Examining the Marketing Effectiveness of Sports Team Sponsorship on Consumer Behaviour: A Cross-Cultural Comparison between Low and High Context Cultures

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ABSTRACT

Sports sponsorship is a marketing activity that requires huge budget where companies seek to achieve business objectives. The study compares between low and high context cultures to understand the effect of football team sponsorship on consumer behaviour. An online survey was conducted through Qualtrics with 380 responses. Results show that culture affects the outcome of football team sponsorship on brand image, purchase intention, and brand loyalty. Football team sponsorship leads to higher marketing effectiveness in low context culture. Low context culture has either the same outcome of high context culture or better and vice versa. High context culture tends to have some negative attitudes toward the brands that are sponsoring football teams. It is recommended for marketers to allocate football team sponsorship budget to low context culture for better outcome. Future work should aim to compare cultural effect on sports sponsorship in other sports such as basketball, tennis, golf, etc.

Keywords: sponsorship marketing; sports sponsorship; sponsorship effects; international marketing; cultural marketing

INTRODUCTION

Sponsorship is the financial support of an activity in order to achieve specific business objectives (Friedman, 2015). The involvement of a second party, that is the sponsee, differentiates sponsorship from advertising. Sponsorship of sports, arts or events is a powerful form of marketing communication for businesses and organisations (Cornwell, 2014). It offers the possibility of achieving multiple business goals at once. The intention is to use a cost effective method and the ability to communicate with their target market without being overly intrusive (Levin et al., 2001). Cultural differences raise the importance of understanding the cultural context as they significantly influence consumer behaviour (Maheswaran & Shavitt, 2000). The Edward Hall culture theory identifies important cultural factors and dimensions to understand the differences between cultures, namely low and high contexts cultures.

Understanding the customer targeted by the brand is the first step of sponsorship for effective marketing. It is essential for sponsored teams and sponsors to understand their fans (Kaynak et al., 2007). As sports sponsorship is a huge industry with billions of pounds at stake, this raises the importance of effective marketing. Marketing effectiveness is the measure of how effective marketing strategy is to maximise spending that achieves positive results (Kotler & Keller, 2006). Marketing effectiveness is maximised by understanding the customer. Understanding the customer behaviour and decision making process helps marketers improve resources allocation decisions, and therefore the return. Marketing activities decisions should be based on the understanding of the consumer behaviour.

The aim of the study is to investigate the impact of team sponsorship on consumer behaviour across different cultures based on Hall & Hall cultural contexts. Sponsorship marketing effectiveness will be measured using consumer behaviour metrics: 1) brand recall, 2) brand image, 3) purchase intention, and 4) brand loyalty. The study compares consumer groups from low context culture UK and high context culture Gulf States. The research represents an endeavour to extend current studies on sponsorship marketing by finding the depth of impact of team sponsorship and the difference between two different cultures within international marketing context. The outcome should assist marketers to develop their understanding of marketing effectiveness from the budget spent on sponsorships internationally, hence improving marketing decisions that lead to more efficient resources allocation.

Drawing on analysis of a survey, the study combines sports sponsorship, consumer behaviour, and cultural perspectives to understand the effectiveness of sports team sponsorship. The study finds that football team sponsorship leads to an overall higher marketing effectiveness in low context culture than high context. Low context culture has either the same outcome of high context culture or better and vice versa. High context culture tends to have some negative attitudes toward the brands that are sponsoring football teams. The study contributes by identifying the effectiveness of sports team sponsorship that explain the consumer behaviour of consumers in low and high context cultures.

The study is structured as follows. First, describes the theoretical framework. Second, describes the methodology and data. Third, presents data analysis and findings. Fourth, discusses the findings, proposes managerial implications, and make recommendations for international marketers.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Sponsorship and Consumer Behaviour

Corporations spend multimillion marketing budgets on event sponsorships in order to achieve specific corporate objectives. The objectives of any sport marketing industry can be classified as one of four goals: exposure, processing, communication effects, and consumer action (Smolianov & Aiyeku, 2009). Sponsorship is considered as an element of the promotional mix that contributes to an integrated marketing strategy (Seguin, 2007). It creates synergy of efforts to maximise the investment in marketing (Chebli & Gharbi, 2014). Sponsorship is a major driver of brand strategy to add value to the brand through leveraging functional and non-functional brand values with extending customer experience (Cliffe & Motion, 2005). Furthermore, it differentiates a brand and offers a sustainable competitive advantage (Cornwell et

al., 2001). When brand advertising is used during a sport event, it is effective for the brand to be both official sponsor of the event or the provider of products integrated in the event (Carrillat & d'Astous, 2012).

Brand exposure is when the recipient is exposed to the brand logo or products through media such as brand or product placement, shop sign, television, or internet banner ad (Gamble, 2016). Brand related measures such as brand recall, brand image, purchase intentions, and brand loyalty are influenced by many factors including exposure to the brand (Hansen & Christensen, 2007). Interestingly, not all brand stimuli lead to the same result. Celebrity endorser brand stimuli has decreased effect on consumer behaviour than unknown but equally attractive endorser (Erfgen et al., 2015). This provides insight of the important to create brand stimuli in appropriate conditions. Consumers who are exposed to high fit sponsorship develop stronger link between sponsor and sponsored than low fit (Zdravkovic & Till, 2012). Exposure during an event sponsorship influences the variables that measure effectiveness (Dubois & Jolibert, 2005). Various aspects of sport sponsorship package such as exposure of the brand are perceived to contribute differently to the impact on brand equity (Henseler, 2011). Therefore, the following hypothesis can be drawn:

H_0. Higher Exposure to sports team sponsorship has the same impact on consumer behaviour.
H_1. Higher exposure to sports team sponsorship has greater impact on consumer behaviour.

Brand recall is the basic dimension of brand equity (Shimp, 2008). It is established through exposure to fast moving consumer goods (Baumann et al., 2015). Brand recall is higher for brands exposed through logos than for brands exposed through traditional ads (Levin et al., 2001). There is a strong power association between brand names among consumers and sponsored sports (Aitken et al., 1986). Consumers are likely to learn about connections between brands and sports by attending the event. There are implicit associations between popular sports and sponsors (Pettigrew et al., 2013). However, on-site direct audiences show better recall and recognition of brands than the television audiences (Carrillat et al., 2015). Furthermore, when the consumer selects to watch a particular event, brand recall is stronger due to higher attention (Siemens et al., 2015). When the exposure is prominent, it leads to better brand recall (Lehu & Bressoud, 2009). Repeated exposure to the brand results in not only better recall of the brand, but also impair recall of competitors' brands (Alba & Chattopadhyay, 1986). Therefore, in the context of sports team sponsorship, the following hypothesis can be drawn:

H_{1a}. Higher Exposure to Sports Team Sponsorship Has Greater Impact on Brand Recall

Sponsorship allows targeted actions to improve positioning of the brand and its image (Derbaix & Lardinoit, 2001). Appropriate fit between sponsor and sponsored party leads to enhancement in brand loyalty and customer equity by positively influencing attitude towards the sponsor brand image (Liu et al., 2015). On the other hand, Grohs & Reisinger (2014) found that higher sponsorship exposure leads to less effects on sponsor image from respondents that perceived overwhelming levels of commercialisation. Sponsor image after the event is significantly more positive for respondents who had followed the event (Grohs, 2016), than those who did not follow the event. Increased exposure leads to more positive attitude towards the

brand (Grinsven & Das, 2014). Moreover, higher frequency of exposure to the brand can have a positive effect on brand evaluations even if consumers do not recall the brand (Matthes et al., 2007).

H_{1b}. Higher Exposure to Sports Team Sponsorship Has Greater Impact on Brand Image

Purchase intention is the likelihood of a consumer to purchase a product or service from the brand. The relationship between sponsorship and consumer purchase intentions remains not clear. An empirical study by Smith et al. (2008) to explain the mechanism of the relationship between sport sponsors and sport consumers. They found the key pathway to purchase intentions is associated with fan passion and a perception of sponsor integrity. The implication is that activities that boost both perception of the sponsor integrity and passion for the team are the best mechanism for sponsor return on investment. Lower exposure to a brand promotion was found to be associated with decreased consumption over time (English et al., 2016). Sponsoring in sports leads to a higher level of purchase intention (Tanvir & Shahid, 2012). Sponsorship not only enhance brand awareness and recall, but creating perceptions of scale adoptions among fans (Bennett, 1999).

H_{1c}. Higher Exposure to Sports Team Sponsorship Has Greater Impact on Purchase Intention

Marketers are increasingly seeking to develop and enhance brand loyalty through sponsorship activities (Mazodier & Merunka, 2012). Positive attitude towards a brand increases trust in the brand and hence brand loyalty (Nagar, 2014). Sponsorship affects positively perceived quality and awareness which, in turn, stimulates brand loyalty (Ha et al., 2011). Event sponsorship has a positive influence on brand loyalty when customers are aware of the firm sponsoring the event and when customers are involved with the event (Sirgy et al., 2008). Repetitive brand exposure impacts purchasing volume that is meditated by brand loyalty (Tellis, 1988). Brand exposure stimulates demand for a brand which leading to frequent purchases thus enhancing brand loyalty. Brand associations with celebrities or teams are positively related to higher loyalty behaviour (Romaniuk & Nenycz-Thiel, 2013).

H_{1d}. Higher Exposure to Sports Team Sponsorship Has Greater Impact on Brand Loyalty

Culture and Consumer Behaviour
From cultural perspectives, consumers from different cultures have different reactions to marketing messages. There is a relationship between attitudes to corporate social responsibility with the cultural dimensions identified by Hofstede (Williams & Zinkin, 2008). Consumers' tendency to punish firms for bad behaviour varies in ways that relate to cultural characteristics. Han and Shavitt (1994) state that cultural differences emerge strongly for advertised products that tend to be purchased and used with others. Culture affects perception and cognition that result in behavioural differences (Kastanakis & Voyer, 2014). Such differences influence perception of emotions, environment, and aesthetic preferences. It is the gateway by which external stimuli received. While cognitive orientation influences the way of processing information. Independent people retrieve self-related memory and interdependent people retrieve other relational memories. However, there is a

universal preference for the divine proportion in logos design across cultures (Pittard et al., 2007).

> H0. Culture doesn't affect the impact level of sports team sponsorship on consumer behaviour.
> H2. Culture affects the impact level of sports team sponsorship on consumer behaviour.
> H2a. Culture affects the impact level of sports team sponsorship on brand recall.
> H2b. Culture affects the impact level of sports team sponsorship on brand image.
> H2c. Culture affects the impact level of sports team sponsorship on purchase intention.
> H2d. Culture affects the impact level of sports team sponsorship on brand loyalty.

Horizontal/vertical cultural orientations represent how hierarchy and power affect consumer behaviour (Shavitt & Cho, 2016). These orientations influence how consumers react to advertisements, brands, and service providers, and how they respond to their needs. Cultural orientation associated with higher probability to choose a brand promoting an openness brand concept (Torelli et al., 2012). Consumers with collectivistic mindset tend to think about ad information relationally, while individualist mindset consider the sponsor and sponsored as independent ad information thus less sensitive to their fit (Kwon et al., 2015). Culture impacts shopping behaviour as suggested by Gentina (2014) where the process by which adolescents satisfy universal need differ across cultures. In individualistic country like United States consumers seek distinctiveness while in collectivistic culture like France consumer shopping style depends on social assimilation. Independent self-construal implies stronger reliance on feelings in making decisions about brands while interdependent self-construal implies stronger reliance on reasons (Hong & Chang, 2015). Culture influences consumer impulsive buying behaviour (Kacen, 2002) where consumers make unplanned buying decision and it accounts for majority of purchases. Western culture encourages impulsive buying behaviour while Eastern cultures discourage it. Cultural context affects the prevalence of advertising appeals in vertical versus horizontal cultures (Shavitt et al., 2011). Cultural orientation influences country of origin effects on brand evaluations (Gurhan-Canli & Maheswaran, 2000).

> H0. Sports team sponsorship impact on consumer behaviour is the same in low and high context cultures.
> H3. Sports team sponsorship has higher impact on consumer behaviour in low context culture.
> H3a. Sports team sponsorship has higher impact on brand recall in low context culture.
> H3b. Sports team sponsorship has higher impact on brand image in low context culture.
> H3c. Sports team sponsorship has higher impact on purchase intentions in low context culture.
> H3d. Sports team sponsorship has higher impact on brand loyalty in low context culture.

METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is the plan of how the research questions will be answered, specify sources to collect data, and analysis techniques (Saunders et al., 2012). To investigate and collect data that achieve research objectives, appropriate research methods are proposed in order to ensure credible and accurate results. The methodology for the project based on research objectives, nature, and successful approaches taken by previous researchers in this area.

Table 1. Research Methodology Brief

Method	Quantitative method	
Strategy	Survey	
	United Kingdom	Gulf States
Sample and size	190	190
	380	
	Descriptive	
	• Mean	
	• Mode	
	• Median	
	• Standard deviation	
Analysis	Inferential	
	• Confidence interval	
	• Pearson correlation	
	• T-test	
	• Chi-Square test	
Modelling	SPSS	

Quantitative method was chosen for this study. The reason for choosing quantitative over qualitative is because this study examines the relationships between variables and comparison between two groups, therefore, this method uses measurable values to formulate facts by establishing statistics that generate significant conclusions about a population. Quantitative method is better at establishing causality because of the precise measurements. The appropriate reporting of population is through data statistical analysis where quantitative method serves that purpose (Hedges et al., 2014).

This study combines descriptive and explanatory analysis. Descriptive to gain data of sponsorship events, consumers, and the situation of exposure to sponsorship. Explanatory to establish a relationship between exposure to team sponsorship independent variable and consumer behaviour dependent variables which are brand recall, brand image, purchase intentions, and brand loyalty.

A deductive research is employed where there is a set of hypothesis to be tested through analysis of data. This research is explanatory as it aims to test the relationship between variables of exposure to sports sponsorship and the impact on consumer behaviour in multiple cultures. Survey is associated with deductive research approach (Hakim, 2000). It is used for exploratory and descriptive research. It allows to collect quantitative data which can be analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Survey data can be used to find reasons for relationships between variables and test hypothesis. Because this research is quantitative, descriptive and explanatory purpose, deductive and tests hypothesis as well as aims to answer research questions, then survey is chosen as a primary source for data collection.

Explanatory research to be applied by collecting data to test a theory. The theories this research aims to test are sponsorship and consumer behaviour. The scope is team sponsorship within cultural contexts. The independent variable is exposure to sports team sponsorship, while dependent variables are brand recall, brand image, purchase intentions, and brand loyalty. The moderating variables are cultural contexts which are low context culture and high context culture. The types of

data variables that will be collected include opinion, behavioural, and attribute variables.

Table 2. Relationship Variables

Independent Variable	Exposure to Sports team sponsorship
Moderating Variables	Low context culture
	High context culture
Dependent Variables	Brand recall
	Brand image
	Purchase intention
	Brand Loyalty

The survey design consists of category questions, ranking questions, and Likert scale questions. The questionnaire consists of four parts: 1) culture question, 2) exposure question, 3) brand recall question, 4) Likert scale questions to determine their perception of brand image, purchase intention, and brand loyalty, and 5) demographic questions to increase gain more in-depth insights. The sampling method of the research is convenience sampling, where participants are selected based on their availability and willingness to respond (Gravetter & Forzano, 2015). One of the goals of the research is to compare findings from multiple cultures, therefore respondents from two different populations: 1) United Kingdom as a low context culture and 2) Gulf States as a high context culture. United Kingdom consists of England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. UK population 64.1 million (BBC, 2015). Gulf States consist of UAE, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman. Gulf States council countries population 43.2 million (Bakr, 2012). The sample size calculated based on 95% confidence level and +/-5 confidence interval. Therefore, 380 respondents from both cultures that are representative of these two populations size (Barlett et al., 2001). The conceptual framework of the study is depicted by the diagram below:
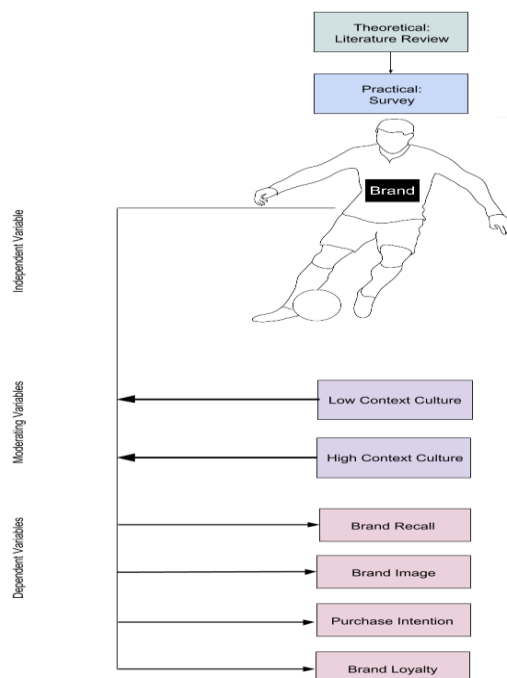

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

In the data analysis, descriptive and inferential analysis were employed. Descriptive analysis to describe general patterns from survey results such as the average impact rate of sponsorship on consumer behaviour. Determining the highest impact from the two dependent variables. Relationships to be examined using statistical significant tests such as parametric statistics. Inferential statistics include confidence interval, Pearson correlation, t-test, and chi-square tests (Rumsey, 2007). Confidence interval to estimate the score in population based on participated sample with targeted confidence of 95%. Pearson correlation to find if there is a relationship between independent and dependent variables. Data to be recorded using numerical codes to enable entry in statistical software and analysis. Developing coding prior collecting data and can be amended after collecting in some cases to improve. Each variable will have code to avoid missing data and errors.

RESULTS

Demographics

Population survey conducted through the period from 1st June 2016 to 15th July 2016 in UK and Gulf Council Countries (GCC). A total of N = 380 surveys completed, a 95% confidence interval with 189 participants from UK and 191 from Gulf countries.

Table 3. Country of participants

	%	Count
UK	49.74%	189
GCC (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE)	50.26%	191
Total	100%	380

In terms of gender, the majority of participants are males from all locations. A total of 262 males representing 69% of the sample and 118 females or 31%. Breaking down gender further to countries, in UK a slight majority of males of 65% while in GCC an overwhelming majority of males of 73%. Regarding females, in UK they represent 35% of the sample while in GCC 27%. This reflects the fact that football is less popular sport within females than males (Kluger, 2016).

Table 4. Gender by country

	Male		Female		Total
UK	64.6%	122	35.4%	67	189
GCC (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE)	73.3%	140	26.7%	51	191

The majority of participants from all locations are young adolescents. Their age between 15 – 25 representing 42% in UK and 53% in GCC. The second largest age group are adults in middle age between 26 – 40. The small difference in representation size in the two cultures reflects the fact that low context cultures has larger ageing population than high context cultures (Christensen et al., 2009).

Frequency of Watching Football

Figure 2 displays respondent's football watching behaviour, and reveals the discrepancy of the behaviour between UK and GCC. In UK, 54.7% majority of population watch football once or more a week while 45.3% watch occasionally. In GCC, quite opposite where 41.8% minority watch football once or more a week while

a majority of 58.2% watch football occasionally. Football is almost addicted by respondents from UK while it is less popular in by GCC respondents.
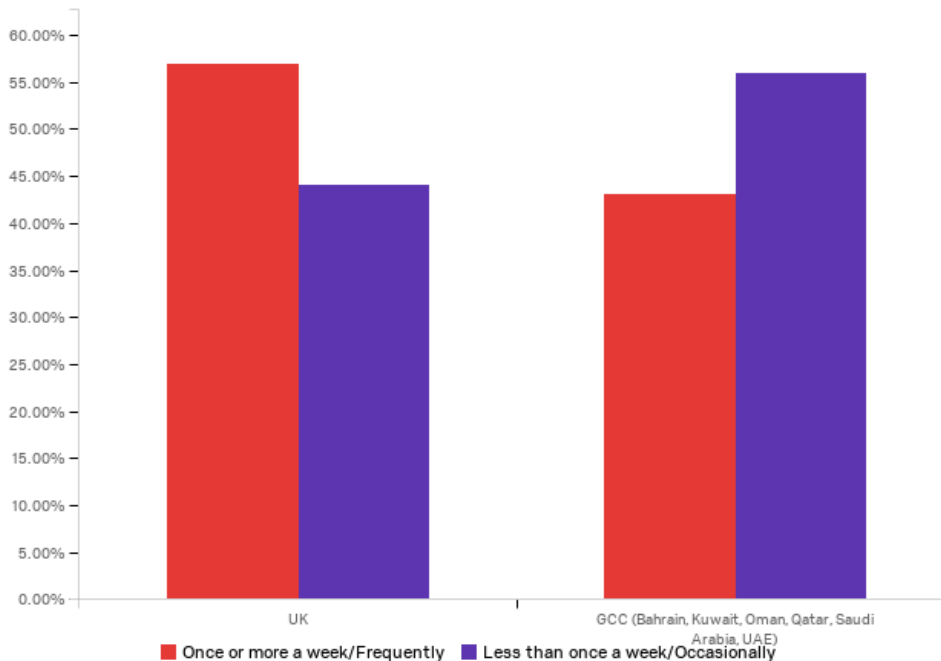
Figure 2. Frequency of watching football by country bar chart

Brand Recall

Consumers' memory and ability to recall brands were tested by asking them to mention how many brands they are able to remember that are sponsoring football. In UK, out of 189 respondents, 25 (13%) didn't recall any brand and were dismissed from analysis. UK consumers were able to recall over 3 brands which is the largest group of 35.3%. Followed by 34.8% recalled 1 brand. The remaining group of 29.9% recalled 2 brands. In GCC, out of 191 respondents, 53 (28%) didn't remember any brand and were removed from analysis. GCC consumers were able to recall 1 brand only the largest group of 48.6%. Followed by 26.8% recalled over 3 brands, and smallest group of 24.6% recalled 2 brands.

Figure 3. Brand recall by country line chart

Table 5. T-test Results Comparing UK and GCC Watching Football Frequency and Brand Recall

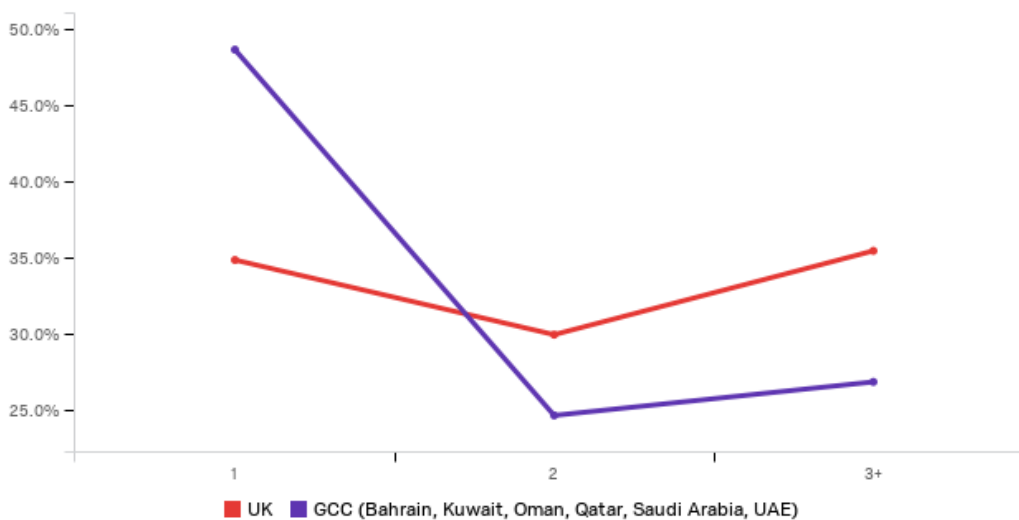|		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
How frequently do you watch football?	Equal variances assumed	.641	.424	-2.497	376	.013	-.152	.061	-.272	-.032
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.497	375.996	.013	-.152	.061	-.272	-.032
How many brands can you remember that are sponsoring football teams?	Equal variances assumed	1.172	.280	4.065	355	.000	.438	.108	.226	.650
	Equal variances not assumed			4.063	352.696	.000	.438	.108	.226	.650

In the t-test shown on Table 5, there are two results from two different t-tests, one assuming equal variance and the other unequal variance. The result to consider depends on Levene's test. For watching frequency, sig. (p-value-) is .424 less than 0.5, then we have to use unequal variance from sig. 2-tailed. Since p-value is 0.013 less than 0.05, therefore, we conclude that country affects the frequency of watching football.

Applying same interpretation to brand recall, as sig. (p-value) is 0.280 less than 0.5, then we have to use unequal variance from sig. 2-tailed. Since p-value is 0.000 is less than 0.05, therefore, we reject null hypothesis and accept H2a that culture affects the level of brand recall.

Table 6. Chi-Square Test between Watching Football Frequency and Brand Recall
How frequently do you watch football? * How many brands can you remember that are sponsoring football teams? Crosstabulation

			How many brands can you remember that are sponsoring football teams?				Total
			0	1	2	3+	
How frequently do you watch football?	Once or more a week/Frequently	Count	1	19	73	79	172
		Expected Count	26.6	59.4	40.1	45.9	172.0
	Less than once a week/Occasionally	Count	54	104	10	16	184
		Expected Count	28.4	63.6	42.9	49.1	184.0
Total		Count	55	123	83	95	356
		Expected Count	55.0	123.0	83.0	95.0	356.0

Table 7. Chi-Square Test between Country and Watching Football Frequency

Crosstab			How frequently do you watch football?			Total
			Once or more a week/Frequently	Less than once a week/Occasionally	Never	
Country	UK	Count	98	81	9	188
		Expected Count	85.5	91.5	10.9	188.0
	GCC (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE)	Count	74	103	13	190
		Expected Count	86.5	92.5	11.1	190.0
Total		Count	172	184	22	378
		Expected Count	172.0	184.0	22.0	378.0

Table 8. Chi-Square Test between Country and Brand Recall

Crosstab			How many brands can you remember that are sponsoring football teams?				Total
			0	1	2	3+	
Country	UK	Count	16	57	49	58	180
		Expected Count	27.7	62.5	41.8	47.9	180.0
	GCC (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE)	Count	39	67	34	37	177
		Expected Count	27.3	61.5	41.2	47.1	177.0
Total		Count	55	124	83	95	357
		Expected Count	55.0	124.0	83.0	95.0	357.0

Tables 6, 7, and 8 have crosstabs, observed count, cross count, and expected count. The expected count is what would we expect to observe of there was no association. It can be noticed that observed count are different than expected and Chi-Square test helps determine if this observed count are different enough for the test or association to be significant.

Looking at Chi-Square test tables from Table 6, 7, and 8, the following was found. On Table 6, Pearson Chi-Square value is 199.233, 3 degrees of freedom, and asymptotic significant which is the significance value is 0.000. As the value is 0% less than alpha value of 5%, that means our result would be statistically significant, and hence accept alternate hypothesis H1a that higher exposure to sports team sponsorship has greater impact on brand recall.

On Table 7, Pearson Chi-Square value is 6.696, 2 degrees of freedom, and asymptotic significant which is the significance value is 0.035. As the value is 3.5% less than alpha value of 5%, that means our result would be statistically significant, and hence accept alternate hypothesis H2a that culture affects brand recall from sports team sponsorship. On Table 8, Pearson Chi-Square value is 17.754, 3 degrees of freedom, and asymptotic significant which is the significance value is 0.000. As the value is 0% less than alpha value of 5%, that means our result would be statistically significant. The crosstab results from Table 7 and Table 8 indicate that UK sample has an overall higher brands recall, and as the results are statistically significant,

therefore, accept alternate hypothesis H3a that low context culture has higher positive impact on brand recall than high context culture.

Brand Image
Successful

The following illustrates the perception and attitude of consumers towards the brands sponsoring football teams. Table 9 shows whether consumer think the brand is successful or not. In UK, the majority think the brand is somewhat successful. In GCC, different results but same conclusion. However, more people in GCC think the brand is unsuccessful than UK.

Table 9. Perception towards brand successfulness by country

I think the brand is successful	UK		GCC (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE)	
Strongly disagree	1.2%	2	0.7%	1
Somewhat disagree	12.8%	21	21.7%	30
Neither agree nor disagree	4.9%	8	10.9%	15
Somewhat agree	48.2%	79	39.9%	55
Strongly agree	32.9%	54	26.8%	37
Total		164		138

For enhanced interpretation, let's look at the relationship between frequency of watching and success perception. The results show a positive relationship where consumers who watch football frequently tend to think the brand is successful in both cultures.
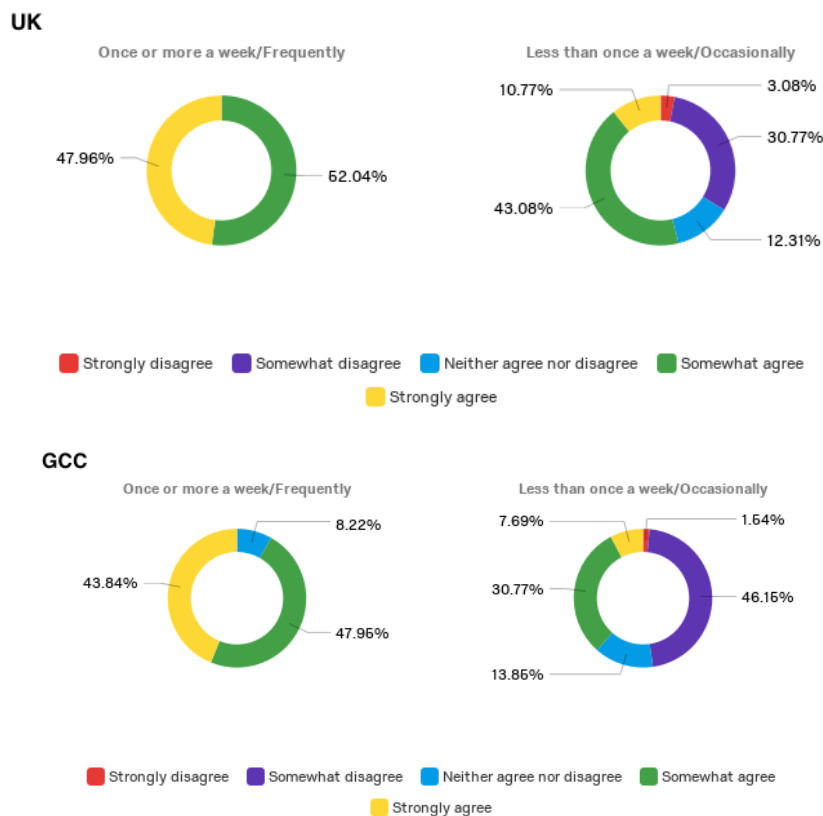

Figure 4. The relationship between frequency of watching football and perception of brand successfulness in UK and GCC

Exciting

A large proportion of respondents from both cultures agreed that the brand sponsoring football teams are exciting. In UK a majority of 48% think the brand is exciting, while in GCC a majority of 39% think the same. However, more consumers in GCC of 23% disagree and think the brand is not exciting, while in UK 14% disagree. Figure 5 illustrates that trend where very few respondents strongly disagree to the level they think the brand is boring.

Table 10. Perception towards brand excitement by country

I think the brand is exciting	UK		GCC (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE)	
Strongly disagree	1.83%	3	0.73%	1
Somewhat disagree	14.02%	23	22.63%	31
Neither agree nor disagree	10.37%	17	13.14%	18
Somewhat agree	48.17%	79	38.69%	53
Strongly agree	25.61%	42	24.82%	34
Total		164		137

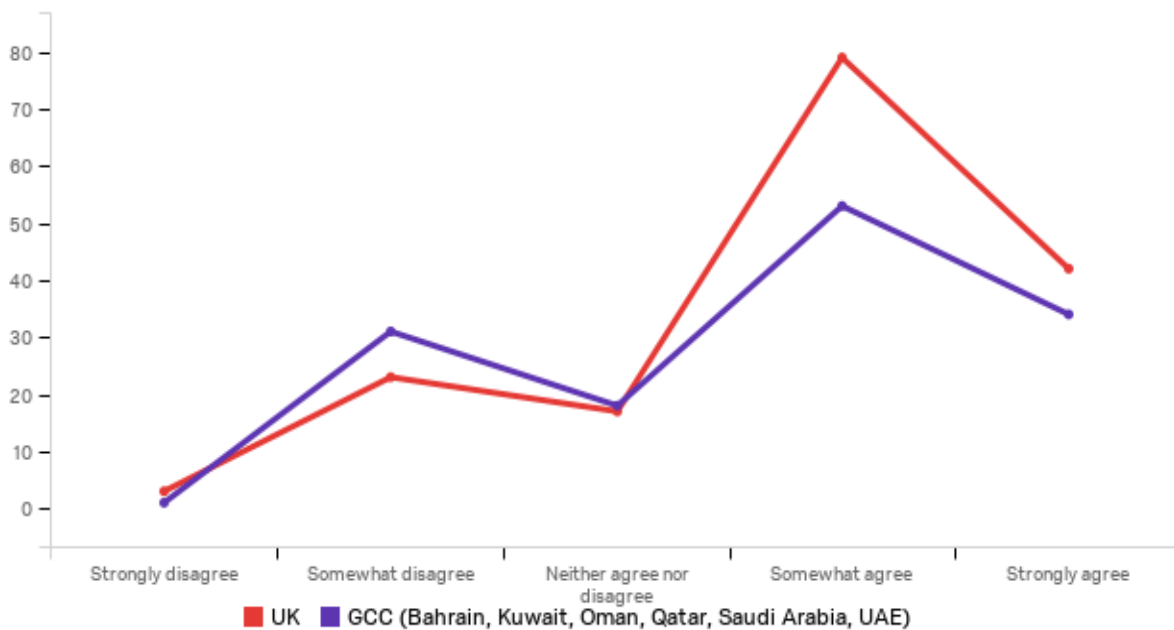**Figure 5**. Perception towards brand excitement by country line chart

Cheerful

It is revealed in Table 11 that in both cultures there is an agreement that brands sponsoring football are cheerful with 48% in UK and 37% in GCC. However, larger group in GCC disagrees. Figure 6 clarify that in UK stronger perception the brand is cheerful with larger divergence while in GCC more people think the brand is not cheerful than UK.

Table 11. Perception towards brand cheerfulness by country

I think the brand is cheerful	UK		GCC (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE)	
Strongly disagree	1.83%	3	0.72%	1
Somewhat disagree	14.02%	23	22.46%	31
Neither agree nor disagree	10.37%	17	13.77%	19
Somewhat agree	48.17%	79	36.96%	51
Strongly agree	25.61%	42	26.09%	36
Total		164		138
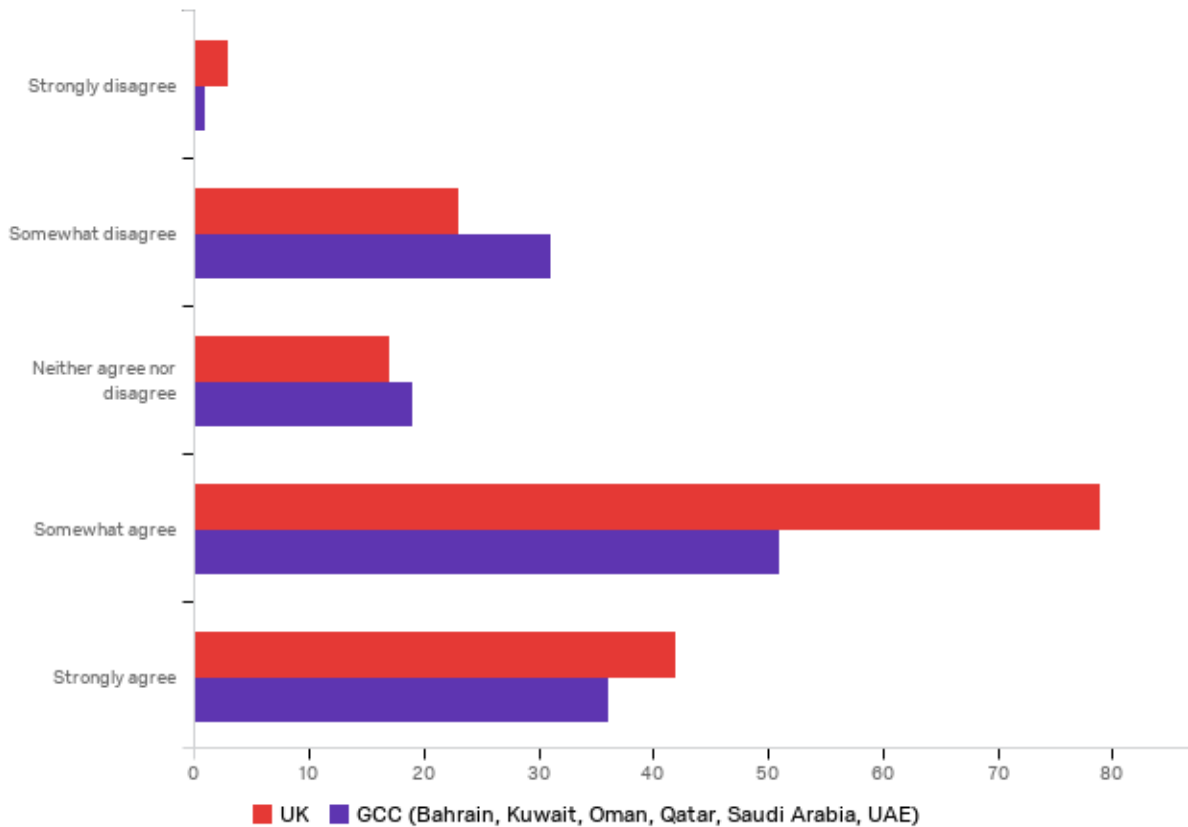
Figure 6. Perception towards brand cheerfulness bar chart

Charming

Regarding brand charming perception. Respondents from UK and GCC reported similar findings to cheerfulness. As illustrated in Table 12 both cultures agree the brand is charming while larger group in GCC disagrees than UK. The same for brand cheerfulness as well.

Table 12. Perception of brand charming by country

I think the brand is charming	UK		GCC (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE)	
Strongly disagree	1.83%	3	0.73%	1
Somewhat disagree	14.02%	23	21.90%	30
Neither agree nor disagree	10.37%	17	14.60%	20
Somewhat agree	48.78%	80	37.96%	52
Strongly agree	25.00%	41	24.82%	34
Total		164		137

Intelligent

UK respondents view the brand as intelligent with 41% agree, while GCC consumers think the opposite with 41% disagree. GCC consumers think the brand is not intelligent. This perception can be justified by the fact that football in UK is flourished (FIFA, 2016), while in GCC football is a third world country activity that doesn't reflect intelligence or developed like it is seen in developed countries such as UK.

Table 13. Perception of brand intelligence by country

I think the brand is intelligent	UK		GCC (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE)	
Strongly disagree	3.05%	5	2.90%	4
Somewhat disagree	17.07%	28	41.30%	57
Neither agree nor disagree	17.68%	29	21.01%	29
Somewhat agree	41.46%	68	18.12%	25
Strongly agree	20.73%	34	16.67%	23
Total		164		138

Reliability

The perception of consumers towards brand reliability is important factor of consumer loyalty (Koksal & Dema, 2014). Table 14 shows that there is no decisive result in both cultures. The majority in UK and GCC are not sure whether the brand is reliable or not. This can be interpreted that consumers got little confused about the question and that factor. It can be concluded that football team sponsorship is not the optimal method to deliver perception about brand reliability and it doesn't affect consumers' reliability perception towards the brand.

Table 14. Perception towards brand reliability by country

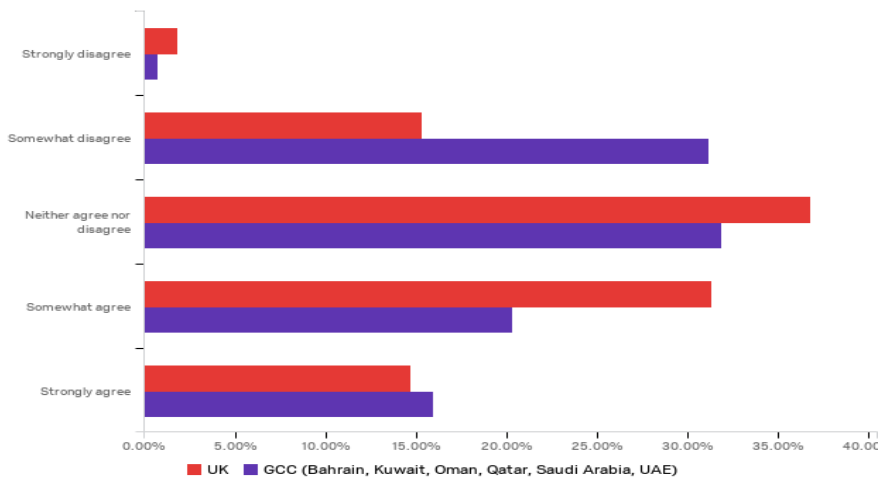| I think the brand is reliable	UK		GCC (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE)	
Strongly disagree	1.84%	3	0.72%	1
Somewhat disagree	15.34%	25	31.16%	43
Neither agree nor disagree	36.81%	60	31.88%	44
Somewhat agree	31.29%	51	20.29%	28
Strongly agree	14.72%	24	15.94%	22
Total		163		138

Figure 7. Perception towards brand reliability by country bar chart

Toughness

Table 15 shows that 37% of respondents in UK which represent the majority neither agree not disagree with the statement that the brand is tough. The second largest group agreed with 30%. In GCC, there is an equal majority of 31% for neither agree nor disagree and disagree. This result can be interpreted that it is difficult to deliver this perception through football team sponsorship. However, there is higher chance to succeed in delivering that perception in low context culture rather high context culture.

Table 15. Perception towards brand toughness by country

I think the brand is tough	UK		GCC (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE)	
Strongly disagree	1.83%	3	0.73%	1
Somewhat disagree	15.24%	25	31.39%	43
Neither agree nor disagree	37.20%	61	31.39%	43
Somewhat agree	30.49%	50	21.17%	29
Strongly agree	15.24%	25	15.33%	21
Total		164		137

Old Fashioned

Data presented in Table 16 reveals that a significant proportion of UK respondents disagreed with the statement that a brand is old fashioned. Over 50% think the brand is modern. In GCC, the opposite is true where a majority of 47% agree the brand old fashioned. This result can be justified by the fact that football is UK is developed and the association with it is modern, while in GCC football is not so popular with population having other interests.

Table 16. Perception the brand is old fashioned by country

I think the brand is old fashioned	UK		GCC (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE)	
Strongly disagree	20.12%	33	17.39%	24
Somewhat disagree	38.41%	63	25.36%	35
Neither agree nor disagree	8.54%	14	5.07%	7
Somewhat agree	24.39%	40	47.10%	65
Strongly agree	8.54%	14	5.07%	7
Total		164		138

Table 17. T-test Results Comparing UK and GCC Consumer Behaviour, Purchase Behaviour, Loyalty on Sports Sponsorship

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
I think the brand is successful	Equal variances assumed	10.563	.001	2.342	300	.020	.285	.122	.045	.524
	Equal variances not assumed			2.321	279.155	.021	.285	.123	.043	.527
I think the brand is exciting	Equal variances assumed	5.468	.020	1.416	299	.158	.175	.123	-.068	.418
	Equal variances not assumed			1.406	280.675	.161	.175	.124	-.070	.419

I think the brand is cheerful	Equal variances assumed	6.141	.014	1.333	300	.183	.165	.124	-.078	.408
	Equal variances not assumed			1.324	281.589	.187	.165	.125	-.080	.410
I think the brand is charming	Equal variances assumed	5.393	.021	1.373	299	.171	.169	.123	-.073	.410
	Equal variances not assumed			1.364	280.939	.174	.169	.124	-.075	.412
I think the brand is intelligent	Equal variances assumed	1.450	.230	4.244	300	.000	.554	.131	.297	.811
	Equal variances not assumed			4.216	282.393	.000	.554	.131	.295	.813
I think the brand is reliable	Equal variances assumed	1.267	.261	1.871	299	.062	.222	.118	-.012	.455
	Equal variances not assumed			1.857	280.543	.064	.222	.119	-.013	.456
I think the brand is tough	Equal variances assumed	1.012	.315	1.950	299	.052	.231	.118	-.002	.464
	Equal variances not assumed			1.936	279.941	.054	.231	.119	-.004	.466
I think the brand is old fashioned	Equal variances assumed	.415	.520	-2.318	300	.021	-.343	.148	-.634	-.052
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.319	291.593	.021	-.343	.148	-.634	-.052
I will buy from the brand in the next three months	Equal variances assumed	26.433	.000	3.738	300	.000	.434	.116	.206	.663
	Equal variances not assumed			3.659	255.953	.000	.434	.119	.201	.668
I buy regularly from the brand	Equal variances assumed	18.729	.000	5.384	300	.000	.574	.107	.364	.784
	Equal variances not assumed			5.295	264.981	.000	.574	.108	.360	.787

In the t-test shown on Table 17, all sig. (p-value) are less than 0.5 except old fashioned more than 0.5. For those less than 0.5 we have to use unequal variance from sig. 2-tailed for interpretation and for old fashioned we will use equal variance. Sig. 2-tailed for brand success, intelligent, old fashioned, purchase intention, and loyalty are less than 0.05. Therefore, we conclude that country affects these variables significantly. We reject null hypothesis and accept H2c and H2d that culture affects the level of purchase intention and brand loyalty.

Before making a conclusion about culture effect on brand image, we have to look at the other variables. Sig. 2-tailed is more than 0.05 for brand exciting, cheerful, charming, reliable, and tough. Therefore, we conclude that country doesn't affect these variables significantly. For overall brand image, we have 3 variables that are affected significantly and 5 variables that are affected insignificantly. The weight average is higher for insignificant effect, thus, rejecting alternative hypothesis H2b.

Table 18. Pearson Correlations Between Country and Brand Image

		Country	Successful	Exciting	Cheerful	Charming	Intelligent	Reliable	Tough	Old fashioned
Country	Pearson Correlation	1	-.134*	-.082	-.077	-.079	-.238**	-.108	-.112	.133*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.020	.158	.183	.171	.000	.062	.052	.021
	N	380	302	301	302	301	302	301	301	302
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	302	302	301	302	301	302	301	301	302

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From Table 18, it can be seen that the correlation coefficient (r) between country and all aspects of brand image (except old fashioned) is negative and close to 0. Therefore, it can be concluded that country or culture affects brand image leading us to accept H2b that culture affects the impact of sports team sponsorship on brand image. Furthermore, low context culture has higher positive impact on brand image, therefore, accepting hypothesis H3b.

Table 19. Pearson Correlations between Watching Football Frequency and Brand Image

		How frequently do you watch football?	Successful	Exciting	Cheerful	Charming	Intelligent	Reliable	Tough	Old fashioned
How frequently do you watch football?	Pearson Correlation	1	-.612**	-.681**	-.680**	-.682**	-.604**	-.640**	-.640**	.647**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	378	301	300	301	300	301	300	300	301

From Table 19, it can be seen that the correlation coefficients (r) between frequency of watching football and all aspects of brand image (except old fashioned) is negative and close to 1. These results indicate that there are negative relationships and strongly correlated. However, as the order of watching frequency is in descending order, then it can be concluded that there is a positive relationship between watching football frequency and brand image. Thus, accepting H1b.

Purchase Intention

In response to the question of purchase intention (Table 20), around half of respondents in UK (48%) expressed their intention to buy from the brand in the next three months. The second largest group is not sure with 24% neither agree nor disagree. A small minority of 12% disagree. In GCC, the results are close with a majority of disagreement (36%). Around 30% agree that they are intending to buy in the next three months. The combined results of agree and strongly agree (47%) still doesn't represent a majority of overall. This indicates that in GCC, a high context culture, has lower chance of consumers purchase as a result of football team sponsorship.

Table 20. Purchase intention by country

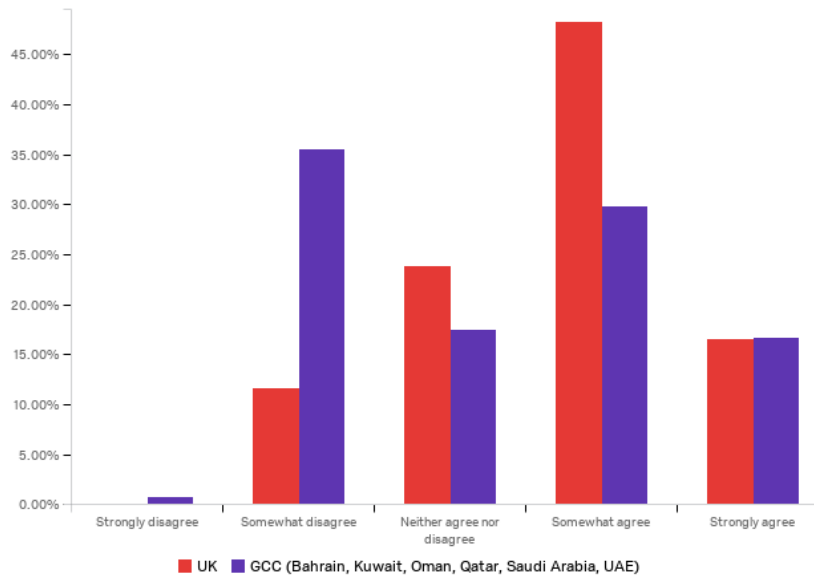| I will buy from the brand in the next three months	UK		GCC (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE)	
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0	0.72%	1
Somewhat disagree	11.59%	19	35.51%	49
Neither agree nor disagree	23.78%	39	17.39%	24
Somewhat agree	48.17%	79	29.71%	41
Strongly agree	16.46%	27	16.67%	23
Total		164		138

Figure 8. Purchase intention by country bar chart

Brand Loyalty

In term of respondents' loyalty towards the brand, Table 21 shows that in low context culture such as UK, consumers are more likely to stay loyal to the brand (35%). However, the largest group (40%) was confused and neither agree nor disagree with loyalty statement. On the other hand, in high context culture such as GCC countries, the largest group that represents the majority of 62% disagrees. The second largest group is loyal with 28% agree. Overall, it can be concluded that in low context culture, maintaining a long-term football team sponsorship agreement yields positive result of keeping customers loyal, while it doesn't produce the same result in high context culture.

Table 21. Loyalty towards the brand by country

I buy regularly from the brand	UK		GCC (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE)	
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0	2.17%	3
Somewhat disagree	19.51%	32	61.59%	85
Neither agree nor disagree	40.24%	66	5.07%	7
Somewhat agree	34.76%	57	27.54%	38
Strongly agree	5.49%	9	3.62%	5
Total		164		138

Table 22. Pearson Correlations between Watching Football Frequency with Purchase Intention and Brand Loyalty

Correlations

		Country	How frequently do you watch football?	I will buy from the brand in the next three months	I buy regularly from the brand
Country	Pearson Correlation	1	.128[*]	-.211[**]	-.297[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.013	.000	.000
	N	380	378	302	302
How frequently do you watch football?	Pearson Correlation	.128[*]	1	-.613[**]	-.519[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013		.000	.000
	N	378	378	301	301
I will buy from the brand in the next three months	Pearson Correlation	-.211[**]	-.613[**]	1	.781[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	302	301	302	302
I buy regularly from the brand	Pearson Correlation	-.297[**]	-.519[**]	.781[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	302	301	302	302

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From Table 22, it can be seen that the correlation coefficients (r) between frequency of watching football, and purchase intention and brand loyalty equal -.613 and -.519 respectively and close to 1. These results indicate that there are negative relationships and strongly correlated. However, as the order of watching frequency is in descending order, then it can be concluded that there is a positive relationship between watching football frequency and purchase intention and brand loyalty. Thus, accepting H1c and H1d. The correlation coefficients (r) between country, and purchase intention and brand loyalty equal -.211 and -.297 respectively and close to 0. These results indicate that there are negative relationships and not strongly correlated. UK's low context culture is correlated with higher purchase intention and brand loyalty. While GCC's high context culture is correlated with lower purchase intention and brand loyalty. This leads us to accept hypothesis H2c and H2d that culture affects the impact of sports team sponsorship on purchase intention and brand loyalty. Additionally, hypothesis H3c and H3d are accepted that low context culture has higher impact.

In summary, the results of the research lead to accept all hypothesis except one was rejected. Thus, accepting H1 that higher exposure to sports team sponsorship has greater impact on consumer behaviour. Accept H2 that culture affects the impact level of sports team sponsorship on consumer behaviour except brand image (H2b) that is rejected. Accept H3 that sports team sponsorship has higher impact on consumer behaviour in low context culture.

DISCUSSION

The objectives of this research were to assess the role of culture on marketing effectiveness, particularly in sports team sponsorship, determine which culture yields higher marketing effectiveness, and provide recommendation for international marketers on where to invest their marketing budget. Previous studies (e.g. Dubois and Jolibert, 2015; Siemens et al., 2015; Derbaix & Lardinoit, 2001; Smith et al., 2008; and Kaynak et al., 2008) have shown that sports team sponsorship affects consumer behaviour through exposure to the brand. In essence, it influences brand recall, brand image, and purchase intention, and brand loyalty. This study adds to these findings by comparing between cultures.

Within UK, a low context culture, brand recall is strong and increases as exposure to the brand increases. On the other hand, within GCC countries, a high

context culture, brand recall is limited for one brand. Additionally, consumers in UK tend to be more football addict than GCC. The findings suggest that sponsoring football teams in UK has higher chance of the brand being exposed to consumers, hence more likely to be remembered, and vice versa for GCC.

The eight elements that constitute brand image which are successful, exciting, cheerful, charming, intelligent, reliability, toughness, and old fashioned vary in effect. Brands that sponsor football teams are considered successful both in UK and GCC. However, there is a larger group that thinks otherwise in GCC. As watching football increases, brand success perception increases in both cultures. This study extends the finding of (Grinsven & Das, 2014) that increased exposure leads to more positive attitude towards the brand by showing it applies to all cultures.

As football is the most exciting sport in the world (Ben-Naim et al., 2005), establishing a correlation of excitement with brands associated with that event is an objective of marketers. A similar attitude to brand success found in other brand elements where both cultures agree brands are exciting, cheerful, and charming with larger group in GCC thinks otherwise than UK. The influence on positive brand attitudes is stronger in low context culture. However, the difference in the effect of culture on brand image is insignificant.

Brands that are sponsoring football teams in UK are considered intelligent while in GCC they think otherwise. Therefore, brands sponsoring football teams in high context culture may not be viewed positively in term of intelligence while they will be looked as intelligent in low context culture.

There is no decisive judgment regarding brand reliability and toughness. Agreement and disagreement both less than half of population, while indecisive group that neither agree nor disagree is the largest with over a third of the population. It can be concluded that sponsoring football team sponsorship will not affect reliability and toughness perception significantly.

UK consumers think the brand is not old fashioned by a significant portion, while in GCC consumers think the brand is old fashioned. This different view may be affected by development of football as a sport in the country. However, it can be said that in low context culture the brand will be viewed as modern while in high context culture it will be viewed as old fashioned.

A critical aspect that enables marketers to assess the success of their sponsorships is purchase. It was found that UK consumers more likely to purchase with over half of population stated explicitly their intention to buy. On the other hand in GCC countries, a large proportion are intending to purchase, however, they represent less than half of population as over third of the population stated they don't have intention to purchase. Thus, football team sponsorship has higher probability of purchase and conversion in low context culture while in high context culture it still has a high probability of purchase but lower return. This is consistent with Hall & Hall (1990) high context culture commitment where people tend to be extremely cautious and reluctant to begin something. Therefore, if the primary objective of marketers is sales, it is recommended they direct their sponsorship investment to low context countries such as UK.

The last aspect is the loyalty towards the brand. Surprisingly, UK consumers indicated a neutral attitude towards brand loyalty. This is consistent with Hall & Hall (1990) theory that low context culture has weak ties with others, so people move away or withdraw if things are not going well. From the perspective of GCC

consumers, they were decisively not loyal to the brand sponsoring the team. Overall, sports team sponsorship is unlikely to be the optimal mean to nurture brand loyalty.

Another way to enhance our understanding of the two cultures is by looking at the demographic differences. Football tends to be a masculine sport for both UK and GCC with the latter prevailed, while in UK around third of females watch football. This is consistent with AlAnezi & Alansari (2016) that high context cultures have a significant gender differences where males have higher score than females on masculinity, highlighting Hofstede (1998) theory. Regarding age, football is most watched by young people but in UK there are huge fans from the elderly age group. Thus, sports team sponsorship has better fit for products targeting males who are young. However, in low context culture such as UK, it is possible to reach more females and senior consumers.

CONCLUSION

The current level of sponsorship industry, wherein companies spend hundreds of millions of pounds on sponsoring teams, makes it critical for marketers to enhance their understanding of the outcome from football team sponsorship. The differences in the outcome imposed by the differences between consumers is a major factor that influences reaction to the sponsoring brands. One of the major factors that affects consumer behaviour is their culture.

The result of the study indicates that football team sponsorship leads to an overall higher marketing effectiveness in low context culture than high context in terms of brand recall, purchase intention, and brand loyalty. In terms of consumer behaviour elements, it can be argued that low context culture results in the same outcome of high context culture or better and vice versa. High context culture tends to have some negative attitude towards the brands that are sponsoring football teams.

This study successfully establishes differences in the outcome between consumers of different cultures. However, it is limited by the fact that the study conducted in specific countries to represent the culture. Future studies that include consumers from more countries to represent cultures would be useful to generalize the results. Furthermore, it is important to apply current study on other sports by comparing consumer behaviour between different cultures in other sports such as basketball, tennis, golf, etc. Finally, it would be interesting to examine other marketing aspects like the relationship between sports sponsorship and digital marketing metrics such as increasing traffic to website or followers of social media account.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Author declares that this manuscript has no conflict of interest with any party.

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