

INFLUENCE OF BRAND-EVENT PERSONALITY FIT ON SPORT SPONSORS'  
CONSUMER-BASED BRAND EQUITY

By

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(Under the Direction of James J. Zhang)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the influence of multi-dimensional brand-event personality fit (BEPF) on sport sponsors' consumer-based brand equity (CBBE). Two sub-studies were conducted, where Study 1 was aimed to form the BEPF scale and Study 2 was aimed to examine the structural relationships. Research findings revealed the following direct influences of BEPF on CBBE: (a) the responsibility fit of BEPF would positively influence brand awareness/association and perceived quality; (b) the activity fit of BEPF would positively influence brand loyalty; and (c) the emotionality fit of BEPF would positively influence perceived quality and brand loyalty. Indirect influences included: (a) the responsibility fit of BEPF would positively influence perceived quality via brand awareness/association; (b) the responsibility fit of BEPF would positively influence brand loyalty via brand awareness/association and perceived quality; and (c) the emotionality fit of BEPF would positively influence brand loyalty via perceived quality. The implications, limitations, and suggestions for future research were extensively discussed.

INDEX WORDS:     Branding, Sport event sponsorship, Brand-event fit,  
                         Consumer-based brand equity

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## DEDICATION

To my family

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Brand equity was defined as “a set of assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or that firm’s customers” (D. A. Aaker, 1991, p. 15). In recent years, two research streams on brand equity have formed, one taking a firm-based (or financial) perspective and the other taking a consumer-based perspective (Christodoulides & de Chernatony, 2010; Keller, 1993; Keller & Lehmann, 2003; Krishnan, 1996; Lassar, Mittal, & Sharma, 1995). The firm-based perspective considers brand equity to be the value of a brand to the firm with respect to a merger, acquisition, or divestiture (Keller, 1993; Keller & Lehmann, 2003). In the consumer-based perspective, brand equity is seen from the consumer’s point of view, in which consumer behavior is considered the basis for strategic decision-making that involves targeting consumers, positioning products, and adopting appropriate marketing promotions (Keller, 1993). Conceptually, consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) includes four dimensions: (a) brand awareness, (b) brand association, (c) perceived equity, and (d) brand loyalty (D. A. Aaker, 1991; Cornwell, Roy, & Steinard, 2001; Keller, 1993; Krishnan, 1996).

As a crucial marketing asset, CBBE has been studied in a broad array of academic fields that reveal consistent findings of its positive influence on promoting consumer preferences and purchase intentions (Cobb-Walgren, Ruble, & Donthu, 1995), reducing firm risk (Rego, Billett, & Morgan, 2009), enhancing consumer perceived quality toward products (Dodds, Monroe, & Grewal, 1991), increasing shareholder value (Kerin & Sethuraman, 1998), improving consumer

evaluations of brand extensions (D. A. Aaker & Keller, 1990; Bottomley & Doyle, 1996), increasing consumer price insensitivity (Erdem, Swait, & Louviere, 2002), and enhancing resilience in product-harm crises (Dawar & Pillutla, 2000). Understandably, corporations always seek efficient ways to build strong CBBE.

Keller and Lehmann (2006) systematically categorized various identified approaches of building CBBE into three propositions: (a) using brand elements, including brand name, logo (or symbol) designs, and packaging; (b) using marketing activities, including advertising, corporate social marketing programs, and sponsorship; and (c) using various communication channels, including mass media, online and real-world communities, and interpersonal word-of-mouth. Among these proposed approaches, sponsorship is considered one of the most effective, widely used, and rapidly growing strategies to build CBBE and therefore has been receiving tremendous attention from both practitioners and academics (e.g., Cornwell, Roy, & Steinard, 2001; Gwinner, 1997; Henseler, Wilson, & Westberg, 2011; Meenaghan, 1998). Sport event sponsorship, as the major component of all sponsorship types, has also been identified as playing a key role in building sponsors' CBBE (Cornwell et al., 2001; Henseler et al., 2011). Large numbers of sport events, from local and small-scale events to international and mega events, can provide great marketing platforms for sponsors to build, strengthen, and maintain their CBBE. According to the recent International Events Group (IEG) report (2011), sponsorship expenditure of corporations was estimated at \$48.7 billion across the world, with 68% of sponsorship spending distributed to sport. Among the sport platforms, sport event "is the most commonly associated with sport marketing" (Shank, 2005, p. 358).

Although numerous sport events provide opportunities for sponsors to engage in sponsorship, oftentimes corporations are puzzled and stressed in choosing suitable sport event(s)

that would maximize their sponsorship effect in building strong CBBE. Given the theoretical support from schema theory and associated network theory, as well as the empirically identified positive influence of brand-event personality fit (BEPF) on consumers' sponsorship responses (Lee & Cho, 2009), the current study proposes that highlighting BEPF in sport event sponsorship could potentially contribute to the efficiency of building sponsors' CBBE.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Schema Theory**

Schemas are hypothetical cognitive structures representing a person's expectations in a certain domain; schemas guide one's perception, thoughts, and actions (McDaniel, 1999). One key feature of schema theory is its ability to cue affective and behavioral responses to stimuli (Fiske & Linville, 1980; Stoltman, 1990). Thus, schema theory is widely used in emerging marketing research that concentrates on how people process stimuli by comparing the stimuli with stereotypical knowledge (Goodstein, 1993; Goodstein et al., 1992; Stoltman, 1990; Wright, 1986).

According to schema theory, consumers would develop schemas related to a specific event on different levels through their prior knowledge (e.g., personal attendance, advertising in mass media, interpersonal word-of-mouth) (McDaniel, 1999). Consumers process marketing communications by matching cues derived from sponsorship to their prior knowledge of similar stimuli stored in the appropriate schema (Goodstein, 1993; Goodstein et al., 1992; Stoltman, 1990; Wright, 1986). Schema theory predicts that memory is likely to perceive the brands/brand attributes that are consistent with the event and decline discrepant brand/brand attributes because the former are strongly associated with the organizing schema (Sujaan & Bettman, 1989). For example, through the information provided by mass media and personal attendance, a tennis fan

would form his/her schemas toward Wimbledon Championships, which might be characterized as traditional, classic, and elegant. Thus, the tennis fan would be prone to positively process the information from sponsors like Rolex, which has characteristics consistent with the event, than Pepsi, whose image is exciting, passionate, and modern.

Schema theory also suggests that, in addition to affecting consumers' cognition, the fit information also positively influences consumers' evaluation of sponsorship because the schemas contain knowledge from both cognitive beliefs and relevant affection (Fiske & Pavelchak, 1984). That is, the consumers' affection also could be transferred from the general schema to the specific brand. Therefore, if the sponsoring brand fits consumers' schema for the sport event, it would encourage consumers to receive and process information of the sponsoring brand and also generate a corresponding positive affective responses toward the sponsor.

Based on schema theory, the match-up hypothesis was proposed in advertising studies which mainly examined the differential impact of different types of endorsers, often celebrities, on the endorsed brand (Till & Busier, 2000). The fit between the endorser and the endorsed brand in this hypothesis is described by the term "match-up" (Kahle & Homer, 1985; Kamins, 1990; Lynch & Schuler, 1994; Solomon, Ashmore, & Longo, 1992). The match-up hypothesis suggests that the effectiveness of an endorsement largely depends on the existence of fit between the endorser and the endorsed brand. Because this kind of fit emphasizes the association between endorser and the endorsed brand, it is more likely that the endorsed brand will be effectively linked to the endorser (Till & Busler, 2000).

The sponsorship process is comparable to celebrity endorsement (Gwinner, 1997; Keller, 1993; McCracken, 1989; McDaniel, 1999) because consumers would similarly link the attitudes they have toward a particular property to the sponsoring brand (Keller, 1993). Therefore, in the

sport event sponsorship setting, the fit between the sponsored event and the sponsoring brand effectively links the brand to the event. This linkage, in turn, promotes the positive image that consumers hold toward the sport event to be transferred to the sponsoring brand (Cunningham & Taylor, 1995; Gwinner, 1997; Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Keller, 1993; Koo, Quarterman, & Flynn, 2006; McDaniel, 1999). Moreover, the positive transfer of image also might improve consumers' assessment of a sponsor, including the quality of the sponsor's products and the perceived categorical leadership of the brand (Becker-Olsen, 2003).

Overall, schema theory and its derivative match-up hypothesis predict that the degree of consumer perceived fit between the sponsor and the sponsee positively affects consumers' cognitive, affective, and conative responses toward the sponsor and in turn the overall effectiveness of sport event sponsorship (Crimmins & Horn, 1996; McDaniel, 1999; Schrieher & Lenson, 1994).

### **Associated Network Theory**

In 1975, Collins and Loftus first proposed the associated network theory, which posits that human knowledge is derived from multiple isolated nodes, and the meaning connects relevant isolated units to form certain knowledge (Anderson & Bower, 1973; Wyer & Srull, 1989). Memory search could be considered as the process in which the activation spreads among concept nodes within the semantic network, and this spreading activation process determines the extent of retrieval in memory (Collins & Loftus, 1975; Raaijmakers & Shiffrin, 1981; Ratciiff & McKoon, 1988). Based on the associated network theory, both encoding external information and retrieving internal information from long-term memory would trigger a node to become the potential source of activation for other nodes, and this kind of activation would further spread among linked nodes (Keller, 1993). Once one node exceeds the threshold level, the information

included in that node could be recalled. The tie strength of the activated node and all linked nodes could determine the extent of memory retrieval (Keller, 1993). That is, more shared links existing among brands and events would lead to a stronger relevant association. For example, Bud-Light and the NFL (National Football League) share many similar memory nodes (characteristics), such as passionate, cool, and crazy, which would lead to intensive association between the two brands. Thus, when sport fans see Bud-Light, it is relatively easier for them to associate Bud-Light with the NFL. Therefore, Keller (1993) suggested that the fit between two brands would positively influence consumers' brand knowledge.

In the context of sport event sponsorship, both the sponsoring brand and the sponsored sport event represent the certain memory nodes connected with other nodes based on consumers' experiences. If there are more fit nodes between a brand and a sport event, corresponding memory retrieval would be easier to happen in consumers' minds. Therefore, associated network theory indicates that the fit between the sponsoring brand and the sponsored event would positively affect consumers' brand cognition. Based on Lavidge and Steiner's (1961) hierarchy of effects model, which has been widely used to examine consumers' responses to advertising and sponsorship, consumers' responses caused by marketing stimulation would go through a hierarchy of four stages: cognition, affect, conation, and behavior. Following this theory, Cianfrone and Zhang (2006) and Crompton (2004) tested and verified the applicability of the AIDA concept in explaining the consumer decision-making process: awareness, interest, desire, and action. Logically, consumers' perceived brand-event personality fit would hierarchically influence their cognitive responses (e.g., brand awareness, brand association) and affective responses (e.g., perceived quality), and then further impacts their conative responses (e.g., brand loyalty).

### **Statement of Problem**

Although the understanding of CBBE has been advanced significantly in the past two decades, how to efficiently build CBBE remains a challenging question (Keller & Lehmann, 2006). As sport event sponsorship has been recognized as an effective way to build CBBE, tangible guidance for utilizing sport event sponsorship has seldom been offered. Currently, two major issues in this area deserve further inspection.

One major issue is that no scholarly inquiry or empirical study has been conducted to explore the influence of BEPF on CBBE in sport event sponsorship. According to schema theory, associated network theory, and relevant empirical studies, BEPF would be likely to exert a positive influence on consumers' cognitive, affective, and conative responses, covering the dimensions of CBBE. Therefore, analyzing the impact of BEPF on sponsors' CBBE is necessary to further deepen studies on building CBBE.

The other major issue is that previous studies have often overlooked the presence of multiple dimensions of BEPF when examining its impact on consumers' responses. According to the literature in both mainstream business and sport management, multi-dimensions exist in the constructs of both brand personality and sport event personality (J. L. Aaker, 1997; Braunstein & Ross, 2010; Geuens, Weijters, & Wulf, 2009; Lee & Cho, 2009). These in turn suggest that the construct of BEPF could also be a multi-dimensional concept. Failure to consider the various facets of brand personality would reduce the specificity and applicability of the research findings.

### **Purpose of the Study**

From the perspective of a corporation seeking sport event sponsorship opportunities or a sport event organizing committee promoting sponsorship opportunities to corporations, the purpose of this study was to assess the influence of various dimensions of BEPF on corporate

sponsors' CBBE, which was carried out in three phases: (1) proposing the relationship model between dimensions of BEPF and CBBE based on the literature review, (2) developing a valid and reliable scale for measuring relevant constructs, and (3) empirically assessing the proposed structural relationship model.

### **Research Hypotheses**

Based on a comprehensive review of literature on relevant theories (e.g., schema theory, associated network theory, and hierarchy of effects model) and the proposed multi-dimensional BEPF scale, the following research hypotheses (Figure 1-1) were proposed and tested in this study.

1. Responsibility fit would positively influence sub-dimensions of CBBE:

1a: Responsibility fit would exert the positive influence on sponsors' brand awareness/association;

1b: Responsibility fit would exert the positive influence on sponsors' perceived quality;

1c: Responsibility fit would exert the positive influence on sponsors' brand loyalty;

2. Activity fit would positively influence sub-dimensions of CBBE:

2a. Activity fit would exert the positive influence on sponsors' brand awareness/association;

2b. Activity fit would exert the positive influence on sponsors' perceived quality;

2c. Activity fit would exert the positive influence on sponsors' brand loyalty;

3. Aggressiveness fit would positively influence sub-dimensions of CBBE:

3a. Aggressiveness fit would exert the positive influence on sponsors' brand awareness/association;

3b. Aggressiveness fit would exert the positive influence on sponsors' perceived quality;

- 3c. Aggressiveness fit would exert the positive influence on sponsors' brand loyalty;
- 4. Simplicity fit would positively influence sub-dimensions of CBBE:
  - 4a. Simplicity fit would exert the positive influence on sponsors' brand awareness/association;
  - 4b. Simplicity fit would exert the positive influence on sponsors' perceived quality;
  - 4c. Simplicity fit would exert the positive influence on sponsors' brand loyalty;
- 5. Emotionality fit would positively influence sub-dimensions of CBBE:
  - 5a. Emotionality fit would exert the positive influence on sponsors' brand awareness/association;
  - 5b. Emotionality fit would exert the positive influence on sponsors' perceived quality;
  - 5c. Emotionality fit would exert the positive influence on sponsors' brand loyalty;
- 6. Consumers' brand awareness/association would positively influence their perceived quality toward sponsors.
- 7. Perceived quality would positively influence consumers' brand loyalty.

### **Significance of Study**

Through examination of the proposed research model, the findings of this investigation provided a comprehensive understanding of the sequential relationship between BEPF and CBBE in the context of sport event sponsorship. Corporations might take into consideration the findings of this study when making effort to build a stronger CBBE via efficiently choosing the right sport event sponsorship(s). Sport event marketers may also utilize the information in their communication with corporations regarding potential or continued sponsorship agreements. Most importantly, the findings of this study would help to fill the void in the theory of building up CBBE by identifying and promoting BEPF.

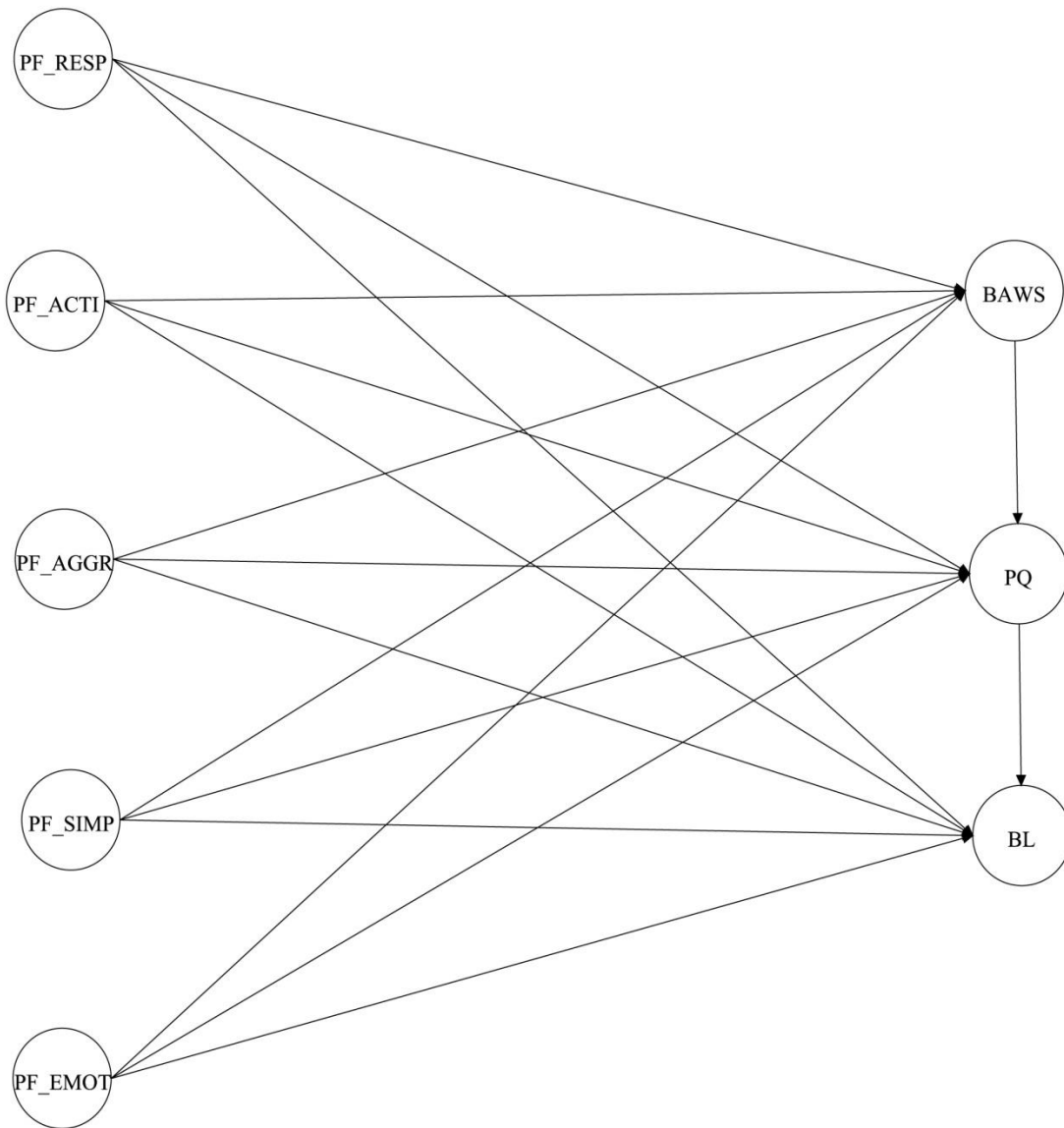


Figure 1-1: Proposed Research Model

*Note.* PF\_RESP = Responsibility fit

PF\_ACTI = Activity fit

PF\_AGGR = Aggressiveness fit

PF\_SIMP = Simplicity fit

PF\_EMOT = Emotionality fit

BAWS = Brand awareness/association

PQ = Perceived quality

BL = Brand loyalty

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

As one of the most important topics in brand management field, studies on building CBBE have been garnering tremendous attention from both practitioners and academics over past decades. Recently, with the rocketing development of the sport industry, sport event sponsorship has increasing power to influence the behavior of exposed consumers and therefore is considered important for firms in their efforts to build CBBE. However, comparatively little academic research has been devoted to specific guidance on how to efficiently utilize sport event sponsorship to build CBBE. Given the crucial role of BEPF in influencing consumers' sponsorship responses (Lee & Cho, 2009), the current study attempts to analyze the impact of multi-dimensional BEPF on sponsors' CBBE. To gain a better understanding of this topic, this literature review begins with the conceptualization and significance of CBBE and then extends to the importance of sport sponsorship in building CBBE. The types of sport sponsorship, mechanism of sport event sponsorship, and measuring the effectiveness of sport event sponsorship are summarized in the following chapter. Finally, this review turns to BEPF, covering the topics of brand personality, sport event personality, as well as the relationship between BEPF and CBBE.

### **Consumer-Based Brand Equity**

#### **Development of Consumer-Based Brand Equity**

As the key to understanding the holistic impact of marketing (Reynolds & Phillips, 2005), brand equity has become one the hottest areas in brand management studies. The initial interest

in brand equity studies can be traced back to the 1980s advertising field (Barwise, 1993). Since then, scholars have put forth numerous conceptualizations of brand equity (e.g., D. A. Aaker, 1991; Farquhar, 1989; Krishnan, 1996; Lassar et al., 1995; Rego et al., 2009), but the widely accepted definition did not emerge until D. A. Aaker (1991) defined brand equity as “a set of assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or that firm’s customers” (p. 15). Overall, two research streams appear in the literature on brand equity: the firm-based (or financial) brand equity and CBBE (Christodoulides & Chernatony, 2010; Keller, 1993; Keller & Lehmann, 2003; Krishnan, 1996; Lassar et al., 1995; Shocker & Weitz, 1988).

The firm-based perspective considers brand equity as the value of a brand to the firm with respect to merger, acquisition, or divestiture (Keller, 1993; Keller & Lehmann, 2003). Keller and Lehmann (2003) further specified that firm-based brand equity is constituted by the product market outcome and the financial outcome. The product market outcome can be evaluated by indicators such as the revenue premium, the price premium, and the brand extension success (Keller & Lehmann, 2003), which are usually calculated from observed market data (e.g., Ailawadi, Lehmann, & Neslin, 2003; Holbrook, 1992). Financial outcome refers to the performance of a brand value in financial markets. The research from the firm-based perspective includes Simon and Sullivan’s (1993) study, which estimated brand equity via firms’ financial data and tangible assets, and Mahajan, Rao, and Srivastava’s (1994) study, which assessed the significance of brand equity in the decision-making of acquisition. In the industry, consulting firms, like Interbrand, Wire and Plastic Products Corporation, Young & Rubicam, and Research International, also devise their own methods to assess brand equity (Haigh, 1999).

In parallel, the other research stream concentrates on brand equity from the consumer perspective in which consumer behavior is considered the cornerstone for appropriate strategic decision-making regarding targeting consumers, positioning products, and adopting appropriate marketing promotions (Keller, 1993). Overall, scholars have advocated CBBE for several reasons. First, firm-based brand equity is merely the outcome of consumers' responses toward the brand name, while CBBE is the fundamental driving force for a corporation's financial profits (Christodoulides & Chernatony, 2010; Krishnan, 1996; Lassar et al., 1995). Second, a firm's most valuable asset to enhance its marketing productivity is the consumers' brand knowledge created from the firm's previous marketing investment (Keller, 1993). Third, financial measurements, such as the value of sales and the profit, are only partial indicators of marketing performance owing to their weaknesses in terms of historical orientation and usually short-term horizon, while CBBE constitutes intangible market-based assets and represents the more sustainable competitive advantage (Hunt & Morgan, 1995; Mizik & Jacobson, 2008). Therefore, CBBE can offer a richer understanding of marketing performance, reconcile short-term and long-term performance (Ambler, 2003), and link marketing and shareholder value (Srivastava, Shervani, & Fahey, 1998).

Overall, the development of CBBE studies has primarily gone through three stages: (a) "what is CBBE?" (D. A. Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; Krishnan, 1996; Erdem & Swait, 1998), (b) "how to measure CBBE?" (D. A. Aaker, 1991, 1996; Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995; Lassar et al., 1995; Pappu, Quester, & Cooksey, 2005; Yoo & Donthu, 2001, 2002), and (c) "how to build CBBE?" (Cornwell et al., 2001; Henseler et al., 2011; Keller, 2001; Keller & Lehmann, 2006). The conceptualization of CBBE is built up by the relevant theories in cognitive psychology and information economics, which in turn leads to two different but complementary research streams

in this field. The dominant stream is based on cognitive psychology and focuses on memory structure (D. A. Aaker 1991; Keller, 1993; Krishnan, 1996). D. A. Aaker (1991) first clearly and comprehensively proposed the conceptual dimensions of brand equity, including brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and other proprietary brand assets, such as patents and trademarks. The first four dimensions of brand equity represent consumers' responses to a brand (Christodoulides & Chernatony, 2010). Keller (1993) looked at CBBE strictly from the consumer psychology perspective and defined brand equity as "the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumers' responses to the marketing of the brand" (p. 2). Brand knowledge encompasses a variety of associations in human memory formed from numerous brand-related nodes. The differential effect derives from "comparing consumer response to the marketing of a brand with the response to the same marketing of a fictitiously named or unnamed version of the product" (Keller, 1993, p. 8). Consumers' responses toward the marketing mix of a brand can span various stages of the decision-making process, such as awareness, attitude, purchase intention, and actual behavior. Although the concepts of brand equity proposed by D. A. Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993) differ somewhat, both are derived from the consumer standpoint and founded on the theory of memory-based brand associations (Pappu et al., 2005).

Another complementary CBBE research stream is grounded in the information economics perspective, which focuses on the imperfect and asymmetrical information structure of the market and stresses the role of credibility (derived from dynamic interaction between firm and consumer) as the primary determinant of CBBE (Erdem & Swait, 1998). In addition, other attributes, such as brand content and brand clarity, are also deemed signals of a brand. Once consumers are confronted with uncertainty about product attributes, brand signals would inform

them about the product position to ensure that the product claim is credible (Erden & Swait, 1998). Thus, brand signals reduce the uncertainty and perceived risk of consumers with low information costs and in turn increase the expected utility of the consumer (Erden & Swait, 1998). The information economics perspective suggests that CBBE is not necessarily associated with a product's quality but relies more on its credibility.

Academic studies in a broad array of fields have revealed consistent findings on the benefits of strong CBBE: promoting consumer preferences and purchase intentions (Cobb-Walgren et al., 1995), reducing firm risk (Rego et al., 2009), enhancing consumer perceived quality of products (Dodds et al., 1991), increasing shareholder value (Kerin & Sethuraman, 1998), improving consumer evaluations of brand extensions (D. A. Aaker & Keller, 1990; Bottomley & Doyle, 1996), increasing consumer price insensitivity (Erdem et al., 2002), and enhancing resilience in product-harm crises (Dawar & Pillutla, 2000).

### **Dimensions of Consumer-Based Brand Equity**

Despite definitions of CBBE having been proposed for about two decades, there is still little consensus on which dimensions should be included in CBBE (Pappu et al., 2005). The relevant research is summarized in Table 2-1. Opinions on CBBE dimensions differ slightly, but they share the same foundation: “all typically either implicitly or explicitly focus on brand knowledge structures in the minds of consumers - individuals or organizations - as the source or foundation of brand equity” (Keller & Lehmann, 2006, p. 745).

In the CBBE literature, D. A. Aaker's (1991) scale is considered the basis for other scales and has also been widely adopted in cross-circumstances (e.g., Henseler et al., 2011; Pappu et al., 2005; Sinha & Pappu, 1998; Washburn & Plank, 2002; Yoo & Donthu, 2001; Yoo, Donthu, & Lee, 2000). Hence, the current study principally adopts the view of D. A. Aaker (1991) to

analyze CBBE in the following four dimensions: brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty.

Brand awareness refers to the strength of brand presence in consumers' minds (D. A. Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). D. A. Aaker (1991) also pointed out that there are multiple levels of brand awareness, ranging from mere recognition to the condition where the involved brand dominates consumers' recall. Keller (1993) further divided brand awareness into brand recognition and brand recall. Brand recognition relates to "consumers' ability to confirm prior exposure to the brand when given the brand as a cue" (Keller, 1993, p. 3). In other words, brand recognition refers to consumers' ability to correctly differentiate a brand that they have seen or heard of before. Brand recall refers to consumers' ability to possess relevant memory retrieval when brands' category or the needs fulfilled by the category are mentioned (Keller, 1993).

Brand association has been defined as "anything linked in memory to a brand" (D. A. Aaker, 1991, p. 109). Brand association refers to the meaning conveyed from the brand to the consumer and reflects features of the product or aspects of the product (Keller, 1993; Chen, 2001). In the range of sources that influence brand associations, brand personality and organizational associations are the most important (D. A. Aaker, 1991). D. A. Aaker (1991) indicated that the brand association will be stronger when consumers have more experience with or exposure to the brand and when the brand links to their other memory networks. A strong brand association would encourage consumers to process information, differentiate the brand, and form a positive attitude, as well as enhance consumers' purchase motivation and provide a basis for brand extension (D. A. Aaker, 1991).

Perceived quality was defined as "the consumer's judgment about a product's overall excellence or superiority" (Zeithaml, 1988, p. 3). It is customers' subjective evaluation or feeling

on a product's quality rather than the real quality of the product (Yoo & Donthu, 2001). Toward same product, consumers' perceived quality would sharply differ from each other due to some personal factors, like personalities, needs, and liking (D. A. Aaker, 1991). Therefore, perceived quality is "an intangible, overall feeling about a brand" (D. A. Aaker, 1991, p. 86), which belongs to the affective domain in Lavidge and Steiner's Hierarchy of Effects Model (1961). High perceived quality could add value to a brand by providing consumers a reason for their purchase behavior, differentiating the brand from its competitors, allowing the brand to charge a premium price, and providing a strong basis for brand extension (D. A. Aaker, 1991).

D. A. Aaker (1991, p. 39) defined brand loyalty as "the attachment that a customer has to a brand". Aaker also identified the benefits that consumers with a high level of brand loyalty would bring to a firm, such as reducing marketing costs, providing trade leverage, attracting new customers, and increasing firms' response time to competitive threats. Overall, brand loyalty could be analyzed from both the attitudinal dimension (including cognitive, affective, and conative components) and the behavioral dimension (Oliver, 1997). Consistent with the majority of research studying CBBE (e.g., Yoo & Donthu, 2001, 2002; Yoo, Donthu, & Lee, 2000; Washburn & Plank, 2002), the current study concentrated on conative brand loyalty, which refers to the tendency to be loyal to a focal brand as reflected by the intention to buy the brand as a primary choice (Oliver, 1997).

However, D. A. Aaker's (1991) four-dimensional CBBE is based on only a theoretical conceptualization, which differs slightly from later empirical studies. For example, Yoo and Donthu (2001, 2002) and Yoo et al. (2000) developed a CBBE model based on Aaker's (1991) and Keller's (1993) conceptualizations, but observed only three brand equity dimensions, combining the dimensions of brand awareness and brand associations into one due to the low

discriminant validity between them. A later study conducted by Washburn and Plank (2002) also provided results supporting this three-factor model. Therefore, the current study developed the proposed model based on the three-dimensional CBBE model (Yoo & Donthu, 2001).

### **Building Consumer-Based Brand Equity**

With the established conceptualization of CBBE studies, how to build CBBE has become a big concern for marketers and academics. According to Keller and Lehmann (2006), the proposed approaches in the literature on how to build CBBE can be generally categorized into three propositions: (a) utilizing brand elements, including brand name, logo (or symbol) design, and packaging, (b) utilizing marketing activities, including advertising, corporate societal marketing programs, and sponsorship, and (c) utilizing various communication channels, including mass media, online and real-world communities, and interpersonal word-of-mouth.

Among these proposed approaches, sport sponsorship is considered one of the most effective, widely used, and rapidly growing strategies to build CBBE and therefore has been receiving tremendous attention from academics (e.g., Cornwell, Roy, & Steinard, 2001; Gwinner, 1997; Henseler, Wilson, & Westberg, 2011; Meenaghan, 1998). Sport sponsorship has been effective in increasing sales, changing consumers' attitudes, heightening brand awareness, and improving customer relationships (Shank, 2005). Sport sponsorship also is recognized as a crucial marketing tool that seeks to achieve favorable publicity for a company and build brands within certain target audiences (Bennet, 1999). In the industry, sport sponsorship has accounted for a large part of the whole sponsorship territory. In the U.S., the growth of sport business through sponsorship has been estimated at \$12 billion per year (Schwarz, Hunter, & LaFleur, 2013). In Europe, approximately \$12.2 billion was invested in sport sponsorship contracts in 2009 (IEG, 2009). According to the IEG Sponsorship report (2011), enterprises' expenditures for

sponsorship increased from \$37.7 billion in 2007 to \$48.7 billion in 2011, and around 68% of all sponsorship spending was distributed to sport. Moreover, the mentioned sponsorship expenditures in the IEG report included only “the packaged sponsorship fee” and did not enclose “the leverage or activation that accompanies most sponsorship at a debated dollar for dollar ratio” (Cronwell, 2008, p. 41). Sport event sponsorship, as the major component of sport sponsorship types, has also been identified as playing a key role in building sponsors’ CBBE (Cornwell et al., 2001; Henseler et al., 2011).

### **Sport Event Sponsorship**

As to the definition of sponsorship, scholars have proposed slightly different viewpoints. Sleight (1989) defined sponsorship as “a business relationship between a provider of funds, resources or services and an individual, event or organization which offers in return some rights and association that may be used for commercial advantage” (p. 4). Meenaghan (1983) suggested that sponsorship involves a commercial organization providing either financial or in kind assistance for an activity so as to achieve certain commercial objectives. Sponsorship has also been described by as “buying and exploiting an association with an event, a team, a group, etc. for specific marketing purpose” (Otker, 1988, p. 77). However, most definitions acknowledge that sponsorship includes two major components: (a) an exchange between sponsors and sponsees in which the former obtains the right to connect itself with the sponsored activity and the latter gets support in financial or other form and (b) the marketing of the association by the sponsor (Cornwell & Maignan, 1998).

### **Types of Sport Sponsorship**

With regard to types of sport sponsorship, Schwarz et al. (2013) systematically divided sport sponsorship into six categories: sport governing body sponsorship, sport team sponsorship,

athlete sponsorship, broadcast and media sponsorship, sport facility sponsorship, and sport event sponsorship.

**Sport governing body sponsorship.** Sport governing bodies are sport organizations that have the responsibility to develop the rule structure for a specific activity and organize relevant competitions; these governing bodies include the National Basketball Association (NBA), the International Olympic Committee (IOC), and the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA). Additionally, the sport governing body also is responsible for selecting teams, raising and distributing funding, promoting the development of individual sport, and providing other support (Schwarz et al., 2013). Generally, sponsors support sport governing bodies so as to receive official sponsor status, which refers to the sport organization's public acknowledgment of the association between the sponsor and the organization. For example, Nextel (and eventually Sprint) offered \$700 million in a 10-year contract to sponsor the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR) and got its official sponsor title in 2003. The sport governing body sponsorship is a ubiquitous collaboration between corporations and sport governing bodies, such as Kia Motors and the NBA and McDonald's and the NFL.

**Sport team sponsorship.** Sport teams at any level of competition act as sponsorship platforms (Shank, 2005). Schwarz et al. (2013) indicated that local or regional firms that have limited marketing budgets but a desire for sponsorship are fit for traditional sport team sponsorship in which sponsorship opportunities range from signage on the field or its boundaries to official association with a special event (e.g., home team introductions, half-time/time-out contests). The objectives of these sponsoring firms incorporate building awareness of products, enhancing customer relationships, providing internal benefit programs (e.g., employee rewards and hospitality areas), and building brand association with the sport team (Schwarz et al., 2013).

As to large corporations, team sponsorship activities depend on “the market or the ability to significantly expand awareness” (Schwarz et al., 2013, p. 276). For example, the 10-year sponsorship agreement between Manchester City of the England Premier League and United Arab Emirates Etihad Airways reached \$642.2 million in 2011 and Barcelona, Spain, received a five-year \$265 million sponsorship from the Qatar Foundation in 2010.

**Athlete sponsorship.** Athlete sponsorship refers to “a corporation seeks to be affiliated with an athlete to secure the rights to market the association and reap the benefits of that association” (Schwarz et al., 2013, p. 227). Athletes acquire remarkable credibility with targeted audiences and in turn create a direct association with sponsors in consumers’ mind (Shank, 2005). Usually, athlete sponsorship tends to work better in individual sports than in team sports because the sponsor can focus its efforts and generate significant numbers of visible impressions for the consumer (Schwarz et al., 2013). Tiger Woods, for example, pulled in more than \$60 million from EA Sports, Fuse Science Inc., Nike Golf, Rolex, and other sponsors in 2011. Another famous golfer, Phil Mickelson, brought in around \$57 million in 2011 from his large sponsors, including Callaway, Rolex, Barclays, and ExxonMobil. Similar cases include Roger Federer (tennis), Dale Earnhardt, Jr. (NASCAR), and Lewis Hamilton (Formula 1).

**Sport broadcast sponsorship.** Sport broadcast sponsorship means that corporations purchase an association with a specific sport programming via media outlets (Schwarz et al., 2013). Broadcast sponsorships can “range from a basic sponsorship of a local radio broadcast to being some of the most lucrative associations in all of sport sponsorship” (Schwarz et al., p. 278). In this type of sponsorship, a local or national broadcasting contract between a sport organization and the media is the prerequisite. A local broadcasting contract mainly covers events or games held by the individual sport organization, and this sponsorship agreement usually lasts for

multiple years. For example, the Longhorn Network created by ESPN made a 20-year \$300 million deal with the University of Texas in 2011. As to national sport broadcast sponsorship, a classic instance is the sponsorship between the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) and the IOC. NBC provided \$1.18 billion in exchange for the exclusive U.S. broadcast rights to the 2012 London Summer Olympics Games.

**Sport facility sponsorship.** Sport facility sponsorship refers to the agreement for naming rights for sport stadiums, arenas, and other sport facilities (Schwarz et al., 2013). In this kind of agreement, sport facilities sell their naming rights to corporations in exchange for long-term and significant financial support, and the value of sponsorship is largely determined by marketing factors. For example, Farmers Insurance got the naming right for Farmers Field (Los Angeles) with a sponsorship agreement at \$700 million for 30 years in 2011. Papa John's offered \$15 million over 32 years to obtain the naming rights for the University of Louisville's stadium in 2011.

**Sport event sponsorship.** In the sport marketplace, the most common athletic platform is sport event sponsorship, which provides effective communication channels for corporations to create an association with sport events at different levels (Shank, 2005).

Sport event sponsorship can be traced back to 776 BC when the first Olympic Games were held to celebrate the achievements of the human body. Since then, the Olympic Games have been receiving external financial or political support from local governments because the event is considered to greatly improve the standing and reputation of the host city (Schwarz et al., 2013). Based on this kind of trade mechanism, the Olympic Games have increasingly become a commercial event and a typical sport event sponsorship case. In recent decades, a significant sport event sponsorship was the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games, which provided a significant

spur to the development of sport event sponsorship. Peter Victor Ueberroth, president of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Committee, proposed a new pattern of sponsorship called “Official Olympic Sponsor”. In this approach, official Olympic sponsors provide a huge amount of financial support in exchange for the right to use the Olympic logo in their advertisements. Under this frame, the IOC subsequently founded The Olympic Partner (TOP) program in 1995 in which TOPs provide financial, technical, and product support for the IOC, organizing committees (OCOGs), and national Olympic committees (NOCs). In return, TOPs are granted exclusive worldwide marketing rights for the winter and summer Olympic Games. These sponsorship forms in the Olympic Games not only prompted the Olympic Games to become “one of the most effective international marketing platforms in the world” (IOC Marketing: Media Guide London, 2012), but also provided the paradigm for later sport event sponsorship in many professional and non-professional sport leagues.

In sport event sponsorship, numerous sport events in world-wide provide the fundamental platforms. According to the classification of sport events by Shani and Sandler (1996), global events, international events, national events, regional events, and local events jointly form a “sports event pyramid.” At the apex of this pyramid, global events generate tremendous interest among consumers and thus are the most powerful marketing communication tool. Shani and Sanler (1996) suggested that the FIFA World Cup and the Olympic Games are the only two events that can be counted as truly global events. International sport events are at the second level in the pyramid. Shani and Sanler (1996) proposed that international sport events might acquire “a high level of interest in a broad, but not global, geographic region, or a truly global in scope but have a lower level of interest in some of the countries reached” (p. 6). In this line, the Wimbledon Open (tennis), European Cup Soccer, and Rugby Union World Cup can be

deemed international events. In the sports event pyramid, the events with a high interest level among consumers in certain countries should be categorized as national events, like the Super Bowl and NCAA Final Four. Regional events usually refer to the events attracting a great amount of attention in certain geographic areas, such as the southeast conference tournament in NCAA basketball and the Beijing marathon. As the events at the lowest level of the pyramid, local events have the narrowest geographic focus and attract consumers within a narrow region. High school sport events and local races are typical examples of local events.

Usually, several types of sponsorship are provided in one sport event, such as title and associate sponsorships, activity or promotion sponsorships, media sponsorships, facility sponsorships, award or presenting sponsorships, broadcast sponsorships, technology sponsorships, in-stadium signage, official licensing, official marketing partners, and official suppliers. In most cases, sponsors use a combination of these types of sponsorship to leverage their involvement (Shank, 2005).

### **Mechanism of Sport Event Sponsorship**

The difference between sponsorship and philanthropy deserves mention when analyzing the mechanism of sponsorship. According to the report of the Global Media Commission of the International Advertising Association (GMCIAA) in 1988, underlying motivations and expected return are the fundamental distinction between sponsorship and philanthropy. Etherington (1983) suggested that philanthropy is a gift undertaken with philanthropic motives and without the expectation of return. Yet, sponsorship, as one form of commercial investment, differs from philanthropy (Cunningham & Taylor, 1995; Brooks, 1994; GMCIAA, 1988; Speed & Thompson, 2000). Brooks (1994) also noted that sponsorship must work for the business interest of sponsoring corporations and bring a positive return for their sponsorship investment, especially

in today's fiercely competitive and cost-conscious business environment. Other aspects, like the source of funds for corporate giving and the nature of recipients, also differentiate sponsorship and philanthropy.

Sponsorship also differs from advertising to some extent (Crimmins & Horn, 1996; Gardner & Shuman, 1987; Javalgi, Traylor, Gross, & Lampman, 1994; McDaniel, 1999; Speed & Thompson, 2000; Cornwell, 2008). To be specific, in the process of sponsorship, the sponsor could not always firmly control the message conveyed to the consumer or communicate rich product information to that consumer, whereas advertising is characterized by a rich depiction of the brand (Cronwell, 2008; Pokrywczynski, 1994). Therefore, Crimmins and Horn (1996) argued that sponsorship is one kind of indirect persuasion that "improves the perception of a brand by flanking our beliefs about the brand and linking the brand to an event or organization that the target audience already values highly" (p. 12). Consistent with this notion, Speed and Thompson (2000) suggested that sponsorship involves a second party (e.g., sport event) rather than persuading the consumer directly.

Although certain differences do exist between sponsorship and advertising, the two constructs still are adequately analogous in terms of consumer oriented objectives, leading some models from advertising to be applied in the sponsorship setting (Cunningham & Taylor, 1995). Specifically, sponsorship and advertising have the similar marketing objectives, indicating that two strategies would lead to comparable consumer behavior such as information processing, affective responses, and behavioral intentions. Both two marketing strategies are used to impact consumer through combining with certain vehicles. In addition, the wide use of sponsorship in recent also increase the similarity between sponsorship and traditional advertising media in terms of clutter levels (Cunningham & Taylor, 1995; Pham, 1992; Stotlar, 1993). Therefore, models

applied in advertising might provide appropriate perspectives for sponsorship studies (Cunningham & Taylor, 1995).

Within the sport setting, sponsorship is described as “investing in a sports entity to support overall organization objectives, marketing goals, and promotional strategies” (Shank, 2005, p. 330). Essentially, sport sponsorship is a kind of strategic business-to-business (B2B) relationship between a sponsor and a sport entity for mutual benefit (Farrelly & Quester, 2005a). Brooks (1994) outlined the advantages of sport sponsorship: creating identity, increasing sales, promoting B2B contacts, extending benefits to constituents, and bringing in business customers. These advantages entice a variety of organizations to engage in sport sponsorship with specific business objectives. However, what kind of sport events to choose and which sponsorship channels to adopt depend on the sponsor’s marketing communication goals and intended target consumers (Lagae, 2005). Sleight (1989) claimed that the general purpose of sponsorship activities is transmitting certain desired messages to various targeted audiences. Later scholars further comprehensively summarized the motivations for corporations to engage in sport sponsorship. Shank (2005) suggested that related objectives involve improving awareness, enhancing competitiveness, reaching target markets, managing relationship marketing, building brand image, and increasing sales. Skinner and Rukavina (2003) stated that the goals for sport event sponsorship include heightening visibility, shaping consumer attitudes, narrowcasting, providing entertainment for clients, recurring/retaining employees, merchandising opportunities, displaying product attributes, differentiating products from competitors, and driving sales.

In general, the motivations behind sport sponsorship could be systematically categorized into three categories: cognitive goals, affective goals, and behavioral goals (Lages, 2005). Cognitive goals are the first and foremost goals for firms’ sponsorship activities because the

brand name, brand logo, and limited messages are the major vehicles in the process of sport sponsorship. Normally, cognitive goals involve increasing brand awareness, clarifying brand interpretation, and targeting consumers. Given that sport sponsorship also can act indirectly and implicitly on consumers' attitudes (Lages, 2005), the sponsoring brand also pursues the goal of affection by, for example, improving consumers' perceived brand image and accentuating consumers' brand experience. Behavioral goals involve the ultimate expectations of sponsors, including increasing brand loyalty, stimulating sales, and creating distribution space. Given that sport event sponsorship is the crucial component of sport sponsorship, it is reasonable to assume that the motivation pyramid would be appropriate in the sport event sponsorship setting.

As the other party in the B2B relationship, sport events also try to attract attention from appropriate sponsors to receive sponsor support, to achieve exposure, and to create an association with the sponsoring brand (Shilbury, Quick, & Westerbeek, 1998). First, sponsor support is not limited to financial funding, but also includes goods and service support. The huge support from enterprises brings in huge profits for sport events/organizations and also promotes the enterprises to enhance the service quality of sport events through, for example, rebuilding stadiums, updating service devices, recruiting more influential athletes, and increasing advertising budgets. On the other hand, the trend of governments increasingly declining to support sport events has also led sport events/organizations to look for opportunities from enterprises. Second, through setting up sponsorship agreements with several types of sponsors, sport events/organizations can expect to increase the coverage among consumer groups via mass media. In particular, the support from broadcasting companies would bring with it a great deal of exposure for sport events. Finally, being the same as sponsors, sport events also are participants in the marketplace, so creating a better brand image is necessary for them as well.

In brief, the ideal sport event sponsorship pursued by sponsors and sponsees is a mutually beneficial agreement. When sponsors select a particular sport event, they would consider the cognitive, affective, and behavioral benefits brought about by the sponsorship agreement. Sport organizations would aim to enlarge their influence and in turn maximize their profits.

### **Measuring the Effectiveness of Sport Event Sponsorship**

With the rapid growth of sport sponsorship in terms of popularity and value, measuring the effectiveness of sponsorship has become the major concern in sponsorship studies, as well as in sponsorship practice (Cianfrone & Zhang, 2006; Cornwell, 2000; Crompton, 2004; Gwinner & Swanson, 2003). However, two major issues restrict the assessment of relevant sponsorship effectiveness, including sport event sponsorship (Crompton, 2004). First, sponsorship is part of a multiple promotions mix, which makes distinguishing the specific impact of sponsorship amid multiple promotional tools difficult. Even if other promotional tools not used simultaneously, due to the carry-over effect of promotional tools, it is still hard to assess the effectiveness of individual sponsorship (Crompton, 2004). Second, an uncontrollable marketing environment also leads the evaluation of sponsorship to be challenging. As Meenaghan (1991) noted, in some cases, sales might rise due to changes in the marketing environment rather than the sponsorship.

In response to the urgent need to measure the effectiveness of sport event sponsorship, both direct and indirect measurements proposed for a general sponsorship setting could provide insightful references. The direct measurements, usually from financial institutions (e.g., IEG and Front Row Analytics), include measuring media equivalencies and measuring the impact on sales. The former method evaluates sponsorship effectiveness by comparing the value of media coverage generated by sponsorship with the cost of equivalent advertising, usually in relation to duration of television coverage, duration of radio mentions, and extent of press coverage

measured in column inches (Crompton, 2004). The latter method focuses on all relevant sales associated with the sponsorship, so it is usually considered one of most desirable sponsorship measurements. Compton (2004) proposed several relevant channels to assess the impact of sponsorship on sales, including measuring boosts in traffic at retail points, comparing the number of retailers participating in the sponsorship-themed promotion, and examining the actual increase in sales related to a sponsorship. However, due to the limitations in terms of high cost and low accuracy, these two methods are seldom adopted in practice, especially in academic research.

The indirect measurements mainly concentrate on consumer behavior, including measuring the impact of sponsorship on consumer brand awareness, brand image, and consumer purchase intention. First is measuring the impact of sponsorship on brand awareness. At the starting stage in consumption decision-making (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961), consumer awareness is the crucial indicator in assessing the effectiveness of sponsorship (Bennett, Henson, & Zhang, 2002; Cianfrone, Zhang, Lutz, & Trail, 2008; Crimmins & Horn, 1996; Meenaghan, 1996; Nicholls, Roslow, & Dubliss, 1999; Stotlar, 1993). Given that brand recall and brand recognition constitute consumer brand awareness (Keller, 1993), the impact of sponsorship on brand awareness can be further specified to the brand recall and brand recognition level. Second is measuring the impact of sponsorship on brand image. This approach assesses the degree to which sponsors effectively borrowed from an event's image, which can be evaluated by the following formula: “% of target market who recognize the link between the sponsoring brand and the event” minus “% of target market who mistakenly believe there is a link between a non-sponsoring competitor and the event” (Crompton, 2004, p. 227). Keller (1993) proposed relevant factors that could contribute to brand image: favorability of brand associations, strength of brand associations, uniqueness of brand associations, and types of brand associations, which further

derived from consumer attitude, product attributes, and benefits. Third is measuring the impact of sponsorship on purchase intention (also called conative intention). Although purchase intention differs from actual purchase behavior, consumer intention does provide a gauge for the strength of consumers' motivation to perform actual purchase behavior, so it is considered an important indicator in evaluating the effectiveness of sponsorship (Alexandris, Tsaousi, & James, 2007; Crompton, 2004; Madrigal, 2001; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Cianfrone et al., 2008; Dees, Bennett, & Tsuji, 2008; Gwinner & Swanson, 2003; Harvery, 2001; Madrigal, 2001; Zhang, Won, & Pastore, 2005). Generally, the mentioned indirect methods are consistent with Lavidge and Steiner's (1961) hierarchy of effects model in which consumer purchase behavior goes through a hierarchical four levels: cognitive, affective, conative, and behavioral.

Overall, the main purpose behind sponsoring brands conducting a sponsorship evaluation is to provide reference information for future sponsorship and in turn improve the effectiveness of sponsorship. Both post-event sponsorship evaluation and prior-event sponsorship evaluation can contribute to this objective. However, compared with post-sponsorship evaluation, prior-sponsorship assessment would provide a more salient advantage in enhancing sponsors' investment efficiency, which is crucial for firms' development in today's marketing environment. Given that dimensions of CBBE involve consumers' cognitive responses, affective responses, and conative responses, all of which have large overlaps with the proposed indirect ways of measuring sponsorship effectiveness, the current study exploring the influence of BEPF on sponsors' CBBE may also provide beneficial information for sponsors conducting effectiveness evaluations prior to their investment in sport event sponsorship.

## **Brand-Event Personality Fit**

### **Brand Personality**

Psychologically, personality is defined as a systematic description for relatively enduring styles of thinking, feeling, and acting (McCrae & Costa, 1997). In branding research, the tendency to attribute human characteristics to brands existed as early as the 1950s when Martineau (1958) studied the symbolic use of brands. Since then, a broad range of literature has been focusing on brand personality due to its tremendous significance in marketing. Generally, the benefits that a strong brand personality bring about could be summarized as increasing consumer preference and usage (Sirgy, 1982), enhancing the favorability of brand image (Phau & Lau, 2001; Sutherland et al., 2004), building brand equity (van Rekom, Jacobs, & Verlegh, 2006), increasing emotions in consumers (D. A. Aaker & Biel, 1993), increasing levels of trust and loyalty (Fournier, 1998), encouraging active processing on the part of the consumer (Biel, 1992; Plummer, 2000), providing a basis for product differentiation (D. A. Aaker, 1996), and improving positioning strategy for the brand (Burke, 1994).

Partly due to the lack of consensus regarding what brand personality really is, the early stage of brand personality studies developed relatively slowly (J. L. Aaker, 1997; Freling & Forbes, 2005). In the late 1990s, the widely accepted conception of brand personality was proposed by J. L. Aaker (1997): “the set of human characteristics associated with a brand” (p. 347). One aspect that deserves to be emphasized in brand personality studies is the relationship between brand personality and brand image, which is easy to misinterpret and use inappropriately (Graeff, 1997; Patterson, 1999). Although the terminology of brand image has been proposed and studied for more than 70 years, its definition still is ambiguous and inconsistent. According to Patterson (1999), 27 relevant definitions of brand image are found in

the brand literature. This had led to wide debate on the relationship between brand personality and brand image (Graeff, 1997; Patterson, 1999). Some scholars have indicated that brand image and brand personality should be considered the same construct (e.g., Gardner & Levy, 1955; Smothers, 1993; Graeff, 1997; Hendon & Williams, 1985). The other more prevalent perspective suggests that brand image is an encapsulating concept that has multiple dimensions, including brand personality, user image, price information, product attributes, packaging, and consumer benefits, among others (J. L. Aaker, 1997; Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Keller, 1993, 2008; Plummer, 1985). In the current study, the latter definition of brand image is employed. Most researchers in various disciplines agree that the construct of brand image consists of cognitive and affective evaluations (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). Cognitive evaluations are beliefs or knowledge regarding physical attributes of the brand; affective evaluation refers to feelings or attachment toward the brand. Biel (1993) stated that brand personality is more related to the affective part of brand image, which is supported by the empirical study conducted by Hosany, Ekinci, and Uysal (2006). Therefore, this study adopted the view that brand personality is an important subset of brand image and more related to the affective component of brand image (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Hosany et al., 2006; Patterson, 1999). Furthermore, consistent with this notion, it is reasonable to infer that brand personality fit is the affective part of brand image fit.

The development of brand personality scale was largely based on the “Big Five” human personality structure which was developed and refined by series of psychological studies in past decades (e.g., McCrae & Costa, 1989; Norman, 1963; Piedmont, McCrae, & Costa, 1991; Tupes & Christal, 1958). The structure of “Big Five” includes: (1) dimension of extraversion or surgency, covering talkative, assertive, and energetic; (2) dimension of agreeableness, covering good-natured, cooperative, and trustful; (3) dimensions of conscientiousness, covering orderly,

responsible, and dependable; (4) dimensions of emotional Stability versus neuroticism, covering calm, not neurotic, and easily upset; and (5) dimension of openness or intellect, covering intellectual, imaginative, and independent-minded (John and Srivastava, 1999).

Based on the “Big Five” human personality structure and other relevant personality scales used in academia and industry, J. L. Aaker (1997) specified the dimensions of brand personality and proposed the brand personality scale (BPS) to systematically measure the personality traits of a given brand. In Aaker’s study, a total of 309 non-redundant traits were generated from previous study and qualitative surveys and later refined to 114 personality traits, which is considered a manageable size. Subjects were required to rate how well each refined personality traits fit the chosen brands. Through principal factor analysis and by comparing the variance in different categories, 5-factor brand personality dimensions were generated: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness. Generally, Aaker’s BPS provided a systematic measurement scale and inspired the majority of the research on brand personality to date.

However, J. L. Aaker's (1997) scale recently received criticism related to the following aspects. First, the definition of brand personality from Aaker (1997) included several characteristics beyond the scope of personality, such as age, gender, and user image. This loose definition of brand personality led to the construct validity problem of mixing the personality of brand and the characteristics of users (Geuens et al., 2009). Second, the proposed factor structure is limited when analyzing the brand at the respondent level (for a specific brand or within a specific product category) (Austin, Siguaw, & Mattila, 2003). Third, the proposed scale could not be replicated cross-culturally (Azoulay & Kapferer, 2003).

In response to the limitations of J. L. Aaker’s (1997) scale, Geuens et al. (2009) proposed a new brand personality scale that consists of personality items only. Candidate traits derived

from the brand personality studies, psychology literature, and brainstorm of focus groups were screened by the psychological criteria, excluding functional attributes, demographic traits, user imagery, user appearance, and brand attitudes. Then, the remaining traits passed the judgment of marketing professionals and academic researchers. On the basis of the remaining traits and the existing Big Five scale, an initial pool of 40 items was developed. The following empirical studies conducted by Geuens et al. (2009) include 4 parts: pretest (20 brands and 1235 Belgium participants), validation test (193 brands and 12789 Belgium participants), test-retest reliability over a time of one year (84 of 193 brands in validation test and 4500 participants), and cross-cultural validity and nomological validity test (20 brands and 401 American participants). As a result, the validity and reliability of Geuens et al.'s (2009) personality scale was demonstrated to be reasonable-well. Finally, a five-factor scale (shown in Figure 2-2), including five factors with 12 traits, was formed through data analysis and proved have good reliability and generalizability in general business field.

As the response to further development of brand personality studies, multiple scholars formulated brand personality scales in specific fields, such as the brand personality scale for Germany's automobile industry (Kuenzel & Phairor, 2009), the brand personality scale for tourism destinations (Ekinici & Hosany, 2006), and the brand personality scale for sport settings (Braunstein & Ross, 2010; Cho & Lee, 2012; Heere, 2010).

### **Sport Event Personality**

With the significant global growth of the sport industry, a considerable amount of attention has been given to sport event personality. Generally, four perspectives have formed on the sport event personality scale in past years: (a) J. L. Aaker's (1997) original brand personality

scale, (b) Braunstein and Ross's (2010) sport personality scale, (c) Lee and Cho's (2012) sport event scale, and (d) Heere's (2010) brand personality scale.

Owing to the tremendous influence of J. L. Aaker's brand personality scale, multiple scholars in the sport management field have proposed using this scale in the sport setting. In Caslavova and Petrackova's (2011) study that concentrated on brand personality of large sport events, the authors proposed that J. L. Aaker's (1997) scale could be applied in evaluating and measuring the brand personalities of sport events because this scale had been proven by numerous empirical research studies. Their empirical study covered several mega-events, such as the FIFA World Cup, Tour de France, and Olympic Summer Games. Similar cases could be found in the study by Deane et al.'s (2003) study that employed J. L. Aaker's (1997) brand personality scale to examine the brand personality of the Ryder Cup Team.

However, due to identified limitations of J. L. Aaker's (1997) brand personality scale and the unique features of the sport industry, sport management scholars have argued that Aaker's brand personality scale could not totally fit in the sport setting (Braunstein & Ross, 2010; Heere, 2010; Lee & Cho, 2007). Lee and Cho (2007) proposed that the different sources of inference and the different valences of personality traits may contribute to this mismatch. Specifically, brand personality traits are captured from product-related attributes, product category associations, brand name, symbol or logo, advertising style, price, distribution channel, and user imagery (J. L. Aaker, 1997). However, due to the properties of sport events (e.g., simultaneous production and consumption), most sport event personalities are more heavily derived from consumers' vicarious interaction with players or players' performance (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Lee & Cho, 2007; Madrigal, 2006). Additionally, J. L. Aaker's (1997) brand personality scale contains only positive personality traits, but a sport event includes both positive and negative

personality attributes. For instance, the NBA All-Star Game could be characterized as showoff, arrogant, and aggressive. Actually, the second argument in Lee and Cho's (2007) study deserves further review because the negative characteristics mentioned in their study, like aggression and showoff, usually are deemed the positive description in sport circumstances. Thus, to be more precise, it is relatively appropriate to say that sport events acquire some personality attributes that general brands do not. As an initial step in sport event personality scholarship, Lee and Cho (2007) examined whether sport events possess human personality traits, developed the structural model of the sport event personality, and proposed the corresponding measurement scale. This sport event personality includes five dimensions (diligence, uninhibitedness, fit, tradition, and amusement), representing 24 personality traits.

Heere (2010) argued that consumers' perception of brand personality is manipulated by brand managers and is the result of "an endless line of experiments performed by marketers" (p. 18). Thus, it would be appropriate for brand managers to sum up the personality traits that lead them in their marketing strategies. Based on this notion, in this study, the free listing technique was employed for the brand managers to generate the candidate brand traits. After that, procedures similar to those used in J. L. Aaker's (1997) study were adopted to obtain a corresponding result. Overall, Heere's (2010) perceptions of brand personality could provide more precise analysis for a certain given brand, but it also leads to the relatively low generalizability of his scale. In addition, in his view, the fact was overlooked in this view that brand personality strategy used by brand managers in marketing practice would be distorted by certain factors, such as culture and the marketing environment. These factors would cause consumers' perceived personality traits to differ from the original intention of brand managers.

Similar to Lee and Cho (2007), Braunstein and Ross (2010) also claimed that sport personality is influenced by various factors such as packaging, distribution, communication strategies, consumer interaction, logo, and success of team or event. They maintained that these factors should be taken into consideration when developing the scale of brand personality in sport. Therefore, the instrument in Braunstein and Ross's (2010) study not only includes dimensions from J. L. Aaker's (1997) original brand personality scale, but also incorporates adapted dimensions that are directly relevant in sport settings (Braunstein & Zhang, 2005; Musante, Milne, & McDonald, 1999; Tenser, 2004). The scale of brand personality in sport proposed in their study consists of six identified dimensions (competence, sophistication, sincerity, ruggedness, community-driven, and classic), covering 40 personality traits.

Given that the current study concentrates on the personality fit between sponsoring brands and sponsored events, a personality scale that is effective in both the general business field and the sport event field is needed. Essentially, the sport event is a branch of general business, so a sport event could be considered a kind of brand, but not the other way around. Considering the generalizability and soundness of the proposed scale in the general business field, the scale of brand personality in sport developed by Geuens et al. (2009) will be employed in the current study.

### **Brand-Event Personality Fit**

Brand fit has been studied under several different names in sponsorship literature: Fleck and Quester (2007) and Meyers-Levy and Tybout (1989) used "congruency"; Mandler (1982) used "congruity"; McDaniel (1999) referred to "match-up"; Gwinner (1997) and Gwinner and Eaton (1999) referred to "similarity"; and McDonald (1991) and Rodgers (2003) used "relevancy". Mandler (1982) defined congruity/fit as the match between attributes of an object

and its relevant schema. Although later scholars offered slightly different definitions of fit (Keller, 1993; McDonald, 1991), most scholars agree that fit is correlated with the strength of the link between the product and its category.

In the early stages of brand-event fit studies, fit usually was treated as a one-dimensional concept, namely, global fit (e.g., Johar & Pham, 1999; McDaniel, 1999; Rifon, Choi, Trimble, & Li, 2004; Speed & Thompson, 2000). McDonald (1991) took the initial step to subdivide overall fit. In his study, the fit (relevance) between the sponsor and the event could be divided into two major categories: direct fit and indirect fit. Direct fit refers that sponsors' products could be directly used in the events and an indirect fit occurs when some aspect of a sponsor's image matches up with the event (McDonald, 1991). Furthermore, Gwinner (1997) proposed the "functional-based" fit (similarity) and "image-based" fit (similarity) to describe the potential fit between sport events and the sponsoring brand. Here, the function-based fit corresponds with the direct fit; for example, Wilson sponsors the U.S. Open, Omega sponsors swimming tournaments, and Gatorade sponsors the NBA. The image-based fit corresponds to the indirect fit. For instance, the Master's Golf Tournament and Mercedes Benz automobiles have a similar prestige image. This classification of brand-event fit also has been supported by other studies (e.g., Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Lee & Cho, 2009). Compared with function-based fit, image-based fit provides more universal reference on brand-event fit because only a few sponsors are widely used in sport events, while nearly all sponsors have their own symbolic characteristics and a more or less image-based fit between them and sport events. However, limitations still exist in image-based fit studies. As discussed earlier, brand image generally includes the cognitive component and the affective component (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). The cognitive component usually is influenced by beliefs and knowledge about the brand's physical attributes, which are easily

changeable in the short term. In addition, one brand usually embraces many products, and their physical attributes might differ from each other. It is rather difficult to make consumers build consensus on the cognitive component of brand image. In contrast, brand personality forming from a brand's long-term brand management is a kind of generally effective evaluation of consumers' attitudes toward a brand (Biel, 1993; Hosany et al., 2006). In a broad array of studies, brand personality has served as the cornerstone in analyzing issues related to brand image. For instance, Gwinner and Eaton (1999) adopted brand personality as an adjective-based brand image when analyzing image transfer between events and sponsors; Olson and Thjomoe (2011) used brand personality to analyze the image fit between the sponsor and the object. Therefore, employing personality fit would be effective and reliable in assessing relevant consumer behavior toward sponsorship.

In the context of sport events sponsorship, Cho and Lee (2009) first utilized BEPF to predict consumers' responses. They postulated and tested that BEPF would affect consumers' responses to sponsorship, such as brand attitude and behavioral intention. Specifically, BEPF positively influences consumer attitude and, in turn, leads to a favorable behavioral intention. Meanwhile, BEPF also slightly and directly influences on consumer behavioral intention. These findings provided guidance for the current study, which aimed to explore the influence of BEPF on CBBE, also included consumers' attitudinal responses and behavioral intention.

Theoretically, the sequential relationship between BEPF and CBBE is supported by schema theory and associated network theory. Schema theory suggests that schemas, hypothetical cognitive structures representing one's expectations in a certain domain, would be developed in consumers' minds through their prior knowledge (Lynch & Schuler, 1994; Misra & Beatty, 1990). When receiving marketing stimuli, consumers compare the stimuli to their prior

knowledge of similar stimuli stored in the appropriate schemas (Goodstein, 1993; Goodstein et al., 1992; Stoltman, 1990; Wright, 1986). Schema theory predicts that a consumer could efficiently process new stimuli that are consistent with existing schema and decline the mismatched information, which further influences the overall consumers' responses. More congruent stimuli are received and more resilient effects would take place on the consumer's prototypic memory (Goodstein, 1993; Goodstein, Moore, & Cours, 1992; Stoltman, 1990). Likewise, in sport event sponsorship, if consumers perceive that the personality of the sponsoring brand is congruent with their prior schema on sport event personality, they would generate a more positive response toward the sponsoring brand.

According to associated network theory, numerous isolated memory nodes and their relevant meaning jointly form the certain human knowledge (Collins & Loftus, 1975; Raaijmakers & Shiffrin, 1981; Ratciiff & McKoon, 1988). If a memory node is activated by external or internal stimuli, then the activated node would rapidly link to other similar nodes by relevant meanings. The tie strength of the activated node and all linked nodes determines the extent of memory retrieval (Keller, 1993). In the context of sport event sponsorship, both the sponsoring brand and the sponsored sport events represent the certain memory nodes linked with other nodes based on consumers' experiences. Having more shared links among brands and events makes it easier to trigger stronger relevant associations. Therefore, the fit between sponsors and events would facilitate corresponding memory retrieval in consumers' minds.

Table 2-1: CBBE Dimensions in Literature

Study	Dimensions of CBBE
Martin and Brown (1990)	Perceived quality Perceived value Image, Trustworthiness, Commitment
Aaker (1991)	Brand awareness Brand associations Perceived quality Brand loyalty
Balckston (1992)	Brand relationship (trust, customer satisfaction with the Brand)
Keller (1993)	Brand knowledge ( brand awareness, brand image)
Lassar et al. (1995)	Performance Social image Value Trustworthiness Attachment
Sharp (1995)	Company/brand awareness Brand image Relationships with customers
Cobb-Walgren et al. (1995)	Brand awareness Brand associations Perceived quality
Agarwal and Rao (1996)	Awareness Perceptions and attitudes Preferences Choice intentions Actual choice
Krishnan (1996)	Brand awareness Familiarity
Berry (2000)	Brand awareness

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	Brand meaning
Keller and Lehmann (2003)	Brand awareness Brand associations Brand attitudes Brand attachment Brand activity
Burmann, Jost-Benz, and Riley (2009)	Brand benefit clarity Perceived brand quality Brand benefit uniqueness Brand sympathy Brand trust
Rego et al. (2009)	Familiarity Perceived quality Purchase consideration Differentiation

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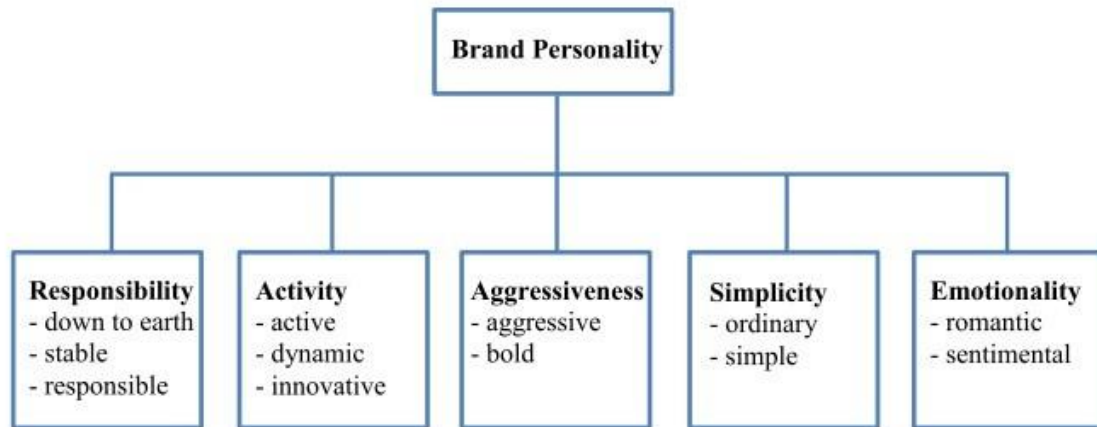


Figure 2-1: Brand Personality Scale by Geuens et al. (2009)

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

To assess the influence of multidimensional BEPF on sponsors' CBBE, two studies were conducted: (a) Study 1 was designed to develop an effective measurement scale for BEPF; and (b) Study 2 was aimed to identify the sequential relationship between dimensions of BEPF and dimensions of CBBE. Presentation of each study includes the following five subsections: (a) selection of target stimuli; (b) participants, (c) measurement, (d) procedures, and (e) data analyses.

#### **Study 1 - Formulation of the Brand-Event Personality Fit Scale**

A prerequisite needs to be met in order to measure BEPF as multidimensional concept, namely an available brand personality scale that is effective in measuring both a sponsoring brand and a sponsored event, respectively. Due to its recognized measurement merits and generalizability in mainstream business, the brand personality scale developed by Geuens et al. (2009) was identified and modified for application in this study. Geuens et al.'s scale contains 12 personality traits in a Likert 7-point scale under 5 factors: (a) responsibility, (b) activity, (c) aggressiveness, (d) simplicity, and (e) emotionality. Unlike Geuens et al.'s original scale that measures personality characteristics of a brand, the modified scale assessed the personality traits of a sponsored event. Due to changes made in the measurement context and object in the modified scale, further examining its measurement properties is warranted.

## **Selection of Target Stimuli**

Chick-fil-A Kickoff Game, a large-scale, annual college football event held in Atlanta, Georgia on the season opening weekend was selected as the sponsored sport event due to its marketing influence and clear brand personality. Chick-fil-A Kickoff Game possesses a strong national-wide influence not only among the college football fans but also among general consumers. Unlike multisport events (e.g., Olympic Games, Georgia Games), Chick-fil-A Kickoff Game is an individual event and has relatively uncompounded personalities, which would help facilitate the current study with a focus on brand-event personality fit.

## **Participants**

Research participants were students in a large public university located in southeastern United States, who had been exposed to Chick-fil-A Kickoff Games. Participants were 18 years of age or older and voluntarily participated the current study.

## **Procedures**

In addition to the modified brand personality scale developed by Geuens et al. (2009), three basic demographic items at gender, age and ethnicity were included in the questionnaire for sample description purpose. The preliminary questionnaire was submitted to a panel of three experts in sport management for content validity testing. Each panel member was requested to examine the relevance, clarity, representativeness, and format of the questionnaire. Based on the feedback of the panel of members, the preliminary questionnaire was further modified, revised, and improved, mainly in the areas of wording clarity. Approval was obtained from to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Participants. A pilot study was then conducted with a small sample of the targeted population ( $n = 15$ ). The purpose of this pilot study was to further examine the content validity from the perspective of research participants.

At this stage, suggested changes and improvements were all minor and they were primarily related to wording clarifications. Participation in the survey was voluntary and anonymous. It normally took an individual 5-7 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

### **Data Analyses**

Descriptive statistics was calculated to examine basic demographics of participants by using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 19.0. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was executed by Mplus 7.0 to examine the factor validity of proposed brand personality scale in measuring sport event personality. The MLR (maximum likelihood estimation with robust standard errors) estimator in Mplus 7.0 was employed due to its two-fold advantages: (1) MLR estimator is robust in both multivariate normality data and in non-normality data, (2) MLR estimator works well in data with missing values. The chi-square test statistic under MLR “is asymptotically equivalent to the Yuan-Bentler T2\* test statistic” (Muthén & Muthén, 2012, p. 603).

To examine the goodness of fit of proposal scale, the following indexes were employed: chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) statistic, normed chi-square ( $\chi^2/df$ ), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), standardized root means square residual (SRMR), and comparative fit index (CFI) (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2005).

To assess the construct validity, convergent validity and discriminant validity were examined. Convergent validity refers to the extent that each observed variable loads on its underlying construct (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988), which could be assessed by factor loadings and t-value. Discriminant validity refers to the extent that a given construct differs from other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), which could be assessed by the correlations among constructs (Kline, 2005).

To examine the reliability of the scale, Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ), construct reliability (CR), and averaged variance extracted (AVE) were employed. Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) is a coefficient of internal consistency, which shows how well the indicators predict one another based on the correlations between them (Kline, 2005). CR is derived from the square of the total of factor loadings for a construct, which shows the measurement errors of all indicators (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The AVE values assess "the overall amount of variance in the indicators accounted for by the latent construct" (Hair et al., 2010, p. 617).

A total amount of 251 questionnaires were collected from voluntary participants. 44 questionnaires were ruled out due to severe incompleteness of questionnaire, largely caused by poor knowledge of Chick-fil-A Kick off game. As a result, 207 questionnaires were considered the valid data and represented in both descriptive statistics and measurement properties.

## Results

The descriptive statistics (Table 4-1) showed the demographics of participants: in terms of gender, 56.3% ( $n = 116$ ) were male, and 43.7% ( $n = 90$ ) were female; in terms of age of participants, 81.1% ( $n = 167$ ) were 18-21 years old, and 18.9% ( $n = 39$ ) were 22-25 years old; in terms of ethnicity, 69.0% ( $n = 140$ ) were Caucasian, 13.3% ( $n = 27$ ) participants were Asian, 7.7% ( $n = 16$ ) were African-American, 4.9% ( $n = 10$ ) were Hispanic, and 4.9% ( $n = 10$ ) were Mixed ethnicity or other.

To assess the indexes of scale in terms of goodness of fit, scale reliability, construct validity, a CFA (Figure 4-1) was executed. The goodness of fit of scale met the suggested cut-off criteria:  $\chi^2 = 100.333$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ;  $\chi^2/df (100.333/44 = 2.280)$  meeting the recommendation of Kline (2005) who suggested this value should be lower than 3.0; RMSEA of the model was 0.079, indicating the moderate fit of the model (Hu & Bentler, 1999); CFI was 0.913, which

exceeded the suggested criterion of 0.90 (Hu & Bentler, 1999); SRMR = 0.063 was lower than the suggested cut-off value of 0.09 (Kline, 2005).

As shown in Table 4-2, all item's factor loading were above suggested value of 0.50 (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Hair et al., 2010), ranging from 0.612 to 0.921, indicating that the good convergent validity. As shown in Table 4-3, the correlations of all factors are lower than suggested criterion of 0.85, showing the good discriminant validity of scale.

As shown in Table 4-2, Cronbach's alpha of listed items was above the acceptable value of 0.60 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2010), ranging from 0.612 (ordinary) to 0.921 (romantic). The CR of five factors met the threshold value of 0.70 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2010), ranging from 0.702 (Aggressiveness) to 0.837 (Responsibility). As for AVE of factors, all exceeded the suggested value of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2010).

Overall, findings of the CFA suggested that personality scale was effective in assessing the brand personality of Chick-fil-A Kickoff Game. Based on the above findings, the BEPF was developed by measuring the level of fit between a sponsoring brand and a sporting event, which consistently includes 12 personality traits under 5 dimensions (i.e., responsibility fit, activity fit, aggressiveness fit, simplicity fit, and emotionality fit). The question was stated as: "Do you think that X (a sponsoring brand) and Y (a sponsored sport event) are a good match-up in each of the following traits?" Each item was phrased in a Likert 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strong agree).

## **Study 2 - Structural Relations between Brand-Event Personality Fit and Consumer-Based Brand Equity**

### **Selection of Target Stimuli**

Study 2 also chose 2013 Chick-fil-A Kickoff Game as the sponsored sport event. As the counterparts of sport event, six sponsoring brands of 2013 Chick-fil-A Kickoff Games were selected based on their representativeness in three perspectives: (a) AT&T was a long-term sponsor with Chick-fil-A Kickoff Games, whereas Home Depot was a relatively new sponsor for event; (b) Coca Cola possessed relatively well established brand equity and obtained a world-wide marketing dominance, whereas the influence of Georgia Power was limited to the southern region of U.S.; and (c) Chick-fil-A represented the title sponsor of the event and served as the primary food supplier of the event, whereas Delta Airline could represent the sponsor whose product or service may not be directly used in event.

### **Participants**

Research participants were students in a large public university located in southeastern of United States who had been exposed to the 2013 Chick-fil-A Kickoff Game and noticed the sponsorship relationship between event and correspondingly sponsoring brands. Participants were 18 years of age or older and voluntarily participated in the study.

### **Instruments**

The BEPF assessing the fit of personality traits between 2013 Chick-fil-A Kickoff Game and its sponsors was measured by scale developed in study 1, which included the fit of 12 personality traits under 5 factors: responsibility fit, activity fit, aggressiveness fit, simplicity fit, and emotionality fit. Each personality trait was phrased in a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). The sponsors' CBBE was examined by the CBBE scale

developed by Yoo and Donthu (2001), which contained 10 items under 3 factors: brand awareness/association, perceived quality, and conative brand loyalty. The brand equity items were assessed with 5-point Likert scale anchored at 1 = “strongly disagree” and 5 = “strongly agree”. Additionally, three items measuring gender, age, and ethnicity were included in the survey form for providing basic demographic references. The questionnaire was preceded with a screening question: Do you realize that X (a sponsoring brand) sponsors the 2013 Chik-fil-A Kickoff Game? An individual was included as a participant only after he/she positively confirmed the awareness of the sponsorship relationship.

### **Procedures**

The preliminary questionnaire was submitted to a panel of three experts in sport management for content validity testing. Each panel member was requested to examine the relevance, clarity, representativeness, and format of items in the questionnaire. Based on the feedback of the panel of members, the preliminary questionnaire was modified, revised, and improved.

A pilot study was conducted with a small sample of participants who met the requirement for participation in the study ( $n = 9$ ). The purpose of this pilot study was to further examine the content validity from the perspective of targeted population. At this stage, suggested changes and improvements were all minor and they were primarily related to wording clarifications.

### **Data analyses**

Descriptive statistics for the demographics BEPF, and CBBE variables were calculated by carrying out procedures in SPSS 19.0. Given the advantage of structural equation modeling (SEM) in estimating relationships among latent variables and in exploring multivariate relationships in an integrated manner, a SEM was executed by executing procedures in Mplus

7.0 to identify the relationships between BEPF and CBBE factors. Following the two-step process of SEM suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), the first step examined the measurement model via the appropriate validation process and the second step focused on assessing the structural relationships after confirming the adequacy of measurement model.

Consistent with Study 1, both the measurement model and the structural model in Study 2 were evaluated in terms of goodness of fit by the following indexes: chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) statistic, normed chi-square ( $\chi^2/df$ ), RMSEA, SRMR, and CFI (Hair et al., 1998; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Kline, 2005). In addition, the measurement scale also was examined in terms of reliability and construct validity. The reliability of the scale was evaluated by Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ), CR, and AVE. The construct validity was examined by convergent validity and discriminant validity (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988).

## Results

In total, 327 questionnaires were collected from participants. Excluding 45 questionnaires for severe incompleteness of questionnaires, 282 questionnaires were confirmed as valid data: AT&T (n = 46), Chick-fil-A (n = 48), Coca-Cola (n = 49), Delta (n = 44), Georgia Power (n = 46), Home Depot (n = 49). The sample size of current study (N = 282) reached the suggested minimum size of 200 to test the proposed structural model (Anderson & Gerbing, 1998; Hair et al., 2010; Harris & Schaubroeck, 1990; Weston & Gore, 2006).

Descriptive statistics (Table 4-4) showed the demographics of participants: in terms of gender, 64.9% (n = 183) were male, and 35.1% (n = 99) were female; in terms of age of participants, 56.0% (n = 158) were 18-21 years old, 34.8% (n = 98) were 22-25 years old, 4.3% (n = 12) were 26-30 years old, and 5.0% (n = 14) were above 30 years old; in terms of ethnicity, 76.2% (n = 214) were Caucasian, 13.3% (n = 27) participants were Asian, 10.0% (n = 28) were

African-American, 2.5% ( $n = 7$ ) were American Indian, 3.2% ( $n = 9$ ) were Hispanic, and 3.2% ( $n = 9$ ) were Mixed ethnicity or other.

Descriptive statistics also displayed the extent of personality fit between Chick-fil-A Kickoff Game and its sponsors in specific dimensions (Table 4-5), as well as the level of sponsors' CBBE (Table 4-6). The responsibility fit between Chick-fil-A Kickoff Game and its sponsors was at a relatively high level. In the 7-point Likert scale,  $M = 4.95$ ,  $SD = 1.205$  for the trait of down to earth;  $M = 5.82$ ,  $SD = 1.064$  for the trait of stable;  $M = 5.68$ ,  $SD = 1.119$  for the trait of responsible. The activity fit between selected sport event and its sponsors was at a high level. In the 7-point Likert scale,  $M = 5.81$ ,  $SD = 1.185$  for the trait of active;  $M = 5.34$ ,  $SD = 1.204$  for the trait of dynamic;  $M = 5.10$ ,  $SD = 1.350$  for the trait of innovative. The aggressiveness fit between sponsors and event was around at a medium level. In the 7-point Likert scale,  $M = 4.58$ ,  $SD = 1.440$  for the trait of aggressive;  $M = 4.87$ ,  $SD = 1.348$  for the trait of bold. The level of simplicity fit in the current study was at a medium level. In the 7-point Likert scale,  $M = 4.05$ ,  $SD = 1.459$  for the trait of ordinary;  $M = 4.12$ ,  $SD = 1.522$  for the trait of simple. The level of emotionality fit in the current study was at a low level. In the 7-point Likert scale,  $M = 2.47$ ,  $SD = 1.516$  for the trait of romantic;  $M = 3.12$ ,  $SD = 1.665$  for the trait of sensitive.

The level of sponsors' brand awareness/association was at a high level. In the 5-point Likert scale,  $M = 4.80$ ,  $SD = 0.448$  for the brand reorganization;  $M = 4.89$ ,  $SD = 0.342$  for the brand awareness;  $M = 4.45$ ,  $SD = 0.842$  for the quickness of coming to mind;  $M = 4.78$ ,  $SD = 0.523$  for the recalling logo;  $M = 4.65$ ,  $SD = 0.626$  for the difficulty of imaging (coding in reserve). The level of sponsors' perceived quality was at a high level. In the 5-point Likert scale,  $M = 4.10$ ,  $SD = 0.782$  for the product quality;  $M = 4.34$ ,  $SD = 0.673$  for product function. The

level of sponsors' brand loyalty was around at a medium level. In the 5-point Likert scale,  $M = 3.44$ ,  $SD = 1.301$  for being loyal;  $M = 3.56$ ,  $SD = 1.234$  for the first choice;  $M = 2.96$ ,  $SD = 1.292$  for no buy others.

Except for the item of having difficulty in recalling brand ( $\lambda = 0.461$ ), the factor loading of rest items were above suggested value of 0.50 (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Hair et al., 2010), ranging from 0.553 to 0.907, indicating that the good convergent validity of scale. Regarding the discriminant validity of scale, all interrelations were lower than suggested criterion of 0.85 except for the correlation between activity fit and aggressiveness fit whose value was 0.90 (Table 4-8). To double check the acceptability of discriminant validity between activity fit and aggressiveness fit, the current study also adopted another widely accepted discriminant validity test in which comparing 1.0 with the result of formula: parameter estimate (phi value)  $\pm 1.96 * \text{standard error}$  (Bagozzi, Yi, & Phillips, 1991; Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008). If the value of formula lower than 1.0, it suggested discriminant validity has been achieved. As a result, the value of test was 0.92, indicating the discriminant between activity fit and aggressiveness fit still was in an acceptable level. Meanwhile, using the same data in Study 2, a comparison was conducted between results of CFA for 5-factor BEPF scale and results of CFA for 4-factor BEPF scale which combined the activity fit and the aggressiveness fit into one factor. Given the revised 4-factor model was not a nested model, the model fit indexes such as Akaike information criterion (AIC), Bayesian information criterion (BIC), and sample-size adjusted Bayesian information criterion (SABIC) were used to compare two models. Although no criterion is specified for AIC, BIC, and SABIC, smaller values usually stand for better fit (Kline, 2005). As a result of comparison, the 5-factor BEPF model ( $AIC = 10400.636$ ;  $BIC = 10568.164$ ;  $SABIC = 10422.298$ ) was superior to 4-factor BEPF model ( $AIC = 10420.016$ ;  $BIC = 10572.976$ ;  $SABIC =$

= 10439.794). Therefore, no modification about discriminant validity was conducted to 5-factor BEPF model.

A CFA (Figure 4-2) was conducted to assess the measurement model. The goodness of fit of scale was reasonably well:  $\chi^2 = 365.639$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ;  $\chi^2/df = 2.020$ ; RMSEA = 0.060; CFI = 0.917; SRMR = 0.059. In terms the reliability of scale, Cronbach's alpha of listed items were above the acceptable value of 0.60 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2010), ranging from 0.697 (Simplicity fit) to 0.879 (Brand loyalty). The CR of five factors also met the threshold value of 0.70 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2010), ranging from 0.726 (Aggressiveness fit) to 0.884 (Brand loyalty). As for AVE of factors, all exceeded the suggested value of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2010), except for Brand awareness/association (0.418). Considering the goodness of overall scale's reliability and the theoretical soundness of scale, the measurement scale was retained in the current study. Overall, the indexes of proposed measurement model in terms of goodness of fit, scale reliability and construct validity suggested the model was adequate for conducting further structural analyses.

### **Structural Model**

The goodness of fit indexes of structural model was reasonable well:  $\chi^2 = 366.169$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ;  $\chi^2/df = 2.012$ ; RMSEA = 0.060; CFI = 0.918; SRMR = 0.059. According to Hair et al. (2010), the non-significant chi-square difference between the measurement model and the structural model could demonstrate the adequacy of structural model fit. In the current study, the result of this test was not significant ( $\Delta\chi^2 = 0.53$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), indicating the adequacy of structural model fit.

As shown in Table 4-9 that indicated the path value between dimensions of BEPF and CBBE, hypothesis 1 was partially supported. Specifically, hypothesis 1a that responsibility fit

would positively influence brand awareness/association was supported ( $\beta = 0.281, p < 0.05$ ). Hypothesis 1b, postulating responsibility fit would positively influence perceived quality, was supported ( $\beta = 0.350, p < 0.01$ ). However, the hypothesis 1c that the direct influence from responsibility fit on brand loyalty was rejected. In terms of indirect effect, responsibility fit would positively influence perceived quality through brand awareness/association ( $\beta = 0.073, p < 0.01$ ) and positively influence brand loyalty through brand awareness/association and perceived quality ( $\beta = 0.250, p < 0.01$ ).

Hypothesis 2c that activity fit would positively influence brand loyalty was supported ( $\beta = 0.387, p < 0.05$ ). However, hypothesis 2a and hypothesis 2b were not supported, signifying that activity exerted no significant influence on brand awareness/association and perceived quality. On indirect effect was found in Hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 3 was totally not supported. There was no significant ( $p > 0.05$ ) relationship between aggressiveness fit and sub-dimensions of CBBE. Hypothesis 4 also was totally rejected, indicating that the simplicity fit exerted not significant influence on sub-dimensions of CBBE.

Hypothesis 5b that emotionality fit would positively influence perceived quality was supported ( $\beta = 0.162, p < 0.05$ ). Hypothesis 5c that emotionality fit would positively influence brand loyalty was supported ( $\beta = 0.157, p < 0.05$ ). But the positively influence from emotionality on brand awareness/association was not significant, therefore hypothesis 5a was rejected. The potential indirect effect from emotionality fit to brand loyalty also was rejected due to the non-significance of path value. Hypothesis 6 that brand awareness/association would positively influence perceived quality was supported ( $\beta = 0.286, p < 0.01$ ). Hypothesis 7 that perceived quality would positively influence brand loyalty was supported ( $\beta = 0.590, p < 0.01$ ). Additionally, brand awareness/association also would indirect influence brand loyalty via

perceived quality ( $\beta = 0.169, p < 0.01$ ). The diagram of overall SEM was represented in Figure 4-3.

Table 4-1: Descriptive statistics for demographics of Study 1 (N=207)

Variables	Categories	n	%
Gender	Male	90	43.7
	Female	116	56.3
Age	18-21	167	81.1
	22-25	39	18.9
	26-30	0	0
	30+	0	0
Ethnicity	Caucasian	140	69.0
	Hispanic	10	4.9
	Asian	27	13.3
	African-American	16	7.9
	American Indian	0	0
	Mixed ethnicity or other	10	4.9

Table 4-2: Factor loadings ( $\lambda$ ), Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ), construct reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE) for the proposal brand personality scale in Study 1 (N=207)

Factors and variables	$\lambda$	$\alpha$	CR	AVE
<i>Responsibility</i>		.828	.837	.634
Down to earth	.693			
Stable	.888			
Responsible	.795			
<i>Activity</i>		.756	.771	.531
Active	.678			
Dynamic	.803			
Innovative	.698			
<i>Aggressiveness</i>		.688	.702	.543
Aggressive	.801			
Bold	.667			
<i>Simplicity</i>		.707	.732	.586
Ordinary	.612			
Simple	.893			
<i>Emotionality</i>		.714	.753	.613
Romantic	.921			
Sentimental	.615			

Table 4-3: Correlations among dimensions of brand personality of Chick-fil-A Kickoff Game in Study 1 (N=207)

	RESP	ACTI	AGGR	SIMP	EMOT
RESP	1.00				
ACTI	0.46	1.00			
AGGR	0.21	0.61	1.00		
SIMP	0.18	-0.34	-0.40	1.00	
EMOT	0.25	0.13	0.14	0.27	1.00

*Note.* RESP = Responsibility

ACTI = Activity

AGGR = Aggressiveness

SIMP = Simplicity

EMOT = Emotionality

Table 4-4: Descriptive statistics for demographics in Study 2 (N=282)

Variables	Categories	n	%
Gender	Male	183	64.9
	Female	99	35.1
Age	18-21	158	56.0
	22-25	98	34.8
	26-30	12	4.3
	30+	14	5.0
Ethnicity	Caucasian	214	76.2
	Hispanic	9	3.2
	Asian	14	5.0
	African-American	28	10.0
	American Indian	7	2.5
	Mixed ethnicity or other	9	3.2

Table 4-5: Descriptive statistics for dimensions of BEPF in Study 2 (N=282)

Factors and variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
<i>Responsibility Fit</i>				
Down to earth fit	4.95	1.21	-.23	-.09
Stable fit	5.82	1.06	-.88	1.12
Responsible fit	5.68	1.12	-.80	.67
<i>Activity Fit</i>				
Active fit	5.81	1.19	-.99	.90
Dynamic fit	5.34	1.20	-.39	-.46
Innovative fit	5.10	1.35	-.56	.08
<i>Aggressiveness Fit</i>				
Aggressive fit	4.58	1.44	-.23	-.22
Bold fit	4.87	1.35	-.39	.02
<i>Simplicity Fit</i>				
Ordinary fit	4.05	1.46	.15	-.63
Simple fit	4.12	1.52	-.16	-.27
<i>Emotionality Fit</i>				
Romantic fit	2.47	1.52	.83	.05
Sentimental fit	3.12	1.67	.33	-.67

Table 4-6: Descriptive statistics for dimensions of CBBE in Study 2 (N=282)

Factors and variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
<i>Brand Awareness and Association</i>				
Recognize <b>X</b> <sup>a</sup> among competing brands quickly	4.80	.45	-2.24	4.40
Be aware of <b>X</b>	4.89	.34	-3.34	11.35
Some characteristics of X come to mind quickly	4.43	.84	-1.61	2.53
Quickly recall the symbol or logo	4.78	.52	-2.46	5.87
Have difficulty in imagining X in mind (r) <sup>b</sup>	4.65	.63	-2.02	5.10
<i>Perceive Quality</i>				
Likely quality of X is extremely high	4.10	.78	-.72	.81
High likelihood of being functional	4.34	.67	-.60	-.39
<i>Brand Loyalty</i>				
Consider myself would be loyal to <b>X</b>	3.44	1.30	-.44	-.82
X would be my first choice	3.56	1.23	-.49	-.69
No buy other brands if X is available at the store	2.96	1.29	.07	-.99

Note. <sup>a</sup> X indicates a brand name.

<sup>b</sup> (r) indicates reversed scoring.

Table 4-7: Factor loadings ( $\lambda$ ), Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ), construct reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE) for the measurement scale in Study 2 (N=282).

Factors and variables	$\lambda$	$\alpha$	CR	AVE
<i>Responsibility Fit</i>		.787	.794	.564
Down to earth fit	.669			
Stable fit	.759			
Responsible fit	.818			
<i>Activity Fit</i>		.793	.799	.570
Active fit	.690			
Dynamic fit	.776			
Innovative fit	.794			
<i>Aggressiveness Fit</i>		.718	.726	.573
Aggressive fit	.677			
Bold fit	.829			
<i>Simplicity Fit</i>		.697	.724	.576
Ordinary fit	.604			
Simple fit	.887			
<i>Emotionality Fit</i>		.814	.819	.695
Romantic fit	.771			
Sentimental fit	.892			
<i>Brand Awareness and Association</i>		.722	.777	.418
Recognize <b>X</b> <sup>a</sup> among competing brands quickly	.708			
Be aware of <b>X</b>	.774			
Some characteristics of X come to mind quickly	.553			
Quickly recall the symbol or logo	.688			
Have difficulty in imagining X in mind (r) <sup>b</sup>	.461			
<i>Perceive Quality</i>		.767	.777	.637
Likely quality of X is extremely high	.856			
High likelihood of being functional	.735			
<i>Brand Loyalty</i>		.879	.884	.719
Consider myself would be loyal to <b>X</b>	.903			
X would be my first choice	.907			
No buy other brands if X is available at the store	.721			

Note. <sup>a</sup> X indicates a brand name.

<sup>b</sup> (r) indicates reversed scoring.

Table 4-8: Correlations among dimensions of CBBE and BEPF in Study 2 (N=282)

	PF_RESP	PF_ACTI	PF_AGGR	PF_SIMP	PF_EMOT	BAWS	PQ	BL
PF_RESP	1.00							
PF_ACTI	0.73	1.00						
PF_AGGR	0.58	0.90	1.00					
PF_SIMP	0.25	-0.02	-0.08	1.00				
PF_EMOT	0.19	0.29	0.36	0.29	1.00			
BAWS	0.35	0.31	0.28	-0.06	-0.03	1.00		
PQ	0.62	0.54	0.43	0.12	0.27	0.49	1.00	
BL	0.42	0.45	0.29	0.14	0.33	0.30	0.73	1.00

*Note.* PF\_RESP = Responsibility fit

PF\_ACTI = Activity fit

PF\_AGGR = Aggressiveness fit

PF\_SIMP = Simplicity fit

PF\_EMOT = Emotionality fit

BAWS = Brand awareness/association

PQ = Perceived quality

BL = Brand loyalty

Table 4-9: Standardized path value, standard errors for the hypothesized structural model in Study 2 (N=282).

Path coefficients between factors	$\beta$	SE	<i>P</i>	H
<i>Direct effect</i>				
Responsibility Fit → Brand Awareness/Association	.254*	.100	.011	H1a
Responsibility Fit → Perceived Quality	.350*	.121	.004	H1b
Responsibility Fit → Brand Loyalty	-.094	.125	.455	H1c
Activity Fit → Brand Awareness/Association	.034	.168	.840	H2a
Activity Fit → Perceived Quality	.166	.197	.399	H2b
Activity Fit → Brand Loyalty	.387*	.192	.044	H2c
Aggressiveness Fit → Brand Awareness/Association	.104	.179	.561	H3a
Aggressiveness Fit → Perceived Quality	-.059	.170	.727	H3b
Aggressiveness Fit → Brand Loyalty	-.288	.167	.084	H3c
Simplicity Fit → Brand Awareness/Association	-.074	.089	.407	H4a
Simplicity Fit → Perceived Quality	-.009	.067	.890	H4b
Simplicity Fit → Brand Loyalty	.039	.092	.670	H4c
Emotionality fit → Brand Awareness/Association	-.097	.092	.286	H5a
Emotionality fit → Perceived Quality	.162*	.080	.044	H5b
Emotionality fit → Brand Loyalty	.157*	.075	.037	H5c
Brand Awareness/Association → Perceived Quality	.286**	.065	.000	H6
Perceived Quality → Brand Loyalty	.590**	.087	.000	H7
Path coefficients between factors	$\beta$	SE	<i>P</i>	
<i>Indirect Effect</i>				
Responsibility Fit → Brand Awareness/Association → Perceived quality	.073*	.033	.026	
Responsibility Fit → Brand Awareness/Association, Perceived Quality → Brand Loyalty	.250**	.086	.004	
Emotionality Fit → Perceived Quality → Brand Loyalty	.096	.050	.058	
Brand Awareness/Association → Perceived Quality → Brand Loyalty	.169**	.500	.001	

Note: \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ .

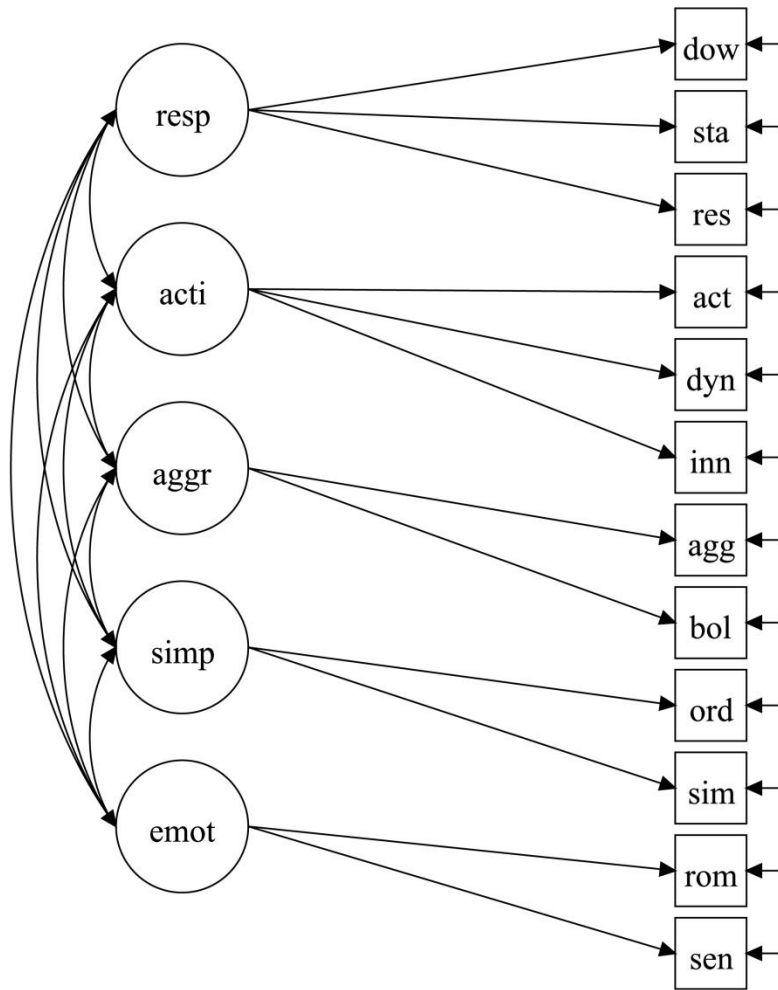


Figure 4-1: Measurement model in Study 1

Note: PF\_RESP = Responsibility fit  
 PF\_ACTI = Activity fit  
 PF\_AGGR = Aggressiveness fit  
 PF\_SIMP = Simplicity fit  
 PF\_EMOT = Emotionality fit  
 BAWS = Brand awareness/association  
 PQ = Perceived quality  
 BL = Brand loyalty  
 pf\_dow = Down to earth fit  
 pf\_sta = Stable fit  
 pf\_res = Responsible fit  
 pf\_act = Active fit  
 pf\_dyn = Dynamic fit  
 pf\_inn = Innovative fit

pf\_agg = Aggressive fit  
 pf\_bol = Bold fit  
 pf\_ord = Ordinary fit  
 pf\_sim = Simple fit  
 pf\_rom = Romantic fit  
 pf\_sen = Sentimental fit  
 be\_rec = Recognize **X**<sup>a</sup> among competing brands quickly  
 be\_awa = Be aware of **X**  
 be\_com = Some characteristics of X come to mind quickly  
 be\_rea = Quickly recall the symbol or logo  
 be\_dif = Have difficulty in imagining X in mind (r)<sup>b</sup>  
 be\_fun = Likely quality of X is extremely high  
 be\_qua = High likelihood of being functional  
 be\_loy = Consider myself would be loyal to **X**  
 be\_fir = X would be my first choice  
 be\_nbo = No buy other brands if X is available at the store

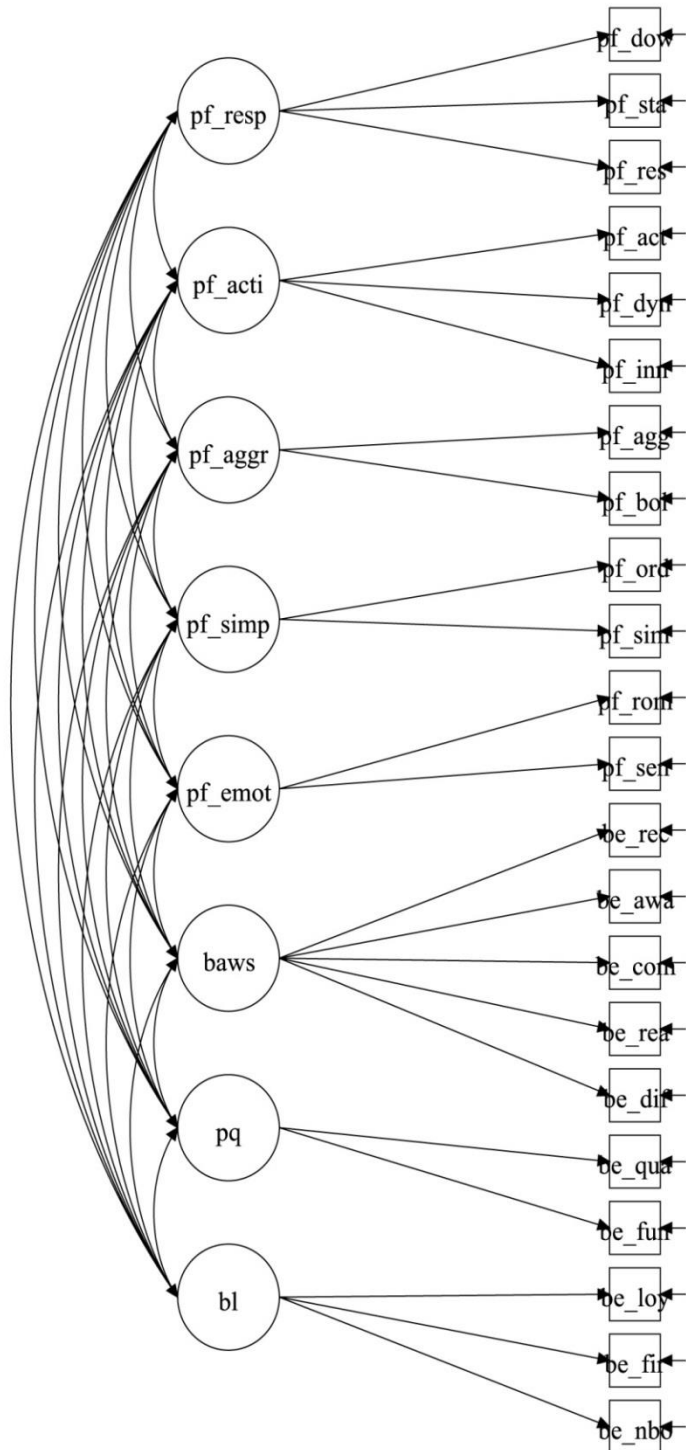


Figure 4-2: Measurement model in Study 2

Note: PF\_RESP = Responsibility fit  
 PF\_ACTI = Activity fit  
 PF\_AGGR = Aggressiveness fit

PF\_SIMP = Simplicity fit  
 PF\_EMOT = Emotionality fit  
 BAWS = Brand awareness/association  
 PQ = Perceived quality  
 BL = Brand loyalty  
 pf\_dow = Down to earth fit  
 pf\_sta = Stable fit  
 pf\_res = Responsible fit  
 pf\_act = Active fit  
 pf\_dyn = Dynamic fit  
 pf\_inn = Innovative fit  
 pf\_agg = Aggressive fit  
 pf\_bol = Bold fit  
 pf\_ord = Ordinary fit  
 pf\_sim = Simple fit  
 pf\_rom = Romantic fit  
 pf\_sen = Sentimental fit  
 be\_rec = Recognize **X**<sup>a</sup> among competing brands quickly  
 be\_awa = Be aware of **X**  
 be\_com = Some characteristics of X come to mind quickly  
 be\_rea = Quickly recall the symbol or logo  
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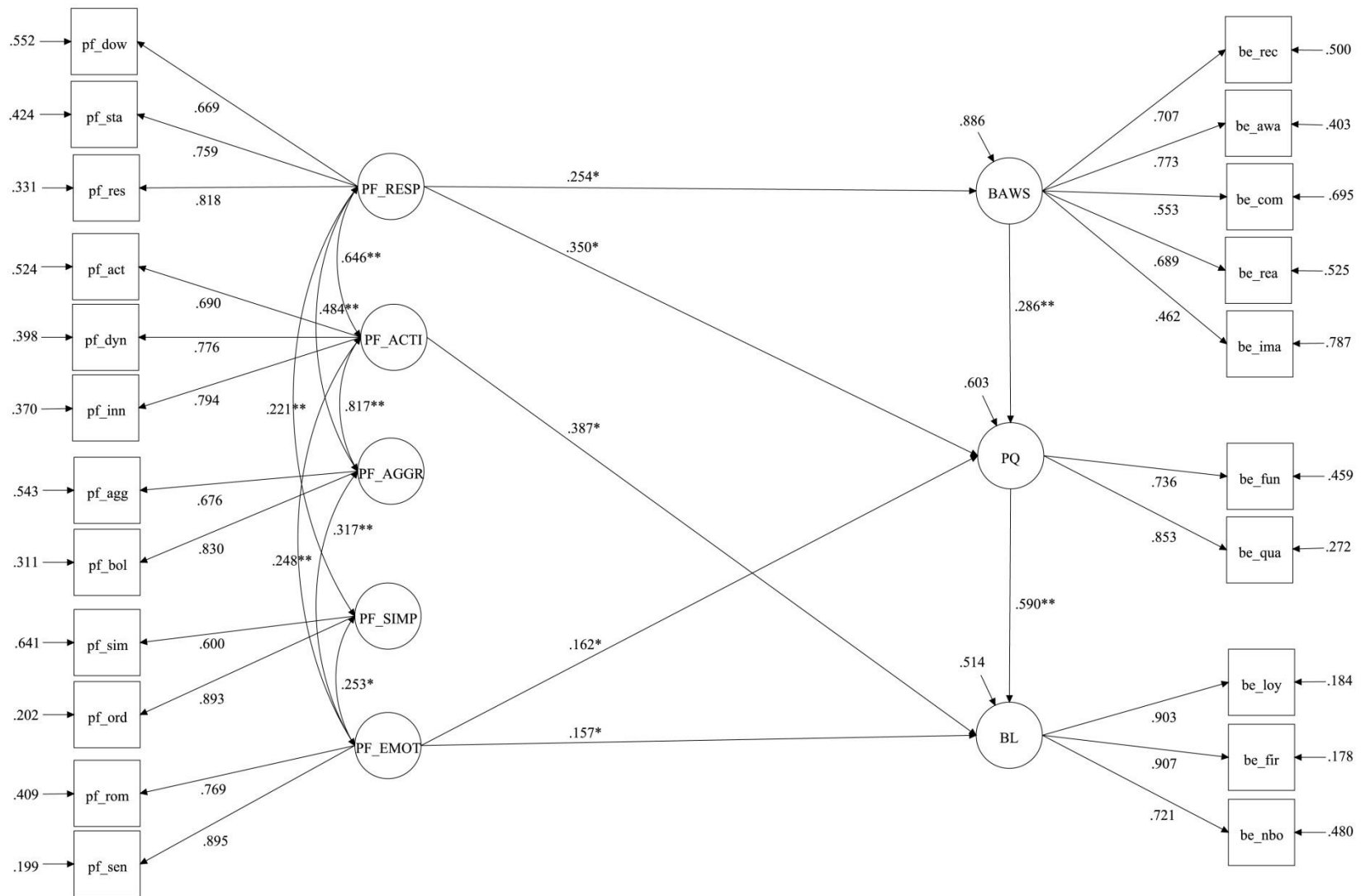


Figure 4-3: Structural model of relationships between dimensions of BEPF and dimensions of CBBE

$\chi^2 = 366.169$ ,  $p < .001$ ;  $\chi^2 / df = 2.012$ ; RMSEA = .060; SRMR = .059; CFI = .918.

Note: \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ .

PF\_RESP = Responsibility  
 PF\_ACTI = Activity fit  
 PF\_AGGR = Aggressiveness fit  
 PF\_SIMP = Simplicity fit  
 PF\_EMOT = Emotionality fit  
 BAWS = Brand awareness/association  
 PQ = Perceived quality  
 BL = Brand loyalty  
 pf\_dow = Down to earth fit  
 pf\_sta = Stable fit  
 pf\_res = Responsible fit  
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 pf\_ord = Ordinary fit  
 pf\_sim = Simple fit  
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 pf\_sen = Sentimental fit  
 be\_rec = Recognize **X**<sup>a</sup> among competing brands quickly  
 be\_awa = Be aware of **X**  
 be\_com = Some characteristics of X come to mind quickly  
 be\_rea = Quickly recall the symbol or logo  
 be\_dif = Have difficulty in imagining X in mind (r)<sup>b</sup>  
 be\_fun = Likely quality of X is extremely high  
 be\_qua = High likelihood of being functional  
 be\_loy = Consider myself would be loyal to **X**  
 be\_fir = X would be my first choice  
 be\_nbo = No buy other brands if X is available at the store

## CHAPTER 4

### DISCUSSION

As an important, yet intangible, equity of companies, CBBE plays a fundamental role in a corporation's survival in today's fierce market competitions and therefore drives corporations constantly to seek an efficient way to build strong CBBE. Among the proposed methods, emphasizing BEPF in sport event sponsorship is potentially contributory due to its identified positive influence on consumers' responses toward sponsorship (Lee & Cho, 2009). Meanwhile, one aspect necessitating further study is that previous studies have only assessed overall BEPF when examining its impact on consumers' responses. As both brand personality and sport event personality have been recognized as multi-dimensional constructs in relevant literature (J. L. Aaker, 1997; Braunstein & Ross, 2010; Geuens et al., 2009; Lee & Cho, 2009), the construct of BEPF could also have multiple dimensions. With the further development of sponsorship studies, exploring the influence of specific dimensions of BEPF on CBBE would be necessary and valuable in that more detailed implications are urgently needed for both academics and practitioners. Therefore, through testing a structural relationship model, the current study was aimed to specifically explore the sequential relationship between BEPF and CBBE.

#### **Summary of Findings and Implications**

Study 1 was conducted to develop a valid measurement scale of multidimensional BEPF. A personality scale that was effective in assessing both sponsoring brands and sponsored sport events was the prerequisite for this study. Geuens et al.'s (2009) personality scale was proposed and examined in following CFA. As a result, the fit indexes indicated that the proposed personality scale from mainstream business also possessed the acceptable measurement

properties in the sport event field. Then, based on modifying the personality scale, the BEPF scale was developed. The fit of 12 personality traits were under five dimensions: responsibility fit, activity fit, aggressiveness fit, simplicity fit, and emotionality fit.

A SEM was conducted in Study 2 based on the two-step approach suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1988): The measurement model was tested through an appropriate validation process in the first step and the structural relationships model was assessed in the second step if the measurement model was adequate. Through a series of hypothesis testing, a structural model pertaining to the sequential relationship between dimensions of BEPF and dimensions of CBBE was formed.

In the structural model, the responsibility fit would directly influence both brand awareness/association and perceived quality. Also, there was an indirect influence from responsibility fit to perceived quality via brand awareness/association. This indicated that responsibility fit could be more likely to influence consumers' responses in the early stage of cognition and affection. Although no significant sequential relationship was found between responsibility fit and consumers' brand loyalty, an indirect effect of the former on the latter was detected. Specifically, the influence of responsibility fit went through brand awareness/association and perceived quality and then affected brand loyalty. This indicated that corporations could use responsibility fit between sponsors and sport event to enhance consumers' conative responses, a stage of response that was most likely to trigger actual consumption behavior.

According to Lagae (2005), the motivations behind corporations' sponsorship activities varied based on their marketing goals and target consumers. Identified motivations included improving brand awareness/association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty, the three

dimensions of CBBE (Lagae, 2005; Shank, 2005). Combined with the findings of the current study, emphasizing responsibility fit was crucial for corporations' sport event sponsorship that was intended to enhance all three dimensions of CBBE.

The finding that activity fit exerted only direct influence on brand loyalty indicated that activity fit was more likely to affect consumers' conative stage than their cognitive and affective stages. It also should be noted that the magnitude of this effect ( $\beta = .387, p < 0.05$ ) represented the largest value among all dimensions of BEFP that could influence brand loyalty. Therefore, sponsors that mainly plan to improve consumers' brand loyalty through sport event sponsorship should prioritize the activity fit between themselves and potential sport events.

The finding that aggressiveness fit and simplicity fit exerted no significant influence on dimensions of CBBE suggested that these two areas could be in the backseat when sponsors selected a sport event with the purpose of building CBBE. Alternatively, it was also possible that participants in the current study did not have a clear picture about the meaning that aggressiveness and simplicity stood for. If this case was true, the BEPF scale needed to be further improved or developed to possess a good validity.

The direct influence from emotionality fit to perceived quality and brand loyalty suggested that emotional personality fit was more connected with CBBE on the affective level and conative level. Compared with the cognitive responses of consumers, these two areas would be more likely to lead to actual behavior based on the hierarchy of effects model (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961). Therefore, emotionality fit also deserved consideration by sponsors in their assessment of sport event sponsorship.

The hierarchy influence from brand awareness/association to perceived quality and then to brand loyalty was consistent with Lavidge and Steiner's (1961) hierarchy of effects model,

which suggested that consumers' responses toward sponsorship would go through four hierarchy domains: cognitive, affective, conative, and behavioral. Also, this result confirmed the expectation of Yoo and Donthu (2001) about the potential causal order among dimensions of CBBE. The magnitude of relevant path values indicated that perceived quality would easily affect brand loyalty, while the influence of brand awareness/association to perceived quality and to brand loyalty was relatively low.

In addition, measurement scales employed in the current study were tested to determine that they possess sound validity and reliability. Therefore, they could be used by academics in future studies and by practitioners in marketing practice.

As an initial step in exploring the sequential relationships of BEPF and CBBE, the current study bridged the literature gap between personality fit and CBBE. The BEPF literature and following empirical studies shed new light on the study of personality fit in multidimensional level. The findings of this study have also extended and enriched the research scope of building CBBE.

For marketing practitioners, the current study also was compelling because more specific sponsoring references could be derived for their marketing activities intended to build CBBE. Specifically, the structural relationship model could inform sponsors about which aspects of BEPF should be prioritized in sport event sponsorship to efficiently achieve a better effect in building CBBE; the findings of the current study would provide sport event marketers with information they can use to communicate with corporations regarding potential or continued sponsorship agreements; the proposed measurement scales could be utilized by sponsors to assess the potential effectiveness of sport event sponsorship before their investment. Given higher costs, greater market competitions, and flattening demand in today's marketing

environment (Keller, 2003), findings and information provided by the current study appeared to be extra valuable in that they met the demand of sponsors in terms of increasing the efficiency of marketing expenditures, including the investment in building CBBE.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

A number of limitations associated with the current study have been identified. First of all, the current study adopted a convenience sampling technique and participants were limited to the college students, which would reduce the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, future studies need to make an effort to obtain a research sample that would fully represent the consumers of a sport event and preferably also the brand.

Second, this study selected only limited sponsoring brands and one national-scale sport event in the assessment of BEPF. It was possible that the proposed structural model needed to be adjusted if more sport events and corporate sponsors are involved in the study. Further study could select multiple representative sponsoring brands and sponsored sport events to improve the generalizability and reliability of conclusions.

Third, cross-cultural validity of results in the current study also deserved to be examined and improved. Participants from different cultures might lead to adjustments of the current findings. Hence, conducting further cross-cultural studies to examine the proposed model was strongly recommended in today's globalized sport markets.

Finally, potential moderators were not covered in the current study. From analogous studies, the potential moderators might include consumers' previous attitude toward sponsoring brand, attitude toward sport event, fan identification, and brand involvement (Dees, Bennett, & Ferreira, 2010; Lee & Cho, 2009; Speed & Thompson, 2000). These moderators, to some extent, would contribute to the adjustment of findings in the current study. Future studies are strongly

suggested to include the potential moderators to comprehensively assess the relationship between BEPF and CBBE.

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## APPENDICES

### A. SAMPLE OF CONSENT FORM IN STUDY 1

I agree to participate in a research study titled "Influence of Brand-Event Personality Fit on a Sponsor's Consumer-Based Brand Equity" conducted by Junqi Wang from the Department of Kinesiology at the University of Georgia under the direction of Dr. James J. Zhang, Department of Kinesiology, University of Georgia. I understand that my participation is voluntary. I can refuse to participate or stop taking part at anytime without giving any reason, and without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.

The reason for this study is to investigate consumer response toward the sponsorship activity between sport event and sponsoring brands. If I volunteer to take part in this study, I will be asked to answer a questionnaire about brand personality and consumer-based brand equity. It will take 5-8 minutes to finish the survey. There is no benefit for me to participate in this study, but my participating will help the researcher to learn more about the strategy of sport event sponsorship. There is no compensation for participating in this study.

There are no physical and psychological risks associated with participating in completing this questionnaire. My identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. Any responses in this study will be anonymous and there will be no identifying markers that will link participants to the questionnaire they complete. The data will be reported statistical information. The researchers are grateful for my time and deeply appreciated my assistance with this study.

The investigator will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project.

(To voluntarily agree to take part in this study, you must sign on the line below. Your signature below indicates that you have read or had read to you this entire consent form, and have had all of your questions answered.)

Name of Participant	Signature	Date
Name of Participant	Signature	Date

**Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.**

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 629 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address [IRB@uga.edu](mailto:IRB@uga.edu).

## APPENDICES

### B. SAMPLE OF COVER LETTER IN STUDY 1

Dear participants:

I am conducting a study about the influence of brand-event personality fit on a sponsor's consumer-based brand equity. As one important step, this survey aimed to identify the brand personalities of a sport event. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You can refuse to participate or stop taking part at anytime without giving any reason and without penalty or loss of benefits.

It would be greatly appreciated if you would simply complete the enclosed questionnaire. Please do not include your name or identification number on the survey instrument. It will take approximately 2 to 3 minutes to complete. There are no physical and psychological risks associated with participating in completing this questionnaire. Upon completion, please return the questionnaire to the survey administrator.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about this study. Thank you!

Sincerely yours,

Junqi Wang  
Graduate Student Majoring in Sport Management  
Department of Kinesiology  
College of Education  
University of Georgia  
Athens, Georgia 30602  
Phone: 225.362.0042  
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## APPENDICES

## C. SAMPLE OF QUESTIONNAIRE IN STUDY 1

*Please read each question carefully and circle the appropriate option in the following questions.*

1. Gender:

A. male                      B. female

2. Age:

A. 18-21                  B. 22-25                  C. 26-30      D. 30+

3. Ethnicity:

A. Caucasian                      B. Hispanic                      C. Asian  
D. African-American              E. American Indian              F. mixed ethnicity or other

4. School Year Classification at University of Georgia:

A. freshman                      B. sophomore                      C. junior  
D. senior                      E. graduate or professional school              F. other

Please rate <b>Chick-fil-A Kickoff Game</b> in the following traits:	Not characteristic at all			Neutral		Very characteristic	
– Down to earth	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
– Stable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
– Responsible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
– Active	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
– Dynamic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
– Innovative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
– Aggressive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
– Bold	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
– Ordinary	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
– Simple	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
– Romantic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
– Sentimental	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Thank you for your participation!

## APPENDICES

### D. SAMPLE OF CONSENT FORM IN STUDY 2

I agree to participate in a research study titled "Influence of Brand-Event Personality Fit on a Sponsor's Consumer-Based Brand Equity" conducted by Junqi Wang from the Department of Kinesiology at the University of Georgia under the direction of Dr. James J. Zhang, Department of Kinesiology, University of Georgia. I understand that my participation is voluntary. I can refuse to participate or stop taking part at anytime without giving any reason, and without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.

The reason for this study is to investigate consumer response toward the sponsorship activity between sport event and sponsoring brands. If I volunteer to take part in this study, I will be asked to answer a questionnaire about brand personality and consumer-based brand equity. It will take 5-8 minutes to finish the survey. There is no benefit for me to participate in this study, but my participating will help the researcher to learn more about the strategy of sport event sponsorship. There is no compensation for participating in this study.

There are no physical and psychological risks associated with participating in completing this questionnaire. My identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. Any responses in this study will be anonymous and there will be no identifying markers that will link participants to the questionnaire they complete. The data will be reported statistical information. The researchers are grateful for my time and deeply appreciated my assistance with this study.

The investigator will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project.

(To voluntarily agree to take part in this study, you must sign on the line below. Your signature below indicates that you have read or had read to you this entire consent form, and have had all of your questions answered.)

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Signature	Date

**Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.**

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 629 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address [IRB@uga.edu](mailto:IRB@uga.edu).

## APPENDICES

### E. SAMPLE OF COVER LETTER IN STUDY 2

Dear participants:

I am conducting a study about the influence of brand-event personality fit on a sponsor's consumer-based brand equity. I am interested in how consumers perceive and respond to brand personality fit between sponsors and sport events. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You can refuse to participate or stop taking part at anytime without giving any reason and without penalty or loss of benefits.

It would be greatly appreciated if you would simply complete the enclosed questionnaire. Please do not include your name or identification number on the survey instrument. It will take approximately 5 to 8 minutes to complete. There are no physical and psychological risks associated with participating in completing this questionnaire. Upon completion, please return the questionnaire to the survey administrator.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about this study. Thank you!

Sincerely yours,

Junqi Wang  
Graduate Student Majoring in Sport Management  
Department of Kinesiology  
College of Education  
University of Georgia  
Athens, Georgia 30602  
Phone: 225.362.0042  
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## APPENDICES

## F. SAMPLE OF QUESTIONNAIRE IN STUDY 2

*Please read each question carefully and circle the appropriate option in the following questions.*

**Section I**

1. Gender:

A. male

B. female

2. Age:

A. 18-21

B. 22-25

C. 26-30

D. 30+

3. Ethnicity:

A. Caucasian

B. Hispanic

C. Asian

D. African-American

E. American Indian

F. mixed ethnicity or other

4. School Year Classification at University of Georgia:

A. freshman

B. sophomore

C. junior

D. senior

E. graduate or professional school

F. other

**Section II**

Do you realize that AT&T sponsors the 2013 Chick-fil-A Kickoff Game?

A. Yes

B. No

If you answer B (No) for previous question, you have already completed this survey. Please return the questionnaire to survey administrators. Thanks for your participation.  
If you choose A (Yes), please continue to answer the following questions:

### Section III

Do you think that <b>X (a sponsoring brand)</b> and the <b>2013 Chick-fil-A Kickoff Game</b> are a good match-up in the following traits?	Strongly Disagree			Neutral			Strongly Agree
– Down to earth	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
– Stable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
– Responsible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
– Active	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
– Dynamic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
– Innovative	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
– Aggressive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
– Bold	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
– Ordinary	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
– Simple	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
– Romantic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
– Sentimental	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

## Section IV

The following statements assess your perceptions of <b>X (a sponsoring brand)</b> :	Strongly Disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree
– I can recognize <b>AT&amp;T</b> among other competing brands.	1	2	3	4	5
– I am aware of <b>AT&amp;T</b> .	1	2	3	4	5
– Some characteristics of <b>AT&amp;T</b> come to my mind quickly.	1	2	3	4	5
– I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of <b>AT&amp;T</b> .	1	2	3	4	5
– I have DIFFICULTY in imagining <b>AT&amp;T</b> in my mind.	1	2	3	4	5
– The likely quality of <b>AT&amp;T</b> is extremely high.	1	2	3	4	5
– The likelihood that <b>AT&amp;T</b> would be functional is very high.	1	2	3	4	5
– I consider myself to be loyal to <b>AT&amp;T</b> .	1	2	3	4	5
– <b>AT&amp;T</b> would be my first choice.	1	2	3	4	5
– I will not buy other brands if <b>AT&amp;T</b> is available at the store.	1	2	3	4	5