Leveraging Brand Equity through Sponsorships

An explanatory study of brand loyalty in consistent and conflict ing club and player sponsorship scenarios in European football

Authors
Erik Brännström
Hampus Gunnarsson

 Supervisor
Veronika Tarnovskaya

Examiner
Jens Hultman
Abstract

Title: Leveraging Brand Equity through Sponsorships - An explanatory study of brand loyalty in consistent and conflicting club and player sponsorship scenarios in European football.

Seminar date: 2011-06-01

Course: BUSM 08 Master Thesis, 15 credits.

Authors: Erik Brännström
Hampus Gunnarsson

Supervisor: Veronika Tarnovskaya

Keywords: Brand Loyalty, Sponsorships, Club attachment, Image transfer, Football

Purpose: The purpose of the thesis is to measure the effect of consistent and conflicting sponsorship scenarios on brand loyalty of sponsoring firms among club supporters.

Methodology and Empirical Evidence: A quantitative quota sample survey study on 715 Swedish respondents. Through a deductive approach the thesis tests hypotheses.

Theoretical perspectives: The theoretical underpinnings of this thesis are derived from Customer based brand equity theory, identification theory, image transfer, and social identity theory.

Findings: Sponsorship scenarios influence the Protective Sponsorship Attitude among supporters, but not Brand Loyalty directly.
Acknowledgements

This master thesis wraps up the International Marketing & Brand Management Master Programme 2011, concluding four years all together at the School of Economics and Management at Lund University. As we both have practiced football and ice hockey in sponsored teams, we have experienced the world of sport and sponsorships ourselves. For this reason, we seek to contribute to the theoretical and practical understanding of brands in sport sponsorship with this thesis.

We would like to thank Veronika Tarnovskaya for her guidance and help as supervisor for the thesis. We also want to thank Timurs Umans for his help with the statistics.

We would also like to give a shout-out to Peter Hyllman, Robert Johansson, and Per Zander for posting the surveys on their blogs. Also, we want to thank SvenskaFans and the moderators of the forums for letting us approach their users.

Erik Brännström

Hampus Gunnarsson

May 27 2011

Lund
# Table of Contents

1. Introduction .................................................................................................................. 6
   1.1. The Transfer Dilemma ............................................................................................. 6
   1.2. Emergence of Football Sponsorship .................................................................... 7
   1.3. The Sponsorship Platform ..................................................................................... 8
   1.4. Problematization .................................................................................................. 10
   1.5. Research question and purpose .......................................................................... 13
   1.6. Focus and Limitations ......................................................................................... 13
   1.7. Outline and disposition ........................................................................................ 14

2. Methodology .................................................................................................................. 15
   2.1. Research strategy ................................................................................................ 15
      2.1.1. Research philosophy: epistemological considerations .................................. 15
      2.1.2. Research approach: empirical considerations ............................................... 16
      2.1.3. Ontological considerations .......................................................................... 16
   2.2. Nature of research ................................................................................................ 16
   2.3. Research design .................................................................................................... 17

3. Theoretical Framework ................................................................................................. 18
   3.1. Sponsorships to leverage brand knowledge ....................................................... 18
   3.2. Evaluating sponsorships ..................................................................................... 21
      3.2.1. Creating brand awareness ............................................................................ 21
      3.2.2. Enhancing brand image .............................................................................. 23
   3.3. Brand Loyalty ....................................................................................................... 24
   3.4. Purchase intentions ............................................................................................... 25
   3.5. Club attachment .................................................................................................. 26
   3.6. Player attachment ................................................................................................. 28
   3.8. Summary of theoretical concepts ......................................................................... 29
   3.9. Summary of Hypotheses ...................................................................................... 31

4. Empirical method ......................................................................................................... 32
   4.1. Sample .................................................................................................................. 32
      4.1.1 Research groups - Choice of clubs and players ............................................... 33
8.2. Electronic ......................................................................................................................... 64
8.3. Literature ........................................................................................................................... 66
8.4. Personal Communication and Lectures ............................................................................. 67
9. Appendix ................................................................................................................................ 68
  9.1. Dictionary .......................................................................................................................... 68
  9.2. Survey ............................................................................................................................... 69
  9.3. Pearson correlation ............................................................................................................. 70
  9.4. Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic ......................................................................................... 71
  9.5. ANOVA one-way ............................................................................................................... 71
  9.6. T-test .................................................................................................................................. 72
  9.7. Multiple regression test .................................................................................................... 72
1. Introduction

This chapter starts with a case that introduces the topic of this thesis. We will continue with a background in football sponsorships, discuss our problem, and present the purpose and research question. Lastly, limitations and outline for the thesis will follow.

1.1. The Transfer Dilemma

When the Swedish football player Zlatan Ibrahimović was about to leave his Italian club Internazionale in the summer of 2009, it was suggested in media that the range of clubs he could join was limited. Ibrahimović had led Internazionale to three straight Scudettos (Italian football championships), and was the dominating force in the team. He had been awarded the most valuable player and top goal scorer in the Italian league, and was ready for new challenges. (Persson, 2011; Bolin, 2009) Ibrahimović had a lucrative individual endorsement deal with the American sports apparel manufacturer, Nike. Besides using Nike shoes on the pitch, the deal also included the making of a TV-documentary, advertisements, and various PR stunts (Sjöshult, 2008).

Due to the heavy investments made by Nike to promote Ibrahimović as their poster boy, concerns were raised whether he could join a club that was sponsored by a competing manufacturer. The situation implied that besides finding an athletic connection to a new club, there were also complimentary brand effects to consider. Ibrahimović was obviously an important brand influencer for both the club he represents, as well as the apparel company he was sponsored by. The status of high achieving athletes had put Ibrahimović in a position where he himself was a brand with an estimated value of €30 million, and with a newly contracted brand manager to manage it. (Helander, 2010)
1.2. Emergence of Football Sponsorship

The commercial potential of sponsorship has been increasingly uncovered in recent years, and the use of it as a promotion tool has become more common (Kotler et al., 2004). Sponsorship can be defined as a “provision of assistance either financial or in kind to an activity by a commercial organization for the purpose of achieving commercial objectives” (Meenaghan, 1983). It is also proposed that the objectives are achieved through exploiting the commercial potential that is associated with the sponsored activity (Meenaghan, 1991).

The worldwide expenditures for sponsorships has increased massively over the last decades, from $2 billion in 1984 to $46.3 billion in 2010 (Alexandris & Tsiotsou, 2009: IEG Sponsorship Report 2011) Recent figures from the Swedish Institute of Advertising and Media Statistics shows that sponsorship surpasses television commercial and is the third largest promotion tool after newspapers and the Internet (Helander, 2011).

In football, sponsorships became more occurring after the Second World War, with the rising influence of television. The status of football players increased with the popularity of the sport, and they were more frequently used to sell products through advertising and sponsorships. It made clubs and sponsors not only regard players as athletes but also as “marketable commodities”. (Howard & Sayce, 2002) The increasing value of players has made clubs invest a lot of money to attract a star player to their team. In today’s football market, transfer fees and wages have reached sky-high levels, and the signing of an individual player could cost the club up to $1 billion (Brummer, 2011). For that amount of money, the club do not only expect the player to perform well on the pitch but also to manage his personal brand as they use it to sell merchandise, paying off the expensive transfer (FBSB, 2011).

Apparel manufacturers sign big money sponsor contracts with football clubs and individual players in order to leverage their brand equity. Brand equity is explained as
Leveraging Brand Equity through Sponsorship – Brand loyalty in sponsorship scenarios

the assets linked to a brand, which adds to the value provided by the product or service (Aaker, 1996). Through a qualitative study of a strongly branded firm in New Zealand, Cliff & Motion (2004) found that sponsorships could be used as central driver for brand strategy, and provide added value to the consumers. Sponsorships allow firms to leverage the brand equity assets (awareness, loyalty, perceived quality and associations) by linking themselves to the sponsored object (Meenaghan, 2001: Keller, 2003). At the same time football clubs, with their increased expenditures, have become very much reliable on the revenue stream from sponsoring brands. That makes sponsorship a relationship between parties where there is an assumption of mutual benefits. This makes us interpret sponsorships as a form of co-branding, where the sponsor is seeking to leverage their brand through connecting itself to the associations linked to the sponsor object. Co-branding is when two or more brands join forces, and are marketed together to enjoy synergy effects (Keller & Kotler, 2009) Co-branding includes long-term and symmetrical cooperation between the brands (Uggla, 2001). Figure 1. illustrates this relationship.

Figure 1. “Sponsorship Synergy Model”, adapted from Meenaghan & Shipley (1999) “Interactive relationship between Barclay's and soccer”

1.3. The Sponsorship Platform

Football is the most popular sport in the world, and televised games of top clubs have huge public reach (Zlatans Val, 2009: Britannica, 2011). That makes sponsorships of
football clubs a potent marketing communication vehicle, used by firms to favourably position their brands in the mind of the consumers. Sponsorships differ from traditional advertising where the firm combines a medium and a message to establish favourable associations among consumers that are exposed to them both. When using the club as the medium vehicle, it is at the same time also the message. (Meenaghan & Shipley, 1999) It is also different, as it is often perceived as providing benefits to the society, hence lowering consumers advertising defence mechanism (Meenaghan, 2001). The clubs are basically offering firms a platform where they can communicate with a broad, yet defined target, in more or less disguised ways. The platform consists of many brands in relation to each other. First, the club is one brand itself, then all the players should be regarded as personal brands, and the platform is often shared by multiple sponsoring brands. The sponsoring brand is then trying to exploit the strong media value of the platform, and its audience (spectators and supporters), to leverage their brand associations.

Figure 2. The Club Sponsorship Platform

The focus of this thesis will be on athletic apparel manufacturers that sponsor football clubs. The athletic apparel market is huge with an estimated value at $282 billion for year 2009 (NPD Sport Report 2010). Competitors are selling very similar products,
and hence basically competing with their brands to differentiate from each other. This makes it crucial to build brands and communicate with target consumers that identify with teams and athletes. Besides apparel sponsors, there are often also shirt sponsors. The difference is that shirt sponsors can operate in unrelated markets, while the apparel sponsor have a self-evident link to the club and player, since they actually use the sponsors’ products when they compete (Cornwell et al., 2006). That is one reason why sport sponsorships are more relevant to product brands that can connect product use to the sport activity (Cliff & Motion, 2004).

1.4. Problematization

If individual players are endorsing one brand, while they represent a club that is sponsored by a competing brand, then that brand will affect the sponsorship platform as well. Instead of the synergistic sponsorship model above, the platform includes stakeholders with conflicting interests. That scenario is a common occurrence in football today. “The world of sponsorships are complicated in that sense, and it is a requirement from our perspective as sponsors that consumers recognise what product (brand) the players use and endorse”, says Adidas PR Manager Emma Stjernlöf (Jakobsson, 2009). The figure below outlines two cases of conflicting sponsorships in top European football clubs. The player awarded FIFA Ballon d’Or (best player in the world), Lionel Messi, is sponsored by Adidas but represent FC Barcelona, which is sponsored by Nike. The star player of Real Madrid, Cristiano Ronaldo, is endorsing Nike, while the club is sponsored by Adidas. Those examples are just two out of many among top European football clubs.
The profound and underlying assumption regarding successful sponsorships is that consumers need to be aware of the sponsorship activity, and also aware of the sponsoring corporation’s brand (Pope, 1998). It has been shown in research by Johar and Pham (1999), that the presence of competitors might impair consumers’ ability to identify the right sponsor of an event. This suggests that the scenario where the player and the club endorse competing brands may not have the right conditions for leveraging the sponsorship. We will further on refer to that situation as a conflicting sponsorship scenario. We do not label it conflicting in the sense that it necessarily needs to be detrimental for brand-related outcomes, but rather conflicting because there are two sponsors involved that have separate interests. There are of course also situations where the player endorses the same brand as the club. We have decided to label that situation as a consistent sponsorship scenario. The two sponsorship scenarios are basically different brand settings that provide varied opportunities to leverage brand equity.

The potential of sponsor misidentification in conflicting sponsorship scenarios, could be related to ambush marketing. That basically means that a company are being associated with a particular sponsor object (football club) without actually being the
official sponsor. In this case it would mean that an individual player sponsor was misidentified as the club sponsor. Ambush marketing has been described as a major threat to corporate sponsorship (Meenaghan, 1996). The confusion from ambush may is suggested to arise from the increasing complexity surrounding events being sponsored by multiple sponsors. Athletes, teams, events, and broadcasts are often sponsored by different firms, and hence the complexity makes sponsor value hard to extract (Farrelly et al., 2005). Most effective ambush cases have created confusion among consumers, and generated awareness for the ambushing brand on behalf of the official sponsor (Burton & Chadwick, 2009). Meenaghan (1996:106) describes the ambition and effect of ambush marketing: "At the very least, an ambush marketer creates consumer confusion, thereby denying the legitimate sponsor clear recognition for its sponsorship role." If this confusion translates to the club platform, it might have consequences for the value of clubs as marketing communication vehicles. The club’s offering to the sponsors is an awareness and image-enhancing platform. If the platform is ambushed by conflicting player sponsorships, then their offering might be less attractive for sponsoring firms.

This research is important since club sponsorships and athlete endorsements play an important strategic role for athletic apparel manufacturers (Falkenström, 2011). In many consumer markets, consumers are being less loyal to a specific brand, and more rational and opportunistic when they consume (Schriver (1997) in Dixon et al., 2005). However, the relationship between a sports team and its supporters is different in terms of loyalty. This is a setting where strong supporters have deep emotional bonds to the club, often developed over a long period of time. (Mahony et al., 2000) Through sponsorships, firms are able to exploit these relationships in order to create loyalty to their own brand (Sirgy et al., 2008). This implies the importance of sponsorships in a less loyal and more rational consumption society, since loyal customers is argued to be the most important measure of growth and profitability (Reichheld, 2003).
1.5. Research question and purpose

Research Question: How can a firm leverage its brand equity through football sponsorships?

Research Purpose: We will examine brand loyalty outcomes of consistent and conflicting sponsorship scenarios among club supporters, and analyse mechanisms of sponsorship that influence brand loyalty for the club sponsor.

1.6. Focus and Limitations

This thesis will focus on sport sponsorship since that is the dominant category when reviewing sponsorship market shares of the various categories. Out of the $17.2 billion that was spent on sponsorship in North America in 2010, $12.66 billion, or 73.6 percent, was dedicated towards sports (IEG Sponsorship Report 2011). The biggest sport in the world, with regards to amount of participants and spectators, is undoubtedly football (Britannica, 2011). Top European clubs and their star players are very influential, and have a substantial media value from frequency and reach of exposure. That makes them highly important to sport manufacturers. This suggests that we limit this study to European football and exclude sponsorship scenarios from other parts of the world.

We will research sponsorship outcomes among supporters to certain football clubs. This perspective is relevant since it is reasonable to assume that they are the main targets for sponsorship activities. The die-hard supporters of a club are also important evangelists of the club, and hence valuable for the club sponsor. Our study will for these reasons focus on top-level football clubs in Europe through a football supporter/consumer perspective. To avoid the influence of cultural differences of countries we will focus on Swedish supporters to the European clubs.
By surveying supporters to clubs, we limit this study to football clubs, and disregard when the star players are representing their national team. It is not rare that players in conflicting club relationships have a consistent sponsorship scenario in the national team. International caps are however more event-related, and not an everyday operation like the club games.

1.7. Outline and disposition

In the introduction we have introduced the complexity of sponsorships in football and explained our research purpose. From here on we will explain our methodological choices and then move on to our theoretical framework. After that we will present our empirical method before we introduce our empirical material, analysis and conclusions. We will conclude the thesis with limitations of our research, and suggestions for future studies. We would also like to remind the reader that we have a list of definitions in Appendix 9.1.
2. Methodology

*This chapter will present our methodological choices and the motivation for choosing them. Our research philosophy, approach and design will be discussed.*

2.1. Research strategy

According to Kotler & Keller (2009) not all research projects can be specific. Some are exploratory with the purpose to bring up a real nature of the problem and to suggest possible solutions or a new idea. Descriptive research looks to quantify a problem and outline suggestions through a description. Lastly, causal research (explanatory research) tests cause and effect relationships. With regards to our purpose, this dissertation employs explanatory research strategy.

2.1.1. Research philosophy: epistemological considerations

The research question seeks to measure how a firm could leverage its brand equity, which is why the epistemological approach will be positivism. Positivism advocates the use of natural science methods to study the social reality (Bryman & Bell 2007). The key idea of positivism is that the social world exists externally, and that research should be measured through objective means rather than being inferred through subjective sensations, reflections or intuition (Easterby-Smith et al. 2008). The advantage of positivism is that it provides wide coverage efficiently. It is also potentially fast and economical with the handiness of providing justification of policies. On the other hand, it may be artificial and inflexible as philosophy (ibid.). However, this research focuses the testing of hypotheses and will thus have a positivist philosophy in measuring the phenomena of leveraging brand equity through sponsorship.
2.1.2. Research approach: empirical considerations

There is theory explaining sponsorship in sport settings, and sponsorships are also frequently researched in marketing periodicals and journals. Thus, there is theory relevant to apply in the research we are conducting. Deductive empiricism employs theory in order to do observations or reach findings, as compared to inductive empiricism that seeks to use observations and findings to generate theory. The empirical nature of our research lies closely to the deductive nature, whereas deductive studies seek to test theoretical considerations in relation to a certain domain by deducing hypotheses (Bryman & Bell 2007).

2.1.3. Ontological considerations

Considering our research purpose, objectivism becomes an evident ontological position. Objectivism asserts that a social phenomenon and its meanings have an existence independent of its social actors (Bryman & Bell 2007). It is easy to conclude an objectivist approach in this research, given that the positivist focus implies greater reliance on natural science method and numbers. Generalizability is also greater in objectivism than in the contradicting ontological position, social constructionism, which is another advantage of doing objective research.

2.2. Nature of research

Given the positivist epistemological philosophy, the deductive approach and the objectivist ontological orientation - this research will be of quantitative nature. Quantitative research (compared to qualitative) relies on the use of numbers rather than words, theory testing rather than theory emergence, static rather than process, structured rather than unstructured, generalisation rather than contextual understanding, macro rather than micro, and behaviour rather than meaning (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Also, the point of view of the researcher is focus in quantitative compared to the point of view of participants in qualitative, which makes quantitative method suitable for this research.
2.3. Research design

A research design provides a framework for collecting and analysing data (Bryman & Bell 2007). With the methodological considerations discussed earlier, a cross-sectional study would give a good perspective at a single point in time. Within cross-sectional study, there is survey research, which implies collection of data through questionnaires or by structured interviews (ibid.). Cross-sectional design usually involves more than one case (groups), and at a single point in time in order to collect a body of quantifiable data. The data should also be in connection with two or more variables, which then are examined in order to detect patterns of association (ibid.). A summary of the methodological considerations is illustrated in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methodological choices</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research purpose</td>
<td>Explanatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cause and effect relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research philosophy</td>
<td>Positivist objectivism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Measure numbers through objective means</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research approach</td>
<td>Deductive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Test theoretical considerations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research design</td>
<td>Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cross-sectional single point in time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>collection of data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research nature</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1. Summary of methodological considerations.*
3. Theoretical Framework

In order to evaluate sponsorships in consistent and conflicting scenarios we need to review the previous marketing literature. We will define important concepts in the literature, formulate hypotheses based in these concepts, and determine underpinnings of successful sponsorship practices.

3.1. Sponsorships to leverage brand knowledge

We have in the introduction defined sponsorship as providing funding for an activity, and in return exploiting the commercial potential of that sponsored activity (Meenaghan, 1991). Sponsorship was long regarded as one of many complimentary marketing tools but is now regarded as a powerful vehicle, and used by firms to build brand equity (Farrelly et al. 2005).

Building brand equity is an important part of brand building, and generates value to the firm through greater consumer loyalty, awareness, and image (McGoldrick, 2002). Those outcomes are important since they are fundamental for attitude formation and purchase intentions among consumers. Sponsorships have been proven to positively influence both attitudes to the sponsoring firm, as well as purchase intentions (Bennett et al., 2006). Brand building is essential for corporations as a powerful way to differentiate, and as a potential source of sustainable competitive advantage (Aaker, 1989). A brand is basically everything that makes a product more than a product, and hence brand building is extremely important for firms in competitive markets. (Kapferer, 2008)

According to Aaker (1996), brand equity consists of assets linked to a brand’s name or symbol that adds to the value provided by the product or service. The referred to assets are brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived quality and brand associations.
These are hence areas that should be closely observed when implementing a promotional activity such as sponsorships. We will keep this definition of brand equity in mind while we continue on examining another author’s view of the brand equity concept. They share some common ground but are not entirely the same.

In sponsorship literature, the customer based brand equity (CBBE) perspective is most frequently used to evaluate outcomes of sponsor activities (e.g. Tong & Hawley, 2009; Alexandris et al. 2008; Koo et al., 2006). This makes it reasonable for us to approach the topic from the CBBE perspective as well, and is thus also possible for us to reuse established scales and theories to examine our topic.

Customer based brand equity is defined by Keller (1993:8) as “the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand”. From this definition Keller (1993:8) continues, "a brand is said to have positive (negative) customer-based brand equity if consumers react more (less) favourably to the product, price, promotion, or distribution of the brand than they do to the same marketing mix element when it is attributed to a fictitiously named or unnamed version of the product or service". This argumentation explains the importance of having positive CBBE.

From the perspective of the CBBE, brand knowledge is key to create brand equity because differential effect of brand knowledge drives brand equity (Keller et al. 2008). Brand knowledge is defined as “a function of awareness, which relates to consumers’ ability to recall or recognize the brand, and image, which consists of consumers’ perceptions, and of associations for the brand”. (Keller, 1998:101) Brand awareness is the strength of memory accessibility in the mind of the consumer and is measured by recall and recognition. Awareness can alone be very influential for behavioural outcomes such as purchases of low involvement goods. When it comes to behaviour in relation to higher involvement goods, brand image is more influential, and awareness becomes a prerequisite. Brand image is the consumer perception of the strength, intensity and uniqueness of the brand associations. (Keller, 1998) Keller describes how consumers divide and view the reality in categories through customer behaviour
theory. From the theory of attribution, Keller defines how consumers attribute and perceive the value of a brand. (Uggl, 2001)

![Diagram of Brand Knowledge]

*Figure 4. from Keller (1993:7) “Dimensions of Brand Knowledge”*

When it comes to sponsorships, brand knowledge is relevant since it is suggested that brand equity can be leveraged through linking the brand to other entities, such as other brands, persons, places or events. This is the underlying mechanism of sponsorships. It is therefore important to understand the effect of these combinations, in the mind of the consumer (Keller, 1998). It is argued that in order for the brand to be leveraged successfully, consumers should have knowledge about the other entity, it should add associations of value to the firm, and it should be transferable (Keller, 2003). Aaker (1991) is reasoning in a similar way and argue that brand equity is to a large extent supported by the associations made by consumers. A unique brand association would increase brand equity and help build a competitive advantage, according to Chen (2001).

Tong and Hawley (2009) measured customer based brand equity in the sportswear market in China. Through their survey, they conclude that brand associations and brand loyalty are influential dimensions of brand equity. With this in mind, we will focus on brand loyalty as the main indicator of brand equity effects from sponsorships. We assume that associations are positive to the sponsor object (the club) among club
supporters, and to evaluate brand equity outcomes we measure image transfer. This concept will be further explained later on in this chapter.

3.2. Evaluating sponsorships

There are two kinds of outcomes that are interesting when evaluating sponsorship effectiveness; corporate based and consumer-based outcomes. The former are looking at the return on investment and calculates the financial result of the sponsorship in such terms as increased sales or stock prices. Consumer-based on the other hand is more concerned about non-monetary values, such as awareness, attitude towards the brand, and brand image. (Koo et al. 2006) As previously explained, this thesis is more interested about consumer-based outcomes, and examines brand equity from image transfer and loyalty.

Cliff & Motion (2004) present four consumer objectives to leverage sponsorships for brand strategy: brand awareness, brand image, brand experience, and brand loyalty. This thesis will further expand upon these concepts except brand experience, which we don't believe is relevant for our research purpose. Consumer-based outcomes can also be distinguished into categories of attitudes and behaviour. Attitudinal outcomes refer to changes in consumer perception about the sponsors’ brand image through the activated associations, while behavioural includes consumer action, such as evangelism (positive word-of-mouth) and product purchases. (Alexandris et al. 2008)

3.2.1. Creating brand awareness

A prerequisite for realizing sponsorship objectives is to establish a link between the sponsoring brand and the sponsor object (Cliff & Motion, 2004). Proper identification is regarded as a necessity in order to achieve the image transfer outcomes of sponsorships. Identification is relevant for this thesis since it is argued that presence of competitors impair the consumers’ ability to identify the right sponsor (Johar & Pham, 1999). We have previously defined the conflicting sponsorship scenario, as when the
club platform is disturbed by the presence of competitors. We also drew parallels that this could potentially be a case of ambush marketing.

Sponsored events contribute to brand equity by becoming associated with the brand and thus improving brand awareness. Awareness consists of consumer recall and recognition. The marketer raises the brand awareness by repeating the brand message. (Uggla, 2001)

Depending on what kind of product the sponsor is promoting, the influence of awareness on purchase behaviour is varied. It is however a prerequisite for image related outcomes. Meenaghan (2001) suggests that awareness should be considered a “first-line measure of sponsorship impact”, and not the dominant piece when evaluating outcomes. Cornwell et al. (2006) argue that brand awareness is foundational to other higher-level processes of brand knowledge. This suggests that awareness and proper sponsor identification might be a precursor for brand equity, but not that influential when measuring the concept itself.

Johar and Pham (1999) observed two influential heuristics when they asked consumers to identify the sponsors of the Winter Olympics in Nagano 1998. The first one, and also the most influential, was brand-event relatedness. They argue that when there is a semantic fit between the sponsoring brand and the sponsor object, it is easier to correctly identify the brand as the official sponsor. Relatedness provides the consumer with an intuitive explanation of why the sponsor has chosen to sponsor the particular event. The other heuristic is market prominence and suggests that sponsors that have larger market share or share of voice are more likely to be correctly identified as the sponsor of an event. (Johar & Pham, 1999) For the purpose of this thesis we have chosen brands that have a high level of both relatedness and market prominence. We do not believe that these concepts should have substantial influence on the result of our study. It is however important to introduce them, and have them in mind when analysing the results.
Alexandris et al. (2008) examined sponsor awareness among visitors of three different events, and found that greater involvement and attitude towards the event resulted in higher awareness. When examining sponsorship outcomes of consistent and conflicting scenarios among club supporters, we expect their involvement and attitude towards the event (club) to be high and positive. It is therefore, in combination with awareness as a foundational part of brand equity, not effective for us to use awareness tests as a part of our study (Crompton, 2004). Instead, we will measure higher-level processes of brand equity, as previously presented.

However, in the presence of closely related competitors in the sponsorship scenario, sponsor identification could suffer, and lead to lower brand loyalty, as identification is a precursor for higher-level processes within brand equity. This makes us formulate the following hypotheses:

\( H 1a \) - *Consistent sponsorship scenario between a club and their star player will lead to higher brand loyalty among supporters.*

\( H 1b \) - *Conflicting sponsorship scenario between a club and their star player will lead to lower brand loyalty among supporters.*

### 3.2.2. Enhancing brand image

As previously mentioned, brands can be leveraged through linking itself to other entities. The image of the sponsored object is being transferred to the sponsoring brand in the mind of the consumer when he/she can identify the connection (Gwinner et al. 2009). This phenomenon is called image transfer and relates to classical advertising theory. It is argued that the media vehicle will have its own personality that transfers to, and influence the image values of the advertiser. Within sponsorship this would imply that the personality of the sponsored object e.g. football club or player, transfer image values to the sponsoring brand. And also the reason why sponsor objects with highly favourable consumer attitudes is the objective for
corporate sponsorships with a desire to get spill over effects, and positively influence brand equity. (Meenaghan, 2001)

D’Alessandro (2001) refers to this transfer of emotion from an event, person or product to the sponsoring brand as the halo effect. He also highlights Nike as an example of a company who has tied itself closely to prominent athletes to achieve a halo. This is also in line with De Pelsmacker et al. (2007) who suggest that just as there seems to be a carry over effect from the attitude of an advertisement to the attitude of a brand, there is a carry over effect from the sponsored event to the sponsoring brand. This is of interest for our thesis since image transfer should be a necessity for achieving sponsorship objectives, and largely determine the success of sponsorship outcome. And with our focus on sport sponsorship, image transfer has previously been discussed as particularly crucial and influential for this area.

### 3.3. Brand Loyalty

Favourable, strong and unique associations within brand image are suggested to translate into brand loyalty among consumers. Brand loyalty is important for establishing brand equity according to Aaker (1996), and hence an important concept for this thesis. By evaluating sponsorship outcomes in relation to brand loyalty, we are able to establish a strong link to brand equity. That is the reason we emphasize in loyalty as our main evaluator of sponsorship effectiveness in our different brand scenarios.

According to Reichheld (2003:3), brand loyalty is crucial for growth and has strong impact on profitability. He defines the concept as “the willingness of someone to make an investment or personal sacrifice in order to strengthen a relationship”. It is best measured by purchase patterns and referrals. Reichheld (2003) particularly emphasizes referrals as the best indicator of true brand loyalty because when customers recommend, they put their own reputation on the line.
Olson and Jacoby (1971) define brand loyalty as "a biased, behavioural response expressed over time by some decision making unit with respect to one or more alternative brands as a function of psychological processes".

The affectionate image value of football clubs and players suggests that sponsoring brands are able to build consumer relationships, which in turn could convert into brand loyalty (Cliff & Motion, 2004). As sponsorship media vehicles, football clubs is potentially particularly attractive for firms that are looking for establishing brand loyalty. Eisler (1997) in Mahony et al. (2000:15) describes the special bond between sports fans and clubs: "Marriages come and go. So do jobs, hometowns, and friendships. But a guy's attachment to a sports team? There's a bond that holds the heart." If the sponsoring firm is able to align themselves with the club through image transfer, they will be perceived as more meaningful to consumers. Mahony et al. (2000) argues that sponsorship should not only try to create awareness, but also capture consumers’ "share of heart".

In line with Reichheld’s (2003) argumentation we believe that behavioural outcomes such as purchase patterns and recommendations are valuable measures of brand loyalty. It is however only possible if brand awareness is established, and positive image transfer from the club to the firm has occurred. We would therefore argue awareness and image transfer are prerequisites in order for brand loyalty to be the outcome of sponsorships.

*H 2 - Positive image transfer from club to sponsoring brand leads to higher brand loyalty among supporters.*

### 3.4. Purchase intentions

Purchase intentions have shown to be an important measure when evaluating sponsorship effectiveness. It is suggested that purchase intention is a good indicative of actual sales, which obviously is a relevant objective of sponsorship activities.
(Gwinner & Bennett, 2008) Bennett et al. (2006) examined the attitude among spectators of a tennis tournament, and found that the sponsor of the tournament received beneficial attitudinal and behavioural outcomes. 61.7 per cent indicated that they were more positive towards the sponsor, and 54.9 per cent would be more inclined to buy the sponsors’ products.

Koo et al. (2006) argue that brand recognition, brand attitude, and corporate image are important factors of explaining purchase intentions. Pope and Voges (2000) suggest that there are two determinants of purchase intentions, namely positive brand attitude, and brand familiarity.

This makes us assume that there should be a link between positive image transfer and purchase intentions. For the purpose of this thesis we have incorporated purchase intentions within the concept of brand loyalty, as in a previous study by Tong and Hawley (2009). Therefore we do not have a hypothesis for purchase intentions alone, but this assumption should strengthen Hypothesis 2.

### 3.5. Club attachment

Carlson et al. (2009) argues that sports teams have become quasi-brands that are used by sponsors to drive sales by connecting the popularity of the sports team with the firms’ brand. By tying their brand to a popular sports team they want the positive associations connected to the team to transfer to their own brand. This phenomenon is previously described as image transfer and is a possible explanation behind the popularity of sponsorships within football, a sport where supporters have shown to be very loyal to their favourite team. In the sponsorship literature this concept is referred to as team attachment. When applying the concept to European football it is more relevant to call it club attachment.

Team attachment has been defined as the sport consumer’s psychological connection to a particular sports team, and has shown to be very influential for behavioural
outcomes and intentions (Branscombe & Wann, 1993). It is also sometimes referred to as team identification, and relates to the attachment and concern for a particular sports team, and the influence to the supporter’s self-identity (Madrigal, 2001). The concept is founded in social identity theory and relate to an individuals’ cognitive processes and behaviour in groups (Hogg, 2006).

Alexandris and Tsiotsou (2009) examined the influence of team attachment on both attitudinal and behavioural outcomes of sponsorship. They conducted a survey among supporters of a Greek basketball team, and distributed it in connection to one the team’s games. Team attachment was found to have strong influence on sponsor image, word of mouth and purchase intentions. This suggest that highly attached supporters were more inclined towards developing a favourable brand image of the sponsor, as well as actually purchasing the sponsor’s products. The study by Gwinner et al. (2009) supports the importance of team attachment and identification to increase image transfer. They also found that image transfer was a predictor for purchase intentions as an outcome of sponsorships. Another study by Gwinner and Swanson (2003) conducted among spectators of a NCAA American Football game, concluded that highly identified supporters were more inclined to recognize the sponsor, and have more positive attitudes toward the sponsor.

In a consistent scenario we assume that club supporters are aware of the sponsor regardless if they identify with the club or player. This should translate into a positive attitude toward the club sponsor, and a protective attitude toward the sponsorship scenario. Supporters support clubs of various reasons, identification could be to either the club or the player, this should imply that they do not necessarily have positive attitudes toward the club sponsor. They would hence be less protective about consistent sponsorships. We relate this reasoning to Festinger’s (1957) theory about cognitive dissonance. He suggests that in situations of dissonance (conflicting) persons would experience psychological discomfort, and wants to reduce it by trying to achieve consonance (consistency).
H 1c - Supporters of a sponsorship consistent club will be more protective about the sponsorship scenario.

H 1d - Supporters of a sponsorship conflict club will be less protective about the sponsorship scenario.

Supporter involvement is key to determine image transfer since prior knowledge about the sponsor object is required to get the right associations transferred. Supporter involvement is the degree of attachment that the consumer have to the sponsor activity, or as in our study, the football club. The main point of the concept is that consumers will have favourable emotional response towards sponsors of an activity that provides some sort of benefit to them. (Meenaghan, 2001) The most involved supporters are also the ones that are most able to recognise the right sponsor, which, as previously mentioned is a prerequisite for sponsorship effectiveness (Pope, 1998).

H 3a - Club attached supporters should also be brand loyal to the club sponsor.

3.6. Player attachment

A celebrity endorser is defined as “any individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement” (McCracken, 1989). The reason that celebrity endorsement is a theoretical concept for this thesis is that the use of players as endorsers is the foundation for either consistent or conflicting scenarios on the sponsorship platform. It has been proven that there is a strong level relationship between celebrity endorsers and attitude toward the brand.

An alternative term for player attachment is athlete identification. That is described as “a cognitive state where the individual evaluates the degree of overlap between their
self and the athlete”. When consumers of sport largely identify with an athlete product endorsement is very influential since it gives the consumer a chance to associate themselves with the athletes. This is in line with the image congruence hypothesis; those who identify with the athlete will consume products that enhance the symbolic connection with the athlete. (Carlson & Donovan, 2008)

Besides providing the presence of competitors to impair brand awareness of the club sponsor, individual players that are used as endorsers, could influence football supporters to establish more valuable associations to firms other than the club sponsor in conflicting scenarios. According to player identification theory, it would be reasonable to assume that when player attachment is higher than club attachment, consumers would have more positive associations to, and be more loyal to the player sponsor than to the club sponsor. For this thesis we expect club attachment to be higher than player attachment. However, this concept is still important in order to explain variances between consistent and conflicting scenarios. We propose the following hypothesis:

\[ H_{3b} \text{- Player attached supporters (in conflict scenario) should be less brand loyal to the club sponsor} \]

### 3.8. Summary of theoretical concepts

To summarize our literature review we have gathered the important concepts in a model that describes our view of sponsorship mechanisms.

We have discussed awareness as a foundational concept to other higher-level processes of brand equity. We will therefore not measure awareness with recall and recognition test. We are however interested in how factors influencing awareness might affect other measures of brand equity. Since image transfer, from the club to the sponsoring brand, is not able to take place, if the consumer is not aware of the relationship link. Awareness and sponsor identification has shown a positive relation
to club attachment, relatedness and prominence. On the other hand, the presence of competitors has shown to be detrimental for identifying the right sponsor.

The sponsoring brand provides funding to the club in order to link itself to associations of the club. This is the foundation of image transfer that helps the firm to build relationships, and establish positive consumer attitudes toward the brand. These associations are helpful when the firm is looking to be perceived as meaningful in the mind of the consumer, and capture their “share of heart”. Positive attitudes and meaningfulness are influential components for brand loyalty. Brand loyalty is probably the most important measure of brand equity and is largely determined by consumers’ purchase patterns and referral rate. The ultimate sponsorship objective should be to transform target groups to loyal customers, in order to acquire growth and profitability.

![Theoretical model of Sponsorship Mechanisms](image)
### 3.9. Summary of Hypotheses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 1: Sponsorship Scenario affects Brand Loyalty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>H 1a</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H 1b</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H 1c</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H 1d</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 2: Sponsor Image Transfer affects Brand Loyalty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>H 2</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 3: Club &amp; Player attachment affects Brand Loyalty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>H 3a</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>H 3b</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2. Summary of hypotheses.*
4. Empirical method

Here we present the method for collecting data, such as sample, survey operationalization, reliability and validity

Survey research has the apparent advantage of efficiently collecting data from a large sample, and because earlier studies in similar domain have used the same design (Kwon et al. 2005; Lee et al. 1997; Tong & Hawley 2009; Alexandris 2009), we thereby motivate the use of survey research design. Before posting the surveys, pilots were conducted with non-supporters of the football clubs to test the clarity and flow of the questions. These pilots generated feedback in order to help us formulate the questions better, which resulted in some of the edits discussed and explained later on in this chapter.

The surveys were designed in Google documents with their complementary survey tool, and distributed on blogs and forums related to the football clubs we investigate (svenskafans.se forums 2011, Hyllman blog 2011, Johansson blog 2011, Zander blog 2011).

4.1. Sample

There is a difference in population and sample, which is why inferential surveys seek to draw conclusions about the population from the generalizable evidence resulting from the sample (the inference task) (Easterby-Smith, 2008). Thus, there are two basic principles that underlie sampling design, namely precision and representativeness (ibid.). We hope to have achieved both these principles in our sampling.

Furthermore, there are two types of sampling methods: probability and non-probability sampling designs. Probability sampling has a known probability of the
entity of the sample. Non-probability sampling on the other hand have unknown probability of the member of the population being sampled (Easterby-Smith, 2008). Since we use blogs and forums on the Internet to attract respondents, we employ non-probability sampling (unknown probability of the member of the population participating). According to Bryman & Bell (2007), there are three major types of sampling within non-probability sampling: convenience sample, snowball sample and quota sample. Of these, quota sampling is considered by practitioners to be almost as good as probability sample. Moreover, quota sampling seeks to produce a sample that reflects the population in terms of the relative proportions in different categories (ibid.). The categories can for example be age, gender, and country of origin (Easterby-Smith et al. 2008).

To attract a precise and representative sample of the population as whole, our respondents had to be supporters of the particular clubs being investigated, in order to participate in the survey. Therefore we employ quota sampling with categories to meet. We explicitly designed the surveys to attract supporters of the particular clubs. By having the respondent tell us that they had been a supporter of the club for at least a year, we could conclude them being supporters.

It is often hard to know how large a sample needs to be. Pallant (2007) argues that a sample size of N=30 is considered small and would maybe not reach statistical significance easily (p < .05). A large sample of N=100 would more easily reach statistical significance. On the other hand, very small correlations may reach statistical significance in large samples, which is why the strength of relationships and shared variance should be focused in the analysis when having a large sample.

**4.1.1 Research groups - Choice of clubs and players**

The clubs are selected because of their high achieving sport results, economic significance and their large supporter base. They are all internationally well known in Europe and have solid supporter bases indifferent of nationality and countries. We
have more specifically chosen the four clubs due to their sponsor deals, along with their key players’ individual sponsor deals, and therefore targeted the clubs and players as illustrated in Figure 6. below.

The players are chosen for their media status, which is a combination of sports results, time in professional sport stage light and their sponsor deals. The players are also of great economic contribution to the sales of merchandise for the clubs (such as team shirts).

Regarding the clubs’ shirt sales, all the four clubs are represented as the top shirt sellers in the world (Miller, 2010). Real Madrid followed by Liverpool sold most out of the Adidas sponsored clubs. Manchester United, followed by Barcelona, sold most out of the Nike sponsored clubs. The figures are compiled as average sales per season from 2005 to 2009, with Manchester and Real Madrid peaking at 1.2 - 1.5 Million shirts sold per season on average.

![Figure 6. Summary of research groups](image-url)
4.2. Survey operationalization

4.2.1. Survey

There are three main types of surveys: factual, inferential and exploratory (Easterby-Smith, 2008). Inferential is the most used type of survey in marketing research, and aimed at establishing relationships between variables and concepts. Usually there are assumptions and hypotheses involved and in which relationships are to be researched. The common starting point in this type of research is to isolate the factors that appear to be involved and to decide what appears to be causing what. This implies identifying the dependent and predictor (independent) variables. Cross-sectional surveys are often an investigation of different units in different contexts and how the chosen factors, measured at the same time, vary across the units (ibid.).

There are different types of scales in surveys; category scales (nominal or ordinal scales) or continuous scales (ration or interval scales). Measurement of attitudes and opinions are commonly measured by Likert scale (ibid.). The Likert scale is defined as “a form of ordinal category scale for measuring attitudes from very positive to very negative” (Easterby-Smith et al. 2008:329). Likert scales imply having questions in the closed format, and closed questions often have an advantage to open questions in the way that it is easy to process answers, enhanced comparability and they are easy to complete (Bryman & Bell, 2007). At the same time, there are drawbacks like for instance loss of spontaneity and forced choices. However, we seek to measure a large sample and that is why a Likert scale survey unarguably suits our purpose best.

The items were measured with a 5-point Likert scale from Strongly disagree (1) to Strongly agree (5), where the neutral score is “Not sure” (3). We used a 5-point scale intentionally due to our Swedish focus, as Swedes tend to avoid extreme alternatives when answering surveys. The study would therefore benefit from fewer answer alternatives (Anselmsson, 2011).
4.2.2. Attribute and control variables

Attribute variables record characteristics of the respondents such as age, gender and nationality (Bryman & Bell, 2005). This is useful in order to see what type of sample we employ. In addition, it is also key to know sample characteristics in order to eventually be able to generalize the results to the population overall. The first four items in the survey (A1-A4) record attribute characteristics about the respondent’s age, gender, nationality and fan time.

To establish the validity of respondents, the survey have a few criteria that respondents have to fulfil. All items must be answered, and they must be supporters of the clubs. Thus the respondents must have been supporters of the club for at least 1 year to participate in the survey. Fan time (A4) serve as the control variable.

4.2.3. Dependent variables

Dependent variables are the result from a process where independent variables are available from the start. The dependent variables are hence the sort of outcome of the research (Bryman & Bell, 2008). In our thesis, “Brand Loyalty” (D1-D5) is the dependent variable, which the thesis seeks to explain by investigating the relationship to and of the predictor variables described below.

4.2.4. Predictor variables

The difference from dependent variables is that predictor (independent) variables are available at the start of the process. Easterby-Smith et al. (2008) prefer the term “predictor variable” instead of “independent variable”, as the variables in practice often are related to each other and therefore it is misleading to use “independent”.

The following scales are designed to serve as predictor variables:

Club Attachment (B1-B3)
Player Attachment (C1-C3)
Sponsor Image Transfer (E1-E3)
Protective Sponsorship Attitude (F1-F3)

These are used in order to explain Brand Loyalty (D1-D5) as the dependent variable, as illustrated below in the research model.

![Research model](image)

*Figure 7. Research model.*

### 4.2.5. Edits in scales

The club attachment scale is edited from the original scale based on Kwon et al. (2005). Item 5 was edited to reach a better formulation match in describing the supporter of the club. Thus Kwon et al.’s (2005) item with the original formulation “a real fan” was switched to the more appropriately formulated item of Lee et al. (1997): “a strong supporter”. Overall, they are similar and describe the club attachment but with different formulations. Therefore the reliability of the items should not decrease or negatively effect the scale overall, since it is a minor formulation perfection of the original item.
Regarding the scale player attachment by Kwon et al. (2005), there is two very similar items, which is why we have edited to employ our own suggestion of item instead. Due to poor formulation of the initial question ("big fan") and the need to target the issue of the specific players more accurately, we used our own design on item 9. Through item 9, we can more directly investigate why respondents are supporters of a particular club. This manipulation could affect the reliability of the scale, but the formulation of the original item made it obvious that the original item was superfluous. Through editing the scale and using our own suggestion we hope to have lessened any possible confusion or annoyance perceived by respondents, and thus increased the response rates.

In the brand loyalty scale, there is one edit in the formulation of item 15, which is the item of Tong & Hawley (2009). We have deleted “love to” in front of “recommend” to make the item more objective. The original formulation made the item unnecessarily emphasised with strong subjective value. This edit is also done with care for respondents’ reaction, and to secure a better flow and lessen confusion.

4.3. Reliability and Validity

The most influential and important preoccupations of quantitative research are the aspect of measurement, causality, generalisation and replication (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Thus, reliability is important because it assesses how far each instrument may be relied upon in order to produce the same results for every occasion it is employed (Easterby-Smith, 2008). Stability is concerned with how stable a measure is over time. This is important to know in order to establish whether the results from a measure will fluctuate or not (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

Internal reliability is concerned with the consistency of the scale or index of the measure. This implies the respondents’ scores being unrelated from one indicator or scale to another (Bryman & Bell, 2007). There should not be a correlation in other words. Cronbach’s alpha is commonly employed to test internal reliability. The test
calculates the average of all possible split-half reliability coefficients. The figure 0.7-0.8 is normally considered to be the acceptable level research must meet in order to be internally reliable (ibid.).

Inter-observer consistency handle the complexity of being more than one researcher doing the subjective judgement involved. These activities include translation of data, content analysis, media categorisation or behaviour classification (Bryman & Bell, 2007). We hope to the best of our knowledge to have minimised this complexity as we have analysed our findings and relied on the figures in the results with an open mind.

Validity is concerned with how closely the measures correspond to reality (Easterby-Smith, 2008). Measurement validity is in other words the question if the measure of a concept really measures that concept (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Measurement validity is also more focused on if the indicators devised to measure a concept actually measure that concept, than general validity of the research as whole. Reusing other researchers’ scales should help to assure measurement validity. There are both internal and external validity as well. The maximum internal validity is the aim of positivist research, and this describes the elimination of plausible alternatives that could affect and explain any differences between the observed groups (Easterby-Smith, 2008). By using T-tests to ad hoc analyse and find, explain and eliminate plausible alternatives in the research groups, we seek maximum internal validity. In our measurements, we have taken statistical significance into sincere concern to reach valid findings when analysing the results.

External validity describes the level of generalizability of the results from the research conducted. Management research designs need to demonstrate external validity in a number of features. The results observed must not be a product solely from the selection of individuals or organisations as respondents. Key point is to avoid sources of bias as far as possible. Therefore it is essential to consider the setting and history of the research. For example, research findings in large organisations may not apply in
the setting of small organisations. In the same sense national settings may not be transferable to other national settings. (Easterby-Smith, 2008)

Concurrent validity states criterions for the measurement in the meaning that there should be different results from different respondents (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Football supporters in our investigation should have better knowledge of the sponsorship in question than non-football supporters; otherwise one might questions the concurrent validity of our measure.
5. Results

The results are presented in this chapter, to then be analysed in the forthcoming chapter and lastly discussed and concluded in the following chapters.

5.1. Sample

The initial sample of 796 respondents were screened and cleared down to 715 valid responses due to incomplete answers or no fan time. From this sample 696 were male (97.3 per cent) and 19 female (2.7 per cent) respondents. The youngest was 12 years old and the oldest 53 years, with a mean of 23.82 years of age. Fan time varied from 1 to 43 years with a mean of 12.68 years as supporter of the club.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample demographics</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>23.82</td>
<td>6.647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fan Time</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>12.68</td>
<td>6.662</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Sample demographics

5.2. Coding of scales and scenarios

The items for each scale were coded as follows:

A1-A4 - Demographics
B1-B3 - Club Attachment
C1-C3 - Player Attachment
D1-D5 - Brand Loyalty
E1-E3 - Sponsor Image Transfer
F1-F3 – Protective Sponsorship Attitude
The four groups (sponsorship scenarios) were coded with club sponsor A or B, and player sponsor A or B, thus creating two scenarios of consistent sponsorships and two scenarios of conflicting sponsorships (as defined in the introduction):

AA = Consistent Sponsorship Scenario (Nike Club + Nike Player)
AB = Conflicting Sponsorship Scenario (Nike Club + Adidas Player)
BA = Conflicting Sponsorship Scenario (Adidas Club + Nike Player)
BB = Consistent Sponsorship Scenario (Adidas Club + Adidas Player)

One of the items (F3) had to be reversed due to being negatively worded. This was done in SPSS.

5.3 Reliability of scales
Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient measure internal reliability: to which degree the items of the scale measure the same underlying construct (Pallant, 2007). The ideal value should be above .7 (DeVellis, 2003), but values above .8 are preferable (Pallant, 2007). However, Cronbach’s alpha is sensitive to the number of items in the scale, and short scales (fewer than ten items) commonly generate lower values (below .7) (Pallant, 2007). In this case it may be appropriate, if needed, to consult the inter-item correlation in addition. Briggs & Cheek (1986) recommend optimal range .2-.4 for inter-item correlation. Player Attachment in the BB scenario had an alpha value of .604, but the inter-item correlation was .398 and thus within the limits of optimal range. The complete table with alpha values for each scenario and variable is shown below.
### Table 4. Alpha values.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALPHA TESTS</th>
<th>AA</th>
<th>AB</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>BB</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N=144</td>
<td>N=191</td>
<td>N=220</td>
<td>N=160</td>
<td>N=715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1-B3 Club Attachment</td>
<td>0.719</td>
<td>0.702</td>
<td>0.709</td>
<td>0.775</td>
<td>0.725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1-C3 Player Attachment</td>
<td>0.713</td>
<td>0.882</td>
<td>0.906</td>
<td>0.604</td>
<td>0.831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1-D5 Brand Loyalty</td>
<td>0.874</td>
<td>0.882</td>
<td>0.875</td>
<td>0.887</td>
<td>0.882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E1-E3 Sponsor Image Transfer</td>
<td>0.807</td>
<td>0.851</td>
<td>0.834</td>
<td>0.786</td>
<td>0.833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1-F3 Protective Sponsorship Attitude</td>
<td>0.807</td>
<td>0.822</td>
<td>0.768</td>
<td>0.841</td>
<td>0.808</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 5.4. Statistical result

A common first step when looking at the results in statistical research is to find correlations between variables. The Pearson correlation coefficient is interpreted differently depending on the interpreter. However, Cohen (1998) suggests:

\[
r = .10 \text{ to } .29 \text{ SMALL}
r = .30 \text{ to } .49 \text{ MEDIUM}
r = .50 \text{ to } 1.0 \text{ LARGE}
\]

These three categories then assess the strength of the relationship between the variables tested. The only variables with large correlation (strong relationship), is the relationship between Sponsor Image Transfer and Brand Loyalty. The full Pearson correlation table can be found in Appendix 9.3.

#### 5.4.1. Normal distribution of scores

To test the normality of distribution of scores, Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic was used to assess the scales. A non-significant result \((p > .05)\) indicates normality, but violation of this assumption of normality is quite common in larger samples (Pallant, 2007). All the variables violated the assumption of normality \((\text{Sig.} = 0.000)\). The alternative then
is to manually assess the normality of the scores (ibid.). The histograms and normal probability plots (Q-Q Plots) may qualify results as normally distributed if the observed plotted values follow the expected value line, and then suggest normal distribution. The histograms and Q-Q plots were normally distributed visually for most of our variables, which then suggests that the scales scores are normally distributed. However, the Club Attachment and Player Attachment variables had slightly more extreme scores than the other variables, which could be explained by the uneven and strong scores for those scales. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic table can be found in Appendix 9.4.

Even though the visually assessed Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic were satisfactory for most variables (histograms and q-q plots), the Kruskal-Wallis test can be used as an alternative to one-way between groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) when not normally distributed (Pallant, 2007). Therefore we did the Kruskal-Wallis to compare with the ANOVA one-way, and the results show that there is statistically significant difference in scores between the four groups of sponsorship scenarios, and the mean values confirmed the values from the ANOVA. Thus we can be confident that the ANOVA result is significant and valid.

5.4.2 ANOVA

The one-way ANOVA test seeks to measure if there is significant difference in mean scores along the variables for the four groups of sponsorship scenarios, and we can conclude that there is significant difference (p < .05) among the scores for each variable (Sig. Club Attachment 0.027, Player Attachment 0.000, Brand Loyalty 0.000, Sponsor Image Transfer 0.000, and Protective Sponsor Attitude 0.009). Full ANOVA table can be found in Appendix 9.5.
The Eta squared value tell the effect size statistics, and according to Cohen (1988) .02 is small effect, .06 medium effect and .14 large effect. From the ANOVA, the eta squared is obtained by dividing “the sum of all squares between groups” with “total sum of all squares”. The results from the investigation thus have small to medium effect. Even though medium effect is observed, the effect is however easily obtained through a large sample, and should be interpreted with care (Pallant, 2007). The effect size for this result is calculated by eta squared for each total score of the variables in other words (not by scenario). Complete table can be found in Appendix 9.5.

### 5.4.3 T-test

From looking at the values from the independent T-test (Appendix 9.6.), we are able to calculate the effect size statistic (eta squared), and compare the effect of the research groups (scenarios) as such.
Eta squared = $\frac{t_2}{t_2 + (N_{scenario1} + N_{scenario2} - 2)}$

We can see according to the scale of Cohen (1988) that the effect is small in most cases and medium in two cases (Player attachment 7.9 per cent between scenario AA and AB) (Sponsor Image Transfer 7 per cent between scenario AB and BA) and somewhat large effect in one case (Player attachment 12 per cent between scenario AA and BB).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eta squared values calculated from T-tests independent</th>
<th>AA vs. BB</th>
<th>AB vs. BA</th>
<th>AA vs. AB</th>
<th>BA vs. BB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Club Attachment</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.017**</td>
<td>0.019*</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Player Attachment</td>
<td>0.12**</td>
<td>0.019**</td>
<td>0.079**</td>
<td>0.023**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Brand Loyalty</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.039**</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.018**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Sponsor Image Transfer</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0.07**</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>0.027**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Protective Sponsorship Attitude</td>
<td>0.004</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>0.02**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

*Table 5. Eta squared values from T-tests.*

The eta squared values tell us the variance in brand loyalty explained by the different sponsorship scenarios as such (Pallant, 2007). Therefore it is good to have as low values (effect) a possible, so we can focus the analysis on whether the different variables affect brand loyalty instead of the particular scenarios as such. Overall, we can assume that our results are rather strongly isolated from any large disturbing effects from the scenarios as such.

5.4.4. Regression test

Tabachnick & Fidell (2007) argue that the sample size would have to follow a formula of “$N > 50 + 8m$”, where $m$ is number of predictor variables, to be eligible for regression analysis. Having 5 predictor variables would mean 90 cases at least, so our sample
would be considered very eligible with 715 responses. Before concluding anything from the regression test, a few assumptions must be met.

The variables of a higher correlation than .7 should be considered with caution and one should consider omitting one of the variables or forming a composite variable (Pallant, 2007). We do not see the need to do any of the alternatives, since only one of the four cases had a bi-variate correlation of .712 as all time high value.

Collinearity diagnostics are performed through two values: Tolerance and VIF. Tolerance is an indicator of how much of the variability of the specific predictor that is not explained by the other predictor variables in the model (Pallant, 2007). The value of Tolerance should be above .1 and the value of VIF should be below 10 to avoid multicollinearity. None of the predictors show any signs of multicollinearity in our result.

Moreover, the normal P-P Plots are diagonally linear and the scatterplots are of rectangular pattern visually, suggesting no major deviations from normality (Pallant, 2007). The scatterplots found 3 outliers (standardized residual of more than 3.3) as defined by Tabachnick & Fidell (2007), but this is expected in large samples, and since only 3 out of 715 is such a little deviation, we consider not taking any action.

The R square value evaluates the research model discussed earlier in Figure 7. The variance in the dependent variable is described by R2, which is also represented by the shared variance of the predictor variables together (Pallant, 2007). Variance in Brand Loyalty is described by the predictors’ variance, in each scenario, as the R square value: AA .532, AB .718, BA .589, and BB .491. The full tables for the multiple regression test can be found in Appendix 9.7.

To identify the variance in the individual predictor variables, we turn to assess the Beta values from the regression test. The beta values identify which predictor who makes the strongest unique contribution to Brand Loyalty. They have to be significant
in order to have an explanatory usefulness in the analysis. From the beta values we can see that “sponsor image transfer” seems to be a strong contributor to brand loyalty.

To find out the unique variance explained by a particular predictor variable, the “semi partial correlation coefficients” are consulted (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). By squaring the “part correlation coefficient” we are able to explain the contributors of the total variance in the value of total r² to each unique predictor in the groups. The Total r² value includes unique variance explained by each variable, but also shared variance, which is why the variables’ variance (part correlation square values) summed up do not equal the total r² (Pallant, 2007). Therefore caution should be advised again when analysing these values. As the figure below illustrates, there is variance in sponsor image transfer that explain variance in brand loyalty. Table found in Appendix 9.7.

![Part Correlation square values](image)

*Figure 9. Part Correlation square values.*
6. Analysis

The analysis is based on the results presented in 5. Results and 9. Appendix. We have structured the analysis in our themes. We start by testing our hypotheses and then discuss our findings based on our theoretical framework.

6.1 Theme 1: Sponsorship Scenario affects Brand Loyalty

6.1.1. Hypotheses testing

H 1a - Consistent sponsorship scenario between a club and their star player will lead to higher brand loyalty among supporters.

H 1b - Conflicting sponsorship scenario between a club and their star player will lead to lower brand loyalty among supporters.

Both are rejected. There is no such evidence from the results that indicate either of them. The mean values from the ANOVA test do not indicate any difference in scores that can conclude a pattern or difference between consistent and conflicting sponsorship scenarios (AA 13.7778, AB 13.5969, BA 15.5 and BB 14.2375). The results instead show that the clubs with club sponsor B (Adidas) have slightly higher Brand Loyalty mean scores, in both consistent and conflicting scenario.

H 1c - Supporters of a sponsorship consistent club will be more protective about the sponsorship scenario.

H 1d - Supporters of a sponsorship conflict club will be less protective about the sponsorship scenario.

Both are supported. ANOVA mean values: AA 6.85, AB 6.29, BA 6.40 and BB 7.18, show higher mean scores in Protective Sponsorship Attitude for the consistent scenarios.
6.1.2 Discussion of Theme 1

We find that the sponsorship scenario affects sponsorship mechanisms through supporters’ protective attitude to keeping club and player sponsorships consistent. There is no correlation to Brand Loyalty as such, but the difference in mean scores for Protective Sponsorship Attitude signal that supporters do care about their favourite club’s sponsorship scenario. Supporters in consistent scenarios are more protective about their clubs sponsorship scenario, compared to supporters in conflicting scenarios whom score lower in Protective Sponsorship Attitude. Cognitive dissonance theory (prefer to avoid discrepancies) by Festinger (1957) might help explain the protective attitude that consistent scenario supporters have about their favourite club’s sponsorships. This suggests that supporters are experiencing psychological discomfort when there is inconsistency, and prefer to avoid it.

Furthermore, there is only evidence from ANOVA test (mean values) - no significant relationship from regression test. Also, the scores suggest rather low support for Protective Sponsorship Attitude overall. Thus supporters are open and liberal in general when it comes to players endorsing rival sponsors (to the club), but with a pattern of being more liberal in conflict scenario, and more protective in consistent scenario. This reinforces the assumption of Ugglã (2001) whom argue co-branding (sponsorships) is leveraged when long-term and symmetrical (called consistent by us).

Consistent sponsorship scenario itself does not directly lead to higher Brand Loyalty. Conflicting scenario does not imply lower Brand Loyalty either, and this is why sponsorship scenario is not as strong influence of Brand Loyalty as we initially believed. Differences in the results for H1a and H1b are not due to consistent or conflicting sponsorship scenarios, rather due to brand-related factors in our sample. This suggests that scenarios in the context of highly attached supporters do probably not affect sponsorship awareness. Among this group, awareness of the club sponsor seems to be high, and we have no reason to believe that any identification issues,
affecting higher-level processes of brand equity, are present. Thus our results do not support any impairment from the presence of competitors, like Johar & Pham (1999).

Almost everyone in our sample reported high Club Attachment and low Player Attachment. This suggests that the player endorsement would not be successful in Sponsor Image Transfer of a competing brand, and could explain why scenarios would not affect the outcome of Brand Loyalty. We do not identify any confusion that could be considered evidence for Ambushing as explained by Burton & Chadwick (2009) and Meenaghan (1996). That means that our premonition about ambushing of the club platform was not relevant in the context of strong supporters, as our sample mirrors.

6.2 Theme 2: Sponsor Image Transfer affects Brand Loyalty

6.2.1 Hypothesis testing

H2 - Positive image transfer from club to sponsoring brand leads to higher brand loyalty among supporters.

Supported. We find strong evidence that positive Sponsor Image Transfer leads to higher Brand Loyalty. Also, there is evidence that Sponsor Image Transfer correlates more strongly with Brand Loyalty in conflicting scenarios (Part correlation square values AB 0.378 and BA 0.262) than consistent (AA 0.241 and BB 0.168). This means that out of the total 51.5 per cent (AB) and 34.7 per cent (BA) variance in Brand Loyalty, Sponsor Image Transfer uniquely explains this variance in Brand Loyalty by 37.8 per cent (AB) and 26.2 per cent (BA) variance in Sponsor Image Transfer. The rest is shared variance that is a result from the interrelation of all predictor variables together, which is why the unique variances for each predictor does not sum up to total variance in Brand Loyalty (Pallant, 2007). Altogether, the unique contributions to Brand Loyalty show a pattern of larger variance in Brand Loyalty explained by Sponsor Image Transfer in conflicting scenarios than consistent scenarios.
6.2.2 Discussion of Theme 2

The uniquely significant predictor of Brand Loyalty in our survey is Sponsor Image Transfer. When supporters are positive to the sponsor brand of their favourite club, they are also loyal to the sponsor. In this case we can be more certain that Sponsor Image Transfer to some extent causes Brand Loyalty due to the significant variances established through the regression test.

This results support much of the previous literature within sponsorships. It has been argued that favourable, strong and unique associations translate into brand loyalty, and the sponsor consequently acquires competitive advantage (Chen, 2001). That makes us assume that the associations provided by the club to its loyal supporters are of these characteristics. It is obvious that the sponsored activity is of importance to the supporters, and hence it positively influences brand equity (in the form of loyalty) as Meenaghan (2001) suggests.

We can assume that the club is potent as a media vehicle when it is hosting the dialogue between its supporters and the sponsor, as club attachment leads to positive sponsor image transfer (Alexandris & Tsiotsou, 2009; Gwinner et al. 2009; Gwinner & Swanson, 2003). The appreciated personality of the club can explain the relationship between Positive Image Transfer and Brand Loyalty when there are spillover effects. It seems like, when image transfer occurs, due to the predisposed favourability among supporters, their loyalty towards the club is transferred to the sponsoring brand. This also supports why previous research claims that sponsorship is powerful in connecting a product to the brand (Cornwell et al., 2006; Cliff & Motion, 2004).

When it comes to purchase intentions, positive outcomes on the scale as whole assume positive impact on purchase intentions as well. This is very much in line with previous literature were positive brand attitudes have been proposed to be an important determinant for purchase intentions (Koo et al., 2006; Bennett et al. 2006), together with brand familiarity (Pope & Voges, 2000) which could have been transferred from
the club. We can also identify that our research shows attitudinal outcomes (positive image) affecting behavioural (purchase intentions, recommendations), as they make up 4 out of 5 items in our Brand Loyalty scale. This supports the research of Carlson et al. (2009) who argue that clubs have become quasi-brands that are consulted as sales drivers due to positive sponsor image transfer.

6.2 Theme 3: Club & Player attachment affects Brand Loyalty

6.2.1. Hypotheses testing

H 3a - Club attached supporters should also be brand loyal to the club sponsor.
Indicative evidence for support. Supporters are very club attached, and also brand loyal (judging from high mean scores on both). Only sig. Pearson correlation in AB (0.30**) and BB (0.230**) between Club attachment and Brand Loyalty, and no regression test relationship. On the other hand, scores are high for both variables throughout the sample.

H 3b - Player attached supporters (in conflict scenario) should be less brand loyal to the club sponsor
Unproven. We were not able to test this relationship since very few, to almost none, of the respondents were player attached. We assumed that club attachment would be higher than player attachment, but still expected more player-attached responses.

6.2.1. Discussion of Theme 3

Being a strong supporter does not have to imply being Brand Loyal to the sponsor. But those who are strong supporters seem to also be Brand Loyal in our sample. There is no strong correlation between club attached supporters and brand loyal supporter, but they are nevertheless high scoring in both. The high scores for team attachment in our result supports Mahony et al. (2000) theory that the deep emotional bond with sports team also generates brand loyalty. However, correlation test provides an indication
that there is a relationship between two variables - it does not indicate causality (Pallant, 2007).

In this sample, supporters are highly club attached and at the same time brand loyal to the club sponsor. That is in line with studies that argue team attachment as influential when building consumer relationships that, with time, turns into brand loyalty. (Cliff & Motion, 2004; Branscombe & Wann, 1993; Sirgy et al., 2008)

Another explanation for the combination of high Club Attachment and Brand Loyalty scores might be that highly club attached supporters have good knowledge of the sponsors (brand knowledge) of their favourite team, which is the premise of CBBE according to (Keller, 1998) and (Aaker, 1991). Hence, supporters have a shortcut to respond better to the differential effect from the marketing of a sponsor brand, which in turn helps explain the leveraging of a brand in sponsorship according to theory of Keller (1993).

Player attached supporters could not be tested to assess their Brand Loyalty. Few in this sample are player attached, and no correlation between Player Attachment and Brand Loyalty could be established. We will suggest future studies to investigate this matter further, and possibly with another sample to conclude if there is a brand loyalty conflict with being a player attached supporter (and especially in conflict sponsor scenarios).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H 1a</td>
<td>Consistent sponsorship scenario between a club and their star player will lead to higher brand loyalty among supporters.</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H 1b</td>
<td>Conflicting sponsorship scenario between a club and their star player will lead to lower brand loyalty among supporters.</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H 1c</td>
<td>Supporters of a sponsorship consistent club will be protective about the sponsorship scenario, (and thus more loyal to the club sponsor).</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H 1d</td>
<td>Supporters of a sponsorship conflict club will be less protective about the sponsorship scenario, (and thus less loyal to the club sponsor).</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H 2</td>
<td>Positive image transfer from club to sponsoring brand leads to higher brand loyalty among supporters.</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H 3a</td>
<td>Club attached supporters should also be brand loyal to the club sponsor.</td>
<td>Indications for support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H 3b</td>
<td>Player attached supporters (in conflict scenario) should be less brand loyal to the club sponsor</td>
<td>Unproven</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Summary of tested hypotheses.
7. Conclusion

In this chapter we present the theoretical findings of our study and the managerial implications with the case of Zlatan Ibrahimović in mind. We will end the chapter, and the thesis, with some suggestions for future studies.

7.1. Findings

Sponsorship scenario partly influence Brand Loyalty
Sponsorship scenario influences the Protective Sponsorship Attitude among supporters, but not Brand Loyalty directly. Our research does not show that Protective Sponsorship Attitude relates directly to Brand Loyalty, but when supporters care about their favourite club's sponsorship scenario, it implies them being conscious about the club's commercial well being. Most interesting is that consistent sponsorship scenario supporters are more protective. Therefore, Protective Sponsorship Attitude might have an impact on other sponsorship outcomes than Brand Loyalty. This is a topic for future studies to explore further.

Sponsor Image Transfer causes Brand Loyalty
Sponsor Image Transfer causes Brand Loyalty to some extent according to the regression test. This implies positive image transfer, from the club (vehicle) to the sponsoring brand, being an important precursor for establishing Brand Loyalty. Loyalty is hence related to positive associations, which emphasize the importance of linking the brand to a relevant and meaningful object (club) of the communication target. This does not allow us to draw any conclusions about the effectiveness of different scenarios, but rather conclude that football sponsorships, where the target is supporters to a club, is effective in transferring emotional bonds that translates into brand loyalty.
Club and Player Attachment might influence Brand Loyalty
To be able to conclude something significant about this theme we would have wanted a more balanced attachment range among the supporters in our survey. Since many respondents were highly attached to the club, and not to the player, this sample produced a club-biased result. Club Attachment and Player Attachment might influence Brand Loyalty in a more balanced sample of supporters. However, in line with previous research (e.g. Kwon et al., 2005), our research indicate that club attached supporters are also brand loyal to the sponsor, since both scored similar and high in our survey.

7.2. Managerial Implications
With the initial transfer dilemma in mind, we will address the managerial implications of our findings. There was two interesting perspectives in the scenario: Ibrahimović’s future club’s, and his future club’s sponsor. We are not able to conclude anything about the perspective of the player sponsor, since our research is from the view of a club sponsor. There were only two potential outcomes: he would leave Internazionale for another Nike club (consistent), or he would leave for a club with a competing sponsor (conflicting). We assume that whatever club Ibrahimović joins, he would become the star player.

Outcome 1 - Ibrahimović leaves for a Nike-sponsored club

Club perspective: The club would not have any issues with the value of their club platform as a communication vehicle, as there are no conflicts to manage. With regards to previous literature within sponsorships, we would not suspect any negative brand-related issues from this outcome. Among consumers that are less club attached, it could potentially be synergistic for the value of the club brand as well. That is however a topic for future studies.
Sponsor perspective: This would probably be the preferred outcome for the apparel sponsor. They could use the Protective Sponsorship Attitude to strengthen the relationship with club supporters, and induce positive image transfer. If the sponsor activates club supporters, and establish positive attitudes, our research shows that it would generate increased Brand Loyalty. Supporters are important evangelists of the club, and a strong relationship with that group could also multiply through media to a broader spectator audience. The firm could leverage their CBBE by exploiting the highly attached supporters strong brand knowledge (high awareness and favourable associations). These mechanisms would be further facilitated as the sponsor could use imagery that simultaneously leverages their linking to Ibrahimović, and the club, in marketing communication.

Outcome 2 - Ibrahimović leaves for a club sponsored by a competitor

Club perspective: The signing of a player with a conflicting sponsorship would not necessarily need to negatively affect the attractiveness of the club as a sponsorship platform. Sponsorships are however a complex network, and the value of the club’s platform depends on the target group and objectives of the sponsor. If it is to establish brand loyalty among attached supporters, then the club should not be worried about their value as communication vehicle. Their concern should in this case be to convince the sponsor that the conflict is harmless for their objectives.

Sponsor perspective: It would not have negative consequences on the manufacturers’ Brand Loyalty among highly attached club supporters. It could however, have negative long-term consequences, as a result of less Protective Sponsorship Attitude. This would imply that the manufacturer would probably prefer if the club signed a star player that was also sponsored by them. To prevent misidentification among the broader football audience (less club attached), it would probably be useful to regard the club sponsorship as a long-term co-branding. This would establish authenticity and legitimacy of their linking to the club, and prevent any potentially negative effects from the signing of star players endorsing competing brands. We would recommend that
sponsoring firms carefully choose clubs that have the desired image and associations, and work with them long-term to leverage their brand strategy.

7.3. Limitations and future research

Our research did solely focus on apparel sponsors with a self-evident link to football. Many studies within sponsorship are regarding sponsors from a variety of industries that are more or less congruent with the sponsor object. This suggests that the results from our study should be limited to apparel sponsors. However, the findings about sponsorship mechanisms could potentially be applicable for all sponsors.

Due to the need for cultural consistency we decided to survey Swedish supporters to European clubs. Even though our study had this perspective, we would not say that our survey and research method could not be used in other settings, indifferent of sports and nationality. It could also be argued that our findings are limited to the context of European football supporters. It would be interesting to see differences if the research would have taken place in other geographical areas, and regarding other sponsorship activities than football.

As we have mentioned previously in the discussion, we believe that it would be interesting to examine how conflicting and consistent sponsorship scenarios would affect brand related outcomes, such as sponsor loyalty, among the general football audience. When examining the loyal club supporters we were not able to get any variance between player and club attachment. The general football audience is a significantly larger, and potentially more profitable target for the apparel manufacturers, and hence interesting population to examine for these brand effects.

It would also be interesting to conduct a study with a quota sample of respondents that are very player attached. It has been suggested that the younger football audience is a new type of supporters, more attached to certain players than clubs (Laul Talking, 2011). In this case we could examine the effect of sponsorship conflicts with the
perspective of the player sponsor, and also make predictions about the evolution of football supporters and their attachment.

Awareness tests are often biased (Crompton, 2004), and only a pre-cursor to higher level processes of brand equity (Cornwell et al., 2006). It could however be interesting to measure differences between scenarios with recall and recognition tests. The results of such a study would be limited to foundational conclusions about brand equity. However, it would allow the researcher to establish the effect of scenarios on sponsorship identification processes. Reviewing the literature, that is also the part of sponsorships that might be the most exposed to the presence of competitors (Johar & Pham, 1999).
8. References

8.1. Articles


### 8.2. Electronic

Accessed 2011-02-15

Accessed: 2011-03-29

Eisler, P, (1997) “When your team takes a tumble, Guys go awry over losing”, USA today (March 27 1997)

Encyclopedia Britannica (2011) Headword: football
Accessed: 2011-04-18

FBSB (2011) “Players”, Football Shirt Blog
[http://www.footballshirtblog.co.uk/players/](http://www.footballshirtblog.co.uk/players/) (FB Shirt Blog)
Accessed 2011-03-29

[http://www.le.ac.uk/so/css/resources/factsheets/fs11.html](http://www.le.ac.uk/so/css/resources/factsheets/fs11.html)
Accessed: 2011-02-22

[http://www.resume.se/nyheter/2010/05/26/han-blir-zlatans-varumarke/index.xml](http://www.resume.se/nyheter/2010/05/26/han-blir-zlatans-varumarke/index.xml)
Accessed: 2011-02-15

Accessed: 2011-04-14
Hyllman blog (2011)  
http://hyllman.fotbollskanalen.se/

IEG Sponsorship Report 2011  

Accessed 2011-02-15

Accessed 2011-02-22

Johansson blog (2011)  

http://www.aftonbladet.se/webbtv/sport/laultalking/article13023485.ab  
Accessed: 2011-05-14

Miller, A. (2010-08-31) “Revealed: the world’s best selling club football shirts”  
Accessed 2011-05-02

NPD Sport Report 2010  
Accessed: 2011-05-05

Accessed: 2011-04-14

http://di.se/Templates/Public/Pages/ArticlePrint.aspx?pl=44412__ArticlePageProvider  
Accessed 2011-02-15

Soccerlens.com (2010) “Most popular Premier League Shirt Names – Torres #1”
8.3. Literature


### 8.4. Personal Communication and Lectures


Falkenström, T. (2011) Nike Sweden Football Brand Manager - E-mail correspondence 2011-04-08
9. Appendix

9.1. Dictionary

**Football** – World’s largest sport. Played between two teams of eleven players with a spherical ball. Also called Association Football or Soccer.

**Firm** - An organization designed to provide goods, services, or both to customers. Also called business, enterprise and company. We do not refer to a hooligan firm, which is a gang formed to oppose and physically attack supporters of other clubs.

**Consistent sponsorship scenario** - Club and player sponsored by the same firm

**Conflicting sponsorship scenario** - Club and player sponsored by competing firms

**Sponsorship platform** – The communication vehicle used by sponsoring firms to leverage their brand. Multiple brands are present: the club, the individual players, and sponsors.

**Supporter** - Sometimes also called aficionado or fan, is a person with a liking and enthusiasm for something, such as a band or a sports team. Often promote the object of attention.
9.2. Survey

DEMOGRAPHICS
A1. Gender (Male/Female)
A2. Age (Birth year 2000-1940)
A3. Nationality (78 countries)
A4. Fan time (1-50+ years)

CLUB ATTACHMENT (Kwon et al. 2005)
B1. I consider myself a strong supporter of [club] (Lee & Sandler & Shani, 1997)
B2. I would experience a loss if I had to stop being a fan of [club]
B3. Being a fan of [club] is very important to me

PLAYER ATTACHMENT (Kwon et al. 2005)
C1. I identify more with [player] than with the club [club]
C2. I consider myself a fan of [player] rather than a fan of the club [club] (own item)
C3. [Player] is a strong reason why [club] is my favourite club

BRAND LOYALTY (Tong & Hawley, 2009)
D1. I consider myself to be loyal to [brand]
D2. When buying athletic shoes, [brand] would be my first choice
D3. I will keep on buying [brand] as long as it provides me satisfied products
D4. I am still willing to buy [brand] even if its price is a little higher than that of its competitors
D5. I would recommend [brand] to my friends (edit: “love to” was deleted in front of “recommend”)

SPONSOR IMAGE TRANSFER (Alexandris, 2009)
E1. I have a positive attitude toward [brand] and its products due to the club sponsorship
E2. The sponsorship improves my perceptions about [brand] and its products
E3. Due the particular sponsorship, I like the products of [brand] more

PROTECTIVE SPONSORSHIP ATTITUDE (own scale)
F1. It is important to me that individual players in [club] have the same sponsor as the club
F2. I dislike when individual players in [club] have a different sponsor than the sponsor of the club
F3. I think that individual players in [club] should be able to have any sponsor they want, even if it happen to be a rival to the sponsor of the club

ANY OTHER COMMENTS
### 9.3. Pearson correlation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>1.</th>
<th>2.</th>
<th>3.</th>
<th>4.</th>
<th>5.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AA 1. Total Club Attachment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Total Player Attachment</td>
<td>-.247**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Total Brand Loyalty</td>
<td>0.032</td>
<td>0.017</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Total Sponsor Image Transfer</td>
<td>0.159</td>
<td>0.044</td>
<td>.529**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Total Protective Sponsorship Attitude</td>
<td>0.047</td>
<td>0.028</td>
<td>.204*</td>
<td>.405**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB 1. Total Club Attachment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Total Player Attachment</td>
<td>-.149*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Total Brand Loyalty</td>
<td>.300**</td>
<td>0.051</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Total Sponsor Image Transfer</td>
<td>.357**</td>
<td>0.063</td>
<td>.712**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Total Protective Sponsorship Attitude</td>
<td>-0.085</td>
<td>.142*</td>
<td>.179*</td>
<td>.153*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA 1. Total Club Attachment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Total Player Attachment</td>
<td>-.289**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Total Brand Loyalty</td>
<td>-0.006</td>
<td>-0.032</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Total Sponsor Image Transfer</td>
<td>.188**</td>
<td>0.027</td>
<td>.561**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Total Protective Sponsorship Attitude</td>
<td>-0.121</td>
<td>0.113</td>
<td>.284**</td>
<td>.294**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BB 1. Total Club Attachment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Total Player Attachment</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Total Brand Loyalty</td>
<td>.230**</td>
<td>0.058</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Total Sponsor Image Transfer</td>
<td>.295**</td>
<td>0.097</td>
<td>.480**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Total Protective Sponsorship Attitude</td>
<td>-0.013</td>
<td>0.124</td>
<td>0.129</td>
<td>.212**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

*Table 7. Pearson correlation.*
9.4. Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test</th>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Club Attachment</td>
<td>0.228</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Player Attachment</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Brand Loyalty</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Sponsor Image Transfer</td>
<td>0.106</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Protective Sponsorship Attitude</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

9.5. ANOVA one-way

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANOVA one-way</th>
<th>AA</th>
<th>AB</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>BB</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Club Attachment</td>
<td>13.6667</td>
<td>13.1204</td>
<td>13.65</td>
<td>13.5125</td>
<td>13.4811</td>
<td>0.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Player Attachment</td>
<td>4.0278</td>
<td>5.356</td>
<td>4.5727</td>
<td>5.3313</td>
<td>4.842</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Brand Loyalty</td>
<td>13.7778</td>
<td>13.5969</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>14.2375</td>
<td>14.3622</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Sponsor Image Transfer</td>
<td>9.3264</td>
<td>8.9948</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>9.675</td>
<td>9.7077</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Protective Sponsorship Attitude</td>
<td>6.8472</td>
<td>6.2932</td>
<td>6.4045</td>
<td>7.1875</td>
<td>6.6392</td>
<td>0.009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10. ANOVA one-way test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eta Squared values from ANOVA</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Club Attachment</td>
<td>0.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Player Attachment</td>
<td>0.045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Brand Loyalty</td>
<td>0.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Sponsor Image Transfer</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Protective Sponsorship Attitude</td>
<td>0.016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11. Eta Squared values from ANOVA.


9.6. T-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T-TEST INDEPENDENT</th>
<th>sig.</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Result:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>AA vs. BB</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Club Attachment 0.75</td>
<td>0.702</td>
<td>0.483</td>
<td>No Sig difference btw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Player Attachment</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-6.43</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Sig difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Brand Loyalty  0.892</td>
<td>-0.858</td>
<td>0.392</td>
<td>No Sig difference btw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Sponsor Image  0.418</td>
<td>-1.155</td>
<td>0.249</td>
<td>No Sig difference btw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Protective Sponsorship Attitude 0.403</td>
<td>-1.043</td>
<td>0.298</td>
<td>No Sig difference btw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AB vs. BA</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Club Attachment 0.084</td>
<td>-2.637</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>Sig difference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Player Attachment 0.126</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>Sig difference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Brand Loyalty  0.187</td>
<td>-4.084</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Sig difference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Sponsor Image  0.911</td>
<td>-5.569</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Sig difference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Protective Sponsorship Attitude 0.148</td>
<td>-0.419</td>
<td>0.676</td>
<td>No Sig difference btw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AA vs. AB</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Club Attachment 0.032</td>
<td>2.542</td>
<td>0.011</td>
<td>Sig Difference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Player Attachment 0</td>
<td>-5.34</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Sig Difference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Brand Loyalty  0.476</td>
<td>0.344</td>
<td>0.731</td>
<td>No Sig difference btw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Sponsor Image  0.466</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>0.294</td>
<td>No Sig difference btw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Protective Sponsorship Attitude 0.976</td>
<td>1.766</td>
<td>0.078</td>
<td>No Sig difference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BA vs. BB</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Club Attachment 0.882</td>
<td>0.699</td>
<td>0.504</td>
<td>No Sig difference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Player Attachment 0.211</td>
<td>-3.003</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>Sig Difference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Brand Loyalty  0.506</td>
<td>2.627</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>Sig Difference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Sponsor Image  0.117</td>
<td>3.251</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>Sig Difference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Protective Sponsorship Attitude 0.017</td>
<td>-2.757</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>Sig Difference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9. T-tests for each scenario compared.

9.7. Multiple regression test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multiple Regression Summary</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.532a</td>
<td>.283</td>
<td>3.96970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.718b</td>
<td>.515</td>
<td>3.42721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.589c</td>
<td>.347</td>
<td>3.72636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BB</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.491b</td>
<td>.241</td>
<td>4.14852</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12. R2 values from Multiple Regression.
### Table 13. Beta values.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AA</th>
<th>AB</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>BB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Club Attachment</td>
<td>-0.059</td>
<td>0.067</td>
<td>-0.123*</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Player Attachment</td>
<td>-0.021</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>-0.096</td>
<td>0.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Sponsor Image Transfer</td>
<td>0.545**</td>
<td>0.675**</td>
<td>0.553**</td>
<td>0.442**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Protective Sponsorship Attitude</td>
<td>-0.014</td>
<td>0.081</td>
<td>0.117*</td>
<td>0.036</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

### Table 14. Part Correlation Square values.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AA</th>
<th>AB</th>
<th>BA</th>
<th>BB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Club Attachment</td>
<td>0.003136</td>
<td>0.003721</td>
<td>0.012996</td>
<td>0.009216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Player Attachment</td>
<td>0.0004</td>
<td>0.000049</td>
<td>0.008281</td>
<td>0.000121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Sponsor Image Transfer</td>
<td>0.241081</td>
<td>0.378225</td>
<td>0.262144</td>
<td>0.1681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Protective Sponsorship Attitude</td>
<td>0.000169</td>
<td>0.006084</td>
<td>0.0121</td>
<td>0.001225</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>