

The influence of brand preference on brand image transfer: A research on brand event congruity in sponsorships

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ABSTRACT

Despite the growing attention for sponsorships, few studies have focussed on brand image issues. This article reports findings of an experimental research in which participants assessed the degree to which an event's image associations were transferred to a brand through event sponsorships. Results indicated that congruent sponsorships enhance image transfer, as opposed to incongruent sponsorships. This interaction effect was moderated by brand preferences. Participants with weak brand preferences ranked highest on brand image transfer in the incongruent condition, whereas participants with strong brand preferences were more likely to engage in image transfer when they were exposed to congruent brand – event sponsorship. The latter group ranked lowest on brand image transfer in the incongruent condition. The research utilizes a 2 x 2 factorial design where two variations of brand – event congruity (congruent vs. incongruent) and two different conditions of brand preferences (low vs. high) are used to test the influence of different sponsorships on the brand image beliefs of a new product.

Keywords: brand image transfer, product schema, brand preferences, processing fluency

Introduction

The marketer's principal objective is to reach her target group and make more than a single sale. However, consumers almost always approach the marketplace with a well-established set of tastes and preferences (Hoyer & Brown, 1990). This makes it difficult for new products to position between the already flooded market demands. This challenge is enhanced by traditional marketing communication activities such as advertising and sales promotion, which are faced with the challenges of reaching increasingly fragmented consumer markets and cutting through an overload of messages aimed at consumers, which creates media clutter (Meenaghan, 1983). "Marketers have been spending more and more to try to get their message out, only to find their pitches drowned out in a sea of noise generated by countless other marketers trying to do

the same thing” (Freedman, 2005). Sponsorship is viewed as a means of avoiding this clutter by enabling sponsors to identify and target well-defined audiences in terms of demographics and lifestyles (Fan & Pfitzenmaier, 2002; McDaniel, 1999; Meenaghan, 2001; Roy & Cornwell, 2004, Smith, 2004).

In order for the effect of sponsorship to be maximized, Keller (2003) emphasizes that it is important to select the right type of events or endorsers to match the brand. Literature study suggests that sponsorship functions like celebrity endorser advertising (Gwinner, 1997; McDaniel, 1999; Smith, 2004). Companies hire famous athletes and actors in hopes that celebrities’ fans will also become ‘fans’ of their products or services. According to McCracken (1989) endorsers can leverage their own popularity to create positive associations for brands in the minds of consumers. Brand managers are hoping to transfer this creation of associations to their own product. When a brand is identified as linked to an endorser or event, consumers may infer that some of the particular associations or feelings that characterize the celebrity or event may also characterize the brand (Keller, 2003). Research of Becker-Olsen & Simmons (2006) showed that high-fit sponsorships (sponsor partner is perceived as congruent with sponsored event) can increase brand value, whereas low-fit (sponsor partner is perceived as incongruent with sponsored event) can dilute brand value.

These findings suggest that the link between brand and event influence the transfer of image beliefs, and that the perception of congruent sponsorship is the result of an endorser process in which consumers reinforce, or not, brand image beliefs of a product. Of particular interest in this study is the influence of brand preferences. Will brand image transfer still occur even though the consumer has well-defined brand tastes and preferences? One factor that can influence this response is processing fluency. Van Rompay, De Vries & Van Venrooij (2007) pointed out that the ease of processing information is higher in congruent linkages, involving more understanding, which in turn leads to more favourable responses. Another factor that may well impact the image transfer is the consumers’ product schema. Research of Batra & Homer (2004) reported that brand image beliefs will have a greater impact on brand preferences when consumer’s preconceived associations fit the associations derived from the product category. This research will build from these assumptions and predicts that brand preferences can have a significant influence on brand image transfer when considering these two factors.

The purpose of this research is to gain insight into the brand image aspects in sponsorships. Specifically, based on theoretical perspectives from congruence studies, processing fluency, product schema, brand preferences and advertising literature, several relationships are proposed and tested involving the influence of brand preferences on brand image transfer in event sponsorship.

Literature review

Brand image transfer and congruence studies

Past research on marketing and sponsorships has revealed that the fit between brand and event can be of influence on brand image beliefs. Brand image beliefs include all the associations that consumers connect with the brand (Batra and Homer, 2004). According to Aaker (1997), many of the brand associations that make brands distinctive and strong are of nonfunctional nature; they go beyond the perceived quality of the brand on functional product and service criteria and deal instead with 'intangible' properties of the brand (e.g. Coca-Cola is "All American", Mercedes is "prestigious", etc). These brand associations are created or developed from brand and product category experiences, positioning in promotional communication, or user imagery (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Keller, 1993). McCracken (1986) posed that brands benefit from associations with endorsers, because endorsers acquire or possess a variety of desirable meanings (e.g. Pepsi becomes more attractive to teenagers when endorsed by Madonna, because of her anti-establishment image). In his research, he explained that the associations (meaning) transfer from the celebrity endorser to the brand when both endorser and product are positioned together in an advertisement. The greater the perceived fit of brand associations between the sponsor/ endorser and the brand, the more likely brand image transfer will take place (Smith, 2004). But why is this fit a necessity to transfer image associations? McCracken (1989) pointed out to the endorsement process in which the consumer needs to see the essential similarity (congruity) between endorser and brand (e.g. appropriate tone, pace, etc.), in order to incorporate the endorsers associations (e.g. gender, lifestyle, social class, personality).

Building from McCracken (1989), sponsorship research has also confirmed the importance of congruence or inconsistency on the relation between brand and event, exemplified by brand image beliefs (Crimmins & Horn, 1996; Gwinner and Eaton, 1999; Speed & Thomson, 2000). For instance, consumers had a more positive image of the sponsor if they perceived the sponsor's image and the image of the event sponsored as consistent (Close et al, 2006). Meenaghan (2001) explained that perceptions of congruity reflect the extent to which the sponsored partner is seen as predictable. These studies assume that congruity between brand and event can be positively of influence on consumer responses. This leads to the first hypothesis:

H1: When the fit between brand and event is more congruent, image transfer will be higher as opposed to a low fit between brand and event (incongruent).

The role of processing fluency

The way consumers perceive and process advertising campaigns is important, because it influences their attitude toward the ad, or toward the sponsorship. Consumers can easily process congruent meanings and are therefore more likely to have favourable responses, leading to more positive attitudes, as opposed to incongruent messages (Van Rompay et al., 2007). Van Rompay et al (2007) investigated congruent and incongruent text-picture ads online, and explained that consumers can better elaborate the information presented in a congruent context, because it took less effort for individuals to create a mental picture, than in incongruent contexts. Studies in the psychological area confirm these findings. Reber, Winkielman & Schwarz (1998) used contrast between figure and background, and presentation duration as fluency manipulations and found that individuals ranked stimuli which were easy to process as more 'pretty' and less 'ugly' or as more 'likeable' and less 'dislikable'. Building from Reber et al (1998), research of Winkielman & Cacioppo (2001) also support this connection between high fluency of processing and positive affective reactions. These findings suggest that the ease of processing can be of significant influence on consumer responses. Moreover, this study has focused on the extent of brand image transfer rather than positive or negative affective responses. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H2: The perception of congruity is facilitated by the ease of processing, which in turn leads to more brand image transfer (mediation effect).

Moderating role of brand preference, and the influence of consumer product schema

Consumers entering the market of enormous product demands most of the time have well-established tastes and preferences. These preferences are developed by memory-based expectations of attributes (product schemas) which were embodied by brands, celebrities, and product categories (Misra & Beatty, 1990; McDaniel, 1999). Especially product categories can influence these consumer product schemas; Domzal & Kernan (1992) analyzed 321 printed ads for four product categories and found that beer ads typically evoked the category associations of refreshment, friendship, social consumption, and communicating status, whereas liquor ads stressed a sense of solitude and relaxation. Even the product category itself can be a primary source of meaning, for example how wine can mean snobbism, beer sociability and democracy, soup tradition, and juices virtue (Levy, 1981).

Product schemas help consumers evaluate new brands that fall into the same product category. An example of this was put forward by Fiske's (1982) person perception hypothesis. She stated that affective reactions are governed by a person's prior experiences and beliefs about that category: if an unknown politician matches one's expectations of the typical politician, the affect associated with the politician category is triggered and one has a spontaneous reaction toward the individual.

Past research on the schema theory has shown the effect of product schema on consumer responses. Batra and Homer (2004) have put forward in their research that brand image beliefs have a great impact on brand preferences when the consumer product schema fits the product category. They used in their research two celebrities as endorsers to test their impact on image beliefs (fun and sophisticated), and found that the effect of image beliefs on brand preferences were reflected in the purchase intentions, but only when the image beliefs were relevant and schematically fitted with the product category. This implies that categorization of information facilitates an understanding of stimuli aroused by the sponsorship. Sujan, Bettman, & Sujan (1986) use this theory to show that prior consumer beliefs and expectations significantly affect selling outcomes. According to Sujan (1985), when a person encounters a stimulus, their product schema tries to integrate the stimulus with categories of information (brand attributes) stored in memory. And, according to Smith (2004) consumers use this schema to judge if the image beliefs transferred from an event in a sponsorship matches with the product and their expectations of the product category. Also Goodstein (1993) supported that these product schemas can influence consumers' attitudes and behavioural intentions toward advertised brands and their marketing communications.

These findings suggest that brand preferences are related to consumer product schema, which is constructed by associations of the product category. It can be assumed that when these schemas are well-defined, consumers are less likely to accept the transferred beliefs if it is not consistent with their product schema. This leads to the following hypothesis:

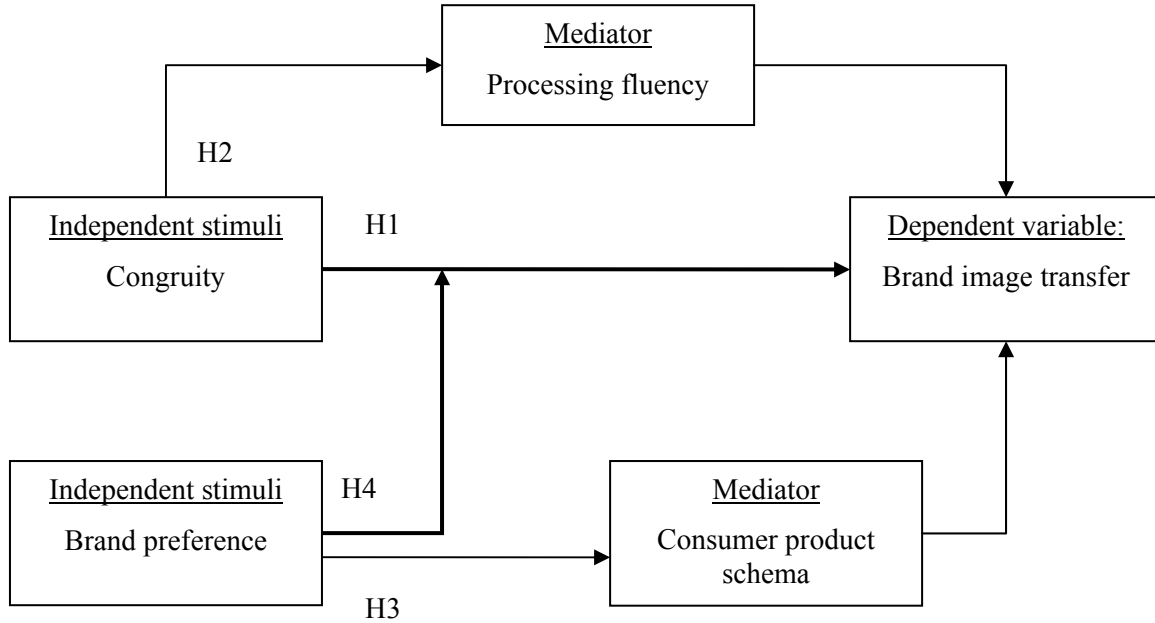
H3: Consumers with strong brand preferences will have well defined product schemas, which in turn can lead to less brand image transfer, as opposed to consumers without defined product schemas (mediation effect).

The previous section emphasized the positive impact of a congruent environment on brand image transfer in sponsorships. It showed that the more fit between brand and event, the more likely image transfer will be increased. Interesting is to find out what the influence is of brand preference. Unfortunately, not many studies have been conducted on brand image issues in sponsorships or on the impact of brand preferences in sponsorships. However, based on the above, we can assume that brand preference will influence the interaction of image transfer in a congruent context. This leads to the following hypothesis:

H4: The positive effect of congruity on brand image transfer is more pronounced for individuals with weak brand preferences as opposed to individuals with strong brand preferences.

This leads to the following conceptual model:

Figure 1. Conceptual research model



Method

Pretest

A series of pretests was conducted to develop stimulus material and to construct measures such as brand image beliefs and product schema. A product category was chosen which is popular to the target group, in this case (a relatively new brand of) beer.

Pretest 1. It was important to find two events of which one was congruent and one incongruent in relation to the brand. Within this framework nine pictures of different events were used (i.e. fashion show (2), politics (2), dance event (2), sports game (2), and church). Ten participants were asked to rank the stimuli on three different aspects: congruity (is this sponsorship realistic/ congruent), credibility (is the manipulation of brand convincing), and visibility of the brand (is the brand obviously presented in the picture). Analysis resulted in two pictures perceived as most congruent (dance event: $M= 5.2$, $SD= .72$) and most incongruent (sport event: $M= 4.2$, $SD= .28$) which were used in this experiment.

Pretest 2. The purpose of the second pretest was the development of scale items to measure brand image beliefs. Items on brand image beliefs for this scale were identified by research of Ross (1971) and Hogg, Cox, and Keeling (2000). Relevancy of image beliefs for the new brand was confirmed by research

of Kew (2008). He investigated the same beer brand (Miller Genuine Draft) on brand image in different dance events. In total twenty image beliefs with semantic differentials were selected (i.e. adventurous, energetic, urban, hip, exclusive, expensive, idealistic, eccentric, male, mature, sexy, refined, classy, original, cheeky, social, American, impulsive, distinctive, elite). After eliminating three image beliefs a Cronbach's alpha for this scale was found of .85, thus demonstrating good reliability.

Pretest 3. Based on research suggested by Batra and Homer (2004), a third pretest was held to elicit product category schema, for which two focus groups were used. In each focus group, participants were asked to write down whatever relevant "nonfunctional" (image) associations they had of the product category beer (e.g. sociability, masculine, fun). Analysis revealed the following major (most frequently mentioned) product category attributes: coziness, sociable, masculine, domestic, uncomplicated, relaxing, freedom, and maturity (Cronbach's Alpha $\alpha = .74$).

Experimental design

This experiment is conducted to investigate the influence of congruent and incongruent sponsorships on brand image transfer of consumers. Furthermore, this study has investigated the response on image transfer when considering brand preferences. The hypotheses were tested using a 2 (congruity: congruent vs. incongruent) x 2 (brand preference: high and low) experimental design.

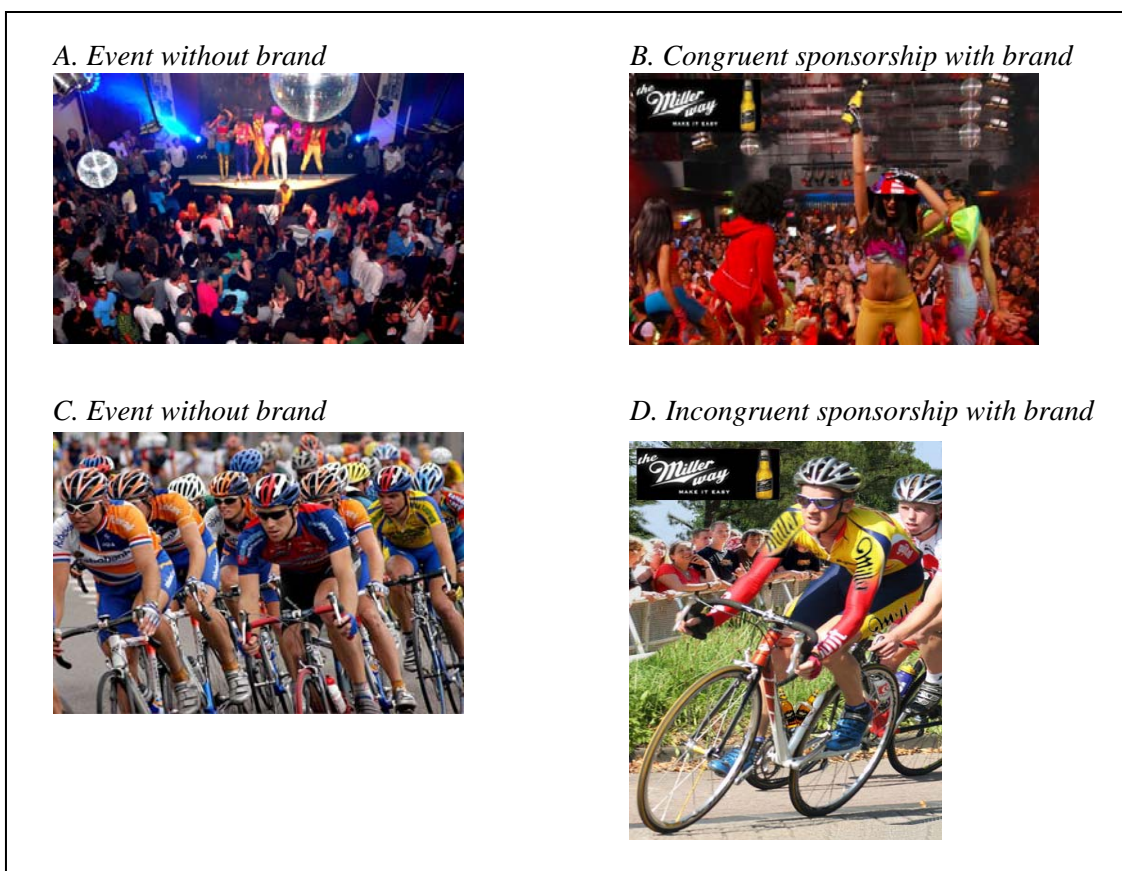
Procedure

The participants were 122 students, studying in Enschede (48.8% male and 51.6% female; mean age 22). The experiment took about 20 minutes and was conducted with hardcopy questionnaires in different rooms at the University of Twente. Furthermore, the education level of the respondents was very high: HBO 8.2%, and WO 91.2%. After debriefing there seemed no evidence of participants knowing the underlying purpose of the experiment.

The respondents were randomly assigned to one of the sponsorship treatments. Before conducting the questionnaire, respondents were asked to rank a similar photo, without brand, on the same image beliefs as were identified in pretest 2. Next, they were asked to fill out the questionnaire (Annex A and B), in which they were confronted with the manipulated stimuli (photo with brand). As pretest 1 indicated, respondents in the congruent condition were shown a different photo than respondents in the incongruent condition. In both congruent and incongruent condition, respondents assessed the brand – event sponsorship congruity and ranked the manipulated stimuli on brand image beliefs (based on pretest 2). They had the possibility to look at the manipulated picture at all times. Respondents were also informed that the questions concerned their opinion, and could therefore never be wrong.

Stimulus material. The independent variable brand – event congruity was manipulated by means of photos. All participants were given a photo with brand (sponsorship) and without brand. Participants in the congruent condition were exposed to a photo illustrating a congruent sponsorship (dance event and beer brand), and participants in the incongruent condition were exposed to a photo illustrating an incongruent sponsorship (sports event and beer brand), as is shown in figure 2. The two photos were edited with color layers and light to minimize possible differences on brightness and contrast. Both pictures also included the logo of the brand in the same corner to reinforce visibility of the brand.

Figure 2. Stimulus material used in this experiment



Measures

Brand preference

The independent variable brand preference was measured with 8 items and was based on scales of Maheswaran & Chaiken (1991), Simonin & Ruth (1998), and Hellier et al (2003). The items described the appreciation of the product category, and the extent of brand loyalty. Items such as ‘*I am interested in trying a beer of another brand*’ or ‘*my favorite brand tastes better than all brands*’, and ‘*Beer is the finest*

alcoholic drink for me were used. Three items were eliminated to obtain a good reliability ($\alpha = .81$). All responses were collected on 7-point Likert scales (1= 'strongly disagree'; 7= 'strongly agree'). In order to form an index for brand preference, the average of all items is used. By means of a median split, two groups were created representing respondents low or weak in brand preferences (LBP), or respondents high or strong in brand preferences (HBP).

Brand image transfer

The dependent variable brand image transfer was measured on the research procedure suggested by Gwinner and Eaton (1999). In the experiment, respondents ranked beforehand each of the 20 brand image beliefs as to how well it described the particular event (1= 'not at all'; 7= 'very well'), and then, respondents ranked the same 20 image beliefs as to how well they describe the brand in the manipulated picture. If image transfer is occurring, one would expect the image of the event and the image of the brand in the sponsorship to be more similar in the congruent condition. Accordingly, the differences between the corresponding image beliefs in the event and the brand in the sponsorship were measured, assuming the smaller the difference the more brand image transfer (i.e. less difference between brand and event). In this experiment, the best possible score was calculated (all event' image beliefs would be transferred to the brand), and classified as brand image transfer on item level (all other ratings were considered less or no brand image transfer). The sum of these item results measured the construct of total brand image transfer. Hypothesis one would predict that this construct will be significantly higher for participants in the congruent condition than in the incongruent condition.

Consumer product schema

As is mentioned earlier, a pretest revealed the extent of defined product schema attributes for this research. Each attribute was ranked on a 7-point Likert scale (1= *not at all characteristic*, 7= *very characteristic*) to analyze the consumer product schema. A median split was used to split this variable in less defined and well defined product schema. When respondents ranked high on this variable, they were supposed to have more well defined product schemas.

Processing fluency

This study measures processing fluency based on indicators developed by Ellen and Bone (1991): ease, vividness, and pleasantness of imagery processing. This scale has also been adopted in research by Van Rompay et al (2007). Answers were ranked on a 7-point Likert scale (1= *totally disagree*, 7= *totally agree*).

Manipulation check

The brand event congruity was checked on a five-item scale derived from research by Speed and Thompson (2000), with a Cronbach's Alpha of $\alpha = .80$. Perceived congruity was measured with items such as *'the sponsor and the event fit well together'*, and *'there is a logical connection between the event and the brand'*. All items on the perception of sponsor- event congruity were ranked on a 7 point Likert scale (*1= totally disagree, 7= totally agree*).

Analysis and results

Manipulation check

The manipulation check employed in this study is based on the perceived congruity of respondents and the different conditions they were exposed to. The respondents in the congruent condition perceived the sponsorship illustrated in the picture as more congruent ($M= 4.20$, $SD= .96$) and respondents perceived the incongruent condition as more incongruent ($M= 2.91$, $SD= .1.10$; $F(2, 84) = 16.75$, $p < .001$).

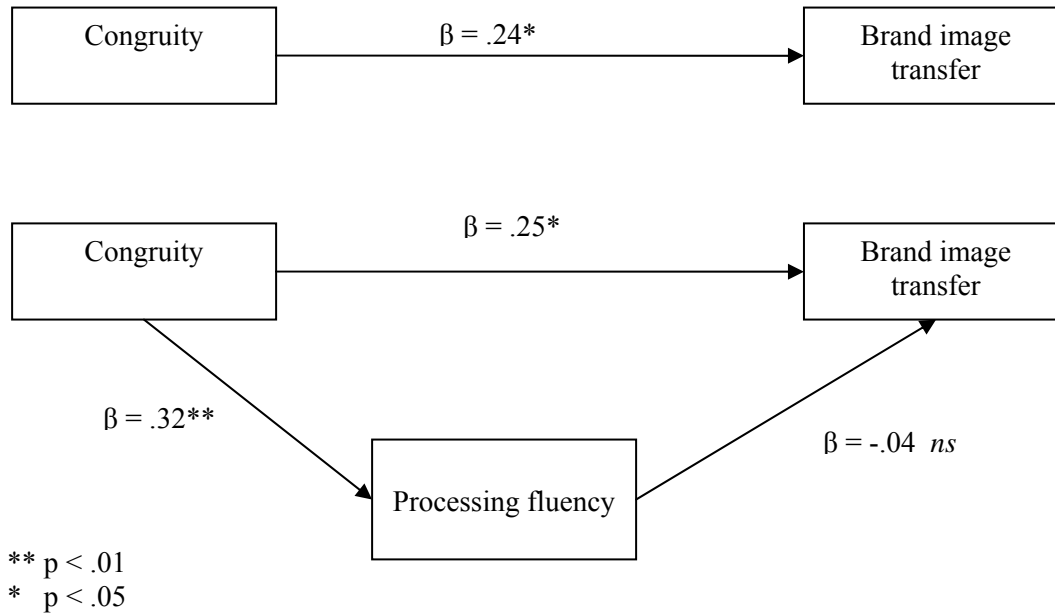
Effects of congruity on image transfer

Hypothesis 1 proposed that the brand image transfer in the congruent condition (Miller beer positioned in dance event) is higher than the transfer in the incongruent condition (Miller beer during sports event). An ANOVA analysis was used to test this assumption. Significant support is found for the assertion of H1 that the condition (congruent or incongruent) is of influence for the amount of image transfer. Respondents experienced more image transfer when brand and event were congruent ($M= 4.84$, $SD= 2.47$; $F(1, 84) = 9.32$, $p < .01$), as opposed to the incongruent sponsorship ($M= 6.60$, $SD= 2.85$).

Mediating role of processing fluency

Based on research procedure suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986), a mediation analysis was used to test hypothesis 2, which assumes that processing fluency facilitates the perception of congruity and will lead to a higher transfer of image. First, regressing brand image transfer on perception of congruity showed a significant result ($\beta = .23$, $t = 2.18$, $p = .03$). Second, regressing processing fluency on the perception of congruity showed that variations in congruity significantly accounted for variations in the presumed mediator processing fluency ($\beta = .29$, $t = 2.81$, $p < .01$). Third, regressing brand image transfer on congruity ($\beta = .24$, $t = 2.19$, $p = .03$) and processing fluency ($\beta = -.04$, $t = -.39$, *ns*) showed no significant results. This leads to no mediation as can be observed in figure 3, following that H2 is not supported.

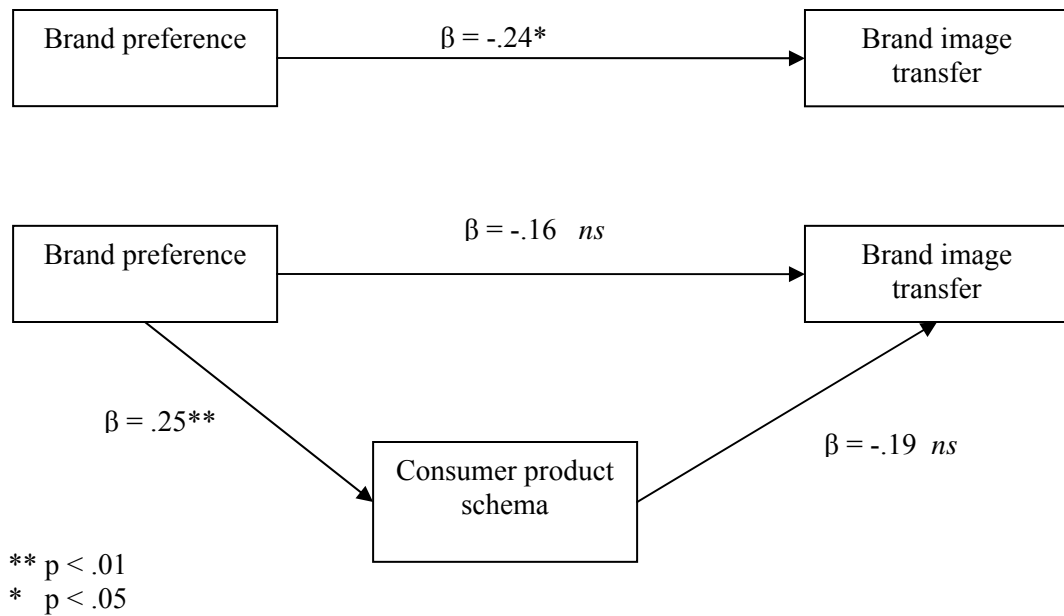
Figure 3. Analysis of processing fluency as mediator for the effect of perception of congruity on brand image transfer



Mediating role of schema category

Respondents with high brand preferences ($M = 5.08$, $SD = .63$) have significantly more developed schemas, than people with weak or no brand preferences ($M = 4.50$, $SD = .75$). This main effect has been confirmed by ANOVA analysis ($F(1,120) = 15.15 < .001$). To investigate whether the relation between brand preference and image transfer is mediated by schema category (H3), a mediation analysis has been conducted. Results are illustrated in figure 4. First, the main effect of schema category on brand preference was assessed and showed a significant result ($\beta = -.21$, $t = -2.00$, $p < .05$) as was already mentioned before. Second, the relation between schema category and brand image transfer was analyzed. Results showed a significant relation between these two variables ($\beta = .29$, $t = 3.35$, $p = .001$). Subsequently, a direct relationship between brand preference and image transfer showed significant results. However, adding schema category as a predictor in the regression analyses resulted in non-significant effect of brand preference ($\beta = -.16$, $t = -1.46$, ns) and consumer product schema ($\beta = -.19$, $t = -1.75$, ns) on brand image transfer, which rules out mediation.

Figure 4. Analysis of schema category as mediator for the effect of brand preference on brand image transfer



Moderating role of brand preferences

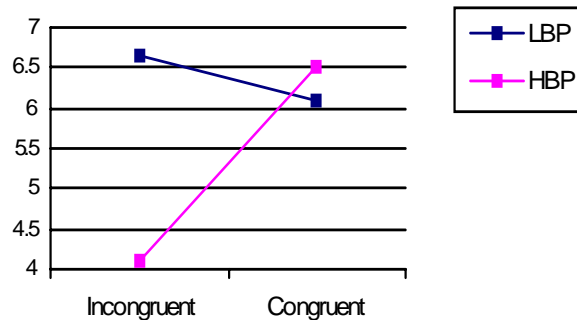
Hypothesis 4 predicted that brand preference would moderate effects of the perception of congruity on responses to brand image transfer. Univariate analyses of variance (ANOVA's) were conducted to test this hypothesized interaction effect. Results showed that brand preference moderated the effect between perception of congruity and image transfer ($F(1, 82) = 5.88, p < .02$). The outcomes of the analyses are described in table 1, indicating support for hypothesis 4.

Table 1. Analysis of brand preference as moderator for the effect of perception of congruity on brand image transfer

	df	F	p
Congruity (C)	1	2.52	<i>ns</i>
Brand preferences (BP)	1	3.01	<i>ns</i>
C x BP	1	5.88	.017
Within cells	82		

As can be seen in table 1, an interaction effect was found of congruity and brand preference on brand image transfer. Figure 5 depicts the plot of this interaction.

Figure 5 – Effects of brand preferences on brand image transfer



Univariate analyses of variance revealed that respondents with high brand preferences (HBP) experienced significant less brand image transfer, when they perceived low consistency between brand and event ($M=4.18$, $SD=1.90$), as opposed to respondents with high brand preferences who perceived a high fit between brand and event ($M=6.47$, $SD=.52$). In the case of perceived congruity in the sponsorship, respondents with both weak and strong brand preferences experienced a great amount of image transfer. Respondents with low brand preference (LBP) experience much brand image transfer in the congruent sponsorship ($M=6.14$, $SD=3.37$) as well as the incongruent sponsorship ($M=6.64$, $SD=2.76$).

General discussion

This experiment examined the brand image transfer derived from sponsorships, in which photos were used of congruent and incongruent sponsorships. According to literature congruity is the most frequently used concept to explain sponsorships (Rodgers, 2007). A manipulation check showed that de congruity was successful: the fit between brand and event was perceived as more congruent in the congruent condition and more incongruent in the incongruent condition. As predicted, sponsorship congruity had a positive effect on respondents' outcome to brand image transfer, and revealed that respondents engaged in more image transfer when brand and event were perceived congruent, and in less image transfer when sponsorship was perceived as incongruent. These findings support hypothesis 1, and with that the traditional view on sponsorship which suggest that relevant events need to be selected for the sponsored brand to maximize positive sponsor evaluation.

Furthermore, this study revealed that the extent of the availability of brand preference moderated the effect of congruity, which supported H4. Results showed that respondents with weak brand preferences engaged strongly in image transfer in both sponsorships; congruent as well as incongruent.

Interestingly, respondents with weak brand preferences ranked significantly more positive on dependent brand image beliefs, as opposed to respondents with strong brand preferences, when the sponsorship was perceived as incongruent. Research studies indicate different effects of low fit between brand and event incongruity: it enhances arousal (Jagre, Watson & Watson, 2001), leads to curiosity and interest (Muehling & Laczniak, 1988), and, more favourable responses (Heckler & Childers, 1992; Lee, 1995). This can be an explanation for respondents without or with weak brand preference who have no well defined product schemas in mind, and may therefore be more inclined to adopt brand beliefs to a brand when the sponsorship is positioned in a more striking context. The opposite is seen for respondents with strong brand preferences. Respondents with strong brand preferences experienced less image transfer in the incongruent condition, as opposed to the congruent condition. Also, research finding showed that respondents with strong brand preference have significantly more developed product schemas. It can be assumed that when the product is placed in an incongruent sponsorship, respondents with strong brand preferences are not convinced of the similarity or the value of the event in order for image to be transferred. Respondents with both weak and strong brand preferences experienced a large extent of image transfer in a congruent sponsorship. As the endorser process recalled and results in this research showed; congruent sponsorship can reinforce a consumers brand image beliefs of a product. This assumes that brand and the event share essential similarity which enhances the transfer of image associations of the event (endorser) to the brand (McCracken, 1989). Research findings support this and indicate that image transfer in congruent sponsorship is effective for respondents with both weak and strong brand preferences.

Mediation of product schema on brand preferences and image transfer led to non-significant results. This can mean that other factors are of influence in this relation. Future research could assess under what conditions brand preference may hold its effect on brand image transfer (the higher brand preference, the less image transfer). Such studies should incorporate the tendency of an individual's response or disbelief to advertising. Obermiller, Spangenberg & MacLachan (2005) defined this as the extent of scepticism. The authors support the proposition that consumers are socialized to be sceptical toward s, and the extent of scepticism is a determinant of their responses to advertising.

Finally, this research examined the mediated effect of processing fluency on the perception of congruity and image transfer. This resulted in non-significant effects, an explanation can be found in that sponsorships, either congruent or incongruent, can evoke many different images, which make it difficult to constitute a good mental image. It might therefore be more interesting for future research to look at ones ability to engage in processing information of congruent and incongruent sponsorships.

Another explanation could be that in this research processing fluency was measured on ease of processing, vividness, and pleasantness (Ellen and Bone, 1991; Van Rompay et al, 2007). Future research should incorporate more specific measures of processing fluency, such as perceptual and conceptual fluency (Reber et al, 1998). Even though the fluency measure used in this study has fairly been accounted for, more direct tendencies could expose unique variances and support the hypothesis proposed. In addition, the brand used in this study was relatively not familiar, thus, participants might be less likely to hold a strong opinion of the brand beliefs, which may also require a more direct measurement of processing fluency. Lee and Labroo (2004) suggested that processing fluency may be conceptually or perceptually driven. They described perceptual fluency as the ease with which consumers can perceive and identify the physical characteristics of a target stimulus. Whereas conceptual fluency reflects the ease with which associations comes to consumers' mind, and can benefit from a more meaningful and expected context (Hamman, 1990).

A final note concerning the manipulation and measurement of the variable brand image transfer. This study has evaluated image transfer only in the most optimal state (difference between brand and event was nil). A more broaden view of image transfer may strengthen the effects found in this research. Smith (2004) posed an important issue between brand associations and its effect on brand image transfer in his research; the greater sponsorship's capability in enabling sponsoring brands to alter their brand associations and effectively reposition them, the greater the commercial value of sponsorship. This raises the question: Are sponsorships able to facilitate transfer on all image beliefs, relevant as well as irrelevant associations? Future research should incorporate this tendency, in order to try to complete the view of image transfer in sponsorship research.

What message can be directed to marketers based on these findings?

Literature suggests to use event sponsorship as a marketing activity to identify and target well defined audiences or lifestyles (Fan & Pfitzenmaier, 2002; McDaniel, 1999; Meenaghan, 2001; Roy & Cornwell, 2004, Smith, 2004). These research findings stress the importance of careful consideration of the type of event sponsorship to select when presenting a new brand: either congruent or incongruent. Sponsorship seems to be a valuable marketing instrument, because it can help marketers in addressing their message to consumers with or without brand preferences. Marketers can use congruent event sponsorships to create or reinforce consumers' image beliefs of a new brand among consumer with strong brand preferences for another product in the same category, and incongruent sponsorship to evoke positive affective responses, i.e. interest and curiosity among consumers with low brand preferences.

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Annex A – Questionnaire 1 (congruent condition)

Hoi! Hier voor je ligt een vragenlijst behorende bij mijn afstudeeronderzoek. Jouw medewerking wordt zéér op prijs gesteld. Het onderzoek duurt in totaal ongeveer 20 minuten. Het is een onderzoek over het product bier in sponsorschappen. We beginnen met het analyseren van een drietal foto's. Bedenk dat er geen foute antwoorden bestaan, het gaat om jouw mening. Kan je op het bijgevoegde formulier aangeven in hoeverre je vindt dat de gegeven associaties bij het evenement passen?

Dan zijn we nu aan de vragenlijst toegekomen. Deze bestaat uit drie onderdelen.

I - Algemeen gedeelte over de productcategorie bier

II – Sponsorschap tussen evenement en bier

III – Profiel van de respondent

Alle antwoorden worden vertrouwelijk behandeld en niet aan derden verstrekt.

Alvast mijn hartelijk dank!

Deel I

	(Helemaal mee oneens			-	Helemaal mee eens)		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Vind jij bier lekker om te drinken?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Ik drink vaak bier.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Bier is de lekkerste alcoholische drank voor mij.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Mensen die bier drinken zijn onbenullig.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. Geef van de volgende associaties aan in hoeverre je deze bij bier vindt passen.

A. Gezelligheid

Helemaal niet kenmerkend 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Erg kenmerkend

B. Sociaal

Helemaal niet kenmerkend 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Erg kenmerkend

C. Mannelijk

Helemaal niet kenmerkend 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Erg kenmerkend

D. Huiselijk

Helemaal niet kenmerkend 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Erg kenmerkend

E. Ongecompliceerd

Helemaal niet kenmerkend 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Erg kenmerkend

F. Ontspanning

Helemaal niet kenmerkend 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Erg kenmerkend

G. Vrijheid

Helemaal niet kenmerkend 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Erg kenmerkend

H. Volwassen

Helemaal niet kenmerkend 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Erg kenmerkend

6. Wat is je favoriete biermerk?

(als je geen favoriete biermerk hebt, vermeld dan het eerste biermerk wat in je opkomt)

	(Helemaal mee oneens			-	Helemaal mee eens)		
7. [favoriete biermerk] smaakt beter dan andere biermerken.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Ik ben wel geïnteresseerd om bier van een ander merk te proberen.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Ik heb geen voorkeur voor een biermerk.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Ik ben van plan, om in de nabije toekomst, [favoriete biermerk] in te ruilen voor een ander biermerk.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Deel II

Voor de volgende vragen krijg je een nieuwe foto. Dit is een foto van een **DANCE FEEST** zien. Kan je aangeven wat je van zo een evenement vind?

-FOTO DANCE EVENEMENT -

	(Helemaal mee oneens			-	Helemaal mee eens)		
11. Ik zou graag zo een evenement bijwonen.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Ik vind het geweldig om naar dit soort feesten te gaan.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Ik vind het leuk om over zo een evenement te lezen.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

De volgende vragen gaan ook over de foto. Zoals je kan zien gaat dit om een **DANCE EVENT** en een merk: **MILLER BIER**. Dit is een Amerikaans biermerk. Antwoord de volgende vragen zo juist mogelijk:

14. Heb je wel eens van Miller bier gehoord?

Ja Nee

15. Heb je wel eens Miller bier gedronken?

Ja Nee

	(Helemaal mee oneens			-	Helemaal mee eens)		
16. Er is een logische connectie tussen het Evenement en Miller bier.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. Het imago van het evenement en het imago van Miller bier komen overeen.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. Miller bier en het evenement passen goed bij elkaar.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. Ik kan niet begrijpen waarom Miller bier dit evenement sponsort.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. Dit evenement voegt niets toe aan het imago van de Miller bier.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

21. Hieronder zijn een aantal waarden gegeven. Kijk goed naar de foto. Kan jij aankruisen in hoeverre jij vindt dat deze waarden bij MILLER BIER past.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
1. Saai								Avontuurlijk
2. Energiek								Apathisch
3. Provinciaal								Urban
4. Ouderwets								Hip
5. Exclusief								Gewoon
6. Goedkoop								Duur
7. Idealistisch								Materialistisch
8. Conventioneel								Excentriek
9. Vrouwelijk								Mannelijk
10. Volwassen								Jeugdig
11. Sexy								Onaantrekkelijk
12. Beschaafd								Lomp
13. Smakeloos								Stijlvol
14. Achterhaald								Origineel
15. Beleefd								Brutaal
16. Bescheiden								Arrogant
17. Europees								Amerikaans
18. Opzettelijk								Impulsief
19. Onderscheidend								Standaard
20. Volks								Elitair

Geef van de volgende stellingen aan in hoeverre je het ermee eens bent:

(Helemaal mee oneens - Helemaal mee eens)

22. Door dit sponsorschap sta ik negatiever tegenover Miller bier.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. Dit sponsorschap verbetert mijn beeld van Miller bier.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. Door dit sponsorschap zal ik eerder de naam van Miller Bier op andere gelegenheden opmerken.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. Door dit sponsorschap zal ik meer letten op reclame van Miller bier.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. Door dit sponsorschap vind ik Miller bier leuker.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. Door dit sponsorschap zal ik eerder de promotie van Miller bier herinneren.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. Door dit sponsorschap zou ik Miller bier eerder gaan drinken.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

29. Dit sponsorschap zorgt ervoor dat ik eerder aan Miller bier zal denken, als ik de volgende keer bier ga kopen. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

De volgende vragen gaat over de beeldvorming van Miller bier toen je de foto zag.

30. Deze vraag gaat over hoe makkelijk je een beeld kon vormen toen je naar de foto keek:

	(Helemaal mee oneens			-	Helemaal mee eens)		
A. Ik vind het lastig om een duidelijk beeld voor ogen te krijgen van Miller bier (op basis van de foto).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B. Ik kan me een goede voorstelling maken van Miller bier.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C. Ik kreeg al snel een goed beeld van Miller bier.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D. Op basis van de foto, kan ik me een goed beeld vormen wie Miller bier drinkt.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

31. Het beeld dat bij mij naar boven kwam toen ik naar de foto keek, was:

	(Helemaal mee oneens			-	Helemaal mee eens)		
A. Duidelijk	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B. Chaotisch	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C. Warrig	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D. Gedetailleerd	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
E. Zwak	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F. Intens	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
G. Vaag	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
H. Levensecht	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I. Levendig	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
J. Scherp	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

32. De aard van de beeldvorming was

A. Positief	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Negatief
B. Onplezierig	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Plezierig
C. Leuk	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Vervelend

33. Wat is de waarschijnlijkheid over je aankopen van dit merk in de toekomst?

1. Helemaal niet aannemelijk	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Heel aannemelijk
1. Onmogelijk	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Heel mogelijk

Deel III

34. Ik ben een

- Man
- Vrouw.

35. Ik ben..... jaar.

36. Wat is je hoogst genoten opleiding?

- LBO
- MBO
- HBO
- WO
- Anders, nl.....

37. Welke studie volg je/ heb je gevolgd?

.....
.

38. Wat is je geboorteplaats?

.....
.

39. Wat is je gemiddeld inkomen (bruto per maand)?

- € 0 - € 500
- € 500 - € 1000
- € 1000 - € 1500
- € 1500 - € 2000
- > € 2000

40. Waar dacht je dat dit onderzoek over ging?

.....
.....
.....

41. Kan je van de volgende stellingen aangeven in hoeverre deze bij je past:

A. Ik ben geneigd om Miller bier te kopen	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Ik heb geen intentie om Miller bier te kopen.
B. Ik wil geen extra informatie.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Ik wil graag meer informatie hebben.
C. Ik ben geïnteresseerd in dit merk	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Ik ben niet geïnteresseerd.

HARTELIJK DANK VOOR JE MEDEWERKING

Annex B – Questionnaire 2 (incongruent condition)

Hoi! Hier voor je ligt een vragenlijst behorende bij mijn afstudeeronderzoek. Jouw medewerking wordt zéér op prijs gesteld. Het onderzoek duurt in totaal ongeveer 20 minuten. Het is een onderzoek over het product bier in sponsorschappen. We beginnen met het analyseren van een drietal foto's. Bedenk dat er geen foute antwoorden bestaan, het gaat om jouw mening. Kan je het bijgevoegd formulier aangeven in hoeverre je vindt dat de volgende associaties bij het evenement passen?

Dan zijn we nu aan de vragenlijst toegekomen. Deze bestaat uit drie onderdelen.

I - Algemeen gedeelte over de productcategorie bier

II – Sponsorschap tussen evenement en bier

III – Profiel van de respondent

Alle antwoorden worden vertrouwelijk behandeld en niet aan derden verstrekt.

Alvast mijn hartelijk dank!

Deel I

	(Helemaal mee oneens)			-	(Helemaal mee eens)		
1. Vind jij bier lekker om te drinken?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Ik drink vaak bier.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Bier is de lekkerste alcoholische drank voor mij.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Mensen die bier drinken zijn onbenullig.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. Geef van de volgende associaties aan in hoeverre je deze bij bier vindt passen.

I. Gezelligheid

Helemaal niet kenmerkend 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Erg kenmerkend

J. Sociaal

Helemaal niet kenmerkend 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Erg kenmerkend

K. Mannelijk

Helemaal niet kenmerkend 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Erg kenmerkend

L. Huiselijk

Helemaal niet kenmerkend 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Erg kenmerkend

M. Ongecompliceerd

Helemaal niet kenmerkend 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Erg kenmerkend

N. Ontspanning

Helemaal niet kenmerkend 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Erg kenmerkend

O. Vrijheid

Helemaal niet kenmerkend 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Erg kenmerkend

P. Volwassen

Helemaal niet kenmerkend 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Erg kenmerkend

6. Wat is je favoriete biermerk?

(als je geen favoriete biermerk hebt, vermeld dan het eerste biermerk wat in je opkomt)

	(Helemaal mee oneens		-		Helemaal mee eens)		
7. [favoriete biermerk] smaakt beter dan andere biermerken.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Ik ben wel geïnteresseerd om bier van een ander merk te proberen.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Ik heb geen voorkeur voor een biermerk.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Ik ben van plan, om in de nabije toekomst, [favoriete biermerk] in te ruilen voor een ander biermerk.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Deel II

Voor de volgende vragen krijg je een nieuwe foto. Dit is een foto van een **WIELER EVENT** zien. Kan je aangeven wat je van zo een evenement vind?

-FOTO SPORT EVENEMENT -

	(Helemaal mee oneens		-		Helemaal mee eens)		
11. Ik zou graag zo een evenement bijwonen.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Ik vind het geweldig om naar dit soort feesten te gaan.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Ik vind het leuk om over zo een evenement te lezen.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

De volgende vragen gaan ook over de foto. Zoals je kan zien gaat dit om een **WIELER EVENT** en een merk: **MILLER BIER**. Dit is een Amerikaans biermerk. Antwoord de volgende vragen zo juist mogelijk:

14. Heb je wel eens van Miller bier gehoord?

Ja Nee

15. Heb je wel eens Miller bier gedronken?

Ja Nee

	(Helemaal mee oneens		-		Helemaal mee eens)		
16. Er is een logische connectie tussen het Evenement en Miller bier.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. Het imago van het evenement en het imago van Miller bier komen overeen.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. Miller bier en het evenement passen goed bij elkaar.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. Ik kan niet begrijpen waarom Miller bier dit evenement sponsort.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. Dit evenement voegt niets toe aan het imago van de Miller bier.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

21. Hieronder zijn een aantal waarden gegeven. Kijk goed naar de foto. Kan jij aankruisen in hoeverre jij vindt dat deze waarden bij MILLER BIER past.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
1. Saai								Avontuurlijk
2. Energiek								Apathisch
3. Provinciaal								Urban
4. Ouderwets								Hip
5. Exclusief								Gewoon
6. Goedkoop								Duur
7. Idealistisch								Materialistisch
8. Conventioneel								Excentriek
9. Vrouwelijk								Mannelijk
10. Volwassen								Jeugdig
11. Sexy								Onaantrekkelijk
12. Beschaafd								Lomp
13. Smakeloos								Stijlvol
14. Achterhaald								Origineel
15. Beleefd								Brutaal
16. Bescheiden								Arrogant
17. Europees								Amerikaans
18. Opzettelijk								Impulsief
19. Onderscheidend								Standaard
20. Volks								Elitair

Geef van de volgende stellingen aan in hoeverre je het ermee eens bent:

(Helemaal mee oneens - Helemaal mee eens)

22. Door dit sponsorschap sta ik negatiever tegenover

Miller bier. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

23. Dit sponsorschap verbetert mijn beeld van Miller bier. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

24. Door dit sponsorschap zal ik eerder de naam van Miller

Bier op andere gelegenheden opmerken. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

25. Door dit sponsorschap zal ik meer letten op reclame

van Miller bier. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

26. Door dit sponsorschap vind ik Miller bier leuker. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

27. Door dit sponsorschap zal ik eerder de promotie van

Miller bier herinneren. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

28. Door dit sponsorschap zou ik Miller bier eerder gaan

drinken. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

29. Dit sponsorschap zorgt ervoor dat ik eerder aan Miller bier zal denken, als ik de volgende keer bier ga kopen. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

De volgende vragen gaat over de beeldvorming van Miller bier toen je de foto zag.

30. Deze vraag gaat over hoe makkelijk je een beeld kon vormen toen je naar de foto keek:

	(Helemaal mee oneens			-	Helemaal mee eens)		
C. Ik vind het lastig om een duidelijk beeld voor ogen te krijgen van Miller bier (op basis van de foto).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B. Ik kan me een goede voorstelling maken van Miller bier.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C. Ik kreeg al snel een goed beeld van Miller bier.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D. Op basis van de foto, kan ik me een goed beeld vormen wie Miller bier drinkt.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

34. Het beeld dat bij mij naar boven kwam toen ik naar de foto keek, was:

	(Helemaal mee oneens			-	Helemaal mee eens)		
A. Duidelijk	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
B. Chaotisch	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
C. Warrig	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
D. Gedetailleerd	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
E. Zwak	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F. Intens	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
G. Vaag	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
H. Levensecht	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I. Levendig	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
J. Scherp	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

35. De aard van de beeldvorming was

A. Positief	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Negatief
B. Onplezierig	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Plezierig
C. Leuk	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Vervelend

36. Wat is de waarschijnlijkheid over je aankopen van dit merk in de toekomst?

1. Helemaal niet aannemelijk	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Heel aannemelijk
1. Onmogelijk	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Heel mogelijk

Deel III

34. Ik ben een

- Man
- Vrouw.

35. Ik ben..... jaar.

36. Wat is je hoogst genoten opleiding?

- LBO
- MBO
- HBO
- WO
- Anders, nl.....

37. Welke studie volg je/ heb je gevolgd?

.....
.

38. Wat is je geboorteplaats?

.....
.

39. Wat is je gemiddeld inkomen (bruto per maand)?

- € 0 - € 500
- € 500 - € 1000
- € 1000 - € 1500
- € 1500 - € 2000
- > € 2000

40. Waar dacht je dat dit onderzoek over ging?

.....
.....
.....

41. Kan je van de volgende stellingen aangeven in hoeverre deze bij je past:

A. Ik ben geneigd om Miller bier te kopen	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Ik heb geen intentie om Miller bier te kopen.
D. Ik wil geen extra informatie.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Ik wil graag meer informatie hebben.
C. Ik ben geïnteresseerd in dit merk	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Ik ben niet geïnteresseerd.

HARTELIJK DANK VOOR JE MEDEWERKING