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SPONSORSHIP IN CLASSICAL OLYMPIC GAMES

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ABSTRACT

For hundreds of years, sports have been the greatest tool for establishing peace in the world, so the Olympic games held every four years became a means of cultural exchange without religious, language or race discrimination. It is the wish of all elite athletes to compete in the Olympic Games and represent their country. Being the most successful athlete, or being an Olympic champion is their biggest dream, but the ultimate aim is to compete with sportsmanlike conduct. Olympic games are among the most costly sports organizations attended by athletes, sports reporters, and audiences from around the world. Only wealthy countries can carry the burden of such high costs, which in turn leads to increased tourism activities

and the acquisition of modern sports facilities for the hosting country while also affording a good opportunity to promote the host country. In order to meet the high cost of sport organization, host countries share the costs with large commercial companies in the context of modern marketing. Sports organizations choose to support sports activities in order to appeal to the maximum number of audience. In today's world, sponsorship has become one of the most important factors that makes it possible to offer the Olympics to large audiences. This study intends to show the importance of sponsorship in classic Olympic games.

Key Words: Olympics, Games, Sports, Sponsorship

INTRODUCTION

Olympism is a way of life that attempts to foster the physical and mental development of people in a harmonious manner, the context of educational, social, aesthetic and moral principles that it supports. Its aim is to contribute to the formation of a better and more peaceful world by educating youth in the spirit of mutual understanding and friendship as well as educating people through sports, strengthening their character and raising generations who trust themselves and others. An international movement, the Olympics, is fully autonomous, and it represents a way of life far from any national, political and economic restrictions (Aripinar, 1997: 119).

The Olympic Games were held in a place known as Olympia in Ancient Greece, built to honor Zeus on a temple overlooking a flat land surrounded by sacred walls. Before commencement of the games, many religious rituals were performed and sacrifices were made to the gods (Gungör, 2013: 23).

The Olympic Games in Ancient Greece were the scenes of intense competition between city districts on the field. It is widely believed that these games were held to promote peace, while the underlying idea was one city district proving its dominance over another. Considering that the athletes participating in the games were actually good warriors, it becomes clearer what the main purpose was.

At the Olympic Games, the winners were considered national heroes. The winners from each field of sport were honored with a crown made from olive branches that were put on their heads, and famous sculptors were commissioned to make their statues. Some Greek city districts put Olympic winners on a lifetime annuity. It was also the case that they were made to be exempt from paying taxes (Aripinar, 1997: 120).

Today's concept of sponsorship can be traced back to patrons hailing from centuries ago. The concept of patronage, which generally means supporting artists and scientists, originates from Gaius Clinius Maecenas (70-8 BC), who was the advisor and close friend of the Roman emperor Augustus (Imamoglu, 2003: 37).

The goals of sponsorship activities, which have been carried out since ancient times, have changed with the advent of industrialization and communication tools with the addition of new objectives. In the past, the patronage offered by kings, nobles and affluent aristocratic families sought no purpose other than to spread their fame, whilst today more commercial organizations are reverting to sponsorship activities to maintain their existence and promote new products and services (Ustel, 2005).

Sports sponsorship is the most commonly preferred type of sponsorship. As sports sponsorship appeals to a wide range of audiences, it is especially preferred by companies that wish to introduce their products and services to large masses of people within a short space of time. Therefore, companies started focusing on supporting sports activities. In the process of historical development, sports sponsorship has followed in the footsteps of advertising and become what it is today (Imamoglu, 2003: 80).

The first commercial use of sponsorship was the placing of ads in the official program of the 1896 Olympic Games. First examples of sports sponsorship appeared towards the end of the 19th century. The modern corporate sports sponsorship as is known today, has been occurring since 1975. It is clear that brands and organizations involved in sports sponsorship tend to produce mass products (Sahin, 2009: 12).

As a result, the availability of sports to a large masses of people has led to a greater interest towards sports sponsorship. From the standpoint of the historical course of sponsorship, whilst people who support art, artists and science were called patrons, sponsorship in its current form is more about organizations or individuals providing financial support for areas outside of their expertise in return for certain benefits. Sponsorship is now included in the marketing strategies of companies all around the world (Meenaghan, 1991: 5).

Concept and Scope

Sponsorship is a new phenomenon arising from modern economic conditions in today's information society. The debate is still ongoing, both practically and theoretically, about what sponsorship actually means. However, there is a general consensus that sponsorship is a process based on the principle of reciprocity in addition to being a versatile communication tool (Imamoglu, 2003: 27; Okay, 1998).

Sponsorship is historically based on patronage. Those who protect artists and their works are called patrons. Rulers, kings and princes, the elite strata of society, have continued to function as guardians of art for centuries (Bülbül, 2000: 85).

From a historical standpoint, with the birth of the concept of “Maecenasism”, named after Gaius Clinius Maecenas who lived in 1 BC, patronage of art and culture remained within the preserve of palaces and affluent estate owners for centuries, only to be replaced by the concept of sponsorship with commercial concerns becoming more prominent (Sahin, 2003: 1, Tarcan, 1984).

The concept of sponsorship was imported from the English language and has its roots in the Latin word *Spondeo* which is of Greek origin. In Latin, *Spondeo* means solemnly promising, undertaking or pledging to do something, and also being a guarantor. Whereas in Latin it refers to someone making a promise or providing surety for somebody.

In English, while sponsorship is used to define guarantors, it also means godfather, guardian, protector, promoter and donator. While the concept of sponsorship initially referred to dealings where only one side was the beneficiary, its meaning has been transformed, especially with the development of the advertising sector in the US, thanks to the proliferation of radio and TV channels, to refer to dealings where both sides become indebted. In Turkish, a sponsor refers to individuals or organizations that undertake the material and spiritual aspect of an activity (Imamoglu, 2003: 35).

Sports sponsorship still gets the biggest financial investment from all sponsorship investments. As sports appeals to larger audiences, companies wishing to promote their products and services, and associate themselves with a certain brand image become engaged in sponsorship activities of various sizes depending on the event sponsored. This is because sports is a sponsorship field that enables communication with target groups, a common language understood by all (Sunay, 2009: 304).

Considering the desire of countries to extract social, economical, political and sports benefits from sports organizations and also athletes' wish to attain the highest level of success in high-profile sports competitions, the Olympic games are without doubt the largest organization of sports in the world for appealing to millions of viewers who are treated to thrilling feats of sports (Karaküçük, 1988: 49).

Olympic sponsorship is the partnership established between a corporate entity and the OIC, the International Olympic Committee, to support the Olympic movement and the Olympic Games (Sunay, 2009: 308).

While sports dominates the world with ever increasing clout over populaces, sports sponsors have played a big role in the staging of sports organizations, so far. The fact that sports events have a large audience base combined with their appeal to people from all over the world through a common language has more than attracted the attention of large sport businesses. Olympic games are the largest sports events and as such they provide a great opportunity for large enterprises to promote their brand around the globe. Large enterprises make all sorts of contributions to take part in this organization as part of their drive to promote themselves globally and increase their brand visibility.

Note: The Olympics are expensive and costly events. Large amounts of capital and political power is required to stage an organization of such scale. Each city of the OIC Member States has the right to organize Olympic games. Reviewing the preparations made by the nominated cities, Turkey's National Olympic Committee presents the candidacy of a city to the OIC with support from the government (TMOK, 2004: 4, Argan and Katirci, 2008) and the city is awarded the Olympic games if approved by the OIC.

SPORTS SPONSORSHIP

To sponsor means to provide financial support, guardianship, bankrolling ability or patronage.

Sponsorship activities cover five main areas: supporting sports activities, supporting artistic activities, supporting environmental protection and associated activities, supporting education, and supporting media. Sports is the most supported type of activity among these areas. Since sports are an activity that appeals to large masses of people, companies find sports sponsorship to be an appealing way to promote themselves (Oztürk, 1992, 18).

The sponsorship budget constitutes the starting point when considering the pricing of sports sponsorship. Similar to the promotion budget, when determining the sponsorship budget, the objective and task method, percentage of sales method, marginal method, competition indicator method, maximum expenditure method and the arbitrary allocation method are taken into consideration (Blythe, 2001; Argan and Katirci, 2008).

Some companies determine their marketing budgets based on the percentage of the previous year's sales figures. In the allocation of the sponsored brands, priority is mostly given to leading brands (Shank, 2002).

The industry data on sponsorship shows that 47% of sponsorship money is paid in advance to the sports organization by the sponsor. 28% of the sponsors donate their products, while the remaining 25% give cash and make product donations (Parkhouse, 1996).

As with the pricing of every kind of products, companies cannot pretend that they have no competitors when acting as a sponsor. Therefore, the behaviors and offers of competitors in the market constitute the price of sponsorship, which is referred to as competitive pricing (Pitts and Stotlar, 1996).

Referring to a Coca-Cola commercial in Time magazine, Coca-Cola is the world's largest and most recognized Olympic sponsor of the international sports world keeping it

propped up with its contributions. With its purity, dynamism and energy, the product sells itself (Simson and Jennings, 1993, 61).

This all goes to prove how vital sponsors are for sports organizations.

SPONSORSHIP IN CLASSIC OLYMPICS

It is worth mentioning that there are two basic components of classic Olympics. One of these is a concept called Arete from the Greek philosophy which means Power. The other is the concept of sponsorship, which is a relatively new-fangled concept in today's world. In the ancient Greek world, almost every champion was a professional in all respects, and earned their living through the support received from their sponsors and with the money from the commodities won in the competitions (Koryürek, 2003: 4).

The right to stage 90 Olympic games was given to what is known today as the Antakya province in the years 260-360 BC. In some periods, the Olympic games were not held due to various reasons. It was reported to the Roman Empire that the region was having economic hardships due to the abolition of the games, and the authorities, who believed that they had an economic crisis on their hands due to a decrease in the number of tourists who were drawn to the area to watch the games, allowed the Olympic games to resume. Afterwards, a foundation was established by the rich for the organization of the games, and after a while the rich created a foundation to start generating their own money. Confronted with such a situation, the state interposed itself in the business of the expenditure of public contributions. At the Olympic Games held in Antakya, the winners were not given any financial rewards but were exempted from taxes and public contributions.

In the XVII century, a rich British businessman named Robert Dover funded an Olympic Games sports competition on his estate. Later, in 1849, another English man called W.P.Brookes, organized an Anglo-Saxon Olympics tournament, which included America in addition to England (Secilmis, 2004).

Beginning in England, this movement spread to Greece and a rich Greek businessman organized an Olympics tournament in Athens in 1859. 30,000 people watched the games; these sports tournaments were repeated in 1870, 1875 and 1888 (Koryürek, 2003: 10).

In summary, in ancient Olympic games, athletes survived with the money from their sponsors, the support of wealthy people, and with the gifts they won in the competitions. Later, insertion of artworks and temples into sports areas drew more tourists and allowed Olympic games to be associated with artworks and temples.

CONCLUSION

Sport it is a giant industry with more than 1% of the world's population making their living from a sports career. Sport is a big industry and a social phenomenon that has a great impact on the world. It is a unifying force that allows people from different parts of the world to feel the same emotions that bring together every country and all people of the world regardless of race.

A highly unique social phenomenon unmatched in its power, sports are also the strongest communication link in the world. The success rate of brands that focus on sports, and support sports through sponsorship is much higher when compared to other brands that have no interest in sports.

Steadily increasing in volume, sports advertising through brands that choose to invest in sports sponsorship continues to get the biggest slice of advertisement investment.

While sports dominates the world with ever increasing clout over populaces, sports sponsors have so far played a big role in the staging of sports organizations. When looking at classical and modern Olympic games, the first Olympic games were staged as part of street fairs or with support from wealthy people and public donations. Growing in size and importance, Olympics became state policy of some countries during certain periods.

The fact that sports events have a large audience base combined with their appeal to people from all over the world through a common language has more than attracted the attention of large sports businesses. Therefore, the Olympic games have gained even more prominence with large enterprises making efforts to take part in the organization and promote their products globally. In that regard, large organizations almost vie with one another to become a sponsor for sports organizations.

Considering the desire of countries to extract social, economical, political and sports benefits from sports organizations and also athletes' wish to attain the highest level of success in high-profile sports competitions, the Olympic games are without doubt the largest sports organization in the world for appealing to millions of viewers who are treated to thrilling feats of sports.

Olympic games are large sports events and as such they provide a great opportunity for large enterprises to promote their brand around the globe. Large enterprises make all sorts of contributions to take part in this extremely important organization as part of their drive to promote themselves globally and increase their brand visibility.

Considering that sports organizations and Olympic games arouse the same sort of interest in people from around the world bringing them together in a spirit of harmony, global sports events command even greater economic power with major global brands seeing them as an opportunity to promote their products and services.

As such, sports advertisements dominate the market with their appeal to large masses of people who share in the joy and thrill. Undoubtedly, sports have become the greatest sanctioning power of recent times drawing people who wish to partake in the unifying power and lured without coercion.

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