

SPONSORSHIP EFFECTIVENESS THROUGH BRAND RECALL: A SURVEY OF BGSU
ATHLETICS

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A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate College of Bowling Green
State University in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

August 2024

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ABSTRACT

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Brand recall is a significant indicator used to evaluate the effectiveness of sponsorships because it pertains to individuals' capacity to remember and establish a connection between sponsors' brands and the sports program. This study explores the value of sponsorship through brand recall, focusing on Bowling Green State University (BGSU) Athletics. This research examines the relationship between fan involvement, brand recall, and purchase intentions. The objectives were to analyze how fan involvement with BGSU Athletics influences attitudes toward the program and sponsors, to assess if a positive attitude toward sponsors influences purchase intentions, and to investigate the influence of fan involvement on brand recall of sponsors.

A quantitative research design was employed, utilizing a structured questionnaire to collect data from 249 participants who were BGSU athletics fans and attendees of various sporting events. The data analysis was conducted using bivariate correlation and multivariate analysis through IBM SPSS. Pie charts and bar charts were used to display the descriptive statistics.

The findings revealed a positive relationship between the extent of fan involvement in BGSU Athletics and attitude towards sponsors. Additionally, the study found that a positive attitude towards sponsors among BGSU Athletics fans significantly influences their purchase intentions. However, a negative relationship was observed between fan involvement and brand recall of sponsors, suggesting that highly involved fans may focus more on the event itself rather than sponsors advertisements. These results contribute to the understanding of sponsorship

dynamics in collegiate athletics and provide practical insights for stakeholders aiming to enhance the value of sponsorship investments.

For my family, whose unwavering support and encouragement have been my guiding light throughout this journey, you are the reason I'm here. Savor The Moment!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to express my sincere gratitude to my thesis advisor and committee chair, Dr Sungho Cho, for his invaluable guidance, support, and encouragement throughout this challenging yet rewarding journey. I also extend my heartfelt thanks to member of my thesis committee, Dr Ray Schneider, for his insightful comments and suggestions, which have significantly improved the quality of this thesis. My thesis journey would be incomplete without the acknowledgment of Dr. Lynn Darby, who was instrumental in picking my thesis topic.

I am also deeply thankful to my family for their unwavering belief in me and endless love and support. Additionally, I extend my appreciation to all the participants who generously contributed their time and insights to this research.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Within the ever-changing and highly competitive realm of sport marketing, sponsorships have evolved as a crucial strategic approach for companies to augment brand recognition and establish connections with their target audiences, (Tessa, 2023). Evaluating sponsorships' efficacy frequently involves utilizing diverse measures, wherein brand recall assumes a pivotal role. The ability of fans to recall and establish connections between sponsors and their preferred sport teams not only serve as a measure of marketing communication but also highlights the significant influence of sports on consumer behavior, (Keller, 1993). Brand recall is a significant indicator used to evaluate the efficiency of sponsorships (Aaker, 1996). because it pertains to individuals' capacity to remember and establish a connection between sponsors' brands and the sport programs. Brand recall is important for sponsors since it directly influences consumer purchase patterns and brand loyalty. In commercialized collegiate sports, a robust brand recall can generate heightened levels of fan engagement, attendance, and sponsorship revenues, significantly contributing to the athletic department's commercial success.

The symbiotic relationship between sport organizations and corporate sponsors is complex and multifaceted. Sponsors invest significant resources in partnerships with sport teams, hoping to capitalize on the unparalleled exposure and emotional connections that sports can offer. Conversely, sport organizations rely heavily on sponsorship revenue to support operations and provide fans with memorable experiences. This mutually beneficial exchange hinges on the ability of sponsors to effectively communicate their brand message to fans and, in turn, fans' capacity to recall and engage with those brands. Like many other collegiate sport programs, BGSU Athletics regularly enters into sponsorship arrangements with corporate partners, providing a valuable platform for promoting corporate brands and critical financial assistance for

the athletic department. Naming rights, signage, product placement, and promotional activities are some examples designed to increase brand awareness of sponsoring organizations.

Many in the advertising industry see sponsorship as a viable alternative to more conventional forms of marketing (Lardinoit & Derbaix, 2001). Boshoff and Gerber (2008) defined sponsorship as a relationship between a sponsor (such as a company) and a property (such as a team or a venue). Sponsors pay fee or provide goods and services to get their name or association with certain athletes or sports events known to the public. Sponsorship can also be putting resources (like money or physical goods) into a person, action, or event in exchange for the chance to talk about that person, action, or event. In sports, sponsorship has become an integral part of the day-to-day running of sporting event. Companies pay a considerable fee to secure a sponsorship slot at major sporting events (Dhurup et al., 2011). However, despite the substantial investments made by sponsors and the critical role of brand recall in the sponsorship activation, there remains a gap in the academic literature regarding the specific factors and strategies contributing to effective brand recall in the context of collegiate athletics. This research aims to bridge this gap by conducting an analysis of sponsorship effectiveness by measuring brand recall of sponsors at BGSU athletic events, shedding light on the practices that would enhance the value of sponsorship agreements for both sponsors and the athletic program.

Research Objectives

The primary aims of the proposed investigation are delineated as following:

- To investigate the extent of fan involvement in BGSU Athletics and its impact on the attitude towards the BGSU Athletics program and the attitude towards sponsors.
- To investigate whether a positive attitude toward sponsors among BGSU Athletics fans positively influences their purchase intention.

- To examine the influence of fan involvement with BGSU Athletics on the brand recall of sponsors associated with BGSU Athletics program.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Sponsorship Definition and Growth

Sponsorship is a business practice in which a company provides financial support for a program or event, (Mason, 2005). In exchange for this support, the sponsoring company can include promotional material within and around the program or event. Companies interact with consumers by being a part of their experience through sponsorship, brand placement, ambient marketing, social media, and other integrative tactics. In other words, sponsorship is a way to promote a product by linking it to something that many people are interested in, like a sports game, a concert, or a party (Ibrahim, 2014). It is a commercial transaction in which one party allows another to leverage an association with a specific audience in exchange for monetary funds, services, or resources (Barbu et al., 2019). Another way to describe sponsorship is a combination of public relations, aiming for credibility, and advertising, to disseminate persuasive messages created by or in collaboration with another entity.

Corporate sponsorship has significantly expanded to serve as a substantial promotional effort. An instance of this can be observed in the United Kingdom, where the outlay on sponsorship escalated from 4 million dollars in 1970 to 107.5 million dollars in 1997 (Mason, 2005). Similarly, there was a notable rise in sponsorship expenses within the United States, which escalated from 850 million dollars in 1985 to 8.7 billion dollars in 2000. According to Kinney et al (2008), some companies now use their sponsorship of sporting events as their primary means to communicate with their customers, because there is a wide range of positive effects associated with sport sponsorship. This is because sponsoring events is a good way for businesses to boost seasonal sales and supplement traditional advertising, (Cuneen & Hannan, 1993). Sponsorship used to be seen as a short-term event-specific advertising practice, but it is

now seen as a means to secure a long-term brand exposure and build good consumer relationships (Keller, 2007). Sponsorship mainly aims at building brand equity rather than creating immediate on-site sales (Meenaghan & O'Sullivan, 2013). Companies that use sponsorship hope to raise brand awareness, improve their public image, and attract new customers by using the advertising platform (Meenaghan & Shipley, 1999). Recently, sport sponsorship has become a global communication platform, aiding relationship building and enhancing consumer experiences worldwide (Cornwell & Kwak, 2015).

Sporting event organizers rely on sponsorship to generate revenues by allowing sponsors to disseminate marketing messages to the consumers who either directly participate as spectators or follow the events through various broadcast and communication outlets (Nicholls et al., 1999). For example, corporate sponsorship agreements accounted for 34% of the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) reported income of more than US\$400 million between 2001 and 2004 (Papadimitriou & Apostolopoulou, 2009). In 2018, sports sponsorship spending around the world hit a record high of \$65.8 billion (Venturoli, 2019). The NFL and its 32 teams garnered over \$1.47 billion in sponsorships during the 2019-20 season, (IEG, 2021). Historically, NFL's annual sponsorship revenue growth has been 4-6%. In the 2020-21 season, the NBA and its 30 teams also revealed notable sponsorship revenue, with an estimated spending of \$1.46 billion, showing a 6% year-over-year growth. This earmarks a nearly 50% increase in NBA sponsorship deals since the 2017-18 season.

The vast and various forms of sports sponsorship may illustrate how the advertising practice is now integrated into sporting events, venues, teams, clubs, apparel, and equipment. It is a form of event-based communication practice that helps businesses gain exposure while supporting deserving causes that align with the company's values, or even specific individual

stakeholders. In addition, it can also serve as a critical source of funding for any sporting event, whether it is for the organizer, the athletes, the clubs, or any other sport entities.

Objectives of Sponsorship

Sponsorship is frequently utilized to leverage brand equity and purchase decisions from sponsoring corporations' view. Blake et al. (2019) found that corporate sponsors may generate significant financial benefits from sport sponsorship practices. Recent research indicates that corporate sponsorship's primary motivations are enhancing brand recognition, bolstering the company's public perception, and cultivating a favorable reputation for the organization (Vale et al., 2009). This aligns with the perceived goodwill that the company seeks to generate through its sponsorship activities. Sponsorship allows companies to engage with various stakeholders in distinctive settings, including customers, suppliers, and other interested parties. As a result, individuals who engage in sponsored endeavors or unique occasions tend to possess positive sentiments towards the activity. The primary objective of sponsorship extends beyond the mere exposure of a brand to a specific target audience. Instead, it involves the transfer of image, whereby the sponsor establishes a durable schematic connection with an event, organization, or team, thereby creating an association with its image in the minds of individual customers.

Sponsorship is widely recognized for its capacity to accomplish specific goals of a corporation. These goals include increasing public awareness of the company and changing the public image of the company (Meenaghan, 1991). The acquisition of competitive advantage is sponsorship's ultimate objective (Schmid, 2017). This is because sponsorship can influence consumers' purchasing decisions by generating brand-level recognition and piquing interest, ultimately leading to the perception of distinctions between the sponsor brand and others within the same product/service category (Vale et al., 2009).

Barbu et al. (2019) further enumerated the primary goals of sponsorship: a) increasing brand recognition for a company or specific product or service, b) fostering customer loyalty and public relationships, c) altering or reinforcing target audience perceptions, d) enhancing corporate image, e) constructing a company database, f) introducing new products or services, g) attracting and motivating employees and channel members, h) generating experiential and emotional responses, and i) demonstrating dedication to the community or social causes. According to Tafa (n.d.), the primary goals of sponsorship are to enhance brand recognition, which is a crucial objective for any commercial entities, to attain media exposure through various platforms, and to improve financial performance by increasing sales.

The prevalence of numerous sponsorships in today's business landscape is often motivated by a strategic emphasis on showcasing the corporate image of the sponsoring entity to a broader and more diverse audience. This approach contrasts with the traditional method of establishing a direct and explicit connection between a brand's distinctive qualities and the recognizable characteristics of its target consumer base, as noted by Bennett (1999). This trend is largely attributed to the fact that in the modern era, many brands share notable similarities with their competitors. Consequently, the primary factor that sets apart a particular brand is its corporate brand identity, which serves as a key point of differentiation. The focus of sponsorship is directed toward external stakeholders, specifically customers. Therefore, many studies examine the influence of sponsorship on the brand perceptions of consumers (Batt et al., 2021).

Category of Sponsorship Rights

Although there are a variety of approaches to sponsorship practices, they all work toward the same end goal: to build customer loyalty to a brand, increase revenue, and provide benefits that the sponsor and the team share. The approach integrates branding, advertising, and other

endeavors directed toward the individual and corporate clientele. It encompasses communication strategies centered on celebrities and emotions, social media communication, events, and initiatives that bolster public relations and corporate social responsibility (Kończak, 2020). It enhances brand recognition, contributes to brand image development, facilitates relationship building, impacts sales, and supports attaining various organizational objectives.

There are different categories of sport sponsorship rights. These include titles and signs rights, image rights, advertising rights, ticket and hospitality package rights, marketing, sales, public relations rights, naming rights, and rights to content (Kończak, 2020). Broadcast rights are also another category of sponsorship rights.

Title and Signs Sponsorship Rights

The preeminent form of sponsorship in sports teams is the title sponsor, which may also be referred to as a naming sponsor, gold sponsor, or sometimes worldwide sponsor (Tafa, n.d.). Title Sponsorship refers to a type of sponsorship in which a company or organization provides financial support to an event or activity in exchange for the right to have their name prominently displayed in the title of the event or activity (Aicher et al., 2019). Possessing such rights not only differentiates the sponsor from other companies lacking such associations but also confers legitimacy upon their actions, demonstrating their ability to effectively communicate through the sponsored entities (Kończak, 2020). The advantages that a sponsor acquires through this set of sponsorship rights include the transfer of image, continual expansion of brand recognition, collaborative identification of both sponsor and sponsored parties, the potential to establish a shared visual identity, differentiation from other non-entitled entities, enhancement of sponsor's legitimacy, and the opportunity for exclusive placement of sponsor's products and services.

Facility Naming Rights

Over the years, professional sports facilities have changed names to reflect the funding sources for construction or renovation. For example, in 1973, the Buffalo Bills entered the first-ever naming rights agreement for a stadium by selling the naming rights of their newly constructed stadium to Rich Foods, Inc (Leeds et al., 2007). Ever since, the acquisition of naming rights has become a prominent type of sponsorship practice which might incur significantly elevated costs. For example, CMGI, Inc., an internet company based in Massachusetts, agreed to pay \$120 million to the New England Patriots to secure naming rights to the team's constructed stadium (Kening, 2001). In addition, Reliant Energy allocated a budget of \$300 million towards branding a collection of arenas and exposition centers, for the NFL expansion franchise in Houston (Kening, 2001). This category includes the rights to use the venue's name in communications and promotional efforts, display advertisements inside and outside the venue, hold events, and conduct promotional and sales activities at regularly scheduled gatherings (Kończak, 2020). The benefits that a sponsor receives from this category of rights are primarily: image transfer, the continuous growth of brand awareness, joint identification of the sponsor and the sponsored, the possibility of developing a common visual identification, differentiation from other companies without rights, growth of the sponsor's legitimacy, and the exclusive placement of the sponsor's products and services.

Athlete Endorsement

Companies frequently use athletes as brand endorsers because of fans' positive attachment to their favorite athletes (Carlson et al., 2008). In addition, many companies fund athletes in various sports, making the sponsored athletes the public face of the company's products. As a result, athletes now heavily rely on endorsement deals as their primary source of

income. In 2022, several high-profile athletes garnered substantial earnings through brand endorsements. For instance, L.A. Lakers player LeBron James amassed \$90 million, retired tennis star Roger Federer earned \$85 million from his brand endorsements, Tiger Woods generated \$65 million, and Cristiano Ronaldo, a prominent soccer star, earned \$55 million (Sonawane, 2023). This category encompasses the right-to-use images featuring athletes, teams, national teams, coaches, and staff members. A celebrity endorsement deal usually provides sponsoring firms with rights to complete or partial exclusivity and arrange PR session (Kończak, 2020).

Broadcasting Rights

Another type of sponsorship rights is the broadcasting rights which is a little bit different from athlete endorsement and naming rights. This is different from the above-mentioned rights because broadcasting rights are not always tied to a team or athlete, rather they are tied to the broadcasting or streaming of exclusive live sporting events to audiences. Most broadcasting rights are geared towards international or national competitions/events. Broadcasting rights or media rights refer to a contractual agreement granting a specific streaming entity the authority to broadcast a competition's official films or footage. In addition, the grant of broadcasting rights confers upon the broadcaster the power to disseminate the content to any geographical location or worldwide, in any language, and in real-time or with a time delay. The monetization of broadcasting and media rights has become a crucial revenue source in sports. The industry has experienced various advantages due to the substantial infusion of revenue from vending of broadcasting rights. For instance, The National Football League's media rights generated over four billion U.S. dollars domestically and 120 million U.S. dollars internationally in 2019 (Gough, 2021). In addition, in 2021, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) disclosed that

the sale of broadcasting rights was the primary contributor, generating \$3.1 billion (61%) of the organization's revenue, (IOC Annual Report, 2021). The revenue obtained from broadcasting rights in the Americas amounted to \$1.6 billion, while the corresponding figures for Asia, Europe, Oceania, and Africa were \$842.5 million, \$606 million, \$77.6 million, and \$17.4 million, respectively (Reindel, 2022). The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) derives substantial financial gains from its contractual arrangements with CBS and Turner Broadcasting System Inc. for television and licensing rights (Gough, 2023). This agreement spans a period of seventeen years, from 2010 to 2027. As a result, the NCAA garnered 870 million U.S. dollars in revenue from payments for television broadcasts and licensing rights during the 2022 fiscal year. In addition, in 2022, Formula One (F1) agreed to extend its media rights contract with ESPN until 2025, at an estimated annual cost of \$75-90 million for the rights (Ourand et al., 2008). In 2017 and 2018, the U.S. Open generated significant revenue, with broadcasting contributing a substantial portion of the total earnings. Specifically, in 2017, the tournament generated \$335 million, with broadcasting accounting for \$120 million, representing 36% of the total revenue (Minassian, 2018). Similarly, in 2018, broadcasting contributed \$120 million, 34% of the \$350 million revenue generated for the U.S. Open.

Theoretical Framework

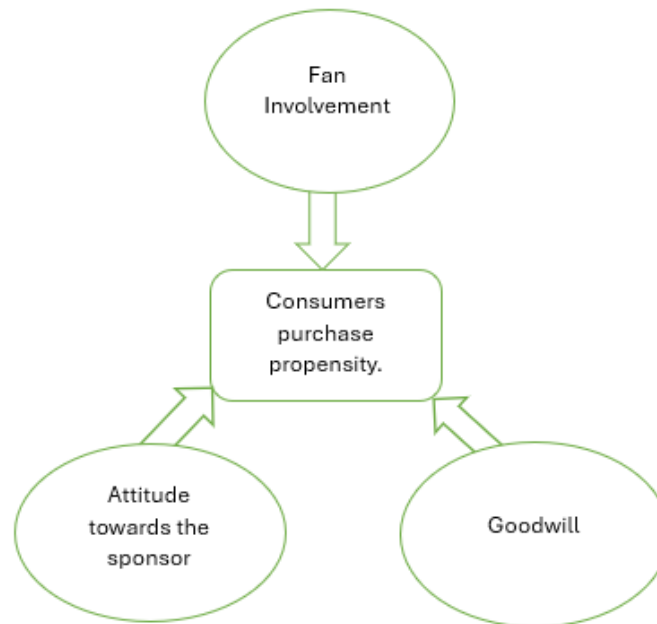
Sponsorship effects

Examining ideas connected to sponsorship and attitude toward the sponsors is necessary to understand the sponsorship process and how corporate sponsor' alignment with a sporting event can influence consumers' attitudes and intents (Dees et al., 2008). For this reason, Meenaghan's (2001) model serves as the theoretical basis of this study. Meenaghan's (2001) model sought to understand how consumers feel about sponsorship in relation to the efficacy of

sponsorship. Within the context of sponsorship effectiveness, three variables were found to affect consumers' purchase propensity. These variables are attitude toward the sponsor, goodwill, and fan involvement. In addition, Ajzen (1991) posits that intentions indicate individuals' motivation and effort to engage in a specific activity. That is, the strength of one's intention to engage in an action positively correlates with the likelihood of the person's actual performance.

Figure 1

Meenaghan (2001) sport sponsorship effectiveness model



Attitude, schema, and emotion in sponsorship process

Sponsorship has the potential to exert a positive influence on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. The perception of a sponsor's support towards a sponsored property or event can lead to a positive impression among consumers, enhancing the likelihood of purchase. According to Cornwell and Maignan (1998), the principal objective of sponsorship is to cultivate favorable perceptions of the sponsoring companies. Rodgers (2003) defined *attitude* as the comprehensive assessment of an individual regarding an object, issue, or person. According to Rodgers (2003), attitudes are typically the degree of favorability or unfavourability, i.e., positivity or negativity, with which an object is perceived and evaluated. The attitude toward an advertiser pertains to an individual's positive or negative assessment of a specific entity, such as an event sponsor (Dees et al., 2010). Ajzen (1991) posited that an individual's attitude toward an object is crucial in forecasting their behavioral intentions and can influence their response toward

the thing (Ajzen, 2001). For instance, Roy and Cornwell (2004) postulated that a positive correlation exists between the attitude toward the sponsor and the congruence between the event and the sponsor. The researchers discovered that individuals who perceived more significant levels of congruity between an event and its sponsor tended to exhibit more favorable attitudes toward the sponsors. In contrast, individuals who rated the congruence between the events and sponsors as low showed a more negative perception of the sponsors.

Speed and Thompson (2000) posited that the impact of sports sponsorship is influenced by three factors: the individual's attitude toward the event, the individual's attitude toward the sponsor, and the individual's perception of the alignment between the sponsor and the event. Applying classical conditioning research in advertising to sponsorship, the study highlights the importance of these factors in shaping the response to sports sponsorship. The researchers aimed to examine a model consisting of three distinct variables: the overall attitude towards the sponsor, the sponsor's perceived sincerity, and the sponsor's perceived ubiquity. McDaniel and Heald (2000) posited the schema-based affect theory to elucidate the development of attitudes towards sponsors, particularly in sporting events. According to Roy and Graeff (2003) consumer response to sponsorship information, such as Coca-Cola's 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Olympics sponsorship, can also be explained through a schema-based approach. This approach postulates that consumers retrieve information about the sponsor and event from their memory and then compare it to the new information presented. A *schema* is a cognitive framework formed based on an individual's prior knowledge or experience with particular people, places, events, or other related entities (McDaniel & Heald, 2000). Schemas evaluate a product's suitability or unsuitability and its associated event when presented with sponsorship (Roy & Graeff, 2003).

The study by Jeong (2005) examined the effect of moods induced by sports programming on responses to various advertising appeals by classifying advertising into emotive and informational categories. Informational advertising provides specific details about a product or brand, whereas emotional advertising emphasizes positive, welcoming emotions. The participants were exposed to one of two advertisements (either emotional or informational) in conjunction with one of two basketball games (win or loss) and were asked to evaluate the advertisement. Participants in negative states of mind were found to be more receptive to emotional advertising than those in positive states of mind. At the same time, there was no difference in attitude toward informational advertising between negative and positive state participants. This finding revealed that people in bad moods can be swayed by emotional advertising because they are likely incentivized to improve their mood.

Goodwill

Understanding the *goodwill* phenomenon in sponsorship is essential, as stated by (Meenaghan, 2001). This is because the goodwill phenomenon is what ultimately differentiates sponsorship from advertising, and it also has the potential to serve as the primary catalyst that influences customers' responses. In the context of sponsorship, *goodwill* refers to the intangible benefits and favorable reputation that a sponsoring entity obtains by associating itself with a sponsored event, organization, or individual. This association may be beneficial to the reputation of the sponsoring entity. It measures the value added to the sponsoring organization's brand and the public's impression of that brand because of the sponsorship relationship. According to Meenaghan (1991), the motivation behind goodwill was individual's recognition that acknowledges the advantages of sponsorship for their associated activities. Corporate entities frequently sponsor events, sports teams, or charitable causes to augment brand exposure,

improve their reputation, and foster a good connection with their intended demographic.

However, the creation of goodwill is contingent upon the perception of the sponsoring entity as being supportive, socially responsible, and in alignment with the values and interests of the sponsored entity or the intended audience. Another study conducted by Meenaghan (2001) through focus groups revealed the presence of the goodwill factor in sponsorship. The study's findings indicate the presence of a positive perception towards a particular entity, commonly referred to as goodwill, across three distinct levels of analysis. These levels include the general, category, and individual activity levels.

Furthermore, the concept of goodwill in sponsorship entails recognizing that such goodwill is subject to certain conditions, as Dees et al. (2008) posited. For instance, the notion of contingent goodwill proposes that the development of goodwill is contingent upon the sponsor's overall conduct towards all aspects of the sponsored project, which supporters evaluate and value (Meenaghan, 2001). Therefore, to optimize the positive impact on public perception, the sponsor must cultivate a favorable image as a benevolent sponsor whose association with the event yields advantageous outcomes for the event (Meenaghan, 2001). In addition, Meenaghan (2001) identified various contingencies involved in sponsorship decisions. These include the selection of the appropriate sponsorship opportunity, the timing of entry into the sponsorship agreement, the manner and timing of exiting from the sponsorship, the level of overt sponsor commitment, the extent to which the sponsor demonstrates a caring attitude towards the activity and its fans, and the interplay among these factors. Therefore, consumers will remove their feelings of goodwill regardless of their level of devotion if corporate sponsors do not adequately adhere to these characteristics (Dees et al., 2008).

Bennett et al. (2006) conducted a study to evaluate the efficacy of sponsorship in professional tennis. The study's findings indicated that the audience of a professional tennis event perceived corporate sponsorship positively. Consequently, these consumers were more inclined to purchase products or services from the sponsoring companies due to their association with the sporting event than non-sponsors. Furthermore, results indicate that event attendees do have strong feelings about who sponsors the tournament. More than 94% of the spectators believed sponsoring the tournament favored the company. Furthermore, a significant proportion of the audience (61.7%) concurred that the company's tournament sponsorship impacts their perceptions of the company and their choices to procure its products or services (54.9%).

Fan involvement

The concept of fan involvement was operationalized by Madrigal (2001) through the lens of social identity theory as the level of emotional connection or attachment that a consumer has to a sponsored property. Social identity theory pertains to the attributes and concepts an individual acquires through affiliation with a particular group. According to the theory, individuals endeavor to attain a favorable social identity by pursuing inclusion in groups that they perceive as possessing positive value and exhibiting uniqueness compared to other groups. Fan involvement pertains to fans' enthusiastic and interactive contribution to diverse undertakings, occasions, or groups associated with a specific interest or subculture. It is also the degree to which individuals associate themselves with and are stimulated by their participation and association with specific recreational pursuits (Meenaghan, 2001). Evaluating commercial sponsorship's efficacy necessitates considering fan involvement as a crucial construct (Dees et al., 2008). This is because fans' diverse emotional degrees of attachment towards the sponsored occasion can influence their attentiveness toward the event's sponsors.

According to Madrigal (2001), team identification plays a crucial role in determining the actions of individuals with a strong affiliation with the team. This is because such behavior reinforces and strengthens their identity as group members. This study examined the impact of consumers' beliefs regarding sponsorship, their perceived significance, and their identification with the sponsee on their attitude toward purchasing products from corporate sponsors of sports teams affiliated with the Ohio State University. For example, the study found that fans who expressed low attitudes towards corporate sponsors on the survey scale were more inclined to purchase from the sponsors if they identified themselves highly with the university, compared to those with lower identification.

Kwon and Armstrong (2002) investigated the impulsive tendencies of college students in purchasing licensed sports team merchandise. The research centered on consumer attributes such as the level of enjoyment derived from shopping and the extent of identification with a sports team; both served as indicators of consumers' identification with the product they intended to purchase. The study assessed two dependent variables: impulse buying behavior and the monetary value of sports team-licensed merchandise purchased. The independent variables examined in the study included shopping enjoyment, sports team identification, time availability, and money availability. The study found that highly invested individuals in a particular team buy more licensed merchandise and exhibit impulsive buying behavior. Furthermore, the research revealed that team identification was the sole determinant that resulted in noteworthy impulsive purchasing. Sports fans who are deeply invested in or active with their team frequently find it difficult to distance themselves from their favorite team or activities. The perceived degree of emotional connection that sports enthusiasts have with a particular sports team may influence their favorable evaluation and endorsement of sponsors associated with the sports property.

Sponsorship effectiveness measurement and evaluation

A monetary contribution, which can sometimes be significant, is frequently required for sporting event sponsorship. This is why it is pertinent that sponsors consider whether such huge investments provide an attractive return on their investment. In addition, sponsors need to examine whether spectators at sporting events know about the sponsorship they provide.

Although sponsorship is becoming an increasingly popular channel for advertising messages, many questions still need to be answered concerning how exactly it works and what results from it (Boshoff & Gerber, 2008). Therefore, measuring the effectiveness of sponsorship is a crucial inquiry in the field of sport sponsorship research.

According to (Cho et al., 2011), researchers need to pay more attention to distinguishing the effects of standard advertising practices from sponsorship when measuring the effects of sponsorship. Furthermore, (Busby & Digby, 2002) posited that the rise in sponsorship has increased the need for accountability. This is because companies facing uncertain economic prospects and paying higher prices for events are experiencing an elevated necessity to rationalize their expenses hence the need for measurement and evaluation. The significance of measurement and evaluation has been noted among all stakeholders involved in sponsorship transactions due to the amplified accountability. Johansson & Utterström (2007) added that the role of measurement is of paramount importance in ensuring a successful sponsorship process. Its significance lies not only in assessing the effectiveness of a program and devising strategies for its improvement but also in safeguarding and rationalizing sponsorship budgets internally in the face of competing demands from other marketing mix components.

Busby and Digby (2002), posited that establishing attainable goals is a crucial component of successful sponsorship, as is evaluating the extent to which said goals have been

accomplished. The authors postulated that the assessment and quantification of the efficacy of a sponsorship initiative could be achieved at three distinct stages: (a) At the onset of the program, (b) during the tracking process, and (c) at the final evaluation upon completion of the sponsorship program. Yu & Tan, (2017), also added that the effectiveness of sports sponsorship is primarily demonstrated through five key dimensions: customer-based brand equity, brand integration, brand loyalty, sponsor image, and stakeholders (Yu & Tan, 2017). Meenaghan (1991) posited that there are three basic approaches for determining the success of sponsorship. The evaluation can be based on the following criteria:

- (a) Measuring the level of media coverage/exposure gained.
- (b) Measuring the communications effectiveness of sponsorship involvement.
- (c) Measuring the effectiveness of sales.

Bennett (1999) further stated that sponsorship outcomes are commonly evaluated based on the levels of awareness attained, the attitudes that have been created or modified, the recall of brand or company names both prompted and unprompted, the extent of media coverage across television, radio, and press, as well as the cost incurred.

Measuring the level of media coverage/exposure gained

According to Meenaghan's (1991) argument, sponsors often utilize the extent of media coverage obtained through their involvement in sponsorship as a practical performance indicator. The evaluation process entails the measurement of three factors, namely:

- a) the length of time dedicated to television coverage.
- b) monitored radio coverage; and
- c) the quantity of press coverage in terms of single column inches.

One potential limitation of utilizing the media coverage or exposure level as a metric for evaluating sponsorship effectiveness is that such coverage indicates the publicity generated by the sponsored activity. For example, the problem with basing success on the amount of media attention is that it only gives a partial picture of the sponsorship's impact on brand awareness. Hence, judging the success of a sponsorship based on how much time and space the media devoted to reporting the event might be misleading because it only considers the amount of exposure the event received in the media and not how much influence the sponsorship had on consumers.

According to Crompton (2004), when evaluating the effectiveness of sponsorship through media coverage, it is essential to consider two factors:

- a) The varying levels of appeal associated with different types of media coverage and
- b) The varying quality associated with the coverage may differ significantly among companies.

Measuring the communications effectiveness of sponsorship involvement

According to Meenaghan (1991), sponsorship could successfully achieve fundamental communication goals, such as enhancing awareness and image. The communication may be strategically crafted to modify or strengthen a brand's stance, to distinguish it from competing brands, or to establish a close and emotionally invested connection with a specific audience.

So, there is a tendency to assess sponsorship outcomes through communication rather than sales metrics. The evaluation of achieved levels of awareness-created attitudes, changed perceptions or suggested associations are conducted about predetermined objectives. As per the author's perspective, evaluating unprompted and prompted name awareness, unprompted awareness as a

sports sponsor/prompted awareness as a sports sponsor, and attitudes towards sponsorship are imperative.

Measuring the positive impact on sales

From the standpoint of a sponsor, the impact of a sponsorship investment on sales is the most desirable metric (Crompton, 2004). Using sales as a metric for evaluating sponsorship efficacy presents significant challenges due to potential confounding factors such as the impact of supplementary marketing communications, residual effects of prior advertising, fluctuations in economic circumstances, the emergence or departure of rival enterprises, and other related variables (Bennett, 1999). Although it cannot be directly inferred that the utilization of sponsorship leads to an increase in sales, several companies correlate the effectiveness of sponsorship with the effectiveness of sales (Theofilou et al., 2014). Meenaghan (1991) claims that the correlation between sales outcomes and allocated expenses in commercial sponsorship poses significant challenges due to various factors. These are:

- a) The concurrent use of other marketing inputs.
- b) The effect of previous marketing communications efforts.
- c) Uncontrollable variables in the business environment, such as the actions of competitors and a fluctuating economy.

Three methods can be employed to evaluate the effectiveness of sponsorship-themed promotions through sales (Crompton, 2004). The first involves traffic increase at retail points of sale. The second compares retailers' or dealers' participation in sponsorship-themed promotions with non-sponsorship advertisements. The third method measures the actual sales increase that can be attributed to sponsorship. Unfortunately, many sponsors use sales results as proof of sponsorship

effectiveness even though it is challenging to provide conclusive proof of this effect (Meenaghan, 1991).

Measuring brand equity and image

Busby and Digby (2002) further stressed the importance of measuring sponsorship effectiveness through brand equity because sponsorship can significantly impact a brand's perceived quality, thereby emerging as a crucial component of brand equity. Brand equity is a concept that pertains to the additional value that a company can generate from a product or service that has a well-known and easily identifiable name (Yu & Tan, 2017).

Madushani and Gunawardane (2020) conducted a study to identify the role of sports sponsorship in creating brand equity and generating a customer-centric platform. The measurement of sport sponsorship was based on several variables, such as the status of the event, personal preferences towards the event, the alignment between the event and the sponsor, and the attitudes held towards the sponsor. The study revealed a positive correlation between sports sponsorship and brand equity, as evidenced by the identified variables. Based on the above findings, it is evident that improving consumers' impression on a company or its products puts them closer to purchasing. Furthermore, establishing consumer relationships is crucial, and measuring how sponsorships enhance people's perception of a company's key elements is essential (Crompton, 2004). So, sponsorships should be evaluated based on how much they change consumers' perceptions of a company's products/services/mission/etc.

Factors affecting sponsorship effectiveness

Numerous scholarly investigations have explored various factors that impact the efficacy of sport sponsorship, including the purchase intentions of fans (Biscaia et al., 2013), the sponsor's perceived attitude (Kim et al., 2011), and the congruence between the sponsor firm and

the sports club (Rifon et al., 2004). The study conducted by Kim et al., (2011) aimed to examine the impact of the association between a sport property and a consumer on sponsorship effectiveness. The researchers identified three critical factors: sincerity, attitude towards the sponsor's brand, and desire to make a future purchase as theoretically connected to the quality of the relationship between a sport property and a consumer.

Sincerity

According to (Kim et al., 2011), a consumer's perception of the motive for sponsorship affects the consumer's reaction to sponsorship. That is, when consumers perceive sponsors as genuine partners of the event or organization, as opposed to being involved solely for sales, there is a higher likelihood of individuals exhibiting interest, favorability towards the sponsor, and a willingness to contemplate the sponsor's product. Rifon et al. (2004) proposed that consumers utilize the attribution theory to perceive the motive behind sponsorship behavior. Specifically, consumers may attribute an altruistic or socially responsible motive to the sponsor, enhancing the sponsor's credibility and eliciting a positive attitude towards the sponsor. On the other hand, consumers may ascribe a more exploitative intention to the sponsor, resulting in a less favorable perception of the sponsor. According to the tenets of the attribution theory, individuals attribute motives to sponsors based on their sponsorship activities. For example, if a company sponsors a sports event, individual consumers may extrapolate sponsors' different intentions such as augmenting brand exposure, focusing on a particular demographic, or bolstering the surrounding community. According to attribution theory, individuals develop clear and unfavorable attributions regarding the underlying corporate motives for sponsoring an event. Sponsorship can either be an expression of corporate altruism or a means of fulfilling corporate self-interest. For example, a study (Dean, 2002) aimed to assess the immediate impact of charitable event

sponsorship on the perception of the sponsor's corporate community relations. The results indicated that the respondents developed both positive and negative attributions regarding corporate motivation for sponsorship. Furthermore, the findings suggest that the participants tended to generate more positive than negative attributions regarding sponsorship, resulting in an improved corporate reputation for the sponsor.

Another study Speed and Thompson (2000) utilized a classical conditioning framework to investigate the impact of consumers' attitudes towards a sport event, their perceptions of the sponsor-event fit, and their attitudes towards the sponsor on a multidimensional measure of sponsorship response. The study's results indicate that consumers do not view sponsorship as a mere commercial activity but are attuned to the potential philanthropic context that a sponsorship may possess. Furthermore, the study revealed a positive correlation between the degree of pro-social perception of the sponsorship program and the extent of the favorable impact on the sponsor's image.

Purchase intentions

If consumers exhibit favorable feelings toward sponsoring organizations, they are more likely to show a stronger intention to purchase their products, (Koronios et al., 2022).

Purchasing can be defined as a deliberate strategy employed by an individual to acquire a particular brand. Crompton (2004) further posited that sponsorship effectiveness could be best evaluated from a sponsor's perspective by considering consumer purchase intention. This is a valuable indicator due to its potential to influence future sales.

According to Spears & Singh's (2004) definition, purchase intentions refer to a deliberate plan by an individual to endeavor to acquire a particular brand. The concept of purchase intentions pertains to the degree of an individual's drive to engage in a particular purchasing

activity, (Dees et al., 2008). The level of motivation an individual possesses to purchase can be gauged by looking at their buying intentions, (Dees et al., 2010). That is, the individual's level of motivation directly matches up to the likelihood that they will complete the transaction. For a consumer to buy a product or service, they must first have the intention to do so; hence, buying intentions are an antecedent to actual purchase behaviors, (Dees et al., 2010). Multiple determinants prompt consumers to purchase a product, one of which is the level of contentment experienced by the consumer with the product or brand from a prior purchase (Khurram et al., 2018). The degree of fulfillment experienced by the consumer will ultimately determine the placement of the brand within their consideration set for future purchasing decisions.

Another similar study conducted by (Eagleman & Krohn, 2012), aimed to investigate the recognition of sponsors, attitudes towards sponsors, and purchase intentions among participants of road race series. The study's findings indicate that a significant proportion of the respondents expressed a greater inclination towards procuring products or services from an enterprise that was the race sponsor. Furthermore, survey participants who reported that their acquaintances had taken part in the series or those who felt obligated by their families to participate demonstrated a higher frequency of purchasing products or services from the race sponsors over the previous year. Alhadad, (2019) further asserted that the effectiveness of sports sponsorship is influenced by three primary factors: consumer characteristics, cognitive processing, and environmental factors.

Brand recall

Sponsorship effectiveness is often evaluated in terms of intervening cognitive effects variables, such as awareness of the brand's sponsorship status as determined by a brand recall (Kinney et al., 2008). A consumer's ability to recognize, recall, and accurately differentiate the

brand later can be measured to examine the efficacy of sponsorship (Aaker, 1996). The methodology of recall testing is widely regarded as a potent approach as it necessitates the participant to retrieve the name of the company/brand from their memory (Pitts, 1998). Speed and Thompson's (2000) research into the determinants of sports sponsorship response revealed that recall awareness and brand preferences are influenced by consumers' attitudes toward the sponsor, their attitudes towards the event, and their perception of sponsor-event fit.

Brand Recall is the degree to which customers recall advertisements and other signals communicated about a brand (Prashar et al., 2012). It is a type of brand awareness in which the customer recognizes or identifies a brand based on information stored in memory. To further emphasize this point, (Baumann et al., 2015) described brand recall as the capacity to recall a brand when given cues associated with that brand. Recall can be aided or unaided (Khurram et al., 2017). According to Leng, (2017), unaided recall measures whether participants recall sponsors without assistance. Employing unaided recall is deemed more suitable than aided recall as it requires the participant to retrieve the sponsor's name directly from memory rather than recognize their brand name from a list (Ibrahim, 2014). However, in the aided recall procedure, respondents are given a list of brands and asked to identify their sponsors. Brand recall measures have been used in several studies of sponsorship's impact (Leng, 2017).

A study was conducted by Rogić et al. (2020) to examine the recall and recognition of sponsorship following the Games of the Small States of Europe. The study indicated that sponsors could attain noteworthy exposure throughout the Games, thereby facilitating the retention of their brand identities in the participants' minds. Furthermore, the findings indicated varying degrees of sponsorship recall among different companies, with some achieving a satisfactory level while others did not. Pitts (1998) conducted a study to ascertain the ability of

attendees of the Gay Games to recognize the official sponsors accurately. The study involved 182 participants, and more than 50% of them correctly identified the names of significant official sponsors. The result showed a high recall rate from the participants.

Boshoff and Gerber (2008) conducted a quasi-experiment study that investigated the level of sponsorship awareness of the 2007 Cricket World Cup. The study measured respondents' brand recall and recognition levels before and after the event. The study revealed that sponsoring the 2007 Cricket World Cup resulted in a notable increase in brand recognition after the sponsored event compared to the period preceding the event.

Another similar study conducted by Dhurup et al. (2010) to examine how well participants could remember official sponsors of the 2010 Fédération Internationale de Football Association Soccer World Cup with aided and unaided recall revealed notable confusion among the respondents. Respondents' ability to recall the names of the firms and brands that sponsored the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa was evaluated by asking them to name as many as 14. Only 13% of those polled were able to name three official sponsors correctly, 10% could name six official sponsors correctly, and only 3% could name all ten official sponsors correctly. A sizable portion of the respondents made recall errors. A total of 203 people (or 43.9%) failed to correctly identify the companies that provided sponsorship for the 2010 FIFA World Cup. According to the study, people can remember sponsorship better if they know who the sponsor is and if they are helped to remember. This is because the responses on aided memory prompted the participants to retrieve their memory associations more easily.

Maxwell and Lough (2009) investigated how correct sponsorship recognition by women's basketball fans is affected by the presence of sponsor signage in collegiate basketball venues. The results showed that the percentage of correctly identified official sponsors among women's

college basketball spectators was 1.69% higher when the venue included signs from corporate sponsors than when no such advertising was displayed. The study also demonstrated that accurate sponsor recognition might be influenced by the level of identification displayed by spectators. Also, each respondent's age greatly affected how well they could name the sponsors. As the age of each respondent in the study increased, they were less likely to know the sponsors' names. In sum, Maxwell and Lough (2009) indicated that having sponsor signage in the stadium did not significantly improve the likelihood that a spectator would be able to name the official sponsors accurately. This is because, despite the absence of signage, an equal number of official sponsors were correctly identified by fans in venues without signage. This study's focused approach also serves as its weakness: it only investigated sponsor recognition among women's college basketball fans. This suggests that the results may not apply to fans of other collegiate and professional women's sports. Hence, more study is required to draw more generalizable conclusions.

Undertaking a study to assess the efficacy of sponsorship by evaluating brand recall within the context of BGSU Athletics holds significance due to several convincing justifications. In the contemporary sports sponsorship landscape, sponsors commit substantial resources, both in terms of financial investment and strategic planning, to establish brand associations with athletic events and organizations. Sponsors must comprehend how these sponsorships improve brand recall to rationalize their investments and maximize their marketing strategy. Furthermore, in the context of BGSU Athletics, conducting an accurate assessment of the influence of sponsorships on brand recall enables BGSU to present more appealing sponsorship opportunities. This, in turn, facilitates the establishment of long-term partnerships with sponsors and generates a consistent stream of revenue that can support and enhance their sports programs.

Furthermore, the investigation has the potential to yield significant findings regarding the preferences and behaviors exhibited by the fan base, thereby empowering BGSU Athletics to strategically customize their sponsorship agreements to better fit with the interests of their target audience. This study aims to contribute to the relevant body of knowledge by enhancing the understanding of the complex interplay among sponsorship variables in the context of intercollegiate athletics. In the end, this investigation benefits the institution and serves as a valuable resource for scholars and practitioners seeking to advance their understanding of sponsorship efficacy in collegiate athletics. In sum, the current project attempts to examine relationships among fan involvement, attitude toward BGSU Athletics program, attitude toward sponsors, brand recall of sponsors, and purchase intention. The following questions will be explored:

- To what extent does fan involvement influence attitude toward the BGSU Athletics program and attitude towards sponsors?
- Does a positive attitude toward sponsors positively influence purchase intention among BGSU Athletics fans?
- Does fan involvement with BGSU Athletics affect their brand recall of sponsors associated with the program?

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This section describes the procedure adopted in conducting the research. First, the research design adopted for the study is explained. Second, the participants included in the study is described. Third, the sample size and sampling technique used is highlighted. Fourth, the data collection procedure, instrumentation and completion rate are reported with safeguards to ethical considerations. Next, the validity and reliability of the measurement platform is assessed. Lastly, the data analysis method is expounded.

Research Design

The goal of the research design is to offer a suitable setting for a specific study. This study is more appropriate for quantitative research design. The systematic investigation of phenomena through the acquisition of numerical data and the application of statistical, mathematical, or computational techniques is known as quantitative research (Mohajan, 2017). The positivist paradigm, which supports methods based on statistical analysis and incorporates additional techniques like inferential statistics, hypothesis testing, mathematical explanation, randomization in experimental and quasi-experimental designs, blinding, structured protocols, as well as questionnaires with a limited range of predetermined answers, is the foundation of quantitative research. Survey, ex-post facto, case study, and experimental research are the most employed research strategies in the field of quantitative research according to Gaille (2018). To learn more about students' awareness and recollections of the official sponsors of BGSU Athletics events, the current study used a survey approach. The research was cross-sectional because the project was meant to be completed in part within the allotted time frame for an academic year.

Participants

Students who are BGSU athletics fans and have attended BGSU athletic events make up the study's target population. The selected participants have attended home games for ice hockey, football, men's and women's basketball, women's volleyball, or women's basketball games.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample size was determined using two non-probability sampling strategies: convenience sampling and purposive sampling. The purposive sampling was used because it allowed the researcher to choose participants based on present criteria aligning with the study's objectives. This study also employed a convenience sampling strategy, which selects participants based on their ease of accessibility and speed of response. The data collection scheme was simple to implement and economical and time efficient. To ensure statistical power to identify importance in brand recall in conjunction with other variables, a sample size of 300 respondents was set as the target sample size.

Data Collection Procedure, Instrumentation and Completion Rate

The main tool for gathering data was a structured questionnaire. The first section of the survey instrument was the consent form, which had to be signed by all respondents for participation. The survey instrument was adapted from Biscaia et al. (2014), Herrmann et al. (2014), and Barros & Silvestre (2006). The questionnaire consisted of multiple sections, including:

- **Demographic Information:** Participants were requested to submit demographic information about their age, gender, race, degree of education, and involvement with BGSU Athletics.

- **Sponsorship Exposure:** Participants were tasked to name the sponsors that are connected to BGSU Athletics. In addition, a list of possible sponsors was shown to them, and they were asked to check the ones they remembered.
- **Attitude Towards the Sponsor:** Respondents were asked to rate or provide feedback on a set of questions about various aspects of the sponsor such as their favorability, schematic fitness with the event, and the impact of their sponsorship on the respondent's perception of the sponsoring entity.
- **Attitude Towards BGSU Athletics Program:** Participants were asked to rate or provide feedback on a set of questions about how they feel about or connected to BGSU Athletic programs in terms of favorability.
- **Purchase Intention:** Respondents were asked to rate or provide feedback on a set of questions about their likelihood of purchasing a product or service from a sponsor.

Data collection was conducted through an online survey platform to facilitate the participation of a diverse group of BGSU athletics fans. Participants were recruited through various channels, including university email lists, on-site recruitment at athletic events and through academic classes.

Table 1

Displays the survey's completion rate computation

Total Retrieved online questionnaires	Total valid online questionnaires	Completion Rate(in %)
300	249	83.0%

The survey's completion rate is displayed in Figure 3.1. It shows that only 249 of the 300 online data sets that were retrieved could be considered for analysis. This indicates an overall completion rate of 83.0%. Such a completion rate is considered good and reflective for a research project.

Ethical Consideration

The institutional review board examined various ethical considerations for the study. Prior to being chosen for the discussion, respondents' consent was directly requested, demonstrating that their participation in the study was voluntary and helping to establish the study's ethical foundation (Locke, et al., 2013). Participants received an explanation of the study's specifics and signed an informed consent form. No one was forced to take part in the study, and no respondent withdrew while the study was underway. The study's output contained no personal data that could be employed for recognizing participants and is only meant to be used for the current study. Participants' confidentiality was maintained throughout the study, and none of the respondents was expected to encounter any known negative effects from the study.

Validity and Reliability of the Survey Instrumentation

Reliability, in the words of Mohajan (2017), is the degree to which measurements can be repeated by different individuals under different circumstances, on different occasions, and ostensibly using different instruments that measure the same construct or skill. It can also mean the degree of consistency or dependability of a construct's measure with a particular scheme. Reliability in research serves to guarantee that the observed score is nearly identical to the true score. To assess the internal consistency among measurement items, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated.

Table 2*Showing SPSS of reliability test*

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.713	.711	30

The SPSS result for the reliability test is displayed in Table 3.2. According to the results, the 30 instruments in the questionnaire have a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.713 and a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient based Standardized Items of 0.711, respectively. These Cronbach Alphas are regarded as acceptable, indicating that there was no significant measurement error in the questionnaire's structure and that each of the items would share a substantial commonality. For the reliability test, four cut-off points identified by Taherdoost (2016) were used: excellent reliability (0.90 and above), high reliability (0.70-0.90), moderate reliability (0.50-0.70), and low reliability (0.50 and below).

Method of Data Analysis

The survey data was subjected to statistical analysis. Data analysis is an essential stage in the process of research because it allows the gathered data to be meaningfully interpreted and conclusions are drawn from. The data analysis was conducted by using IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) Version 21 and Microsoft Excel 2016. Pie charts and bar charts were used to display the descriptive statistics. For inferential statistics, bivariate correlation and multivariate analysis were employed, with 95% and 99% confidence levels and 0.05 and 0.01 significant levels were used.

CHAPTER 4. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter is used to present results of the online survey, and the outcome of the data analysis conducted in the study. A total of 249 valid responses were analyzed.

Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

Table 3

Demographics of the respondents

Status Variables	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Age		
18-24	228	91.6
25-34	16	6.4
45-54	5	2.0
Gender		
Cisgender woman	8	3.2
Gender fluid	2	0.8
Female	111	44.5
Male	118	47.4
Non binary	10	4.0
Education level		
Freshman	61	24.5
Sophomore	50	20.1
Junior	59	23.7
Senior	40	16.1
Graduate	39	15.7
Race/Ethnicity		
White/Caucasian	209	83.9
Black/African American	22	8.8
Hispanic/Latino	6	2.4
Native American	1	0.4
Other	11	4.4

Total Number of valid responses (N) = 249(100%).

Table 3 shows the sociodemographic information of the respondents. It demonstrates that the age group with highest distribution 228(91.6%) were respondents between the ages of 18-24.

Majority of the respondents 118(47.4%) were male. The distribution of years in college also shows that majority of the respondents 61(24.5%) and 59 (23.7%) were classified as Freshman and Juniors respectively. The racial/ethnic majority was 209(83.9%) White/Caucasian.

Figure 4.1 shows the responses on whether fans have attended a BGSU Athletics event in the past year. It demonstrates that 95% of the participants have attended a BGSU Athletics event in the past one-year.

Figure 2

Responses on whether fans have attended a BGSU Athletics event in the past year

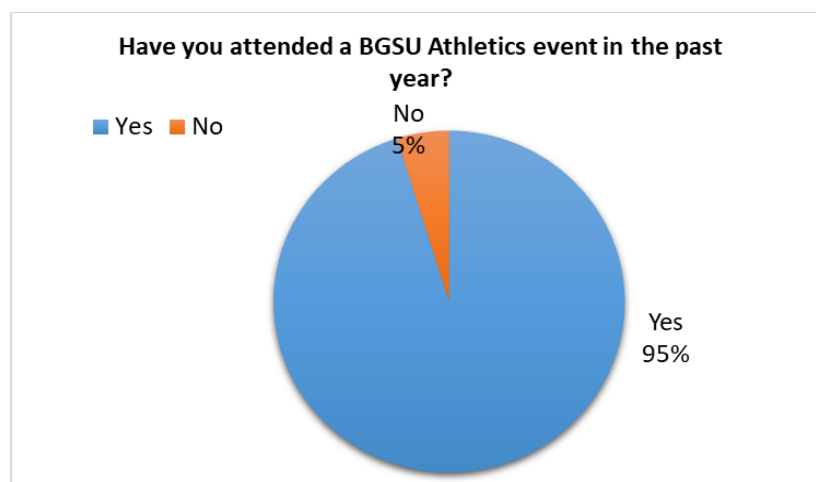


Figure 2 shows the responses on whether fans have attended a BGSU Athletics event in the past year. It demonstrates that 95% of the participants have attended a BGSU Athletics event in the past one-year.

Figure 3

Responses on the frequency of BGSU events attended by fans recently

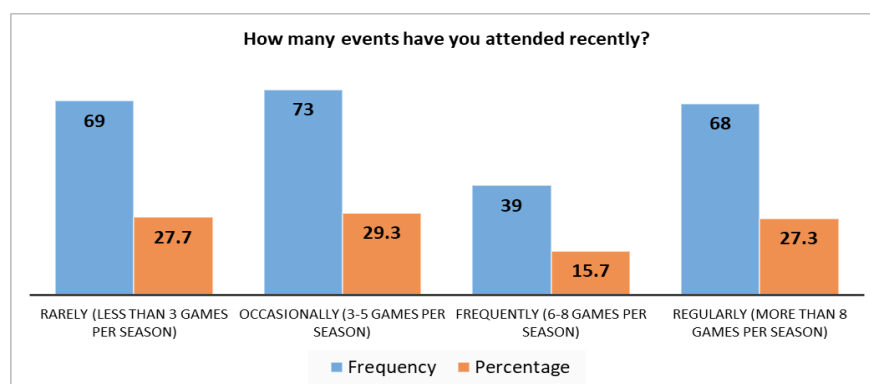


Figure 3 shows the responses on the frequency of BGSU events attended by fans in recent time.

It demonstrates that majorities of the respondents 73(29.3%) and 69(27.7%) attended BGSU Athletics event occasionally (3-5games per season) and rarely (less than 3games per season) respectively.

Figure 4

Responses on whether fans can name any sponsor(s) associated with BGSU Athletics

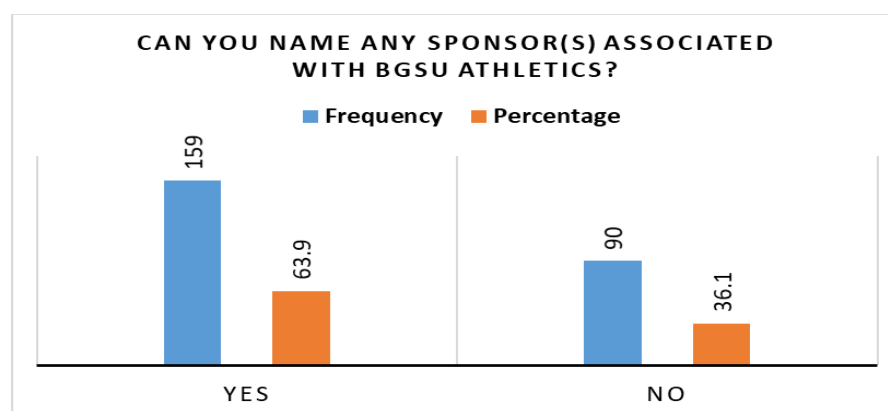


Figure 4 shows the responses on whether fans can name any sponsor(s) associated with BGSU Athletics. It demonstrates that majority of the respondents 159(63.9%) answered 'yes,' to being able to name any sponsor(s) associated with BGSU Athletics.

Table 4*Responses on unaided recall of sponsors associated with BGSU Athletics recently*

Brands	Frequency(F)	Percentage (%)
3 Cord	1	0.4
Beckett's	2	0.8
Greenbriar	39	15.7
BGSU Housing/Apartments	9	3.6
Bigby Coffee	2	0.8
Campus Pollyeyes	8	3.2
Can't think of any	15	6.0
Coca-Cola	1	0.4
Culver's	2	0.8
Frickers	2	0.8
Wood County Hospital	40	16.1
Meijer	12	4.8
Jet Pizza	33	13.3
Juniper	3	1.2
Mecca Apartments	3	1.2
PNC Bank	1	0.4
Thayer	1	0.4
Wendys	2	0.8
Nike	21	8.4
Pita Pit	2	0.8
Powerade	5	2.0
Rapid Fire Pizza	1	0.4
Sam B's	1	0.4
The Edge	7	2.8
Becketts, BG Burgers, Wood County Hospital, Campus Polleyes, Jets Pizza, Wendy's, Culver's, BG Municipal Utilities, Juniper, SamB's	1	0.4
Bigby Coffee and Wood County Hospital	1	0.4
Bigby, Medical Mutual, Meijer, Juniper, Sam B, Wood County Hospital, The Edge	1	0.4
Greenbriar and Biggby Coffee	1	0.4
Greenbriar, Danberry, Biggby, AA Green, Jets	1	0.4
Greenbriar, Wood County Hospital, Frickers	1	0.4
Greenbrier, Meijers	1	0.4
Jets pizza Copper Beech	1	0.4
Jets Pizza, Kroger, Coca-Cola	1	0.4
Juniper, Jets Pizza	2	0.8
Juniper, Pita Pit, The Edge, Jets Pizza	1	0.4
Kroger, Glass City Federal Credit Union	1	0.4
Meijer and Kroger	1	0.4
Seatgeek, Culver's, Coca-Cola	1	0.4

Brands	Frequency(F)	Percentage (%)
Thayer Car Dealer and Meijer	12	4.8
Thayer, Meijer, Wood County Hospital, Nike, Juniper Brewing, Bigby, Falcon Outfitters, American Interiors, Buffalo Wild Wings, Wendy's, Meijer	1	0.4
Wood county hospital, Buffalo Wild Wings, and Frickers	1	0.4
Wood county hospital, Elite Appeal, Campus Pollyeyes	4	1.6
Wood County Hospital. Pitapit, BG burger	2	0.8
Total	249	100

Table 4 shows the responses on unaided recall of sponsors associated with BGSU Athletics recently- Single replies. It demonstrates that majority of the respondents 40(16.1%) and 39(15.6%) without aiding recalled successfully Wood County Hospital and Greenbriar, respectively as sponsors associated with BGSU Athletics recently while looking at single replies. Only were few respondents (0.4%) able to unaidedly recall 3 Cord, Coca-Cola, PNC Bank, Thayer, Rapid Fire Pizza and Sam B's as sponsors associated with BGSU Athletics recently. The result also shows the responses on unaided recall of sponsors associated with BGSU Athletics recently- multiple replies. It demonstrates that majority of the respondents 23(9.2%) without aiding recalled Thayer Car Dealer and Meijer as sponsors associated with BGSU Athletics in recent times. Meanwhile, only 1(0.4%) respondents without aiding recalled 'Becketts, BG Burgers, Wood County Hospital, Campus Polleyes, Jets Pizza, Wendy's, Culver's, BG Municipal Utilities, Juniper, 'Bigby Coffee, Medical Mutual, Meijer, Sam B, The edge', 'Greenbriar, 'AA Green, Jets', 'Frickers', 'Copper Beech', 'Kroger, Coca-Cola', 'Pita Pit, 'Glass City Federal Credit Union', 'Seatgeek, Culver's, 'Thayer, Nike, Falcon Outfitters, American Interiors, and Buffalo Wild Wings', as multiple sponsors that associated with BGSU Athletics recently.

Table 5

Responses on aided recall of sponsors associated with BGSU Athletics recently

Status Variables	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Total Number of valid responses (N) = 249(100%).		
Can you name any sponsor(s) associated with BGSU Athletics recently?		
Real Estate Sponsor		
Mecca Management	82	32.9
New Love Realtor	20	8.0
AA Green Realty	49	19.7
Greenbriar Inc	98	39.4
Retail Department Store Sponsor		
Walmart	17	6.8
Meijer	146	58.6
Aldi	7	2.8
Kroger	79	31.7
Financial Institution Sponsor		
PNC	157	63.1
Alliant credit	11	4.4
Glass City Federal Credit Union	57	22.9
Chase	24	9.6
Non-Alcoholic Beverage Sponsor		
Coca Cola	83	33.3
Starbucks	27	10.8
Pepsi	16	6.4
Biggyby Coffee	123	49.4
Alcoholic Beverage Sponsor		
Juniper Brewing Company	171	68.7
Brewing Green Company	50	20.1
Arlyn's Good Beer	8	3.2
Aistear Brewing	20	8.0
Restaurant Sponsor		
Bob Evans	5	2.0
Fricker's	117	47.0
Buffalo Wild Wings	44	17.7
Jet's Pizza	83	33.3

Table 5 shows the responses of sponsors associated with BGSU Athletics recently. The result demonstrates that Greenbriar Inc has the highest distribution 98(39.4%) of responses in terms of Real Estate Sponsor(s).

Most of the respondents 146(58.6%) believe that Meijer was the retail department store sponsor that associated with BGSU Athletics recently. In the area of financial institution sponsor, a majority of the respondents 157(63.1%) opines PNC to be associated with BGSU Athletics in recent times which was incorrect. Biggyby Coffee was identified as the Non-Alcoholic Beverage Sponsor associated with BGSU Athletics in recent times by a majority of the respondents 123(49.4%). A majority of the respondents 171(68.7%) answered that Juniper Brewing Company is considered an Alcoholic Beverage Sponsor the most associated with BGSU Athletics in recent times. Lastly, a significant number of the respondents 117(47.0%) thought that Fricker's is the Restaurant Sponsor which associated with BGSU Athletics recently.

Table 6

Responses on the sponsor's compliance to value and familiarity with sponsor's brand/product

Status Variables	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Total Number of valid responses (N) = 249(100%).		
Kindly indicate your feelings on how well you think the sponsor(s) align with the values and image of BGSU Athletics.		
Not a good fit	20	8.0
Excellent fit	229	92.0
Kindly indicate your feelings about how familiar you are with the sponsor's brand or products.		
Not familiar at all	10	4.0
Slightly familiar	73	29.3
Moderately familiar	101	40.6
Very familiar	49	19.7
Extremely familiar	16	6.4

Table 6 shows the respondents' opinion on sponsor's compliance with value and fans familiarity with sponsor's brand/product. It demonstrates that a majority of the respondents 229(92.0%)

thought that the sponsor(s) have Excellent fit in terms of aligning with the values and image of BGSU Athletics. A fair number of the respondents 101(40.6%) felt that they are Moderately familiar with the BGSU Athletics sponsor's brand or products.

Table 7*Responses on fans' attitude towards the official sponsors of BGSU Athletics*

Status Variables	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Total Number of valid responses (N) = 249(100%).		
Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements regarding your attitude towards the official sponsors of BGSU Athletics		
I feel more connected to the official sponsors when they support BGSU Athletics.		
Strongly disagree	7	2.8
Disagree	24	9.6
Neutral	118	47.4
Agree	85	34.1
Strongly agree	15	6.0
I am more likely to attend BGSU Athletic events because of the involvement of official sponsors.		
Strongly disagree	34	13.7
Disagree	92	36.9
Neutral	97	39.0
Agree	17	6.8
Strongly agree	9	3.6
The official sponsors of BGSU Athletics enhance the overall experience of attending BGSU sporting events.		
Strongly disagree	10	4.0
Disagree	33	13.3
Neutral	98	39.4
Agree	94	37.8
Strongly agree	14	5.6
I feel a sense of loyalty and appreciation toward the official sponsors of BGSU Athletics.		
Strongly disagree	12	4.8
Disagree	39	15.7
Neutral	100	40.2
Agree	79	31.7
Strongly agree	19	7.6
The advertisements and promotions by official sponsors during BGSU sporting events are enjoyable and add value to my experience.		
Strongly disagree	7	2.8
Disagree	29	11.6
Neutral	99	39.8
Agree	100	40.2
Strongly agree	14	5.6

Table 7 shows the responses on fans' attitude towards the official sponsors of BGSU Athletics. It demonstrates that majority of the respondents 118(47.4%) neither agree nor disagree to feeling more connected to the official sponsors when they support BGSU Athletics. The largest group 97(39%) chose neither agree nor disagree in regards to that they are more likely to attend BGSU Athletic events because of the involvement of official sponsors. A majority of the respondents 98(39.4%) neither agreed or disagreed that the official sponsors of BGSU Athletics enhance the overall experience of attending BGSU sporting events. A substantial number of the respondents 100(40.2%) neither agreed or disagreed that they feel a sense of loyalty and appreciation toward the official sponsors of BGSU Athletics. A number of the respondents 100(40.2%) agreed that the advertisements and promotions by official sponsors during BGSU sporting events are enjoyable and add value to their experience.

Table 8

Responses on how association of the sponsors with BGSU influence fans purchase intent.

Status Variables	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Total Number of valid responses (N) = 249(100%).		
Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:		
Seeing a sponsor's brand associated with BGSU Athletics has influenced my intent to purchase their products or services.		
Strongly disagree	13	5.2
Disagree	58	23.3
Neutral	95	38.2
Agree	73	29.3
Strongly agree	10	4.0
I am more likely to purchase products or services from official sponsors of BGSU Athletics.		
Strongly disagree	16	6.4
Disagree	42	16.9
Neutral	110	44.2
Agree	64	25.7
Strongly agree	17	6.8
I am more inclined to recommend products or services from official sponsors of BGSU Athletics to others.		
Strongly disagree	3	1.2
Disagree	13	5.2
Neutral	95	38.2
Agree	129	51.8
Strongly Agree	9	3.6
I am more inclined to recommend products or services from official sponsors of BGSU Athletics to others.		
Strongly disagree	10	4.0
Disagree	37	14.9
Neutral	130	52.2
Agree	63	25.3
Strongly agree	9	3.6

Table 8 shows the responses on how association of the sponsors with BGSU influence fans' intent to purchase the sponsors' products. It demonstrates that a significant number of the respondents 95(38.2%) chose neither agree nor disagree that Seeing a sponsor's brand associated

with BGSU Athletics has influenced their intent to purchase their products or services. The highest distribution of the respondents 110(44.2%) Was observed in the category of neither agree nor disagree that they are more likely to purchase products or services from official sponsors of BGSU Athletics. Majority of the respondents 129(51.8%) agreed that they trust and have confidence in the products/services offered by the official sponsors of BGSU Athletics. Also, a great number of the respondents 130(52.2%) neither agreed or disagreed that they are more inclined to recommend products or services from official sponsors of BGSU Athletics to others.

Table 9

Responses on the level of satisfaction on experience and quality of BGSU Athletics events

Status Variables	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Total Number of valid responses (N) = 249(100%).		
On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is "Very dissatisfied" and 5 is "Very satisfied," how satisfied are you with your overall experience of BGSU Athletics events?		
Very dissatisfied	1	.4
Dissatisfied	11	4.4
Neutral	41	16.5
Satisfied	132	53.0
Very satisfied	64	25.7
On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is "Very low quality" and 5 is "Very high quality," how would you rate the overall quality of BGSU Athletics events?		
Very low quality	1	.4
Low quality	12	4.8
Neutral	51	20.5
High quality	131	52.6
Very high quality	54	21.7

Table 9 shows the responses on the level of satisfaction on experience and quality of BGSU Athletics events. It demonstrates that a majority of the respondents 132(53.0%) were satisfied

with their overall experience of BGSU Athletics event. Most respondents, 131(52.6%) rated the overall quality of BGSU Athletics events as high.

Table 10

Attitude towards BGSU Athletics and attitude towards sponsorship association

Status Variables	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Total Number of valid responses (N) = 249(100%).		
To what extent do you feel emotionally connected to the BGSU Athletics program?		
Not at all connected	31	12.4
Somewhat connected	121	48.6
Strongly connected	97	39.0
Has your attitude towards BGSU Athletics become more positive or negative due to its association with sponsors?		
More positive	76	30.5
No change	163	65.5
More negative	10	4.0

Table 10 shows the responses on fans extent of emotional connection to BGSU Athletics program and how it impacts on their attitude towards BGSU Athletics. It demonstrates that a majority of the respondents 121(48.6%) felt somewhat connected to the BGSU Athletics program. A substantial number of the respondents 163(65.5%) indicated no change in the attitude towards BGSU Athletics due to its association with the sponsors.

Data Analysis

Research Question One

To investigate the extent of fan involvement in BGSU Athletics and its effects on attitude towards BGSU Athletics Program and the attitude towards sponsors. Hypothesis One.

Table 11

Correlation analysis results of fan involvement in BGSU Athletics and its impact on the attitude towards the BGSU Athletics program and sponsors

	Extent of fans involvement in BGSU Athletics	Attitude towards sponsors	Attitude towards the BGSU Athletics Program
Extent of fans involvement in BGSU Athletics			
Correlation Coefficient	1	.006	.443**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.929	.000
N	249	249	249
Attitude towards sponsors			
Correlation Coefficient	.006	1	-.178**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.929		.005
N	249	249	249
Attitude towards the BGSU Athletics Program			
Correlation Coefficient	.443**	-.178**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.005	
N	249	249	249

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 11 shows the correlation analysis results of the extent of fan involvement in BGSU Athletics and its impact on the attitude towards the BGSU Athletics Program and the attitude towards sponsors. It demonstrates that Extent of fans involvement in BGSU Athletics has positive relation on fans attitude towards the BGSU Athletics Program ($p < 0.01$). Where p-value = 0.000 and correlation coefficient 0.443** shows significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Meanwhile, Extent of fans involvement in BGSU Athletics has no significant correlation with the fans attitude towards sponsors ($p > 0.01$). Since p-value = 0.929 and correlation coefficient 0.006 does not show significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 12

Regression analysis results of the extent of fans involvement in BGSU Athletics and its impact on the attitude towards the BGSU Athletics program and the attitude towards sponsors

Coefficients ^a								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	2.259	.090		25.154	.000	2.082	2.435
	Extent of fans involvement in BGSU Athletics	.267	.038	.408	7.022	.000	.192	.342

a. Dependent Variable: **Attitude_Towards_BGSU_Program**

Table 12 shows the regression analysis results in order to further check the extent of fans involvement in BGSU Athletics and its impact on the attitude towards the BGSU Athletics Program. In the regression analysis test, as seen in Table 12, the extent of fans involvement in BGSU Athletics is the independent variable and attitude towards the BGSU Athletics Program is the dependent variable. The result in the Table 12 demonstrates that there is an association between Extent of fans involvement in BGSU Athletics and Attitude towards the BGSU Athletics Program ($p < 0.05$, at 95% confidence level). Since $p\text{-value} = 0.000$ and $t\text{-statistics} = 7.022$ which is greater than 5 based on common thumb rule, (Kock & Hadaya, 2016). This result confirmed the result of the correlation in Table 11, which shows that there is a positive relationship between Extent of fans involvement in BGSU Athletics and Attitude towards the BGSU Athletics Program.

Table 13

Regression analysis results of the extent of fans involvement in BGSU Athletics and impact on attitude towards sponsors

Coefficients ^a							
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	2.172	.104	20.879	.000	1.967	2.377
	Extent of fans involvement in BGSU Athletics	.203	.044	.281	5.198	.116	.289

a. Dependent Variable: **Attitude_towards_Sponsor**

Table 13 shows the regression analysis results in order to further check the extent of fans involvement in BGSU Athletics and its impact on the attitude towards sponsors. In the regression analysis test, as seen in Table 13, the extent of fans involvement in BGSU Athletics is the independent variable and attitude towards sponsors is the dependent variable. The result in the Table 13 demonstrates that there is an association between Extent of fans involvement in BGSU Athletics and attitude towards sponsors ($p < 0.05$, at 95% confidence level). Since $p\text{-value} = 0.000$ and $t\text{-statistics} = 5.198$ which is greater than 5 based on common thumb rule, (Kock & Hadaya, 2016). This result failed to confirm the result of the correlation in Table 11, which shows that there is a positive relationship between Extent of fans involvement in BGSU Athletics and attitude towards sponsors.

Research Question Two

To investigate whether a positive attitude towards sponsors among BGSU Athletics fans positively influences their purchase intentions.

Hypothesis Two.

Table 14

Correlation result of the attitude towards sponsors and its impact on purchasing intentions

Correlations		Attitude_towards_Sponsor	Purchase Intention
Attitude_towards_Sponsor	Pearson Correlation	1	.462**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	249	249
Purchase_Intention	Pearson Correlation	.462**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	249	249

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 14 shows the correlation result of the test between attitude towards sponsors among BGSU Athletics fans and its impact on their purchase intentions. It demonstrates that Attitude towards sponsors among BGSU Athletics fans have a positive impact on fans purchase intentions ($p < 0.01$), at $p\text{-value} = 0.000$. Where correlation coefficient 0.462 shows statistical significance at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 15

Regression analysis result of the test between attitude towards sponsors among BGSU Athletics fans and its impact on their purchase intentions

Model		Coefficients ^a					
		Unstandardized Coefficients		t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	.992	.258	3.850	.000	.485	1.500
	Attitude towards Sponsor	.789	.096	.462	.000	.599	.978

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

Table 15 shows regression analysis result of the test between attitude towards sponsors among BGSU Athletics fans and its impact on their purchase intentions. It demonstrates that there is an

association between Attitude towards sponsors among BGSU Athletics fans and purchase intentions ($p < 0.05$). Where p -values = 0.000 and t -statistics = 8.183, which is greater than 5 based on common thumb rule. Results of Table 14 and 15 both agree that Attitude towards sponsors among fans of BGSU Athletics impact positively on the fans intention to purchase the product and/or services of the BGSU Athletics sponsors.

Research Question Three

To examine the influence of fan involvement with BGSU Athletics on the brand recall of sponsors associated with BGSU Athletics program.

Hypothesis Three

Table 16

Correlation result of fan involvement with BGSU Athletics and sponsor(s) brand recall

Correlations		Brand recall	Extent of fans involvement in BGSU Athletics
Brand recall	Pearson Correlation	1	-.287**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	249	249
Extent of fans involvement in BGSU Athletics	Pearson Correlation	-.287**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	249	249

**, Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 16 shows the correlation result of the test of influence of fan involvement with BGSU Athletics on the brand recall of sponsors associated with BGSU Athletics program. It demonstrates that there is a negative relationship between Extent of fans involvement in BGSU Athletics on brand recall ($p < 0.01$). Where p -values = 0.000 and correlation co-efficient = - 0.287** less than the significant level 0.01.

Table 17

Regression analysis result of the test of influence of fan involvement with BGSU Athletics on the brand recall of sponsors associated with BGSU Athletics program

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.830	.104		17.632	.000
1 Extent of fans involvement in BGSU Athletics	-.207	.044	-.287	-5.705	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Brand_recall

Table 17 shows the regression analysis result of the test of influence of fan involvement with BGSU Athletics on the brand recall of sponsors associated with BGSU Athletics program. It demonstrates that there is a negative relationship between the Extent of fans involvement in BGSU Athletics and brand recall of sponsors associated with BGSU Athletics program ($p < 0.05$, at 95% confidence level). Based on the output from Table 16 and 17, the Extent of fans involvement in BGSU Athletics negatively influences brand recall of sponsors associated with BGSU Athletics program.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Sponsorship, in the realm of sports, offers a unique platform for brands to connect with their target audience, leveraging the passion and loyalty inherent in sports fans. This connection is presumed to enhance brand recall, a key metric for sponsorship success. However, the effectiveness of these sponsorships in creating lasting impressions on consumers' minds is contingent upon several factors, including the nature of the sponsorship, the alignment between the sponsoring brand and the sports entity, and how these sponsorships are activated and presented to the audience.

The discussion section of this study focused on the intricate relationship between sponsorship effectiveness and brand recall within the context of Bowling Green State University (BGSU) Athletics. This investigation delved into how sponsorships, as a strategic marketing tool, influence the recall and perception of brands among the diverse audiences that follow BGSU's athletic programs. This study's findings emerged from a survey that sought to gauge the effectiveness of sponsorships by measuring how well and under what circumstances the audience recalls brands. Furthermore, this discussion part critically evaluated any disparities between the expected and actual consequences of sponsorship activities, using theoretical frameworks and preceding research to contextualize our findings. In doing so, the study intends to contribute to the body of literature related to sponsorship dynamics in college athletics and provide practical information for stakeholders aiming to maximize the value of their sponsorship investments. The author looked at how the findings compare to existing research on sponsorship effectiveness and brand recall, as well as how they contribute to a better understanding of the elements that impact successful brand-sponsor sponsorships in collegiate athletics.

The result of the study hypothesis and objectives found the following:

- There is a positive relationship between Extent of fans involvement in BGSU Athletics and Attitude towards the BGSU Athletics Program.
- There is a positive relationship between Extent of fans involvement in BGSU Athletics and the Attitude towards sponsors.
- Attitude towards sponsors among fans of BGSU Athletics impact positively on the fans intention to purchase the product and/or services of the BGSU Athletics sponsors.
- The Extent of fans involvement in BGSU Athletics negatively influence brand recall of sponsors associated with BGSU Athletics program.

Research Question One

In line with the findings that the extent of fans involvement in BGSU Athletics have positive impact on the fans attitude towards the BGSU Athletics Program, Kim et al. (2013) acknowledged a positive relationship between attendees' team dedication and their behavioural outcomes. According to Meenaghan (2001), highly involved consumers tend to possess broad knowledge about the events, teams, or players they are passionate about, and have difficulty distancing themselves from their favorite group or event (Dees et al. 2008).

The findings that fans involvement has positive impact on fans attitude towards sponsors was supported by Jaber & Barkhordar (2022), study which sought to model the effect of fan-team identification on the sponsorship consequences in the Professional Football League in Iran. The study found that fan team involvement with a particular team has a strong and meaningful impact on their positive attitude toward sponsors of their team. Put simply, the stronger the fans' affiliation with their favorite team, the more favorable their attitudes will be toward the team sponsors. This agrees with McDonald (1991) which stated that those who are interested in a

sporting or other event are more inclined, even prior to the event, to know of sponsoring companies, be acquainted with them, and have a positive attitude toward them. In support of this finding, Hoek et al. (1993) discovered that managers of sponsoring corporations believe that sponsorship enhances consumers' attitudes toward the company's products.

According to Dos-Santos et al. (2023), alignment with the sponsor plays a significant role in the formation of positive attitudes towards sponsor. According to Pappu & Quester (2016), brand innovation plays a crucial role in increasing customer loyalty, particularly in the current market where brands are fiercely competing, and their products are almost identical. Innovation in this context refers to how much of this attribute customers find appealing in a brand (Barone & Jewell, 2013). Brand innovation within sports sponsorship has the potential to substantially augment the efficacy of such sponsorships through audience engagement, memorability, and relevance. It is introducing new or enhanced components to a brand to increase its visibility and appeal. This ultimately results in increased brand recall, a crucial indicator of the effectiveness of sponsorship. Furthermore, brand positioning plays a critical role in fostering positive attitudes towards the sponsor by enabling consumers to distinguish between brands within a specific category of products (Castañeda-García et al., 2019). It refers to a company's approach to distinguishing itself from the competition. It involves identifying and striving to control a marketing niche for a brand, product, or service through various tactics such as price, promotions, distribution, packaging, and competition. The significance of brand positioning in sponsorship effectiveness cannot be overstated, as it amplifies brand recall, especially in the context of collegiate athletics, where audience alignment with the brand's values can substantially influence recall results. Not only does popularity support these more favorable impressions of the brand but it also drives social consumption, which in turn improves customer

perceptions towards the brand (Gil et al., 2017).

The findings that fans involvement has positive impact on fans attitude towards sponsors was opposed by Rai et al. (2021), who investigated the relationship between fans' Psychological Commitment to Team (PCT) with three outcomes to sponsors: that is, cognitive (product knowledge), affective (attitude to sponsors), and behavioural (purchase plans). The results of their study show that PCT significantly affects cognitive and affective outcomes, but it has no effect or a negative effect on behavioural outcomes towards sponsors. This suggests that the dedication of the fans was ineffective as a motivator and did not change the attendees' plans to make a purchase. When it comes to consumption, customers would rather base their choices on their individual experiences than on an emotional connection to their team (Biscaia et al., 2014). However, this data implies that rather than an emotional bond, consumer decisions about impulsively purchasing sponsor-related products and services are driven by their need for satisfaction. Although Biscaia et al. (2014) opined that sponsors were correctly identified by fans who attend and take part in their team's games, Norris et al. (2014) revealed that consumers purchase goods and services based on their own needs.

Research Question Two

Based on Table 8, the fans neither agree nor disagree that Seeing a sponsor's brand associated with BGSU Athletics has influenced their intent to purchase their products or services. They neither agree nor disagree that they are more likely to purchase products or services from official sponsors of BGSU Athletics. Although they agreed that they trust and have confidence in the products/services offered by the official sponsors of BGSU Athletics. They neither agree nor disagree that they are more inclined to recommend products or services from official sponsors of BGSU Athletics to others.

The analysis of research question two revealed that the attitude towards sponsors among BGSU Athletics fans impact positively on their intent to purchase the product and/or services of the BGSU Athletics sponsors. The results of Gunduzyeli (2023) agree with the findings of this study. Gunduzyeli (2023) found that the team support of the fans has a statistically essential and beneficial effect on the sponsor brand's purchasing intention. It has also been noted that the statistical association between team support and buying intention is strengthened by a favourable fan attitude towards the sponsor. In addition, Kwon & Armstrong (2002) examined the impulsive inclinations of university students when buying licensed sports team merchandise. The study focused on consumer characteristics, precisely the level of pleasure obtained from shopping and the degree of affiliation with a sports team. These factors measured consumers' connection with the products they intend to purchase. The study evaluated two variables dependent on each other: impulse buying behavior and the monetary worth of sports team-licensed products bought. The study analyzed several independent variables: shopping enjoyment, sports team identification, time availability, and money availability. The study revealed that those with a strong emotional attachment to a specific club are more likely to purchase branded products and display impulsive buying tendencies. Moreover, the study found that team identification was the only factor that led to significant impulsive buying. Devoted sports enthusiasts often struggle to detach themselves from their preferred team or activity. The level of emotional attachment that sports lovers feel towards a specific sports team might impact their positive assessment and support of sponsors affiliated with the sports team. Similar to this, Jung & Seock (2016) also attest that fans' perceptions of the sponsoring brand have a statistically significant and favourable impact on their intentions to make a purchase.

According to Nguyen & Vu (2022) study, participation in and exposure to sponsored events significantly improve attitudes towards sponsors and purchase intentions. It is therefore possible to argue that fans who identify with their team and cheer them on no matter what—win or lose—have a higher propensity to buy goods and services from the company that the sports team enjoys a sponsorship relationship with. Given that sponsors provide most of the funding for sports teams, the existence of sporting events and activities depends heavily on them, so highlighting the potential benefits of sponsorship would increase the organizations' willingness to participate in the practice. As can be observed from the results presented in Table 8 of the findings section, product influences BGSU fans when they see a sponsor brand associated with the school's athletics. This is most likely due to their faith in the goods and services provided by BGSU Athletics' official sponsors. Therefore, there is great chance that they will buy goods or services from BGSU Athletics' official sponsors.

According to García-Fernández et al. (2018), one of the factors in the analysis of service operation that has drawn the most attention is perceived quality. This idea relates to how customers assess a product's quality or relative advantage over another. To boost fans' purchase intentions and habits, BGSU athletics sponsors must establish a strong brand that they can trust.

Research Question Three

The analysis of data for research question three revealed that the extent of fans involvement in BGSU Athletics negatively influence brand recall of sponsors associated with BGSU Athletics program. Rubel (2019) discovered that there is a moderately strong correlation between fan participation and sponsor awareness/brand recall, which is in contrast to the results of this study. Thus, this finding casts doubt on one of the most foundational assumptions of sponsorship. Sponsorship can be a very helpful tool for a new brand to quickly increase their

awareness (Rubel, 2019). Furthermore, some of the results of Jaber & Barkhordar (2022) study showed that fans involvement with a particular team impacts how those fans recognize sponsors well. The stronger the fans' connection to their favorite team, the greater their understanding and awareness of the team's sponsors. The results indicate that Fan-team involvement has had a beneficial and noteworthy impact on Iranian football fans' recognition of sponsors. In addition, Rogić et al. (2020) conducted a study investigating the ability of fans to remember and recognize sponsorship after the Games of the Small States of Europe. The study revealed that sponsors have the potential to achieve significant visibility throughout the Games, which helps to reinforce their brand recognition in the minds of the participants.

According to Biscaia et al. (2014), fans tend to remember sponsors who have their logo prominently displayed on the team shirts as "top of mind." Therefore, to guarantee recall rates, it is crucial to be visible from the stadium stands. Most of the time, supporters can identify the sponsors and non-sponsors of their team. This is in line with Monterian (2020), who found out that, even though some of the teams' sponsors are less well-known than others, fans can typically recall them accurately as demonstrated by the results presentation in the findings section. Sport activity involvement, as described by Koronions et al. (2022), is a measure of a person's interest in a specific sport. Sports participation, according to Bachleda et al. (2016), is a crucial component of sponsor awareness that boosts the predictive power on customers' (fans') brand recall and purchase intentions. Customers may develop favorable connections with the brands that sponsor their favorite sport team or athlete based on this idea. Because of the previously mentioned special significance for the customer, which can be related to their perspectives and attitudes, this positive association may be reflected in the emotional bond that develops between them, the team, and the sponsor. This emotional bond may lead to brand loyalty.

The results of this investigation run counter to the assertions and conclusions made by the authors above. Sponsors of BGSU athletics include the following, according to Table 5 Real estate, retail departmental stores, financial institutions, non-alcoholic beverage, alcoholic beverage, and restaurant sponsors. The results of the study, which show that the level of fan participation in BGSU Athletics negatively affect brand recall of sponsors connected to the athletics program, raise the possibility that supporters of a given team will focus primarily on the result of the game and pay little attention to the sponsor's advertisement. The ability of a fan to name brands they saw during a football game without assistance is known as brand recall (Liimatainen, 2023). One important factor in determining how well commercials grab viewers' attention and stick in their memories is "brand recall," a term that is frequently used in research to assess viewers' recall of advertising brands (Liimatainen, 2023). But depending on what the sponsors are marketing; fans might only focus on a particular sponsor. For instance, a beer-drinking fan attending a game might be more drawn to the sponsors whose advertisement promoted alcohol. As a result, this fan remembers the sponsors of the alcohol and ignores the others, whether they support their team or the opposition. Because they are extremely enthused about the game's outcome or extremely angry that a game was lost, some fans of a certain team may be actively participating with that team but be unable to recall a specific brand. According to Monterian (2020), brand recall rises with length of exposure to sponsors, prior brand awareness of sponsors, message design and length, spectator socio-demographics, and interest in the sponsored event. Therefore, the likelihood of recall will decrease even though BSGU athletics fans are heavily involved, and the products are not frequently advertised during a game. Alternatively, BGSU athletics might not have provided cognitive schemata that may be strong enough to help fans enhance their memory association connected to sponsors.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION

Summary of Findings and Discussion

The study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of sponsorships in sports focusing on BGSU Athletics. Through a comprehensive analysis, this study explored the extent of fan involvement, attitudes toward the BGSU Athletics Program and its sponsors, and the impact of these attitudes on brand recall and purchase intentions. The findings show the significant role of fan involvement in shaping positive attitudes towards the athletics program and its sponsors, which in turn influence brand recall and purchase intentions.

Key findings from the study include:

- **Fan Involvement and Attitudes:** A positive correlation exists between fan involvement in BGSU Athletics and favorable attitudes toward the program. This relationship highlights the importance of engaging fans to foster a supportive environment for the athletic program and its sponsors.
- **Attitudes Toward Sponsors and Purchase Intentions:** The study found that positive attitudes towards sponsors significantly influence fans' purchase intentions. This finding suggests that sponsorships enhance brand visibility and drive consumer behavior, leading to increased sales and brand loyalty.
- **Brand Recall:** The Extent of fans involvement in BGSU Athletics negatively influence brand recall of sponsors associated with BGSU Athletics program indicating room for improvement.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations can be made to improve the effectiveness of sponsorships in BGSU Athletics and similar contexts:

- **Enhance Fan Engagement:** Increasing fan engagement through interactive and immersive experiences can strengthen the emotional connection between fans and the athletics program. This could be achieved through social media campaigns, fan events, and exclusive content that resonates with the audience.
- **Strategic Sponsor Activation:** Sponsors should implement strategic activation plans that align with the values and interests of the fan base. Personalized and targeted marketing efforts can enhance brand recall and reinforce positive attitudes toward the sponsor.
- **Leverage Data Analytics:** Data analytics can help sponsors understand fan behavior and preferences, tailor their messaging, and improve engagement. Insights gained from data can also inform more effective sponsorship strategies and maximize return on investment.

Limitations of Study

While this study provides valuable insights, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations:

- **Sample Size and Generalizability:** The sample size of the study was limited to 249 respondents, potentially limiting its ability to represent the complete fan base of BGSU Athletics. In addition, majority of the participants were current students of BGSU which might have impacted their brand recall rate of some categories of the sponsors. Future research with a more extensive and more diverse sample could provide more generalizable results.
- **Cross-Sectional Design:** A cross-sectional design was used to collect data at a specific time for the study. Conducting longitudinal studies may provide more comprehensive insights regarding the enduring impacts of sponsorships on fans' attitudes and behaviors.

- **Self-Reported Data:** The utilization of self-reported survey responses introduces the potential for response bias. Future research may integrate experimental designs or observational methodologies to address this constraint
- **Focus on Collegiate Athletics:** The study focused specifically on BGSU Athletics, which may limit the applicability of findings to other contexts. Comparative studies across different sports and levels of competition could enhance the understanding of sponsorship effectiveness.

Recommendations for Future Study

To build on the findings of this study, future research could explore the following areas:

- **Long term effects of Sponsorships:** Investigate the long-term effects of sponsorships on fan behavior and brand loyalty to provide a more comprehensive understanding of sponsorship effectiveness.
- **Comparative Analysis:** Conduct comparative studies across different sports and levels of competition to identify specific factors that influence sponsorship success.
- **Integrated Marketing Strategies:** Examine how sponsorship and other forms of integrated marketing, including public relations and digital marketing, work together to increase the effectiveness of promotional campaigns.
- **Fan Demographics and Preferences:** Explore the influence of demographic variables, such as age, gender, and socioeconomic status, on fan engagement and sponsorship effectiveness.

In conclusion, this study highlights the significant impact of fan involvement and positive attitudes towards sponsors on the effectiveness of sports sponsorships. By implementing the recommended strategies and addressing the identified limitations, sports organizations and

sponsors can enhance their sponsorship outcomes, driving greater brand awareness, loyalty, and consumer engagement.

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APPENDIX A. QUESTIONNAIRE

Demographics

Age: 18-24 ☐ 25-34 ☐ 35-44 ☐ 45-54 ☐

Gender: _____

Education level: Freshman ☐ Sophomore ☐ Junior ☐ Senior ☐ Graduate ☐

Race/Ethnicity: White/Caucasian ☐ Black/African American ☐ Asian ☐ Hispanic/Latino ☐

Native American ☐ Other ☐

Have you attended a BGSU Athletics event in the past year? (Yes/No)

If yes, how many events have you attended recently? Rarely (less than 3 games per season) ☐

Occasionally (3-5 games per season) ☐ Frequently (6-8 games per season) ☐ Regularly (more than 8 games per season) ☐

Brand Recall

Can you name any sponsor(s) associated with BGSU Athletics? (Open-ended)

Which sponsor do you most closely associate with BGSU Athletics? (Open-ended)

Unaided Brand Recall

Without any prompts, can you name sponsor(s) you recall from recent BGSU Athletics events?
(Open-ended)

Aided Brand Recall

We will provide a list of possible sponsors. Please mark the ones you remember seeing associated with BGSU Athletics recently.

Real Estate Sponsor	Retail Department Store Sponsor	Financial Institution Sponsor
Mecca Management <input type="checkbox"/>	Walmart <input type="checkbox"/>	PNC <input type="checkbox"/>
New Love Realtor <input type="checkbox"/>	Meijer <input type="checkbox"/>	Alliant credit <input type="checkbox"/>

AA Green Realty <input type="checkbox"/>	Aldi <input type="checkbox"/>	Glass city federal credit union <input type="checkbox"/>
Greenbriar Inc <input type="checkbox"/>	Kroger <input type="checkbox"/>	Chase <input type="checkbox"/>
Non-Alcoholic Beverage Sponsor	Alcoholic Beverage Sponsor	Restaurant Sponsor
Coca Cola <input type="checkbox"/>	Juniper Brewing Company <input type="checkbox"/>	Bob Evans <input type="checkbox"/>
Starbucks <input type="checkbox"/>	Brewing Green Company <input type="checkbox"/>	Fricker's <input type="checkbox"/>
Pepsi <input type="checkbox"/>	Arlyn's Good Beer <input type="checkbox"/>	Buffalo Wild Wings <input type="checkbox"/>
Biggyby Coffee <input type="checkbox"/>	Aistear Brewing <input type="checkbox"/>	Jet's Pizza <input type="checkbox"/>

Attitude Towards the Sponsor

On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is "Not a good fit" and 5 is "Excellent fit," how well do you think the sponsor(s) align with the values and image of BGSU Athletics?

On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is "Not familiar at all" and 5 is "Very familiar," how familiar are you with the sponsor's brand or products?

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements regarding your attitude towards the official sponsors of BGSU Athletics. Use the scale below, where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree.

- I feel more connected to the official sponsors when they support BGSU Athletics.
Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐
- I am more likely to attend BGSU Athletic events because of the involvement of official sponsors. Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐
- The official sponsors of BGSU Athletics enhance the overall experience of attending BGSU sporting events. Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

4. I feel a sense of loyalty and appreciation toward the official sponsors of BGSU Athletics.

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

5. The advertising and promotions by official sponsors during BGSU sporting events are enjoyable and add value to my experience. Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐

Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

Purchase Intent

On a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being "Strongly Disagree" and 5 being "Strongly Agree," please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement:

Seeing a sponsor's brand associated with BGSU Athletics has influenced my intent to purchase their products or services. Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neither Agree nor Disagree ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Not sure ☐

I am more likely to purchase products or services from official sponsors of BGSU Athletics.

Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

I trust and have confidence in the products/services offered by the official sponsors of BGSU Athletics. Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

I am more inclined to recommend products or services from official sponsors of BGSU Athletics to others. Strongly Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Neutral ☐ Agree ☐ Strongly Agree ☐

Attitude Towards BGSU Athletics Program

On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is "Very dissatisfied" and 5 is "Very satisfied," how satisfied are you with your overall experience of BGSU Athletics events?

On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is "Very low quality" and 5 is "Very high quality," how would you rate the overall quality of BGSU Athletics events?

To what extent do you feel emotionally connected to the BGSU Athletics program? (Not at all connected/Somewhat connected/Strongly connected)

Has your attitude towards BGSU Athletics become more positive or negative due to its association with sponsors? (More positive/More negative/No change)

APPENDIX B. IRB APPROVAL LETTER



BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

Office of Research Compliance

Institutional Review Board

DATE: December 1, 2023

TO: Oghenevwaire Sarah Enamutor, Masters

FROM: Bowling Green State University Institutional Review Board

PROJECT TITLE: [2105939-3] Sponsorship effectiveness through brand recall: A survey of BGSU Athletics.

SUBMISSION TYPE: Revision

ACTION: APPROVED

APPROVAL DATE: November 27, 2023

EXPIRATION DATE: October 11, 2024

REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # 7

Thank you for your submission of Revision materials for this project. The Bowling Green State University Institutional Review Board has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

Reviewer Comment: Recruiting at a sporting event would make it possible for others to be nearby. (VII e).

The final approved version of the consent document(s) is available as a published Board Document in the Review Details page. You must use the approved version of the consent document when obtaining consent from participants. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that you are responsible to conduct the study as approved by the IRB. If you seek to make any changes in your project activities or procedures, those modifications must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the modification request form for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must also be reported promptly to this office.

This approval expires on October 11, 2024. You will receive a continuing review notice before your project expires. If you wish to continue your work after the expiration date, your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date.

If you have any questions, please contact the Institutional Review Board at 419-372-7716 or irb@bgsu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Bowling Green State University Institutional Review Board's records.