Show Me the Money: On Predicting Actual Purchases in Cross-National Sponsorship

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Abstract

The improvements in new media technologies in conjunction with the expansion of innovative opportunities for marketing and consuming sport have played direct roles in the globalization of sport. However, those in the Sport Management academic field are still trying to understand the effect of culture on sport consumer behavior. Guided by Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory, the purpose of this study was to examine the sponsorship and cross-national relationships among the short-term/long-term orientation and individualism/collectivism cultural dimensions, attitude toward a sponsor, gratitude, purchase intentions, and actual purchases. Data were collected via longitudinal web surveys conducted with soccer fans from the United States, the United Kingdom, and India. The results from a structural equation model provided evidence that the individualism/collectivism cultural dimension had a significant effect on gratitude but not on actual purchases, and that the purchase intentions variable was a predictor of actual purchases.

Keywords: global, Hofstede, United States, United Kingdom, India

1. Introduction

The magnitude of sport sponsorship has risen steadily in recent decades, with companies now allocating in excess of $60 billion globally (IEG, 2016). Rapid and ongoing development of new media technologies (e.g., broadband and mobile platforms) has reduced distances between international markets, and organizations-including sports teams-have become truly global brands (Amis & Cornwell, 2005; Santomier, 2008). For example, the English Premier League (EPL) is shown in 212 territories around the world by 80 different broadcasters, attracting a total audience of approximately 4.7 billion ("Premier League," n.d., para. 2). As such, sports teams are ideal vehicles for sponsors that seek to reach international audiences.

Despite the global nature of sport sponsorships, there appears to be little research in which scholars have assessed the cross-national effectiveness of such agreements (Amis & Cornwell, 2005; Yoshida & Heere, 2015). In particular, jersey sponsorship-ubiquitous in Europe and Asia-is a growing revenue source in specific sport segments (Biscaia, Correia, Ross, & Rosado, 2014; Breuer & Rumpf, 2012). This is exemplified by the EPL team Manchester United's jersey sponsorship deal with the United States (U.S.) car manufacturer Chevrolet, signed in 2014, estimated at $1.3 billion over ten years (Thompson, 2014). Jersey sponsorships are also intriguing as, unlike other forms of sponsorship (e.g., broadcast partners, in-game sponsors), they are visible to all consumers in the same manner, irrespective of their geographic location. Upon review, there was a lack of research in which scholars have empirically analyzed the cross-national effectiveness of jersey sponsorship. Given the magnitude and prevalence of this type of sponsorship, it is important that sport marketers understand their effects on global consumer groups.

However, evaluating the effectiveness of such sponsorships presents a further challenge to sport marketing scholars. The question still remains on how one can interpret findings based on cross-national data (Yoshida & Heere, 2015). Thus, in this study the researchers included the short-term/long-term orientation cultural dimension (e.g., values such as perseverance, stability and respect for traditions; Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010), and the individualism/collectivism cultural dimension (i.e., the degree to which individuals are

self-centered or integrated into groups; Hofstede et al., 2010) from Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory. Previous research on cross-national consumer behavior has utilized Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2010; Singh, 2006), which reflects aspects of a culture that can be measured relative to other cultures (e.g., scales from 0 for the most collectivist and short-term orientation country to 100 for the most individualist and long-term orientation one; Hofstede et al., 2010). To the researchers' knowledge, there have been no academic studies that have included Hofstede's cultural dimensions variables in a sport context.

Moreover, despite an increasing number of studies measuring sponsorship outcomes such as attitude toward the sponsor and purchase intentions (e.g., Alexandris, Tsiotsou, & James, 2012; Biscaia, Correia, Rosado, Ross, & Maroco, 2013), there is a need for established theoretical frameworks explaining consumer decision-making that include variables such as gratitude and actual purchase behaviors (e.g., Kim, Lee, Magnusen, & Kim, 2015; Kim, Smith, & James, 2010; Mazodier & Merunka, 2012). Gratitude is believed to play an important role in understanding how marketing investments increase purchase intentions and sales growth (Palmatier, Jarvis, Bechkoff, & Kardes, 2009). In addition, although intent to purchase is commonly used in the sponsorship academic literature, a more accurate assessment of consumer behavior would include measuring actual purchase data (Gwinner & Bennett, 2008; Kim et al., 2015; Mazodier & Merunka, 2012). However, longitudinal research is needed if, for example, scholars are to understand the extent to which attitude toward a sponsor, and purchase intentions influence actual purchase behavior (Funk, Mahony, & Havitz, 2003; Yoshida & Heere, 2015; Yoshida, Heere, & Gordon, 2015). In this study the researchers also employed two demographics information (i.e., annual household income and household's decision maker) as control variables because scholars have found that they may predict actual purchase behavior (Armstrong, 1985; Sun & Morwitz, 2010).

The purpose of this study was to examine the sponsorship and cross-national relationships among the short-term/long-term orientation and individualism/collectivism cultural dimensions, attitude toward a sponsor, gratitude, purchase intentions, and actual purchases, controlling for the annual household income and household's decision maker. In doing so, the researchers believe there are three important contributions to the Sport Management literature: (1) extension of cross-national research on sponsorship effectiveness, (2) examination of jersey sponsorship specifically, due to the prevalence of this type of sponsorship at a global level, and (3) evaluation of sponsorship effectiveness using a potentially more robust outcome, actual purchase behavior. This research initiative was addressed by analyzing responses from soccer fans from the United States, the United Kingdom (U.K.), and India in the area of a sport sponsorship through a jersey sponsorship.

2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

2.1 Cultural Dimensions

Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory was the theoretical framework utilized in this study, as much of the research on cross-national consumer behavior has utilized these dimensions, which reflect aspects of a culture that can be measured relative to other cultures (i.e., individualism/collectivism, short/long-term orientation, power distance, masculinity/femininity, uncertain avoidance, and indulgence/restraint; Hofstede et al., 2010). Hofstede defined culture as "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another" (2001, p. 9).

Although countries' cultural scores originally were produced in the early 1970s, many replications of Hofstede's study of different samples have provided evidence that the country ranking in his data is still valid (Hofstede et al., 2010). A benefit of Hofstede's cultural dimensions rests in being able to explain and compare aggregate national behavior (Magnusson, Wilson, Zdravkovic, Zhou, & Westjohn, 2008; Singh, 2006). Moreover, Hofstede has shown more than 400 significant correlations between his index scores and data from other sources that validate them (Hofstede, 2001). Hofstede initially created four dimensions (there are now six dimensions), assigned indexes on each to all nations, and linked the dimensions with demographic, geographic, economic, and political aspects of a society (Kale & Barnes, 1992), a feature unmatched by other frameworks. In addition, this framework is useful in formulating hypotheses for comparative cross-cultural studies. Consequently, Hofstede's operationalization of cultures (1980) is the norm used in international marketing studies (Dawar, Parker, & Price, 1996; Sivakumar & Nakata, 2001).

However, academic consideration dedicated to developing a better understanding of sport sponsorship, as part of international marketing, has yet to be conducted (Amis & Cornwell, 2005; Santomier, 2008; Yoshida & Heere, 2015). Furthermore, sponsorship can vary across geographic regions in that there are the "moderating effects of country" (Wang, Cheng, Purwanto, & Erimutri, 2011, p. 5), which convey that a sports team's fans are not all similar in the way they view sport sponsorships. Also, for firms to be successful in the global marketplace they need to grasp the distinction between countries and cultures in order to construct appropriate marketing strategies

based on these distinctions (Craig & Douglas, 2001; Geng, Burton, & Blakemore, 2002).

2.2 Attitude toward the Sponsor

Attitude is defined as "a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable manner with respect to a given object" (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, p. 6). The development of favorable attitudes toward a sponsor is a pivotal factor for sponsorship effectiveness (e.g., Alexandris, Tsaousi, & James, 2007), and, as such, are expected to point to positive behavioral intentions (Laczniak, DeCarlo, & Ramaswami, 2001). Thus, a sponsorship can change consumers' responses towards a specific sponsor, resulting in the development of positive attitudes towards the sponsor, which can then lead to increased consumer willingness to buy the sponsor's products (Swanson, Gwinner, Larson, & Janda, 2003).

Nevertheless, little is known about how sponsorship outcomes, and implicitly attitudes toward sponsors, work in a cross-national setting (Yoshida & Heere, 2015). The attitudes toward various sponsor categories may vary across countries, and in particular, as they pertain to jersey sponsorship. Although jersey sponsorship has been supported by many professional team sports and fans in Europe and internationally, this practice is relatively new in the U.S. and has been met by public opposition (Jensen, Bowman, Larson, & Wang, 2013). In North America, some fans consider jersey sponsorship on game uniforms an "untouchable territory" that should remain free from financial exploitation (Lukas, 2009). Therefore, fans from the U.S. might have a negative attitude toward a jersey sponsor compared to Indian and British fans, as the U.S. has a short-term orientation cultural dimension, which means that although people from the U.S. have a respect for [sports] traditions (Hofstede et al., 2010), they prefer the status quo, which is to not have a sponsor on a team's jersey (Lukas, 2009). Following the previous propositions from past research, it is hypothesized that:

H_1: Attitude toward the sponsor will have a direct positive effect on purchase intentions.

H_2: Attitude toward the sponsor will have a direct positive effect on actual purchases.

H_3: The short-term orientation cultural dimension will have a direct positive effect on attitude toward the sponsor.

2.3 Gratitude

Algoe, Gable, & Maisel (2010) defined gratitude as an emotional appreciation response for costly, yet intentionally provided, benefits from another individual. There is a limited amount of research in which scholars have examined the nature and role of gratitude within a sponsorship context (Kim, Kwak, & Bunds, 2012); however, the significant role of gratitude in a consumer behavior context has been emphasized in previous research (Palmatier et al., 2009). Further, while there appears to be general accord among sponsorship researchers that a distinctive aspect of sponsorship that differentiates it from traditional advertising is consumer gratitude (Meenaghan, 2001), few researchers have empirically analyzed the impact of gratitude on sponsorship effectiveness (Kim et al., 2015). Kim and colleagues (2010) found that feelings of gratitude significantly predicted consumers' intent to purchase the sport benefactor's products in the U.S. Considering that purchase intentions are, in effect, favorable intentions toward actually purchasing a product or service (e.g., Dees, Bennett, & Ferreira, 2010), then gratitude can be considered predictive of consumers' actual behavior.

However, it is likely that the results of Kim and colleagues' (2010) study were impacted by the study's setting-the U.S. as trust, which is linked to gratitude (Palmatier et al., 2009), has been found to be influenced by national culture (e.g., Schumann et al., 2010). In addition, an implication derived from the academic literature is that there is a strong positive relationship between trust and collectivism, and a negative relationship between trust and individualism (e.g., Huff & Kelley, 2005). Therefore, gratitude toward a sponsor may be enhanced among citizens in collectivist countries (i.e., India) compared to citizens in individualist countries (i.e., the U.S., the U.K.). It would seem that collectivists, who appear to place more importance on relationships and nurture them with more care than individualists, would have higher levels of trust than individualists (Huff & Kelley, 2005), and hence, higher levels of gratitude. Furthermore, in collectivist societies, it is reasonable to expect that people think of themselves as members of a larger group (which could include sponsors), and expect members of the group to look after one another based on shared trust (Gwinner, 2005). In exchange for this support, one can feel absolute gratitude is owed to another (Hofstede et al., 2010). Thus, the researchers posit:

H_4: Gratitude will have a direct positive effect on purchase intentions.

H_5: Gratitude will have a direct positive effect on actual purchases.

H_6: The individualism cultural dimension will have a direct negative effect on gratitude.

2.4 Purchase Intentions and Actual Purchase Behaviors

According to Spears & Singh (2004), purchase intentions refer to the person's conscious plan in exerting an effort to purchase a brand. From a sponsor's perspective, a consumer's purchase intentions are the most useful indicator of sponsorship effectiveness, given their expected impact on future sales (Choi, Tsuji, Hutchinson, & Bouchet, 2011). Moreover, the use of intentions to predict purchases depends on the notion that intentions are, in fact, good indicators of consumers' actual purchase behavior (Dees et al., 2010). However, the true long-term impact of a sponsorship on sales, or intent-to-purchase, is difficult to evaluate and, thus, often questioned (Biscaia et al., 2013; Gwinner & Bennett, 2008; Mazodier & Merunka, 2012; O'Reilly, Lyberger, McCarthy, Seguin, & Nadeau, 2008). With few exceptions (i.e., Hickman, 2015; Yoshida et al., 2015), there is a lack of empirical sport data to support the intention-purchase connection, particularly in a sport sponsorship context.

Additionally, considering the influence of culture on an individual's personality, which in turn modifies consumer behavior (Samli, 1994), and bearing in mind that most aspects of consumer behavior are culture-bound (Hofstede et al., 2010), cultural influence may differentially impact actual purchases in different geographic areas. In past research, scholars have asserted that converging technology and disappearing income differences across countries will not lead to standardization of consumer behavior (De Mooij, 2004; De Mooij & Hofstede, 2002).

Furthermore, greater pressure to conform to groups norms that prevail in collectivist countries (e.g., India) can affect consumer behavior, while members of individualist cultures (e.g., the U.S., the U.K.) are less likely to be pressured to buy brands that are not meaningful to them as an individual (e.g., Foscht, Maloles, Swoboda, Morschett, & Sinha, 2008). So, since sponsors can be considered members of a group (Gwinner, 2005), and there is a greater pressure to agree with group norms when it comes to consumer behavior in collectivist cultures (Foscht et al., 2008), Indian sport fans presumably would have higher potential for actual purchase behavior of a sponsor's product(s) compared to American and British sport fans. Thus, the researchers posit:

H7: Purchase intentions will have a direct positive effect on actual purchases.

H8: The individualism cultural dimension will have a direct negative effect on actual purchases.

Based on the hypotheses generated from the literature review, the proposed model guiding this research is presented in Figure 1.
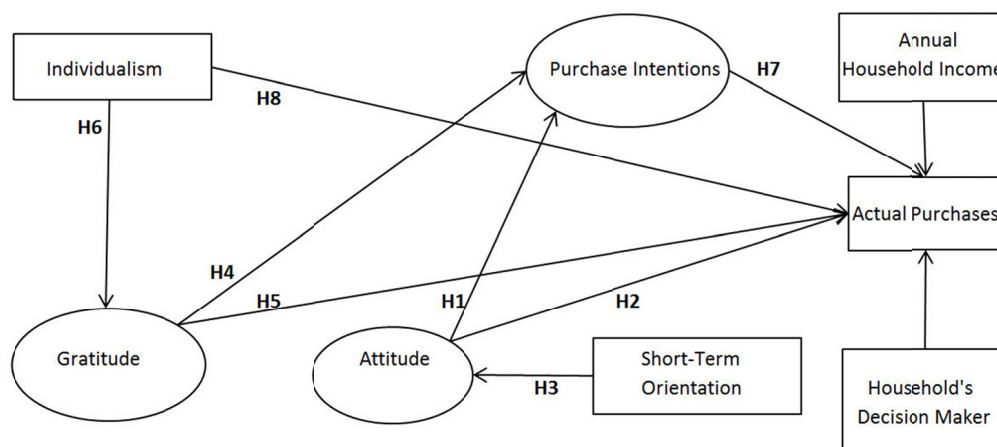

Figure 1. Hypothesized model

3. Method

To measure sponsorship outcomes and effectiveness, a survey was utilized, through which participants rated the effectiveness of EPL team Chelsea Football Club's (CFC) jersey sponsorship. The jersey sponsor for this study was Samsung, a multinational company that sells durable products such as computers, televisions, mobile phones, printers and refrigerators, and is regarded as one of the largest information technology companies in the world (Grobart, 2013). The researchers selected CFC, playing in the EPL, as this club is one of the largest global brands in a sport with an increasing global appeal (Karon, 2004).

The countries incorporated in the sample (U.K., U.S., and India) represented a range of cultural diversity,

illustrated by the variety of index values for the cultural dimensions from Hofstede and colleagues' indexes (i.e., scales from 0 for the most collectivist and short-term orientation country to 100 for the most individualist and long-term orientation one; Hofstede et al., 2010). For example, individualism/collectivism varies from a high of 91 in the U.S., 89 in the U.K., to a low of 48 in India, while short-term/long-term orientation ranges from 51 in India and the U.K., to 26 in the U.S. (Hofstede et al., 2010).

3.1 Participants and Data Collection

Web-based questionnaires were utilized for the collection of data. The online survey was conducted in English, due to it being the most commonly used language in the selected countries. Only English-speaking countries were selected, as past researchers have argued that language and translation continue to present one of the biggest obstacles in cross-national research (Apentiik & Parpart, 2006). When a different language is used across cultures, equivalence of the survey instrument is more likely to be absent, thus preventing meaningful cross-cultural comparisons (Tourangeau, Rips, & Rasinski, 2000). Moreover, while translated materials encourage participation of non-English speakers, a set of items used to measure a construct in English might not accurately assess the underlying construct in a different language or culture (e.g., Harzing, 2006).

The survey link was advertised to administrators of CFC's official supporter clubs, which were identified from the official CFC website, and were located in the U.S., the U.K., and India. The survey link was also posted on CFC's official supporter clubs' Facebook pages, Twitter accounts, and forums of these three countries. The bulk of the study's sample was gathered from emailing administrators of CFC's official supporter clubs. These administrators, in turn, emailed the members of those supporter clubs. Moreover, it is worth noting that every CFC fan from the official supporter clubs needs to pay membership dues annually, otherwise the fans will be removed from those supporter clubs, and implicitly from the mailing lists.

The data collection procedure consisted of two phases. In Phase 1, a survey was conducted to examine attitude toward the sponsor, gratitude, and purchase intentions. Phase 2 involved a follow-up survey at a later date, using the sample from Phase 1 to collect data regarding actual purchases of CFC's jersey sponsor's products during the time between Phase 1 and Phase 2. Responses by individual participants during Phases 1 and 2 were matched using email addresses. The Phase 1 survey was conducted over 78 weeks, during which time a total of 588 questionnaires were returned. The researchers removed 79 questionnaires completed by CFC fans from countries other than the U.S., the U.K., and India, as indicated from the demographic portion of the survey regarding the CFC fans' country of residence.

Questionnaires with incorrect information and a missing e-mail address ($n = 112$) were also eliminated, leaving 397 usable surveys. The Phase 2 questionnaire was sent directly to the 397 Phase 1 participants to capture actual purchase behavior data. In the second phase, 252 questionnaires were returned. After deleting the outliers (i.e., statistical observations that are markedly different in value from the others of the sample), information from 231 respondents were used in the final analysis, with data collected from American ($n = 116$, which is 50.22% of the overall sample), British ($n = 45$, which is 19.48% of the overall sample) and Indian ($n = 70$, which comprises 30.30% of the overall sample) CFC fans. The profile of the respondents is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of respondents

Demographic variable	
Gender	
Male (%)	89.60
Female (%)	10.40
Age	
18-34 (%)	69.30
35-54 (%)	23.80
55 and over (%)	6.90
Education	
High School or Some College (%)	23.80
Undergraduate Degree (%)	53.70
Graduate Degree (%)	22.50
Annual Household Income	
Less than $20,000 (%)	29.00
$20,000-$59,999 (%)	31.20
$60,000-$89,999 (%)	17.70
$90,000 or more (%)	22.10
Household's Decision Maker	
No (%)	65.80
Yes (%)	34.20

The threat of non-response bias (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2014; Jordan, Walker, Kent, & Inoue, 2011) was addressed by comparing demographic information (i.e., age, education, income, and gender) of the Phase 2 non-respondents with the demographic characteristics of the respondents that completed the questionnaire in Phase 2. Based on the results of these comparisons, the authors concluded there were no major differences between the Phase 1 sample and the Phase 2 sample. A comparison on variables that were measured was also made between early and late respondents in Phase 2 (i.e., first thirty respondents and last thirty respondents), as late respondents have been shown to be an appropriate proxy for non-respondents (Dooley & Lindner, 2003). No significant differences between early and late survey respondents were found.

3.2 Measures

The online survey included items adapted from previously validated instruments to measure three constructs: attitude toward the sponsor (Gwinner & Bennett, 2008), gratitude (Palmatier et al., 2009), and purchase intentions (Gwinner & Bennett, 2008; Hong, 2011). Slight modifications were made to suit the specific needs of this study. The items were presented in the same order for all three countries and contained identical designs. Actual purchase behaviors were collected using continuous numeric data (e.g., *How many <sponsor name> products did you buy during the period between the first survey and today?*), and 40.26% of the respondents acknowledged that they bought at least one sponsor's product. The researchers also employed two demographic items as control variables: annual household income (1 = *less than $20,000*; 2 = *$20,000 – $59,999*; 3 = *$60,000 – $89,999*; 4 = *$90,000 or more*) and household's decision maker (0 = *no, I am not the primary decision maker in my family with regard to making purchases*; 1 = *yes, I am the primary decision maker in my family with regard to making purchases*). Descriptive statistics for these demographics appear in Table 1 and Table 3.

Each of the three nations was assigned a national culture index score according to Hofstede's typology of cultural dimensions used in this study (i.e., scales from 0 to 100 for individualism/collectivism and for short-term/long-term orientation; Hofstede et al., 2010). Also, Hui & Triandis (1989), and Clarke III (2001) recommended scales with more response categories (i.e., scale points) as appropriate for cross-national research; thus, for this study the researchers used a 10-point Likert-type scale, anchored by "*Strongly Disagree*" (1) and "*Strongly Agree*" (10). Another reason for implementing a Likert-type scale with 10 points is that previous researchers have found strong differences in response styles between countries (e.g., Harzing, 2006). In particular, East Asian respondents have been shown to display a higher proportion of middle responses in comparison to U.S. and Canadian respondents who displayed more extreme response styles (e.g., Takahashi, Ohara, Antonucci, & Aakiyama, 2002). Dolnicar & Grün (2007) confirmed that this difference was also apparent between Australian and Asian respondents when scales with explicit mid-points are used. Similarly, Johnson, Kulesa, Cho, & Shavitt (2005), and Harzing (2006) suggested that national-level collectivism might be related to middle responses styles. This tendency is reinforced by the fact that most collectivist countries are characterized by an indirect communication style, where the expression of strong opinions is avoided (Hall, 1976). Therefore, researchers need to pay more attention to response styles in their data collection procedures as research clearly shows that there is stability in response style differences between countries (Harzing, 2006).

Finally, the attentiveness of survey participants was tested by inserting the statement "*On this question please click on "Strongly Agree" so we can ensure you are paying attention*" among the sponsorship outcomes' items to account for measurement error, which is a possible survey error that needs to be minimized to improve survey estimates (Dillman et al., 2014).

3.3 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS 21 and AMOS 21. Before any analyses were conducted, the normality of the data was assessed. Then, to assess the measurement model, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted. Internal consistency of the constructs was measured through composite reliability (CR; Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2009). Evidence of convergent validity was evaluated through assessment of the average variance extracted (AVE) scores, while evidence of discriminant validity was established when the AVE score for each construct exceeded the squared correlations between that and any other construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

The researchers utilized structural equation modeling (SEM; Byrne, 2010) to test the hypothesized relationships. Goodness of fit for the measurement and structural models was assessed with the ratio of chi-square (χ^2) to its degrees of freedom, Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), comparative-of-fit-index (CFI), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and standardized root mean residual (SRMR). Sample sizes of 200 or more have been considered acceptable for use of SEM (Garver & Mentzer, 1999; Hoelter, 1983), thus the current sample was deemed suitable.

4. Results

The data were screened before being analyzed, where the level of normality in the dataset was assessed based on the coefficients of skewness and kurtosis for all variables. An examination of the univariate statistics produced one value which was greater than 10 for univariate kurtosis, which indicated the level of normality in the dataset was problematic (Hair et al., 2009). The researchers removed nine cases based on univariate outlier detection; the subsequent skewness and kurtosis values were determined to be normal. Multivariate outliers were identified with the use of Mahalanobis D^2 measure. Hair et al. (2009) recommend a conservative threshold of $p < .001$ for the multivariate outlier test. Twelve cases were removed based on multivariate outlier detection, where both p-values of the Mahalanobis D^2 equaled .000.

4.1 Measurement Model

Examining the results of the CFA, the researchers noted the standardized factor loadings ranged from .61 to .98, surpassing the suggested cut-off point of .50 (Hair et al., 2009), and were all significant ($p < .001$). As shown in Table 2, all the composite reliability (CR) values ranged from .86 to .97, indicating acceptable levels of reliability for the constructs according to the recommended .70 threshold (Hair et al., 2009). All average variance extracted (AVE) values were greater than the .50 standard for convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), ranging from .62 to .91, providing evidence of acceptable levels of convergent validity for the constructs. In addition, evidence of discriminant validity was found given that the AVE value for each construct is greater than the squared correlation between the construct and other constructs in the model (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Additional descriptive statistics (i.e., mean and standard deviations) and the correlation matrix are listed in Table 3, with the correlations among constructs and the square root of the AVE values included on the diagonal. The three diagonal elements of the latent variables were all larger than their corresponding correlation coefficients, evidence of appropriate discriminant validity.

Table 2. Factor loadings, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Constructs/items	Loading[b]	CR	AVE
Attitude Toward the Sponsor [a]		.97	.91
I like <sponsor name> brand	.962		
<Sponsor name> is a very good brand of <product-category>	.928		
I have a favorable disposition/mood toward <sponsor name>	.972		
Gratitude [a]		.95	.86
I feel grateful to <sponsor name> for its sponsorship to <team name>	.963		
I feel thankful to <sponsor name> for its sponsorship to <team name>	.976		
I appreciate <sponsor name>	.833		
Purchase Intentions [a]		.86	.62
I will buy a <product-category> made by <sponsor name>	.829		
Next time I need to buy a <product-category>, I would consider buying <sponsor name>	.874		
I will be more likely to buy a <product-category> made by <sponsor name> over its competitors	.794		
The <sponsor name> sponsorship to <team name> makes me more likely to buy a <product-category> made by <sponsor name>	.614		

Note:
[a]Each item measured on a ten-point Likert-type scale with anchors: 1 = "Strongly Disagree", 10 = "Strongly Agree"
[b]All factor loadings are significant at $p < .001$
Model fit: $\chi^2(84) = 227.878$, $p < .001$, $\chi^2/df = 2.713$, TLI = .93, CFI = .94, GFI = .89, RMSEA = .086, SRMR = .094

Table 3. Mean (M), Standard Deviation (SD), and Correlation Matrix

Variables	M	SD	Correlation Matrix							
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Attitude Toward the Sponsor	8.34	1.63	**.95**							
2. Gratitude	7.22	2.21	.55	**.93**						
3. Purchase Intentions	7.70	2.09	.72	.50	**.78**					
4. Actual Purchases	.61	.88	.20	.17	.24					
5. Individualism/Collectivism	77.58	19.56	.01	-.13	-.01	-.08				
6. Short-Term/Long-Term Orientation	38.45	12.53	-.09	-.06	-.06	.03	-.69			
7. Annual Household Income	2.33	1.12	.06	-.06	.02	.02	.48	-.36		
8. Household's Decision Maker	.34	.48	-.01	-.12	-.01	-.02	.28	-.23	.15	

Note. Diagonals in bold are square root of AVE.

In accordance with the aim of this study, the results of the measurement model [$\chi^2(84)$ = 227.878, p < .001, χ^2/df= 2.713, TLI = .93, CFI = .94, GFI = .89, RMSEA = .086, SRMR = .001] led the researchers to conclude there was acceptable fit to the data. Although the chi-square goodness of fit index was statistically significant, in general, chi-square-based statistics can be misleading (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). Also, the ratio of the chi-square to its degrees of freedom was within the 3.0 criteria (Kline, 2011). The values for the additional fit indices were close to, or exceeded the critical values for good model fit, as CFI, TLI and GFI values higher than .90 are considered to have a close fit (Hair et al., 2009). However, TLI and GFI values are sensitive to sample size and, therefore, researchers need to be cautious with interpretation when assessing model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The observed RMSEA value was slightly over this estimate, as Hu & Bentler (1999) suggested RMSEA values between .05 and .08 to indicate a fair fit, but scholars have cautioned about using precise cutoff points for RMSEA (Chen, Curran, Bollen, Kirby, & Paxton, 2008; Marsh, Hau, & Wen, 2004). Moreover, the SRMR value is preferred over the RMSEA value (e.g., Iacobucci, 2010). Any SRMR value from .05 to .10 is considered indicative of an acceptable fit, while a SRMR value below .05 indicates an excellent fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999); as such, the observed values were considered to be acceptable.

4.2 Structural Model

The examination of the structural model included a test of the overall model fit, as well as individual tests of the relationships among constructs. The overall assessment of the structural model indicated an acceptable fit to the data [$\chi^2(12)$ = 25.918, p = .011, χ^2/df=2.160, TLI = .93, CFI = .97, GFI = .97, RMSEA = .071, SRMR = .059]. Figure 2 shows the standardized regression coefficients of the structural model. Attitude toward the sponsor showed a positive effect, and a significant relationship with purchase intentions (β = .63, p < .001), but no significant relationship was observed with actual purchases (β = .04, p = .669). Thus, H_1 was supported, but H_2 was not.

The short-term/long-term orientation cultural dimension showed a negative effect, but was not significant in its relationship with attitude toward the sponsor (β = -.01, p = .833); therefore, H_3 was not supported. Additionally, gratitude had a significant, positive effect on purchase intentions (β = .15, p = .005), but was not significant in relation to actual purchases (β = .05, p = .554), which did provide support for H_4, but not H_5. The individualism/collectivism cultural dimension had a significant, negative effect on gratitude (β = -.13, p = .031), so H_6 was supported.

There was a significant, positive path from purchase intentions to actual purchases (β = .18, p = .049), when controlling for the annual household income and the household's decision maker; thus, H_7 was also supported. The path between the individualism/collectivism cultural dimension and actual purchases was negative, but not significant (β = -.11, p = .150), when controlling for the annual household income and the household's decision maker, which did not support H_8.

Jointly, attitude toward the sponsor, gratitude, the short-term/long-term orientation and the individualism/collectivism cultural dimensions accounted for 53% of the variance of purchase intentions (R^2 = .53). Attitude toward the sponsor, gratitude, the short-term/long-term orientation and the individualism/collectivism cultural dimensions, and purchase intentions accounted for 7% of the variance of actual purchases (R^2 = .07), when controlling for the annual household income and the household's decision maker. These two control variables were regressed onto the endogenous variable of actual purchases; however, their individual effect was not found to be significant (β = .07, p = .349; respectively, β = .01, p = .914).

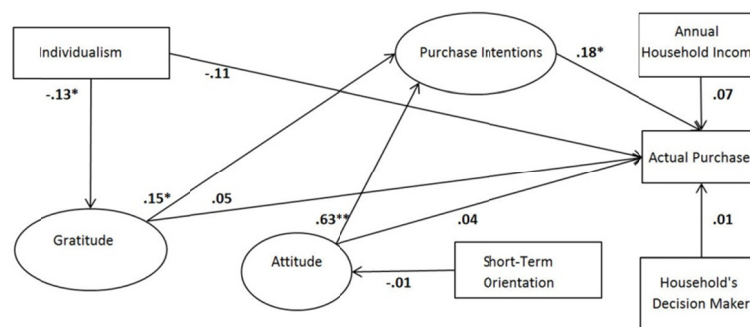Figure 2. Standardized estimates of the structural model

Note. **p ≤ .001, *p < .05.

5. Discussion and Implications

There is a growing interest in determining how sponsorship outcomes such as attitude toward a sponsor, gratitude, and purchase intentions function in relation to actual purchase behaviors at a cross-national level (Amis & Cornwell, 2005; Yoshida & Heere, 2015); yet few researchers have pursued such an investigation, highlighting the significance of this inquiry. Scholars have previously theorized upon the likelihood that consumer behavior might be culture-bound (e.g., Hofstede et al., 2010; Yoshida & Heere, 2015); in the present study the researchers have empirically-tested these assumptions in the context of sport sponsorship. The results suggest that gratitude in sponsorship may be responsive to the individualism/collectivism cultural dimension. Furthermore, a positive link between intentions and actual purchase behaviors has often been suggested (e.g., Dees et al., 2010), but there has been a lack of empirical work providing analysis of actual behaviors to support such an assertion. In the present study, the researchers added actual purchase behavior to assess whether there was a significant correlation between intentions and actual purchase behaviors at a cross-national level.

The link between attitude toward the sponsor and purchase intentions was significant, consistent with findings reported in prior sponsorship research (e.g., Alexandris et al., 2012; Biscaia et al., 2013); scholars have proposed that the development of positive attitudes towards a sponsor leads to increased consumer willingness to buy the sponsor's products. The attitude toward the sponsor variable, however, was not a significant predictor of actual purchases for the jersey sponsor's products in this study. There was no consistency between attitude and behavior in this study, which is contrary to the Theory of Planned Behavior, which includes the premise that actual behavior is influenced by an individual's attitude (Ajzen, 1985). This may indicate that, although international fans do have the intent to purchase the sponsor's products, they did not acquire the sponsor's products based on their positive and strong attitudes toward the sponsor (see Table 3 and Figure 2). It could be the case that, at a global level, positive attitudes toward the sponsor will normally lead to intentions to purchase, but there can be a complex transition from attitudes to action which will necessitate additional variables and increasing specificity in the measures of attitudes and behaviors (Funk, Haugtvedt, & Howard, 2000). Also, as Christensen (2006), and Tsiotsou & Alexandris (2009) noted, sponsorship evaluation research is still at early stages, due to lack of established theoretical frameworks that can explain a consumer's decision making process. This aspect certainly warrants further investigation.

In addition, the short-term/long-term orientation cultural dimension was not a significant predictor of the attitude toward the sponsor, contrary to what was proposed with H_3. When it comes to possibly not respecting [sports] traditions, it can be argued that the surveyed fans are not concerned if their favorite team has a jersey sponsor. This can be particularly true in the U.S. for jersey sponsorship, where some professional sport leagues (i.e., Major League Baseball, the National Basketball Association, the National Football League, and the National Hockey League) have yet to implement game-day jersey sponsorships. Therefore, as levels of the orientation cultural dimension decrease, attitude toward the sponsor's levels may not necessarily decrease. Moreover, making a case for a potentially successful implementation of jersey sponsorship in the U.S., the favorable opinions/attitudes fans have for a global company may be further enhanced if the affiliations between jersey sponsors and sport teams result in lower ticket prices, reduce team expenses, or assist in attracting/retaining star players (Jensen, Bowman, Wang, & Larson, 2012). Thus, there can be unique circumstances related to sport that international corporations should be aware of when they attempt to build more effective cross-national sponsorship initiatives.

In line with this study's findings on attitude toward the sponsor, gratitude was a significant predictor of purchase intentions, but not of actual purchase behaviors. This finding is contrary to prior speculation, in which scholars have stated that gratitude may lead to actual behavior (e.g., Kim et al., 2010; Palmatier et al., 2009). Expecting that feelings of gratitude generate an ingrained sense of psychological pressure to return the benefit received (Dahl, Honea, & Manchanda, 2005), it appears that fans' gratitude did not reciprocate through actual purchases of the team sponsor's products. Additionally, considering that the individualism/collectivism cultural dimension in this study had a significant negative effect on gratitude, it can be acknowledged for the first time that as there is movement to the individualistic end of the cultural dimension, gratitude levels will decrease. In this study the findings provide evidence that the collectivist fans (i.e., Indian fans) have more appreciation for the team's sponsor than the individualist fans (i.e., the British and American fans).

One possible way to increase gratitude levels of fans from individualistic countries could be through corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies that include social objectives within sponsorship initiatives (Alexandris et al., 2012; Cunningham, Cornwell, & Coote, 2009), as the more consumers perceive an organization as socially responsible, the more they will trust products sold by that organization (Ko, Rhee, Kim, & Kim, 2014). CSR activities could inspire consumers' trust and, thus, higher levels of gratitude. Also, the importance of trust as a

building block of relationships is even greater in the sport context, since support from fans for players, coaches, and teams is basically based on the created relationships (Lee, Bang, & Lee, 2013).

The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985), one of the most widely applied theories in consumer research (e.g., Manning, 2009), includes the premise that a link can be present between purchase intentions and behavior, as "at its core, the Theory of Planned Behavior is concerned with the prediction of intentions" (Ajzen, 2011, p. 1115). The results from the current study provide evidence that purchase intentions is a predictor of actual purchases for the jersey sponsor's products, in contrast to Hickman's (2015) and Yoshida and colleagues' (2015) research on intentions and actual sport behaviors in the U.S., and, respectively, Japan. Furthermore, sponsorship should account for behavioral change in order to be proven effective (Amis & Cornwell, 2005), and the most desirable behavioral change from a sponsor's perspective is the influence on sales (Choi et al., 2011; Kim et al., 2015); thus, this research fills a gap regarding the examination of actual behaviors. However, the observed sponsorship outcomes accounted for only a small percent of variance in predicting behavior (i.e., 7 %); therefore, future research should take into account more (sponsorship) variables when studying behavior. Also taking into consideration past results, it appears that the link between intentions and actual purchases is a complex one that will require further research to more fully understand.

The link between the individualism/collectivism cultural dimension and actual purchase behaviors was not significant in this study, dissimilar to what was assumed as a greater pressure to conform with group norms when it comes to consumer behavior in collectivist cultures (e.g., Foscht et al., 2008). Sport has become a global phenomenon because of its capacity to attract people of different nationalities (Ratten, 2011). To exemplify, the declining birth rate and the aging U.S. population, and the large increase in middle class households in India together with its large population, have enticed more professional sport teams to India (Ratten & Ratten, 2011). Lately, the use across the globe of multiple new media/digital platforms (i.e., the convergence of telecommunications, computing and traditional media, such as social media, video and audio streaming, internet protocol television, online video gaming, etc.) in sports sponsorship communications, enables brands to employ multiple media channels and publicity methods in order to sell products (McAllister & Turow, 2002; Santomier, 2008). Consequently, sport consumers have a strong desire to be global citizens and this desire is manifested by their purchases of global brands' products (Kim & Heere, 2012).

Finally, the household production theory of Becker (1965) includes the premise that expenditure rises with income. Therefore, household income can have a positive influence on expenditures (Thibaut, Vos, & Scheerder, 2014). Moreover, people belonging to low-income groups are more inclined to be influenced by family members because, for example, they are financially dependent on the household's decision maker (Yousaf & Huaibin, 2013). For instance, a respondent will provide his or her own intention to purchase the product, but the decision maker in the respondent's household may play a role in the final purchase decision (Morwitz, Steckel, & Gupta, 2007). However, this study's control variables (i.e., annual household income and household's decision maker) were not found to be predictors of actual behavior. These findings can be possibly explained by the fact that consumers may be better able to predict their own future behavior about buying durable goods (e.g., electronics which this study's jersey sponsor is selling), as purchase decisions for durable goods are seen as more important to the consumer than purchase decisions for non-durable goods (e.g., food; Morwitz et al., 2007). Therefore, consumers may deliberate considerably about the purchase decision for durable goods as respondents might have reflected on all of the aspects of the purchase situation, not just their household income and decision maker. Moreover, these two respondents' demographics that might have influenced the analyzed sponsorship outcomes were controlled in the current analysis and were found not significant, further strengthening the validity of the outcomes' correlations.

To summarize, research analyzing multi-country effects of sponsorship is almost non-existent (Amis & Cornwell, 2005; Yoshida & Heere, 2015); therefore, highlighting the importance of this paper for the field, which thus far has included few studies which have advanced our understanding of how cultural differences among continents might affect the sport marketing strategies of international firms (Yoshida & Heere, 2015). It seems that some sponsorship variables (e.g., gratitude) can be influenced by Hofstede's cultural dimensions; therefore, sport research developed in one country should be assessed in other countries as well. Given these results and their broad implications, further investigation on the way countries influence the relationships among key variables in sponsorship contexts is warranted.

6. Limitations and Future Research

The authors of this study tested the application of sponsorship outcomes using just one team and sponsor. To test the validity and generalization of the research findings, future research will require a greater variety of

sponsorship contexts, such as different sports, teams, cultural dimensions, product categories, purchase cycles (i.e., durable/non-durable goods), and sponsor levels. Also, the variation of approximately four to ten months in the number of days between collecting purchase intentions and actual purchases for the jersey sponsor's products (i.e., electronics) may not have been sufficient to be certain the actual purchase behaviors are accurate. However, literature from other academic fields suggest that it is not clear whether the strength of the intent-behavior relationship should increase or decrease with the length of time between the intent and behavior measurement (e.g., Morwitz et al., 2007). Second, while fans engaged in membership programs are often suggested to be highly identified with the team, the actual level of team identification for the CFC fans was not controlled in these research analyses; previous studies suggest that fans' link with the team tend to have a role on sponsorship outcomes (e.g., Alexandris et al., 2012). However, there were some cases where team identification didn't have a significant connection with actual behavior (e.g., Yoshida et al., 2015). Future studies could compare fans with different levels of team identification to better understand its role on sponsorship outcomes.

While this research was developed within three local contexts (i.e., U.S., U.K., and India), it might not be applicable to consumers in other countries. Thus, researchers should test these findings with more countries where sponsorship has experienced growth, such as China and Brazil. Fourth, the current study considered only five variables, and other variables may help to further explain sponsorship effectiveness. In future studies, researchers ought to test cross-national differences with other sponsorship effects, such as awareness, fit, word of mouth, goodwill, and image transfer. Furthermore, future attempts should be made to also include additional variables in global sponsorship models, as the results could have been significantly influenced, for example, by sponsorship activation in each market/country. However, many sports organizations market themselves globally, instead of focusing on one geographic region, as they can save time and money (e.g., Ratten, 2011). Fifth, the data for this research was collected with the use of a purposive sampling method, which can make research methods susceptible to bias. However, the sampling judgments made by the authors were based on clear and analytical criteria in an effort to reduce bias.

Acknowledgements

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