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## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the conclusions, recommendations and limitations of this study. The chapter commences with an overview of the research problem, followed by a discussion of the sample profile and each research question. Based on the conclusions pertaining to the respective research question, recommendations are made to cricket unions who wish to sell their sponsorship proposals. The research questions are linked to the findings obtained in chapter five, followed by the limitations of the study. Finally, recommendations for future research are presented.

#### 6.2 OVERVIEW

The primary objective of this study was to determine the degree to which businesses follow the decision-making process when selecting a sponsorship opportunity. For this reason, the study focused on sports sponsorship and the business decision-making process.

Sport sponsorship is an important field of study; Mansourpour (2007:2) asserts that sponsorship enables businesses to avoid some of the inefficiencies of traditional advertising (such as clutter) and to target specific consumer segments. According to a study by BMI Sportinfo (2010), the year-on-year growth rate of the local sports sponsorship industry in South Africa is almost 14%, which is well ahead of the international sports sponsorship rate of just below 11%. BMI Sportinfo (2010) further indicates that the sports sponsorship industry is worth R3,5 billion, with an additional R2,2 billion being spent on additional marketing activities to support the sponsorship investment.

Copeland *et al.* (1996:34) note that sports organisers and managers typically lack the necessary insight as to the ways in which businesses select and evaluate sports sponsorship opportunities. Furthermore, these authors emphasise that if sports properties were to understand the business decision-making process, this insight

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would enhance their understanding of the exchange process – while at the same time increasing their ability to negotiate successful sponsorship initiatives.

From this short overview, it is clear that research is required in the field of sports sponsorship, with a view to improve the insights that sports organisers have of the decision-making process and evaluation process that businesses follow when selecting sponsorship opportunities.

The conclusions pertaining to the sample profile will now be presented, followed by the conclusions for each research question.

### **6.3 SUMMARISING THE SAMPLE PROFILE**

From the main findings (see section 5.5.1) it is clear that the respondents who participated mostly came from the manufacturing, sales and retail industry. The contribution that are made to cricket unions are mainly a combination of financial and value in-kind, and the contribution range between R10 001 to R100 000 per year. The respondents who participated were mostly from national companies or branches form international companies and the sponsorships' duration were mostly less than 10 years.

### **6.4 CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This section presents the major findings and conclusions reached during the course of the study, based on the main findings presented in chapter five (see section 5.5). Also, recommendations will be made to cricket unions with reference to each main finding.

**6.4.1 Research question 1:** Which objectives are considered to be more likely, and which are less likely to be set for the sponsorship when making a sponsorship decision?

**Main finding reliability (R1) (section 5.3.1.1)** indicates that all the constructs of sponsorship objectives were reliable. These constructs are: Construct 9.1: Broad

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corporate objectives, Construct 9.2: product/brand/service-related objectives, Construct 9.3: sales objectives, Construct 9.4: media coverage objectives Construct 9.5: guest hospitality, and Construct 9.6: personal objectives. **Main finding research question (RQ1) (section 5.4.1)** was that respondents indicated that they are most likely to choose construct 9.2: product/brand/service-related objectives, construct 9.4: media objectives, construct 9.1: broad corporate objectives and construct 9.3: sales objectives for their sponsorship.

It can therefore be **concluded** that respondents found the following objectives to be the most important ones when making a sponsorship decision: product/brand/service, media, broad corporate and sales objectives. In declining order, the other objectives ranked as follows: personal objectives and guest hospitality objectives.

It is **recommended** that cricket unions who wish to sell their sponsorship proposals to businesses should examine these objectives and determine the extent to which these are already included in their sponsorship proposals. A further suggestion is that cricket unions should include these important objectives in the objectives they formulate for the sponsorship opportunity.

**6.4.2 Research question 2:** What are the differences between the objectives set for the sponsorship by medium and large sponsors?

**Main finding research question (RQ2):** When comparing medium and large sponsors in terms of likelihood to set specific objectives for their sponsorships, the only difference found was for guest hospitality objectives. In other words, for these respondents, large sponsors is more likely to set guest hospitality objectives than medium sponsors. For the other five broad objectives there were no differences in terms of likelihood to set the specific objectives between medium and large sponsors.

It can therefore be **concluded** that most of the sponsorship objectives are equally important to the respondents who represent both the medium and large sponsors,

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except for guest hospitality objectives which are regarded as more important by large sponsors as compared with respondents representing medium sponsors.

It is **recommended** that cricket unions should therefore focus more on guest hospitality objectives when negotiating a large sponsorship and focus less on guest hospitality objectives when negotiating a medium sponsorship.

**6.4.3 Research question 3:** What are considered to be the most important decision-making criteria that are used when evaluating a sponsorship proposal?

**Main finding research question (RQ3):** Respondents consider positioning/image criteria to be the most important criteria when evaluating a sponsorship proposal.

**Main finding R2 (section 5.3.1.2)** indicates that all eight constructs of criteria measures are reliable. These constructs are: Construct 10.1: budget considerations, Construct 10.2: positioning and image criteria, Construct 10.3: targeting of the market, Construct 10.4: integrated marketing communication Construct 10.5: competition considerations, Construct 10.6: strategies, Construct 10.7: personal criteria and Construct 10.8: general criteria (see section 3.4.5.2 for a detailed discussion of each construct).

**Main finding research question (RQ3) (section 5.4.3)** can be formulated as such: respondents regard positioning/image criteria as very important; while general criteria, budget considerations, targeting of the market, personal criteria, integrated communications and strategic criteria are also considered as important when evaluating a sponsorship.

It can therefore be **concluded** that respondents viewed positioning/image criteria as very important during a sponsorship decision. These criteria include the following items with which the respondents strongly agreed: The image of the sponsorship (property/event/team) and the product/brand/service must be compatible; and also, the image of the available audience, of the event sponsored, and the product/brand/service must be compatible.

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It is **recommended** that cricket unions should include aspects relating to positioning and image into the sponsorship proposal as these are regarded as the most important decision-making criteria by respondents of this study. It is further suggested, therefore, that cricket unions should target businesses with products/brands/services which are compatible with their audience at the event.

**6.4.4 Research question 4:** What is the degree of involvement of different role-players who are part of the sponsorship decision-making process within a business?

**Main finding research question (RQ4)** is that the marketing manager, the public relations manager and also the CEO or owner most frequently participate in the sponsorship decision-making process.

It can therefore be **concluded** that the marketing manager, public relations manager, CEO or owner, are most frequently involved in the decision-making process when choosing a sponsorship to invest in.

It is **recommended** that cricket unions that wish to sell a sponsorship proposal should make contact with any of the following persons within in the business: the marketing manager, the public relations manager, the CEO or owner of the business. A further suggestion is that the cricket union must always communicate with the person within the business who has the authority to make a sponsorship decision.

**6.4.5 Research question 5:** Is there a difference regarding the extent to which medium and large sponsors would follow the decision-making process?

**Main finding research question (R3)** is that the constructs in the decision-making process have been found to be reliable for testing the decision-making process and evaluation activities (see section 5.3.1.3).

In order to be able to answer this research question, the sizes of the sponsors were combined to form two groups: medium and large (see section 5.4.5.1).

**Main finding research question (RQ5):** Large sponsors will be more likely to follow the activities of the sponsorship evaluation process than medium sponsors. In other words medium sponsors is more likely to skip or dismiss some of the steps in the process, whereas large sponsors indicated that they consider each step as important when evaluating a sponsorship proposal.

It can therefore be **concluded** that large sponsors follow a more formal evaluation process than medium sponsors. It is **recommended** that cricket unions should present large sponsors with a more formal sponsorship proposal than medium sponsors. A further suggestion is that cricket unions should investigate the evaluation process in order to be more prepared when large sponsors evaluate their sponsorship proposals.

## 6.5 LINKING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND MAIN FINDINGS TO QUESTIONS IN THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Table 6.1 presents a summary of the questions in the questionnaire, and these are linked to the research questions and main findings of the study as presented in chapter five.

**Table 6.1 Results summary**

Question/ Division	Subject related	Type of question	Research question	Main finding
<b>Section A</b>	<b>Sample profile</b>			
Question/ Division 1 – 5	Sample profile/ Demographic information	Nominal scale	2 & 5	SP1, SP2, SP3, SP4, SP5, RQ2, RQ5
<b>Section C</b>	<b>Objectives and criteria</b>			
Question/ Division 9	Objectives	Ordinal scale (Likert scale)	1 & 2	RQ1, RQ2
Question/ Division 10	Criteria	Ordinal scale (Likert scale)	3	RQ3
<b>Section D</b>	<b>Decision-making</b>			
Question/ Division 11	Decision-making unit	Ordinal scale (Likert scale)	4	RQ4
Question/ Division 12	Decision-making process	Ordinal scale (Likert scale)	5	RQ5

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From table 6.1 it is evident that the research questions asked with a view to find answers to the primary objective of this study have been answered by the main findings. The primary objective, to determine the degree to which businesses follow the decision-making process when selecting a sponsorship opportunity, has therefore been achieved through the presentation of the main findings for each research question.

## **6.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Since all research studies are confronted by a number of limitations, the limitations for this study will now be presented.

- Time limitation and a lack of financial resources presented difficulties in the execution of the study. Data collection was limited to three months of distribution through the use of the electronic questionnaire. This constraint contributed to the fact that a limited number of completed questionnaires were received.
- Because the questionnaire was web-based, many recipients ignored the request to complete the questionnaire, or some businesses' firewall blocked the questionnaire from reaching the intended person, also contributing to the low response rate.
- Since the cricket unions did not provide all their sponsorship information, the total population was limited. Some information was left out and other information was faulty. Therefore, in light of the fact that a convenience sample was used, it can be assumed that the data is not representative of the total population, only of the respondents of the study.
- The length of the questionnaire presented to be a limitation, and a lack of interest was observed on the part of a number of respondents who participated in the study. This resulted in a number of incomplete questionnaires and also contributed to the low response rate of the study.

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## 6.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

After completing the study and in view of its limitations, the following recommendations can be made for future research:

- A similar study can be conducted with a larger sample size, so that one may be able to use the diverse demographic information of sponsors when comparing the results. Specifically, the differences between medium and large sponsors can be investigated.
- It is recommended that a probability sampling method should be used for future research with a view to collect results that are representative of the entire population.
- A study comparing the cricket unions' perceptions and the perceptions of their sponsors can be conducted.
- Similar studies can be conducted by exploring a broader spectrum of sport types, or by focusing on businesses that sponsor any kind of institution, team, sport or event.
- A qualitative study can be conducted so that one may be able to adapt the decision-making process specifically for sponsorship selection.

## 6.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided the conclusions for this study. First a short overview of the intention of the study was given, as discussed in chapter one. Where after the conclusions for each research question was presented. The links between the research questions and the main findings were presented in a table 6.1. From these links it was clear that the primary objective of the study was achieved by answering the various research questions.

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The research questions were formulated in chapter one (see section 1.4), to answer the primary objective. Based on the conclusions presented, the limitations of the study were discussed. Recommendations for future research have also been made to conclude this study.