

The Impact of Sponsorship Activities on Consumer Based Brand Equity Behaviours: Evidence from the Mobile Telecommunication Industry in Ghana

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of sponsorship on consumer behaviour in the Ghanaian telecommunication sector for which a conceptual frame work was developed. The research was conducted using self-administered questionnaire as the main method of data collection tool. A total of four hundred and twenty (420) questionnaire on the purpose of this study were sent to customer of all the telecom companies in Ghana specifically Accra. Out of this, a total of four hundred and eighteen (418) valid questionnaires were obtained from respondents within a span of two months. The findings of the study revealed that out of the four (4) consumer based brand equity behaviour understudied, brand awareness is the foremost effect of sponsorship activities on mobile telecommunication subscribers. Brand image was also found to be positively and significantly related to sponsorship activities. Additionally, the study also affirms the assertion that sponsorship activities carried out by firms result in high patronage of products and services offered by these firms. Finally, brand loyalty was also found to be positively and significantly related to sponsorship activities. Furthermore, for sponsorship to effectively have an impact on consumers' behaviour, it should not be used in isolation but as an integrated approach with other marketing communications tools such as public relations, exhibitions and trade shows, advertising, direct marketing and sales promotions. Moreover, marketing practitioners are keen to use the effects of sponsorship on consumer behaviour to influence management and board of director's decisions on increase investment for sponsorship activities. Nevertheless, the subjected has been limited to comprehensive studies in and outside Ghana, it is interesting and deemed to be appropriate to further investigate the topic and address the knowledge gap.

Keywords – Sponsorship, Consumer behaviour, Consumer based brand equity, Brand awareness, Brand image, Purchase intention/Brand usage and Brand loyalty.

1. Introduction

In the early 1990s, the Ghanaian economy saw some deregulation in the telecommunication industry through National Communication Policy. By 1994, it brought about a split of the state owned Post and Telecommunication Company into two exclusive individual entities with each having its own budget allocation as well as management. This saw the private sector coming into active participation in the Telecommunication industry of Ghana. Since then, the telecom industry in Ghana have achieve continuous remarkable growth in the economy. Currently, according to National Communication Authority (NCA) August 2012 report, as at the end of June 2012, the country's total mobile subscriber base is 23,370,773 representing a population penetration level of 97.4%. The industry have grown from the stage where it welcomed Millicom Ghana (now trading under the brand name Tigo) as the first investor in the market and was using analogue to were almost all the six competing operators including world and regional heavyweights such as MTN, Vodafone, Bharti (Airtel), Millicom (Tigo) and Glo Mobile Ghana are using digital, which is Global System for Mobile Communication (GSM), except Expresso and are competing fiercely in the market. To survive in this fierce competitive environment, one needs to understand the behaviours of their customers. According to Czinkonta and Ronkainen, (2004), sponsorship is one promotional tool many marketers are using to influence consumer behaviour. Literature on sponsorship indicate that many researchers (Aaker, 1991&1996, Keller, 2003, Arens, Weigold & Arens, 2011 and Pickton & Broderick, 2005) have been interested in sponsorship because of its corresponding effect on consumer behaviour, its necessity in today's marketplace and how sponsorship can be used to acquire a certain level of competitive advantage. This paper is to develop a conceptual framework on sponsorship and consumer behaviour with specific emphasis on consumer based brand equity element such as brand awareness, brand image, brand patronage/usage and brand loyalty.

2. Statement of problem

Review of exiting literature portrays that a number of studies have been contacted on what sponsorship is and, perhaps more importantly, what it is not (Waite 1977, Sandler and Shani, 1989, Meenaghan, 1991; Lagae, 2005;

Arens et al., 2011). Majority of the literature has seemingly concentrated on determining the objective behind the success of sponsorship as a marketing communication tool (Abratt et al., 1989, Meenaghan, 1983; 1991, Witcher et al, 1991, Olkkonen 1999, Maignan, 1998; Shank 1999; Amis et al., 1999, Dolphin 2003, Jobber 2007, and Mullinet et al., 2007; Cornelius 1979; Meenaghan 1983; Bruhn, 1986; Drees, 1989; Hermanns, 1989 and Buhler and Nufer, 2010) or as a competitive advantage (Grant 1991, Mosakowki 1993, Peteraf 1993, and Amis et al 1997) or its prospect for the future (Parker, 1989; Smith et al., 1990; Survey 1990; Meenaghan, 1991; Cornwell et al., 2005), leaving aside its potential impact on all or majority of the elements in consumer based brand equity. According to Cornwell et al., (2005), Smith (2004), Becker-Olsen, KL & Hill PR, (2006) and Huang (2007), there has been little research on the impact of sponsorship on consumer behaviour in the world.

3. Aims and Objectives of the Study

Thus the purpose of this study was to determine the effect of sponsorship on consumer behaviour. In-depth study of the literatures revealed that a limited number of research studies have been carried out outside Ghana and in Ghana to ascertain the impact of sponsorship on consumer behaviour (Cornwell et al., 2005; Smith, 2004; Becker-Olsen, KL & Hill PR, 2006; Huang, 2007). Nevertheless evidence suggests that most of the studies in this area have been conceptual contributions and without much empirical insights (Tseng, 2004; Griffin, 2005; Fineweek, 2007; Kim 2008 and Shank, 2009). The current study provide in-depth insight to academia on sponsorship practices of Telecom companies in Ghana. The study also provides the Telecom companies' new perspectives on sponsorship management and broaden the knowledge of stakeholder on the subject matter.

4. Literature review

Sponsorship has been described by many researchers as a strategic activity. It is strategic because, Slack and Bentz (1996) pointed out that, "it concerns decision about the allocation of resources to achieve organizational objectives and also because it is used to align an organization with the pressures and demands of its environment. Lagae (2005) argues that sponsorship is relatively new compared with other marketing terms. The first modern commercial use of sponsorship can be traced back to advertisement placements by Kodak in the official programme of 1896 Athens Olympic Games (International Olympic committee IOC, 2002). Arun (2004) argues that sponsorship is the only promotional tool that makes it possible to link the aspiration and passion of a target audience to specific events. According to Dolphin (2003), the concept of sponsorship originated in the Greek and Roman era and the word is derived from the Greek word "Horigia" meaning guarantor. Sponsorship has proven successful in breaking through the clutter of traditional forms of communication such as television advertising, radio advertising and magazine advertising (Gardner and Shuman, 1998). Meenaghan (1991) believes this has been driven by the increasing cost of advertising, increased leisure activities, greater media coverage for sponsored events and positive consumer behaviour actions such as enhanced brand image, brand awareness, brand loyalty and brand usage being derived from sponsored programs. Also, traditional media such as television advertising has failed to connect with the consumer, whilst technology developments like TV remotes, allows users to skip over adverts, this has led to a further decline in the importance of television advertising. The growth of sponsorship in the world can be ascribed to the likely optimistic impact of this marketing tool on businesses as well as on customers. Although sponsorship may be purely altruistic, it is normally undertaken with the expectation of achieving corporate or marketing related objectives for the sponsor (Pickton and Broderick, 2005). Arens, Weigold and Arens (2011) and Pickton and Broderick (2005) argues that this growth of sponsorship can be attributed to the following consumer behaviour benefits (enhanced image, increased sales, positive publicity and enhanced employee morale). These positive outcomes of sponsorship on consumer behaviour encourage corporations to make the tool an essential part of business to excite customers in present day investments and survival of businesses.

Furthermore Brown and Dacin (1997), also argue that brand image transfer, seems to be one of the strongest benefits of sponsorship, and may occur at the individual brand level or at the corporate brand level. According to them, due to sponsorship activities companies' customers may assign positive corporate social responsibility associations to a company, which may then be perceived as good corporate citizen. Accordingly, positive corporate social responsibility associations may enhance the final product evaluations (Brown and Dacin, 1997). Pickton and Broderick (2005), argue that there are examples of companies trying to build favourable corporate associations like innovativeness and corporate association by sponsoring events or teams that feature these favourable ability associations. Sponsorship may not only include the rights to place brand promotions at the sponsored event, often the sponsor receives VIP passes or tickets for sports, cultural or entertainment events. Thus, the sponsor has hospitality opportunities to strengthen business-to-business partnerships with current or potential customers or suppliers. Finally, companies may benefit from the media coverage of the sponsored event.

This is especially relevant for companies facing restrictions to TV advertising (Pickton and Broderick, 2005).

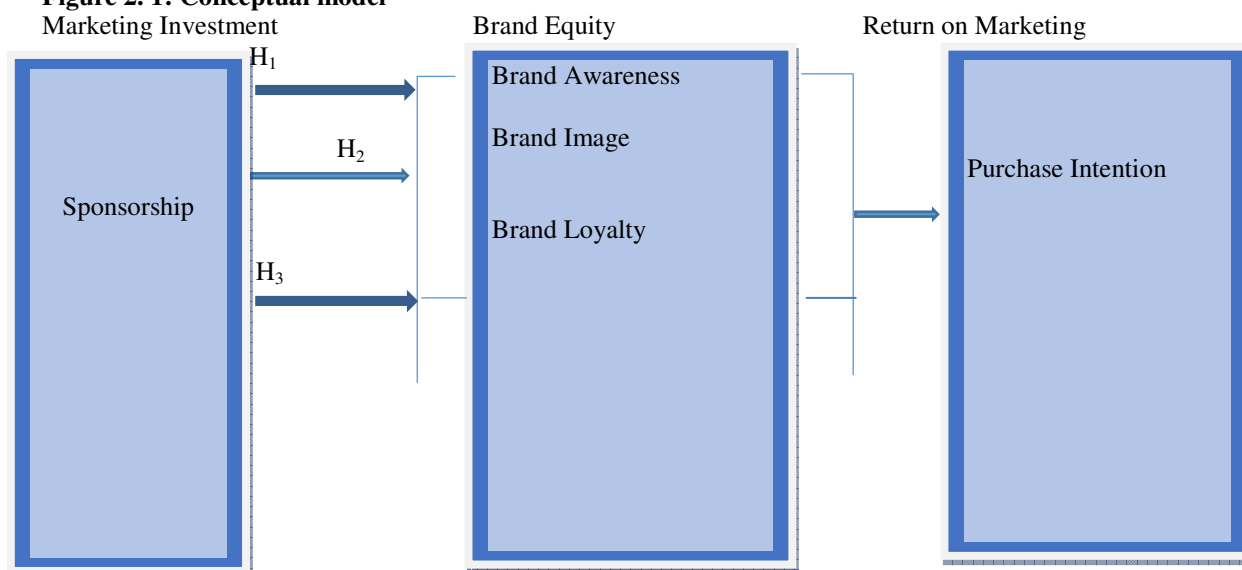
Additionally, Keller (2003) argues that sponsorship investment and any other marketing strategies can be evaluated by using brand equity elements such as brand awareness, brand associations, brand image, brand attachment, brand loyalty and brand activity. Using brand equity element to measure consumer behaviour enables marketers to evaluate marketing program effectiveness (Keller and Lehmann, 2003b). Thus, measuring customer perceptions may identify the impact of a sponsorship investment on consumers.

However, despite the numerous benefits that sponsors enjoy, Pickton and Broderick (2005) argue that sponsorship has two major drawbacks; that is, the recent development of the phenomenon known as ‘ambush marketing’ along with the inaccurate evaluation and measurement of sponsorship activity. Ambush marketing occurs when an organization deliberately seeks an association with a particular event without paying sponsorship fees, influencing the audience to the extent where they believe that the ambusher is the legitimate sponsor. Like in advertising, measuring the value of a sponsorship programme is difficult. Measuring the size of the media audience cannot be regarded as an indicator of effectiveness as the audience’s primary focus is the event, rather than the sponsoring organization. Moreover, potential problems of over-commercialization and endorsement scandals could also have a negative impact on the sponsorship industry.

In general, sponsorship holds a unique position in the marketing mix because it is effective in building brand awareness, brand loyalty, brand image and influencing brand patronage/brand usage, providing differentiated marketing platforms, facilitating direct business benefits and providing valuable networking and hospitality opportunities (Fineweek, 2007).

The core issues of sponsorship, consumer behaviour theories and consumer behaviour have been discussed above. Besides, emotional bonds to products and brands resulting from intergenerational influences, according to Moore, Wilkie and Lutz (2002), sponsorship is one of the marketing tool that greatly influences the consumer behaviour components of brand equity. In contribution to the discussion, Fahy, Farelly and Quester (2004), argues that sponsorship is an increasingly popular marketing tool, which is shown by its large share in the marketing mix of companies and the continuously increasing growth figures of sponsorship expenditures.). Furthermore, in a study by Cornwell (2006) and Gwinner and Eaton (1999), they concluded that, there are significant effects of sponsorship on awareness, brand image and brand loyalty. In sum, it is expected that sponsorship will have a positive impact on these elements of consumer based brand equity CBBE (Brand image, Brand awareness, Brand loyalty, Brand patronage/usage). The researchers proposed a framework that assumes a direct relationship between sponsorship and consumer based brand equity and purchase intention.

Figure 2. 1: Conceptual model



Source: Developed by Akwensive, Narteh and Iden

From the above discussions, the conceptual framework model above was hypnotized as follows.

H₁: There is a positive and significant impact of sponsorship on brand image.

H₂: There is a positive and significant impact of sponsorship on brand awareness.

H₃: There is a positive and significant impact of sponsorship on brand loyalty.

H₄: There is a positive and significant impact of brand equity on purchase intention.

5. Methodology

The study carried out was a cross-sectional study involving 420 mobile network users in the country. The sampling method used to select the respondents was probability sampling method in which respondents were randomly drawn on the street, offices, in-front of network provider's customer care offices, churches and shopping centers. The unit area of Accra metropolis of Ghana, was selected because it represent the total population and gave reliable and true data to achieve the purpose of the research.

The questionnaire were administered in 15 locations broken down as street (3), customer care officers (6), churches (3) and shopping centers (3). The types of questions used for the survey was multi-choice in nature and were mainly 5 point likert scales. The questionnaire was pretested on forty (40) MBA students of the Methodist University College Ghana who were connected to one or more mobile network (s) and thus understand the ramifications of the study. The questionnaire gather information on the impact of mobile telecommunication sponsorship activities on consumer behaviour. This was categorized as:

- i) Sponsorship
- ii) Brand awareness
- iii) Brand image
- iv) Brand loyalty
- v) Purchase intention

The sponsorship set of questions sought information on how the network subscribers are positively influenced and attracted to the network (s) through sponsorship activities.

The second set of questions on brand awareness gathered information from network subscribers on how they recall, recognized and are exposed to network (s) advertising message on sponsorship association.

The third set of questions on brand image also gathered information on how subscribers perceive the network (s) sponsorship programs.

Brand loyalty was the next set of questionnaires that the respondents answered and the researcher gathered information on how the subscribers feel and what they say about the network (s) sponsorship associations.

The last sets of questions were on purchase intention and sought information on whether the network (s) sponsorship activities influence their purchasing habit.

Statistical analysis was carried out by SPSS version 20. Overall, 420 questionnaire were distributed and 418 network subscribers responded, which gave a response rate of 99.5%

6. Analyses on the demographic of respondents

The demography of the respondents showed that more than 79% of the respondents were less than 39 years old with the bulk coming from twenty to twenty-nine years. There were more male respondents (52.2%) compared to female (47.8%). This was to ensure that the study was not skewed to any particular gender and to include views from both gender so as to present a fair demographic result.

The finding also indicates that majority of the respondents were connected to more than one network (60.5%). With respect to the average monthly income, the finding indicates that 59.9% respondent earn between GH¢ 500 and GH¢ 1,500. Table 1 shows details of the sample demography

Table 1: Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Profile of respondents	Measurements	Frequency	Percent (%)
<i>Gender</i>	Male	218	52.2
	Female	200	47.8
	Total	418	100
<i>Age (in years)</i>	Below 20	41	9.8
	20 – 29	188	45.0
	30 – 39	103	24.6
	40 – 49	53	12.7
	50 and above	33	7.9
	Total	418	100
<i>Number of networks connected</i>	One	165	39.5
	Multiple	253	60.5
	Total	418	100
<i>Average monthly income (GH¢)</i>	500 and below	127	30.4
	501 – 1000	137	32.8
	1001 -1500	111	26.6
	More than GH¢ 1500	43	10.3
	Total	418	100

Source: Field Study 2012

T-test analysis on respondents

Table 2 shows the t-test analysis carried out with the various variables used. These indicate the extent to which the respondents disagreed or agreed with the statements in the questionnaire. All the headings were collapsed to form a single variable into the factor “consumer’s perception of sponsorship associations”. The findings indicates that sponsorships influence consumers to easily recognise network(s) logo, colour and brand name (mean 3.913), followed by my network(s) associates itself with positive programs (mean 3.758). My network(s) uses my favourite celebrities as brand icons (mean 3.674) was also perceived as contributory factor for sponsorship influence on consumer behaviour together with I am highly attracted to my network(s) through its sponsorship activities (mean 2.837).

Table 2: T-test (descriptive statistics)

Statements	t	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
I strongly recall my network(s) advertising messages because of its sponsorship associations	66.304	3.543	1.092	.053
I easily recognise my network(s) logo, colour and brand name because of its sponsorship association	67.681	3.913	1.182	.057
I am exposed to my network(s) through its sponsorship programs	46.523	3.131	1.376	.067
I have become aware of my network(s) product and special offering through its sponsorship activities	70.040	3.693	1.078	.052
My network(s) thinks first about its subscribers when sponsoring programs	44.535	2.935	1.347	.065
I have strong positive attitude towards my network(s)	46.704	3.169	1.387	.067
My network(s) sponsors programs that fit its image	47.418	3.234	1.394	.068
I have positive image of my network because of its sponsorship activities	69.362	3.645	1.074	.052
My network(s) associates itself with positive programs	79.395	3.758	.967	.047
My network(s) uses my favourite celebrities as brand icons	61.038	3.674	1.230	.060
I say positive things about my network(s) to other people because of its sponsorship activities	42.817	2.935	1.401	.068
I recommend the network(s) to anyone who seeks my opinion	47.773	3.203	1.370	.067
I have become more loyal to my network(s) because of sponsorships	45.464	3.045	1.369	.066
I have strong positive feelings for my network because of sponsorships	47.793	3.189	1.364	.066
I always buy products of my network(s) because of its sponsorship association	44.303	2.837	1.309	.064
I repeat my purchase twice, thrice or more in a week	43.867	3.033	1.413	.069
My awareness and the brand image of my network(s) influences my purchase decisions	55.070	3.459	1.284	.062

Source: Field Study 2012

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) on respondents

The Table 3 display, initial consideration of the results of the KMO test indicate an overall statistic of .951 for the variables used in the study which gives an indication that there is a higher possibility that the data obtained from the respondents factor well and thus there exists an inter-correlation between the variables thereby making them suitable for factor analysis. . In addition, only factor loading with a minimum threshold of 0.5 (Hair et. al, 2010) and also a minimum reliability threshold of 0.6 were included in the analysis.

Table 3: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Source: Field Study 2012

In order to reduce the number of variables, an exploratory factor analysis was also carried out. Prior to the extraction of factors, the Bartlett test of Sphericity (Approx: Chi-square = 7393.385, df. 190, sig. 0.000) and the KMO measure of sampling adequacy (Value of .951) confirmed that there was significant correlation among the variables to warrant the application of factor analysis. Only factors whose Eigen values were equal or greater than 1 were selected (Malhotra and Birks; 2007).

Table 4 below, shows the communalities and the Eigen values for the variables initially considered for the analysis. Communalities indicate the amount of variance in each variable that is accounted for. Initial communalities are estimates of the variance in each variable accounted for by all components or factors. For

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.951
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	7393.385
	Df	190
	Sig.	.000

principal components extraction, this is always equal to 1.0 for correlation analyses. Extraction communalities are estimates of the variance in each variable accounted for by the components. Item communalities are considered "high" if they are all .8 or greater (Velicer and Fava, 1998) – but this is unlikely to occur in real data. From the table the four altogether explain 73.29% of the variance between the independent variable.

More common magnitudes in the social sciences are low to moderate communalities of .40 up to .70. Hair et al, (2010) posit that ideally variables should have communalities greater than 0.5 to be retained for analysis. If an item has a communality of less than .40, it may either not be related to the other items, or may suggest an additional factor that should be explored. Costello and Osborne (2005) argues that the researcher may consider why that item was included in the data and decide whether to drop it or add similar items for future research. However it is worthy to note that these numbers are essentially correlation coefficients, and therefore the magnitude of the loadings can be understood similarly. The communalities in this table are all high, which indicates that the extracted components are representative of the variables.

Table 4: Exploratory Factor Analysis

Variable	Communality	Factor	Eigen value	Percentage of variance	Cumulative percentage
I always buy products of my network(s) because of its sponsorship association	.718	1	8.224	31.413	31.413
I repeat my purchase twice, thrice or more in a week	.779	2	2.592	19.352	50.765
My awareness and the brand image of my network(s) influences my purchase decisions	.661	3	2.040	12.635	63.400
I strongly recall my network(s) advertising messages because of its sponsorship associations	.709	4	1.643	9.897	73.297
I easily recognise my network(s) logo, colour and brand name because of its sponsorship association	.709				
I am exposed to my network(s) through its sponsorship programs	.548				
I have become aware of my network(s) product and special offering through its sponsorship activities	.779				
My network(s) thinks first about its subscribers when sponsoring programs	.666				
I have strong positive attitude towards my network(s)	.674				
My network(s) sponsors programs that fit its image	.614				
I have positive image of my network because of its sponsorship activities	.656				
My network(s) associates itself with positive programs	.723				
My network(s) uses my favourite celebrities as brand icons	.670				
I say positive things about my network(s) to other people because of its sponsorship activities	.630				
I recommend the network(s) to anyone who seeks my opinion	.617				
I have become more loyal to my network(s) because of sponsorships	.800				
I have strong positive feelings for my network because of sponsorships	.797				

Source: Field Study 2012

Analysis on varimax rotation matrix

The table 5 shows the statistics for the varimax rotated component matrix which helps to determine what the components represent. This is a matrix of the factor loadings for each variable onto each factor. Prior to this statistics, SPSS generated the component matrix table which grouped the variables into various components. Hair et al., (2010) argued that while factor loadings of $\pm .30$ to $\pm .40$ are minimally acceptable, values greater than $\pm .50$ are considered necessary for practical significance. They further argued that for loadings to be considered significant, a smaller loading is needed given either a larger sample size, or a larger number of variables being analyzed. Subsequently, a larger loading is needed given a factor solution with a larger number of factors, especially in evaluating the loadings on later factors. Statistical tests of significance for factor loadings are generally very conservative and should be considered only as starting points needed for including a variable for further consideration (Hair et al, 2010).

The initial exploratory factor analysis produced 17 variables. However a rotation of these variables produced 4 factors as illustrated above in Table 4 above. Four items loaded onto factor 1 and were related to brand awareness (I strongly recall my network(s) advertising messages because of its sponsorship associations, I easily recognise my network(s) logo, colour and brand name because of its sponsorship association, I am exposed to my network(s) through its sponsorship programs and I have become aware of my network(s) product and special offering through its sponsorship activities).

Factor 2 which has six variables that loaded highly was on brand image (My network(s) thinks first about its subscribers when sponsoring programs, I have strong positive attitude towards my network(s), My network(s)

sponsors programs that fit its image, I have positive image of my network because of its sponsorship activities, My network(s) associates itself with positive programs, My network(s) uses my favourite celebrities as brand icons). The factor 3 related to brand loyalty and had four items (I say positive things about my network(s) to other people because of its sponsorship activities, I recommend the network(s) to anyone who seeks my opinion, I have become more loyal to my network(s) because of sponsorships, I have strong positive feelings for my network because of sponsorships). The final factor 4 had three items all relating to purchase intention (I always buy products of my network(s) because of its sponsorship association, I repeat my purchase twice, thrice or more in a week, My awareness and the brand image of my network(s) influences my purchase decisions)

Table 5. 5: Varimax Rotated Factor Loadings

Variables	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
I strongly recall my network(s) advertising messages because of its sponsorship associations	.761			
I easily recognise my network(s) logo, colour and brand name because of its sponsorship association	.787			
I am exposed to my network(s) through its sponsorship programs	.824			
I have become aware of my network(s) product and special offering through its sponsorship activities	.749			
My network(s) thinks first about its subscribers when sponsoring programs		.622		
I have strong positive attitude towards my network(s)		.817		
My network(s) sponsors programs that fit its image		.834		
I have positive image of my network because of its sponsorship activities		.836		
My network(s) associates itself with positive programs		.801		
My network(s) uses my favourite celebrities as brand icons		.607		
I say positive things about my network(s) to other people because of its sponsorship activities			.778	
I recommend the network(s) to anyone who seeks my opinion			.631	
I have become more loyal to my network(s) because of sponsorships			.614	
I have strong positive feelings for my network because of sponsorships			.593	
I always buy products of my network(s) because of its sponsorship association				.646
I repeat my purchase twice, thrice or more in a week				.721
My awareness and the brand image of my network(s) influences my purchase decisions				.758

Source: Field Study 2012

Reliability of the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and final structure

Corroborating the essence of reliability, Pallant (2003) postulates that the scales used for analysis should be checked for reliability to ensure that the items that make up the scale "hang together" (i.e. internal consistency). The most commonly used indicator of internal consistency, Cronbach's alpha coefficient, was employed to check the reliability of the scales used for this survey. Scholars like Pallant (2003) and Hair (2010) argued that ideally this value should be greater than 0.7 for managerial decisions although a threshold level of 0.6 could be used in exploratory research.

The internal reliabilities of the four factors in Table 6 were analyzed through Cronbach's coefficient alpha. Only factors that meet the minimum value of 0.6 as postulated by (Hair et. al, 2010) were accepted. Also, in order to test the value of the variables that loaded onto the factors, item to total correlation was set above 0.3 (Parasuraman et. al, 1985). Based on these requirements, all the factors were retained without modifications. Thus in all, the seventeen (17) variables were all retained in the final structure to serve as the independent variables for regression analysis.

Table 6: Internal Consistency and related decisions

Variable	Loadings	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha	Item-total correlation
Factor 1 – Brand awareness		4	.878	
I strongly recall my network(s) advertising messages because of its sponsorship associations	.718			.642
I easily recognise my network(s) logo, colour and brand name because of its sponsorship association	.779			.774
I am exposed to my network(s) through its sponsorship programs	.661			.785
I have become aware of my network(s) product and special offering through its sponsorship activities	.709			.760
Factor 2 – Brand image		6	.832	
My network(s) thinks first about its subscribers when sponsoring programs	.622			.606
I have strong positive attitude towards my network(s)	.817			.753
My network(s) sponsors programs that fit its image	.834			.725
I have positive image of my network because of its sponsorship activities	.750			.601
My network(s) associates itself with positive programs	.856			.726
My network(s) uses my favourite celebrities as brand icons	.758			.574
Factor 3 – Brand loyalty		4	.734	
I say positive things about my network(s) to other people because of its sponsorship activities	.680			.603
I recommend the network(s) to anyone who seeks my opinion	.586			.519
I have become more loyal to my network(s) because of sponsorships	.801			.524
I have strong positive feelings for my network because of sponsorships	.607			.463
Factor 4 – Purchase intention		3	.745	
I always buy products of my network(s) because of its sponsorship association	.778			.553
I repeat my purchase twice, thrice or more in a week	.631			.529
My awareness and the brand image of my network(s) influences my purchase decisions	.614			.512

Source: Field Study 2012

Table 7 assessed the reliability of the scales used for the dependent variables and this was found to be reliable since they met the conventional rules required for the performance of the analysis. The loadings of the variables ranged between 0.762 and 0.782 with a good Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.823

Table 7: Reliability of scales for dependent variables

Variables	Loadings	Cronbach's alpha
Sponsorship		.823
I am highly attracted to my network(s) through its sponsorship activities	.727	
I am positively influenced by my network(s) sponsorship activities	.762	
My network(s) sponsors a lot of social programs	.782	

Source: Field Study 2012

Multiple regression analysis

Multiple regression analysis was used to investigate the relationship between telecommunications corporate sponsorships activities and consumer based brand equity related factors such as brand awareness, brand image, brand loyalty and purchase intention/brand usage. Sponsorship was used as the dependent variable whilst the

other dimensions were used as the independent variables.

The results in Table 8 indicate that there is a significant relationship between sponsorship activities as an independent variable and consumer behaviour attributes as the dependent variables. This is indicated by an F-statistic of 87.735 (sig. 0.000). The R-square value of .756 indicated that the model explains approximately 75.6% of the variables explaining consumer behaviour toward sponsorship activities by telecommunication firms with an adjusted R-square value of 67.9%. With respect to individual analysis, brand awareness was found to be a major effect of sponsorship activities on consumers' behaviour towards telecommunication brands ($\beta = 0.284$, $t=4.479$, $P = 0.000 < 0.00$). This is followed by brand image ($\beta = 0.188$, $t=3.051$, $P = 0.003 < 0.05$) and purchase intention ($\beta = 0.150$, $t=2.408$, $P = 0.017 < 0.05$). The final factor was found to be brand loyalty ($\beta = 0.109$, $t=2.123$, $P = 0.035 < 0.05$). This is to suggest that in the current study, all the factors were found to be positively and statistically significant to sponsorship activities. Whilst awareness was the dominant effect, brand loyalty was found to be the least.

Table 8: Multiple regression analysis for telecommunication sponsorship and consumer behaviour

Variable	t	Prob	B	S.E	
Constant			.213	5.958	.000
Brand awareness		.284	.041	4.479	
	.000				
Brand loyalty		.109	.039		
	2.123	.035			
Purchase intention		.150	.050		
	2.408	.017			
Brand image		.188	.047		
	3.051	.003			
S.E of estimate	.42140				
R-Square		.756			F-
statistics	87.735				
Adj. R-Square	.679				Prob.
stats.)	.000				(F-

Source: Field Study 2012

7. Discussions and Managerial Implication

Competition in the wireless telecommunications industry is a global phenomenon and has grown at an unprecedented rate in the past several years. The growth of the wireless telecommunications market is due not only to the greater number of subscribers but also to the greater variety of services that are now offered such as short message service (SMS) and Internet browsing. In the early stages of market growth, the emphasis was on acquiring new subscribers, but now as the market matures, the significance of retaining current customer's increases drastically. Additionally, what constitute value creation in mobile telecommunications services have become a topical concern among players within the industry in recent times. The wave of competition coupled with the dynamic nature of consumers have given rise to various activities being pursued by players within the mobile telecommunications industry in a bid to sustain existing customers and win new ones. One key strategy is the sponsoring of activities by these mobile telecommunication firms. The present study agrees with earlier studies that, failure to understand how consumers derive utilitarian value from mobile service sponsorships may result in a massive disappointment by the telecommunication firms (Shankar et al. 2003; Spreng et al., 1996). Therefore, an understanding of the specific drivers and barriers to value creation is crucial to help companies effectively allocate their resources to enhance consumer value perceptions especially in the area of activities sponsorship.

Preliminary findings from the study indicate that all the factors identified from the review of extant literature are positively and significantly related to sponsorship activities. In examining the extent of the factors affecting consumers' behaviours towards telecommunication brand as a result of their sponsorship activities, this research identified brand awareness as the principal effect of sponsorship activities on consumers' perceptions toward mobile telecommunication brands. For most mobile telecommunication service providers, this may be the

primary aim behind sponsoring activities, especially for players who have not gained much recognition within the industry. The creation of positive publicity as a way of heightening visibility of an organization's brand is one of the fundamental reasons why most firms engage in sponsorships. Aside the media coverage which acts as an advantage in terms of advertisement, consumers are better able to relate the event to the brand sponsoring it. In Ghana, such awareness creation forms of sponsorships are usually apparent in beauty pageants, musical shows, cultural festivals and sports among others. Aside the fact that these forms of sponsorships offer the opportunity to establish direct contact with opinion leaders and the general public, it also serves as platforms for showcasing not only existing products and services but also innovative ones. In correspondence with earlier studies by Lee et al., (1997) and Rowley (2002), present study indicate that sponsorships undertaken by mobile telecommunication service providers enable consumers to have strong recall of promotional messages, become exposed to the brand and help recognize salient brand elements such as brand names, logos, colours and other features. For most mobile telecommunication operators in Ghana, sponsorship creates a lot of publicity and facilitates favourable brand associations.

Furthermore, enhancing an organization's brand image is a prime objective which sponsorship activities help to accomplish. Many companies are looking for ways to improve how they are perceived by their target audience. Sponsoring events that appeal to their existing and potential markets are likely to shape consumers' buying attitudes, transfer knowledge and help generate a positive reaction. This helps to develop some competitive advantage as sponsorships tend to produce a brand image which is superior and clearly differentiate the brand from other competing ones. In some instances, the positivity of the event being sponsored is relayed to the sponsoring brand as well and this imprints good imagery about the brand in the minds of consumers. In line with previous studies such as Ramos and Franco, 2005, findings of this study agrees and confirms the point that sponsorship activities undertaken by telecommunication firms create strong positive feelings in consumers towards the brand especially when consumers associate the brand with positive programmes and favourite brand icons.

Additionally, the current study in congruence with previous ones (Kim, (2001); Donio et al, 2006) found a positive and significant relationship between telecommunication firms' sponsorship activities and consumer brand loyalty. Operators within the mobile telecommunications industry should understand that, loyal customers may make positive remarks about the network, recommend the network or even exhibit strong feelings and sentiments towards the brand because of the nature of sponsorship activities carried out by the service provider. However it is important to note that the fundamental catalyst to consumer loyalty is a higher level of satisfaction which boosts customers repeat purchases. This may be achieved through sponsoring good cause-related activities once the core service(s) is/are delivered to consumers. However, in an attempt to secure and maintain existing customers (subscribers), the role of sponsorships in creating loyal customers cannot be underestimated.

8. Conclusions and Limitations

Finally, the findings of this study indicate that the ultimate aim of telecommunication firms sponsoring some events/programs is to get consumers patronize their products and services and consequently become brand loyalists. This study in consonance with previous ones has affirmed this from the viewpoint of consumers. The essence of showcasing products and services, and providing information about mobile telecommunication brands is shaped by the ability of the event to act as a catalyst to drive sales of the brand. Purchase intention as a result of a telecommunications service provider's sponsorship activities may be observed from an angle where consumers repeat purchases of services twice, thrice or even more in a week. Additionally, consumers may subscribe to other services offered by the mobile telecommunication service provider. Especially within a fiercely competitive environment where six mobile telecommunication service providers are all vying for strong market share, the tendency for consumers to easily switch to a competitor brand is very high. As such, sponsoring a favourable events has the likelihood of ensuring this upshot.

The limitations of this study are that as specified earlier, there are over twenty three million (23,000,000) mobile telecommunication service subscribers in Ghana who are all hooked on to a minimum of one service provider's network. However this study examined only sampled respondents from the Accra Metropolis.

Furthermore it was difficult getting a lot of respondents for the study due to the general apathetic nature of Ghanaians when it comes to responding to social researchers. Despite these inadequacies, the generalizability of the results to the entire mobile telecommunication subscriber base is deemed to be representative with a high

confidence. Moreover, the findings from the study shows how sponsorship activities affect mobile subscribers' behaviour in terms of brand awareness, image, purchase intention/brand usage and loyalty in Ghana.

Additionally, in order to provide an accurate picture of the impact of mobile telecommunication sponsorships on consumers' behaviour, suggested future study could be further replicated in other contexts to validate the model. It must also be noted that other factors may also play the role of intervening variables which may affect the model. Furthermore, other forms of service industries may be used as the basis for testing the model. This is because there is an indication that consumers use different measures when evaluating varied products and services. Again cross-cultural studies could also be conducted to ascertain the comparative analysis between and among nations, economies and continents. This is premised on the fact that it is highly probable that the framework developed under the current study cannot be universally generalized to any context.

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