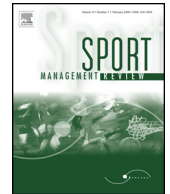




ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](http://www.sciencedirect.com)

Sport Management Review

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/smr

In support of sport: Examining the relationship between community sport organizations and sponsors

Katie Misener^{a,*}, Alison Doherty^b^a University of Waterloo, Canada^b Western University, Canada

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 15 July 2013

Received in revised form 10 December 2013

Accepted 10 December 2013

Available online 14 January 2014

Keywords:

Community sport organizations

Interorganizational relationships

Sponsors

Sponsor relationships

Scale development

ABSTRACT

Sponsorships are a critical resource for nonprofit community sport organizations (CSOs) that are increasingly experiencing pressure to generate funding beyond their traditional source of membership revenues. In order to optimize this alternative source, it is important to understand the nature of the relationship between CSOs and sponsors and its impact on those clubs. Scales were developed, and presidents of CSOs ($N = 189$) completed a corresponding survey that measures the extent to which clubs' relationship with their key sponsor was characterized by various elements of the relationship process and relationship outcomes. Operational competence was a consistent predictor of the impact of the sponsor relationship on club program/operations and community presence, and further enhanced the impact of long-standing sponsorships. Notably, operational competence was perceived to be required to a lesser extent in CSO–sponsor relationships than in the other process elements. Implications for effective CSO–sponsor relationships and directions for future research are presented.

© 2013 Sport Management Association of Australia and New Zealand. Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Community sport organizations (CSOs) are a large subset of nonprofit and voluntary organizations that have a primary mandate to provide recreational and competitive sport services to their members. CSOs also have a unique position in the heart of communities around the world because of their nonprofit governance model and ability to generate social capital, foster volunteerism, and build social networks among individuals and other organizations (e.g., Cuskelly, Taylor, Hoye, & Darcy, 2006; Doherty & Misener, 2008; Nichols & James, 2008; Sharpe, 2006). In order to achieve these outcomes and generate the support they need to fulfill their mandates, CSOs partner with a wide network of organizations including those in the nonprofit, public, and commercial sectors (Misener & Doherty, 2013).

Research suggests that in the context of nonprofit sport organizations, sponsors are one type of commercial sector partner that enables sport organizations to acquire needed physical and financial resources (e.g., Misener & Doherty, 2013; Wicker, Breuer, & Hennigs, 2012). These partnerships may be particularly appealing to sport organizations with limited financial capacity to run their programs due to reductions in government funding, over-reliance on project funding, and unwillingness of funders to support core operations (Gumulka, Barr, Lasby, & Brownlee, 2005; Misener & Paraschak, 2006; Thibault & Harvey, 1997). These challenges are requiring nonprofit sport organizations to look beyond their own membership for revenue, and seek alternative and diverse income streams in order to fund operations, maintain low membership fees, and continue to provide accessible programs (Doherty & Murray, 2007; Wicker et al., 2012). Similarly, commercial sector partners are also becoming commonplace in the broader nonprofit sector where many arts, sports, cultural, and other

* Corresponding author at: Recreation and Leisure Studies, University of Waterloo, 200 University Avenue W, BMH 2112, Waterloo, ON N2L 3G1, Canada. Tel.: +1 519 888 4567x37098; fax: +1 519 746 6776.

E-mail address: k.misener@uwaterloo.ca (K. Misener).

charitable organizations rely on business support to varying extents (Austin, 2000; Bednall, Walker, Curl, & LeRoy, 2001; Daellenbach, Davies, & Ashill, 2006; Foster, Meinhard, Berger, & Krpan, 2009; Mowen, Kyle, & Jackowski, 2007; Wicker et al., 2012). Developing relationships with commercial sector partners is a growing aspect of nonprofit survival and an increasingly important revenue source required for achieving organizational goals (Austin, 2000; Daellenbach et al., 2006). Despite nonprofit and commercial partners' interest in working together to achieve mutual benefits, these interorganizational relationships present complex managerial issues as pressures for increasing commercialization, differing "bottom lines," and problems of opportunism exist (Bednall et al., 2001; O'Regan & Oster, 2000).

Research on sponsorship of nonprofit sport organizations has primarily focused on examining motives behind corporate sponsorship (Berrett, 1993), and principles of exchange theory and return on investment (McCarville & Copeland, 1994; McCarville, Flood, & Froats, 1998). Some research has also considered the process of strategic sponsorship acquisition whereby sport organizations can position themselves to attract sponsors through planning, media exposure, and participation rates (Berrett & Slack, 2001; Doherty & Murray, 2007; Seguin, Teed, & O'Reilly, 2005). In a conceptual paper on corporate-sport relationships, Cousens, Babiak, and Bradish (2006) propose that research should move beyond the sponsor's perspective and return-on-investment approach. They argue that relationships between corporations and nonprofit sport organizations are collaborative linkages between dyadic partners where the needs of both parties, their contextual circumstances, and the evolving strength and value of the linkages should be considered in a holistic manner rather than merely evaluating financial return. Such a perspective looks past the traditional mechanics of sponsorship and considers the nature of relationships across their negotiation, management, and evaluation, as well as the intangible benefits available to both partners (Cousens et al., 2006). Similarly, Daellenbach et al. (2006) suggest that a variety of theoretical views and alternative conceptualizations are needed to better understand the nature of sponsor relationships in the nonprofit sector.

When considering the community sport context in particular, there is a dearth of research on sponsorship. This is perhaps surprising given that anecdotal examples of relationships between sport clubs and local businesses abound through the photographs of soccer (and other) teams in local dentist offices, car repair shops, and so on across our communities. Broader studies of community sport capacity and partnerships indicate that, along with government agencies, volunteers, and other community groups, sponsors are part of the social context that shapes and constrains the ability of community clubs to deliver sport (Cousens & Barnes, 2009; Misener & Doherty, 2009). Yet, the organization-sponsor relationship may be distinct from other interorganizational relationships in the nonprofit community sport context, given the apparent complexity involved as sport clubs seek to adequately nurture the personal connections used to form and manage sponsor relationships, while simultaneously engage in business-like transactions in order to respect the different objectives or "bottom line" of sponsors (Bednall et al., 2001; Misener & Doherty, 2013; O'Regan & Oster, 2000).

In Wicker et al.'s (2012) review of revenue categories of nonprofit sport clubs, they note that sponsorship contributes to the overall revenue of sport clubs in several countries, ranging from 30% of club revenue in the Canadian context (Lasby & Sperling, 2007), to 13% in Belgium (Vos et al., 2011), and 4% in German clubs (Breuer & Wicker, 2009). Despite these differences, the figures demonstrate that sponsors are now recognized as a key partner in the economic environment of CSOs (Wicker et al., 2012). In addition to their economic impact, a few studies in Australia have shown that relationships with sponsors have a social and health-related influence on participants in community sport clubs, whereby the presence of alcohol and food industry sponsorship can have a significant effect on people's awareness, preferences, and consumption of these products (Kelly, Baur, & Bauman, 2010; Kelly et al., 2011; Sawyer et al., 2012; Tobin, Fitzgerald, Livingstone, Thomson, & Harper, 2012). These studies provide empirical evidence of the impact of sponsorship in the community sport context, although the focus is sponsor branding and loyalty and the findings highlight a potential negative impact of particular types of sponsorship in this context (Kelly et al., 2011). From the broader sport literature, it is conceivable that in addition to its economic impact, sponsorship may, for example, serve to enhance the recipient organization's image, promote leveraging strategies that benefit the organization and even select members, and facilitate cross-promotion opportunities with other supporters in the community (cf. Misener & Doherty, 2012; Seguin et al., 2005). Yet, the strategic outcomes of a relationship, or even the relationship itself, may not be realized or sustained without effective relationship management (Babiak & Thibault, 2008; Frisby, Thibault, & Kikulis, 2004), an understanding of which is central to realizing the full advantage of a partnership (Huxham, 1996). There is a critical gap in the literature regarding the nature and quality of the CSO-sponsor relationship and how this influences the club's ability to achieve its objectives.

The purpose of the current study was to address this gap by examining the nature of the relationship between CSOs and sponsors, in terms of critical elements of the relationship process and their perceived impact on important outcomes for those clubs. A second purpose was to develop measures of the relationship process and outcomes in the community sport context. The focus on sponsors in this study is consistent with the growing interest in nonprofit-commercial partnerships and increasing demand for CSOs to develop their financial capacity beyond traditional revenue.

1. Conceptual framework

This study draws on concepts from the interorganizational relationship (IOR) literature and positions these within the realm of sport and nonprofit sponsorship in order to highlight the centrality of IORs within the sponsorship domain. This section provides a brief review of the process and outcomes of interorganizational relationships, followed by a consideration of the connections between them. Three corresponding research questions that guided the study are presented.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/140825>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/140825>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)