

Mapping Sponsorship-linked Marketing in Indian Premier League

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Abstract

Sponsorships have not been subjected to extensive research in an emerging economy like India, till date, which is considered virgin in terms of sponsorship research. Having this in mind, the article focuses on mapping sponsorship scenario in Indian Premier League (IPL) and aims at meeting three main objectives: (a) Mapping sponsorship scenario in Indian Premier League (IPL), (b) to categorize sponsors in Indian Premier League into various categories and highlight the importance of Industry-IPL fit and (c) to discuss the impact of micro-level factors on sponsorship-linked marketing. For the purpose, official websites of IPL and all teams were scanned (from 19 March to 3 April 2012) resulting into the identification of 119 sponsors with varying level of prominence, relatedness and sponsors' hierarchy. Researchers advised brand managers that they should first weigh their brand's prominence and relatedness coupled with taking into account their target customers rather than taking impulse decisions to compete with their competitors' sponsorship activities. The study contributes to the knowledge of the academicians who will be able to understand the potential of future researches that could be done. On the other hand, the study also provides an advantage to marketing executives/sport managers about how they can effectively and efficiently manage their individual brands in a cluttered media environment.

Keywords

Industry, Indian Premier League (IPL), prominence, relatedness, sponsors, sponsorships, sport teams

Introduction

Sports binds families together, binds friends together, and it is truly the only thing that people can only watch Live—
Lalit Modi (Ex-Chairman and the Architect of IPL)

Sponsoring sporting events, arts, individuals and causes has been considered as an important marketing communication strategy (Groza, Cobbs & Schaefer, 2012) which is believed to dominate over other traditional forms of corporate communications and has been cited, coupled with fragmented media and rise of technology, as responsible for causing decline in the use of advertising (Rust & Oliver, 1994). Over the years, sponsorships (commercial as well as philanthropic) have become global in terms of its application to the industry as marketers have understood their importance and realized that sponsorship-linked marketing really pays if activated and leveraged properly

(Bal, Quester & Plewa, 2010) and enhances corporate image (D'Astous & Blitz, 1995), improved brand awareness and brand credibility (Pham & Johar, 2001), influencing consumer recall (Bennett, 1999) leading to the development of competitive advantage, goodwill and brand-equity (Meenaghan, 1991).

Despite its global importance, sponsorships are not been subjected to extensive research in a diverse country like India, as it is in the growth stage where plenty of sponsorship contracts are visible and every day a new sponsorship contract is being signed consisting of sport sponsorships, television sponsorships (a brand sponsoring television show) or any other similar contract. Cultural and behavioural differences among consumers of these different countries raise a question if professional executives can effectively apply sponsorship theories developed and valid in Western countries to Eastern countries which are being

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considered as virgin in terms of sponsorship research? It, thus, becomes very important from academic researchers' point of view to highlight issues regarding the state of sponsorship which could be used as a stimuli or a motivating factor to generate interest among researchers to study sponsorships in India.

The rise of Indian Premier League (IPL) as an exciting T20 cricket tournament in an emerging economy like India has brought to the notion of marketing executives that IPL can also be used for introducing new products/services, building brand image, brand awareness and finally enhancing brand-equity on a bigger platform. The event is already being labelled as 'the hottest sporting event' by *Forbes* magazine with a brand value worth \$3 Billion in 2011. One strategy which is being commonly used by marketers for the first time in Indian history is the extensive use of sponsorship-linked marketing in IPL. We believe that IPL provides the best legitimate source to study sports sponsorships not in India but in whole Asia being the sporting event acknowledged by ICC, BCCI, fans, celebrity players, bollywood celebrities as well as corporate houses resulting into a total of 119 sponsors in a short span of just five years with an average of 10 sponsors per team. The area needs further digging for exploring the possibilities of additional improvements into previous sponsorship theories, if any, for making them suitable to be used in the Indian context. Having this in mind, we were interested in mapping the sponsorship scenario in IPL in order to provide a clear understanding of sports sponsorship situation in India. This mapping is believed to act as a stimuli for potential researchers to create their interest in sponsorship research and will provide them a clear understanding of how sponsors are leveraging sponsorship-linked marketing in IPL.

Research Objectives

The present study aims at meeting three main objectives:

1. Mapping sponsorship scenario in Indian Premier League (IPL) to provide a clear understanding of sports sponsorships in India.
2. To categorize sponsors in Indian Premier League into various categories and highlight the importance of Industry-IPL fit.
3. To discuss the impact of micro-level factors on sponsorship-linked marketing and their impact on diluting/enhancing the image of sponsee and/or other concurrent sponsors.

Review of Literature

Rust and Oliver (1994) argued two decades back via their research work titled 'The Death of Advertising' that fragmented media and markets, technological advancement and curious and empowered twenty-first century customers had led to cause a slow growth rate of advertising which was once a dominant communication strategy and other forms of communication strategies will overtake the position which once advertising used to hold. Those predictions seemed to get real in today's scenario where sponsorships seemed to overshadow the growth rate of advertising as the investments made in sponsorship industry has grown to a massive \$51 billion in 2012 (IEG Report, 2012) and is estimated to grow more in the coming decade. Previous researchers have argued about the commercial potential associated with every event/activity which could be leveraged by firms and, thus, acts as a main reason for the marketers to associate their brands with events/activities to sign sponsorship deals with them.

This commercial potential has been reflected by previous researchers, for example, Meenaghan (1991, p. 36), while defining sponsorship as 'an investment, in cash or in kind, in an activity in return for access to the exploitable commercial potential associated with that activity', talks of the potential carried by events/activities that could be exploited by marketers. Similar thoughts are generated when one takes a closer look at the International Events Groups' definition of sponsorship that defines it as 'a cash and/or in-kind fee paid to a property, typically a sports, entertainment, non-profit event or organization, in return for access to the exploitable commercial potential associated with that property'. Various benefits that are achieved by exploiting the commercial potential of event/activity are an enhanced corporate image, increased awareness, brand exposure, image building, goodwill generation and most importantly consumer attitude change, increased fan loyalty and hence an increase in the customer-based brand equity of the brands (Meenaghan, 2005).

Sponsorship and Customer-based Brand Equity

Brand with high customer-based brand equity attracts new customers as well as retain the existing ones causing increased profits, low costs (Stahl, Heitmann, Lehmann, & Neslin, 2012), successful brand extensions (Pitta & Katsanis, 1995), increased purchase intentions

(Keller, 2003), and effective marketing communications (Tirole, 1990). The concept of brand-equity is also associated very strongly with two important constructs in marketing literature: (a) *brand loyalty* (Emari, Jafari, & Mogaddam, 2012) and (b) *brand extension* (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Having an understanding of the fact that sponsorships can help marketing executives to achieve above-mentioned objectives, it, thus, creates a curiosity among academic researchers to study brand-equity in context of sponsorship since it is believed that the ultimate end-benefit of sponsorship is the enhancement/dilution in brand equity (Wang, Cheng, Purwanto & Erimurti, 2011).

Researchers have argued brand differentiation as the main motivation for managers' indulgence in corporate sponsorship that adds to the financial value of a brand (Cornwell, Roy & Steinar, 2001; Simmons & Becker-Olsen, 2006), but they put more focus on exploring the relationship between sponsorship and the development of customer-based brand equity in the mindsets of the customers. Henseler, Wilson, and Westberg (2011) develop and validate a Sport Sponsorship Index and link it with the brand equity of sponsors and provide a good understanding of how marketers can use varying level of sponsorship components for achieving their marketing objectives.

They argue that the ultimate contribution of sponsorship as a communication strategy is the contribution, directly or indirectly, in the enhancement of the brand equity of the brands. Despite the importance of brand equity (Cornwell & Maignan, 1998; Walliser, 2003), brand-equity researchers in sponsorships have not taken a leading spot in sponsorship research (Wang *et al.*, 2011). Christensen (2006) argued that brand-equity researchers should be given encouragement to research in sponsorship (sports) so as to cater to marketers' need about creating, enhancing and sustaining sponsors' brand-equity.

Concurrent Sponsorships Alias Multiple Sponsorships

The era of solo sports sponsorships is now a myth as all the events, domestic or international, are being sponsored by two or more than two sponsors. The eagerness of the marketing managers to engage their brands in sponsorships has resulted into 'concurrent sponsorship' boom (also known as multiple or concomitant sponsorship), as it is hard in the current decade to find any event sponsored by a single firm (Carrillat, Harris & Lafferty, 2010; Fleck &

Quester, 2007). This has resulted in an increased curiosity among scholars to study various factors influencing sponsorship effectiveness. Take for instance the case of sponsorship contracts in the 5th Edition (2012) of Indian Premier League (IPL) which had generated more than hundred sponsorship contracts between event/teams and brands coming from different industries having varying level of prominence and at a different level of commitment with the event/team such as title sponsor/partner, official sponsor/partner and associate sponsor/partner.

When research on sponsorship is evaluated, solo sports sponsorship arrangements dominate majority of the attention focused on assessing sponsorship effectiveness for individuals' cognitions and affective components on one end of the continuum and its impact on the behavioural outcomes of an individual on the other end (Chanavat, Martinent & Ferrand, 2009; Cornwell, Weeks & Roy, 2005; Speed & Thomson, 2000). Till date, Ruth and Simonin (2003); Carrillat, Lafferty and Harris (2005); Ruth and Simonin (2006); Pentecost and Spence (2009); Chanavat, Martinent and Ferrand (2009); Carrillat, Harris and Lafferty (2010); and Groza, Cobbs and Schaefer (2012) are the only researches we came across while scanning concurrent sponsorship literature all arguing anonymously that the concurrent sponsors impact each other as well as the event.

Ruth and Simonin (2003) studied the impact of sponsors' nationality, complementarity and its controversial nature in concurrent sponsorship and argued that the presence of controversial sponsors work against the image of the event and the image of the other sponsors. Carrillat, Lafferty and Harris (2005) share an interesting finding of their research that in concurrent sponsorship brands with low familiarity benefits more in comparison to highly familiar brands and less familiar sponsors had an advantage over other sponsors to be impacted from other entities, whereas such brands do not have the capability to impact any other entity. Ruth and Simonin (2006) were of the view that roster size has an impact on consumers' judgement of the event and argued that consumers evaluate an event favourable which is being sponsored by a solo firm with a goodwill-oriented firm where the addition of a second sponsor dilutes the benefits thus derived from.

Carrillat, Harris and Lafferty (2010) have been referred as the first study for explaining the phenomenon of image transference/contrast in concurrent sponsorships. They were of the view that the images of two familiar brands concurrently sponsoring the same event can be transferred between each other when they have similar concepts,

whereas their images contrast when they have different concepts. Groza, Cobbs and Schaefer (2012) recently opined that portfolio congruence for events coupled with the sponsorship level in concurrent sponsorships is a dynamic indicator impacting the brand-equity of the sponsors. Highlighting the importance and dominance of concurrent sponsorship these days, we can argue that concurrent sponsorships are going to attract the attention of the future researchers and will dominate sponsorship research in the next couple of decades. Interestingly, the rise of concurrent sponsorships also creates an opportunity for exploring sponsorship effectiveness studies.

Sponsorship Relatedness and Sponsor Prominence

Johar and Pham (1999) were the first to empirically analyze the most important heuristics impacting sponsors' identification, calling one of them as 'relatedness' (discussed above) and another as 'sponsors prominence' arguing that sponsor identification does not solely depend on retrieval of information from memory but involves a complex psychological phenomenon ranging from pure guessing at one end and drawing inferences on the basis of relatedness and prominence as cues on the other end. Relatedness and Prominence are considered as the centre of attraction for many sponsorship researches and are effective dimensions for assessing sponsorship for improved sponsorship processing (Copetti, Wentzel, Tomczak & Henkel, 2009; Cornwell *et al.*, 2005) as both individually improves sponsor recall, sponsor awareness (Pham & Johar, 2001; Johar & Pham, 1999).

The term relatedness is supposed to be known by different names like relatedness, congruence, or fit in sponsorship literature (Fleck & Quester, 2007; Johar & Pham, 1999; Olsen & Thjomoe, 2011; Rifon, Choi, Trimble & Li 2004); compatibility or relevance in cause-related marketing (Simonin & Ruth, 1998); similarity (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999); or typicality (Ladwein, 1994). Relatedness theory suggests that a highly related sponsor-sponsored entity has a direct impact on storage and retrieval of information from consumers' memory and is responsible for the stronger and favourable relationship between the two (Olson, 2010; Woisetschlager, Eiting, Hasehoff & Michaelis, 2010; Zdravkovic, Magnusson & Stanley, 2010). Categorizing fit as Native (Natural) fit and Created (Articulated) fit, Becker-Olson and Simmons (2002) argue that sponsor-event having high natural/created fit had the advantage of high

positive outcomes. For example, Reebok or Nike sponsoring Olympics or any sports event will look highly related and legitimate which will help these brands to be easily remembered and recalled in consumers' memory in comparison to a situation when they sponsor some other Arts events.

On the other hand, Prominence of a brand was defined by Pham and Johar (2001) as 'Consumers' use of variations in the market prominence of potential sponsors as a source of information when inferring the identity of sponsors' where different factors like brand awareness, market share, visibility and share-of-voice act as antecedents. It can be argued that prominent brands (for example, DLF, Coke, Hero) are viewed as more reliable/authentic and can be viewed as sponsors (accurately or guessing) in comparison to brands (for example, Shracchi Real Estate or Dheeraj Real Estate, Amity University) which are less prominent. Various theories also support the importance of prominence as in one research advertisers' prominence was called as one important factor influencing message recall (Turley & Shannon, 2000), and it was also observed in another research that consumers identify prominent brands (for example, Ford, Budweiser and Compaq) as sponsors as it was believed that sponsors having large pool of funds which they can use for high media spending as compared to brands (for example, Kia, Southpaw Beer, and Acer) having less funds for media spending (Roy & Cornwell, 2003). Wakefield, Becker-Olson and Cornwell (2007) examine the role of prominence in a field setting and advice managers to acknowledge the role played by these heuristics (prominence and relatedness) in sponsor identification. In addition, researchers had also highlighted the direct impact of relatedness and prominence on recall, thus, influencing their identification (Lardinoit & Quester, 2001; Wakefield & Bennett, 2010).

Previously, all the above-mentioned studies related to relatedness, prominence or sponsorship had been carried out in European countries or USA. Interestingly, with the increase in the global investment on sponsorship, it, thus, has become very important to study sponsorship in Asia and other countries also as the same sponsorship theories of the West cannot be applied directly to East owing to different cultures, different consumption habits and different consumers. However, IPL has created an interesting sponsorship clutter and provides an umbrella to concurrent sponsorship contracts for the first time in the history of sponsorship research in Asia or Indian context. It is thus argued that the current study will give a clear understanding of sponsorship situation in Indian Premier League

and will serve as a base for future researchers in the coming decades.

Sponsorship in Indian Premier League

The most interesting and entertaining part of the rise of global T20 cricket tournament is Indian Premier League (IPL), the shorter version of the game, which has grown into a flourished and money-spinning sports business attracting attention of many global corporate houses, film stars, celebrities and is now recognized as a ‘colorful and commercial’ platform where bollywood and sports merge together changing people’s attitude towards one of the oldest sport on the planet. In terms of its brand equity, IPL has been on a roller-coaster ride since its inception in 2008 as shown in the graph below (Figure 1) and is now valued worth \$2.92 Bn in 2012 by a UK-based research agency Brand-Finance.

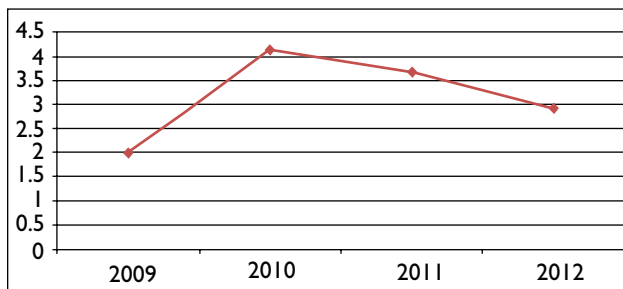


Figure 1. IPL Brand Valuation as Per Brand Finance (in \$ Bn)

Source: Developed by the authors.

But when it is about entertainment, IPL rules the alternatives and meets the expectations of millions of common masses irrespective of their age, income, social status and/or country who want to see full-on entertaining cricket in a short time. This holds true as IPL emerges from a nation where bollywood (Indian film industry) and cricket are considered to be the most dominant sources of entertainment from ages, and IPL presents to its viewers a combination of both of them on a single platform. Curiosity among people to watch IPL was generated by creating buzz marketing among viewers. It was launched in 2008 and accumulated a total viewership of 102.2 million as shown in Figure 2 and the latest season of IPL (2012) accumulated a cumulative viewership of 159 million viewers (Bhat, 2012).

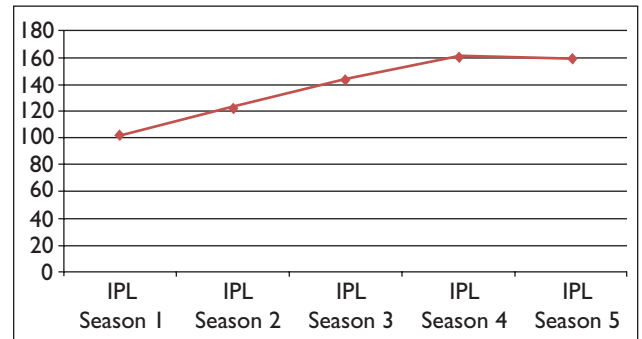


Figure 2. Year-wise Cumulative Reach for IPL (in millions)

Source: Developed by the authors.

Such a huge fan following and viewership of IPL can be attributed to the interesting features of IPL such as shorter version 20–20 format, involvement of bollywood and celebrity team owners (Shahrukh Khan, Preity Zinta, Shilpa Shetty), auctioning of cricketers, multiple celebrity cricketers within a single team, high number of close finishers in the tournament and introducing the concept of cheerleaders (foreigner) for the first time in Indian sport history adds more to entertainment and results in the greater acknowledgement of the tournament by people than in any other form of the game. Indian business houses cannot keep the distance from such a tournament with tremendous potential for brand building as marketers viewed it as an important platform to build their brands on a bigger platform and hence the commercialization of cricket took place on a bigger level than ever before making BCCI the richest sports’ governing body all over the world.

Sponsorships of IPL and/or IPL teams emerge as other interesting thing that make IPL and its franchisees cash-rich cows. Initially, DLF group paid US\$50 million to IPL for acquiring the Title sponsorship of IPL, naming the tournament as DLF-IPL, for the initial first 5 years (2008–2012) which was then replaced by Pepsi on November 2012, by winning the title sponsorship of IPL for the next five years (2012–2017) and pays staggering \$72 million to IPL (Business Standard, 2012). Interestingly by the end of the 5th Edition of IPL (2012), the total number of sponsors in the whole tournament was more than hundred (refer Table 1) resulting into a cluttered media environment. These sponsors were from different backgrounds (sports or non-sports background) with different level of global prominence (for example, Reebok, Coca Cola, Nokia, Muffin Innovations, TG Ticketing and many more) from a wide variety of industries (Aviation,

Electronics, FMCG, etc.) and at a different level of sponsorship commitment (title sponsor, founding sponsor, official sponsor/partner, associate sponsor/partner and many more) resulting into the creation of 'concurrent sponsorship' where hundreds of brands were presented together at the same time and competing for getting attention of the viewers/fans. In India, such a fair of sponsors was observed for the first time, thus, attracting academic researchers who are now focusing on this current trend in sponsorship. It, thus, becomes necessary to map the sponsorship-linked marketing in Indian Premier League to provide the world a clear picture of how brands are leveraging sport sponsorships.

Research Methodology

Procedure and Sample

The official website of IPL as well as the websites of all teams was scanned on a daily basis for a period of two weeks before the start of the tournament so as to jolt down the names of all the sponsors in the tournament (from 19 March–3 April 2012). This process resulted in the identification of 119 sponsors with varying level of nationality and other different characteristics. In addition to the names, information regarding sponsors commitment with

Table 1. IPL Franchisees-related Information Highlighting Owners, Brand Value (by Brand-Finance) and Sponsors

Team	Owner(s)	Brand Value (Till 2010)	Sponsors in the 5th Edition of IPL
Mumbai Indians	Mukesh Ambani (Reliance Industries)	\$79.13 Mn	Hero, MasterCard, DHFL, Bridgestone, Air India, Disney, Adidas Eyewear, MSN, Adidas, Dheeraj Real Estate, Loop, Kingfisher Premium, Coca Cola, Royal Stag, Double Mint, Red 93.5 FM, Fever 104 FM, Book My Show, Radio City 91.1 FM.
Chennai Super Kings	Gurunath Meiyappan (India Cements)	\$75.58 Mn	Aircel, Gulf, Coromandel King Cement, Life Ok, Amrapali Group, Reebok, Coromandel Infotech India Ltd, 7 UP, Mansion House, The Hindu, Hercules, Washington Apples, USHA, Hello 106.4 FM, Cool Maal, UniverCell.
Kolkata Knight Riders	Shahrukh Khan (Red Chillies Entertainment), Juhi Chawla and Jay Mehta	\$57.57 Mn	Nokia, Matrix, Rose Valley, Spanco, Concast Maxx, Reebok, Dish TV, EMT, Royal Stag, Manyavar, Coca Cola, The Telegraph, Xenoh, Vivel, Freecultr, Bisk Farm Biscuits.
Royal Challengers Bangalore	Vijay Mallya (UB Group)	\$55.13 Mn	Royal Challenge, Kingfisher Premium, McDowell's No. 1, Reebok, Spirit and More.
Delhi Daredevils	GMR Group	\$40.85 Mn	Muthoot Group, Idea, Panasonic, GMR, Kingfisher Premium, Coca Cola, Royal Challenge, Amity University, Adidas, Fever 104 FM.
Deccan Chargers	Deccan Chronicle Holdings Ltd	\$38.76 Mn	Emirates, JayPee Cement, McDowell No. 1, Kingfisher Premium, Puma, TVS, Xenoh, Muffin Innovations, Apollo Hospitals, Burn Fitness Port, Deccan Chronicle, TV 5, 92.7 FM, Yo! Vizag, Ad age, Oakley, Mojo Street, Opium Spas, TG Ticketing, DNA, Agon, White Mischief.
Kings 11 Punjab	Ness Wadia, Preity Zinta, Dabur and Apeejay Surendera Group	\$35.75 Mn	Videocon d2h, U.S POLO, Lux Cozi, ACC Cements, Valvoline, McDowell No. 1, Kingfisher Premium, Prayag, MiromaSport, Godrej Eon, Coca Cola, Max Healthcare, 92.7 Big FM, Punjab Kesari, Book my Show.
Rajasthan Royals	Lachlan Murdoch (Emerging Media), Shilpa Shetty, Raj Kundra	\$33.78 Mn	Ultratech Cement, HDFC Life, Supertech, Kingfisher Premium, Puma, Valvoline, Marriott, TATA Consultancy Services, Kingston Technology, Amity University, Doublemint Chewing Gum, RN Club, Oakley, Ram Bandhu Masale, Mountain Dew, Mitashi Electronics, State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur, Bikano Snacks, Sanskar School, Official Radio Partner: Red FM 93.5, Book My Show.com.
Pune Warriors India	Subrato Roy Sahara (Sahara Group)	N.A	TVS, Finolex, Sahara, Adidas, Kingfisher Premium, Pepsi, Book My Show.com.

Source: Developed by the authors.

the event/team (hierarchy of the sponsor) was also written down which was presented in the official websites.

Data was collected from youths, in the Jammu region, who watch IPL and are interested in sports as they represent the major target customers of sport organizations and are responsible for majority of the sport-related consumption representing the most important segment (Dickson, Lennon, Montalto, Shen & Zhang, 2004). However, there always exists a biasing effect in favour of the local team. Since, no team from Jammu region plays in IPL, so the selection of the location becomes appropriate, and it was argued that such a decision can lessen the biasing error in the study. In order to filter important information regarding IPL, teams and sponsorship-linked marketing in IPL, three studies were conducted.

Results and Findings

First Study

All the sponsors in IPL came from different industries having varying level of relatedness with the IPL/teams. The very first step starts with categorizing all the 119 sponsors into similar groups based on their industries, leading to 21 different industries (refer to Table 2), which was followed by measuring the Industry-IPL/team using Wakefield, Becker-Olsen and Cornwell (2007) and was customized by asking respondents on a 10-point scale 'Given what these industries offer to the customers, would it make sense for brands from these industries to sponsor IPL or any team of IPL (makes no sense/makes perfect sense)?'

Table 2. Industry-Event/Sponsors Relatedness

Industry	Mean	SD	Sponsors from the Industry
Sports Industry	9.00	1.51	Adidas, Reebok, Puma, Oakley, Burn Fitness Port, RN Club, Adidas Eyewear, Miroma Sport.
Entertainment Industry	8.10	1.64	92.7 Big FM, TV5, TG Ticketing, Videocon d2h, Book My Show, Spirit and More, Red 93.5 FM, Fever 104 FM, Dish TV, Life OK, Hello 106.4 FM, Cool Maal, Disney, Radio City 91.1 FM, Mojo Street.
Soft Drink Industry	7.80	1.69	Coca Cola, Pepsi, Mountain Dew, 7 UP.
Hospitality Industry	7.53	1.90	Agon, Opium Spas, Marriott.
Services Industry	7.47	1.40	Apollo, Via.com, Manyavar.
FMCG/Food Industry	7.37	2.10	Xenoh, Double Mint, Ram Bandhu Masale, Bikaji Snacks, Vivel, EMT, Washington Apples.
Telecommunications Industry	7.33	1.60	Idea, Aircel, Vodafone, Karbonn Mobiles, Matrix Sim Cards, Loop Mobiles.
Lifestyle/Apparels Industry	7.30	2.08	US Polo, Flying Machine, Freecultr, Lux Cozi.
Automobile Industry	7.10	1.39	Volkswagen, Hero, TVS, Hercules, Bridgestone.
Electronics Industries	7.00	2.33	Mitashi Electronics, Panasonic, Nokia, Muffin Innovations, Godrej Eon, Finolex Industries, USHA.
Consumer Durable Goods Industry	6.73	2.16	—
Alcohol and Tobacco Industry (Surrogate Brands)	6.47	2.59	Kingfisher Premium, McDowell No. 1, White Mischief, Royal Challenge, Royal Stag.
Information Technology Industry	6.33	2.46	Tata Consultancy Services, Supertech, Spanco, Coromandel Infotech, Microsoft.
Transportation Industry	6.31	2.02	Emirates Airways, Air India, Kingfisher Airways.
Real Estate Industry	5.23	2.19	DLF, Amrapali Group, Mansion House, Dheeraj Real Estate, GMR, Rose Valley.
Banking and Finance Industry	5.07	2.54	Citibank, HDFC Life, Master Card, Max Life Insurance, Muthoot Group, DHFL, State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur.
Postal/Courier Industry	4.41	2.16	—
Petroleum Industry	4.20	2.49	Valvoline, Gulf Lubricants.
Cement Industry	3.80	2.20	JayPee Cements, ACC Cements, Ultratech Cements, India Cements, Coromandel King Cements.
Education and Paper Industry	3.53	2.06	Amity University, Sanskar School, Deccan Chronicle, Ad Age, Punjab Kesari, The Telegraph, The Hindu.
Mining Industry	2.53	2.14	—

Source: Developed by the authors.

Results of the study came as expected. Industry-IPL/team relatedness scores vary for different industries ranging from the highest related (sports industry, mean = 9) followed by entertainment industry, soft drink industry, hospitality industry, services industry and so on while paper industry and the least related (Mining industry, mean = 2.53) at the bottom of the industry-IPL relatedness list (Table 2). In addition, majority of the brands from the entertainment industry were sponsoring IPL which was also positioned as an entertaining sporting event.

Second Study

There are 9 teams playing in IPL (refer Table 1) originating from different Indian cities consisting of many celebrity players with varying level of team performance and hence different fan following. Interestingly, a question arises: Which is the most recalled and liked team of IPL? When it comes for financial based brand-equity, Brand-Finance (UK-based research consulting firm) rated Mumbai Indians on the top position with a brand-equity worth \$79.13 million followed by Chennai Super Kings (\$75.58 Mn) and Rajasthan Royals (\$33.78 Mn) at the bottom. But brand-equity literature stresses that financial-based brand-equity cannot be considered equivalent to people's perception of the brand (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). This motivation drives us to find the most recalled (unaided recall) and liked team of IPL and data was collected from 260 respondents for the same purpose.

Most Recalled Team of IPL: The respondents were asked to recall their top three favourite teams playing in IPL. Mumbai Indians followed by Kolkata Knight Riders and Chennai Super Kings were found to be the top three most recalled teams of the IPL respectively. The decision to select Mumbai Indians was arrived at after finding that Mumbai Indians was the most recalled team with (30.5 per cent) respondents followed by Kolkata Knight Riders (27.5 per cent) and Chennai Super Kings with (22.2 per cent) respondents. Hence, it was observed that Mumbai Indians was the most liked team of IPL followed by Chennai Super Kings.

Most Liked Team of IPL: In order to find the most liked team of IPL, the affective intensity scores for all the teams were measured in a way similar to Wakefield and Bennett (2010) by asking respondents:

Read the names of the **teams** listed in the table as shown below and please mention your liking towards the **teams**.

Please answer each of the following Teams/IPL by circling the number that best describes your opinion. Here (-4) indicates negative Liking and (+4) indicates positive Liking towards that team.

The affective intensity scores were then summed up for all the teams (refer Table 3). It becomes clear that Mumbai Indians is the most liked team of IPL. These results are similar to the results of the most recalled team of IPL.

Table 3. Affective Intensity Scores of the Teams in IPL

Event/Team (S)	Summated Affective Intensity Score
Mumbai Indians	632
Chennai Super Kings	630
Kolkata Knight Riders	558
Delhi Daredevils	518
Rajasthan Royals	493
Royal Challengers Bangalore	429
Pune Warriors	381
Kings 11 Punjab	380
Deccan Chargers	365

Source: Developed by the authors.

It, thus, becomes very clear that Mumbai Indians holds the top position for the most recalled as well as most liked team of IPL followed by Chennai Super Kings and Kolkata Knight Riders. These findings are similar to the ranking of teams on the basis of their financial worth as given by Brand-Finance. Mumbai Indians can, thus, be called as the most liked and recalled team of IPL followed by Chennai Super Kings and Shahrukh Khans' Kolkata Knight Riders in the top three.

Third Study

This study was conducted for measuring the prominence and relatedness of each individual brand with the event/team it is sponsoring. The Prominence and Relatedness of every individual sponsor was measured in a way similar to Johar and Pham (1999). For each of the sponsor, respondents were asked to respond to the following using seven-point scales for each brand:

Prominence: Compared to their competitors, how large and prominent is this brand? (small/large)

Relatedness: Given what they offer and their image, would it make sense for this brand to sponsor IPL or any team of IPL (makes no sense/makes perfect sense).

Median split analysis was then performed on the data for categorizing the sponsors in four different categories (Table 4). These four categories were as follow: (1) Unrelated and Less-Prominent, (2) Unrelated and Prominent, (3) Related and Less-Prominent, and (4) Related and Prominent. The results obtained from the median-split analysis are as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Median-split Analysis Results

	Related	Unrelated
Prominent	32 Brands Related (Mean = 7.33) and Prominence (Mean = 7.46)	24 Brands Related (Mean = 5.46) and Prominence (Mean = 4.22)
Less-Prominent	13 Brands Related (Mean = 6.94) and Prominence (Mean = 4.21)	50 Brands Related (Mean = 5.17) and Prominence (Mean = 4.22)

Source: Developed by the authors.

Statistical tests like Anova and Tukeys' post-hoc test were used in order to show the statistical difference between the means of these four different groups using SPSS software taking relatedness mean and prominence mean as the dependent variables and categorization of sponsors as the factor. Results show that the mean of related and unrelated sponsors were significantly different ($F = 69.54, p < 0.01$) as well as the means of prominent and less-prominent sponsors ($F = 79.05, p < 0.01$) were statistically different. Results of Tukeys' test confirm that

for relatedness, group (1) and (2) shares similar means ($p > 0.05$) when compared to the means of group (3) and (4) which also have a similar means between them ($p > 0.01$). Tukey test in terms of prominence of sponsors revealed that the means of group (1) and (3) share similar means ($p > 0.05$) when compared to the means of group (2) and (4) having similar means ($p > 0.01$). The sponsors falling into these four different categories are shown in Table 5.

Contribution and Managerial Implications

Research on sponsorship-linked marketing is a recent development in India with no study till date focusing on IPL that has attracted global attention and has earned the titles as 'hottest sporting event' and 'Indias' Richest League'. This study tries to scan sports sponsorship in IPL by categorizing sponsors into different industries, exploring Industry-IPL/Teams relatedness, relatedness and prominence of individual sponsors as well as the nature of the sponsorship contracts signed during the 5th Edition of IPL. While doing the same it came into knowledge that sponsors from 21 different industries are showing their presence in IPL and majority of the brands that were sponsoring IPL/team were from more related industries and very few from the least related industries. Sponsors from sports industry as well as entertainment industry are dominating in quantity, whereas very few sponsors were from petroleum industry whereas no sponsor was from

Table 5. Categorization of IPL Sponsors on their Relatedness and Prominence

Unrelated and Less-prominent Sponsors	TV 5, Muffin Innovations, Oakley, Burn Fitness Port, Yo! Vizag, Agon, Mojo Street, TG Ticketing, Ad Age, Opium Spas, Lux Cozi, ACC Cements, Max Life Insurance, Finolex Industries, Book My Show, Via.com, Flying Machine, Spirit and More, Red 93.5 FM, Sanskar School, Tata Consultancy Services, Supertech, Book My Show, Ram Bandhu Masale, Bikaji Snacks, Marriott, Mitashi Electronics, Amity University, Fever 104 FM, GMR, Vivel, EMT, <i>The Telegraph</i> , Spanco, Rose Valley, Concast Maxx, Manyavar, Freecultr, 7 UP, India Cements, Gulf Lubricants, Amrapali Group, Coromandel King Cements, Coromandel Infotech, Cool Maal, Mansion House, Fever 104 FM, Book My Show, Loop Mobiles, Dheeraj Real Estate.
Unrelated and Prominent Sponsors	Oakley, Royal Challenge, Muthoot Group, Matrix Sim Cards, USHA, <i>The Hindu</i> , Microsoft, Disney, Bridgestone, Vodafone, Karbonn Mobiles, Volkswagen.
Related and Less-prominent Sponsors	Deccan Chronicle, Xenoh, MiromaSport, Double Mint, State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur, RN Club, Life Ok, UniverCell, Washington Apples, Hello 106.4 FM, Radio City 91.1 FM, DHFL.
Related and Prominent Sponsors	Reebok, Adidas, Hero, Idea, Coca Cola, DLF, TVS, Kingfisher Premium, Puma, Nokia, Aircel, McDowell No. 1, Emirates Airways, Videocon d2h, US POLO, TVS, Kingfisher Premium, McDowell No. 1, Sahara, Mountain Dew, Panasonic, Royal Stag, Dish TV, Hercules, MasterCard, Air India, Adidas Eyewear, Citibank.

Source: Developed by the authors.

postal/courier and mining industry. With the number of sponsors already being raised to 119, it is argued that IPL will attract more sponsors in coming years where more brands will be racing forward to get associated with IPL. Managers of brands from the least related industries can also sponsor IPL or any team but had to provide a strong reason for sponsoring the same and they need to articulate the reason for their decision if they wanted to use sponsorship as a strategic tool rather than an impulse decision.

The study also came with an interesting finding about the most recalled and most liked team of IPL. It was observed that Reliance Groups' Mumbai Indians has created and maintained a good rapport and it emerged as the most recalled and most liked team of IPL based on the two separate studies conducted for the same purpose. Interestingly, Chennai Super Kings and Shahrukh Khans' Kolkata Knight Riders gave a tough competition and figured among the top three teams of IPL, thus, giving more choices to the marketing managers to choose a team from IPL if they are interested in choosing sponsorship as a communication strategy for achieving their marketing objectives.

IPL is the first sporting league in India to have more than 100 sponsors who are making huge investments in sponsorship. It was found that these sponsors are either individual brands or corporate houses who are either the market leaders (highly prominent) or market followers (less prominent). This study also makes an attempt to study the relatedness as well as the prominence of every individual sponsor in IPL for the first time and explored that every sponsor is viewed differently by the respondents for whom relatedness and prominence are important predictors of judging the sponsor–sponsee association. We, thus, advised brand managers to take these two dimensions seriously. Before making sponsorship decisions, managers should be aware of their prominence (easily available for them) as well as relatedness to the entity being sponsored. Even in case their relatedness is found to be low, they should articulate the reason for the same. This would help them to leverage sponsorship-linked marketing in the long term.

This study contributes to the knowledge of the academicians by providing useful insights about sponsorships in IPL which was lacking till date. In addition, academicians will be able to understand the potential of future researches that can be done on IPL only and will, thus, contribute to the sponsorship literature in India. The findings of the study will contribute to both academicians as well as professional executives. On the other hand, the study provides

an advantage to professional executives of corporate firms as well as of event or sport managers about how they can effectively and efficiently manage their individual brands in a cluttered media environment.

The study concludes with a warning for the brand managers that they should first weigh the prominence and performance of their brands coupled with an understanding of how much they are related with the event and should take into consideration their target customers and then arrive at a decision to sponsor a team/event in IPL. The managers of the brands should always avoid making impulsive investments on sponsorships driven solely by the sponsorship activities of their competitors as they are also investing in sponsorships and are leveraging the benefits. By doing so, managers of the sponsoring brands will be able to establish strong psychological bonding with their target customers and will leverage the benefits of sponsorship-linked marketing in the long-term.

Future Research Suggestions

However, there is a lot of scope for academic research which needs to be tapped. As discussed, presence of 119 sponsors makes IPL more complex when compared to other events from managerial point of view. Academicians and practitioners should focus on exploring the cognitive, behavioural or attitudinal outcomes (refer to Cornwell, Weeks & Roy, 2005), as well as sponsorship effectiveness of such deals. This will give a clear picture of the reasons for customizing sponsorship theories for the East irrespective of applying the Western sponsorship theories.

Another important dimension, which can be focused in the near future, is researching the role of surrogate advertising/brands which is done very aggressively in IPL. Academicians should explore the advantage being taken by surrogate brands in IPL and should highlight the potential threats to the competing brands. Interestingly, research question that academic researchers need to be answering in the coming future will be: Does the different hierarchical titles as official sponsor/partner, associate sponsor/partner, founding sponsor/partner matters for the audiences/viewers? As it was observed that sponsors in IPL were having different level of hierarchy (sponsor commitment) hoping to get benefited from an advantageous position among other sponsors. It could be judged from just having a glimpse on sponsors that how the difference of a single word, Official, creates a new hierarchy in IPL as the word 'Official' matters for the marketers resulted into majority

of opting for official partners hierarchy (48). This was followed by sponsors having hierarchy titled 'team sponsor or title sponsor' (33). Empirical studies should be conducted in future to highlight this important issue of sponsor hierarchy, thus, providing answer to the managers if their investment in different hierarchies is worth or not as the event managers charge different for different hierarchies.

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