

The Effectiveness of Sponsorship Program Analysis at the Persip Football Club in Building Brand Awareness of Pekalongan University

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ABSTRACT

Sponsorship is showing tremendous growth and is becoming a popular marketing communication to increase brand awareness. The purpose of this study is to analyze how the sponsorship carried out by Pekalongan University can affect UNIKAL brand awareness itself. This research was conducted on the sponsor of a leading football club in the city of Pekalongan which became the champion of the Central Java league 3 twice in a row, namely PERSIP. The research was conducted in a qualitative way using PLS-SEM for simple regression. This research has a Technology Uptake Rate of 3. The results of sponsorship research on PERSIP football clubs are an effective strategy in building unique and strong brand awareness among football fans. This success is supported by the loyalty and strong identification of fans towards the sponsoring brand, which in turn strengthens the brand image and increases consumer loyalty to the products or services offered by the sponsoring company.

Keywords: sponsorship; Brand Awareness; UNIKAL; PERSIP

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INTRODUCTION

Seeing the increasingly fierce condition of university competition today, universities continue to compete to create a strong brand to have competitiveness to beat their competitors. Not stopping there, universities must also develop strategies to communicate with consumers so that the brands they carry are able to stick in the memories and minds of consumers with the result being able to achieve high brand awareness. The University of Pekalongan chose to use sponsorship in carrying out marketing communication activities by spending large investments, of course, because there are clear goals.

The concept of sponsorship itself explains that the sponsor does not voluntarily offer support to the event organizer. There are opportunities and objective that become the motive of sponsors in sponsoring an event. It is impossible for a company to carry out a marketing activity such as the granting of sponsorship without a clear purpose. According to Noor (2009) explain that generally, sponsors carry out



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sponsorship programs to increasing brand awareness, increasing brand image, trying to launch a new product in the market, even to the point of increasing sales. D'Astous and Bitz (1995) define sponsorship by linking it to the communication process and its purpose, namely, sponsorship is part of communication tools where companies provide financial support to sports, music, social and other activities so that these activities can carry out their activities well and at the same time the company will benefit in the form of awareness and image from its consumers.

Sponsorship is an era of the latest marketing method to increase public awareness of a product (Brand Awareness). Brand awareness or brand awareness is a person's ability to recognize and recall a brand as part of a particular product and service (Keller, 2003). Haryanto & Mirzanti (2019) also revealed that the core issue of marketing lies in brand awareness. Brand is a sign that defines the company and people recognize the products. This awareness is the company's initial stage in penetrating the market (Saputra, 2019). The better the brand is recognized by the public, the more likely the product is in demand.

Sponsorship cooperation with football clubs today is being intensively carried out by many companies because it is considered very effective in reaching the wider community. This is in line with the purpose of the implementation of Unikal's sponsorship collaboration with Persip Pekalongan which is indeed to build brand awareness or Brand Awareness. This activity aims to benefit both parties so that later it can increase product exposure, company image, and Brand Awareness. Prastya, (2015) said that formulating a branding strategy, a sports club needs to determine the core values they want to communicate to the public. This can include achievements, club history, individual figures who are the mainstay of the club (e.g. star players, coaches with certain characteristics), supporter community base, youth coaching programs, and the relationship between the values of the club's hometown and club identity. Branding is basically the activity of communicating self-identity. This goal is supported by research conducted by Salma (2017) that 88.7% of sponsorships affect Brand Awareness.

University of Pekalongan (Unikal) is the object of research because efforts to do sponsorship in football clubs are one of the new tools in promotional media. The sponsorship carried out by the University of Pekalongan (Unikal) to Persip Pekalongan is expected to increase Brand Awareness in the community, seeing fans of the club known to have a very large nickname Kalong Mania. Although the cost of sports sponsorship is quite high, it has the benefit of reaching a large audience and experiencing extensive media coverage to reach a larger target audience (Egan, 2007).

PERSIP (Indonesian Football Association Pekalongan) is an Indonesian football club based in Pekalongan City. The team competes in Liga 3. Persip Pekalongan was established on August 12, 1934. However, Persip was recorded to have participated in the PSSI competition in 1951. Currently, Persip Pekalongan has won the Liga 3 Central Java champion. With massive Persip Pekalongan supporters, whose can be invited to get to know Unikal more closely and the significance of Unikal in supporting the world of football. Based on the above background, the purpose of the research to be achieved is to find out and analyze the effectiveness of the sponsorship program at the Pekalongan persip club in building Brand Awareness of Pekalongan University.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sponsorship

Sponsorship is an activity where a company seeks to establish a sponsorship relationship related to a particular event by displaying company attributes including messages contained in advertisements in exchange for financial support (Belch & Belch, 2018). One of the basic ideas behind sponsorship is a company's effort to improve a company's brand image by associating with the property, which is considered to bring about a change from the attributes of the sponsored image property to the sponsor's brand (Boronczyk & Breuer, 2019). According to Simoes (2015), Sponsorship is a form of brand promotion with support financial assistance from an organization, individual, or activity that connects a brand with sports, entertainment, culture, and social (public activity) activities that generate high power interest, provide reciprocity to advertise the company.

According to (Speed and Thompson 2000) three dimensions shape consumer perceptions of sponsorship, namely event factors, sponsorship factors, and sponsorship factors themselves. The determining factors in a Sponsorship according to (Terence, 2007) are concerning: 1. Image Matchup means the match of the company's image with the message to be conveyed by the company into the event sponsored by the company. 2. Target Audience Fit is the match of the target audience segmentation or connoisseurs of the event to the intended goals of the company. 3. Sponsorship Misidentification means the placement of a company label clearly in an event so that there is no misinterpretation on a sponsor. 4. Clutter is whether the event can attract public attention and cause public enthusiasm in organizing an event. 5. Complement Other Marcom (marketing communication) Elements are whether there is a match between the sponsored event and other elements contained in other marketing communications in the company. 6. Economic Viability is economy or affordability in an event held by a company

According to Duncan (2008) the goals to be achieved by a company through sponsorship strategies: First, increase Brand Awareness. Through sponsorship through an event, companies can transfer brands from the company itself to the event to increase Brand Awareness on consumers. Second, build a brand image. Can help to reposition or strengthen a brand or corporate image through certain activities by conducting sponsorship strategies. Sponsorship programs are designed by making the sponsor's brand image similar to the brand image of the event they sponsor.

Third, improve or maintain relationships. Sponsorship allows on maintaining relationships within an organization, be it among consumers or employees. Marketing relationships are an important issue in marketing communications, as they help to build consumer loyalty. In addition, events can be used as entertainment opportunities for employees, rewarding them and enabling informal interaction between employees at various levels within an organization or company. Fourth, increase sales. By becoming a sponsor in an event, of course, the brand will be presented in the event and one of the goals of sponsorship is to increase sales of the company's brand in the event. Fifth, do promotions. Through an event, the sponsor also aims to promote by not holding their event but being part of a certain event within a certain time

Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is a common goal in every promotional strategy. As mentioned by Peter & Olson (2000) that Awareness is a general purpose of communication for all promotional strategies carried out by the company. So it can be said that Brand Awareness is the first step for a consumer to get to know and know a brand which can then lead to a purchase decision.

Keller (2003) formed the dimensions of brand awareness into two, namely brand recognition and brand recall which are both levels of Brand Awareness itself. Brand recognition can be interpreted as the ability of consumers to identify or confirm their experience of a brand with certain stimuli as aid. In short, brand recognition can be described as the ability of consumers to recognize a brand, which means consumers have also been able to distinguish a brand from other brands. While brand recall relates to the ability of consumers to remember a brand from memory when given clues in the form of product categories. When consumers can categorize a brand into their product categories or know the product category of a brand, then these consumers already have Brand Awareness both because they have reached the level of brand recall. Adding to that, Keller (2003) also explained that in general consumers are easier to recognize than remember a brand. However, the difference in the need to know and remember the brand is felt during the purchase determination process. If the process of determining the purchase is carried out in a store, then brand recognition will be more dominant because at that time the brand exists physically. In contrast to processes outside the store or in circumstances where the brand is not physically present. If the process is carried out outside the store, then the consumer's need to be able to remember the brand (brand recall) has a more dominant possibility.

Brand Awareness Dimension

Keller (2003) created the dimension of brand awareness into two, namely brand recognition and brand recall, both of which are levels of Brand Awareness itself. If the purchase process is carried out at a store, brand recognition will be more dominant because there is a physical brand. If the process is carried out outside the store, the consumer's need to be able to remember the brand (brand recall) has a more dominant possibility.

Aaker (1996) describes brand awareness as something that involves two activities, namely trying to acquire brand identity and trying to associate with certain product categories through stimuli. Brand awareness is formed by the ability to associate a brand with a certain product category (linkage to its product category).

The Relationship of Sponsorship to Brand Awareness

The company certainly wants each of its products to have a strong brand in the minds of consumers. In achieving the strength of the brand, previously the brand must first gain awareness from its consumers. This is what is referred to as brand awareness as the beginning of the formation of a strong brand. The company continues to look for the right promotion tools, both for products, brands, consumers, or the company itself, in building, increasing and maintaining brand awareness of its products. Today, many companies are falling in love with using sponsorship programs on sports and the arts to increase brand awareness as Gwinner (1997) expressed in Rowley and Williams (2008) that the two important goals of sports and arts sponsorship are to increase brand awareness and to build, strengthen and change brand image. According to

Masterman (2007), since the beginning of its use as a promotional tool, namely in the 1970s, sponsorship was only seen as an advertising opportunity and corporate hospitality, now sponsorship has grown in implementation. With the development of the times, sponsorship is mostly done at an event that is considered to attract high attention.

Conceptual framework described by Speed and Thompson (2000), there is a formation of consumer attitudes after they play their role in responding to both sponsorship factors, where the two factors are sponsorship factors and sponsorship factors. This consumer attitude can be manifested into interest (attention to sponsors that will increase awareness for sponsors), favor (liking for sponsors), and use (use of sponsored products). Attention to sponsors is described as more attention given by visitors to sponsors during the event and other promotional attributes of sponsors. This indicates that attention leads to brand awareness. In addition, Cornwell et al (2001) also revealed that sponsorship carried out at an event has a positive impact on brand assets and one of the most prominent is Brand Awareness which manifests into the ability of consumers to recognize (recognize) and associate brands to their product categories (link to its product category). The effectiveness of sponsorship to increase brand awareness in new product categories is inevitable, especially when looking at the exploitative implementation of other promotional attributes, including advertising and direct selling, during events that make massive exposure to the sponsor's brand elements.

Analysis Model

The analysis model consists of two variables, namely independent variables and dependent variables where the independent variable of this study is sponsorship consisting of sponsorship factors and sponsorship factors and the dependent variable is Brand Awareness.

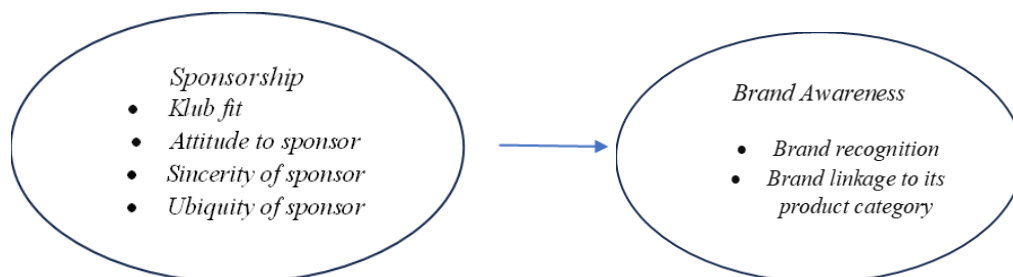


Figure 1. Research Analysis Model

METHOD

This research uses a quantitative approach to observe, collect information, process data, and present research results. The quantitative approach departs from a number of theories, concepts, hypotheses, and assumptions before collecting data. After the data is obtained from the field results, data processing is carried out which will be matched with the theory, concepts, hypotheses and assumptions applied. The data used is primary data by making observations and distributing questionnaire links. The population used is all PERSIP supporters with samples of Kalong mania, Brigata City,

Batbois, Pekalongan Raya Reckless Supporters (SNEPER). The analysis used is this using the PLS-SEM method.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Outer Model Test Output (Reliability Test)

Variabel	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Result
Sponsorship (X)	0,953	0,960	Reliable
Brand Awareness (Y)	0,934	0,944	Reliable

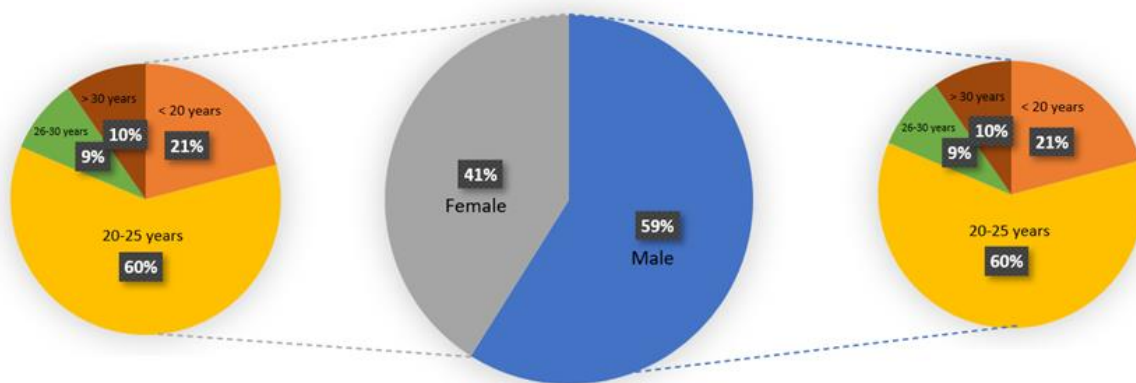
Source: Output SmartPLS 3 (2024)

Table 2. Inner Model Test Results

Inner Model	Test Criteria	Conclusion	Test Results	
			Result	Conclusion
R Square	0,25	Weak Model	0,804	Powerful Model
	0,50	Medium Model		
	0,75	Powerful Model		
Goodness of Fit	SRMR < 0,10	Model Fit	0,066	Model Fit
F Square (Effect Size)	0,02	Small/low	4,110	Big/strong
	0,15	Medium/medium		
	0,35	Big/strong		
Path Coefficients (Direct Effect)	P Values < 0,05	Significant	0,000	Significant
	P Values > 0,05	Insignificant		

Source: SmartPLS Output 3 (2024)

Dissemination of research instruments in the form of questionnaires to a of respondents who have met the criteria for *purposive sampling*. With limitations in the research process, 134 respondents were obtained. The characteristics of respondents were analyzed based on identification of gender, age, and domicile.

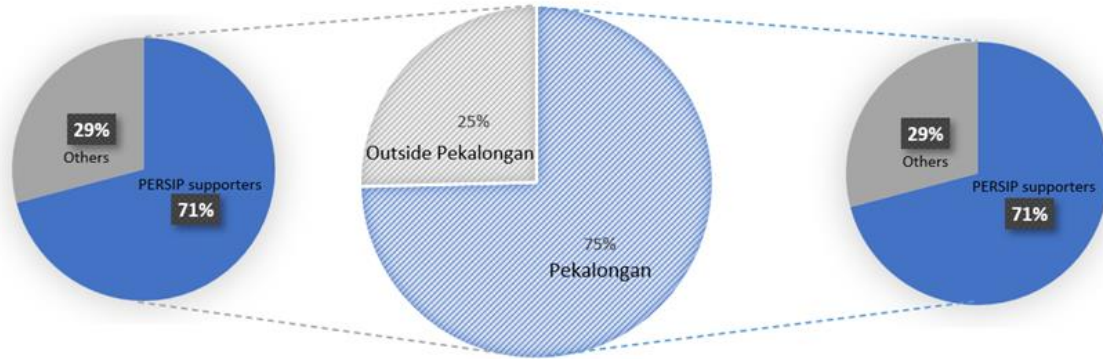


Source: Data processed (2024)

Figure 1. Characteristics of respondents by gender divided by age

Figure 2. indicates that the PERSIP football club is supported fifty-nine percent by men compared to female supporters. Both male and female supporters, each dominated by sixty percent with the age of 20 to 25 years. Explicitly, this shows that UNIKAL's *brand image* is dominated by generation Z in both male and female genders.

Figure 3. shows that supporters of the PERSIP football club predominantly come from Pekalongan at seventy-five percent, while the rest come from outside Pekalongan. If the two domiciles are lowered based on the origin of the supporters, almost the same value is obtained, which is at seventy-one percent of PERSIP supporters.



Source: Data processed (2024)

Figure 2. Characteristics of respondents based on regional origin are divided into the origin of supporters

Analysis of Respondent Responses

The analysis was conducted based on the average value and continuum line of respondents' responses from each statement in *the sponsorship and brand awareness variables*.

Table 3. Respondents' Responses

Indicator	Questionnaire	Mean	Category
"Sponsor - Event Fit"	Q1	3,38	"Agree"
	Q2	3,53	"Agree"
	Q3	3,27	"Agree"
	Rerata	3,39	"Agree"
"Attitude to Sponsor"	Q1	3,27	"Agree"
"Sincerity of Sponsor"	Q1	3,38	"Agree"
	Q2	3,38	"Agree"
	Q3	3,38	"Agree"
	Rerata	3,38	"Agree"
"Ubiquity of Sponsor"	Q1	3,53	"Agree"
	Q2	3,18	"Agree"
	Q3	3,11	"Agree"
	Rerata	3,27	"Agree"
"Brand Recognition"	Q1	3,27	"Agree"
	Q2	3,27	"Agree"
	Q3	3,11	"Agree"
	Q4	3,27	"Agree"
	Rerata	3,23	"Agree"
"Brand Linkage to Its Product Category"	Q1	3,53	"Agree"
	Q2	3,11	"Agree"
	Q3	3,11	"Agree"
	Q4	3,27	"Agree"
	Rerata	3,25	"Agree"

Source: Data processed (2024)

Based on Table 3, respondents to *sponsorship* and *brand* awareness can be seen in the following points:

1. "Sponsor - Event Fit"
Based on the results of respondents' responses, it was found that the indicator "Sponsor - Event Fit" had an average value of 3.39 and was included in the category of agree. When each statement item is analyzed, it is seen that all statement items fall into the same category of "agree", with relatively similar values. This shows that all respondents have a uniform assessment of the ability to associate a brand with the PERSIP football club.
2. "Attitude to Sponsor"
From the perspective of visitors, almost all respondents agreed that UNIKAL is a university that has a fairly good attitude as a sponsor. This can be seen from the average value of the indicator, which is 3.27 which is included in the "agree" category.
3. "Sincerity of Sponsor"
From this indicator, it can be seen that almost all respondents agree with the sincerity of UNIKAL sponsorship of the PERSIP football club. This can be seen from the high average value of each statement in the indicator, as well as the average value of the indicator which reached 3.38 included in the category of "agree". Thus, it can be interpreted that the respondent agrees with all three statements in the sponsor sincerity indicator.
4. "Ubiquity of Sponsor"
Respondents' responses to the "Ubiquity of Sponsorship" indicator on the *sponsorship* variable showed that respondents predominantly gave positive responses to sponsors' activeness in *sponsorship programs*. This can be seen from the average value of the indicator of 3.27, which is included in the category of "agree".
5. "Brand Recognition"
Respondents showed quite positive responses to the "Brand Recognition" indicator, which was reflected in the average value of the indicator of 3.23 which was included in the "agree" category. When examined further, there were three points of statements that obtained respondents' responses with the same average value. On the other hand, there was also the lowest response value of all items in this indicator, namely in assistance through logo stimulus with an average value of 3.11.
6. "Brand Linkage to Its Product Category"
From the respondents' responses, it can be seen that the indicator "Brand Linkage to Its Product Category" gets an average indicator value of 3.25, which is included in the "agree" category. Each statement item in the indicator also shows a similar assessment, namely "agree", with values that do not differ much from one another. This shows that all respondents have similar assessments regarding the ability to associate brands with PERSIP football clubs.

Significant Test

The results of the significance test to test the formulation of the hypothesis can be seen from the acquisition of the following path coefficient table.

Table 4. Path Coefficient

	Original Sample	P Values
Sponsorship → Brand Awareness	0.897	0.000

Source: Output SmartPLS 3 (2024)

Based on table 4. obtained a coefficient (original sample) of 0.897 and P Values value is $0.000 < 0.05$, meaning that sponsorship variables have a significant effect on *brand awareness*.

Coefficient of Determination (R Square)

The coefficient of determination test is intended to determine the amount of influence of the sponsorship as an independent variable toward the brand awareness as dependent variable.

Table 5. R Square Test Results

	R Square
Brand Awareness	0.804

Source: Output SmartPLS 3 (2024)

Table 5. shows an R Square value of 0.804, meaning that the influence of sponsorship on the PERSIP football club in building UNIKAL *brand awareness* is at 80.4 percent, in other words that in this study there are another 19.6 percent that *the brand awareness* variable is influenced by other variables outside this study

DISCUSSION

The results showed that the sponsorship program at the PERSIP football club was considered quite effective in building UNIKAL's brand awareness. This result is in line with research by Karo Karo & Firstyana (2021) and Augusta et al., (2023) and in line with Chebli & Gharbi's (2014) statement that sponsorship programs are one of the most effective forms of marketing in increasing image and brand awareness. By being involved in sponsorship activities, UNIKAL managed to reach a wide audience, especially enthusiastic football fans. Based on the results of respondents' responses to sponsorship indicators, it can be seen that almost all respondents gave positive responses to UNIKAL involvement in the PERSIP football club.

According to this research data, it can be seen that indicators related to sponsorship such as "Sponsor - Event Fit", "Attitude to Sponsor", "Sincerity of Sponsor", "Ubiquity of Sponsor", "Brand Recognition", and "Brand Linkage to Its Product Category" received quite positive responses from respondents. This illustrates that sponsorship of the PERSIP football club in building UNIKAL brand awareness can be said to be successful and has created a positive perception of UNIKAL among football fans.

Unique and strong brand awareness is formed through this sponsorship activity because of the emotional connection between UNIKAL and the PERSIP football club whose is loved by their fans. UNIKAL involvement in club activities, such as promotions at stadiums, logos on players' uniforms, or attendance at official club activities, can help create top of mind awareness and strong brand recall among target audiences. Thus, sponsorship of PERSIP football clubs is an effective strategy on build unique and strong brand awareness among football fans. Their success is supported by the loyalty and strong identification of fans towards the sponsoring brand, which in turn

strengthens the brand image and increases consumer loyalty to the products or services offered by the sponsoring company.

CONCLUSION

Positive perception of UNIKAL brand awareness can be built by becoming a sponsor at the PERSIP club. PERSIP Club has many supporters, most of them are school-age teenagers so it can be a promotion event for them to continue their study at UNIKAL. A strong brand image for UNIKAL has been formed by becoming a sponsor of PERSIP. UNIKAL has succeeded in reaching the audience of football fans in all aspects

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