

Sponsorship and Marketing Objectives: Study of Medium and Large Size Companies in Pakistan

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of sponsorship to achieve marketing objectives in event sponsorship perspective. For this study, holistic model “Event Sponsorship Success” has been suggested. Six constructs i.e., sponsor event fit, target market fit, sponsor leverage and activation, sponsor’s senior management involvement, integrated event marketing and mutual understanding between sponsor and event/ property (sponsee) were considered in this research. The outcome related to sponsorship was measured with the construct “sponsorship effectiveness” with three sub factors i.e. brand image, brand loyalty and sale objectives. Study was conducted through self-administered questionnaires, where response of 165 event attendees in pilot study and 385 in main study were tested. Structural equation model was used to analyse the data. The findings of overall study suggested that better fit between sponsor and sponsee during organization and conduct of event positively contributes to the effectiveness of sponsorship for marketing. This research provides useful contribution and guidance for sponsorship and event management organizations in Pakistan to work for mutual benefits i.e. the effectiveness of sponsorship and success of event. Since the survey was conducted in few cities in Pakistan, therefore results of the study can only be generalized in Pakistan. This research also provides enough guidance to explore new subjects / fields and avenues related to sponsorship and event management for future researchers.

Keywords: Sponsorship, event management, brand image, brand loyalty, SEM

Introduction

Spending on Sponsorship has increased manifold all over the world during last two decades. Overall World’s expenditure on sponsorship has reached up to 62.8 Billion US \$ in 2017 and its growth is higher as compare to advertising and sale promotion (International Event Group,2017). Large business firms in Pakistan have realized the importance of corporate sponsorship (Amanullah, 2005). There has been a shift in strategic orientation from traditional sponsorship approach being used primarily for public relations and corporate image, to integrated marketing communication to achieve commercial benefits (Goldblat, 2008).

Researchers have also identified two roles of sponsorship i.e. one to be used as a marketing communication tool and second as source of income (Rowley & William, 2008; Tripodi & Hirons, 2009). Sponsorship activation and leveraging in marketing

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communication mix is used to make the sponsor brand prominent in the event. This enables business organizations to build a long-lasting impression with the audience to achieve sponsorship objectives (Becker-Olsen & Simon 2002; Cornwell, 2008; Crimson & Horn, 1996).

Business organizations have also recognized the value of events in terms of their economic, marketing and promotional potential (Bowdin, Allen, O’Toole, Harris & McDonnell, 2011; Masterman, 2007). Organizations have also recognized the need of sponsorship using events to achieve marketing objectives (Woisetschlager, Backhaus, Evanschitzky & Michaelis, 2010). League (2005) defined sponsorship as a business contract between two parties, the sponsor and sponsee, wherein the sponsor provides money, goods and services or know-how and in exchange, the sponsee (individual, event or organization) offers rights and associations.

Sponsorship linked marketing influences customer attitude and perception positively towards sponsor brand (Nickel, Cornwell & Johnsten, 2011). To make the event successful and beneficial both the sponsor and event management, should establish common strategy and objectives (Cornwell, Weeks & Roy 2005; Nadav, 2010). There is a requirement of reciprocal beneficial partnership to establish a common management frame work in event sponsorship perspective (Soteriades & Dimou, 2011).

Peculiar environments related to Pakistan and sponsorship for marketing being a new field, there is lack of mutual understanding and coordination between the sponsor and event management for organization of events. Local and multinational business firms spend money on sponsoring the events but unable to achieve desired marketing objectives. Current study identifies the factors related to bring synergy and coordination among stake holders and developed a model which contribute towards the effectiveness of sponsorship for marketing.

Literature Review

Growth of Sponsorship

During last two decades there has been a lot of research on event sponsorship. Researchers over the period suggested different sponsorship and event sponsorship management models, which have been taken into consideration to identify relevant factors related to Pakistani sponsors, event managers and other stakeholders: -

Table 1: *Evolution of Sponsorship Management*

Model	Importance
Sponsorship Model by Gardner and Shuman (1998).	Sponsorship being used for awareness, image building and sales
Sponsorship Development Model by Cornwell et al. (2005).	Sponsorship used as part of corporate strategy and using marketing mix to enhance the sponsor’s impact.

<p>Model of Sponsorship Based on Competitive Advantage by Fahy, Farrelly, & Quester (2004) Sponsor Asset Model by Hughes & Dann (2006). Life Cycle Model by Urriolagoitia & Planellas (2007). Sponsorship Progression Model by Lammers (2010). Event Sponsorship a Management Framework by Sorteriades, Sarmanioties & Varvaessos (2013) Sponsor Event Fit a Network Perspective by Bruhn & Holzer (2015).</p>	<p>Model links sponsor and property/event to integrate their resources to improve the efficiency of a system Identified contributing factors of sponsor and property/event to give rise to new competency Long term alliances among stake holders to get the competitive advantage Use of leveraging and, activation in event management by sponsor and event managers. Sponsorship is an investment for sponsors and source of income for event managers. Importance of factors i.e. sponsor artist fit (good. theme/image) and sponsor event organizer fit (better-coordination) to bring synergy among stake holders.</p>
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Sponsor Event Fit (SEF)

The unique congruency and fit between sponsor and event make the sponsorship successful and provide sustainable competitive advantage (Amis, Slack, & Berrett, 1999). There should be either functional or image similarity between sponsor product/brand and event, which leads to develop positive attitude and transfer of brand image to audience (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Roy & Graeff, 2002; Speed & Thompson, 2000).

Research Literature has endorsed great importance to the fit between the sponsor and the sponsored event (Richard & Peter, 2000). Speed and Thompson, (2000) also well-defined that the good fit and congruence between sponsor and event, will have positive effect on audience response in three ways i.e. (i) the attitude towards the event (ii) attitude towards the sponsor and (iii) perception of congruence between sponsor and event.

The fit can be found with number of other dimensions such as: "sponsor brand /product relevance to the object", "functional similarities" (i.e. sponsor's product and the object are both of high quality) and "image/symbolic similarities, linkage, resemblance, pairing and complimentary association" between sponsored product, event/property and audience/client (Rifon, Choi, Trimble & Li, 2004). There are several studies which showed similar findings reinforcing the positive relationship between the perceived fit and behavioural intentions of audience attending the event (e.g. Cornwell et al., 2005; Olson, 2010).

H₁: Sponsorship effectiveness is positively related to sponsor event fit.

Target Market Fit (TMF)

Shanklin and Kuzma (1992) identified the critical issues that corporate leaders observe in making sponsorship choices, which include choosing the right event for their audience/client. Ruth and Simonion (2003) described that the transfer of image from event / brand was higher when the event and the sponsor were congruent with their target audience in either functionality or image. Sponsor is interested in that event where the audience of event can use the sponsors brand and interact with the sponsor initiatives (Keller, Parameswaran, & Jacob, 2011).

The audience should have relevance both with the sponsor brand and event (Woisetchlager & Michallis, 2012). Event manager would like to organize that event, which is able to attract audience required by the sponsor (Walraven, Koning, & Bottenburg, 2012).

Cornwell et al., (2005) and Jobber and Ellis-Chadwick (2012) explicitly pointed out the strive towards a target market fit, fit of event and audience or target audience fit in their objectives. The audience who attend the event should have relevance both with event and sponsor brand (Bowdin *et al.*, 2011; Woisetchlager & Michallis, 2012).

H2: Sponsorship Effectiveness is positively related to target market fit.

Sponsors Leverage and Activation (SLA)

Event-sponsor link can be improved when sponsor uses the activities like packaging, promotion, advertising, direct marketing in the event This can also be done by creating on-site activities launched by the sponsors like presentations, exhibitions, trade shows, displaying banners and signboards (Madrigal, 2001). Leveraging means use of different methods of marketing mix (e.g. advertising, sale promotion and direct sale), while an activation means presentation of sponsorship programs and on-site activities to have direct interaction with the audience to make the sponsorship effective (Cornwell et al., 2005).

Event marketing has unique quality where sponsor can mix his message into the event gathering and can directly engage the customer (Close, Finney, Lacey & Sneath, 2006). The objectives of sponsor should be clear to create activations and direct contact with the customer (Brennan, 2008). The activational communication is very useful in bringing customers near to sponsor. International Event Group (IEG) indicates that an estimated additional cost of US \$1.90 is spent on leveraging activity for each US \$ 1.0 spend on sponsorship (International Event Group, 2007).

A research carried out by Coppetti, Wentzel, Tomczak and Sven (2009) also proved that there is positive relation between activation and participation on sponsorship effectiveness where more involvement of sponsor and on-site direct communication with the audience improved brand awareness, brand locality and sales. Leveraging consists of

development of integrated promotion plan that clarifies the effective role of each promotional tool (Howard & Crompton, 2005; Speed & Thompson, 2000)

H3: Sponsorship Effectiveness is positively related to sponsors leverage and activation.

Senior Manager Involvement (SMI)

High identification and emotional involvement of sponsors in the event will enhance the synergy among sponsor and sponsee (Madrigal, 2001). Direct involvement of sponsors will be beneficial for success of the event and effectiveness of sponsorship (Chadwick & Thawaitis 2005; Coppetti et al., 2009). Many researchers have argued that sponsors enabled companies should participate and actively interact with the event participant (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000).

Degree to which the firm and sponsoring organization are well committed and share common traits will have positive impact on sponsorship effectiveness (Basil & Basil, 2003). Sponsorship requires, however, the active involvement and combined resources of all stake holders to create value for sponsors and event organizers (Lund, 2011).

The study paper presented by Soteriades and Dimou, (2013) suggested a model for establishing a common mutual management framework for efficient management of event sponsorship. Sponsor organizations should establish long term partnership with the property / event and establish credibility with the event. This includes sincerity, commitment and involvement of sponsors for event / property (Woisetchlager & Michallis., 2010).

H4: Sponsorship Effectiveness is positively related to senior management involvement in the event

Mutual Understanding Sponsor and Sponsee (MUSS)

Existence of semantic link (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999) and well match between sponsor and sponsee will have positive impact on sponsorship effectiveness (Speed et al, 2000). Study proved that in event sponsorship perspective, if there is a synergy / link and similarity between sponsor and sponsee and other stakeholders, all will be benefited (Grohs, Wagner & Vstecka, 2004).

Sponsorship relationships can operate as alliances, providing a strategic platform for mutual gain (Fahy et al, 2005). Proper and well managed sponsorship campaign can benefit all partners of supply chain including producers, wholesalers, retailers and other marketing channel holders/ partners (Bruhn & Holzer, 2015). The study paper presented by Soteriades and Dimou (2013) suggested a model for establishing a common mutual management framework for efficient management of event sponsorship.

The sponsorship should be long term and able to get better recognition (Eunju, Love & Bdi,2008). There should be mutual understanding on all marketing issues and

common management frame work for event sponsorship (Okumus, Altinary & Chathoth, 2010; Soteriades & Dimou, 2011). Good understanding will enhance benefit for both the parties to achieve the objectives i.e. the success of event and effectiveness of sponsorship (Bruhn & Holzer, 2015; Soteriades & Dimou, 2011).

H5: Sponsorship Effectiveness is positively related to mutual understanding of sponsor & sponsee.

Integrated Event Marketing and Social Media (IEMS)

Good match between sponsor and event marketing initiatives and perceived similarity attributed to effectiveness of sponsorship (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999). All high-profile sport, social / cultural events and musical shows receive lot of media attention and coverage (Cronwell, 2008). Especially the use and importance of social media by business organization as a communication platform has multiplicative benefits (Bughin & Chui, 2011).

The events which are sponsored well will be able to attract all types of media. Sponsorship has the ability to use integrated marketing to enhance link between sponsor and audience (George, Susan & Stafford, 2012). Event management and sponsors should mobilize all resources for establishment of well- coordinated marketing plan to promote the event and sponsors brand / product (Sirgy, Ley, Johar & Well, 2008; Sneath, Finny & Close, 2005). The events like sports, social and cultural, get lot of media attention. The cost of this media is not borne by the sponsor but it gets lot of exposure (Sneath et al., 2005).

H 6: Sponsorship effectiveness is positively related to integrated event marketing and social media

Sponsorship Effectiveness (SE)

There is also no formal measuring tool to evaluate the effectiveness of sponsorship. However different indicators are being used by sponsorship team to evaluate the sponsorship activity i.e., this include the positive word of mouth of the clients for particular sponsorship initiative (Irem & Pirzada, 2015). Most cited objectives of event sponsorship include generating public awareness, media attention, product awareness, brand loyalty, enhanced corporate image and consumer perception (Chadwick & Thawaits, 2005).

Findings on sponsorship evaluation study by Gwinner and Eaton, (1999) identified sales / purchase intention and media exposure as most common measurement methods. Proposed model of sponsorship-based competitive advantage (Chadwick & Thawaits, 2005) includes three key resources: i) tangible assets (such as financial); ii) intangible assets (brand equity, image transfer), and iii) capabilities (sponsorship management expertise).

In sponsorship literature, the connection between attitudes and purchase intentions has been investigated and well-established in several studies (e.g. Biscaia, Correia, Rosado, Ross & Maroco, 2013; Kim, Ko & James, 2011). Event sponsorship enhances brand awareness and brand loyalty as measured by recall and recognition (Cornwell *et al.*, 2006). Sponsorship is most effective for objectives to enhance corporate image, brand awareness and equity (Sneath *et al.*, 2005). The positive brand opinion change contributes to higher purchase intentions for the sponsor (Close *et al.*, 2006).

Sponsorship for marketing has direct impact on customer sale intentions (Harvey, Gray & Despain, 2006; Keller *et al.*, 2011). Pelsmacker, Geuens, and Van (2013) identified three sponsorship marketing objectives i.e. awareness building, brand image and Sales/market share. Considering the previous research and need three predictors i.e. brand image, brand loyalty and sale objectives are being used for measurement of sponsorship effectiveness.

Theoretical Framework

Constructs and Items

The constructs and items used in the research model are presented in the table 2. All variables were measured on 5-point Likert Scale (1= strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree).

Table 2: *Constructs and Items of Model*

Name of Construct	Code	Items	Constructs and Items Adopted from
Sponsor Event Fit	SEF	SEF1-SEF5	Speed & Thomson (2000)
Target Market Fit	TMF	TMF1-TMF5	Keller (2001)
Sponsor Leverage and Activation	SLA	SLA1-SLA5	Sylvestre & Moutinho (2007)
Senior Management Involvement	SMI	SMI1-SMI5	Johansson & Utterstrom (2007).
Mutual Understanding Sponsor & Sponsee	MUSS	MUSS1-MUSS5	Smith, Graetz, & Westerbeek (2008).
Integrated Event Marketing & Social Media	IEMS	IEMS1-IEMS5	Johansson & Utterstrom (2007)
Sponsorship Effectiveness	SE		
Brand Image	BI	BI1-BI5	Simmons & Becker - Olsen (2006)
Brand Loyalty	BL	BL1-BL5	Simmons & Becker - Olsen (2006)
Sale Objective	SO	SO1-SO5	Smith <i>et al</i> (2008)

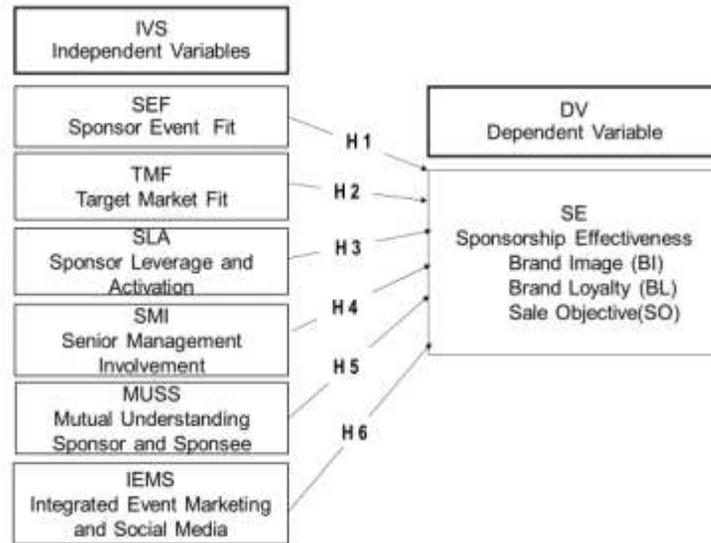


Figure 1: *Conceptual Framework Sponsorship Success Model.*

Data and Methodology

Field study method, which is of non-contrived setting, was used for this research. Population taken for this research was event attendees i.e. students of schools and colleges, teachers, parents, employees of sponsoring organizations, event management and media persons. Two events were selected for this research. Event sponsored by Toyota Rawal Motors at Islamabad was used for pilot study and event sponsored by Coke Pakistan at Lahore was used for main study. Both events were organized by WWF Pakistan.

Convenience sampling method was used to select the sample for both pilot testing and main research. Pilot study with the sample of 165 respondents was conducted and instrument was tested for construct validity to ensure that the questions and scale items were clear and run smoothly before submitting the survey questionnaire for actual data collection for main research. 850 questionnaires were distributed to event attendees. After screening, 385 responses were found useful for data analysis. Response rate was 45 percent. Data was analyzed using SEM using SPSS version 22, EViews7 and AMOS 22.

Results and Discussion

Summary of data analysis of 385 respondents is presented in the article. The threshold values for Cronbach's alpha should be more than 0.70 (Cronbach, 1951). Composite Reliability should be more than .70 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Average Variance Extracted (AVE) should be more than .50 and item loading should be more than .60 (Hair, Black, Babin, Aderson and Tatham, 2006).

Table 3: Tests for Reliability and Consistency (N=385)

Variables	AVE	Composite Reliability	Item Loading	Cronbach's Alpha
SEF	.796	.940	.892	.914
TMF	.855	.999	.924	.916
SLA	.847	.959	.921	.943
SMI	.852	.965	.922	.914
MUSS	.788	.948	.887	.916
IEMS	.769	.928	.969	.916

Note. Data presented in the table 3 shows that the values of CR, AVE and Cronbach's Alpha are within the permissible limits, which confirms the reliability of measurement model.

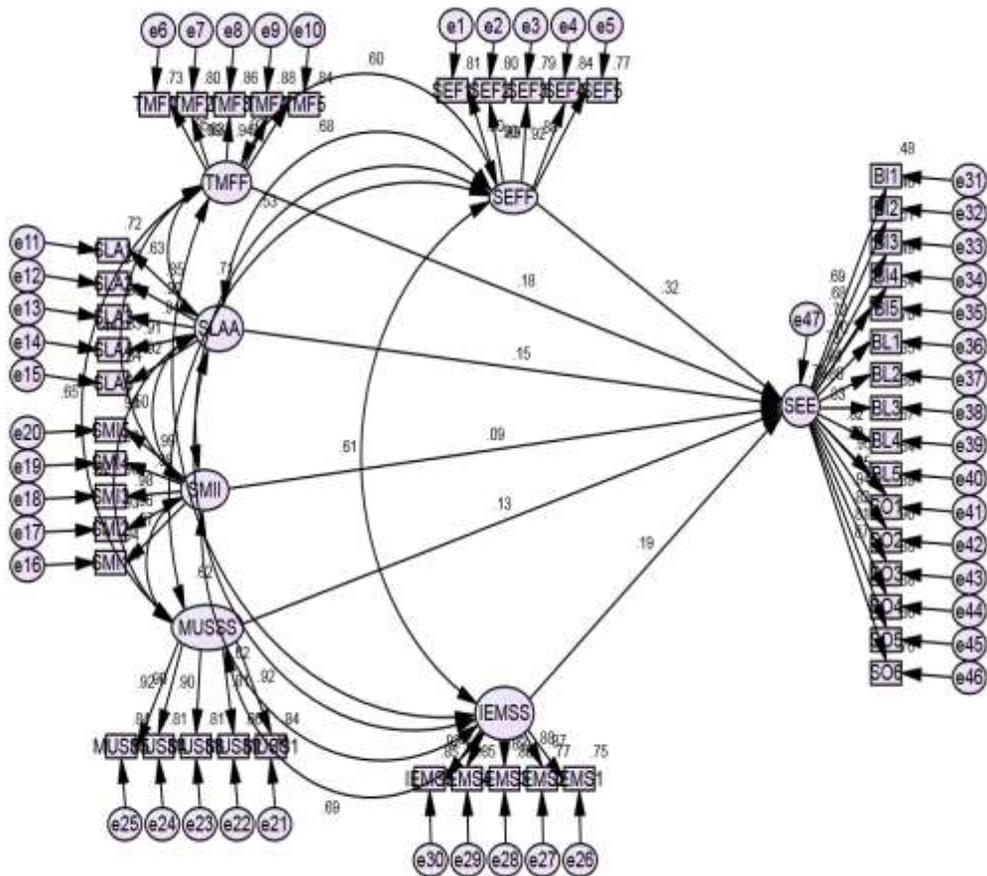


Figure 2: AMOS Diagram of the Model

Table 4 present the goodness of fitness measures of the model. Seeing the thresholds of goodness of fit index, it is established that either the model is accepted or rejected (Bryne, 2013 Hu and Bentler (1999). The values of goodness of fit indices were adequate and satisfactory to accept the sponsorship effectiveness model.

Table 4: *Goodness of Fit Measures (N=385)*

Absolute Fit Measures	Accepted Value	Values from Model	Adequacy
Goodness of Fit Measure			
Chi-square (x ²)	-	x 2 = 2796.5	
Df	-	.968	
X ² P – level	> 0.05	.000	
Goodness of Fit Index(GFI)	> 0.90	.907	Good
Incremental Fit Measures			
Tucker Lewis Index TLI	> 0.95	.958	Good
Normed Fit Index NFI	> 0.90	.934	Good
Incremental Fit Index IFI		.943	
Non Centrality Based Measures			
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	< = 0.08	.050	Good
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	> = 0.90	.953	Good
Parsimonious Fit Measures			
Normed x 2 (x 2 / df)	1 < x 2 / df < 2	2.085	Satisfactory
Relative Fit Index RFI	Higher the better	.912	Good

Hypotheses Testing

Blunch (2012) explained the relationship between the variables if proved strong then the model is fit. The latent constructs cumulative impact has been measured. It has been observed that the value of total effect is within permissible limits, therefore, the hypotheses having direct relation with sponsorship effectiveness have been accepted.

Table 5: *Structural Equation Coefficients of the Model (N=385)*

	Effect From	To	Stdzd. Reg. Weight	C.R.	p-values	SE
H 1	Sponsorship Effectiveness	Sponsor Event Fit	.322	6.721	.001	.038
H 2	Sponsorship Effectiveness	Target Market Fit	.178	4.396	.001	.034
H 3	Sponsorship Effectiveness	Sponsor Leverage and Activation	.117	3.643	.001	.038
H 4	Sponsorship Effectiveness	Senior Management Involvement	.090	2.838	.005	.021
H 5	Sponsorship Effectiveness	Mutual Understanding Sponsor & Sponsee	.134	2.926	.003	.035
H 6	Sponsorship Effectiveness	Integrated Event Marketing & Social Media	.192	4.54	.001	.034

Discussion

The value of standardized regression weight (SRW) for SEE-SEF was .322. The relationship was significant. Results confirmed that audience liked dimensions of fit between sponsor and event/property investigated through survey questionnaire. The sponsor brand and event were able to create linkage and fit in the event, whereas audience were able to get entertainment and interaction with the sponsor.

The value of SRW for SEE-TMF was .178. The relationship was significant. The event was able to attract reasonable number of audience required by the sponsor to promote and sell their product. The audience also showed positive response for sponsor product / brand.

There was positive relation between SLA and SE. The value of SRW for SEE - SLA was .153 and results were significant. The audience and sponsor close interaction during the event was due to effective sponsorship in the form of on-site leverage and activation, which had positive impact on audience and they liked sponsor's initiatives during the event and showed positive response for sponsor brand/product.

There was positive relationship between SE-SMI. The value of SRW i.e. SE-SMI was .090. The presence of sponsors and interaction with audience was able to achieve positive response among audience. However, strength of this relationship was satisfactory which confirmed that the presence of senior management was nominal to create significant positive impact on customer attitude.

There was positive relation between SE-MUSS. The value of SRW for SE - MUSS was .134. The results were significant. Results confirmed that audience liked dimensions investigated through survey questionnaire on mutual understanding between sponsor and event/property i.e. such as better understanding, achievement of commercial and social objectives.

The value of SRW for SE - IEMS was .192. The audience liked the publicity campaign and participated in the event in good strength. The presence of event and sponsors brand in social media was also noticed. The event was also well covered by TV and other media.

Conclusion

The lessons and outcomes of current research are considered very useful for business organizations in Pakistan. This research provides guidance for sponsorship and event management organizations to work together for mutual benefits i.e. the effectiveness of sponsorship and success of event. This research also provides enough guidance to explore new subjects / fields and avenues related to sponsorship and event management for future researchers.

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