

THE IMPACT OF SPONSORSHIP ON BRAND IMAGE

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Abstract. This study examines the impact of sponsorship on brand image in the context of the Indian Premier League (IPL) cricket tournament. It investigates how sponsorship activities influence consumers' perceptions of brands and their purchasing behaviour. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining surveys and interviews with cricket fans to gather data on their attitudes towards sponsors and their association with the IPL. The findings suggest that sponsorship significantly shapes brand image and consumer preferences in the highly competitive sports market.

The study contributes to the literature on sports sponsorship and provides practical insights for marketers seeking to leverage sponsorship opportunities in cricket and other sports. You can search for this article in academic databases or libraries to access the full text and delve deeper into the research findings and implications. Qualitative insights from interviews with industry stakeholders shed light on the strategic nuances of cricket sponsorship, including the diverse array of sponsorship strategies brands employ to maximize their impact and engagement with cricket audiences. From product placements to experiential marketing initiatives and digital activations, brands leverage cricket platforms to create memorable and authentic connections with fans, driving brand affinity and loyalty. Despite the evident benefits of cricket sponsorship, the research also uncovers challenges and complexities inherent in the sponsorship landscape, such as escalating costs, market saturation, and the need for robust measurement metrics to gauge sponsorship effectiveness and return on investment (ROI). Nevertheless, stakeholders recognise the immense potential of cricket as a platform for brand-building and market expansion, particularly in emerging markets like India, where cricket enjoys unparalleled popularity and fan fervour.

The findings of this study have far-reaching implications for marketers, sports organizations, and policymakers navigating the evolving landscape of sports sponsorship and commercialization. By understanding the interplay between cricket sponsorship, brand management, and consumer behaviour, stakeholders can craft more effective sponsorship strategies, enhance brand engagement, and capitalize on the unique opportunities offered by cricket as a global sporting phenomenon.

In conclusion, this study sheds light on the multifaceted dynamics of cricket sponsorship and its implications for brand management and consumer behaviour. The findings underscore the significant impact of cricket sponsorship on brand awareness, image perception, and purchasing behaviour among fans, highlighting the strategic value of sports partnerships in driving consumer engagement and brand loyalty. By leveraging innovative sponsorship activations and engaging with cricket audiences authentically, brands can harness the immense potential of cricket as a platform for market expansion and brand differentiation.

The qualitative Insights gleaned from interviews with key stakeholders offer valuable perspectives on the challenges and opportunities in cricket sponsorship, urging brands and sports organizations to navigate the evolving landscape with creativity, agility, and strategic foresight. Despite the complexities and uncertainties inherent in sports sponsorship, the study emphasizes the importance of collaboration and synergy between brands, sports entities, and policymakers in maximizing the mutual benefits of sponsorship partnerships while ensuring transparency and accountability.

Future research in this domain could explore emerging trends and technologies shaping the future of cricket sponsorship, such as virtual reality experiences, sports

integration, and fan-driven content creation. Moreover, longitudinal studies tracking the long-term effects of cricket sponsorship on brand equity and market performance would provide valuable insights into the sustained impact of sports partnerships on brand value and consumer preferences. In closing, this study contributes to the growing body of

literature on sports sponsorship and commercialization, offering practical insights and actionable recommendations for marketers, sports organizations, and policymakers seeking to navigate the dynamic landscape of cricket sponsorship in an increasingly competitive and globalised marketplace.

Keywords: cricket sponsorship; brand image; indian premier league; impact; sports.

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