How Minority Status and Fan Commitment Affect Sponsorship Evaluation: An Abstract

Marc Mazodier and Conor Henderson

Abstract Brands seeking to build a strong relationship with their target customers sometimes support social causes supported by their target customers in an effort to facilitate bonding through perceived similarity (Cornwell 2015). Although building relationships with customers through shared interests is well understood in the context of direct one-to-one relationships marketing (Palmatier et al. 2006), the processes are more complex and less understood when the target customer exists as a group with a social identity. Such a context includes brand sponsorship of sports teams in which fans are the target customers and group processes inform individual fan's response to the sponsorship (e.g., social identity of the group, see Madrigal 2001). To further our understanding of how group processes shape individual's reactions to sponsorship strategies, the current research examines how the context of the fan relative to others in their community (majority or minority status of the fan in their community) alters their acceptance of the brand as a common supporter of their team. We show that just as a person is more likely to warmly embrace a fellow countryman when they encounter each other in a foreign land rather than in their homeland, brands are more likely to gain acceptance when supporters of the team are isolated from other fans. Building on Optimal Distinctiveness Theory, we also show that the relevance of the fan's status among their community (isolated minority status or majority status) is greater the more commitment they feel to the team.

References Available Upon Request

M. Mazodier (✉)

Hong Kong Baptist University, Kowloon Tong, Hong Kong
e-mail: mmazodier@hkbu.edu.hk

C. Henderson

University of Oregon, Eugene, OR, USA
e-mail: conorh@uoregon.edu