

Tourist Attitudes to Mega Event Sponsors: Where does Patriotism Fit?

Abstract

The sponsoring of mega events enables organizations to capitalize on the power of sport to stimulate passionate brand identifications amongst attendees. However, a critical issue that has not been addressed by scholars is whether the effects of sponsoring mega-events such as the Olympics by a foreign brand will resemble the equivalent sponsorship by a domestic counterpart. In particular, few scholars have investigated attendee perceptions of congruities between event-sponsor and self-sponsor brand favorability emanating from an overseas country with where there are longstanding tensions and from home. This study investigated attendees at the 2014 Summer Youth Olympic Games in Nanjing, China, a city with a long history of patriotic nationalism directed against Japan. The researchers identify that self-domestic sponsor congruity mediates the impact of patriotism amongst domestic attendees on their favorability towards domestic brands. Self-foreign sponsor congruity moderates the impact of event liking on favorability, even in the case of sponsors from a country with hostile connotations. The study has managerial implications for targeting and localization strategies by sponsor brands both domestic and overseas. It is proposed that foreign brand sponsors of mega-events should pursue local brand adaption through the incorporation local narratives with which residents can identify.

Key words: patriotism, event liking, self-sponsor congruity, sponsor favorability, tourist

Introduction

Hosting mega events such as the Olympics, FIFA World Cup and international exhibitions (e.g., world expos) impacts on the economies of host countries and reverberates across global media (Lim and Lee, 2006). Hosts have included less familiar tourism destinations, some of which have provided lasting legacies of tourism growth for either the host city or for the wider country or territory (Fourie and Santana-Gallego, 2011). Scholars have shown an increasing interest in how tourism destinations have engaged in “commercial nationalism” to sell patriotic stories to local and international audiences (Seeler, 2017). It also has potential impacts on visitor perceptions towards company sponsorships (Petrovici, Shan, Gorton, and Ford, 2015). The concept of event liking is “a construct that taps into the benefits that individuals respondents receive directly from the sport event” (Speed and Thompson, 2000, p.228). This concept has been adopted by researchers who have explored the changing tourist attitudes towards sponsors (e.g. Speed and Thompson, 2000; Gwinner, Larson, and Swanson, 2009; Shin, Lee, and Perdue, 2018). Speed and Thompson (2000) found that perceived status and personal liking for the event

impact positively on attitudes to sponsor brands. Although the strength of the association between awareness of Olympic sponsor brands invites huge sponsorships, researchers have given little attention to whether the sponsoring of mega events impacts differently on local and international sponsors. Specifically, in-group patriotic event tourists may question the morality of liking foreign sponsors and of purchasing foreign products (Sharma, Shimp, and Shin, 1995). The city of Nanjing is a potential example of these phenomena. There is a widely held anti-Japanese feeling that originated with the mass slaughter of citizens during the Nanking Massacre of December 1937, when Japanese troops slaughtered an estimated 300,000 civilians and raped 80,000 women (Mitter, 2013). Given this historical context, Chinese event tourists may demonstrate a high tendency towards ethnocentrism, leading to a disinclination to purchase products imported from Japan.

Jiménez and Martín (2010) argued that the reputation of firms associated with a country-of-origin (COO) can create trust in foreign firms, though this may be undermined by animosity and/or ethnocentrism. It is plausible that sponsoring mega events might lessen the transference of event related images to foreign sponsors, particularly when tourists have a strongly developed narrative towards a foreign country. A survey also reported unfavorable sentiment towards Japan that amounted to 88% of the population in China and 75% in South Korean (Stocks, 2015). Given such circumstances, is it possible for Japanese sponsors to leverage the sporting image of mega events hosted in China through sponsorship? To address this issue the present study examines whether domestic and foreign sponsors of a mega event (e.g., the Youth Olympics) are received favorably by tourists who hold identifiable in-group identifications. Research on self-image congruence has provided substantive evidence that self-congruity with a product/brand/store (a match between brand user image and tourist's self-image) positively effects tourist behaviors such as brand attitudes and loyalty (e.g. Sirgy, 1982). However, there is less compelling evidence of the effect of self-sponsor congruity on sponsor favorability because of national identity. In this study the researchers investigate whether a patriot's self-sponsor congruity mediates the impact of patriotism on attitudes to local sponsors.

It cannot be assumed that hosting a mega event will lead to a shift in national image. Hahm, Tasci, and Breiter Terry (2019) found no significant changes in South Korean's country, destination, and Winter Olympic images following hosting of the 2018 Winter Olympic Games. An equivalent effect may also apply to event sponsorship. Although the question of whether a mega-event sponsor originates locally or overseas is a critical moderator of sponsorship effects, empirical evidence has shown that foreign sponsors achieved poorer outcomes than domestically owned rivals in emerging markets (Petrovici et al., 2015;). For instance, Petrovici et al. (2015) demonstrated that the effects of an event's status and of sponsor-event fit on brand favorability and interest are significantly stronger for domestic sponsors than for foreign sponsors. The Adidas-Li Ning case in the 2008 Beijing Olympics is an example of a foreign sponsor registering poorer outcomes than a domestic rival. It was found that a domestic brand

(Li Ning) achieved better likelihood of brand recommendation than the official sponsor (Adidas) (Pitt, Parent, Berthon, and Steyn, 2010). However, some studies have found that hosting a mega event can contribute to national pride and identity (Karkatsoulis, Michalopoulos, and Moustakatou, 2005; Kaplanido, 2009; Florek and Insch 2011; Chen, 2012; Abou-Shouk, Zoair, Farrag, and Hewedi, 2017), because it can raise national image. Chen (2012), for example, indicated that hosting mega events such as the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, 2010 Shanghai Expo, and 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games enhances China's image. Abou-Shouk, Zoair, Farrag, and Hewedi (2017) also found that the image of the venue had a positive effect on the country image and visit/revisit intentions of exhibitors at the 2015 Expo. On this basis one might expect tourist liking for an event and faith in a sponsor to influence the effectiveness of image transfer from an event sponsorship (Alexandris, Douka, Bakaloumi, and Tsasousi, 2008). However, whilst purchasing foreign brands may reinforce one's desired social image that incorporates an ideal social group (Kang, Tang, Lee, and Bosselman, 2012), unpatriotic and disloyal connotations may render the activity undesirable (Yue, Thwaites, and Pillai, 2013). Finally, this study examines the moderation effect of self-congruence with a foreign sponsor on the relationship between event liking and foreign sponsor favorability, in a case where event tourists are particularly hostile to the country origin of the brand. Identification of the moderating and mediating roles of self-image congruity in a strongly patriotic society may have profound implications for foreign and domestic event managers and for event organizers when implementing sponsorship strategies.

It is particularly relevant in Asia where there are widespread and persistent expressions of strong nationalistic feeling and rhetoric, notably over territorial disputes in the South China Sea.

Literature Review and Conceptual Development

Patriotism and Mega Events

Kock, Josiassen, Assaf, Karpen, and Farrelly (2019) have noted that "People often demonstrate a home country bias toward their own nation over other nations. This bias is an important determinant of their behavior" in tourist destination decision (p.1). Such patriotic disposition is a form of national identification that binds people together with a nation, giving them a sense of membership of a cultural or ethnic group (Bulmer and Buchanan-Oliver, 2010). Well-known sporting events, such as the Olympics have become a critical cultural site which generates the most intense forms of patriotic emotions to be found in modern societies. Hosting such a mega sport event conveys important national symbolism (Allison, 2000) and encourages patriots to participate. Mega events exhibit symbolic significance and form, and may illuminate the image of a host city and country (Snyder, Lassegard, and Ford, 1986). They allow citizens to be involved emotionally in an extraordinary and global event to socialize the status of the host community and to enhance connections with personal hobbies and interests (Warner,

Newland, and Green, 2011). Feelings of overwhelming patriotism are commonly on display during mega sporting competitions. For instance, the nationalistic symbolism of Olympic athletes competing as representatives of a country can generate a nationalistic climate before, during and after the competition (Maguire, Jarvie, Bradley, and Mansfield, 2002). Thus, the pride of hosting a mega event builds identification, vision and motivation amongst tourists (Preuss and Solberg, 2006). A notable example is the 1988 Olympics in Seoul, Korea. This event generated national pride, feelings of vitality, participation and recognition, and an international perception of Korea as modern and technologically up-to-date (Bridges, 2008). The Summer Olympic Games in London in 2012 are a comparable example. Team Great Britain offered a more effective way of enhancing British identity when a medalist stood on the podium, than using more overtly and traditionally political methods (Chesterton 2012).

Since mega events can contribute to country image (Karkatsoulis et al., 2005; Chen, 2012; Abou-Shouk, Zoair, Farrag, and Hewedi, 2017), they may attract the support of tourists, thereby enhancing image and credibility and increasing the global economic influence of national governments and boosting national morale and pride (Karkatsoulis et al., 2005). Chen (2012) and Abou-Shouk, Zoair, Farrag, and Hewedi (2017) have also indicated that a country's image can be enhanced by hosting mega events or visiting the venue of Expo exhibitors. One such example is Li Ning, a domestic celebrity during the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games (Pitt, Parent, Berthon, and Steyn, 2010). These observations prompted the researchers to propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Patriotism impacts positively on tourists' liking of a mega event

Liking Events and Favoring Domestic Sponsors

Given their established sense of interdependence, groups in Asian countries which Hofstede (1980) has described as patriotic collectivists, will give priority to the goals of in-groups that influence their cognitive evaluations of sponsor brands. These will ultimately affect the purchasing of domestic brands (Han, 1998). Patriotic consumers commonly express willingness to make sacrifices for their country, thereby subordinating their personal interests and foregoing well-known foreign products which are perceived as harming the national economy (Balabanis, Diamantopoulos, Mueller, and Melewar, 2001). Patriots are likely to view it as their duty to consume domestic products and thereby to support producers with a view to protecting the economy (Han, 1988). Hereafter, the authors treat patriotic consumers as being synonymous with patriotic tourists.

A strong sense of patriotism may motivate volunteering and participation in mega-events (Lee et al., 2014). When a tourist has a personal liking for an event, this reflects their self-image (Sirgy et al. 2008). Such positive attitudes will influence the extent of favorability towards sponsor brands and a sponsor's reputation for corporate social responsibility (Speed and

Thompson, 2000). When tourists participate in a mega event, they are exposed to voluminous information through commercial sponsorships. Such exposure through mass media channels may occur during or after the sponsored event. Classical conditioning theory posits that an increased prevalence of pairings increases associations between an unconditioned stimulus (the event) and conditioned stimulus (the sponsor) (Yue et al., 2013). One might expect the impact of event image on attitudes towards the sponsor to increase in the face of higher levels of sponsorship exposure (Speed and Thompson, 2000; Grohs and Reisinger, 2014). When tourists appreciate the benefits of sponsorship for an event where patriotism enhances their involvement, they may feel grateful and show goodwill and gratitude towards the sponsoring organization (Crimmins and Horn, 1996; Meenaghan, 2001). Thus, the presence of higher numbers of tourists that have been prompted by their personal liking for the event should generate greater awareness of domestic sponsors. Such awareness may prompt more positive attitudes towards the brand image of the domestic sponsor and a preference for choosing the sponsor's product offerings (Roy and Cornwell, 2004). These observations lead to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Tourists' liking of mega events mediates the impacts of patriotism on favoring domestic sponsors.

The Mediating Role of Self-domestic Sponsor Congruity

The concept of self-image congruence refers to the cognitive match between how tourists view themselves (e.g., actual self, ideal self, social self and ideal social self) and a product/brand, store image, destination image or user image of a given product/brand/service (Ebrahim, Ghoneim, Irani, and Fan, 2016). There is empirical confirmation that such congruence with a brand image influences tourist behaviors such as brand attitudes, preferences, brand and loyalty and motivations to purchase (e.g., Graeff, 1996; Sirgy et al., 2008). Tourist identifications with preferred brands express and enhance their uniqueness and self-identity (Belk, 1988). People buy products for their meanings as well as for what they can do. They not only consume products/brands/services for their functional value, but also for their symbolic meanings (Lee and Hyman, 2008).

Brand communications are symbolic resources which can be used to build and develop tourist identities (Elliott and Wattanasuwan, 1998). They are sometimes associated with social self-congruity and motivate tourists to behave in ways that satisfy their need for social consistency and which stimulate positive attitudes towards purchases of brands that relate to their self-concept (Graeff, 1996). When highly patriotic individuals purchase and use domestic brands, they are communicating with themselves and embracing socially attributed brand meanings. This internal, personal communication process with domestic brands can enhance tourist self-concepts when presenting the domestic brand to significant others such as parents and peers. Desired communication occurs between the individual and others when there is a

shared understanding of the domestic brand, leading to the development of self-enhancement through interactions between the individual and the social group (Grubb and Grathwohl, 1967). Patriotic tourists will tend to view this as connected to their social bonds with country, leading to greater satisfaction with and support for domestic brands and producers (Han, 1988). The impulse to express national identity has been described as a driving force that prompts the consumption of domestic goods (Sirgy, 1982).

Elias (1991) has argued that the traits of national group identity (“national character”), are a layer of social habitus that is deeply embedded in individual personalities. Through these means, traits represent a person’s self-image (Elias, 1991). Purchasing domestic brands/products reflects part of one’s national identity of self-image. Thus, intensely patriotic people are more disposed to images of domestic sponsoring brands that define, maintain and express their authentic sense of self (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003). From this we may conclude that preferences towards domestic sponsors will be higher than is the case amongst those with a lesser patriotic tendency. On this basis, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 3: Self-domestic sponsor congruity mediates the impact of patriotism on favoring domestic sponsor brands.

The Moderating Role of Self-foreign Sponsor Congruity

Patriotism is a critical socio-psychological antecedent to tourist ethnocentrism which refers to “a more powerful influence on consumer preferences for domestic and foreign products than demographic or marketing-mix variables” (Balabanis et al., 2001, p. 159). It correlates with the anti-purchasing of foreign products (Sharma et al., 1995). Previous research has demonstrated that patriotic tourists may perceive purchasing imported products as wrong because of their potential to hurt the domestic economy, causing job losses and being perceived as unpatriotic (e.g., Yue et al., 2013). Intensely patriotic tourists may demonstrate a high tendency toward ethnocentrism, leading to a tendency to discount imported products.

Consuming foreign brands has been interpreted as creating an emergent cosmopolitan national identity that connects the Chinese with the world (Tian and Dong, 2011). The latter concept represents success and social status, and the reputation that is commensurate with consuming luxury brands (Park, Rabolt, and Jeon, 2008). In collectivist cultures such as China, customers tend to consume conspicuously, especially when purchasing public products. This is not only because the products conform to social norms, but because they enhance bonding with the social context, and symbolize what matches their social related values such as the need for uniqueness (Park et al., 2008; Sung and Choi, 2012). Consuming foreign brands may be perceived by collectivistic tourists as a way of representing or achieving one’s desire self-image by incorporating images of their social group (Kang, et al., 2012). Hence, it is argued here that patriots who have high self-congruity with a foreign sponsor may be more favorable towards

the foreign sponsor brand than those with low self-sponsor congruity.

Crimmins and Horn (1996) suggested that event sponsors can benefit from “gratitude” amongst fans, namely those with the strongest liking for the event. Lee, Sandler, and Shani (1997) have contended that liking an event is important as a predictor of sponsorship outcomes. Spectators are more likely to develop favorable responses towards sponsors when they perceive an event as attractive, entertaining, interesting and important (Grohs, 2016). Such liking for an event helps to create favorable attitudes because the positive feelings may spill over to the brand of the sponsoring company (Gwinner and Eaton, 1999).

Since the effectiveness of image transfer from an event sponsorship depends on both the participants’ faith in the sponsor and their liking of the event (Alexandris et al., 2008), patriotic tourists may regard hosting an international high-status event as an extension of their national image. This may enhance their receptiveness to substantial messaging and “hype” from foreign sponsors. When foreign brands represent identity, success, social status, public reputation and a desire to be unique, this may form a basis to develop favorable attitudes (Sirgy, 1982; Park et al., 2008). Conversely, when the patriotic image of participants is diminished by purchasing foreign sponsor brands (i.e., self-image incongruity with the foreign sponsor), the development of favorable attitudes towards the brands will be impeded. Although there is no consistent evidence that foreign sponsors suffer poorer outcomes than domestically owned rivals in emerging markets (Petrovici et al., 2015), it is argued here that the effect of event liking on favorability towards a foreign sponsor would be higher amongst event tourists who have high self-sponsor congruence than those with self-sponsor incongruity. For instance, in China the foreign credit card company Visa, an official sponsor of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, achieved better brand attitude and recommendation likelihood than non-sponsors (e.g., MasterCard or American Express) (Pitt, Parent, Berthon, and Steyn, 2010) as the former achieved the obligation of social responsibility in the host country. On this basis, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 4: The impact of event liking on favoring foreign sponsors will be contingent upon self-foreign sponsor congruity.

The development of the above hypotheses suggests that patriotism directly influences self-domestic sponsor congruity and event liking, both of which mediate the impact of patriotism on domestic sponsor favorability. Self-foreign sponsor congruity moderates the impact of event liking on foreign sponsor brand favorability.

Methodology

The researchers contend that adopting a quantitative method is adequate to investigate and test the applicable hypotheses. It is noted that Petrovici, Shan, Gorton, and Ford (2015) conducted a quantitative study to explore with patriotic effect on 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. Noting the successful adoption of a quantitative method for this reevaluation and that the relevant questions have moved beyond the exploratory stage, the current researchers have opted to persist with a quantitative method.

Measurements

The measures used for the main constructs that have been developed and examined by previous studies. All items use a classification ranging from “1” (strongly disagree) to “7” (strongly agree).

The respective measures of patriotism (PAT) were adopted from Kosterman and Feshbach’s (1989) twelve-item patriotism scale as follows: (PAT1) - I love my country; (PAT2) - I am proud to be Chinese; (PAT3) - In a sense, I am attached emotionally to my country and affected by its actions; (PAT4) - Although as times I may not agree with the government, my commitment to China always remains strong; (PAT5) - I feel a great pride in the land that is our China; (PAT6) - It’s not that important for me to serve my country; (PAT7) - When I see the Chinese flag flying I feel great; (PAT8) - The fact that I am Chinese is an important part of my identity; (PAT9) - It is not constructive for one to develop an emotional attachment to his/her country; (PAT10) - In general, I have very little respect for the Chinese people; (PAT11) - It bothers me to see children being made to pledge their allegiance to the flag or sing the national anthem or otherwise be induced to adopt such strong patriotic attitudes; and (PAT12) - China is really just an institution, big and power yes, but just an institution.

The chosen attitudinal measures of event liking (EL) were adopted from Speed and Thompson (2000) and involved a four-item scale: (EL1) - I am a strong supporter of this event; (EL2) - I would want to attend this event; (EL3) - I pay attention to the report of this event; and (EL4) - This event is important to me. The measurement has been used in a variety of studies, such as Gwinner, Larson, and Swanson (2009) and Shin, Lee, and Perdue (2018). The items were framed as statements about tourist attitudes towards the mega event and their degree of liking.

The Self-Sponsor Congruity (SSC) scale was adopted from Higie and Feick (1989) to assess the extent of self-sponsor congruity on a four-item scale: (SSC1) - part of my self-image; (SSC2) - portrays an image of me to others; (SSC3) - tells others about me and (SSC4) - others use to judge me.

The Sponsor favorability (FAV) was measured with a three-item scale adopted from Speed and Thompson (2000): (FAV1) - This sponsorship makes me feel more favorable towards the sponsor; (FAV2) - This sponsorship would improve my perception of the sponsor; and (FAV3) - This sponsorship would make me like the sponsor more.

Sampling and Data Distribution

Data collection was conducted at the 2014 Summer Youth Olympic Games. The Summer Games provided a rare and invaluable opportunity to collect empirical data for an examination of the exercise of patriotism towards Japanese brands by Chinese tourists. The survey administration occurred over a seven day period during August 2014. Questionnaires were collected at the three major event exposition grounds: Wutaishan Sports Center, Nanjing Olympic Sports Center and Nanjing Expo Center. A judgmental/purposive sampling method was adopted because random sampling was impractical in light of the complexity of the total population across multiple centers. This sampling approach based on the judgments of survey administrators about the sample characteristics for the purposes of further hypotheses evaluation (Zikmund, Babin, Carr and Griffin, 2013). For testing and comparison purposes, the researchers used pairs of domestic and foreign sponsor brands covering both public and home goods. In the absence of sponsor pairings that meet the study aims, the authors manipulated sponsor brands by adopting two genuinely famous brands that were not official sponsors for comparison with two famous brands that were official sponsors. The researchers purposefully selected one Chinese and one Japanese brand in each product category to minimize country-origin bias. In the public category the researchers paired goods 361° (a Chinese sports brand, domestic) and Mizuno (a Japanese sports brand, foreign); Haier (a Chinese home goods brand, domestic) and Panasonic (a Japanese home goods brand, foreign) were paired within the home goods category.

A total of 302 valid questionnaires were obtained for purposes of data analysis. There were 158 male (52.3%) and 144 female (47.7%) respondents. Most (198, 65.6%) were aged between 20 and 30, indicative of participation by the under 30s. A total of 208 respondents (69%) had a bachelor degree, and 263 (87%) earned a monthly income less than six thousand RMB dollars. The demographic of this data are similar to He and Wang (2015) study (male = 49.1%, Female = 50.9%; age below 24 to 34 = 60.2%), which explored the impact of consumer ethnocentrism on preference and purchase of domestic versus import brands in China.

Results

To explore the conceptual framework, Partial Least Squares (PLS) procedure was adopted using Smart-PLS 2.0 to test the hypothesized relationships (Hair, Ringle, and Sarstedt, 2011). The variance-based PLS is a distribution-free regression analysis technique, robust for small sample sizes and deviations from normality (Hair, Hult, Ringle, and Sarstedt, 2017). PLS is often appropriate for explaining complex relationships because it avoids problems such as inadmissible solutions and factor indeterminacy (Hair et al., 2011). Thus, the measurement and structural models were tested simultaneously.

Measurement Model

Tables 1 and 2 present cumulative explanations, means, standard deviations (SD) and standardized loadings for each item of measurement after deleting any insignificant items in the constructs of patriotism (PAT1, 4, 10, 11) and self-sponsor congruity (SSC4). The cumulative explanations of each construct range between 67.76% and 93.18%, thereby exceeding the 60% threshold (Hair et al., 2017). The cross-loadings of each corresponding construct range from 0.75 to 0.98 with a significant level of $p < .001$ indicating good discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 1 Means, Standard Deviations and Standardized Loadings of Manifest Variables for Mizuno/361° (sports goods)

Constructs	Indicators	Cumulative Explanation	Mean	SD	Loading
Patriotism (PAT)	PAT 2	67.76%	6.34	1.00	0.83/0.83
	PAT 3		6.27	0.99	0.79/0.79
	PAT 5		6.15	1.04	0.84/0.84
	PAT 6		6.23	0.92	0.89/0.89
	PAT 7		6.26	1.05	0.83/0.83
	PAT 8		6.33	0.96	0.81/0.81
	PAT 9		6.25	0.94	0.83/0.83
	PAT 12		6.13	1.03	0.75/0.76
Event Liking (EL)	EL 1	84.21%	5.88	1.27	0.90/0.91
	EL 2		5.80	1.30	0.93/0.93
	EL 3		5.76	1.26	0.94/0.94
	EL 4		5.73	1.28	0.89/0.89
Sponsor Favorability (FAV)	FAV 1	90.70% / 89.50%	3.85/5.19	1.57/1.37	0.96/0.94
	FAV 2		3.74/5.17	1.56/1.32	0.97/0.97
	FAV 3		3.82/5.01	1.64/1.39	0.93/0.93
Self-Sponsor Congruity (SSC)	SSC 1	93.18% / 89.83%	2.97/4.14	1.43/1.49	0.96/0.93
	SSC 2		2.98/4.12	1.41/1.44	0.98/0.97
	SSC 3		3.03/4.04	1.49/1.47	0.96/0.94

Note: The minimal loading is 0.75 with a significance level of $p < .001$.

Table 2 Means, Standard Deviations and Standardized Loadings of Manifest Variables for Panasonic/Haier (electrical goods)

Constructs	Indicators	Cumulative Explanation	Mean	SD	Loading
Patriotism (PAT)	PAT 2	70.47%	6.18	1.16	0.84/0.84
	PAT 3		6.11	1.12	0.85/0.84
	PAT 5		5.96	1.24	0.84/0.84
	PAT 6		6.10	1.13	0.85/0.85
	PAT 7		6.14	1.25	0.83/0.83
	PAT 8		6.09	1.19	0.87/0.87
	PAT 9		6.09	1.13	0.86/0.86
	PAT 12		6.00	1.13	0.77/0.77
Event Liking (EL)	EL 1	81.16%	5.76	1.38	0.90/0.90
	EL 2		5.76	1.32	0.91/0.91
	EL 3		5.70	1.27	0.91/0.91
	EL 4		5.62	1.35	0.88/0.88
Sponsor Favorability (FAV)	FAV 1	89.30% / 89.80%	4.17/5.03	1.63/1.57	0.95/0.94
	FAV 2		4.09/5.08	1.61/1.49	0.96/0.97
	FAV 3		4.19/5.09	1.65/1.48	0.92/0.93
Self-Sponsor Congruity (SSC)	SSC 1	90.82% / 90.61%	3.35/4.12	1.67/1.56	0.95/0.95
	SSC 2		3.34/4.11	1.61/1.54	0.97/0.97
	SSC 3		3.29/4.14	1.62/1.54	0.94/0.94

Note: The minimal loading is .77 with a significance level of $p < .001$.

As indicated in Tables 3 and 4, convergent validity was well above the threshold criterions. Cronbach's α scores of these six constructs exceeded 0.60 (Hair et al., 2017) and all values of composite reliabilities (CR) exceeded 0.70 (Hair et al., 2011), showing a high internal consistency of indicators measuring each construct and thus confirming construct reliability. The average variances extracted (AVEs) for each construct were significantly above 0.50 (Hair et al., 2017), indicative of high internal consistency of each construct and thus confirming construct reliability. Furthermore, Tables 3 and 4 showed that the coefficients ranged between -0.04 and 0.64. The square root of AVE for each construct was higher than corresponding inter-construct correlations. The discriminant validity was also acceptable on this basis (Hair et al., 2011).

Table 3 Convergent Validity, Discriminant Validity and Reliability of Measurement Model for Mizuno/Panasonic

	EL	FAV	PAT	SSC
EL	<i>0.92/0.90</i>			
FAV	0.05/0.15	<i>0.95/0.94</i>		
PAT	0.50/0.55	0.06/0.09	<i>0.82/0.84</i>	
SSC	0.03/0.09	0.53/0.64	-0.04/0.03	<i>0.96/0.95</i>
Means	5.79/5.71	3.80/4.15	6.25/6.08	2.99/3.32
SD	1.17/1.20	1.52/1.54	0.81/0.98	1.39/1.56
AVE	0.84/0.81	0.91/0.89	0.68/0.70	0.93/0.91
CR	0.96/0.95	0.97/0.96	0.94/0.95	0.98/0.97
Cronbach's α	0.94/0.92	0.95/0.94	0.93/0.94	0.96/0.95

Note: EL= Event Liking, PAT= Patriotism, FAV= Sponsor Favorability, SSC= Self-Sponsor Congruity
Numbers shown in italics devote the square root of the average variable extracted.

Table 4 Convergent Validity, Discriminant Validity and Reliability of Measurement Model for 361°/Haier

	EL	FAV	PAT	SSC
EL	<i>0.92/0.90</i>			
FAV	0.47/0.44	<i>0.95/0.95</i>		
PAT	0.50/0.55	0.33/0.50	<i>0.82/0.84</i>	
SSC	0.32/0.28	0.37/0.51	0.17/0.32	<i>0.95/0.95</i>
Means	5.79/5.71	5.14/5.07	6.25/6.08	4.10/4.12
SD	1.17/1.20	1.29/1.43	0.81/0.98	1.39/1.47
AVE	0.84/0.81	0.90/0.90	0.68/0.70	0.90/0.91
CR	0.96/0.95	0.96/0.96	0.94/0.95	0.96/0.97
Cronbach's α	0.94/0.92	0.94/0.94	0.93/0.94	0.94/0.95

Note: EL= Event Liking, PAT= Patriotism, FAV= Sponsor Favorability, SSC= Self-Sponsor Congruity
Numbers shown in italics devote the square root of the average variable extracted.

Structural Model and Mediation Test

The researchers tested hypothesized relationships with the use of the standard bootstrapping procedure, with individual sign changes and resample of three times of subjects (Hair et al., 2011) to generate t-values. As exhibited in Tables 5 and 6, and in Figure 1, the results of testing hypothesis H1 indicate that patriotism has a significant effect on event liking ($\beta_{MizunoPat} = 0.50, p < .001$; $\beta_{361^{\circ}Pat} = 0.50, p < .001$; $\beta_{PanasonicPat} = 0.55, p < .001$; $\beta_{HaierPat} = 0.55, p < .001$) respectively. On this basis, H1 was supported. H2 proposed that event liking has a positive impact on favorability towards domestic sponsors. As shown in Table 5 and in Figure

1, the result of testing H2 indicates that the effect of event liking on domestic sponsor favorability ($\beta_{361^\circ Pat} = 0.39, p < .001$; $\beta_{HaierPat} = 0.32, p < .001$) is positively significant, lending support to H2. As is indicated in Table 5 and in Figure 1, the result of testing H3a indicates that self-domestic sponsor congruity mediates the relationship between the patriotism ($\beta_{361^\circ Pat} = 0.17, p < .01$; $\beta_{HaierPat} = 0.33, p < .001$) on sponsor favorability toward domestic sponsors 361° and Haier ($\beta_{361^\circ Pat} = 0.25, p < .001$; $\beta_{HaierPat} = 0.42, p < .001$). Thus, H3 is supported.

Table 5 Structural Model Results and Effect Sizes (f^2) for Domestic Brands (361°/Haier)

Criterion	Predictors	R^2	Path Coefficient	f^2
EL	PAT	0.25/0.30	.50 ($t = 9.50^{***}$) /	0.34/0.42
			.55 ($t = 12.11^{***}$)	
SSC	PAT	0.03/0.11	.17 ($t = 3.21^{***}$) /	0.03/0.12
			.33 ($t = 5.51^{***}$)	
FAV	EL	0.28/0.35	.39 ($t = 6.27^{***}$) /	0.19/0.14
			.32 ($t = 5.89^{***}$)	
	SSC		.25 ($t = 4.77^{***}$) /	0.08/0.25
			.42 ($t = 8.19^{***}$)	

Note: EL= Event Liking, PAT= Patriotism, FAV= Sponsor Favorability, SSC= Self-Sponsor Congruity; *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; Effect size measures the relevance of each predictor of a dependent latent variable and is based on the relationship of determination coefficients when including or excluding a particular predictor from the structural equation; $GoF_{361^\circ PAT} = 0.39$, $GoF_{HaierPAT} = 0.46$.

H4 posits that self-foreign sponsor congruity moderated the relationship between event liking and foreign sponsor favorability. As is show in Table 6 and in Figure 1, the results of testing H4 demonstrated that the effect of the interaction term (EL^xSSC) on sponsor favorability towards foreign sponsor Mizuno ($\beta_{MizunoPat} = 0.14, p < .01$) achieves a significant level of $p < .01$, but an insignificant level on foreign sponsor Panasonic ($\beta_{PanasonicPat} = 0.06, p > .05$). That is, self-foreign sponsor congruity only positively moderates the effect of event liking on foreign sponsor favorability in the product category of sport goods.

Table 6 Structural Model Results and Effect Sizes (f^2) for Foreign Brands (Mizuno/Panasonic)

Criterion	Predictors	R^2	Path Coefficient	f^2
EL	PAT	0.25/0.30	0.50 ($t = 9.69^{***}$)/	0.34/0.43
			0.55 ($t = 11.21^{***}$)	
FAV	EL	0.31/0.42	0.07 ($t = 1.52$)/	.004/0.02
	EL \times SSC		0.10 ($t = 1.94$)	
			0.14 ($t = 3.09^{**}$)/	
		0.06 ($t = 0.95$)		

Note: EL= Event Liking, PAT= Patriotism, FAV= Sponsor Favorability, SSC= Self-Sponsor Congruity; *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; Effect size measures the relevance of each predictor of a dependent latent variable and is based on the relationship of determination coefficients when including or excluding a particular predictor from the structural equation; $GoF_{MizunoPAT} = 0.41$; $GoF_{PanasonicPAT} = 0.54$.

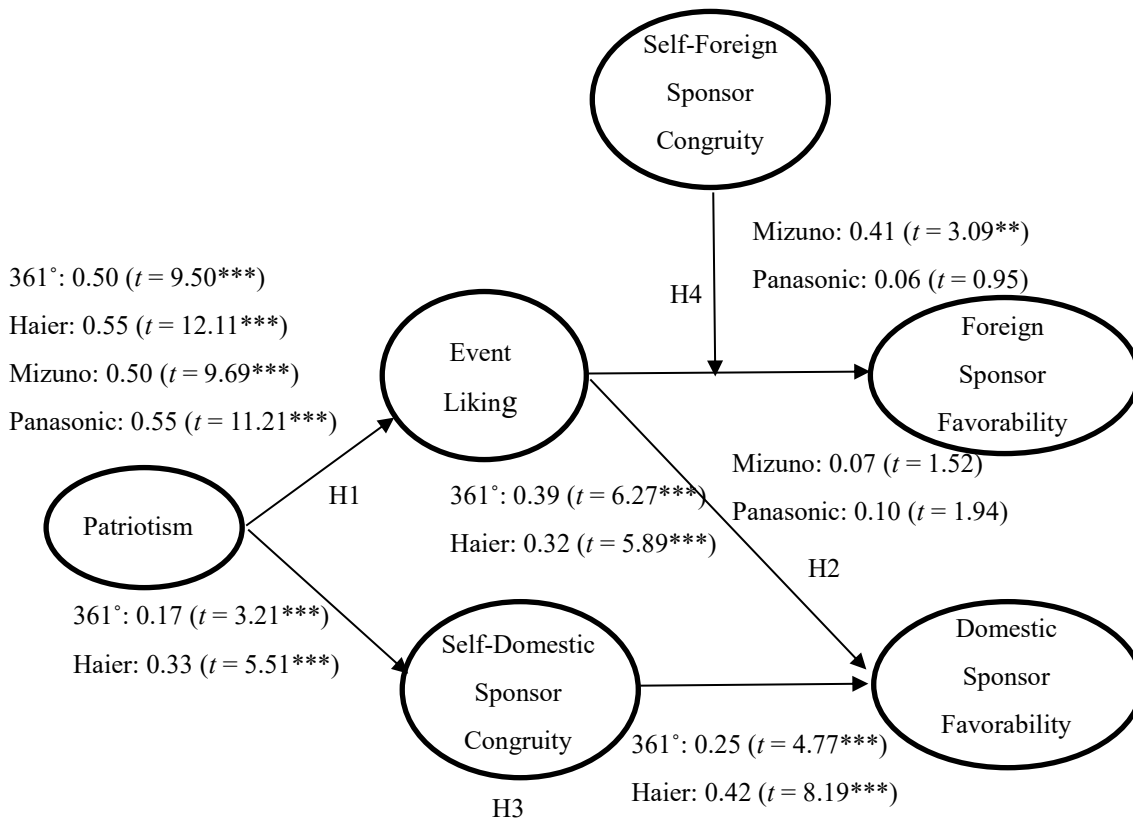


Figure 1 Results of Hypothesis Testing

The researchers next performed mediation analyses to undertake an empirical test of the mediating effects depicted in the research model. The results of the Sobel tests where Z-value ranges from 2.52 to 4.96, indicate that partial mediation exists between the antecedent variable

(patriotism) and sponsor domestic brand favorability when the mediators (i.e., event liking and self-domestic sponsor congruity) were included. The results of the mediating test are summarized in Table 7. Both event liking and self-domestic sponsor congruity partially mediate the impact of patriotism on favorability towards domestic sponsors 361° and Haier.

Table 7 Results of the Mediation Test for Domestic Brands (361°/ Haier)

IV	DV	M	IV → M	IV → DV	IV+M→DV		Sobel Z	Mediation Effect
					M→DV	IV→DV		
(361°)								
PAT	FAV	EL	0.50 (<i>t</i> = 9.18***)	0.33 (<i>t</i> = 5.88***)	0.41 (<i>t</i> = 5.61***)	0.13 (<i>t</i> = 1.83)	4.72***	Partial
PAT	FAV	SSC	0.18 (<i>t</i> = 4.35***)		0.33 (<i>t</i> = 6.28***)	0.28 (<i>t</i> = 1.99*)	3.84***	Partial
(Haier)								
PAT	FAV	EL	0.55 (<i>t</i> = 11.92***)	0.51 (<i>t</i> = 11.66***)	0.23 (<i>t</i> = 2.85**)	0.38 (<i>t</i> = 5.40***)	2.52**	Partial
PAT	FAV	SSC	0.33 (<i>t</i> = 6.14***)		0.38 (<i>t</i> = 7.01***)	0.38 (<i>t</i> = 7.60***)	4.96***	Partial

Note: IV = Independent Variable, DV = Dependent Variable, M = Mediator, PAT= Patriotism, FAV= Sponsor Favorability, EL= Event Liking, SSC= Self-Sponsor Congruity; *** *p* < .001; ** *p* < .01; * *p* < .05

Discussion and Implications

This study makes four major contributions to the tourism literature on mega-events between national identity (as measured by patriotic feelings), event liking and sponsor favorability. First, the results contribute to the realm of sponsorship research by confirming that tourist patriotism is a social-psychological antecedent to liking a mega event (Chen, 2012; Abou-Shouk, Zoair, Farrag, and Hewedi, 2017). Our findings suggest that tourist patriotism impacts directly on event liking, leading to favorability towards domestic sponsors. Tourists construct their national pride and identity by engaging in a locally hosted mega event. Tourist attitudes towards sponsor brands may be shaped through constructing such identification alongside self-sponsor congruity with a foreign brand, even where there is animosity towards the origin country. Secondly, self-sponsor congruence and event liking are two critical antecedents in predicting the effect of sponsor favorability (Speed and Thompson, 2000; Petrovici et al., 2015). These lead to the transference of event image to sponsor brand (Gwinner and Eaton, 1999). This study has shown that tourists' mega event liking and self-congruity with a domestic brand mediates the impact of patriotism on favorability towards domestic sponsors

(i.e., 361° and Haier). However, the mega-event sponsors might effect change through the development of tourist self-image congruence amongst those with a strongly patriotic orientation.

Thirdly, our study indicates that self-sponsor congruence with foreign brands moderates the impact of event liking on favorability towards the sponsor in the case of Japanese brands (i.e., Mizuno). The examination of moderating effects of self-foreign sponsor congruence with Panasonic was not reached. Brand category is one plausible explanation. Mizuno produces and sells sporting products, such as basketballs, golf equipment and swimming gadgets. Such public goods embody social symbolism, reflective of self-image. Panasonic products on the other hand, are mainly focused on household goods such as washing machines, televisions and refrigerators. Such products do not express one's image publicly. Patriots, especially younger tourists, regard purchasing some foreign brands as a means of representing social status and self-uniqueness in a harmonious international atmosphere. Foreign sponsor firms may consider crafting their brands as more fashionable and unique by deploying the advertising and support of sponsored mega events so that domestic patriots could view them as symbols of their desired self-image and uniqueness. Alexandris et al. (2008) pointed out that the effectiveness of image transfer from an event sponsor depends on the liking of events by participants and their faith in the sponsor.

Finally, self-image congruence with domestic brands mediates the relationship between patriotism and favorability towards domestic brands in the case of 361° and Haier. Social identity theory suggests that ethnocentric tourists exhibit higher patriotism and/or national identities (Sharma et al., 1995). Tourists who are proud of their cultures, countries and technologies may form favorable assessments of the event sponsors that express themselves as the value of national identity and enhance self-expressive images (Sirgy, 1982). Domestic sponsors could enhance their competitiveness by supporting a locally held mega event. Sponsoring domestic athletes and teams facilitates patriotic liking of the event amongst tourists, thereby generating participation by tourists from nationwide. Hence, domestic companies may utilize sponsor-linked marketed activities, such as celebrity endorsements, public reaction and advertising alongside the sponsorship impact to develop positive attitudes amongst patriotic tourists from nationwide.

Out-group foreign companies might encounter the marketing challenge that it is difficult to alter the attitudes of highly patriotic domestic tourists. Therefore, international companies that attempt to penetrate the markets of other countries should develop an understanding of the historical and cultural background of the target market when developing brand strategies. First, foreign companies implementing localization strategies can improve tourist attitudes towards the company or brand, attenuate the effects of tourist patriotism on sponsoring and give comfort to the cultural and psychological biases of local tourists against the products/brands. This might take the form of creating local employment through moving production to the target country,

adding local elements to the brand and products, such as choosing a local version of the brand name, and utilizing brand alliances or co-production with well-known local manufacturers. For example, Kia motors is the longest major sponsor of the Australian Open. Kia motors organized Kia Amateur Australian Open (KAAO) to hold in conjunction with the Australian Open (Fairley and Tyler, 2011). This long-term sponsorship helps Kia achieve a brand localization strategy.

Secondly, previous research has suggested that advertising appeals should be congruent with one's self-concept and that these are likely to be more effective for advertising than incongruent appeals (Graeff, 1996). Advertising messages must be adapted to the self-concept of target tourists. Foreign brands may opt to incorporate local elements and stories into their advertising to attract tourists before or during the sponsorship of a mega event. Moreover, endorsements by local celebrities may be an effective tool to convey an image of being "part-of-us" amongst patriots. Third, sport sponsorships can foster trust in a brand. Sponsors should highlight their alignment with the sponsored event and build leverage to enhance existing product knowledge with displays, marketing materials, and interactions with brand personalities.

Last but not least, foreign companies may focus on tourists who display a high international (Kosterman and Feshbach, 1989) and xenophilic tendency (Perlmutter, 1954). Following China's economic reforms, new generations have been exposed to Western cultures and have displayed minimal in-group bias towards foreign brands. A survey of Chinese consumers concluded that consumers view foreign luxury fashion brands, such as Gucci, Hermes, and Chanel, as symbolizing a successful life, a member of high social class, and of having good taste (Li, Li, and , Kambele, 2012). Moreover, people within collectivistic cultures view themselves as members of a group or as reliant on others and consumer decision making tends to be determined by the reference group or by the social context (Sung and Choi, 2012). Marketers may encourage customers to view the consumption of foreign brands as not only about conforming to their social context, but as representing their own status and uniqueness. Therefore, foreign companies may craft brand images by sponsoring mega events and holding event marketing programs to meet local tastes. By doing so, local patriots may favor foreign sponsors that have developed self-image congruency.

Some limitations should be noted when interpreting the present results and designing future research. Firstly, the current focus has been on commercial sponsorships. However, Grohs (2016) indicated that philanthropic sponsorships impact more positively on perceptions of sponsor's image than commercial sponsorships. For example, a philanthropic marathon may achieved more positive perception than a non- philanthropic marathon. Tourists may perceive a positive event image or sponsor image by an empathy or sympathy marathon theme. Researchers may conduct further examinations about whether philanthropic sponsorships would change the attitudes of tourists from bias towards foreign sponsors to a more favorable

view. Second, this study has considered a locally-held international event rather than locally-held national events. With its rapid economic growth, China will host more and more national sporting events or exhibitions, such as arts, festivals, and music. Future researchers can examine whether the effect of sponsoring national events resembles the sponsorship of locally-held international events. Third, this research has not addressed longitudinal issues. Considering the long-term nature of sponsorships, future longitudinal studies may consider changing favorability towards foreign sponsors and self-image congruity with foreign sponsor brands over time in response to being exposed to sponsor messages. Last, different empirical results might result when the country or cultural setting is different because of the influence of antecedent variables. Future researchers might examine the proposed conceptual model in the context of other settings, such as in Southeast Asia, Japan or Taiwan.

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