
CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the background and introduction to this study. The rationale for the study is explained by summarising the main concepts which guided the initiation of this study. The following aspects are also included in this chapter:

- Definitions of relevant terminology, particularly those concepts that are used throughout the study.
- An explanation of the problem on which the study is based. This problem is formulated with reference to evidence of the feasibility of the study in light of an overview of the context of the South African sports¹ sponsorship industry.
- Documentation of the primary objective and research questions of this study.
- A brief overview of the research methodology that is followed, together with a motivation for the choice of the methodology used in this study.
- An overview of the structure of the chapters that follow.

1.2 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

The next section provides a brief overview of the meanings of the most important concepts that are used throughout the study.

- **Business decision-making**

A decision is defined as a possible choice among a range of alternative possible courses of action (Schermerhorn, 2008:162). This author further stipulates that the decision-making process involves a set of activities that begins with the identification of a problem, includes making a decision, and ends with the evaluation of the results

¹ For purposes of consistency, the use of the word “sport” refers to the noun, whereas “sports” is used as an adjective in this dissertation.

or the identification of the best course of action. The business purchasing process can also be defined as the decision-making process by means of which businesses establish the need to purchase products and services; and also by means of which they identify, evaluate, and choose among alternative brands and suppliers (Webster & Wind, 1972:14).

This definition corresponds with the view of Du Plessis and Rousseau (2003:136) who propose that the business decision-making process is typically referred to as business-to-business buying behaviour, business buying behaviour or industrial buying behaviour. Brennan *et al.* (2003:1659) state that when a consumer buys a product, such a purchase does not necessarily comprise of a single act or isolated event. These authors further note that a purchase consists of a number of linked activities, which are contained in the decision-making process. Schiffman and Kanuk (2007:3) further elaborate that a consumer can either be an individual consumer (end-consumer) or a business consumer. In a business, several people will have an influence or exercise some input into the purchasing decision (Blyte & Zimmerman, 2005:17).

- **Sponsorship**

A sponsorship can be defined as support for a business, person or activity – financial or in kind – in exchange for brand publicity and association, or other marketing communication objectives (Ouwensloot & Duncan, 2008). In accordance, Shimp (2010:562) argues that sponsorships involve an exchange between a sponsor (such as a brand or business) and a sponsee (such as a sporting event) whereby the latter receives a fee and the former obtains the right to associate itself with the activity sponsored.

The definition of sponsorship that is used for this study that sponsorship refers to the provision of resources of any kind by a business in direct support of an event (sport or art) or social concern (educational or environmental) with the purpose of directly associating the business's name or products with the event and deriving benefits related to the affiliation or association (Mullin *et al.*, 2007:315).

- **Sponsor**

The business that pays for the advertising right is called the client or the sponsor (O'Guinn *et al.*, 2009:9). From this definition one can conclude that the sponsor can also be called the marketer, because the marketer uses the sponsorship in the marketing communication strategy of the business. The sponsor is generally regarded as the principal, requiring certain tasks to be performed by the entity or property it has selected to sponsor (Thompson & Quester, 2002:2951).

- **Property**

Farrelly (2002:2) states that the sponsored entity is known as the property. The word property is commonly employed in both literature and practice to describe any business (e.g. Manchester United), event (e.g. Super Bowl), or person (e.g. Tiger Woods) with whom a sponsor formally aligns itself as a vital component of its communications strategy (Farrelly & Quester, 2005:2).

- **Sponsorship proposal**

The Business Dictionary (2010:1) defines a proposal as a solicited or unsolicited submission of a document by one party to supply certain products or services to another party. Furthermore, unlike an offer, a proposal is not a promise or commitment, but, if accepted, the proposer is expected to follow through and negotiate for the development of a binding contract.

From a sports property's perspective, once it has been determined that new sponsors are needed, all efforts will be directed toward designing a plan to sell the opportunity to the prospective sponsor (Fullerton, 2010:167). The author continues that a sponsorship proposal can therefore be defined as the effort to provide information about the available opportunities for a business to associate and affiliate with the sports property in the form of a sponsorship.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Marketing can be described as a business function that facilitates the exchange process between buyers and sellers (Belch & Belch, 2004: 8). These authors elaborate that marketing includes examining the needs of consumers; developing a product or service that will satisfy these needs; offering this product or service at an appropriate price; and making it available at a particular place through a channel of distribution. These authors emphasise the function of marketing in the development of a communication programme aimed at creating awareness and interest (Belch & Belch, 2004:8).

This description of marketing indicates that the capacity of marketing to communicate effectively and efficiently with consumers is critical to the success of both the marketing effort and, finally, to the success of the entire business. However, effective communication between the marketer and the market is often hindered by the sheer volume of communication aimed at consumers (Boshoff & Gerber, 2008:1). O'Reilly (2008:63) concurs that an information overload may indeed obstruct the communication effort's effectiveness.

Given the growing importance of marketing communications on the one hand, and the risk of information overload on the other, marketers are constantly on the lookout for new, resourceful ways to break through the communications clutter, and to communicate effectively with their chosen target markets (Boshoff & Gerber, 2008:1). Mansourpour (2007:2) argues that sponsorship enables businesses to avoid some of the inefficiencies of traditional advertising (such as clutter) and to target specific consumer segments.

Sponsorship is defined as the provision of resources of any kind by a business in direct support of an event (sport or art) or social concern (educational or environmental) with the purpose of directly associating the business's name or products with the event and deriving benefits related to the affiliation or association (Mullin *et al.*, 2007:315). Fullerton (2010:32) concurs and notes that sponsorship involves an array of activities which entail that the marketer attempts to capitalise on an official relationship with an event, a team, a league, a player, or a sports property.

From the above definitions one can conclude that there are two main parties involved in a sponsorship; in this regard Fullerton (2010:32) also states that a sponsorship involves two entities: the sponsor and the sponsee. For the purpose of this study, the sponsee or the event sponsored will be referred to as the property, and the business that associates itself with the property will be referred to as the sponsor or, in some cases, as the marketer.

Although sponsorships can cover a wide range of activities - including sport, arts, culture, broadcasting, education, science and the environment - sports sponsorship is the largest sector (Ouwensloot & Duncan, 2008:297). Sport, art and social events have become dependent on sponsorship for funding (Apostolopoulou & Papadimitriou, 2004:180). Today, there is an ever-increasing pressure for sports properties to seek creative financial support, including sponsorships; such support is becoming essential to ensure the survival of these properties (Manos, 2003:14).

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%. Sports sponsorship in South Africa has enjoyed remarkable growth since the early 1990s, largely due to South Africa's re-admission to international sport and the substantial increase in television coverage of major sporting events (Van Heerden & Du Plessis, 2003:22). In South Africa, as is the case in most of the world, most sponsorship spending goes to major television-driven sport: soccer, rugby and cricket (BMI Sportinfo, 2010).

BMI Sportinfo (2010) further shows that among the top 100 sponsors in South Africa, it has been found that the sports sponsorship industry is worth R3,5 billion, with an additional R2,2 billion being spent on leveraging. Farrelly and Quester (2003:539) describe leveraging as the implementation of complementary marketing activities, such as advertising and promotions, in order to achieve the objectives set by the business.

Interestingly, Roybal (2006:87) found a disconnection between a business' motives for entering into a sponsorship and the motives perceived by the sports property. This author asserts that sports properties should aim to understand the motives of

businesses, looking for a sponsorship opportunity, in order for them to be able to entice prospective sponsors effectively (Roybal, 2006:87).

The view of McCarville and Copeland (1994:103) is also supported by Fullerton (2010:176) who indicates that sports properties hoping to attract sponsors must first understand how businesses view and assess sponsorship opportunities. These authors elaborate that only a few properties understand how such opportunities (i.e. getting hold of a sponsor) might be enhanced. In this regard, it is notable that only one percent of proposals that are submitted actually receive funding (Fullerton, 2010:176).

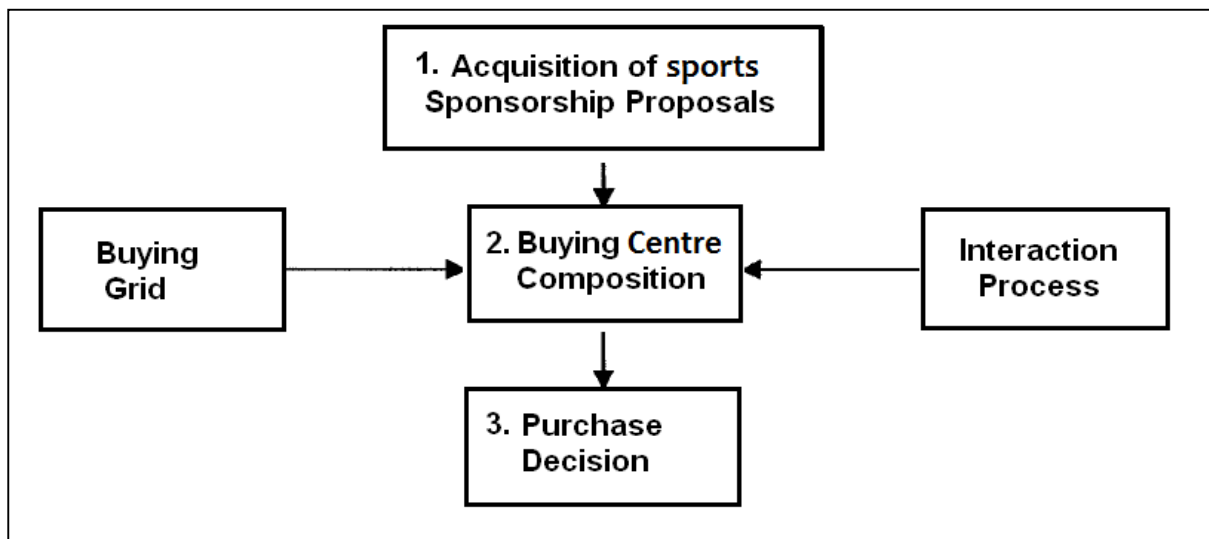
Sports organisers and managers typically lack the necessary insight as to the ways in which businesses select and evaluate sports sponsorship opportunities (Copeland *et al.*, 1996:34). Furthermore, these authors propose that if sports properties were to understand the business decision-making process, this insight would enhance their understanding of the exchange process while at the same time increasing their ability to negotiate successful sponsorship initiatives.

On the other hand, Fullerton (2010:21) notes that one of the challenges facing businesses is the hundreds of unsolicited sponsorship proposals they receive annually. In the same vein, Tripodi (2001:1) states that from a marketing perspective, knowledge and expertise in sponsorship management are in demand as businesses are increasingly being inundated with sponsorship proposals – together with the business' realisation of sponsorship as a powerful brand building tool. In this regard, McCarville and Copeland (1994:112) suggest that businesses should formalise their sponsorship selection processes in order to identify superior sponsorship opportunities from the substantial numbers received.

There are a number of tools that have been designed with a view to expedite the screening and selection process, for example the sponsorship worksheet (Ensor, 1987:40); the evaluation profile sheet (Jackson & Schmader, 1990); the six-step approach to sports sponsorship management (Irwin & Asimakopoulos, 1992:43); and the sports sponsorship proposal evaluation model (Irwin *et al.*, 1994:54).

However, Arthur *et al.* (1997:224) argue that none of the existing models provides comprehensive detail on the actual process of business decision-making with regard to the acquisition or purchase of a sponsorship. These authors have developed the sports sponsorship acquisition model (Arthur *et al.*, 1997:229) as depicted in figure 1.1 below. This model describes the basic decision-making process undertaken by businesses as they evaluate and select sports properties to sponsor (Arthur *et al.*, 1997:228).

Figure 1.1 **The sports sponsorship decision-making process**



Source: Adapted from Arthur *et al.* (1997:229).

The business decision-making process commences when someone in the business recognises a need that can be satisfied by buying products or acquiring services (Mullins & Walker, 2010:132). Arthur *et al.* (1997:230) propose that the business decision-making process begins with the acquisition of the sponsorship proposals, then the buying centre is put together (those responsible for making the final purchase decision).

The process of purchasing a sponsorship is often complex and requires the communication and coordination of all individuals in the buying centre (Shank, 1999:300). Bouwens (2009:18) asserts that a careful sponsorship screening process can go a long way towards reducing the possibility of a sponsorship to fail.

Irwin and Asimakopoulos (1992:43) propose that the first step in evaluating a sponsorship proposal is to examine the property's marketing plan and corporate objectives in order to assess how well the particular sponsorship is aligned with the objectives of the business. Van Heerden and Du Plessis (2004:429) concur that clearly defined, quantifiable sponsorship objectives provide the best guidance to selecting the event or activity to sponsor, and this enables the sponsor to develop clear criteria for sponsor opportunity selection and evaluation.

Sports sponsorships can support various business objectives (Mullin *et al.*, 2007:340). Sandler and Shani (1993:38) group these objectives into three broad categories, namely media objectives, marketing objectives and corporate objectives. Shank (1999:301) and later Lannto and Wehlen (2003:16) add that objectives can also include personal objectives such as management's interests, which may refer to the manager's hobbies or field of interest, for example, in sport or art.

Properties should seek the type of market information from sponsors that will enable them to demonstrate the fit and synergy between their goals and objectives (Farrelly & Quester, 2005:62). Contrary to this view, McDonald (1991:31) argues that businesses enter into sponsorships with no more than a vague feeling that they ought to do something charitable, or they sponsor because the opportunities exist for business entertainment, or the cause is important to the chairman.

McCarville and Copeland (1994:112) support this notion; they found that corporate executives may rely on intuition, personal objectives, or on the application of reliable rules of thumb when making a sponsorship decision. Arthur *et al.* (1997:228) add that the criteria used by a business for evaluating a sports sponsorship opportunity may be based on a variety of rational and emotional motives - such as the need for increased awareness, increased sales, and a positive image or the desire to be a good citizen by supporting a worthy cause or event.

Koenderman (2007:72) notes that positive tax implications motivate the sponsorship of sport- or other properties. Bouwens (2009:47) adds that the competitive advantage that the sponsoring business will have above their competitors plays an important role in the sponsorship decision.

From the above discussion, a conclusion can be drawn that sports properties need a better understanding of their potential sponsors' decision-making process and the influences which play a key role in the decision to sponsor or not to sponsor. This study set out to examine the process by which sponsors decide to purchase a sports sponsorship. The research questions of this study will now be formulated.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY

The research objectives should be based on the research problem (Hair *et al.*, 2010:35). Research objectives, although related to and determined by the problem definition, are set so that when achieved, they provide the information necessary to solve the problem (Burns & Bush, 2010:56). The primary objective and research questions are set out below.

1.4.1 Primary objective

The primary objective of this study was to determine the degree to which businesses follow the decision-making process when selecting a sponsorship opportunity. In order to answer the primary objective of this study, a number of relevant research questions were identified; these are answered during the course of the study.

1.4.2 Research questions

In order to address the primary objective of the study, the following research questions were formulated:

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?
2. What are the differences between the objectives set for the sponsorship by medium and large sponsors?
3. What are considered to be the most important decision-making criteria that are used when evaluating a sponsorship proposal?

-
4. What is the degree of involvement of different role-players who are part of the sponsorship decision-making process within a business?
 5. Is there a difference regarding the extent to which medium and large sponsors would follow the decision-making process?

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A brief summary of the literature study and empirical investigation that was followed during this study will now be provided. Chapter four will be dedicated to providing a detailed discussion of the research methodology followed.

1.5.1 Literature study

The aim of this study is to determine how businesses make sponsorship decisions. The current literature available on these subjects was examined by means of a literature review. The sources used were obtained from scholarly journals, articles and research documents that are scientifically verifiable.

The following databases were consulted:

- SACat: National catalogue of books and journals in South Africa
- Nexus: Databases compiled by the NRF of current and completed research in South Africa
- SAePublications: South African journals
- EBSCOhost: International journals on Academic Search Premier, Business Source Premier, Communication and Mass Media Complete, SportDiscus and EconLit.
- Emerald: International journals
- ProQuest: International dissertations in full text

1.5.2 Empirical investigation

The empirical investigation is briefly discussed below, with reference to the research design and the method of data collection. Here, the study population is defined and motivated, and the research instrument used is indicated. Only a brief description of the data analysis is included in this chapter, as chapter four will be directed towards a more detailed discussion of the statistical measurements used in this study.

1.5.2.1 Research design and method of collecting data

The empirical investigation is based on a particular research design. Malhotra (2010:42) states that a research design is the framework or plan for a study which details the procedures necessary for obtaining the information needed to structure or solve marketing research problems. The research design provides details of each step in the marketing research project and the research design process begins with defining the marketing research problem (Malhotra & Peterson, 2006:71). These authors further propose that a good research design ensures that the information collected will be relevant and useful to management and that all the necessary information will be obtained.

Kent (2007:254) concurs that the purpose of the research design is to ensure that the evidence to be obtained will enable the researcher to address the objectives for which the research is to be undertaken. Research designs can be categorised into two broad types, namely exploratory and conclusive (Malhotra & Peterson, 2006:72). These authors elaborate that conclusive designs may be further categorised as either descriptive or causal.

Aaker *et al.* (2011:72) concur that the different types of research designs can be classified into three broad categories, namely exploratory research designs, descriptive research designs and causal (experimental) research designs. These authors elaborate that the choice of research approach depends on the nature of the research.

Exploratory research refers to research that is conducted with a view to explore the problem situation, that is, to gain ideas and insight into the problem confronting management or the researcher (Malhotra & Peterson, 2006:72). These authors suggest that because the information needs are only loosely defined at this stage, exploratory research has to be flexible and unstructured. A conclusive research design was used to assist the decision-maker in determining evaluating, and selecting the best course of action in a given situation (Malhotra & Peterson, 2006:73). It is further indicated that conclusive research can be used to verify the insights gained from exploratory research.

In this study, a descriptive research design was used. A descriptive research design describes specific market characteristics and was used when there is a clear statement of the research problem, or when detailed information is needed (Malhotra, 2010:106). Descriptive research involves the collection of structured statistical data that can be verified with statistical testing techniques (Shao, 2002:45; Zikmund & Babin, 2010a:50).

When data is collected with a view to address a specific marketing problem or research problem, this is referred to as primary data (Malhotra & Peterson, 2006:97). Aaker *et al.* (2011:77) argue that primary data is collected first hand for a specific research study. Malhotra (2010:73) further explains that primary data can be collected in either a qualitative or quantitative manner. For this study, primary data was collected through the use of quantitative web-based questionnaires.

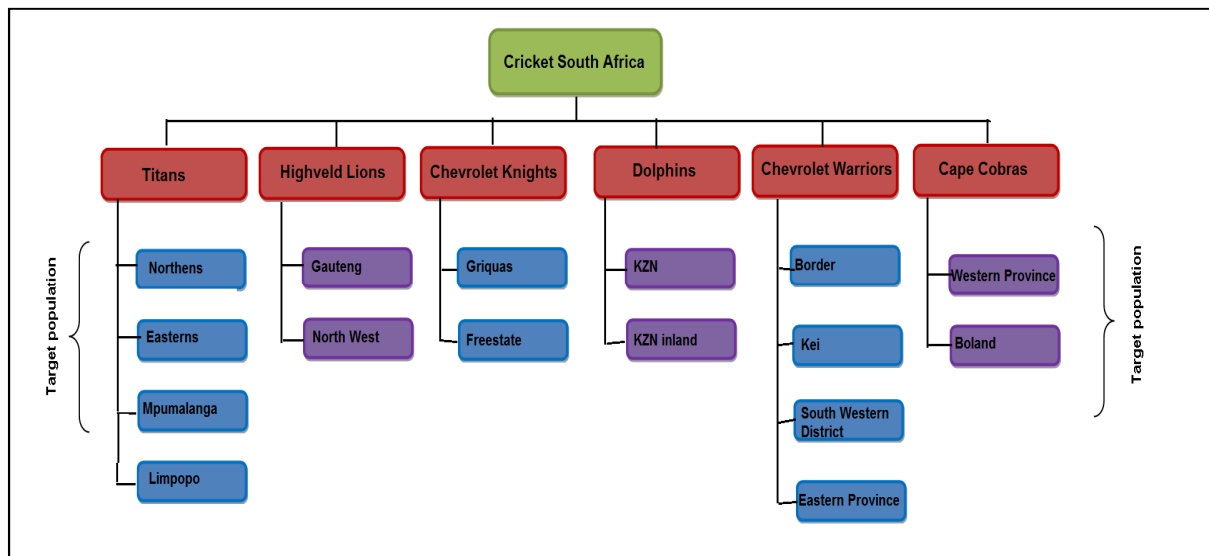
1.5.2.2 Population and sampling plan

Zikmund and Babin (2010a:412) refer to a population as the set of all objects that possess some common set of characteristics with respect to some marketing research problem. The authors continue that each individual member is referred to as a population element.

The target population is defined as the entire group to be studied as specified by the research objectives (Burns & Bush, 2010:354). Aaker *et al.* (2011:336) define the target population as that part of the total population (universe) at which the study is

directed. The target population of this study includes all businesses (sampling elements) that are currently sponsors for any of the sixteen cricket unions (units) in South-Africa (area of coverage). Figure 1.2 shows the structure of Cricket South Africa and indicates where the target population fits into the structure.

Figure 1.2 Structure of Cricket South Africa



Source: Adapted from CSA (2010).

This study only focused on the provincial level cricket unions. The main consideration for this decision was the connection with, and the need for research felt in the North-West cricket union.

Churchill *et al.* (2010:39) state that a sample design is a method used to select the units of an analysis for a study. The authors indicate that a sample design can be classified and divided into probability and non-probability approaches. Wiid and Diggines (2009:199) further explain that when using probability sampling, each member of the population has a known probability of being selected; however, the researcher needs to have a definite sampling frame of the sampling units. These authors also note that non-probability sampling, which was used in this study, does not require a sample frame. As a result, sampling efficiency and precision are absent from these methods.

Aaker *et al.* (2011:349) explain that non-probability samples tend to pose problems relating to bias; there is, furthermore, no way of ensuring that the sample is

representative of the total population. These authors continue that non-probability sampling does not depend upon chance as a selection procedure, and thus the researcher cannot properly control the probability of a sampling unit being included in the sample. Also, non-probability sampling methods do not allow for generalisation outside the group of sample units and can only be evaluated subjectively (Wiid & Diggines, 2009:199).

Churchill *et al.* (2010:334) define the methods of non-probability sampling as convenience samples, referral samples, judgment samples and quota samples (see table 4.2). **In this study**, convenience sampling was used to reach population elements. According to McDaniel and Gates (2010:435), convenience sampling is the simplest form of non-probability sampling, since a survey can be conducted with the first available population elements. Malhotra (2010:377) states that non-probability sampling methods can also be helpful to researchers when they are limited in terms of available time and financial resources. Because the cricket unions restricted the researcher's connection with the sponsors in a number of ways, a convenience, availability sample was used to reach the population elements.

The **total population** can be defined as all sponsors of provincial sports unions in South Africa. For this study, the **target population** is defined as all the current sponsors of the sixteen provincial cricket unions in South-Africa. A list of all the known target population elements was put together with the help of the cricket unions. As will be pointed out in chapter six, the limitation of this target population is that the relationship between the cricket union and the sponsor is based on a contractual agreement that prohibits the cricket union from giving information on the sponsor to anyone.

Fullerton (2010:96) states that contractual agreements for all relationships with sponsors may vary in terms of the required set of components they desire to include in the contract. Some unions only gave the numerical number of their sponsors; these unions therefore distributed the questionnaires directly to their sponsors. Table 1.1 shows the target population's size and how each union's sponsors were reached.

Table 1.1 Cricket unions and number of sponsors

	Provincial Cricket Union	List received or Not	Number of sponsors (available)	Number of completed questionnaires
1	Boland	Yes	2	2
2	Border	No	4	0
3	Eastern Province	Yes	5	1
4	Easterns	Yes	10	0
5	Free state	No	6	1
6	Gauteng	No	9	5
7	Griquas	No	1	0
8	Kei	Yes	0	0
9	Kwa-Zulu Natal	Yes	21	12
10	Kwa-Zulu Natal Inland	Yes	3	0
11	Mpumalanga	Yes	0	0
12	Limpopo	Yes	0	0
13	North-West	Yes	25	11
14	Northerns	No	9	0
15	South Western District	Yes	10	5
16	Western Province	Yes	15	2
		TOTAL	120	39

From table 1.1 can be seen that from the 120 sponsors, that were declared by the cricket unions, only 39 responded by completing the questionnaire.

1.5.2.3 The research instrument

The research instrument for this study was a web-based questionnaire. According to Burns and Bush (2010:267), surveys are a popular means of collecting primary data and are conducted using questionnaires. McDaniel and Gates (2010:216) state that web survey software is a popular means of conducting online surveys. These authors assert that the advantages of online surveys far outweigh its disadvantages. Aaker *et al.* (2011:230) concurrently state that web-based surveys have many advantages over traditional methods: they can be high quality, fast, and inexpensive.

For this study, a web-based survey was designed on Survey Monkey and sent to all the cricket unions in South Africa. All sixteen unions send out the questionnaire to all of their current sponsors by the 1st of August 2011. The unions chose to send out the

questionnaires themselves in order to protect the confidentiality of their sponsors. The researcher received the lists of each union as proof that the questionnaire was indeed sent to each sponsor.

1.5.2.4 Data analysis

Data obtained from questionnaires is raw data that must be analysed in order to make the data useful (Tustin *et al.*, 2005:451). These authors continue that the first step in analysing data is data preparation; this involves three procedures, namely editing, coding and data capturing. In this study, the data has been captured and analysed using with the SPSS and STATISTICA statistical programmes (SPSS Inc, 2007; StatSoft, Inc, 2006). The statistical data was analysed by the statistical department of the North-West University.

1.6 PRELIMINARY CHAPTER CLASSIFICATION

This study was divided into six chapters; a brief description of each chapter will now be given.

Chapter 1: Introduction, problem statement, research goals

This chapter provides an overview of the research conducted. A brief background to sports sponsorship as well as the motivation and need for this research are set out in this chapter. The primary objective and research questions that are addressed by this study have been formulated. The method of investigation that has been followed and the chapter layout conclude this chapter.

Chapter 2: Sports sponsorship in the marketing communication mix

In order to understand sponsorships, it is important to understand where this concept fits into the marketing communication mix. A definition of marketing and a layout of how sponsorship fits into a marketing strategy are presented in this chapter. The unique features of sponsorship as a marketing communication tool are also

addressed. This chapter concludes with a brief discussion of marketing through sports, in order to put sponsorship into a sports perspective. The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate that sponsorship is seen as a “product or service” that needs to be purchased by a business, and that can therefore be used as a marketing communication tool in the business’ marketing strategy.

Chapter 3: Business buying behaviour and the decision-making process

In this chapter, the focus is on the business decision-making process that is applied to sports sponsorships. The business decision-making process for purchasing sports sponsorships will be discussed in greater detail, specifically referring to the buying centre composition, objectives and selection criteria set for the sponsorship.

Chapter 4: Research methodology

The research design that was used is discussed in detail in this chapter, specifically focusing on the design and method of collecting data, sampling plan and the data analysis that will be done for this study. This chapter provides a motivation for the choice of methodology, as well as statistical analyses that were conducted.

Chapter 5: Results

This chapter provides the results obtained from the statistical analysis. The sample profile of the respondents who participated is presented. Each research question is discussed and the chapter concludes by representing the main findings.

Chapter 6: Summary, conclusions and recommendations

The conclusions regarding the key findings of the empirical results are presented in this chapter. Recommendations are made to sports properties with a view to enhance their understanding of the sponsorship agreements. The limitations of the study are discussed and the chapter concludes with recommendations for future research.

1.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided an introduction for this study and offered the motivation for undertaking this research. The research problem was set out and research questions were formulated to support the primary objective of the study. The research problem indicates that sports properties are increasingly dependent on sponsorships for funding. However, only a small percentage of sponsorship proposals that are submitted do indeed receive funding, and this is indicative of the fact that sports organisers and managers lack the necessary insight regarding the ways in which businesses select and evaluates their sports sponsorship opportunities.

Sports properties should therefore strive to better understand the business decision-making process, as this could enhance their ability to negotiate successful sponsorships. This last point indicates the necessity of conducting the current research. A convenience sample was drawn on an availability bases. The respondents were all current sponsors from the sixteen provincial cricket unions in South-Africa. The next chapter focuses on sponsorship as a marketing communication tool. Businesses need to purchase this tool to use it in their marketing strategy; therefore a clear understanding is needed of the advantages and unique characteristics of sponsorship as a marketing communication tool.