean	3,97	3,33	3,10	4,23	4,30
	N	30	30	30	30	30
	Std. Deviation	,615	1,470	1,296	,774	,877
60+ years	Mean	3,83	3,03	3,17	3,87	3,83
	N	30	30	30	30	30
	Std. Deviation	,648	1,273	1,262	,860	,747
Total	Mean	3,77	3,11	3,31	4,31	3,90
	N	137	137	137	137	137
	Std. Deviation	,776	1,299	1,326	,847	,980

Table 6: General Fan intentions - Mean comparison - Age

Are you an official member of this club?		Statements: – I trust my club's decisions.	Statements: – I regularly buy official club merchandise, such as the current season's jersey.	Statements: – I try to attend games at the stadium whenever possible.	Statements: – I would recommend this club to friends.	Statements: – I would publicly defend the club against criticism.
Yes	Mean	3,84	3,52	3,82	4,42	4,12
	N	67	67	67	67	67
	Std. Deviation	,687	1,198	1,127	,838	,962
No	Mean	3,71	2,71	2,81	4,21	3,69
	N	70	70	70	70	70
	Std. Deviation	,854	1,276	1,322	,849	,956
Total	Mean	3,77	3,11	3,31	4,31	3,90
	N	137	137	137	137	137
	Std. Deviation	,776	1,299	1,326	,847	,980

Table 7: General Fan Intention - Mean comparison - Club Membership

Data RQ1

One-Sample Statistics				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such a sponsorship deal would reduce my trust in the club.	137	3,31	1,173	,100
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship would have a negative impact on the level of trust I have in the club's management.	137	3,58	1,235	,105

Table 8: One-Sample T-Test Output - Fan Trust - Scenario 1 (Political Sponsorship Controversy)

One-Sample Test							
Test Value = 3							
	t	df	Significance		Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
			One-Sided p	Two-Sided p		Lower	Upper
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such a sponsorship deal would reduce my trust in the club.	3,059	136	,001	,003	,307	,11	,50
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship would have a negative impact on the level of trust I have in the club's management.	5,536	136	<,001	<,001	,584	,38	,79

Table 9: One-Sample T-Test Output - Fan Trust - Scenario 1 (Political Sponsorship Controversy)

One-Sample Statistics				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such a sponsorship deal would reduce my trust in the club.	137	3,07	1,198	,102
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship would have a negative impact on the level of trust I have in the club's management.	137	3,10	1,238	,106

One-Sample Test							
	t	df	Significance		Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
			One-Sided p	Two-Sided p		Lower	Upper
			Test Value = 3				
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such a sponsorship deal would reduce my trust in the club.	,713	136	,239	,477	,073	–,13	,28
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship would have a negative impact on the level of trust I have in the club's management.	,966	136	,168	,336	,102	–,11	,31

Table 10: One-Sample T-Test Output - Fan Trust - Scenario 2 (Moral Sponsorship Controversy)

One-Sample Statistics				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such a sponsorship deal would reduce my trust in the club.	137	3,45	1,388	,119
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship would have a negative impact on the level of trust I have in the club's management.	137	3,53	1,425	,122

One-Sample Test							
	t	df	Significance		Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
			One-Sided p	Two-Sided p		Lower	Upper
			Test Value = 3				
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such a sponsorship deal would reduce my trust in the club.	3,756	136	<,001	<,001	,445	,21	,68
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship would have a negative impact on the level of trust I have in the club's management.	4,377	136	<,001	<,001	,533	,29	,77

One-Sample Effect Sizes					
		Standardizer ^a	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such a sponsorship deal would reduce my trust in the club.	Cohen's d	1,388	,321	,149	,492
	Hedges' correction	1,395	,319	,148	,489
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship would have a negative impact on the level of trust I have in the club's management.	Cohen's d	1,425	,374	,200	,547
	Hedges' correction	1,433	,372	,199	,544

a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.
 Cohen's d uses the sample standard deviation.
 Hedges' correction uses the sample standard deviation, plus a correction factor.

Table 11: One-Sample T-Test Output - Fan Trust - Scenario 3 (Commercial Sponsorship Controversies)

Data RQ2

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. - Such sponsorship influences my willingness to buy official club merchandise.	137	2,93	1,223	,104
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. - I would consider buying a jersey with this sponsor's logo on it.	137	2,18	1,106	,095
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. - Such sponsorship influences whether I would want to attend games at the stadium.	137	2,15	1,049	,090

One-Sample Test

Test Value = 3

	t	df	Significance		Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
			One-Sided p	Two-Sided p		Lower	Upper
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. - Such sponsorship influences my willingness to buy official club merchandise.	-.699	136	,243	,486	-.073	-.28	,13
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. - I would consider buying a jersey with this sponsor's logo on it.	-8,650	136	<,001	<,001	-.818	-1,00	-.63
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. - Such sponsorship influences whether I would want to attend games at the stadium.	-9,444	136	<,001	<,001	-.847	-1,02	-.67

One-Sample Effect Sizes

	Standardizer ^a	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower	Upper
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. - Such sponsorship influences my willingness to buy official club merchandise.	Cohen's d	1,223	-.060	,108
	Hedges' correction	1,229	-.059	,107
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. - I would consider buying a jersey with this sponsor's logo on it.	Cohen's d	1,106	-.739	-.549
	Hedges' correction	1,112	-.735	-.546
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. - Such sponsorship influences whether I would want to attend games at the stadium.	Cohen's d	1,049	-.807	-.613
	Hedges' correction	1,055	-.802	-.609

a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.
Cohen's d uses the sample standard deviation.
Hedges' correction uses the sample standard deviation, plus a correction factor.

Table 12: One-Sample T-Test Output - WTP - Scenario 1 (Political Sponsorship Controversy)

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. - Such sponsorship influences my willingness to buy official club merchandise.	137	2,91	1,305	,112
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. - I would consider buying a jersey with this sponsor's logo on it.	137	2,29	1,158	,099
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. - Such sponsorship influences whether I would want to attend games at the stadium.	137	2,32	1,104	,094

One-Sample Test

Test Value = 3

	t	df	Significance		Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
			One-Sided p	Two-Sided p		Lower	Upper
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. - Such sponsorship influences my willingness to buy official club merchandise.	-,851	136	,198	,396	-,095	-,32	,13
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. - I would consider buying a jersey with this sponsor's logo on it.	-,7158	136	<,001	<,001	-,708	-,90	-,51
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. - Such sponsorship influences whether I would want to attend games at the stadium.	-,7195	136	<,001	<,001	-,679	-,87	-,49

Table 13: One-Sample T-Test Output - WTP - Scenario 2 (Moral Sponsorship Controversy)

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship influences my willingness to buy official club merchandise.	137	3,26	1,317	,113
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – I would consider buying a jersey with this sponsor's logo on it.	137	2,18	1,283	,110
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship influences whether I would want to attend games at the stadium.	137	2,66	1,244	,106

One-Sample Test

Test Value = 3

	t	df	Significance		Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
			One-Sided p	Two-Sided p		Lower	Upper
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship influences my willingness to buy official club merchandise.	2,270	136	,012	,025	,255	,03	,48
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – I would consider buying a jersey with this sponsor's logo on it.	-7,526	136	<,001	<,001	-,825	-1,04	-,61
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship influences whether I would want to attend games at the stadium.	-3,159	136	<,001	,002	-,336	-,55	-,13

Table 14: One-Sample T-Test Output – WTP - Scenario 3 (Commercial Sponsorship Controversy)

Data RQ3

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship would influence the extent to which I would recommend my club to others.	137	2,68	1,218	,104
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship would influence whether I would support the club in public discussions.	137	2,99	1,275	,109

One-Sample Test

Test Value = 3

	t	df	Significance		Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
			One-Sided p	Two-Sided p		Lower	Upper
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship would influence the extent to which I would recommend my club to others.	-3,086	136	,001	,002	-,321	-,53	-,12
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship would influence whether I would support the club in public discussions.	-,067	136	,473	,947	-,007	-,22	,21

Table 15: One-Sample T-Test Output - WOM communication - Scenario 1 (Political Sponsorship Controversy)

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship would influence the extent to which I would recommend my club to others.	137	2,72	1,156	,099
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship would influence whether I would support the club in public discussions.	137	2,88	1,151	,098

One-Sample Test

Test Value = 3

	t	df	Significance		Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
			One-Sided p	Two-Sided p		Lower	Upper
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship would influence the extent to which I would recommend my club to others.	-2,881	136	,002	,005	-,285	-,48	-,09
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship would influence whether I would support the club in public discussions.	-1,188	136	,118	,237	-,117	-,31	,08

Table 16: One-Sample T-Test Output - WOM communication - Scenario 2 (Moral Sponsorship Controversy)

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship would influence the extent to which I would recommend my club to others.	137	3,07	1,235	,105
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship would influence whether I would support the club in public discussions.	137	3,36	1,360	,116

One-Sample Test

Test Value = 3

	t	df	Significance		Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
			One-Sided p	Two-Sided p		Lower	Upper
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship would influence the extent to which I would recommend my club to others.	,692	136	,245	,490	,073	–,14	,28
Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship would influence whether I would support the club in public discussions.	3,079	136	,001	,003	,358	,13	,59

Table 17: One-Sample T-Test Output - WOM communication - Scenario 3 (Commercial Sponsorship Controversy)

Data RQ4

Differences in the impact on Fans' trust

Mauchly's Test of Sphericity^a

Within Subjects Effect	Measure	Mauchly's W	Approx. Chi-Square	df	Sig.	Epsilon ^b		
						Greenhouse-Geisser	Huynh-Feldt	Lower-bound
Scenario	Trust_Club	,952	6,679	2	,035	,954	,967	,500
	Trust_Management	,906	13,354	2	,001	,914	,926	,500

Tests the null hypothesis that the error covariance matrix of the orthonormalized transformed dependent variables is proportional to an identity matrix.

a. Design: Intercept
Within Subjects Design: Scenario

b. May be used to adjust the degrees of freedom for the averaged tests of significance. Corrected tests are displayed in the Tests of Within-Subjects Effects table.

Tests of Within-Subjects Effects

Multivariate^{a,b}

Within Subjects Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	
Scenario	Pillai's Trace	,092	6,557	4,000	544,000	<,001	,046
	Wilks' Lambda	,909	6,587 ^c	4,000	542,000	<,001	,046
	Hotelling's Trace	,098	6,617	4,000	540,000	<,001	,047
	Roy's Largest Root	,078	10,617 ^d	2,000	272,000	<,001	,072

a. Design: Intercept
Within Subjects Design: Scenario

b. Tests are based on averaged variables.

c. Exact statistic

d. The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level.

Univariate Tests

Source	Measure	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared		
Scenario	Trust_Club	Sphericity Assumed	9,698	2	4,849	4,325	,014	,031	
		Greenhouse-Geisser	9,698	1,908	5,083	4,325	,016	,031	
		Huynh-Feldt	9,698	1,934	5,014	4,325	,015	,031	
		Lower-bound	9,698	1,000	9,698	4,325	,039	,031	
	Trust_Management	Sphericity Assumed	19,187	2	9,594	8,342	<,001	,058	
		Greenhouse-Geisser	19,187	1,828	10,497	8,342	<,001	,058	
		Huynh-Feldt	19,187	1,851	10,363	8,342	<,001	,058	
		Lower-bound	19,187	1,000	19,187	8,342	,005	,058	
	Error(Scenario)	Trust_Club	Sphericity Assumed	304,968	272	1,121			
			Greenhouse-Geisser	304,968	259,475	1,175			
			Huynh-Feldt	304,968	263,073	1,159			
			Lower-bound	304,968	136,000	2,242			
Trust_Management		Sphericity Assumed	312,813	272	1,150				
		Greenhouse-Geisser	312,813	248,587	1,258				
		Huynh-Feldt	312,813	251,799	1,242				
		Lower-bound	312,813	136,000	2,300				

Pairwise Comparisons

Measure	(I) Scenario	(J) Scenario	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig. ^b	95% Confidence Interval for Difference ^b	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Trust_Club	1	2	,234	,116	,138	-,047	,515
		3	-,139	,127	,825	-,445	,168
	2	1	-,234	,116	,138	-,515	,047
		3	-,372 [*]	,140	,027	-,712	-,033
	3	1	,139	,127	,825	-,168	,445
		2	,372 [*]	,140	,027	,033	,712
Trust_Management	1	2	,482 [*]	,116	<,001	,200	,764
		3	,051	,122	1,000	-,245	,348
	2	1	-,482 [*]	,116	<,001	-,764	-,200
		3	-,431 [*]	,148	,013	-,789	-,072
	3	1	-,051	,122	1,000	-,348	,245
		2	,431 [*]	,148	,013	,072	,789

Based on estimated marginal means

*. The mean difference is significant at the ,05 level.

b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.

Table 18: Repeated Measure ANOVA Output - Differences in impact on Fan trust

Differences in the impact on WTP

Mauchly's Test of Sphericity^a

Within Subjects Effect	Measure	Mauchly's W	Approx. Chi-Square	df	Sig.	Epsilon ^b		
						Greenhouse-Geisser	Huynh-Feldt	Lower-bound
Scenario	WTP_Merchandise	,871	18,582	2	<,001	,886	,897	,500
	WTP_Jersey	,986	1,843	2	,398	,987	1,000	,500
	WTP_Stadium	,889	15,885	2	<,001	,900	,911	,500

Tests the null hypothesis that the error covariance matrix of the orthonormalized transformed dependent variables is proportional to an identity matrix.

a. Design: Intercept
Within Subjects Design: Scenario

b. May be used to adjust the degrees of freedom for the averaged tests of significance. Corrected tests are displayed in the Tests of Within-Subjects Effects table.

Tests of Within-Subjects Effects

Multivariate^{a,b}

Within Subjects Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	
Scenario	Pillai's Trace	,095	4,519	6,000	542,000	<,001	,048
	Wilks' Lambda	,905	4,580 ^c	6,000	540,000	<,001	,048
	Hotelling's Trace	,104	4,641	6,000	538,000	<,001	,049
	Roy's Largest Root	,094	8,532 ^d	3,000	271,000	<,001	,086

a. Design: Intercept
Within Subjects Design: Scenario

b. Tests are based on averaged variables.

c. Exact statistic

d. The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level.

Univariate Tests

Source	Measure	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	
Scenario	WTP_Merchandise	Sphericity Assumed	10,555	2	5,277	4,551	,011	,032
		Greenhouse-Geisser	10,555	1,772	5,956	4,551	,015	,032
		Huynh-Feldt	10,555	1,794	5,884	4,551	,014	,032
		Lower-bound	10,555	1,000	10,555	4,551	,035	,032
	WTP_Jersey	Sphericity Assumed	1,173	2	,586	,565	,569	,004
		Greenhouse-Geisser	1,173	1,973	,594	,565	,567	,004
		Huynh-Feldt	1,173	2,000	,586	,565	,569	,004
		Lower-bound	1,173	1,000	1,173	,565	,453	,004
	WTP_Stadium	Sphericity Assumed	18,584	2	9,292	12,146	<,001	,082
		Greenhouse-Geisser	18,584	1,800	10,323	12,146	<,001	,082
		Huynh-Feldt	18,584	1,823	10,195	12,146	<,001	,082
		Lower-bound	18,584	1,000	18,584	12,146	<,001	,082
Error(Senario)	WTP_Merchandise	Sphericity Assumed	315,445	272	1,160			
		Greenhouse-Geisser	315,445	241,008	1,309			
		Huynh-Feldt	315,445	243,959	1,293			
		Lower-bound	315,445	136,000	2,319			
	WTP_Jersey	Sphericity Assumed	282,161	272	1,037			
		Greenhouse-Geisser	282,161	268,362	1,051			
		Huynh-Feldt	282,161	272,000	1,037			
		Lower-bound	282,161	136,000	2,075			
	WTP_Stadium	Sphericity Assumed	208,083	272	,765			
		Greenhouse-Geisser	208,083	244,822	,850			
		Huynh-Feldt	208,083	247,904	,839			
		Lower-bound	208,083	136,000	1,530			

Pairwise Comparisons

Measure	(I) Scenario	(J) Scenario	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig. ^b	95% Confidence Interval for Difference ^b	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
WTP_Merchandise	1	2	,022	,106	1,000	-,236	,280
		3	-,328*	,133	,045	-,651	-,006
		2	-,022	,106	1,000	-,280	,236
	3	1	-,350	,147	,057	-,708	,007
		2	,328*	,133	,045	,006	,651
		3	,350	,147	,057	-,007	,708
WTP_Jersey	1	2	-,109	,116	1,000	-,390	,171
		3	,007	,126	1,000	-,299	,313
		2	,109	,116	1,000	-,171	,390
	3	1	,117	,127	1,000	-,191	,424
		2	-,007	,126	1,000	-,313	,299
		3	-,117	,127	1,000	-,424	,191
WTP_Stadium	1	2	-,168	,086	,162	-,377	,042
		3	-,511*	,113	<,001	-,784	-,238
		2	,168	,086	,162	-,042	,377
	3	1	-,343*	,116	,011	-,623	-,063
		2	,511*	,113	<,001	,238	,784
		3	,343*	,116	,011	,063	,623

Based on estimated marginal means

*. The mean difference is significant at the ,05 level.

b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.

Table 19: Repeated Measure ANOVA Output – Differences in the impact on WTP

Differences in the impact on WOM communication

Mauchly's Test of Sphericity^a

Within Subjects Effect	Measure	Mauchly's W	Approx. Chi-Square			Epsilon ^b		
			Approx. Chi-Square	df	Sig.	Greenhouse-Geisser	Huynh-Feldt	Lower-bound
Scenario	WOM_Recommendation	,942	7,997	2	,018	,946	,959	,500
	WOM_Defence	,960	5,575	2	,062	,961	,975	,500

Tests the null hypothesis that the error covariance matrix of the orthonormalized transformed dependent variables is proportional to an identity matrix.

a. Design: Intercept
Within Subjects Design: Scenario

b. May be used to adjust the degrees of freedom for the averaged tests of significance. Corrected tests are displayed in the Tests of Within-Subjects Effects table.

Tests of Within-Subjects Effects

Multivariate^{a,b}

Within Subjects Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	
Scenario	Pillai's Trace	,086	6,128	4,000	544,000	<,001	,043
	Wilks' Lambda	,915	6,189 ^c	4,000	542,000	<,001	,044
	Hotelling's Trace	,093	6,250	4,000	540,000	<,001	,044
	Roy's Largest Root	,082	11,199 ^d	2,000	272,000	<,001	,076

a. Design: Intercept
Within Subjects Design: Scenario

b. Tests are based on averaged variables.

c. Exact statistic

d. The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level.

Univariate Tests

Source	Measure		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared		
Scenario	WOM_Recommendation	Sphericity Assumed	12,998	2	6,499	8,973	<,001	,062		
		Greenhouse-Geisser	12,998	1,891	6,873	8,973	<,001	,062		
		Huynh-Feldt	12,998	1,917	6,780	8,973	<,001	,062		
		Lower-bound	12,998	1,000	12,998	8,973	,003	,062		
		WOM_Defence	Sphericity Assumed	16,910	2	8,455	10,217	<,001	,070	
			Greenhouse-Geisser	16,910	1,922	8,797	10,217	<,001	,070	
	Huynh-Feldt		16,910	1,949	8,675	10,217	<,001	,070		
	Lower-bound		16,910	1,000	16,910	10,217	,002	,070		
	Error(Scenario)		WOM_Recommendation	Sphericity Assumed	197,002	272	,724			
				Greenhouse-Geisser	197,002	257,207	,766			
		Huynh-Feldt		197,002	260,724	,756				
		Lower-bound		197,002	136,000	1,449				
WOM_Defence		Sphericity Assumed	225,090	272	,828					
		Greenhouse-Geisser	225,090	261,424	,861					

Pairwise Comparisons

Measure	(I) Scenario	(J) Scenario	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig. ^b	95% Confidence Interval for Difference ^b	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
WOM_Recommendation	1	2	-,036	,090	1,000	-,255	,182
		3	-,394 [*]	,111	,002	-,663	-,126
		2	,036	,090	1,000	-,182	,255
	2	3	-,358 [*]	,107	,003	-,616	-,099
		1	,394 [*]	,111	,002	,126	,663
		2	,358 [*]	,107	,003	,099	,616
WOM_Defence	1	2	,109	,100	,823	-,132	,351
		3	-,365 [*]	,119	,008	-,653	-,077
		2	-,109	,100	,823	-,351	,132
	2	3	-,474 [*]	,110	<,001	-,742	-,207
		1	,365 [*]	,119	,008	,077	,653
		2	,474 [*]	,110	<,001	,207	,742

Based on estimated marginal means

*. The mean difference is significant at the ,05 level.

b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.

Table 20: Repeated Measure ANOVA Output - Differences in impact on WOM communication

DATA RQ5

Moderation effects on Fans' Trust

Mauchly's Test of Sphericity^a

Within Subjects Effect	Measure	Mauchly's W	Approx. Chi-Square	df	Sig.	Greenhouse-Geisser	Epsilon ^b	Lower-bound
Scenario	Trust_General	,956	5,764	2	,056	,958	1,000	,500
	Trust_Management	,937	8,384	2	,015	,940	1,000	,500

Tests the null hypothesis that the error covariance matrix of the orthonormalized transformed dependent variables is proportional to an identity matrix.

a. Design: Intercept + Q9_Age + Q8_Member + Q9_Age * Q8_Member
Within Subjects Design: Scenario

b. May be used to adjust the degrees of freedom for the averaged tests of significance. Corrected tests are displayed in the Tests of Within-Subjects Effects table.

Tests of Within-Subjects Effects

Multivariate^{a,b}

Within Subjects Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Scenario	Pillai's Trace	,130	8,981	4,000	516,000	<.,001	,065
	Wilks' Lambda	,872	9,111 ^c	4,000	514,000	<.,001	,066
	Hotelling's Trace	,144	9,240	4,000	512,000	<.,001	,067
	Roy's Largest Root	,125	16,081 ^d	2,000	258,000	<.,001	,111
Scenario * Q9_Age	Pillai's Trace	,096	2,177	12,000	516,000	,012	,048
	Wilks' Lambda	,904	2,221 ^c	12,000	514,000	,010	,049
	Hotelling's Trace	,106	2,264	12,000	512,000	,008	,050
	Roy's Largest Root	,104	4,454 ^d	6,000	258,000	<.,001	,094
Scenario * Q8_Member	Pillai's Trace	,091	6,157	4,000	516,000	<.,001	,046
	Wilks' Lambda	,909	6,286 ^c	4,000	514,000	<.,001	,047
	Hotelling's Trace	,100	6,413	4,000	512,000	<.,001	,048
	Roy's Largest Root	,100	12,904 ^d	2,000	258,000	<.,001	,091
Scenario * Q9_Age * Q8_Member	Pillai's Trace	,024	,514	12,000	516,000	,906	,012
	Wilks' Lambda	,977	,512 ^c	12,000	514,000	,907	,012
	Hotelling's Trace	,024	,510	12,000	512,000	,909	,012
	Roy's Largest Root	,013	,575 ^d	6,000	258,000	,750	,013

a. Design: Intercept + Q9_Age + Q8_Member + Q9_Age * Q8_Member
Within Subjects Design: Scenario

b. Tests are based on averaged variables.

c. Exact statistic

d. The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level.

Table 21: Mixed Design MANOVA Output - Fan trust

How old are you?	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
16-28 years	3,08	1,313	3,21	1,291	3,09	1,510
29-44 years	3,33	1,007	3,17	0,963	3,67	1,274
45-60 years	3,00	0,994	3,00	1,196	3,00	1,185
60+ years	3,33	1,155	2,70	1,179	3,43	1,331
Total	3,31	1,173	3,07	1,198	3,45	1,388

Are you an official member of this club?	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
Yes	3,49	1,120	3,07	1,185	3,78	1,289
No	3,13	0,994	3,07	1,203	3,13	1,413
Total	3,31	1,173	3,07	1,198	3,45	1,388

Table 22: Mean Comparison - Trust Item 1 (Scenarios x Age + Scenarios x Club Membership)

How old are you?	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
16-28 years	3,40	1,335	3,34	1,300	3,15	1,486
29-44 years	3,58	1,139	3,21	1,062	3,83	1,404
45-60 years	3,77	1,165	2,90	1,185	3,93	1,202
60+ years	3,73	1,202	3,00	1,270	3,57	1,431
Total	3,58	1,235	3,10	1,238	3,53	1,425

Are you an official member of this club?	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
Yes	3,82	1,141	3,00	1,255	3,93	1,329
No	3,36	1,062	3,20	1,223	3,16	1,421
Total	3,58	1,235	3,10	1,238	3,53	1,425

Table 23: Mean Comparison - Trust Item 2 (Scenarios x Age + Scenarios x Club Membership)

Moderation effects on WTP

Mauchly's Test of Sphericity^a

Within Subjects Effect	Measure	Mauchly's W	Approx. Chi-Square	df	Sig.	Epsilon ^b		
						Greenhouse-Geisser	Huynh-Feldt	Lower-bound
Scenario	WTP_Merchandise	,893	14,555	2	<,001	,903	,965	,500
	WTP_Jersey	,969	4,032	2	,133	,970	1,000	,500
	WTP_Stadium	,880	16,426	2	<,001	,893	,953	,500

Tests the null hypothesis that the error covariance matrix of the orthonormalized transformed dependent variables is proportional to an identity matrix.

a. Design: Intercept + Q9_Age + Q8_Member + Q9_Age * Q8_Member
Within Subjects Design: Scenario

b. May be used to adjust the degrees of freedom for the averaged tests of significance. Corrected tests are displayed in the Tests of Within-Subjects Effects table.

Tests of Within-Subjects Effects

Multivariate^{a,b}

Within Subjects Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Scenario	Pillai's Trace	,122	5,585	6,000	514,000	<,001	,061
	Wilks' Lambda	,880	5,627 ^c	6,000	512,000	<,001	,062
	Hotelling's Trace	,133	5,668	6,000	510,000	<,001	,063
	Roy's Largest Root	,106	9,122 ^d	3,000	257,000	<,001	,096
Scenario * Q9_Age	Pillai's Trace	,139	2,082	18,000	774,000	,005	,046
	Wilks' Lambda	,867	2,083	18,000	724,563	,005	,046
	Hotelling's Trace	,147	2,081	18,000	764,000	,005	,047
	Roy's Largest Root	,079	3,381 ^d	6,000	258,000	,003	,073
Scenario * Q8_Member	Pillai's Trace	,075	3,353	6,000	514,000	,003	,038
	Wilks' Lambda	,925	3,397 ^c	6,000	512,000	,003	,038
	Hotelling's Trace	,081	3,441	6,000	510,000	,002	,039
	Roy's Largest Root	,078	6,675 ^d	3,000	257,000	<,001	,072
Scenario * Q9_Age * Q8_Member	Pillai's Trace	,041	,594	18,000	774,000	,905	,014
	Wilks' Lambda	,959	,594	18,000	724,563	,905	,014
	Hotelling's Trace	,042	,594	18,000	764,000	,905	,014
	Roy's Largest Root	,033	1,431 ^d	6,000	258,000	,203	,032

a. Design: Intercept + Q9_Age + Q8_Member + Q9_Age * Q8_Member
Within Subjects Design: Scenario

b. Tests are based on averaged variables.

c. Exact statistic

d. The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level.

Table 24: Mixed Design MANOVA Output - WTP

		Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship influences my willingness to buy official club merchandise.	Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship influences my willingness to buy official club merchandise.	Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship influences my willingness to buy official club merchandise.	Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship influences my willingness to buy official club merchandise.	Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship influences my willingness to buy official club merchandise.	Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship influences my willingness to buy official club merchandise.
How old are you?							
16–28 years	Mean	2,85	3,02	2,96			
	N	53	53	53			
	Std. Deviation	1,364	1,474	1,427			
29–44 years	Mean	3,13	3,17	3,42			
	N	24	24	24			
	Std. Deviation	1,116	1,204	1,283			
45–60 years	Mean	3,03	2,80	3,67			
	N	30	30	30			
	Std. Deviation	1,129	1,243	1,093			
60+ years	Mean	2,80	2,60	3,23			
	N	30	30	30			
	Std. Deviation	1,157	1,102	1,278			
Total	Mean	2,93	2,91	3,26			
	N	137	137	137			
	Std. Deviation	1,223	1,305	1,317			
Are you an official member of this club?							
Yes	Mean	2,97	2,70	3,49			
	N	67	67	67			
	Std. Deviation	1,180	1,303	1,211			
No	Mean	2,89	3,10	3,03			
	N	70	70	70			
	Std. Deviation	1,269	1,287	1,383			
Total	Mean	2,93	2,91	3,26			
	N	137	137	137			
	Std. Deviation	1,223	1,305	1,317			

Table 25: Mean Comparison - WTP Item 1 (Scenarios x Age + Scenarios x Club Membership)

How old are you?		Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – I would consider buying a jersey with this sponsor's logo on it.	Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – I would consider buying a jersey with this sponsor's logo on it.	Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – I would consider buying a jersey with this sponsor's logo on it.	Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – I would consider buying a jersey with this sponsor's logo on it.	Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – I would consider buying a jersey with this sponsor's logo on it.
16–28 years	Mean	2,60	2,25	2,53		
	N	53	53	53		
	Std. Deviation	1,230	1,357	1,295		
29–44 years	Mean	2,25	2,29	2,17		
	N	24	24	24		
	Std. Deviation	,897	,859	1,274		
45–60 years	Mean	1,80	2,53	1,90		
	N	30	30	30		
	Std. Deviation	,997	1,196	1,322		
60+ years	Mean	1,77	2,13	1,83		
	N	30	30	30		
	Std. Deviation	,858	,937	1,117		
Total	Mean	2,18	2,29	2,18		
	N	137	137	137		
	Std. Deviation	1,106	1,158	1,283		

Are you an official member of this club?		Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – I would consider buying a jersey with this sponsor's logo on it.	Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – I would consider buying a jersey with this sponsor's logo on it.	Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – I would consider buying a jersey with this sponsor's logo on it.
Yes	Mean	2,07	2,34	2,06
	N	67	67	67
	Std. Deviation	1,078	1,200	1,254
No	Mean	2,29	2,24	2,29
	N	70	70	70
	Std. Deviation	1,131	1,122	1,309
Total	Mean	2,18	2,29	2,18
	N	137	137	137
	Std. Deviation	1,106	1,158	1,283

Table 26: Mean Comparison - WTP Item 2 (Scenarios x Age + Scenarios x Club Membership)

How old are you?		Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship influences whether I would want to attend games at the stadium.	Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship influences whether I would want to attend games at the stadium.	Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship influences whether I would want to attend games at the stadium.	Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship influences whether I would want to attend games at the stadium.	Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship influences whether I would want to attend games at the stadium.
16–28 years	Mean	1,87	2,13	2,38		
	N	53	53	53		
	Std. Deviation	1,110	1,194	1,319		
29–44 years	Mean	2,21	2,58	2,96		
	N	24	24	24		
	Std. Deviation	1,021	1,060	1,233		
45–60 years	Mean	2,33	2,37	3,17		
	N	30	30	30		
	Std. Deviation	,884	1,033	1,117		
60+ years	Mean	2,43	2,40	2,43		
	N	30	30	30		
	Std. Deviation	1,040	1,037	1,073		
Total	Mean	2,15	2,32	2,66		
	N	137	137	137		
	Std. Deviation	1,049	1,104	1,244		

Are you an official member of this club?		Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship influences whether I would want to attend games at the stadium.	Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship influences whether I would want to attend games at the stadium.	Please answer the following questions based on how you would personally feel if your own club entered into such a sponsorship agreement. – Such sponsorship influences whether I would want to attend games at the stadium.
Yes	Mean	2,18	2,09	2,85
	N	67	67	67
	Std. Deviation	1,086	1,055	1,234
No	Mean	2,13	2,54	2,49
	N	70	70	70
	Std. Deviation	1,020	1,112	1,236
Total	Mean	2,15	2,32	2,66
	N	137	137	137
	Std. Deviation	1,049	1,104	1,244

Table 27: Mean Comparison - WTP Item 3 (Scenarios x Age + Scenarios x Club Membership)

Moderation effects on WOM communication

Mauchly's Test of Sphericity^a

Within Subjects Effect	Measure	Mauchly's W	Approx. Chi-Square	df	Sig.	Greenhouse-Geisser	Epsilon ^b	Lower-bound
Scenario	WOM_Recommendation	,908	12,360	2	,002	,916	,979	,500
	WOM_Defence	,949	6,766	2	,034	,951	1,000	,500

Tests the null hypothesis that the error covariance matrix of the orthonormalized transformed dependent variables is proportional to an identity matrix.

a. Design: Intercept + Q9_Age + Q8_Member + Q9_Age * Q8_Member
Within Subjects Design: Scenario

b. May be used to adjust the degrees of freedom for the averaged tests of significance. Corrected tests are displayed in the Tests of Within-Subjects Effects table.

Tests of Within-Subjects Effects

Multivariate^{a,b}

Within Subjects Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	
Scenario	Pillai's Trace	,102	6,907	4,000	516,000	<,001	,051
	Wilks' Lambda	,899	7,048 ^c	4,000	514,000	<,001	,052
	Hotelling's Trace	,112	7,189	4,000	512,000	<,001	,053
	Roy's Largest Root	,109	14,030 ^d	2,000	258,000	<,001	,098
Scenario * Q9_Age	Pillai's Trace	,116	2,643	12,000	516,000	,002	,058
	Wilks' Lambda	,887	2,637 ^c	12,000	514,000	,002	,058
	Hotelling's Trace	,123	2,631	12,000	512,000	,002	,058
	Roy's Largest Root	,076	3,282 ^d	6,000	258,000	,004	,071
Scenario * Q8_Member	Pillai's Trace	,064	4,274	4,000	516,000	,002	,032
	Wilks' Lambda	,936	4,319 ^c	4,000	514,000	,002	,033
	Hotelling's Trace	,068	4,363	4,000	512,000	,002	,033
	Roy's Largest Root	,066	8,457 ^d	2,000	258,000	<,001	,062
Scenario * Q9_Age * Q8_Member	Pillai's Trace	,043	,942	12,000	516,000	,505	,021
	Wilks' Lambda	,957	,942 ^c	12,000	514,000	,504	,022
	Hotelling's Trace	,044	,942	12,000	512,000	,504	,022
	Roy's Largest Root	,036	1,547 ^d	6,000	258,000	,163	,035

a. Design: Intercept + Q9_Age + Q8_Member + Q9_Age * Q8_Member
Within Subjects Design: Scenario

b. Tests are based on averaged variables.

c. Exact statistic

d. The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance level.

Table 28: Mixed Design MANOVA Output - WOM

How old are you?	Mean	2,34	2,66	2,81
16-28 years	N	53	53	53
	Std. Deviation	1,315	1,329	1,345
29-44 years	Mean	2,75	2,96	3,12
	N	24	24	24
	Std. Deviation	1,113	1,083	1,296
45-60 years	Mean	3,17	2,93	3,63
	N	30	30	30
	Std. Deviation	1,053	,944	,964
60+ years	Mean	2,73	2,40	2,93
	N	30	30	30
	Std. Deviation	1,143	1,037	1,081
Total	Mean	2,68	2,72	3,07
	N	137	137	137
	Std. Deviation	1,218	1,156	1,235

Are you an official member of this club?	Mean	2,79	2,64	3,28
Yes	N	67	67	67
	Std. Deviation	1,262	1,164	1,241
No	Mean	2,57	2,79	2,87
	N	70	70	70
	Std. Deviation	1,174	1,153	1,203
Total	Mean	2,68	2,72	3,07
	N	137	137	137
	Std. Deviation	1,218	1,156	1,235

Table 29: Mean Comparison - WOM Item 1 (Scenarios x Age + Scenarios x Club Membership)

How old are you?	Mean	2,75	2,70	2,89
16-28 years	N	53	53	53
	Std. Deviation	1,371	1,367	1,325
29-44 years	Mean	3,29	3,21	3,37
	N	24	24	24
	Std. Deviation	1,160	1,021	1,408
45-60 years	Mean	3,27	3,03	4,03
	N	30	30	30
	Std. Deviation	1,081	,850	1,098
60+ years	Mean	2,90	2,80	3,50
	N	30	30	30
	Std. Deviation	1,322	1,064	1,358
Total	Mean	2,99	2,88	3,36
	N	137	137	137
	Std. Deviation	1,275	1,151	1,360

Are you an official member of this club?	Mean	3,07	2,69	3,54
Yes	N	67	67	67
	Std. Deviation	1,295	1,196	1,374
No	Mean	2,91	3,07	3,19
	N	70	70	70
	Std. Deviation	1,260	1,081	1,333
Total	Mean	2,99	2,88	3,36
	N	137	137	137
	Std. Deviation	1,275	1,151	1,360

Table 30: Mean Comparison - WOM Item 2 (Scenarios x Age + Scenarios x Club Membership)

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