



# *Storytelling as activation tool for sports sponsorship*

*'How can storytelling, as activation tool for sports sponsorship, build brand equity through emotional customer connection and how is it moderated by the congruence between the brand and the athlete, and fan involvement?'*

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*“Stories around sport: it is about more than golden medals”*

Bibi Rodel

## Management summary

This study is conducted to answer the research question: *‘How can storytelling, as activation tool for sports sponsorship, build brand equity through emotional customer connection and how is it moderated by the congruence between the brand and the athlete, and fan involvement?’* The literature review gives insight into the current, more central and integrated position of sports sponsorship as communication tool for brands. With respect to competitive clutter on one side and the emotional power of athletes as brand extensions on the other side, sports sponsorship offers many opportunities. The rise of social media that brought athletes more close to the customer strengthened the development of valuable relationships between customers, sponsored athletes and brands. As a framework for this study, we linked the phenomena of storytelling as activation tool for sports sponsorship to emotional customer connection and brand equity. The study consists of a dominant main study from a consumer perspective and an additional study from a company perspective. The main study has been conducted via an online experiment. As an answer to the research question, we cannot conclude that storytelling builds brand equity through emotional customer connection. Although the expected directionality of the effects is shown, the results only show significance for one out of the five hypotheses. There is no evidence that storytelling in sports sponsorship positively affects emotional customer connection, and neither brand equity. According to emotional customer connection, there is evidence for a direct positive effect on brand equity, but the mediating effect of emotional customer connection cannot be supported. The moderating effects of fan involvement with the sport and congruence between brand and athlete are not significant. Only a main effect of fan involvement is found. The additional analysis from a company perspective confirmed the significant findings from the main study implying its external validity. Besides, it also suggested relationships between the non-significant constructs of the study, indicating that the effects might exist and should thus be further investigated. The two-sided perspective strengthens the overall reliability of the study results. This research extends the existing academic knowledge in the field of sports sponsorship effectiveness and the role of storytelling as activation mechanism. The results offer clear insights into the direct and indirect effects of storytelling and the influences of congruence and fan involvement. With respect to managers, the study provides more insight into how storytelling and related concepts could contribute to sports sponsorship investments.

**Key words:** *sports sponsorship, storytelling, emotional customer connection, brand equity, congruence, fan involvement.*

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# Chapter 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background and knowledge gaps

Traditional marketing communications are facing challenges of reaching consumers because of the highly cluttered market environment characterised by an overload of messages. Therefore, there is a certain pressure on the creation and implementation of new communication channels. One of the fastest growing marketing communication tools that overcome media clutter is the corporate sponsorship of sports. It has the ability to provide an environment in where a brand can differentiate itself from competitors and where it can reach a preferred specific target audience. It is more often pointed out as a powerful communication mode. A best practice example for the sponsorship strategy is the Red Bull Brand, a company that integrated the sponsorship platform throughout the entire brand. Via sponsorship the brand can be linked to a sport, team or athlete, which enables companies to reach attention and interest of the target group by associating with the sports that are of great importance to them. Energy, dedication and teamwork are the values that drive athletes parallel with the values that make a company successful. Aligning a company with an athlete can establish brand universality. Sports sponsorship offers the perfect platform for a company to engage and interact with fans or followers of an athlete, particularly via social media. It is a powerful tool to connect at a deep emotional level with people and change their feelings about brands. With regards to the future of sponsorship and its survival, both academicians and practitioners acknowledged the need to create dynamic and engaging campaigns that allow brands to become an integrated part of the sports or athlete that is being used as a channel. Besides, alignment of values and congruent messages between the brand and the sport or athlete is essential (Belzer, 2013).

Traditionally, sports sponsoring was used for charity purposes or as a tool to strengthen brand awareness and recognition. However, over the past few years the benefits and power of successful sponsorships were discovered, which brought its importance to a higher level. Although in the past, marketing budgets focused mostly on advertising to drive brand exposure and increase sales, nowadays sports sponsoring became a substantive aspect of the marketing strategy. Budgets for sponsorship have grown relatively faster than budgets for sales promotion and advertising (Cornwell & Roy, 2003). Currently, organizations spend 23% of their overall marketing, advertising, and promotion budgets to sponsorship, which is the second highest average in the last 14 years. Compared to 2013, 52% of the companies will keep their sponsorship budgets at the level of 2013, whereas 27% will increase and 21% will

decrease their sponsorship spending (International Events Group, 2014). A study that was conducted in 2013 showed that decision makers in a company agreed that sponsorship is more effective than advertising in delivering brand exposure. 75% of the directors reported that sponsorship became of greater importance in their strategies than advertising. Whereas advertising is a direct communication tool reaching the customer through an 'interruption' mode, sponsorship communicates more indirectly via the so-called 'property in a passion' mode. The primary reason why sponsorship quickly becomes a more effective alternative to advertising is that it allows brands to differentiate themselves in the market. Moreover, sponsorship provides the opportunity to create and own a unique position in the mind of the consumer. This is extremely important in the current market environment that is characterized by an overload of products and brands with little to choose between price, content and quality. Brand marketers have moved away from a focus of sales recruitment towards a goal of customer retention. This shifted perspective is likely to continue as for the bigger part of companies driving brand loyalty is the primary objective (Greenhalgh & Greenwell, 2013). Corporate spending on sponsorship worldwide grew by 4.1% (from \$51.1 billion in 2012) and reached \$53.2 billion in 2013. The global sponsorship sector is expected to grow by 3.9% to \$55.3 billion in 2014 (Statista, 2014). According to statistical data, sport is the most popular type of sponsorship, which accounted for 75.6% (\$40.2 billion) of total revenue in 2013. This is an increase of 2.6% from 2012. For 2014, it is expected that the share of sports sponsorship will increase even more with 13.6% to \$45.6 billion (Statista, 2014). Besides, sports sponsorship is weathering the economic downturn better than many traditional areas of marketing spend as they kept (higher) positive growth during the recession. However, even though this increased revenue suggests that sports sponsorship is becoming an increasingly effective marketing communication tool in general, there is only limited research that investigates the concrete influence to a company or brand. This can be seen as a knowledge gap, which offers many room for further research. Most of the literature about sponsorship considers the generation of favorable consumer reactions such as brand recall (Wakefield et al 2007), brand awareness (Cornwell et al 2006), and brand image (Smith 2004). These are all very abstract metrics leading to uncertain results, because they are very sensitive for misinterpretation. For instance, a consumer might be able to recall a brand but this not necessarily leads to a more positive attitude towards the brand or actual purchases. Some of the studies are particularly focused on sponsorship outcomes at brand-level such as brand equity (Becker-Olsen & Hill 2006; Cornwell et al 2001). Nevertheless, little studies present interpretable or actionable results for managers as they only report abstract findings. There is

a lack of literature that is relevant and suitable for managers. As mentioned before, sports accounts for a substantial part of sponsorship and it involves massive business investments. This motivates its relevance, which suggests that more specific research and in-depth knowledge should be represented in academic literature. Besides, measurement of sports sponsorship is an underrepresented area in academic literature. Measurement of business results is necessary, especially during tough economic times. During the recession, more people tend to see sports sponsorship as a luxury that is only possible when having additional budget. Sponsor directors have to show precisely what returns are made out of sponsorship investments. Thus, measurement of sponsorship performances became extremely important. Often, sponsoring is measured quantitatively, which means that sponsorship costs are compared with indicators of visibility such as the number of times that a brand is visible et cetera. Qualitative measurements are somewhat more difficult, but the quality of sponsorship communication is extremely important. A brand that is represented on the shirt of an athlete results in substantively more value than the same logo on a billboard. Therefore, there is a crucial need of more insight into measurable effects of sponsorship on brand equity.

Generally, three causes of sponsorship fails are mentioned in literature. First, failing to activate a sponsorship. Rather, it is not sufficient to buy access to a certain platform only, or more practically, to tie a brand to a sport or athlete, without doing something concretely with that connection. Sponsorship in isolation might only contribute to brand awareness, but it will not result in the communication of a specific brand message (Millward Brown, 2006). This implies that sponsoring needs to be supported and leveraged by other media, so that a relationship with sports fans is build. The activating potential of storytelling might contribute to overcome this failure. The second failure is a bad match between the sponsor and the sponsored athlete, and the accompanied sport. The values of the involved parties need to be congruent or interlinked in some way. The appropriateness of the fit between the brand and the sponsored athlete is crucial to generate the desired brand impressions. Appropriateness may take the form of a natural fit but it might also be primarily tonal, which means that the connection is established through the creativity of support executions. Rather, when there is no natural match between the brand and the athlete, it is essential to create fit in a relevant and memorable way. Only then, the sponsorship could be of any value for the brand (Millward Brown, 2006). Hence, it is implied that congruence strengthens the effect of storytelling in sports sponsorship on brand equity. And the third failure: lack of continuity. Sponsorship is a long-term strategy and needs to persist for at least three years. Ending a sponsorship after a year is irrational, as it is not realistic to achieve objectives within one year (Millward Brown,

2006). In most of the cases sponsorship associations take time to build. Many activation efforts are necessary to position the brand associations in people's minds. Finally, it goes wrong as well when a sponsor tries to change a sport or traditions. This might lead to resistance of fans resulting in negativity for the brand.

## **1.2 Framework of the study**

### *1.2.1 Storytelling*

With the presence of many competitors who offer comparable products, surrounding in a cluttered environment of messages, there is only little differentiation. Brands could differentiate themselves through storytelling. They need to tell compelling narratives to reach their target groups. Thus, as a marketer it makes sense to structure the brand in a story. To investigate this in the field of sports sponsorship, storytelling forms the independent variable of this study. The dependent variable that is measured in this study is brand equity, as the study aims to investigate the effect of storytelling as activation tool for sports sponsorship on brand value. In this study, storytelling is demarcated in the context of sports sponsorship, which means that stories about a brand are linked to stories in sport. More specifically, the research considers brands that invested in sports sponsorship and activate these sponsorships by storytelling via athletes. This includes athletes sharing stories on social media, such as Twitter and Facebook, with a link to the sponsoring brand so that the audience gets involved in their lives and the brand. Besides, it also involves the dispersion of content by the brand itself, in where the sport or the athlete is integrated, such as commercials, short movies or messages et cetera. Considering the storytelling tactic, the main job of marketers is to make a brand part of the customers' stories. They need to understand their needs and demonstrate how the brand fits with their functional and, even better, emotional needs. They have to demonstrate an alignment with the (potential) customers' priorities and motivations (Skildum-Reid K., 2009). As a result the brand becomes more activated in the mind of consumers, which is expected to boost the level of brand equity.

### *1.2.2 Emotional customer connection*

It is proposed that creating customer connection during a sponsorship through storytelling could contribute to its successful implementation. According to Fog et al (2005) a brand is strong when it is built on emotional connection with the consumer (Fog, Budtz, & Yakaboylu, 2005). Mc Lellan (2006) suggests that emotional connection might intensify the relationship between consumers and the brand, which strengthens consumer attitude and brand evaluation,

translating into higher brand equity (Mc Lellan, 2006). Hence, in her study she proposes that storytelling in sports sponsorship positively affects brand equity, including brand attitude, brand image and brand loyalty by intensifying emotional customer connection. In the context of the study, the focus lies on the emotional bond that is created between the brand, the story around the athlete and the target group. Branding is the ultimate goal and storytelling is the means to achieve it. More specifically, the story speaks to consumers' emotions, the brand creates an emotional connection with the customer, and the target group emphasizes with the brand. Considering this, emotional customer connection is incorporated as a mediator in the study. The beneficial effects of emotional attachment might lead to more close connections to the brand, which favorably influences overall brand perceptions. From a consumer perspective, which is relevant for the current study, feelings of emotional connections to a brand may underlie positive transfer effects to brand associations and attitude.

### *1.2.3. Congruence and fan involvement*

To address the foregoing propositions, the effects of storytelling are examined in more detail. Although most of the results indicate that sports sponsorship entails beneficial consequences and interesting opportunities for companies, several boundary conditions and possible negative influences are pointed as well. Incongruence between sponsor and athlete (Dardis, 2009) and consumer involvement towards a sport are stated as challenging influences that might have effect on the positive effect of sponsorship. Therefore, the study investigates the presumed moderating influences of congruence between the brand and the athlete in the context of sponsorship, and the degree of involvement towards a sport. These moderators might strengthen the effect of storytelling in sponsorship on brand equity. Literature suggests that congruence enhances brand equity, so according to these findings it is expected that congruence strengthens brand equity in the context of this study as well. Besides, it could be expected that the degree of fan involvement determines the strength of the effect of storytelling in sports sponsorship on brand equity. Hence, when people feel highly attached to a sport, they are more sensitive for messages and more likely to create positive feelings. In short, the use of storytelling as activation mechanism of sports sponsorship could be an important antecedent of brand equity. Particularly, storytelling might positively boost emotional customer connection in a way that enhances feelings of attachment to a brand. More specific insight into the effect of storytelling in sports sponsorship could assist marketers or sponsorship directors to activate their sports sponsorship in an effective manner. More practically, insight could guide them in their decisions with regards to sports

sponsorship investments and its successful implementation. It might give them ideas of activating their sports sponsorship in a way that resonates with the modern customer-oriented and integrated sponsorship activation ‘thinking’. Summarized, this leads to the following research question: ***“How can storytelling, as activation tool for sports sponsorship, build brand equity through emotional customer connection and how is it moderated by the congruence between the brand and the athlete, and fan involvement?”***

To answer the main research question, the following sub questions need to be answered.

- *“How does storytelling in sports sponsorship influence brand equity?”*
- *“How does storytelling in sports sponsorship influence emotional customer connection?”*
- *“How does emotional customer connection influence brand equity?”*
- *“How does congruence moderate the effect of storytelling on brand equity?”*
- *“How does fan involvement moderate the effect of storytelling on brand equity?”*

### **1.3 Academic and managerial relevance**

#### *1.3.1 Academic contribution*

Only since the last 20 years, the body of literature has examined corporate sponsorship as a distinct marketing communication tool that complements the marketing communication platform of a company (Cornwell & Roy, 2003). This means that sponsorship, as area of study, is rather unexplored and thus relevant for further investigation. Prior literature showed that it is quite difficult to measure the effectiveness of sponsorship, as it involves relatively abstract and subjective measurement items. For instance, measurements of awareness and recall are indicators for attention to a brand, but they do not specifically say something about actual changed consumer behaviour for buying that brand. Therefore there is need for appropriate measurement in this area. This research contributes to the existing knowledge of sponsorship effectiveness in the context of a specific activation tool: storytelling. Its effectiveness is measured by relevant metrics from a consumer perspective, as consumers are the most important drivers of sponsorship success. Consumers literally have the power to determine the value of a brand, as their behaviour is dependent on processes in consumers’ minds. Therefore, it is more important to assess effects on actual behavioural elements, instead of meaningless indicators.

#### *1.3.2 Managerial contribution*

This study aims to provide relevant practical insight into the effect of storytelling in sports sponsorship for sponsor managers and directors. Although the power and potential of

sponsorship is acknowledged in the market and increasingly confirmed in literature, there is only little literature that considers concrete effects on relevant outcomes for companies. By investigating the effects of storytelling, a highly interesting marketing tool for sport sponsoring directors, the study might contribute to the knowledge of its effects in use. The results might be valuable for them who consider implementing storytelling to activate their sports sponsorship programs. Recent developments in the market stimulated attention for sponsorship in companies. The economic crisis has stimulated doubts about the justification and appropriateness of sports sponsoring during tough economic times (Marketingtribune, 2013). Furthermore, corporate social responsibility plays an important role in the current era of sponsorship. This further increased a mind set in where people have doubts about the appropriateness of sports sponsorship. Some people suggest that companies can better invest in societal sponsoring, while others think that notably sport can offer a solution for societal problems (Marketingtribune, 2013). Thus, researching sport in sponsorship is relevant as it is a trending topic in the public discussion. Besides, recent contract endings of sports teams, such as the Rabo cycling team and the Dutch speed skating teams has brought the considerations according to sports sponsorship and opportunities for companies into the picture again. Storytelling is repeatedly mentioned as marketing trend for 2014. While facts were most important for consumers for years ago, nowadays their needs are more and more focused on identification with products and services. By using stories, information is more easily understandable (Schilders, 2013). Sponsor experts state that dynamic and creative thinking is crucial in sports sponsoring nowadays. They suggest that sponsor directors who stay to think traditional, are going to lose ground in the market (Waal, 2014). Therefore, more specific practical knowledge is needed to guide, in this field, relatively less experienced managers. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of one of the most pointed potential marketing instruments to activate sponsorship in today's market; storytelling.

#### **1.4 Overview structure**

The remainder of this report is organized in a structured way. In chapter two existing literature with regard to the topic is discussed and the areas of interest for the research are introduced. Chapter three describes the methodology involving the several methodological decisions. In chapter four the study results are presented, involving an analysis of the retrieved data. Chapter five consists of a discussion of the study results, whereby the research questions are answered, and concluding with implications, limitations and recommendations for further research.

## Chapter 2 Discussion of literature

### 2.1 Sports sponsorship

#### 2.1.1 Definition

According to the International Events Group (IEG), a leading information source in the sponsorship industry, sponsorship can be defined as: *“A cash or in-kind fee paid to a property (typically a sports, entertainment, non-profit event or organization) in return for access to the exploitable commercial potential associated with that property”*. With regard to the context of this study, we confine this definition solely for sponsorship in the field of sports.

#### 2.1.2 Evolution of sports sponsorship

At the end of the sixties, sports sponsorship was introduced as a marketing tool for companies to enlarge their name awareness. However, over the years the objectives for sports sponsorship became much broader. Obviously, sponsorship of sports is still seen as a business investment aiming to make savings, but the more specific sub goals to realize it have changed. Nowadays, the association with sports and the accompanying norms and values are driving benefits for sponsoring companies. Often, the predominant motivation of companies to engage in sport sponsorship is to bring their brands at a different way to the attention. Reviewing the sponsorship literature, there have been several era's of sponsorship in where companies had different perspectives and strategies with regard to their sponsorship activities. The modern sponsorship literature acknowledges this development, as they are increasingly writing about the evolution of sponsorship over time. Sponsorship expert Kim Skildum-Reid, author of several bestsellers and papers in the field of sponsorship, has pointed the evolution of sponsorship by describing three generations over forty years in where the power of sponsorship has matured towards its full potential (Skildum-Reid K. , 2013).

*The first generation* of sponsorship refers to the period of 1970 until early 1980, when brands focused on achieving exposure and awareness. This ego-driven norm still holds for many corporate sponsors worldwide who still believe that logo dispersion, accompanied by a multitude of other logos, equals marketing return. During this generation sponsorship was not considered part of the overall marketing plan, but a luxury spend.

*The second generation* originates from the mid of 1980 until the early years of 1990, in where the focus of sponsorship shifted towards sales. Immediate gains were the drivers, while long-term benefits were not taken into consideration. Results, such as incremental sales and profit margins, were compared to the sponsorship investment. This short-sighted era has

disappeared for the bigger part, but is still visible at brands that make sponsorship deals to gain vending rights. Different from the prior era, this generation realized that sponsorship had to be leveraged to create returns. Therefore, extra budgets were allocated to promotions. However, as they were not integrated, they often competed with other brand activities.

*The third generation* reflects a major step forward, starting in the early years of 1990 and is still used by sponsors today. Drivers of this era are brand needs, integration and the achievement of various marketing objectives. Sponsor goals are both focused on short and long term. However, its self-centred focus on “what is in it for us?” instead of “what can we offer?” hinders its ability to realize the full potential of sponsorship. Compared to the second era, integration with the overall marketing objectives and activities came into play during the third generation, as sponsorship became part of the marketing mix.

*The fourth generation is called the ‘Last Generation of Sponsorship’* as academicians see this as the final stage in where marketers finally start focusing on nurturing a brand’s connection with a target market by putting consumer needs first, instead of brand needs. They state that it is not about the number of times that you communicate with the target market through sponsorship, but it is about how to use the most personally relevant and emotional marketing media to improve relationships between the brand and the target market. The sponsored team or athlete becomes the conduit through which the brand can strengthen its connections with the target market. Meeting functional and emotional customer needs is the main focus when negotiating sponsorships. The goal of the brand should be to provide meaningful added value benefits. The Last Generation sponsorship era will never change as long as target markets, their needs and the environment change. This new view on sponsorship, created a new sponsorship model. While in the past sponsors focused on creating bonds with events, nowadays they focus on bonds with target markets. Due to the multitude of sponsorship brand messages and the cluttered environment of dozens of logos, people do not notice signage anymore. This suggests that leveraging the sponsorship is crucial to realize sponsorship returns. Therefore, the focus of this study is not the effect of sports sponsorship in general, but more specifically the effect of activating that sponsorship. This new era forms the foundation for the research question of this study.

### *2.1.3 Sponsorship activation*

In the last generation, integrated leverage programs are established to use the unique emotional power of sponsorship to drive the entire marketing program of a brand. In fact, sponsorship is deployed as a catalyst for other media, instead of being supported by other

media. The leverage program of a successful Last Generation Sponsorship considers several aspects: leveraging sponsorship in a way that respects and enhances the emotional connection between the audience and the sport or athlete, providing meaningful added-value to the experiences of both the audience with the sport and the audience with the brand, and enhancing the community of the target market in a way that impacts the ordinary lives of people. Sports sponsorship enables companies to attach value to a brand. Sponsorship is differential, exclusive and also accessible as it is closely linked to the interests of people. When sponsoring a sports or an athlete, a brand can ‘say’ it loves that sport or athlete, just like a specific target group, without really saying it. This helps brands to make a connection with the audience they want to connect with in a relatively simple manner. In this study the phenomena of storytelling is investigated as activation mechanism for sports sponsorship.

## **2.2 Storytelling**

### *2.2.1 Definition*

Storytelling is a fairly uninvestigated activating marketing instrument that does receive more and more attention due to its potential to deliver benefits in sponsorship. Storytelling is a broad concept that holds a spectrum of definitions for different marketers. Mc Lellan (2006) defines the concept as *“creating abstract value by framing information so that it is meaningful, understandable and memorable, evoking listeners’ own emotions by mere association, leading to the creation of solid customer relationships”*. To see storytelling from the same point of view in this study, it is important to define the term more demarcated and to apply it more specifically in the context of sports sponsorship. In this study, storytelling is therefore defined as *“the development of incremental (emotional) elements of a brand idea that gets dispersed systematically in a sports sponsorship strategy by the brand or the sponsored athlete for the purposes of creating a unified and coordinated emotional brand-customer connection”*. Storytelling is obviously providing consistent and compelling content to build a picture of a brand. It is necessary that stories include content and emotion, while considering long-term approaches. Rather, people need to develop long-lasting connections with brands, so they should become invested into the stories. It might take several years to build up a story, and more important, to change consumer perceptions about the brand.

### *2.2.2 Evolution of storytelling*

To place storytelling as marketing tool in a strategic framework, it is necessary to start with content marketing. Content marketing is a higher-order construct that consists of several

elements. Content marketing is defined as *“the creation or publication of content with the purpose to start and build a relationship with existing and/or potential customers”* (Maas, 2013). Content marketing is subdivided into several channels, which are relevant for different target groups. Next to traditional textual forms, animations, games, videos, blogs and hence storytelling are channels of content marketing as well. The way in which content is featured changed extremely after the rise of Internet as communication channel. It enabled companies to be visible every hour of the day. Nowadays the main challenge of content marketing is to be present with content and foremost to be relevant. Another change is that content is more based on conversations with the target group. The importance of starting dialogues with (potential) target customers became clear, so content need to touch them mentally. The essence of content marketing is to be present in conversations, which means that you need to be relevant. Companies need to find content that is suitable for the message that they wish to communicate. Content needs to be able to keep the interest of the audience continuously. If a company is able to manage this, content marketing could be a very effective marketing tool leading to large consumer engagement. If implemented successfully, it enhances loyalty and customer connection. The traditional view on marketing of responding to customer needs’ has not changed, but the strategies and the means to realize it did change. The most conspicuous change is the relationship with the consumer that is characterized by a bilateral relationship nowadays (Maas, 2013). Summarized, storytelling is a way of content marketing and due to its emotional and interactive character it is a very suitable and relevant channel in sports.

### *2.2.3 Power of stories*

Stories are acknowledged as unique marketing tools that can leverage the effectiveness of sports sponsorship. Stories have the potential to create emotions of caring, even though people have never had connections with the sport, the athlete or the brand before. More and more brands try to create their own stories, with the extremely successful example of Coca Cola sharing a story of ‘happiness’. The power of communication in sports is incorporated in the stories that unfold during sports, such as the Olympics, with athletes turning into legends and inspirational experiences. This suggests that brands are more than products, with stories as facilitators of the process to buy a brand into ideas. Many marketers, experts and sponsorship directors believe in the power of stories to enrich brand equity. They see it as an opportunity to activate sports sponsorship. However, telling a story sounds very simple, but there are a couple of challenges to implement it effectively (Kourovskaja, 2012). First, it is quite challenging to get the attention among a strong competitive field of other sponsors who

are trying to get them selves heard as well. Second, relevance is crucial, because a brand needs to contribute to the ideals in sport in some way. According to Gwinner & Eaton (1999) there are two kinds of sports sponsors: function-based and image-based, where respectively the sponsors' product is used for the sport or where the sponsors' image is convergent with the sport. Sports brands such as Nike and Adidas have a direct link to sports, so they score high on functional relevance. Brands without a direct connection to sports experience a higher challenge to justify the relevance of a sponsorship. To overcome this challenge, creative marketing, in particularly storytelling, might be a potential solution. Brands need to find ways to link themselves to the values and characteristics of sports. There might be roles that contribute to the sport or options to create new roles by the company itself.

#### *2.2.4 Example case of successful storytelling*

A worldwide renowned case that shows the success of storytelling in sports as activation mechanisms for their sponsorship is Procter & Gamble. They have been Olympic Partner for the Olympics and activated their sponsorship by a multilevel campaign by linking both the corporate name and several individual brands to the Olympic Games. The 'Thank You Mom' campaign was introduced to tribute mothers who work tirelessly to support their children. The campaign created a story of mothers as having 'the hardest, best job in the world'. The so-called 'Momumentaries' featured stories of well-known athletes that were told by their mothers and were distributed on television and social media in 29 countries. The marketing efforts of P&G based on storytelling proved its success worldwide. Executives reported an estimated \$500 million of incremental sales (P&G). They succeeded creating a vision of seeing Olympic athletes as sons and daughters, which created feelings of pride. Vicarious pride in raising national champions and personal pride in raising our own children, with help of products from P&G. Moreover, mother's love for a child is a universal emotion. This campaign creates positive feelings, which will transfer over when consumers think about the brand. Concluding, P&G found a new way to emote people, which leaded to the creation of a lasting impression (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999). This aligns with the implementation of storytelling as used in this study, as the brands of P&G dispersed emotional stories that were based on the personal lives of athletes.

#### *2.2.5 Types of storytelling*

Stories could appear in different forms, depending on the brand that builds the story. Brands could tell stories about how its products are used by athletes, about personal experiences, or

about a specific adventurous lifestyle. Sharing these stories might create feelings of engagement, resulting in a higher likeability to associate with the brand that ‘tells’ the story. Besides, stories could be told via several channels. The traditional media, such as television commercials and advertisements, could tell stories in a classic manner. However, the rise of social media enlarged the opportunities for storytelling extensively. The ‘following’ and ‘sharing’-principle in social media are communication channels that offer excessive reach. Successful stories can achieve millions of online views (e.g. YouTube) in a short time period and boost brand image and loyalty. Marketers increasingly realize that a brand is obviously an on-going story; a set of meaningful experiences unfolding between the brand and its audience. Human are not able to memorize lists, but stories help to remember things as they put things in context and evoke emotions. People relate to stories and want to stay connected with it as they become invested in the storyline and characters. Creativity in storytelling enables transferring a story in a unique matter. In literature, three benefits of creative storytelling are mentioned. First, creative stories can grab attention and are subsequently an aid to memorability. It places associations so deeply, that people simple cannot forget them anymore. Second, stories stimulate interest and curiosity in a brand. And third, imaginative and amusing associations, both characteristics of sports, help people to remember things. Storytelling involves a two-way interaction between a storyteller and the listeners, so it emerges from the cooperative efforts of the teller and the audience (National Storytelling Network, 2014). Concluding, the unique power of storytelling originates from the fact that it requires active listening and provides mechanisms to emphasize meaning and feeling. Moreover, stories are able to empower speakers, create bonds between individuals and negotiate differences (McLellan, 2006). Stories are able to activate feelings and thus make people *feel* something. These emotions result in powerful connections between the audience, the characters within the stories and the storyteller. Therefore, a story is a catalyst to build brand value (Gunelius, 2013). Most of the other communication methods do not offer these advantages. These propositions are reflected in the first hypothesis ***H1: Storytelling in sports sponsorship positively effects brand equity***, which is investigated to answer the first research question: *”How does storytelling in sports sponsorship influence brand equity?”*

## 2.3 Emotional customer connection

### 2.3.1 Emotional customer connection through storytelling in sports sponsorship

Good sponsorship has always been defined as being win-win, leading to mutual benefits for both the sponsor and the sponsorship seeker. The Last Generation Sponsorship takes a

different approach by incorporating a third aspect to the equation: the target market. More and more marketers realize that the audience is the driver of the revenue and thus the pivot of the wellbeing for the brand and the sponsored athlete. Therefore, there is an increasingly shared opinion that the target market has to be a basic part of best practice sponsorship. In line with this shift, customers are considered as central stakeholders in this study. The effects of sports sponsorship activation are investigated with respect to emotional customer connection. Literature suggests that storytelling goes a step beyond customer connection as performed by other marketing tools. First, a strategic difference of storytelling compared to other marketing tools is that it is based on a pull- instead of a push strategy. This means that storytelling is a more 'soft' technique, which is focused on making people 'willing' to act instead of pushing them (Brokkelkamp, 2013). In fact, people need to be activated by seducing them, voluntarily, with storytelling. Second, storytelling is able to create emotional connections between the heart of people and the heart of brands. This means that it has the power to create connections on a deeper level. It has been found in studies on consumer behaviour that people choose with their hearts and think only afterwards about arguments for their choice (Brokkelkamp, 2013). Building forth on this finding, stories about a brand have to touch people in their hearts, so that they act on behave of the brand. The emotional connection between people and brands is a 'living' connection with a reciprocal effect. Therefore it is important to find an appropriate joined theme that suits both parties. There are some key factors for effective brand storytelling mentioned in literature. First of all, it is important to show, rather than to tell the audience what is happening in the story. This can be incorporated by using descriptive words or emotionally charged and descriptive language that trigger deeper feelings for the characters. For instance, rather than simply telling people how athletes train to achieve certain sportive goals in their professional careers, it is shown by using a 'different language' with images of athletes meeting the 'man with the hammer' and with an emotional tone of voice. It is highly unlikely and almost impossible that people listen to these stories without the creation of powerful feelings. Second, emotional connection to a brand could be strengthened when the target audience can relate to the consumers. Using characters that reflect the buyer personas of the audience might drive deeper relationships with the brand. If a person can relate his or herself to a character that is incorporated into a brand story they might feel more closely connected, which leads to stronger preferences for the brand. Although mascots are often used in marketing as well, buyer personas as brand story characters are very effective to make the story of a brand more successful. Third, it is important to understand the complete story arc. Stories needs to be part of a broader story arc

based on a long-term plan instead of short stand-alone stories. It is necessary to literally take the audience through a stepwise journey, instead of telling the complete story in one shot. Practically, this means that target people need to be kept hanging to the story and that stories need to be extended over several sequential brand messages. Fourth, consistency with the brand promise is of great importance. Confusion and misunderstanding are very harmful for a brand, so it is crucial to ensure consistency between the brand promise and the brand image. If the audience does not understand how a brand story relates to the perceptions of a brand and the related expectations, customer connection will be weakened. As a brand, it is highly important to stay consistent with the brand promise to endure realism and trust of consumers and to subsequently meet their expectations. Red Bull is a successful example of a brand that manages consistency in their brand storytelling. The Red Bull brand image consists of extreme sports, adventure and freedom. This image is incorporated into their communications, which are focused on characters living the Red Bull brand lifestyle. Red Bull successfully created its 'World of Red Bull' wherein emotions are transferred by brand stories, leading to the development of emotional connections between the audience and the brand, and strengthening the relationship in every interaction (Gunelius, 2013). The prior findings are reflected in the second research question: *"How does storytelling in sports sponsorship influence emotional customer connection?"* Proposing that sports sponsorship, when activated, leads to emotional customer connection due to the positive effect on consumer attachment to the brand, the hypothesis is stated as follows: ***H2: Storytelling in sports sponsorship positively effects emotional customer connection.***

### *2.3.2 Operationalizing storytelling*

Storytelling in sports could be operationalized at different levels. At company level stories are dispersed by the brand itself, but there are also multiple reasons to communicate stories at individual level by athletes. According to athlete endorsement literature, athletes are influential people with large networks who have special connections to their fans (Fidelman, 2014). These emotional connections can even become stronger when using storytelling. They can connect with fans in a personal matter via social media like never before, and have the power to create and share the story fans want to be a part of. Tweets shared by athletes during the Olympics in Sochi have been very impactful. For instance, Dutch ice skater Sven Kramer has 172.000 followers (Kramer, 2014) and over 4 million people saw the photo of another Dutch ice skater, Koen Verweij (Brouwer, 2014). In this way athletes shared their 'Olympic journey' with the audience, while showing brands of their sponsors. If a brand can leverage

this, it might be an extremely powerful marketing channel, in where the connection between athletes, brands, and consumers become strengthened. The issue of brand communication is that they will never reach the level of ‘friends’, so customer attachment will remain relatively superficial. Athletes, however, can emotionally reach this level, as they are real human beings. They do not become real friends, but people experience connections with athletes as really intense (Kuipers, 2014). Prior studies found that athletes are 40% more trusted than brands (Favier, 2013). This suggests that consumers are 1.4 times more likely to buy a product that is endorsed by an athlete than when it is promoted by a brand. This leaves no doubts with regards to the high potential of storytelling performed by athletes.

### *2.3.3 Sports sponsorship effects on brand equity through emotional customer connection*

A foundational premise of brand equity is that the power of brand lies in the minds of consumers and its experiences with the brand over time. Brand equity could be considered the added value of a product in the thoughts and actions of consumers, which could be realized and exploited in many different ways. The equity of a brand is ultimately derived from consumers, as they decide the equity of brands with their purchases. All definitions of brand equity share a common thought: the real power of a brand is dependent of the thoughts, feelings, images, beliefs, attitudes, and experiences that exist in the minds of consumers. Customer-based brand equity could be seen as the differential effect that consumer brand knowledge has on their response to brand marketing activity (Keller, 2003). In a study of Fransen et al (2013) it was investigated whether companies can improve the effectiveness of their sponsorship investments by creating a brand experience. Brand experience is defined as the staging of events to get in contact with consumers in such a way that it creates a memorable experience for the consumer (Fransen et al, 2011). It is described as providing opportunities for a direct and interactive contact with a brand, involving sensory, pleasing and entertaining experiences. Obviously, this is closely related to storytelling as it involves aspects of customer connection and creating memories at an abstract level. Therefore, it is expected that the effects of brand experience might be valid for storytelling as well. Results showed that consumers who participated in a brand experience had better attitudes towards the sponsoring brand, compared to participants who did not. Moreover, it was confirmed that within an experience condition, brand experience predicts brand attitudes. Direct brand experiences contribute to intrinsic benefits by intensifying the direct contact between consumers and the sponsoring brand. Thus, it can be assumed that a direct, interactive brand experience does translate into increased brand attitudes and overall brand perceptions, which

indicates higher sponsorship effectiveness. Research in consumer psychology demonstrates that social aspects of marketing products become increasingly important, especially consumer interaction and participation. Consumers search for opportunities of social interaction and brand connections, as they experience the product itself as not enough anymore. People are searching for valuable experiences and connections at an emotional level. Successful companies translate the differential power into content that connects the brand and the customer. This makes the difference between brands that are in fact quite similar (Molenaar, 2013). Thus, sharing experiences with the audience may fulfil important social needs, which develops a descent base for a valuable customer experience translating into positive brand attitudes and behaviour. The preceding relation is reflected in the third research question: “*How does emotional customer connection influence brand equity?*” As we assume that it will strengthen the effect, this results in the following hypothesis:

***H3: Emotional customer connection positively effects brand equity.***

#### *2.3.4 Measuring the influence of emotional customer connection on brand equity*

It is quite complicated to show how emotions drive value as they are difficult to measure. Social studies have proven that emotions guide thoughts and deeds, but there are no general scales that measure emotion. Brand equity is a combination of the measurement of brand strength, which consists of three types of metrics: knowledge, preference and financial. All three parameters are critical to optimize the financial outcome of a brand. *Knowledge metrics* measure brand awareness via recognition and recall, and associations via functional and emotional associations of a brand. *Preference metrics* measure the relative competitive position of a brand in the market. It is measured through various levels of preference, ranging from mere awareness and familiarity through loyalty. *Financial metrics* measure the monetary value of a brand by several parameters, such as market share and growth rate. A proper evaluation of brand equity consists of a measurement of all three metrics, because it ensures that the brand is valued in totality from several viewpoints. According to the brand equity model of Brandt & Johnson (1997), brand equity is “*a unique set of real and perceived distinctions attached to a brand that lives only in the hearts and minds of customers*”. In academic literature there is a lot written about brand equity and many models are developed that reflect its underlying constructs. Generally, they come up with a similar set of variables that reflect the higher-order construct of brand equity. Keller (1998) developed a brand equity model to measure brand power from a consumer perspective. The model consists of two constructs: ‘brand awareness’, measured by recognition and recall of the brand, and ‘brand

image', measured by associations and attitude towards attributes, values and benefits of the brand. Higher brand equity results in a stronger differential effect, more brand knowledge of consumers and higher consumer response such as repeat purchases, willingness-to-pay extra and favourable brand associations (Na, Marshall, & Keller, 1999). Aaker (1991) developed a brand equity model consisting of five components: brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations and other proprietary assets. The five components contribute to sustainable competitive advantage for brands, resulting in higher brand equity (Aaker, 2009). More recently, a study was conducted to get insight into the sports sponsorship objectives of companies. Results showed that niche sport sponsors place relatively high importance on increasing corporate awareness, brand image and community involvement. Increasing brand loyalty, brand attitude and sales and market share were stated as less important (Greenhalgh & Greenwell, 2013). Generally, companies measure the value of sports sponsorship investments via two components: Return on Investment (ROI), which measures the quantifiable increase in business achieved, and Return on Objectives (ROO), which measures the achievement of objectives that are defined prior to the agreements of the sponsorship. Each component holds several metrics, but they are not all easily quantifiable. ROO, which is the focus of this study, is measured by (1) increase in brand engagement, (2) change in brand image, (3) brand loyalty boost (4) increase of favorable brand associations (5) target specific demographics, and (6) improve of community relations (Halpin, P (2014). A yearly online survey based on measuring sponsorship returns, report that marketers find product and service sales (86%), amount of media exposure generated (85%), increased brand awareness (84%), and attitudes towards the brand (81%) the most valuable metrics to measure the effectiveness of sponsorship marketing initiatives (ANA, 2013). Summarizing the prior academic findings, there are six components of brand equity that are consistently used in literature: brand awareness, brand image, brand attitude, brand loyalty, community involvement and sales/market share. Brand awareness and community involvement are excluded in this study, because measurement items related to these variables are leading and inaccurate with regards to the real interests for companies. For instance, questions such as "are you aware of sponsors?" and "how many brands can you recall?" are quite meaningless and sensitive for bias (e.g. social desirable responding). Measurements of these variables do not tell anything about actual performance of the sponsorship. Therefore, and due to the limited time available, this study focuses on the most important variables only. The three remaining ROO metrics brand image, brand attitude, and brand loyalty serve as items of interest for the main study. Measurement is more extensively elaborated in the third chapter.

## 2.4 Theoretical model

According to the preceding discussion, it is expected that implementing storytelling as activation mechanism for sports sponsorship will positively influence emotional customer connection of consumers with the brand. This is due to the fact that sharing emotional stories will actively engage the audience and stimulates them to interact with the brand. Through the stronger emotional customer connection, the audience will feel more closely linked to the brand, which is translated in higher brand engagement resulting in higher brand equity for the company. In line with the ‘Last Generation’ sponsorship strategy, activating sponsorship through storytelling is expected to result in higher brand benefits. The general research question that the study aims to answer is *‘How can storytelling, as activation tool for sports sponsorship, build brand equity through emotional customer connection and how is it moderated by the congruence between the brand and the athlete, and fan involvement?’*

The conceptual model is shown in figure 1. In the following paragraphs the choices for the variables in the conceptual model are elaborated in more detail.

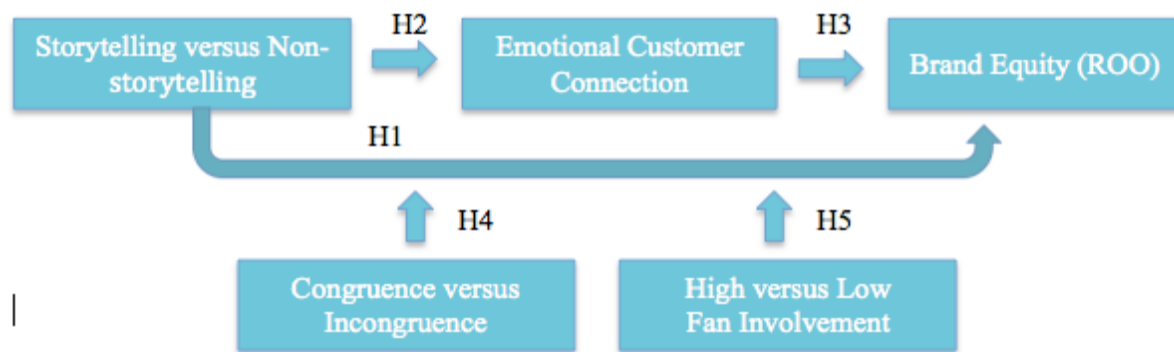


Figure 1: Conceptual model

### 2.4.1 Independent variable: storytelling

In this study the three main elements of sports sponsorship are considered: interactions between the brand (the sponsor), the audience (the sports fans) and the athlete (the sponsored icon). The theory of Last Generation Sponsorship, which describes the importance of leveraging sponsorship to ensure returns, is used as context for the study. The phenomena of storytelling, which is increasingly mentioned for its potential as activation mechanism for sports sponsorship serves as the area of interest. According to its currently mentioned effectiveness and interest by marketing practitioners, this study aims to investigate if integrating stories into brand communication is an effective activation tool in sports sponsorship to achieve brand equity. The direct and indirect effect of storytelling on brand equity is investigated.

#### 2.4.2 Mediator: emotional customer connection

The existing literature repeatedly suggested the power of sponsorship as marketing tool to connect with customers. According to Kim Skildum-Reid (2013) sponsorship is the most emotional, personal and integrateable of all marketing media. Condition for this positive effect is that sponsorship is integrated and activated by a brand. Therefore it is assumed, that storytelling in sponsorship has a positive effect on emotional customer connection. Subsequently, a higher emotional connection with customers leads to higher brand equity. According to the brand equity model of Brandt & Johnson (1997), brand equity is “*a unique set of real and perceived distinctions attached to a brand that lives only in the hearts and minds of customers*”. The last part of the definition reflects the emotional aspect of brand equity, which suggests that there might be a positive relation between customer attachment to a brand and brand equity. Moreover, prior research found that sports fans are more ‘connected’ than general populations, with a larger percentage using social networks (83% over 78%) and demonstrating greater engagement and interaction on such platforms. With regards to online activity, sports fans are more likely to become a fan of a brand (47% over 38%), click on an advert (39% over 32%), and buy (29% over 23%) (Bracher L., 2014). Acknowledging the power of emotional customer connection to strengthen the effect on brand equity, the second and third research questions reflect a possible mediating effect in the study.

#### 2.4.3 Moderators: congruence and fan involvement

Other constructs that might have an influence on the variables in the model are incorporated as moderators in the conceptual model. The first moderator is congruence, which is defined as the match between the sponsoring brand and the sponsored athlete and its sport. Prior literature suggests that fit between two parties is crucial for sponsorship outcomes. Non-matching combinations might be interpreted as ambiguous or untrustworthy, which results in negative associations and weaker attitudes towards a brand (Dees, Bennett, & Ferreira, 2010). Whereas unobvious combinations might harm sponsorship effectiveness, congruent sponsorships might have strengthening effects. As suggested in prior studies, fit leads to positive affective and behavioural responses as it makes people more certain of a brands’ positioning (Roy & Cornwell, 2004). These suggestions lead to the fourth research question of this study: “*How does congruence moderate the effect of storytelling on brand equity?*” Proposing that matching combinations have higher effects, the hypothesis is stated as follows: ***H4: Congruence strengthens the positive effect of storytelling on brand equity.***

The second moderator is fan involvement. Fan involvement is a central concept in sports

sponsorship, because the various emotional levels of commitment of fans with the sport determine their attentiveness to the sport or an athlete that performs that sport. Fans could establish a range of relationships with the sponsor depending on the level of involvement with the sport. Fan involvement is part of the social identity theory, wherein an individual forms characteristics and ideas of his or her specific personality (Madrigan, 2001). It consists of the characteristics that are derived from an individuals' association with a group (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). In this study, the level of fan involvement refers to an individual's level of association or attachment with a particular sport. The extent to which an individual identifies with a sport can vary greatly. Individuals low on fan involvement are more likely to have a passive relationship, while highly involved individuals could be extremely loyal, probably even keeping a particular athlete as central to their identity (Gwinner & Swanson, 2003). These people strive to achieve strong affiliations with the athlete and are therefore more likely to create more positive brand images and higher loyalty. This loyalty is often translated into long-term and financial commitment (Sutton, McDonald, Milne, & Cimperman, 1997) resulting in higher spending to the brand than low involved individuals (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). Moreover, highly involved individuals are extremely sensitive to the behavior and actions of the athlete and its sponsor, translating in stronger reactions. If a consumer views the sponsor as a partner or supporter of the athlete and its practiced sport, he or she will exhibit more goodwill and benevolence toward that brand. Less involved consumers might not respond with the same (high) levels of goodwill, because they are less emotionally attached. All in all, existing literature suggests that highly involved consumers will be the primary target of sponsors, because they are more easily to connect with. It becomes more difficult to connect with consumers with lower levels of fan involvement, but they could be still potential targets. A study that was conducted in 2003 showed that the brand equity of the sport sponsoring brand Gillette was far more stronger for people who were interested in sports, than people who were not. Sports lovers are more likely to see a brand as relevant, and as offering good performance with advantages over competing brands, which subsequently makes them more likely to be bonded to it (Millward Brown, 2006). This relation is reflected in the fifth research question of the study: *"How does fan involvement moderate the effect of storytelling on brand equity?"* Proposing that the higher the level of fan involvement, the stronger the effect of storytelling, it is translated into the following hypothesis: ***H5: Fan involvement strengthens the positive effect of storytelling on brand equity.*** Fan involvement is incorporated as moderating variable in the model as it is conceptually different from emotional customer attachment. Involvement can be considered

as a state of mental readiness that typically influences the allocation of cognitive resources to a consumption object, decision, or action (Park & Mittal, 1985). However, emotional attachment goes beyond mental readiness and resource allocation as it is often beyond someone's volitional control. Moreover, emotional attachments to brands are clearly relevant to the realm of emotions, whereas the concept of involvement taps the realm of cognition. Attachment is conceptually distinct and hence should be empirically distinct as well (Thomson, MacInnis, & Whan Park, 2005).

## **Chapter 3 Methodology**

In this chapter the research strategy and methods that have been chosen are presented. First, the focus of research and the approach is explained, followed by further elaboration of the research design. This is followed by a discussion of the data collection methods, the sample selection, and the experimental design. After that the manipulations and the research instruments are further elaborated. The final section consists of a description of the pre-tests, an analysis of the validity and reliability, and the description of an additional study.

### **3.1 Focus of research**

As mentioned in chapter two, the higher-order construct of interest that is measured in this study is brand equity. The focus will lie on ROO as this is most suitable and interesting in the context of this study. The construct is measured from a consumer perspective, consisting of sports fans' perceptions specifically in this study. Next to the main study, the research is strengthened with an additional analysis. In this second analyses the construct is measured via a company perspective, consisting of sport sponsor experts of Dutch companies. In this way the main study is tested on its generalizability and additional information is provided from another perspective. The consumer perspective provides insights into the results of storytelling according to changes in consumer attitude and behaviour, whereas the company perspective is more based on actual experiences in the market. Additionally, as said the study aims to investigate how storytelling in sports sponsorship influences brand equity and thereby it is proposed that the effect is mediated by emotional customer connection. Therefore, emotional customer connection is incorporated as an additional construct of interest in the study. Two moderators that probably might influence the effects that are studied, congruence and fan involvement, are taken into account.

### **3.2 Research approach**

One of the main factors that determines the selection of the research approach is the research problem (Creswell, 2003). In this research the main objective is to test hypotheses and to identify factors that influence an outcome so that a general conclusion of the effect of storytelling in sports sponsorship can be drawn. With regard to the hypotheses, the main focus of the research is to investigate the influence of storytelling in sports sponsorship on brand equity. We chose to conduct quantitative research, as this is preferred in the main study (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). However, as the field of research is only little studied and a sub goal of the research is to understand the impact of the relatively new concept of storytelling in sports sponsorship from the company perspective, qualitative research is preferred as well (Creswell, 2003). Deeper understandings from a business perspective might contribute to the general research findings, as it offers sponsor directors more practical insights. Therefore, qualitative interviews are integrated in the study as an additional analysis. Taking into account these research perspectives, a combined methods approach will be most beneficially. In this way, a general outcome of the main effect based on quantitative data will be evaluated with qualitative results that enlarge the deeper understanding of the storytelling's effects on actual company performance. Moreover, a combination of both quantitative and qualitative approach is considered as more appropriate (Johnson & Turner, 2003).

### **3.3 Research design**

Combined methods research obtains both quantitative and qualitative data, attempting to complement findings and taking a balanced approach to the research. To conduct an appropriate analysis that reflects the issues of the research problem, it is necessary to make some methodological decisions beforehand. In literature, combined designs are divided into multi-method and mixed designs (Creswell, 1995). In this research we chose for a multi-method design as the quantitative and qualitative approaches are conducted independently. The quantitative research tests the entire model comprehensively, whereby the qualitative research is an additional study. It is necessary to conduct two independent analyses because both approaches consist of different perspectives. Therefore the investigation is based on a two-phase design involving a dominant design and a less-dominant design (Creswell, 1995).

### **3.4 Data collection methods**

The main study involves a consumer experiment with different conditions covering the focal variables of interest. The experimental research design tests the effects between these

variables as proposed in the five hypotheses. There is chosen to conduct an experiment because of several advantages. First, it enables to examine underlying mechanisms, while avoiding direct awareness of the participants. Second, experiments allow analysing what people actually do, instead of what they say they will do. As this is mentioned as a gap in existing literature, an experiment could contribute to the relevance of the study. Third, in an experiment the variables of interest could be manipulated, allowing different conditions, which enables testing cause and effects in the variables. This makes it possible to measure the influence of sports sponsorship with and without the use of storytelling. And likewise the moderating influence of congruent and incongruent brand-athlete combinations. Naturally an experimental study has disadvantages as well. The magnitude of the effects may differ in the real world. Moreover, external validity is less as experiments are conducted with a specific sample under specific circumstances that might not be generalizable to other situations.

### **3.5 Population and sample selection**

The population of the main study consists of Dutch consumers who are interested in sports. Consumers were approached to participate in the experiment via sports-related social media channels, including twitter and Facebook. More specifically, links to the online experiment were posted at social media platforms of sports-themed groups, including sports news communities such as Sportnext (Sportnext, 2013), Infostrada Sports Nederland (Infostrada Group, 2014), and some specific sport pages such as Sport Promotions (Sport Promotions, 2014) and Triple Double (Triple Double, 2014). These online communities offer broad reach among the target group, which enables to reach their followers to participate in the experiment. Moreover, some influential persons in the field of sports on Twitter were approached to share the link of the survey on their twitter page, which broadened the reach as well. This way of selecting participants allowed reaching participants that are knowledgeable with the use of social media and who share an interest for sports. Eisenhardt (1989) claims that purposeful selection in an experimental study is preferred. This gives researchers the ability to select a population that is most suitable and relevant for the research. Rather, the brand that is used in the experiment is probably less known as a consumer product, and more recognized as its role and activities of sponsor. Therefore, the experiment is not relevant for everyone, but more applicable for people who share some interest in the field of this sport. As a trigger to encourage participation in the experiment and to complete the survey, two Zalando vouchers with a value of ten euros were randomly dispersed over all participants after completing the study.

### 3.6 Experimental design

In the study a factorial experimental design is used, wherein each independent variable is represented by a factor. There are three factors, including one independent variable and two moderators, with two levels each. This means that the research design involves a two-by-two-by-two ( $2 \times 2 \times 2$ ) design. The independent variable consists of a level of ‘storytelling’ versus a level of ‘non-storytelling’. The first moderator consists of a level of ‘congruence’ and a level of ‘incongruence’ reflecting a match or non-match between the brand and the athlete. The second moderator consists of a level of ‘high fan involvement’ and a level of ‘low fan involvement’. A scale referring to the social identity theory, the Sport Spectator Identification Scale, allows allocating respondents into high and low fan involvement groups based on the median of the scores. The study measures the dependent variable ROO via three elements: brand attitude, brand image and brand loyalty. As mentioned in chapter two, these factors are most appropriate for this study. Besides, the mediating variable emotional customer connection is measured by emotional attachment towards the brand. In a study that aimed to develop a new measurement scale reflecting the strength of consumers’ emotional attachments to brands, reported that affection, passion, and connection are three non-orthogonal first-order factors that correspond with a higher order emotional attachment construct (Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005). Building forth on this theory, these items are used in the study. The research model of the main study can be found in figure 2.

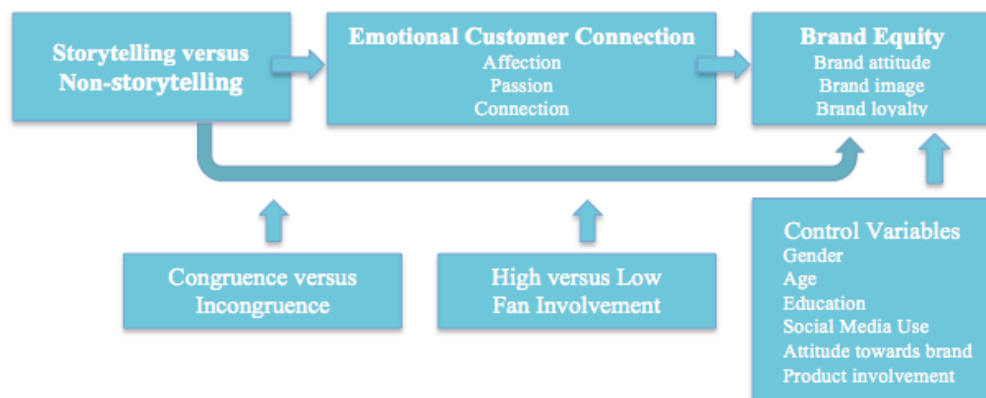


Figure 2: Research model of the main study

### 3.7 Manipulations

#### 3.7.1 Storytelling

In the experiment, we have chosen to use the brand TVM, a Dutch transport insurance company, as real-life context. The company sponsored a Dutch ice-skating team for 14 years, but they finalized the sponsorship contract since May this year. Over the years, TVM integrated more storytelling into their brand messages, partly realized by social media

activities of the athletes they sponsored. This real-life situation offers a good starting-point for the experiment, because we were able to use original messages that perfectly represented storytelling or non-storytelling. Besides, we could describe realistic situations of the brand that sponsored an athlete versus the brand that is looking to sponsor a new athlete. The limitation of this brand is that it is probably less known for its consumer products (travel and car insurances) and might thus be less relevant for consumers. However, at the same time this overcomes the disadvantage of attitudes and associations that are already set in consumers' minds before participating in the experiment. It increases the probability that respondents answer the questions in the experiment on the basis of what they get confronted with.

The independent variable storytelling is manipulated into two conditions: a set of messages with and a set of messages without storytelling. At the beginning of the experiment participants are primed into one of the two conditions by showing a selection of messages that either involve or does not involve storytelling. To avoid any bias in the type of the messages used, two different types are used. The first type is a couple of tweets shared by an athlete, consisting of photos and texts. The athlete who is used in this study highly implemented storytelling in his tweets during the Sochi Olympics in February 2014. Therefore, a selection of recent tweets is very suitable to serve as the storytelling condition. The non-storytelling condition consists of a selection of tweets with non-storytelling content, involving non-personal information. The second type is a video message communicated by the brand featuring the sponsored athlete. The video without storytelling is a video message that was communicated in August 2012 when the brand did not use storytelling in a large extent. The video with storytelling was communicated in December 2013, highly based on storytelling.

### *3.7.2 Congruence*

The moderating variable congruence is manipulated so that again two conditions are incorporated. Congruence refers to the condition in where the brand and the sponsored athlete have matching values. In the experiment, the brand TVM and its sponsorship of Dutch ice-skating athlete Sven Kramer is used as congruent combination. Although there is no direct match initially between the core products of TVM, which are transport insurances, and the athlete, there is certainly congruence between the values of both parties. In their mission TVM included the values 'involved', 'competent' and 'entrepreneurial'. This is congruent with the values of the athlete and the sport he practices. The involvement of TVM was reflected into their huge investments in ice-skating. Moreover, as ice-skating is a real national sport in the Netherlands, the sponsorship of the ice-skating team can be seen as a social task.

Furthermore, Sven Kramer is characterized as an athlete who is very involved with the sports as well as he constantly strives to the best circumstances for his team and himself. He proved his team spirit during the Olympics this year when he won the gold medal with the Dutch male team during the team pursuit. Besides, Sven Kramer is perceived as a very competent and professional athlete, as he is mentioned as one of the most successful athletes of the country, referring to his multiple national and international titles. Furthermore, athletes are certainly entrepreneurial persons, as this is required to be able to reach the professional top in their sports. Specifically, Sven Kramer is mentioned for his excellent media skills and professionalism in public appearances, qualities that are highly preferred by many (potential) sponsors. Thus, initially this is probably not the most obvious and logical match, but there are substantive similarities between the values of the brand and the athlete. Prior research found evidence that little irregularities are not crucial if the underlying values are matching (Burggraaff, 2014). To manipulate the variable into an incongruent condition we have chosen to change the athlete and to keep the brand and the related sport the same. The main argument to change the athlete instead of the brand is that this situation is most interesting in the context of the study. This study aims to provide insights for companies, so it is more obvious to see changes from the perspective of the brand, which means that athletes that are sponsored by the company change over time. Companies might be confronted with decisions of investing in sponsorship, in where they need to decide which athlete to sponsor. The manipulation is realized by combining the TVM brand with Dutch ice-skating athlete Jorrit Bergsma, which reflects an incongruent combination. In this condition, the values of the brand and the athlete do not match anymore. Although Jorrit Bergsma is an internationally successful ice-skater as well who has definitely proven his competence he lacks with regard to the values of involvement and entrepreneurship. First, he decided to retire from the national ice-skating men's team a few days before the team pursuit at the Winter Olympics. This boycott emphasizes the fact that he is not involved with the team spirit of the game. This quite unprofessional perceived behaviour did result in rumours among the ice-skating teams and harmed his image of professionalism. Second, as a result of this occurrence, he got involved in some embarrassing public performances in where he tried to defend himself speaking negatively about his colleague-athletes and the situation in general. These occurrences resulted in some negative public remarks. Logically, this destroys the congruence with the values of TVM with respect to involvement and entrepreneurship. An athlete, who is associated with unprofessional behaviour and 'stupid' personal choices, is confronted with a destroyed public image resulting in negative associations. This means that the attributes that

are valued to the athlete by consumers become negative, which are incongruent with the brand. Concluding, it is assumed that there is no substantive match between this athlete and the brand TVM. Participants were randomly allocated to brand messages with congruent brand-athlete combinations and incongruent brand-athlete combinations. The messages were preceded by a short introduction of the athlete in where the brand logo of TVM, two pictures of the congruent or incongruent athlete, and an introducing text about the athlete were shown. In this way respondents were introduced to the athletes, in case they did not know them, and at the same time primed into a congruent or incongruent condition. One picture showed the athlete when performing his sport and the other was a basic picture of his face. To avoid any other influences, no other brand logos were visible and other factors were held constant.

### **3.8 Research instruments**

Eight experimental conditions are incorporated in the study, which are more extensively described in appendix A (section 1 and 2). In the study, Qualtrics software is used to establish an online survey for the experimental research. The constructs are measured via a set of measurement items, which are further elaborated in the next paragraphs. Participants were randomly allocated to the different conditions, starting with one of the priming conditions, followed by the questions. The list of questions is included in appendix A (section 3).

- Condition 1: Storytelling – congruence – high fan involvement
- Condition 2: Non-storytelling – congruence – high fan involvement
- Condition 3: Storytelling – incongruence – high fan involvement
- Condition 4: Non-storytelling – incongruence – high fan involvement
- Condition 5: Storytelling – congruence – low fan involvement
- Condition 6: Non-storytelling – congruence – low fan involvement
- Condition 7: Storytelling – incongruence - low fan involvement
- Condition 8: Non-storytelling – incongruence - low fan involvement

#### *3.8.1 Construct 1: Emotional customer connection*

- *Item 1a: Affection (affectionate, loved, peaceful, friendly)*
- *Item 1b: Passion (passionate, delighted, captivated)*
- *Item 1c: Connection (attached, bonded, connected)*

In this study, emotional customer connection refers to the emotional attachment towards the brand that an individual creates during interactions with an athlete and its sport. In fact, the athlete is the personalization of the brand, so the brand becomes kind of human. Interactions

encourage meaning over time and stimulate the development of strong emotions (Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005). Nevertheless, the objects or persons to which consumers feel emotionally attached are limited and thus often significant (Ball & Tasaki, 1992). In this case, the athlete linked to the brand to which an individual feels emotionally attached is linked to the self-concept of consumers. This concept is different from customer attitude, as this is more situation- and context dependent (Sheppard, Hartwick, & Warshaw, 1988). Therefore we have chosen to incorporate these constructs as separate items in this study. The construct is measured by using a 7-point rating scale, ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very well), to describe the extent to which a set of words describe their typical feelings toward the brand.

### 3.8.2 Construct 2: Brand equity (Return on objectives)

- *Item 2a: Brand attitude (brand quality, brand credibility, brand consideration, brand superiority)*
- *Item 2b: Brand image (brand personality, user profiles, functional associations, abstract associations)*
- *Item 2c: Brand loyalty (past purchases, degree of loyalty, degree of idealism)*

Emotional attachment will translate into feelings of emotional connection with the athlete, which results in behavioral manifestations with respect to the brand that is linked to the athlete. As mentioned before, in this study this is covered in the construct of brand equity.

According to literature in the context of a customer-based brand equity perspective, the indirect approach to measure brand equity is based on assessing potential sources for brand equity (Keller). The most relevant source in this study is the consumer mindset, as the study aims to test if this causes the differential response that creates brand equity. Brand equity is measured through three items. The first item that is accounted for is a preference metric, brand attitude, which reflects the evaluative reactions to a brand (Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005). Attitudes are generally situation dependent and might change over multiple experiences with the brand, and in this case more specifically via the athlete. Brand attitude is measured by four questions using a 7-point semantic differential scale as used in the study of Thomson & Park (2005), which is based on the metric of Batra and Stayman (1990) to describe their attitude favorability (Batra & Stayman, 1990).

1. *Brand quality: 1 (bad) to 7 (good)*
2. *Brand credibility: 1 (disagreeable) to 7 (agreeable)*
3. *Brand consideration: 1 (dislikeable) to 7 (likeable)*
4. *Brand superiority: 1 (unfavorable) to 7 (favorable)*

The second item is a knowledge metric, based on associations with the brand, namely brand image, which reflects the perceptions of and preferences for a brand that are stored in consumers' memory (Keller). Associations are dependent on a couple of different dimensions,

including strength, positivity, abstractness and uniqueness. These are all important sources that determine the power of brand equity driven by consumer behavior, and are thus taken into account. Brand image consists of functional (intrinsic), performance-related associations, such as product characteristics, and more abstract (extrinsic), imagery-related associations (beliefs), including specific attributes and benefits linked to the brand, such as ‘fun’, ‘exciting’ or ‘cool’ (Keller). People might also have certain user profile associations as a mental image of actual users of the brand. Naturally, the values set by the brand are important to measure as well, as these should be dominantly present in consumers’ minds. Brand image is assessed via four items using a 7-point semantic differential scale.

1. *Brand personality and values: (1) totally disagree to 7 (totally agree)*
2. *User profiles: (1) totally disagree to 7 (totally agree)*
3. *Functional associations: (1) totally disagree to 7 (totally agree)*
4. *Abstract associations: (1) totally disagree to 7 (totally agree)*

Third, individuals who developed strong emotional connection with an athlete are generally motivated to preserve this relationship. Similarly, strong emotional connection triggers feelings of irreplaceability (Miller, 1997). These two emotionally laden developments will result in higher brand loyalty, again a preference metric. Brand loyalty is measured by using a 7-point semantic differential scale as used in the study of Thomson & Park (2005), which is based on the metric of Sirgy et al (1991) (Sirgy, Johar, Samli, & Claiborne, 1991). The following items were incorporated in the survey:

1. *Past purchases: 1 (never) to 7 (always)*
2. *Degree of loyalty: 1 (very weak) to 7 (very strong)*
3. *Degree of idealism of the brand: 1 (very far from my ideal brand) to 7 (very close to my ideal brand)*

### *3.8.3 Moderator: Fan involvement*

#### *Item 1: Sport Spectator Identification Scale (SSIS)*

By using the Sport Spectator Identification Scale (Wann and Branscombe 1993), the degree of involvement of participants towards the sport is measured, which identifies the strength of orientation towards the sport. Given that the original scale was developed to assess an individuals’ identification with a sports team, rather than the sport in general, questions were adjusted to apply to the context of this study. The original scale includes seven questions, each using an eight-point scale with anchors of “Strongly disagree” (1) and “Strongly agree” (8). Wann and Branscombe presented data indicating that the identification scale is a highly reliable (e.g., Cronbach's alpha ranged from .91 to .93) and valid instrument (Wann, Melnick, Russell, & Pease, 2001) In this study, the items were slightly modified to adapt it more

properly to the context of the study. The items were randomly ordered and placed in the survey (Appendix A, section 3.3). Participants were allocated to groups of low fan involvement, including mean scores below the median and high fan involvement, including mean scores above the median.

### **3.9 Control variables**

A couple of variables are incorporated as control variables in the study, including gender, age, education, brand attitude, product involvement, and use of social media. These extraneous variables might have an influence on the effects that are studied but are not the focal variables of interest so they need to be controlled.

### **3.10 Pre-tests**

#### *3.10.1 Pilot study*

The pilot study was performed by two fellow students who are also doing the master's programme of the author's study. The questions were discussed with them during a face-to-face meeting. First they were introduced to the topic and the purpose of the study to ensure a good interpretation. After that, they checked individually the structure of the survey, the questions in general, the unambiguity and validity of the questions, and if they covered all aspects of the study. Besides the questions were translated into Dutch, after which the fellow students were asked to back translate them. At the end, their suggestions and feedback were discussed and some questions were re-phrased, some were removed and some were added.

#### *3.10.2 Manipulation checks*

It is crucial that manipulations are in line with the view of consumers and thus equally perceived. To address this consideration, two manipulation checks are integrated in the experiment to test the manipulated variables. In this way it is possible to determine if the manipulations are properly applied and suitable for the study. This is done by testing if the presumptions hold by asking respondents how they perceive the manipulations at the end of the experiment. The first manipulation involves the variable storytelling, whereby videos and tweets are manipulated in storytelling and non-storytelling versions. For the manipulation check, it was asked whether they perceived the shown video and tweets as storytelling or non-storytelling. The second variable that is manipulated is congruence, involving the match between the brand and the sponsored athlete that are used in the study. At the end of the experiment we asked if the presumed congruent and incongruent brand-athlete combinations

are perceived as congruent or incongruent matches. In other words, it is tested if respondents confirm the manipulations of presumed matching and non-matching combinations.

### *3.10.3 Reliability and validity*

To ensure stable and consistent results, reliability is considered in the choice of metrics. We have chosen to use standardized research instruments, including existing scales that are used in prior studies as well. Obviously some survey questions were adjusted or adapted to the context, but using pre-performed scales assures that the metrics are reliable. Besides, a test for internal consistency reliability is conducted in the analysis part of the study. Checks for internal validity are part of the study to ensure that the study really measures what is ought to be measured. It reflects the degree to which the cause-and-effect relationship between the treatment and the observed outcome is established in the study (Slack & Draugalis, 2001). Various decisions in the study process were made to minimize threats to internal validity, such as instrumentation, selection, and experimental mortality. No changes occurred in measuring the dependent variable during the study. Moreover, two examiners were involved to assess the instruments used in the study during a pilot study. Thus, instrumentation was no threat of validity. Subjects were randomly assigned, which means that they all had equal chances of being in a specific condition group. Experimental mortality was avoided by conducting the experiment in one time slot. This decreased the chance of participants who dropped out. Considering internal validity, the confidence to report that there exist a relationship between the independent and dependent variables is strengthened. External validity is addressed by assessing generalizability and by using relevant variables in the study. Considering threats of external validity contributes to the confidence in stating that the study results are applicable to other groups as well (Slack & Draugalis, 2001). The sample of the study is quite representative for the population as they were directly taken from social media communities that are sport related. So, these individuals are representative for the type of people that are interesting for our study.

### **3.11 Additional analysis**

The second study is an additional analysis consisting of qualitative interviews to broaden the results from the first study. It is an extension of the main study that is investigated from another perspective, namely from a company point-of-view. This study could overcome the disadvantage of little external validity of the first study. By measuring the effects from another sample with another perspective, the consistency of the results could be investigated

and it will contribute to the relevance of the study. Participants used in this study are sport sponsor experts that are responsible for sport sponsoring in companies. Results from this study could bring more clarity and is beneficial for managerial relevance.

#### *3.11.1 Interview design*

The data collection for this study is based on face-to-face interviews. An advantage of the method of interviewing is the flexibility (Robson, 2002). The researcher is able to follow-up on ideas, facial expressions, intonations and interpret feelings. In this way, more subtle information could be obtained from interviews. A disadvantage is the fact that interviews are quite time consuming and that there is a risk of interviewer and interviewee bias. There are different types of interviews, varying from fully- to unstructured interviews. In this study, a semi-structured interview is used. This type of interview has the advantage of predetermined questions, which allows a certain structure, but the interviewer is able to change the order and the wording of the questions. This makes it possible to adapt the interview to the situation and to follow the participant's flow of thoughts, with a predetermined set of questions. To avoid missing information and to keep full attention to the participant, the interviews were recorded for later processing. Before the start of the interview, we asked permission for recording to avoid negative feelings of participants. Moreover, the participants of the interviews are all persons who have quite a lot of experience of being interviewed, so it is assumed that these people are less sensitive of uncomfortable or insecure feelings as a result of recording the interview. The audio recordings were later transcribed into a summary of the interview.

#### *3.11.2 Population and sample selection*

The sample in this study consist of two sports sponsorship experts of companies in the Netherlands who use storytelling as a corporate communication tool to activate sports sponsorship. Eisenhardt (1989) claims that purposeful selection in a qualitative interview study is preferred. Conducting interviews with sports sponsorship experts ensures knowledgeable participants and thus proper qualitative results, as they are responsible for the activation of sports sponsorship of companies. This means that they should have knowledge of storytelling as a marketing communication instrument.

#### *3.11.3 Research instrument*

A couple of interview questions was developed to measure the areas of interest during the semi-structured interview. Some of the scales from the first study were used to form the

questions, but due to time limitations managers were not asked to rate each scale item. The complete list of questions is included in appendix B (section 1). The general outline of the interview was based on the main constructs from the first study: storytelling, emotional customer connection, brand equity, congruence and fan involvement. Before starting the interview a brief introduction of the study was given. The context and the focus of the study were shared with the interviewee. This ensured that the participant understood the main goal of the interview and the field of interest of the study. After the introduction, the focal topics were discussed sequentially. During the interview, the interviewer left room for other remarks and at the end the interviewee was invited to share some other interesting related issues.

#### *3.11.4 Pilot study*

Again, the pilot study was performed by the same two fellow students who are also doing the master's programme of the author's study. The interview questions were, just like the customer survey, discussed during a face-to-face meeting after they were introduced to the topic and the purpose of the study to ensure a good interpretation. The students checked the interview questions individually, the unambiguity and validity of the questions. At the end, their suggestions and feedback were discussed and some questions were re-phrased.

## **Chapter 4 Results**

In this chapter the results of the research are presented. First, the preliminary results are described including the sample, assumptions for the analysis and the data preparation. Subsequently, the results of the online consumer experiment are analysed by processing the acquired quantitative data in SPSS using several statistical techniques. As a robustness check, a three-way ANOVA is conducted for an overall picture of the effects. At the end of the chapter, the most interesting finding of the qualitative interviews are reported.

### **4.1 Preliminary results**

#### *4.1.1 Sample*

The online consumer experiment was published online for 7 days. After that period a total of 372 participants contributed in the experiment. The results show that from the total participants only 170 people completed the entire survey, which is 45.7%. To be able to accurately draw conclusions on the analysis, it is necessary to remove the incomplete

responses from the dataset. This means that we used 170 respondents for the analysis. A possible explanation for the incomplete surveys might be the length or duration of the experiment, which was relatively long. As the experiment started with a video of approximately one minute, followed by several blocks of questions, it could be that people were not motivated enough to answer all questions and dropped out. Another explanation is the possibility that people opened the survey on their mobile devices, which might have caused problems to stream the video. Besides, there were a few cases in which participants missed only one question. This might be due to unintentional reasons, such as just missing or wrongly clicking the question, or intentional reasons, such as purposefully not answering because of not understanding the question. We did not remove these respondents from the entire dataset, but to avoid bias in the results, they were marked as missing values for the specific missing question. This explains the varying number of participants in some parts of the analysis. With regard to the experimental conditions, participants were randomly allocated to one of the four conditions where one video and one set of tweets were shown. From the 170 participants 28.8% was presented to the congruent storytelling condition, 27.1% to the incongruent storytelling condition, 25.3% to the congruent non-storytelling condition, and 22.9% to the incongruent non-storytelling condition. For more insight into the demographics of the participants, descriptive statistics of the control variables are presented in Appendix C (section 1.1). Correcting for the missing values, 44.6% of the respondents is male and 55.4% is female. The mean age of the participants is 27.61, ranging from 14 to 63. The distribution of educational level is skewed right, which shows that most of the participants has attended higher education. A total of 82.8% followed HBO or WO education (Appendix C, section 1.2). According to social media use, 86% of the participants use social media platforms often or always, whereas 1.3% never or seldom (Appendix C, section 1.3). This means that the vast majority of the sample is an active online user means that the sample is relevant for the study. The mean attitude towards the brand ranging from very negative (1) to very positive (7) is quite positive to neutral ( $M = 4.6$ ,  $SD = 1.024$ ). 43.3% has a neutral attitude towards TVM, 48.4% more or extremely positive and 8.3% more or extremely negative (Appendix C, section 1.4). Besides, we added three questions to measure the degree of product involvement as this might influence the results as well. To ensure the scale reliability we conducted a reliability analyses. The cronbach's alpha shows a value of 0.768 indicating high internal consistency between the items (Appendix C, section 1.5). The average mean of the three items is quite neutral to slightly positive ( $M = 4.417$ ,  $SD = 0.931$ ). Only a few rated extreme scores, but

these can be neglected, as they do not cover a substantive part. The complete scores can be found in Appendix C (section 1.6).

#### *4.1.2 Testing for assumptions*

Before conducting the analysis several assumptions need to be checked. To test for the normal distribution of the data, the guidelines of Hair et al (1998) are used. Following the Central Limit Theorem, the assumption is not applicable for samples over 100 respondents. Thus, the valid response of 170 participants in our study meets the condition. This means that we can conclude that the results are normally distributed and robust against violations of normality.

With regard to the dependent variable, the items are measured with interval scales. All items involve five- or seven-point Likert-scales. This means that the data is continuous having equal distances between scale points along the scale. The independent variable consists of two independent categorical groups, including a storytelling group and a non-storytelling group. Besides, to ensure independence of observations, all respondents were randomly allocated to the experimental conditions. Moreover, participants were not aware of these conditions and the purpose of the study. By conducting the experiment online, it was ensured that participants completed the survey alone and without presence of others. Thus, the behaviour of one participant does not influence the behaviour of others. Therefore we can conclude that the observations are independent of each other.

### **4.2 Manipulation checks**

#### *4.2.1 Congruence*

To test for the validity of the manipulation of the variable congruence, a manipulation check was integrated at the end of the survey. It was checked if respondents perceived the conditions correctly. In line with the manipulation, 99% of the respondents perceived the congruent condition as congruent and 91% perceived the incongruent condition as incongruent. This means that a substantive part of the respondents perceived the manipulations as correctly (table 3A). Therefore, we can conclude that the manipulation of the variable congruence is conducted properly in the study and that it is not biasing the results.

#### *4.2.2 Storytelling*

Just as the variable congruence, there was a check for the manipulation of storytelling at the end of the survey as well. Respondents were asked whether they perceived the primed conditions correctly. In line with the manipulation 98% of the respondents perceived the

storytelling condition as storytelling and 91% perceived the non-storytelling condition as non-storytelling (table 3B). Thus, we could conclude again that the respondents correctly perceived the manipulations which determines that the manipulation was conducted properly.

Manipulation Congruency		Condition	
		Congruent	Incongruent
Perceived	Congruent	99%	9%
	Incongruent	1%	91%

Table 3A: Manipulation check congruence

Manipulation Storytelling		Condition	
		Storytelling	Non-storytelling
Perceived	Storytelling	98%	9%
	Non-storytelling	2%	91%

Table 3B: Manipulation check storytelling

A possible cause for the incorrect interpretation might be that some respondents did not carefully view the video or tweets, or did not carefully read the manipulation question. The question consisted of a relatively long explanation, which might have triggered people to tick one of the response boxes randomly just to go along with the following questions. As the manipulation check was tested during a question at the end of the interview, people only thought about the conditional prime after they finalized the experiment. Therefore it would not necessarily mean that the wrongly perceived condition influenced their responding. Moreover, due to the small number of participants who perceived the condition incorrectly, we assume that the videos and tweets represented their conditions correctly. Thus, we decided to keep the few participants who perceived the conditions incorrectly in the sample.

## 4.3 Factor Analysis

### 4.3.1 Data preparation for analysis

To test the reliability and validity of the multi-item constructs that represent one variable, it is necessary to conduct a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). By conducting a factor analysis, we can show that there is correlation between variables indicating that they belong to one factor. In this way the underlying structure in multiple variables can be found. A minimum requirement for confirmatory factor analysis is that the number of factors in the model has to be hypothesised beforehand. In chapter three we posited expectations with regards to the variables belonging to three separate factors: brand equity, emotional customer connection and fan involvement. So, we assume that the variables load onto one of the three factors for which they have been used in the online experiment. Before factor analysing, the data need to be checked for various assumptions. According to the number of observations, the rule of

thumb is that a minimum of 5 observations per variable or a total of 50 observations need to be presented in the dataset. This means that for this study, wherein three variables are measured (emotional customer connection, brand equity and congruence), a minimum of 150 respondents is required. We can conclude that this assumption is met, as the total of valid respondents is 172. With regard to the method we chose to use Common Factor Analysis (CFA) for several reasons. First, the measurement items consist of mainly Likert-scales, which mean that the data is subjective and that there is a high chance of measurement errors. Second, the goal of the study is to get insight into any underlying constructs instead of making predictions. Besides, as extraction method for CFA the Principal Axis Factoring (PAF) is chosen, as it is less likely than Maximum Likelihood to produce improper solutions. We also have chosen to rotate the factor model to make the results better interpretable. As rotation method we used an oblique rotation, because we expect correlation among the factors. The standard method used for this scenario is the direct oblimin rotation. To ensure a good quality of the factor outcome, we also conducted several quality checks (Appendix C, section 2.1). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (KMO) tests whether there are sufficient significant correlations between the variables, whereby the quality standard is set on a value of at least 0.6. The output shows that the KMO value is 0.898, which means that the data is suitable for factor analysis and no factors need to be removed from the model. The Bartlett test of sphericity tests if the correlations are based on coincidence. The null hypothesis states that there are no significant correlations and thus needs to be rejected. The output shows a value of 0.000, so we can conclude that correlations are not based on coincidence. Therefore, it is meaningful to conduct a factor analysis.

The Measure of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) measures the extent wherein a variable has sufficient correlation with the other variables. The output shows that all individual MSA-values are above 0.6, which indicates that they all have enough contribution to the factor solution (Appendix C, section 2.2). The individual communalities show the explained variance of the variable by the factor in the factor solution. All values, with the exception of 'brandequityloyalty1' are above 0.3. This means that, after removing this item, all other variables are sufficiently explained by the factor and could be kept in the model (Appendix C, section 2.3). As a rule of thumb for the correlation matrix at least one third of the data points needs to have a value above 0.3 or under -0.3. The data complies with this condition, indicating enough correlation between variables (Appendix C, section 2.4).

#### *4.3.2 Conducting the factor analysis*

As we determined the number of factors on the base of theory beforehand, we looked for three factors in the dataset: (1) emotional customer connection, (2) brand equity, and (3) fan involvement. With regard to the statistical output, the Eigenvalues show that three factors reflect 55.4% of the cumulative variance, and from the sixth factor there is at least 65% variance. The scree plot does not show clear factors either, with the line turning below one from the eighth factor. This might be probably due to the fact that the scales consisted of many sub-items or that the ratio of variables to factors is low. The pattern matrix shows the correlations between the variables and the factors after rotation and thus should be better interpretable (Appendix C, section 2.5). The output shows that the variables load onto three factors. However, some items have cross loadings onto two factors, which means that they cannot be clearly attributed to one of the factors. For emotional customer connection, 6 out of 10 variables form a clear group as the third factor, including items CC1, CC2, CC3, CC4, CC6 and CC7. For brand equity 14 out of 25 variables fall together in the first factor, consisting of BEatt1, BEatt2, BEatt3, BEatt4, BEatt9, BEatt10, BEima1, BEima2, BEima3, BEima5, BEima6, BEima7, BEima8, and BEima9. Besides, all 7 variables of fan involvement form the second factor. An explanation for the low correlations of some variables is that it is likely that participants do not make clear divisions between questions that are based on emotional feelings or attitudes and images with regards to the brand. The average of consumers might not be able to see this as different concepts. This 'bad' interpretation of questions might account for some overlaps between the factors of emotional customer connection and brand equity. To avoid bias in the results, we decided to remove both variables that have cross-loadings and do not have correlations above 0.35. The structure matrix confirms the results of the pattern matrix, showing a three-factor structure (Appendix C, section 2.6). Again, some of the variables load high onto different factors, but the dominant pattern is visible.

#### *4.3.3 Convergent validity*

Separate factor analyses were conducted to test the convergent validity per construct. For each construct only the items that were allocated to the factors were incorporated in the analyses. So, the items that were removed as described in the previous paragraph were kept out in this analysis as well. The six remaining items for emotional customer connection loaded on one factor. This was replicated for the other two constructs finding similar results. The separate correlations matrices per factor (Appendix C, section 2.7) show that, for all constructs, the

measurements are significantly correlated ( $p < 0.05$ ). This validates that the scores on different measures, which are supposed to measure the same are related. This also confirms the right choice for the oblique rotation method, as this method assumes that there is high correlation between the factors. We can conclude that the constructs are unidimensional.

#### *4.3.4 Discriminant validity*

Taking all constructs together we assessed the discriminant validity to check if the different constructs do not have correlating scores. The three constructs should rather not be related to each other, so we need to discriminate between dissimilar constructs. Comparing the correlations of the three constructs in the correlation matrix (Appendix C, section 2.8), we see that all correlations between the constructs are less than 0.8. Thus, we can state that the constructs are not highly correlated. Looking at the inter-item correlation matrix again, three patterns are visible (Appendix C, section 2.4). The items belonging to one construct have higher correlations to items of their own factor than to items of other constructs. Thus, we can conclude that there is discrimination between the three dissimilar constructs.

#### *4.3.5 Reliability of the outcome of the factor analysis*

A reliability analyses was conducted to investigate the internal consistency of the factors. The Cronbach's Alpha measures whether all variables in the factor measure the same and thus belong to solely one concept. The output shows that the Cronbach's Alpha for the emotional customer connection factor is 0.879, for brand equity is 0.935 and for fan involvement is 0.937 (Appendix C, section 2.9). All three factors are above 0.7, which means that the data is internal consistent measuring only one underlying construct. Summarizing the outcome of the factor and reliability analysis, we see that the same problematic variables become visible. In both analyses eight variables do not show high correlations underlying one construct. Thus, the lack of internal consistency of these variables was confirmed. We decided to keep them out for the further analysis. See appendix A (section 4) for a complete view of the questions that were kept in the analysis, whereby in the analysis used variables are marked by a star.

#### *4.3.6 Computing new variables*

As expected, three factors were found among the 35 variables, of which 27 remained included in the model. We labelled the factors respectively: 'Brand Equity', 'Fan Involvement' and 'Emotional Customer Connection'. Since these three higher order constructs are theoretically supported as well, we averaged the constructs into one variable for the further analysis. All

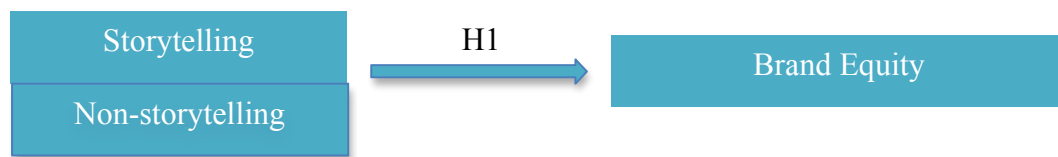
variables belonging to a specific concept, with the exception of the removed variables, were summed up and divided by the number of total variables of the concept. The initial factors and the revised factors after factor analysing are visualized in Appendix C (section 2.10) showing the final removal decisions.

#### 4.4 Main analysis

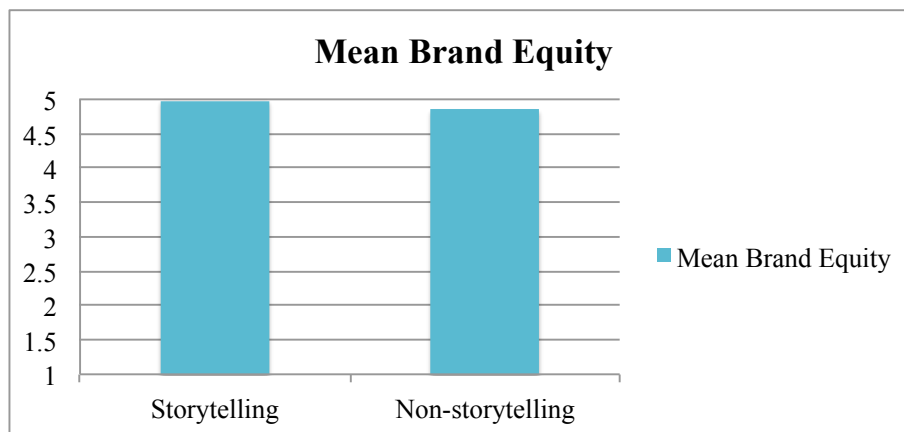
The main analysis part of the study consists of several ANOVA analyses and a regression to measure the hypothesized effects. The total research model consists of one independent variable, storytelling, which affects the dependent variable brand equity. Moreover, the model is extended with the mediating effect of emotional customer connection, which is affected by storytelling and subsequently affects brand equity. Besides, we test for the possible moderating effects of congruence and fan involvement and the effects of control variables.

##### 4.4.1 Main effects: storytelling, emotional customer connection and brand equity

###### Main effect H1: storytelling on brand equity

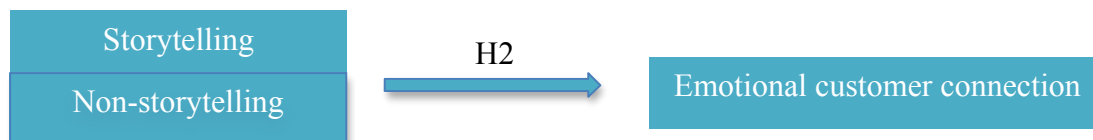


The first hypothesis tests whether there is a difference in brand equity for the storytelling condition and the non-storytelling condition. As the model consists of one independent categorical variable consisting of two levels and one continuous dependent variable, we used the one-way ANOVA procedure to determine whether there is a significant difference between the sample means. As the independent variable is a dichotomous variable, we are able to compare the means of these groups. As the subjects are randomly assigned to the two groups, any difference in response of brand equity is due to the treatment of storytelling and not to other factors. The output (graph 5) shows that the mean of brand equity for the storytelling condition is higher ( $M = 4.9821$ ,  $SD = 0.75705$ ) than for the non-storytelling condition ( $M = 4.8487$ ,  $SD = 0.93123$ ). However, although directionality is shown, the effect of storytelling is non-significant ( $p = 0.367 > 0.05$ , two-tailed) (Appendix C, section 3.1). So, the first hypothesis of a direct effect of storytelling is rejected. We could not confirm our expectation that activating sports sponsorship by messages with storytelling content is more effective with respect to brand equity, than communications with non-storytelling content.

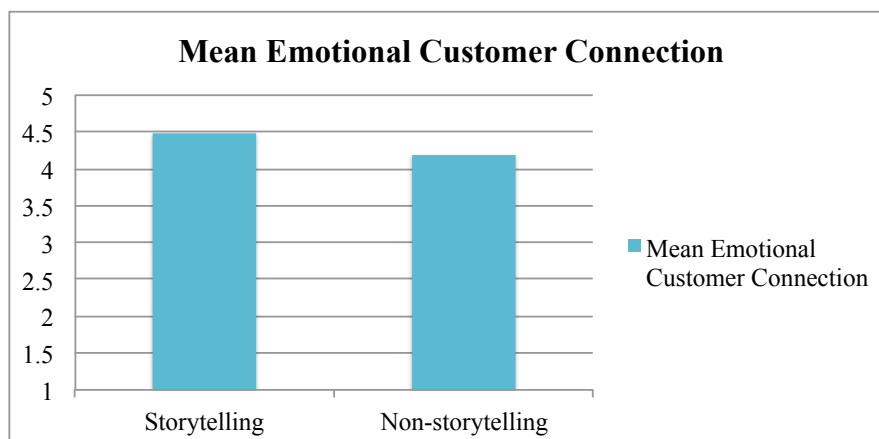


Graph 5: Mean Brand Equity – storytelling versus non-storytelling

Main effect H2: storytelling on emotional customer connection



The second main effect was also tested by a one-way ANOVA. Again, the means for the two groups including storytelling and non-storytelling cases were compared. For this hypothesis, the continuous dependent variable is emotional customer connection. The results show that, in line with the expectation as hypothesized, there is a positive effect of storytelling on emotional customer connection. The output (graph 6) confirms that the mean for the storytelling condition ( $M = 4,4919$ ,  $SD = 1.16855$ ) is higher than the non-storytelling condition ( $M = 4,1963$ ,  $SD = 1.11815$ ). However, although the direction is confirmed, the direct effect is not significant ( $p = 0.111 > 0.05$ , two-tailed) (Appendix C, section 3.2).



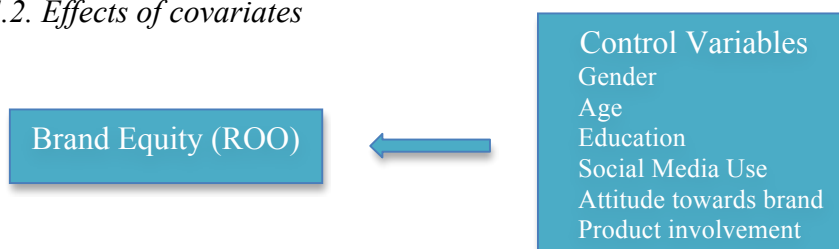
Graph 6: Mean emotional customer connection – storytelling versus non-storytelling

### Main effect H3: emotional customer connection on brand equity



In the third hypothesis we hypothesized a causal relationship for two different constructs, whereby the one is influencing the other. The independent variable of the third hypothesis, emotional customer connection, includes an interval scale, which means that this is a continuous variable. As the dependent variable is continuous as well, we need to test this effect with a linear regression. The R measures the predictive power of the regression equation and shows the proportion of explained variance of the dependent variable by the independent variable. The results show that emotional customer connection explains 59.7% of the variance of brand equity (Appendix C, section 3.3). The F-test shows whether the explained variance is more than could be expected on coincidence. The output shows a significant F-test ( $F = 69.850$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) which means that the R-square significantly differs from zero (Appendix C, section 3.4). The coefficients table (Appendix C, section 3.5) shows evidence for the effect as well, as the beta is significant ( $B = 0.435$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). Thus, there is evidence that emotional customer connection explains brand equity in the model. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) shows the extent to which the coefficient of the variable is explained by the other variables. This value needs to be lower than 10, otherwise there is too much correlation between the independent variables. The output shows a VIF value of 1, so there is no multicollinearity. All in all, we can conclude that emotional customer connection is a significant predictor of brand equity, which confirms the third hypothesis.

#### *4.4.2. Effects of covariates*

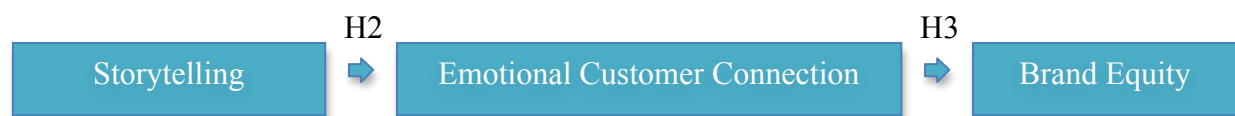


To account for the control variables we conducted a linear regression. Rather, it could be the case that extraneous variables have a significant influence on brand equity. A reason could be that people who are highly active on social media are more influenced by brand communications and are thus more emotionally connected. Another interesting difference could possibly exist with regard to gender, education or age, as women, lower educated and younger people are possibly more sensitive for emotional connections and stories. Moreover,

it is expected that people with higher brand attitudes or who are highly involved to the product are more likely to positively evaluate the brand, which increases brand equity. The coefficients show that only the effects of brand attitude ( $p = 0.000$ ) and product involvement ( $p = 0.005$ ) are significant as they are below the critical p-value of 0.05 (Appendix C, section 3.6). Both variables increase brand equity ( $B_{productinvolvement} = 0.377$ ,  $SD = 0.064$  and  $B_{brandattitude} = 0.196$ ,  $SD = 0.074$ ). The other variables have no significant effects at all, although social media use is only marginally non-significant with a p-value of 0.081.

#### 4.4.3 Mediation: emotional customer connection

##### Mediator H2 and H3: emotional customer connection

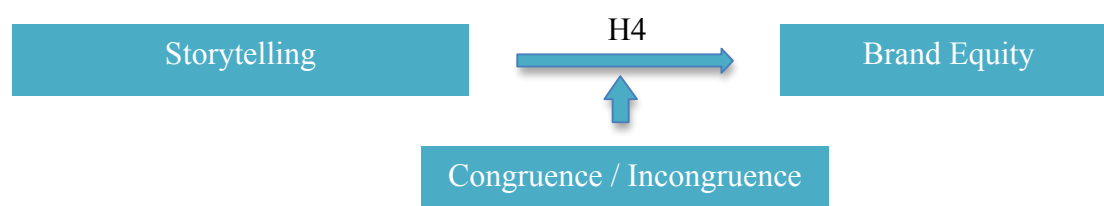


We expected emotional customer connection to be a mediating variable, having an intervening effect between the effect of storytelling on brand equity. However, as the direct effect of storytelling on brand equity is not significant, there is no possibility that emotional customer connection has a mediating effect in this case. There is no way we could claim mediation, so we decided to not conduct a regression.

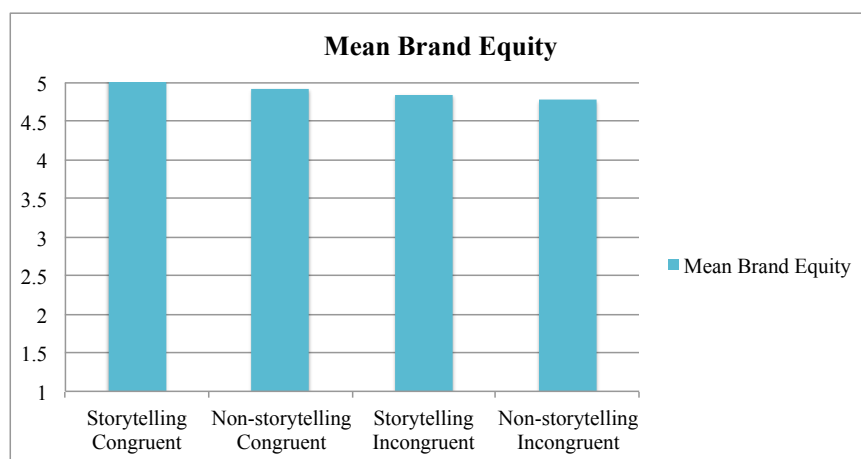
#### 4.4.4 Moderations: congruence and fan involvement

Next to the main effects two moderations are integrated in the model. It is expected that both moderators strengthen the effect of storytelling on brand equity. Although the direct effect of storytelling was not found in the study, we decided to assume a direct effect for the following analysis to be able to test the moderating effects. Rather, marketing experts often suggest the effect and importance of storytelling in public discussions and recent literature. The moderating effects are analysed by a two-way ANOVA. To measure the moderating effects two new interaction variables were computed. The first one involves the interaction effect of congruence (storytelling\*congruence), and the second one the interaction effect of fan involvement (storytelling\*fan involvement).

##### Moderator H4: Congruence



We transformed storytelling and congruence into dichotomous variables, whereby a value of 0 respectively indicates non-storytelling or incongruent, and a value of 1 storytelling or congruent. A new categorical variable was conducted, consisting of four categories: (1) storytelling - congruent, (2) non-storytelling - congruent, (3) storytelling - incongruent, and (4) non-storytelling – incongruent. The between-subjects factors are shown in Appendix C (section 3.7). In the model, the main effect and interaction effect of congruence and storytelling was included. In line with the expectations, the output shows the expected directionality of the mean scores. The results in graph 7 show that the mean for storytelling is indeed higher than non-storytelling and congruent combinations are stronger than incongruent combinations. The two opposite groups show the highest difference ( $M_{storytellingcongruent} = 5.0875 > M_{nonstorytellingincongruent} = 4.7762$ ).

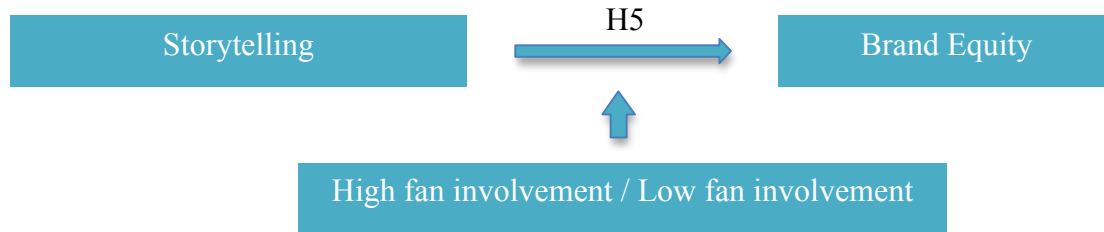


Graph 7: Mean brand equity – moderating effect of congruence

However, the output of the two-way ANOVA (Appendix C, section 3.8) shows that the interaction effect of congruent\*storytelling is not significant ( $F = 0.092$ ,  $p = 0.763 > 0.05$ , two sided). Also, there are no significant differences in mean brand equity for the congruent and incongruent groups ( $p = 0.196 > 0.05$ ), and neither for the storytelling and non-storytelling groups ( $p = 0.423 > 0.05$ ). The post hoc test shows that none of the group differences is significant as they all have p-values above 0.05 (Appendix C, section 3.9). Nevertheless, despite of the insignificance of these study findings, the effect of congruence seems quite strong, as it overrules the effect of storytelling. The congruent conditions show stronger effects even when the messages are non-storytelling (Appendix C, section 3.10). This suggests that, although not significant in this study, storytelling messages show a higher effect than non-storytelling messages on brand equity. But, when there is a congruent brand-athlete combination involved, the congruent messages are higher, irrespective of whether it is

storytelling or non-storytelling. It might be suggested that congruence has possibly a direct effect on brand equity. This could be investigated in an extended study or for future research.

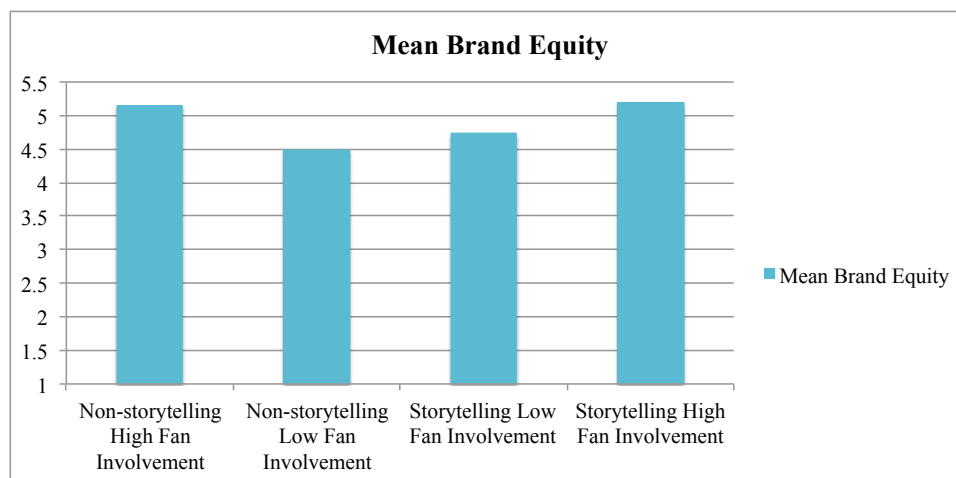
#### Moderator H5: Fan involvement



As described in chapter three, we added eight questions on an 8-point scale to measure the degree of involvement with the sport as this might have a moderating influence on the main effect. The median of 4.57 was used as a cut-off value to divide respondents into a low and high fan involvement group. We recoded the metric variable into a dichotomous variable, with a score of 0 indicating the low fan involvement group with a score of 4.57 and lower, and a score of 1 indicating the high involvement group with a score of 4.57 and higher. We conducted a two-way ANOVA with the dependent variable brand equity and the categorical interaction term of fan involvement and storytelling. So, this resulted in a new variable consisting of four categories: (1) non-storytelling – high fan involvement, (2) non-storytelling – low fan involvement, (3) storytelling – low fan involvement, and (4) storytelling – high fan involvement. The between-subjects factors are shown in Appendix C (section 3.11).

Graph 8 confirms the expected strengthening effect of high fan involvement, as the two conditions with high fan involvement have higher means than the conditions with low fan involvement. The output (Appendix C, section 3.12) shows that the direct effect of fan involvement is significant ( $F = 15.346$   $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ , two-sided). However, the interaction effect of storytelling\*fan involvement is not significant ( $p = 0.447 > 0.05$ ), which was expected because of the non-significant effect of storytelling. The post hoc test (Appendix C, section 3.13) shows that most of the comparisons of the mean values with regard to the groups are significantly different, ( $p < 0.05$ ) which confirms the main effect. Only when the level of fan involvement is similar, there is no significant difference. The high fan involvement – storytelling and the high fan involvement – non-storytelling group do not differ, which is in line with the effect of storytelling being insignificant. This also applies for the two low fan involvement groups. The parameter estimates (Appendix C, section 3.14) presents the coefficients of the dichotomous groups, showing that the low involvement groups have significantly weaker effects on brand equity ( $B_{nonstorytellinglowfaninvolvement} = -.710$ ,  $p =$

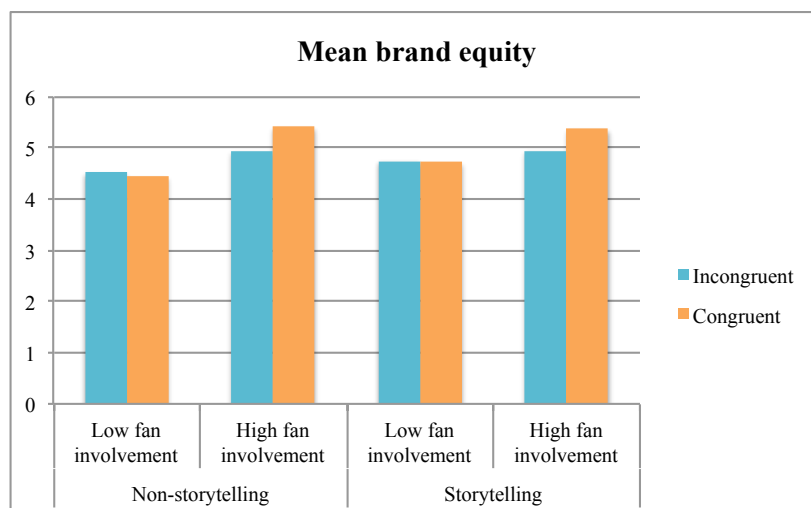
0.001 and  $B_{storytellinglowfaninvolvement} = -.454$ ,  $p = 0.019$ ) than the high involvement-storytelling group. Thus, we can conclude that fan involvement has a direct effect on brand equity.



Graph 8: Mean brand equity – moderating effect of fan involvement

#### 4.5 Robustness check: 3-way ANOVA

For an overall picture of the relationships, we conducted a 3-way interaction with another ANOVA. In this way we are able to investigate if the means in the 4 different experimental conditions in the high fan involvement scenario are significantly different from the 4 experimental conditions in the low fan involvement scenario. To make this more understandable, the means of all 8 different experimental conditions are presented in graph 9.



Graph 9: Mean brand equity of the 8 experimental conditions

The output of the tests of between-subjects effects (Appendix C, section 3.15) shows one significant main effect on brand equity ( $F_{fan\ involvement} = 15.015$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ) and one marginally significant two-way interaction effect on brand equity ( $F_{congruence\ fan\ involvement} =$

2.985,  $p = 0.087 < 0.10$ ). The three-way interaction term is non-significant ( $p = 0.859 > 0.05$ ). The table of parameter estimates (Appendix C, section 3.16) shows a beta coefficient of 0.647 ( $p = 0.013$ ) for the low fan involvement group, which means that the mean brand equity is lower compared to means of the high fan involvement group. The marginally significant interaction effect of congruence\*fan involvement has a beta coefficient of 0.446 ( $p = 0.246$ ) for the low fan involvement group, but the insignificant p-value shows that the difference is not substantive. Consistent with our prior findings, we can conclude that there is no interaction effect, only a direct effect of fan involvement.

#### **4.6 Additional analysis: qualitative interview reports**

As an additional analysis we conducted two qualitative interviews to get more insight from a company perspective. The first interview was done with a sport marketing expert company, Triple Double, and the second with a sports sponsorship expert company, Sportnext. A report of the given answers during the interviews can be found in Appendix D. The interview questions can be found in appendix B (section 1).

## **Chapter 5 Conclusion and discussion**

### **5.1 Discussion of results**

The aim of the study was to investigate how storytelling as activation tool for sports sponsorship can build brand equity through emotional customer connection, and how this effect is moderated by the congruence between the brand and the athlete, and fan involvement with the sport. Although there is an increasing number of research about the effects of sports sponsorship on company results, this study offers a unique contribution to the existing literature as the research is conducted specifically in the field of storytelling as leveraging communication mechanism. The current era of sponsorship is taken as foundational premise for this study, which ensures the relevance for companies who are currently active at the sports sponsorship market. In order to adequately answer the main research question, five sub questions and related hypotheses were developed. The first research question aimed to identify how storytelling in sports sponsorship influences brand equity. It was suggested that storytelling has a positive effect on brand equity due to its ability to activate feelings. Although the results confirmed the directionality, the effect was not significant. Thus we cannot conclude that integrating storytelling in sports sponsorship brand messages directly leads to higher brand equity. However, as the literature and results of the additional study

with marketing experts suggest that storytelling has a unique differential power that is difficult to measure, we can conclude that storytelling is an important tool to consider while creating brand messages in sports sponsorship. The second research question had the objective to investigate how storytelling in sports sponsorship influences emotional customer connection. As acknowledged in various areas of academic literature, it was proposed that storytelling increases feelings of attachment to the brand, which causes a positive effect on emotional customer connection. The data from our study showed again the expected directionality, but no significant positive effect. However, as the effect is not far from significance, the rejection of the hypothesis might be due to the sample. As storytelling and customer connection are concepts that are obviously closely connected, it can be assumed that the effect could be significantly proven in a follow-up study or a study with another sample. The third research question was elaborated on the direct effect of emotional customer connection on brand equity, which was expected to be positive. Prior literature showed that emotional attachment is an important predictor of brand equity, but that the real influence is difficult to measure due its abstractness. The results from our study confirmed the effect, which means that we succeeded to overcome this measurement issue. The mediating effect that was proposed in this study could not be confirmed due to the non-significant effect of storytelling. Additionally the effects of several covariates were tested on brand equity. Only brand attitude and product involvement were proven to have an extraneous effect. This means that it is necessary to take the existing attitudes and involvement with the product of target consumers into consideration while evaluating the effects on brand equity. A possible explanation for their influence might be the cognitive processes in consumer's minds that trigger preferences. For the fourth research question it was proposed that congruence has a strengthening effect on the relationship of storytelling and brand equity. As congruence is a concept that is investigated in many marketing studies, and as its effect is proven for many brand outcome situations, it was expected to have a moderating influence. Although the expected differences between groups were shown, the effect was not significant. Lastly, the fifth research question aimed to investigate whether fan involvement has a strengthening influence on the effect of storytelling and brand equity. It is repeatedly proven in social studies that consumers who are 'real' fans of a sport have per definition higher evaluations. A direct effect of fan involvement was significantly confirmed in our study, as high fan involvement with a sport results in higher outcomes. There was no support for the interaction effect due to the non-significant effect of storytelling. In addition to the main analyses, we aimed to get some more in-depth insights from a company perspective. An additional

analyses consisting of two qualitative interviews with sport sponsor experts were conducted to get insight into the latent constructs of the study. In both interview reports the importance of storytelling to activate sports sponsorship were remarked, because of its unique ability to emotionally reach target groups. Both interviewees believe that storytelling becomes of crucial importance for brands to be visible and memorable in the rapid world of social media. Stories have the unique power to transcend the 'reason of being' of brands to the hearts of people, which is believed to be essential for a positive brand value. The other constructs also received support, as the effect of emotional customer connection, congruence and fan involvement were confirmed. All the findings summarizing allows us to answer the main research question of the study. Based on all results, we can conclude that storytelling in sports sponsorships might play an important role as activation tool for sports sponsorship, but it does not directly build brand equity. A direct effect of emotional customer connection on brand equity is proven and a direct influence of fan involvement as well. Emotional customer connection does not play a mediating role between storytelling and brand equity. The other effects are visible and show the expected directionality, but they are not significant.

## **5.2 Limitations and future research**

Sport as marketing tool should be more investigated, as there are still many undiscovered areas left and under-researched fields of study. A recent study showed that Europe is a real sporting hotbed as 71% of the general population is fan of at least two sports and 49% of at least four sports (Bracher L., 2014). There are several limitations that need to be considered with respect to this study. First, the choice for the online consumer experiment was appropriate on the one side, because we had to deal with time limits. However, on the other hand this caused some disadvantages as well. Due to the multiple variables and comprehensive scales that were used in the study, the survey was quite long and time-consuming. This is a possible reason for the high drop-off rate (54.3%) of participants who entered the online experiment. Besides, the abstract variables of the emotional customer connection construct could have caused difficulties with the interpretation of some questions. As also students entered the experiment, who are not sport fans by definition, a substantive part of the participants might not have been motivated enough to complete the experiment in full concentration and to overthink the questions without time pressure. A group consisting of sports fans solely would have done well for the reliability of the data, which might have possibly resulted in better interpretable and significant results. Of course, a laboratory setting would have been better for the study results as well, because this allows controlling for

possible distorting factors by keeping the environment neutral. Moreover, in this way the manipulation could be conducted more precise and systematic, because researchers are better able to check if the movies and the tweets are seen completely. For future research this might contribute to the internal validity of the study results. Another limitation of the study is the use of explicit metrics to measure participants' beliefs on emotional characteristics. We measured attitudes and images in a quantitative way, but for future research and with less time constraints it might be advantageously to use qualitative metrics such as qualitative interviews. In this way it is possible to measure direct participant response, which allows to control and measure data more adequately contributing to a higher reliability. Another suggestion for extensions and future research might be the investigation of differences among different product categories. This study focused solely on one product, but it could be interesting to get more insight into the possible varying effects of storytelling in sports sponsorship for different products. This also applies to different type of sports that might have differing effects due to the fact that some sports are more related to sponsorship than others. Although we opted for the potential of sports sponsorship, we need to mention some drawbacks as well. First, the degree of control is less compared to other media, which makes it a more difficult tool to activate for companies. Second, with regard to involving athletes in sports sponsorship, their performances and behavior cannot be anticipated with certainty. As athletes are human beings, they are not controllable or directional. From one point-of-view the use of real human as brand ambassadors strengthens the emotional connection with customers and brings the relationship on a more intense level. But, from the other point-of-view it increases the chance on unexpected scenarios that might be harmful for the brand.

### **5.3 Academic contribution**

Although the results from this study did not find many significant effects as proposed based on findings from the literature, this study does contribute to the current literature. For all proposed hypotheses we succeeded to show the directionality of the effects. The relations of the conceptual model hold with regards to its expected effects. Unfortunately, only little effects were found significant, but this might be due to the number of valid respondents. The direct role of emotional customer connection is confirmed and the importance of storytelling is suggested. The study results invoke many assumptions, additions and questions related to the study, which means that there are various interesting extensions to study possible. It could be stated that this study encouraged the less-investigated era of storytelling in academic literature. Thus, this study could be seen as an inspirational piece of work that is likely to

serve as framework for future studies. A further contribution of the study is manipulation of the experimental conditions. The manipulation of the brand-athlete combinations and the videos and tweets seemed to be conducted properly, as almost all participants perceived the experimental conditions right (99% for storytelling, 91% for non-storytelling, 98% for congruence, and 91% for incongruence). The manipulation checks confirm the strength and interpretation of the athletes, videos and tweets that are used in the online experiment. The manipulation of storytelling is a unique contribution of this study, as a manipulation for this specific phenomenon has never been conducted in academic literature before. Additionally, as we measured storytelling via two ways in the study, by videos and tweets, we also accounted for possible misinterpretation among participants. By showing two types of storytelling messages, we increased the possibility of appropriately perceiving the manipulation of storytelling. This novel way could be seen as an innovative study approach. However, a possible drawback of the storytelling video that is used must also be mentioned. For the congruent storytelling condition, the video was used in its original form. This video has been published online a while ago, so participants of the experiment might have seen the video before. However, for the incongruent storytelling condition the original version was little changed, featuring another athlete. This change might have been perceived as less realistic, which could have impacted our non-significant findings. Another strength of the study is that we incorporated an additional study from a company perspective next to the main study that is based on a consumer perspective. Whereas the main study offers the most obvious results from the behavior and attitudes of sports fans, the additional study provides more insight into the world of sports sponsoring companies. This makes the study more interesting for companies as they get both insight into the actual mindset of their target group and the practical opinions by expert companies. Moreover, as the additional study involves another approach as well (qualitative) the study results become more reliable.

#### **5.4 Managerial contribution**

Along with the rise of social media and the increased activities of athletes on social platforms, the influence of athletes became a popular field of interest for marketing managers over the last years. Companies acknowledge the power of influential persons and are therefore integrating them in brand messages. Therefore, it is important for companies to have accurate insight into the drivers of brand equity. This study provides sport sponsor directors more knowledge with regard to storytelling and the role of emotional customer connection. Although a direct effect of storytelling is not confirmed, the study shows that storytelling has

a positive directionality. Moreover, emotional customer connection is proven to have a crucial role in activating sponsorship and positively affecting brand equity. This indicates that directors or managers should carefully overthink the implementation of sports sponsorship and the communication of aligned brand messages. When sponsoring in sports, companies need to develop relationships at an emotional level with their customers as this results in more brand power. Besides, although the effect was not found significant in the main study, it is advisable to consider the type of athlete in combination with the brand. Incongruent combinations might negatively influence the results of a sponsorship as it harms the credibility and trust of a brand. In practice, this has already often resulted in negative consequences for brand equity. Last but not least, fan involvement is definitely important to consider, because consumers are more likely to have higher brand evaluations, as they are real fans of a sport. Concluding, when companies decide to invest in sports sponsorship, they have to carefully deliberate on the target group and the athlete they are going to sponsor. Subsequently they need to communicate brand messages by themselves or via the athlete, which develops connections with customers at an emotional level.

## **5.5 General conclusion**

The primary objective of this study was to research the effect of storytelling as activation mechanism for sports sponsorship. As derived from the new sponsorship model theory, emotional bonds with target markets are the new focus of sponsorship. It was suggested that the main consideration for sponsor directors is how to use the most personally relevant and emotional marketing media to improve relationships between the brand and the target market. Therefore, we expected that leveraging sponsorship is crucial to realize sponsorship returns. We proposed that storytelling leads to emotional customer connection, which subsequently results in brand equity. However, the study results did not support the effect of storytelling on emotional customer connection and brand equity, which means that the mediating effect cannot be supported either. The results only supported a direct effect of emotional customer connection on brand equity and a direct effect of fan involvement. However, as the literature and public discussion offers support for the idea that the phenomena of storytelling is becoming of crucial importance, it is suggested that there exists a relationship between the constructs that were studied. Moreover, the additional study from a company perspective supported the role of storytelling and the importance of congruent brand-athlete combinations. Hence it is suggested that the limitations of this study influenced the non-significant findings. Furthermore, this study is conducted with innovative research

instruments and considered two research perspectives. Thus, we can conclude that the research does contribute to the existing literature, offering expansions on and inspiration to the domain of sports sponsorship.

According to the future of sports sponsorship, it is expected that it goes along with digital support and social media. As stories are one of the most powerful and simple ways to communicate online, we believe that storytelling is becoming more and more inherent to sports sponsorship. Therefore, we still opt for the fact that storytelling will play an important role in activating sponsorship. Another trend in the sports sponsorship industry that deserves more attention is the fact that sport is also getting another role. Next to its leisure and amusement elements, sport is increasingly associated with its healthy elements. This is linked to the health problems in society that is getting more importance on the public agenda due to its problematic status. Therefore, it is publically expected that sponsor investments need to have societal relevance. Huge sponsor investments without direct contributions to the environment or society get more and more resistance. So, we expect that the sport sponsor of the future needs to fulfil a broader range of needs, getting the role of a real 'world improver'. Stories offer a great opportunity to contribute to this societal relevance.

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## Chapter 7 Appendices

### Appendix A - Consumer experiment

#### 1. Manipulations congruence

A congruent athlete and an incongruent athlete with respect to the brand were incorporated into the study. Congruent sponsorships involve sponsorships that have a match between the values of a brand and the attributes of the athlete and the accompanied sport. Incongruent sponsorships are sponsorships that do not have a direct match.



Sven Kramer



*Congruent combination*



Jorrit Bergsma



*Incongruent combination*

## 2. Manipulations storytelling

### 2.1 Videos

Due to the long period wherein TVM sponsored the athlete and the information that is available, there is access to several videos featuring the athlete that have been communicated by TVM. In the experiment a video with storytelling and a video without storytelling are used for both the congruent and the incongruent athlete. For the storytelling condition, the original video was used reflecting the congruent athlete. For the incongruent version, the same video was manipulated by changing the shots of the congruent athlete with the incongruent athlete. For the non-storytelling condition, two different videos were used showing the athletes during their training. To limit any possible bias, the audio from the video of the congruent condition was also integrated in the video of the incongruent condition so that this was the same for both videos. Both videos were mainly based on performance during training and did not include any text. To avoid external influences we used recent videos of similar durations.

#### Storytelling – congruent and incongruent

*TVM ‘The road to gold’ commercial: original (congruent) and manipulated (incongruent)*

<http://vimeo.com/81083986> - 2013, December 5 - duration 1:15 minutes

English translation of the spoken and written text in the video:

0:14 “I am always on the road”  
0:17 “My world, is never standing still”  
0:22 “Still standing, is regression”  
0:26 “Stay focused”  
0:28 “I am looking forwards”  
0:31 “I push myself to the limit”  
0:34 “I want, I must, I always go along”  
0:39 “Every meter, is a victory”  
0:46 “But sometimes, I need to dwell upon my progress”  
0:50 “To think about, for whom I am doing everything”  
0:56 “Because even though the road is long and lonely sometimes”  
1:00 “I am never standing alone”  
1:09 “Make a chance to win a trip to Sochi. Or many other prizes”  
“Play the game on [theroadtogold.nl](http://theroadtogold.nl)”

#### Non-storytelling - congruent

*TVM ‘Sven in action’ commercial (original)*

<http://vimeo.com/48287649> - 2012, August 27. duration: 1:11 minutes. No text.

## Non-storytelling – incongruent

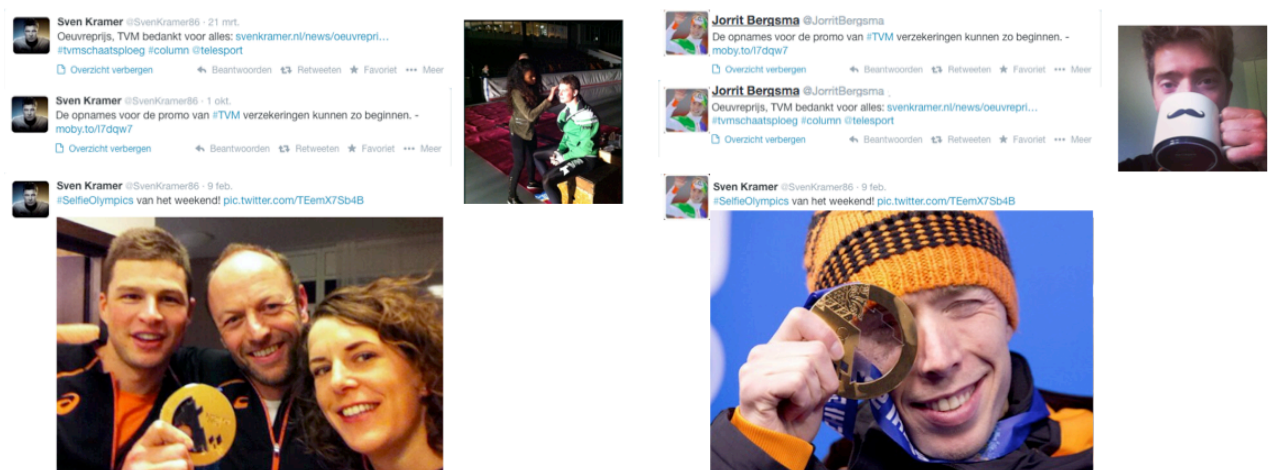
*Catch your moment video productions ‘Jorrit Bergsma, van fietsenmaker tot wereldkampioen’* (manipulated) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o7cx19abjt4> - 2013, September 8, duration: 1:11 minutes. No text.

### 2.2 Tweets

To incorporate tweets in the experiment we searched for tweets in where storytelling was used and tweet in where it was not. For the congruent athlete, we found two sets of tweets, one representing storytelling and the other one non-storytelling. More practically, this means that the storytelling-based tweets involve personal stories and photos that characterize emotional connections with people. The non-storytelling-based tweets involve only unemotional and non-personal facts, characterizing less emotional connections with people. For the incongruent condition, the storytelling and non-storytelling tweets from the congruent athlete were manipulated by changing the athlete's name and photo. In this way it looked like the incongruent athlete posted the tweets.

## Storytelling

Original tweets of ice-skating athlete Sven Kramer with personal stories and photos during his Olympics adventure in Sochi. A set of three tweets were integrated in the experiment, to avoid possible misunderstanding or misinterpretation when using only one tweet.



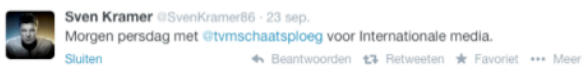
*Tweet Storytelling 1:* tweet that refers to a column written by the athlete in where he thanks his sponsor TVM. English translation: “*Oeuvre price, TVM thanks for everything. #tvmiceskatingteam #column.*”

*Tweet Storytelling 2:* tweet that refers to a photo of the athlete during a photo/video session for a promotional campaign of his sponsor TVM. English translation: “*The recordings for the promo of #TVM insurances can start in a minute.*” The photo that was referred to in the tweet of the athlete: a view behind the scenes where the athlete is being prepared for the photo/video session.

*Tweet Storytelling 3:* tweet that shows a ‘selfie’ photo of the athlete, his teammate and his coach showing the Olympic medal he won that weekend. English translation: “*#selfieolympics of the weekend!*”

## Non-storytelling

Tweets posted by the athlete with solely non-personal and non-emotional facts. Again three tweets were used in the experiment.



*Tweet Non-storytelling 1:* tweet that announces that the athlete is allocated into the last ride during the world championship ice-skating. English translation: “*Tomorrow last ride 5km against Lee. #worldcupdistances #Sochi.*”

*Tweet Non-storytelling 2:* tweet that tells that the facilities in Sochi, such as the arena, the ice-skating rink, and the treatment rooms are good. English translation: “*The facilities such as the arena, the ice-skating rink, the treatment rooms are really good in #Sochi. Certainly the most important for me.*”

*Tweet Non-storytelling 3:* tweet that announces a press day for international media with the TVM team. English translation: “*Tomorrow press day with @tvmiceskatingteam for international media.*”

## 3. Survey questions

### 3.1 Emotional customer connection

“To what extent describe the following words your typical feelings toward the brand TVM?”

#### Item 1a: Affection

1. AFFAFF = affectionate: 1 (not at all) to 7 (very well) \*

2. AFFLOV = loved: 1 (not at all) to 7 (very well) \*
3. AFFPEA = peaceful: 1 (not at all) to 7 (very well) \*
4. AFFFRN = friendly: 1 (not at all) to 7 (very well) \*

#### Item 1b: Passion

5. PASPAS = passionate: 1 (not at all) to 7 (very well)
6. PASDEL = delighted: 1 (not at all) to 7 (very well) \*
7. PASCAP = captivated: 1 (not at all) to 7 (very well) \*

#### Item 1c: Connection

8. CONATT = attached: 1 (not at all) to 7 (very well)
9. CONBON = bonded: 1 (not at all) to 7 (very well)
10. CONCON = connected: 1 (not at all) to 7 (very well)

### *3.2 Brand equity*

#### Item 2a: Brand attitude

##### *Brand quality: 1 (bad) to 7 (good)*

1. BAQUAL = overall brand quality      “Do you see this brand as offering high quality?” \*

##### *Brand credibility: 1 (disagreeable) to 7 (agreeable)*

2. BACRED1 = brand expertise      “Do you see this brand as competent in its area of business?” \*
3. BACRED2 = brand trustworthiness      “How trustworthy do you find this brand?” \*
4. BACRED3 = brand likeability      “Is it worth spending time with this brand for you?” \*

##### *Brand consideration: 1 (dislikeable) to 7 (likeable)*

5. BACONS1 = relevance      “How relevant is this brand for you?”
6. BACONS2 = appropriateness      “Do you see this brand as appropriate?”
7. BACONS3 = meaningfulness      “How meaningful is this brand to you?”
8. BACONS4 = consideration set      “How likely is it that you include this brand in the set of possible options of brands to buy?”

##### *Brand superiority: 1 (unfavorable) to 7 (favorable)*

9. BASUP1 = uniqueness      “Do you see this brand as unique and better than other brands in its field of business?” \*
10. BASUP2 = advantages      “Do you think this brand offers advantages over other brands?” \*

#### Item 2b: Brand image

##### *Brand personality and values*

1. BIVAL1 = involved: 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree) \*
2. BIVAL2 = competent: 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree) \*
3. BIVAL3 = entrepreneurial: 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree) \*

##### *User profiles*

4. BIPROF1 = young: 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree)
5. BIPROF2 = active: 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree) \*
6. BIPROF3 = progressive (non-conservative): 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree) \*

#### Functional associations

7. BIFUNC1 = innovative: 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree) \*
8. BIFUNC2 = safe: 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree) \*
9. BIFUNC3 = responsible: 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree) \*

#### Abstract associations (fun, exciting, cool)

10. BIABS1 = fun: 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree)
11. BIABS2 = exciting: 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree)
12. BIABS3 = cool: 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree)

#### Item 2c: Loyalty

##### *Past purchases: 1 (never) to 5 (always)*

1. LOYPP = past purchases “How often have you bought this brand in the past?”

##### *Degree of loyalty: 1 (very weak) to 5 (very strong)*

2. LOYDEG = degree loyalty “How would you characterize your loyalty toward this brand?”

##### *Degree of idealism: 1 (very far from my ideal brand) to 5 (very close to my ideal brand).*

3. LOYIDL = degree idealism “How does this brand compare to your ‘ideal’ brand?”

### 3.3 Fan involvement

#### Item 1: Sport Spectator Identification Scale (SSIS)

1. FANINV1: “How important is it to you that Dutch ice-skating is internationally successful?” \*
2. FANINV2: “How big of a fan of ice-skating do you see yourself as?” \*
3. FANINV3: “Do you follow ice-skating platforms or communities on social media?” \*
4. FANINV4: “How often do you read or watch online news items about ice-skating?” \*
5. FANINV5: “How often do you display material related to ice-skating on your social media pages (e.g. tweets, sharing etc.)?” \*
6. FANINV6: “Is it important to you to follow the performances and developments of ice-skating?” \*
7. FANINV7: “How many matches of ice-skating did you attend or watch on TV/Internet last year?”\*

### 3.4 Control variables

CONGEN = gender: “What is your gender? ”: male (0) / female (1) (dummy scale) \*

CONAGE = age: “What is your age? ”: exact number (ratio scale) \*

CONEDU = level of education: “What is your highest level of (almost) finalized education? ”: primary school, VMBO, HAVO, VWO, MBO, HBO, WO (ratio scale) \*

CONACT = social media use: *“Do you use social media platforms such as twitter, Facebook etc.?”*: never/seldom/sometimes/often/always (5-point scale) \*

CONATT = attitude towards the brand: *“What is your attitude towards the brand TVM?”* \*

Very negative – Very positive (7-point scale)

CONINV = product involvement: *“Please rate the process of choosing a brand of transport insurances on each of the following 7-point scales. Please base your rating on your most recent choice of a brand of transport insurances”* \*

1. CONINV1: Very unimportant decision - very important decision
2. CONINV2: Decision requires little thought - decision requires a lot of thought
3. CONINV3: Little to lose if you choose the wrong brand – a lot to lose if you choose the wrong brand

## **Appendix B - Qualitative interviews**

### **1. Interview questions**

1. How are you activating sports sponsorship in companies?
2. In which ways are you deploying storytelling in the field of sports sponsorship?
3. How are you integrating storytelling in brand communication? Do you have real life examples?
4. Are you experiencing positive results after using storytelling in sports sponsorship? What are direct or indirect results?
5. Do you believe that a sports sponsorship strategy is more successful through the integration of storytelling?
6. To what extent do you think an emotional connection with people is determining the value of a brand? Do you think storytelling has a crucial role, or are there other important aspects?
7. To what extent do you believe that the influence of athletes on social media plays a role in the results of sports sponsorship for companies?
8. Do you have examples of situation wherein storytelling in sports sponsorship has led to better company results, a better brand image, higher loyalty of the target group et cetera?
9. To what extent do you think that a congruent brand-athlete combination (a match between the sponsoring brand and the sponsored athlete) is of importance for a successful sports sponsorship?

## Appendix C - SPSS output

### 1. Preliminary results

#### 1.1 Descriptive statistics control variables

Control variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Gender	157	1	2	1.55	0.499	(-) 0.220	(-) 1.977
Age	156	14	63	27.61	9.926	1.872	2.975
Education	157	2	7	6.146	1.245	(-) 1.838	2.988
Social media use	157	1	5	4.21	0.734	(-) 0.845	1.431
Brand attitude	157	1	7	4.60	1.024	0.291	0.910

#### 1.2 Control variable: education

Education	Frequency	Percentage
VMBO (MAVO)	5	3.2
HAVO	5	3.2
VWO (Ath/Gym)	7	4.4
MBO	10	6.4
HBO	48	30.6
WO	82	52.2
Total	157	100

#### 1.3 Control variable: social media use

Social media use	Frequency	Percentage
Never	1	0.65
Seldom	1	0.65
Sometimes	20	12.7
Often	77	49.1
Always	58	36.9
Total	157	100

#### 1.4 Control variable: brand attitude

Brand attitude	Frequency	Percentage
1 (very negative)	1	0.65
2	1	0.65
3	11	7
4 (neutral)	68	43.3
5	51	32.5
6	16	10.2
7 (very positive)	9	5.7
Total	157	100

#### 1.5 Reliability and item statistics

Reliability Statistics	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Product Involvement	0.768	3

Item Statistics	Mean	Standard Deviation
Product Involvement 1	4.34	0.969
Product Involvement 2	4.45	0.854
Product Involvement 3	4.47	0.969

#### 1.6 Control variable: product involvement

Product involvement	Importance of brand choice		Required thought for making brand decision		Potential loss in case of wrong brand choice	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1 (extremely little)	1	0.65	0	0	1	0.65
2	5	3.2	3	1.9	4	2.6
3	18	11.4	12	7.65	10	6.4
4 (neutral)	65	41.1	70	44.6	70	44.8
5	57	36.1	58	36.9	50	32.05
6	10	6.3	13	8.3	19	12.2
7 (extremely much)	2	1.25	1	0.65	2	1.3
Total	158	100	157	100	156	100

## 2. Factor analysis

### 2.1 Quality checks

Quality checks	Statistic
KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.898
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	4,192.321
Approx. Chi-Square	
df	861
Sig.	0.000

### 2.2 Measure of Sampling Adequacy

Anti-image correlation	EmotionalCC1	EmotionalCC2	EmotionalCC3	EmotionalCC4	EmotionalCC5	EmotionalCC6	EmotionalCC7	EmotionalCC8	EmotionalCC9	EmotionalCC10
EmotionalCC1	.908	-.276	-.102	-.147	.003	-.007	-.277	-.061	.087	-.118
EmotionalCC2	-.276	.937	-.314	.002	-.069	-.054	-.129	.081	-.075	.036
EmotionalCC3	-.102	-.314	.848	-.503	-.151	.222	.072	-.078	.083	.101
EmotionalCC4	-.147	.002	-.503	.881	.086	-.293	.231	-.189	-.142	.054
EmotionalCC5	.003	-.069	-.151	.086	.902	-.435	.017	-.101	.072	-.223
EmotionalCC6	-.007	-.054	.222	-.293	-.435	.861	-.250	-.148	.039	.148
EmotionalCC7	-.277	-.129	.072	.231	.017	-.250	.884	-.069	-.147	.074
EmotionalCC8	-.061	.081	-.078	-.189	-.101	-.148	-.069	.932	-.142	-.384
EmotionalCC9	.087	-.075	.083	-.142	.072	.039	-.147	-.142	.918	-.261
EmotionalCC10	-.118	.036	.101	.054	-.223	.148	.074	-.384	-.261	.907

\*Diagonal = MSA

Anti-image correlation	BrandEquityAtt1	BrandEquityAtt2	BrandEquityAtt3	BrandEquityAtt4	BrandEquityAtt5	BrandEquityAtt6	BrandEquityAtt7	BrandEquityAtt8	BrandEquityAtt9	BrandEquityAtt10	BrandEquityIma1	BrandEquityIma2	BrandEquityIma3
BrandEquityAtt1	.911	.109	-.108	-.184	-.127	.104	-.186	.042	-.113	-.119	-.245	-.013	.180
BrandEquityAtt2	.109	.841	-.120	-.310	.059	-.226	-.066	.163	-.179	.006	-.046	-.181	-.166
BrandEquityAtt3	-.108	-.120	.928	-.195	.112	.125	-.162	-.156	.070	-.022	.003	-.231	-.050
BrandEquityAtt4	-.184	-.310	-.195	.931	-.044	.110	.012	-.066	-.090	.131	-.006	-.009	-.042
BrandEquityAtt5	-.127	.059	.112	-.044	.863	-.362	-.150	-.434	-.003	.128	-.004	.011	.000
BrandEquityAtt6	.104	-.226	.125	.110	-.362	.869	-.311	-.197	-.152	.123	.024	-.023	.173
BrandEquityAtt7	-.186	-.066	-.162	.012	-.150	-.311	.904	-.094	.092	-.162	.025	.203	-.122
BrandEquityAtt8	.042	.163	-.156	-.066	-.434	-.197	-.094	.886	-.060	-.051	.009	-.043	-.001
BrandEquityAtt9	-.113	-.179	.070	-.090	-.003	-.152	.092	-.060	.856	-.706	.162	.008	-.065
BrandEquityAtt10	-.119	.006	-.022	.131	.128	.123	-.162	-.051	-.706	.876	-.124	-.019	-.026
BrandEquityIma1	-.245	-.046	.003	-.006	-.004	.024	.025	.009	.162	-.124	.929	-.200	-.403
BrandEquityIma2	-.013	-.181	-.231	-.009	.011	-.023	.203	-.043	.008	-.019	-.200	.941	.136
BrandEquityIma3	.180	-.166	-.050	-.042	.000	.173	-.122	-.001	-.065	-.026	-.403	.136	.908
BrandEquityIma4	.151	.052	.055	-.039	-.247	.101	.009	-.005	.015	-.199	.096	-.005	-.059
BrandEquityIma5	.028	-.127	.070	.051	-.088	.255	-.040	-.065	-.080	.074	.109	-.182	-.245
BrandEquityIma6	.049	.146	.056	.062	.100	-.216	.001	.036	-.082	.049	-.004	-.153	-.243
BrandEquityIma7	.054	.068	-.002	-.154	.042	-.170	.016	.030	.178	-.180	-.017	-.142	-.134
BrandEquityIma8	-.019	-.224	-.132	-.055	.110	-.070	.267	-.148	.009	-.063	.066	.084	.034
BrandEquityIma9	-.197	.162	-.073	.065	.023	-.192	-.036	.102	.022	.015	-.170	-.227	-.033
BrandEquityIma10	.262	.184	-.213	-.059	.010	.076	-.227	.159	-.224	.120	-.016	.072	.042
BrandEquityIma11	-.119	.105	-.010	-.044	.076	-.122	.205	-.143	-.013	.025	.255	.045	-.206
BrandEquityIma12	-.112	-.066	.100	-.112	.059	.051	-.057	-.058	.155	-.142	-.045	-.101	.174
BrandEquityLoy1	.204	-.033	-.037	.041	-.070	.116	-.152	-.065	-.195	.065	.009	-.115	.155
BrandEquityLoy2	-.010	.034	.097	.013	.058	.034	-.101	-.073	-.061	-.034	-.022	-.060	.126
BrandEquityLoy3	.035	-.060	-.230	.063	-.131	-.018	.095	-.014	-.143	-.048	-.104	.080	-.013

\*Diagonal = MSA

Anti-image correlation	BrandEquityIma4	BrandEquityIma5	BrandEquityIma6	BrandEquityIma7	BrandEquityIma8	BrandEquityIma9	BrandEquityIma10	BrandEquityIma11	BrandEquityIma12	BrandEquityLoy1	BrandEquityLoy2	BrandEquityLoy3
BrandEquityAtt1	.151	.028	.049	.054	-.019	-.197	.262	-.119	-.112	.204	-.010	.035
BrandEquityAtt2	.052	-.127	.146	.068	-.224	.162	.184	.105	-.066	-.033	.034	-.060
BrandEquityAtt3	.055	.070	.056	-.002	-.132	-.073	-.213	-.010	.100	-.037	.097	-.230
BrandEquityAtt4	-.039	.051	.062	-.154	-.055	.065	-.059	-.044	-.112	.041	.013	.063
BrandEquityAtt5	-.247	-.088	.100	.042	.110	.023	.010	.076	.059	-.070	.058	-.131
BrandEquityAtt6	.101	.255	-.216	-.170	-.070	-.192	.076	-.122	.051	.116	.034	-.018
BrandEquityAtt7	.009	-.040	.001	.016	.267	-.036	-.227	.205	-.057	-.152	-.101	.095
BrandEquityAtt8	-.005	-.065	.036	.030	-.148	.102	.159	-.143	-.058	-.065	-.073	-.014
BrandEquityAtt9	.015	-.080	-.082	.178	.009	.022	-.224	-.013	.155	-.195	-.061	-.143
BrandEquityAtt10	-.199	.074	.049	-.180	-.063	.015	.120	.025	-.142	.065	-.034	-.048
BrandEquityIma1	.096	.109	-.004	-.017	.066	-.170	-.016	.255	-.045	.009	-.022	-.104
BrandEquityIma2	-.005	-.182	-.153	-.142	.084	-.227	.072	.045	-.101	-.115	-.060	.080
BrandEquityIma3	-.059	-.245	-.243	-.134	.034	-.033	.042	-.206	.174	.155	.126	-.013
BrandEquityIma4	.861	-.085	4,58E-03	-.035	.049	-.106	.002	-.147	-.029	.072	-.010	.234
BrandEquityIma5	-.085	.925	-.265	-.081	.045	-.191	.101	-.066	-.198	-.044	-.035	.143
BrandEquityIma6	4,58E-03	-.265	.883	-.165	-.043	.091	-.034	-.021	-.017	.072	-.075	-.101
BrandEquityIma7	-.035	-.081	-.165	.941	.015	-.087	-.114	-.107	.014	-.068	-.194	.097
BrandEquityIma8	.049	.045	-.043	.015	.899	-.503	-.031	.084	.029	.078	-.116	.073
BrandEquityIma9	-.106	-.191	.091	-.087	-.503	.914	-.238	.019	.180	-.017	.120	-.110
BrandEquityIma10	.002	.101	-.034	-.114	-.031	-.238	.906	-.115	-.276	.104	-.012	-.034
BrandEquityIma11	-.147	-.066	-.021	-.107	.084	.019	-.115	.846	-.498	.038	.012	-.207
BrandEquityIma12	-.029	-.198	-.017	.014	.029	.180	-.276	-.498	.916	-.048	.066	-.058
BrandEquityLoy1	.072	-.044	.072	-.068	.078	-.017	.104	.038	-.048	.626	-.070	.025
BrandEquityLoy2	-.010	-.035	-.075	-.194	-.116	.120	-.012	.012	.066	-.070	.939	-.300
BrandEquityLoy3	.234	.143	-.101	.097	.073	-.110	-.034	-.207	-.058	.025	-.300	.905

\*Diagonal = MSA

Anti-image correlation	FanInvolvement1	FanInvolvement2	FanInvolvement3	FanInvolvement4	FanInvolvement5	FanInvolvement6	FanInvolvement7
FanInvolvement1	.840	-.497	.164	-.001	.007	-.187	-.043
FanInvolvement2	-.497	.872	-.104	-.116	-.145	-.004	-.310
FanInvolvement3	.164	-.104	.917	-.308	-.155	-.184	-.007
FanInvolvement4	-.001	-.116	-.308	.915	.003	-.498	.011
FanInvolvement5	.007	-.145	-.155	.003	.862	-.149	-.158
FanInvolvement6	-.187	-.004	-.184	-.498	-.149	.886	-.336
FanInvolvement7	-.043	-.310	-.007	.011	-.158	-.336	.907

\* Diagonal = MSA

### 2.3 Communalities

Communalities	Initial	Extraction
EmotionalCC1	1.000	.416
EmotionalCC2	1.000	.515
EmotionalCC3	1.000	.537
EmotionalCC4	1.000	.437
EmotionalCC5	1.000	.496
EmotionalCC6	1.000	.585
EmotionalCC7	1.000	.491
EmotionalCC8	1.000	.515
EmotionalCC9	1.000	.618
EmotionalCC10	1.000	.534
BrandEquityAtt1	1.000	.589
BrandEquityAtt2	1.000	.329
BrandEquityAtt3	1.000	.549
BrandEquityAtt4	1.000	.463
BrandEquityAtt5	1.000	.632
BrandEquityAtt6	1.000	.562
BrandEquityAtt7	1.000	.627
BrandEquityAtt8	1.000	.622
BrandEquityAtt9	1.000	.436
BrandEquityAtt10	1.000	.424
BrandEquityIma1	1.000	.681
BrandEquityIma2	1.000	.657
BrandEquityIma3	1.000	.631
BrandEquityIma4	1.000	.332
BrandEquityIma5	1.000	.567
BrandEquityIma6	1.000	.438
BrandEquityIma7	1.000	.511
BrandEquityIma8	1.000	.616
BrandEquityIma9	1.000	.731
BrandEquityIma10	1.000	.600
BrandEquityIma11	1.000	.386
BrandEquityIma12	1.000	.525
BrandEquityLoy1	1.000	.224
BrandEquityLoy2	1.000	.431
BrandEquityLoy3	1.000	.454
FanInvolvement1	1.000	.570
FanInvolvement2	1.000	.784
FanInvolvement3	1.000	.694
FanInvolvement4	1.000	.808
FanInvolvement5	1.000	.598
FanInvolvement6	1.000	.850
FanInvolvement7	1.000	.798

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

## 2.4 Correlation matrix

### Part I

Correlation	ECC1	ECC2	ECC3	ECC4	ECC5	ECC6	ECC7	ECC8	ECC9	ECC10	BEAtt1	BEAtt2	BEAtt3	BEAtt4	BEAtt5	BEAtt6	BEAtt7	BEAtt8	BEAtt9	BEAtt10	BEIma1	BEIma2	BEIma3
ECC1	1.000	.618	.540	.536	.446	.494	.513	.478	.393	.416	.427	.151	.283	.285	.309	.409	.469	.362	.211	.240	.389	.323	.265
ECC2	.618	1.000	.665	.579	.492	.550	.526	.432	.411	.371	.412	.180	.308	.360	.329	.361	.516	.383	.299	.285	.381	.263	.283
ECC3	.540	.665	1.000	.744	.476	.543	.387	.477	.501	.397	.420	.185	.296	.297	.403	.488	.562	.338	.271	.313	.404	.307	.353
ECC4	.536	.579	.744	1.000	.511	.631	.301	.549	.475	.392	.443	.210	.338	.259	.295	.372	.438	.257	.315	.367	.452	.307	.388
ECC5	.446	.492	.476	.511	1.000	.637	.463	.598	.469	.546	.516	.264	.469	.368	.318	.383	.401	.297	.408	.401	.608	.520	.517
ECC6	.494	.550	.543	.631	.637	1.000	.532	.528	.509	.443	.508	.274	.429	.390	.405	.459	.478	.451	.323	.364	.467	.435	.360
ECC7	.513	.526	.387	.301	.463	.532	1.000	.453	.460	.455	.374	.201	.295	.333	.370	.363	.441	.395	.400	.311	.519	.456	.370
ECC8	.478	.432	.477	.549	.598	.528	.453	1.000	.628	.725	.615	.253	.432	.435	.334	.331	.450	.260	.312	.318	.599	.449	.425
ECC9	.393	.411	.501	.475	.469	.509	.460	.628	1.000	.668	.654	.428	.514	.481	.279	.385	.410	.209	.390	.348	.611	.576	.530
ECC10	.416	.371	.397	.392	.546	.443	.455	.725	.668	1.000	.521	.229	.445	.430	.342	.397	.478	.319	.316	.311	.617	.533	.466
BEAtt1	.427	.412	.420	.443	.516	.508	.374	.615	.654	.521	1.000	.409	.606	.589	.326	.391	.483	.316	.501	.527	.645	.549	.421
BEAtt2	.151	.180	.185	.210	.264	.274	.201	.253	.428	.229	.409	1.000	.542	.555	.123	.282	.241	.158	.486	.434	.396	.500	.385
BEAtt3	.283	.308	.296	.338	.469	.429	.295	.432	.514	.445	.606	.542	1.000	.609	.168	.293	.371	.272	.472	.482	.578	.631	.482
BEAtt4	.285	.360	.297	.259	.368	.390	.333	.435	.481	.430	.589	.555	.609	1.000	.220	.262	.353	.292	.466	.424	.459	.510	.427
BEAtt5	.309	.329	.403	.295	.318	.405	.370	.334	.279	.342	.326	.123	.168	.220	1.000	.710	.637	.740	.274	.228	.199	.195	.109
BEAtt6	.409	.361	.488	.372	.383	.459	.363	.331	.385	.397	.391	.282	.293	.262	.710	1.000	.677	.656	.385	.327	.310	.329	.196
BEAtt7	.469	.516	.562	.438	.401	.478	.441	.450	.410	.478	.483	.241	.371	.353	.637	.677	1.000	.598	.399	.410	.391	.281	.293
BEAtt8	.362	.383	.338	.257	.297	.451	.395	.260	.209	.319	.316	.158	.272	.292	.740	.656	.598	1.000	.366	.350	.191	.266	.125
BEAtt9	.211	.299	.271	.315	.408	.323	.400	.312	.390	.316	.501	.486	.472	.466	.274	.385	.399	.366	1.000	.839	.433	.478	.467
BEAtt10	.240	.285	.313	.367	.401	.364	.311	.318	.348	.311	.527	.434	.482	.424	.228	.327	.410	.350	.839	1.000	.460	.473	.468
BEIma1	.389	.381	.404	.452	.608	.467	.519	.599	.611	.617	.645	.396	.578	.459	.199	.310	.391	.191	.433	.460	1.000	.684	.688
BEIma2	.323	.263	.307	.307	.520	.435	.456	.449	.576	.533	.549	.500	.631	.510	.195	.329	.281	.266	.478	.473	.684	1.000	.566
BEIma3	.265	.283	.353	.388	.517	.360	.370	.425	.530	.466	.421	.385	.482	.427	.109	.196	.293	.125	.467	.468	.688	.566	1.000
BEIma4	.322	.313	.357	.290	.230	.494	.477	.299	.374	.354	.265	.102	.194	.314	.404	.307	.360	.378	.317	.353	.234	.320	.345
BEIma5	.272	.287	.305	.324	.491	.484	.455	.433	.545	.497	.447	.357	.433	.459	.216	.233	.306	.263	.467	.445	.533	.651	.685
BEIma6	.315	.191	.201	.284	.394	.237	.248	.399	.409	.454	.323	.223	.330	.275	.144	.300	.265	.199	.374	.367	.455	.510	.605
BEIma7	.392	.253	.278	.335	.362	.367	.343	.397	.529	.476	.458	.321	.458	.468	.191	.375	.350	.269	.405	.459	.518	.605	.561
BEIma8	.295	.375	.512	.391	.409	.435	.403	.497	.777	.560	.613	.533	.618	.529	.210	.412	.348	.234	.444	.418	.600	.611	.496
BEIma9	.305	.338	.422	.405	.483	.484	.448	.558	.696	.592	.664	.443	.661	.526	.253	.424	.404	.246	.488	.472	.711	.711	.591
BEIma10	.448	.568	.651	.662	.451	.699	.482	.407	.514	.421	.442	.227	.491	.422	.320	.438	.534	.361	.440	.450	.449	.421	.420
BEIma11	.306	.430	.361	.296	.437	.410	.516	.285	.221	.281	.275	.108	.260	.333	.317	.316	.324	.451	.402	.384	.233	.329	.359
BEIma12	.432	.511	.464	.432	.469	.519	.573	.431	.372	.440	.434	.201	.345	.475	.325	.327	.443	.436	.437	.462	.384	.442	.368
BELOY1	.091	.099	.152	-.037	-.019	.158	.185	-.065	.068	-.065	.000	.175	.052	.042	.286	.230	.253	.305	.146	.106	-.083	.079	-.177
BELOY2	.275	.380	.339	.337	.351	.393	.471	.349	.350	.370	.377	.250	.327	.300	.290	.386	.422	.372	.478	.441	.397	.378	.250
BELOY3	.250	.347	.474	.350	.390	.435	.415	.338	.457	.390	.467	.352	.510	.383	.343	.471	.434	.392	.551	.504	.474	.436	.377
FI1	.245	.263	.184	.234	.346	.234	.187	.240	.306	.177	.372	.152	.194	.349	.013	.144	.186	.055	.312	.239	.293	.226	.267
FI2	.283	.303	.205	.229	.305	.305	.381	.169	.276	.203	.284	.027	.125	.195	.025	.184	.192	.079	.242	.163	.333	.212	.217
FI3	.269	.412	.259	.251	.304	.365	.357	.156	.304	.184	.335	.279	.286	.309	.138	.247	.266	.166	.284	.216	.267	.230	.118
FI4	.326	.370	.309	.300	.345	.371	.373	.178	.286	.209	.363	.139	.221	.247	.159	.280	.286	.199	.275	.225	.321	.260	.142
FI5	.262	.357	.273	.255	.188	.378	.313	.148	.288	.231	.287	.199	.179	.206	.230	.324	.330	.284	.171	.187	.200	.150	.020
FI6	.326	.366	.272	.292	.280	.321	.408	.222	.288	.213	.380	.114	.227	.292	.124	.241	.272	.129	.300	.242	.322	.217	.200
FI7	.376	.351	.288	.273	.286	.310	.467	.181	.304	.182	.368	.153	.227	.324	.138	.244	.243	.158	.360	.310	.320	.268	.211

## Part II

BEIma4	BEIma5	BEIma6	BEIma7	BEIma8	BEIma9	BEIma10	BEIma11	BEIma12	BELOY1	BELOY2	BELOY3	F11	F12	F13	F14	F15	F16	F17
.322	.272	.315	.392	.295	.305	.448	.306	.432	.091	.275	.250	.245	.283	.269	.326	.262	.326	.376
.313	.287	.191	.253	.375	.338	.568	.430	.511	.099	.380	.347	.263	.303	.412	.370	.357	.366	.351
.357	.305	.201	.278	.512	.422	.651	.361	.464	.152	.339	.474	.184	.205	.259	.309	.273	.272	.288
.290	.324	.284	.335	.391	.405	.662	.296	.432	-.037	.337	.350	.234	.229	.251	.300	.255	.292	.273
.230	.491	.394	.362	.409	.483	.451	.437	.469	-.019	.351	.390	.346	.305	.304	.345	.188	.280	.286
.494	.484	.237	.367	.435	.484	.699	.410	.519	.158	.393	.435	.234	.305	.365	.371	.378	.321	.310
.477	.455	.248	.343	.403	.448	.482	.516	.573	.185	.471	.415	.187	.381	.357	.373	.313	.408	.467
.299	.433	.399	.397	.497	.558	.407	.285	.431	-.065	.349	.338	.240	.169	.156	.178	.148	.222	.181
.374	.545	.409	.529	.777	.696	.514	.221	.372	.068	.350	.457	.306	.276	.304	.286	.288	.288	.304
.354	.497	.454	.476	.560	.592	.421	.281	.440	-.065	.370	.390	.177	.203	.184	.209	.231	.213	.182
.265	.447	.323	.458	.613	.664	.442	.275	.434	.000	.377	.467	.372	.284	.335	.363	.287	.380	.368
.102	.357	.223	.321	.533	.443	.227	.108	.201	.175	.250	.352	.152	.027	.279	.139	.199	.114	.153
.194	.433	.330	.458	.618	.661	.491	.260	.345	.052	.327	.510	.194	.125	.286	.221	.179	.227	.227
.314	.459	.275	.468	.529	.526	.422	.333	.475	.042	.300	.383	.349	.195	.309	.247	.206	.292	.324
.404	.216	.144	.191	.210	.253	.320	.317	.325	.286	.290	.343	.013	.025	.138	.159	.230	.124	.138
.307	.233	.300	.375	.412	.424	.438	.316	.327	.230	.386	.471	.144	.184	.247	.280	.324	.241	.244
.360	.306	.265	.350	.348	.404	.534	.324	.443	.253	.422	.434	.186	.192	.266	.286	.330	.272	.243
.378	.263	.199	.269	.234	.246	.361	.451	.436	.305	.372	.392	.055	.079	.166	.199	.284	.129	.158
.317	.467	.374	.405	.444	.488	.440	.402	.437	.146	.478	.551	.312	.242	.284	.275	.171	.300	.360
.353	.445	.367	.459	.418	.472	.450	.384	.462	.106	.441	.504	.239	.163	.216	.225	.187	.242	.310
.234	.533	.455	.518	.600	.711	.449	.233	.384	-.083	.397	.474	.293	.333	.267	.321	.200	.322	.320
.320	.651	.510	.605	.611	.711	.421	.329	.442	.079	.378	.436	.226	.212	.230	.260	.150	.217	.268
.345	.685	.605	.561	.496	.591	.420	.359	.368	-.177	.250	.377	.267	.217	.118	.142	.020	.200	.211
1.000	.509	.244	.370	.293	.366	.472	.435	.489	.100	.257	.216	.092	.148	.194	.195	.122	.268	.281
.509	1.000	.591	.596	.485	.597	.463	.463	.550	.016	.345	.349	.299	.274	.221	.225	.152	.294	.303
.244	.591	1.000	.602	.363	.452	.317	.332	.335	-.117	.274	.277	.200	.069	-.022	.029	.061	.097	.061
.370	.596	.602	1.000	.495	.583	.483	.367	.441	.029	.406	.357	.334	.278	.201	.262	.262	.298	.322
.293	.485	.363	.495	1.000	.822	.511	.197	.304	.060	.385	.508	.257	.206	.314	.270	.271	.267	.255
.366	.597	.452	.583	.822	1.000	.555	.253	.353	-.018	.359	.497	.292	.207	.251	.242	.174	.272	.258
.472	.463	.317	.483	.511	.555	1.000	.513	.637	.116	.442	.544	.235	.311	.338	.377	.397	.381	.402
.435	.463	.332	.367	.197	.253	.513	1.000	.767	.092	.384	.458	.111	.191	.257	.250	.199	.205	.247
.489	.550	.335	.441	.304	.353	.637	.767	1.000	.113	.426	.473	.268	.318	.330	.356	.294	.354	.434
.100	.016	-.117	.029	.060	-.018	.116	.092	.113	1.000	.233	.174	-.085	.003	.248	.194	.371	.127	.158
.257	.345	.274	.406	.385	.359	.442	.384	.426	.233	1.000	.587	.214	.389	.486	.435	.442	.435	.412
.216	.349	.277	.357	.508	.497	.544	.458	.473	.174	.587	1.000	.207	.335	.385	.347	.339	.310	.365
.092	.299	.200	.334	.257	.292	.235	.111	.268	-.085	.214	.207	1.000	.727	.423	.557	.379	.635	.622
.148	.274	.069	.278	.206	.207	.311	.191	.318	.003	.389	.335	.727	1.000	.624	.735	.564	.772	.789
.194	.221	-.022	.201	.314	.251	.338	.257	.330	.248	.486	.385	.423	.624	1.000	.778	.638	.738	.653
.195	.225	.029	.262	.270	.242	.377	.250	.356	.194	.435	.347	.557	.735	.778	1.000	.639	.851	.745
.122	.152	.061	.262	.271	.174	.397	.199	.294	.371	.442	.339	.379	.564	.638	.639	1.000	.640	.599
.268	.294	.097	.298	.267	.272	.381	.205	.354	.127	.435	.310	.635	.772	.738	.851	.640	1.000	.837
.281	.303	.061	.322	.255	.258	.402	.247	.434	.158	.412	.365	.622	.789	.653	.745	.599	.837	1.000

## 2.5 Pattern matrix

Pattern matrix	Component		
	1	2	3
EmotionalCC1			.479
EmotionalCC2			.549
EmotionalCC3			.603
EmotionalCC4			.431
EmotionalCC5	.520		
EmotionalCC6			.526
EmotionalCC7			.427
EmotionalCC8	.599		
EmotionalCC9	.711		
EmotionalCC10	.630		
BrandEquityAtt1	.642		
BrandEquityAtt2	.596		
BrandEquityAtt3	.737		
BrandEquityAtt4	.617		
BrandEquityAtt5			.859
BrandEquityAtt6			.708
BrandEquityAtt7			.722
BrandEquityAtt8			.833
BrandEquityAtt9	.530		
BrandEquityAtt10	.545		
BrandEquityIma1	.802		
BrandEquityIma2	.821		
BrandEquityIma3	.849		
BrandEquityIma4			.451
BrandEquityIma5	.726		
BrandEquityIma6	.696		
BrandEquityIma7	.667		
BrandEquityIma8	.752		
BrandEquityIma9	.850		
BrandEquityIma10			.477
BrandEquityIma11			.506
BrandEquityIma12			.466
BrandEquityLoy2			
BrandEquityLoy3			
FanInvolvement1		.719	
FanInvolvement2		.916	
FanInvolvement3		.818	
FanInvolvement4		.893	
FanInvolvement5		.710	
FanInvolvement6		.929	
FanInvolvement7		.885	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

## 2.6 Structure matrix

Structure matrix	Component		
	1	2	3
EmotionalCC1	.421		.601
EmotionalCC2	.419	.440	.673
EmotionalCC3	.471		.704
EmotionalCC4	.514		.585
EmotionalCC5	.653		.496
EmotionalCC6	.560	.401	.693
EmotionalCC7	.506	.452	.609
EmotionalCC8	.681		.478
EmotionalCC9	.776		.415
EmotionalCC10	.702		.464
BrandEquityAtt1	.740	.404	.434
BrandEquityAtt2	.569		
BrandEquityAtt3	.741		
BrandEquityAtt4	.669		
BrandEquityAtt5			.774
BrandEquityAtt6			.743
BrandEquityAtt7	.442		.780
BrandEquityAtt8			.780
BrandEquityAtt9	.630		.408
BrandEquityAtt10	.629		.407
BrandEquityIma1	.820		
BrandEquityIma2	.810		
BrandEquityIma3	.784		
BrandEquityIma4	.406		.540
BrandEquityIma5	.751		
BrandEquityIma6	.640		
BrandEquityIma7	.708		
BrandEquityIma8	.782		
BrandEquityIma9	.855		
BrandEquityIma10	.596	.438	.675
BrandEquityIma11	.404		.595
BrandEquityIma12	.534	.424	.643
BrandEquityLoy2	.445	.516	.517
BrandEquityLoy3	.561	.414	.534
FanInvolvement1		.705	
FanInvolvement2		.877	
FanInvolvement3		.831	
FanInvolvement4		.897	
FanInvolvement5		.742	.417
FanInvolvement6		.921	
FanInvolvement7		.893	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

## 2.7 Correlations matrix per factor

Correlations Brand Equity		BEAtt1	BEAtt2	BEAtt3	BEAtt4	BEAtt9	BEAtt10	BEIma1	BEIma2	BEIma3	BEIma5	BEIma6	BEIma7	BEIma8	BEIma9
BEAtt1	Pearson Correlation	1	.403**	.606**	.573**	.505**	.534**	.614**	.550**	.417**	.403**	.351**	.452**	.603**	.620**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	139	137	138	138	138	138	137	137	136	137	138	136	138	138
BEAtt2	Pearson Correlation	.403**	1	.562**	.527**	.511**	.457**	.332**	.505**	.410**	.294**	.287**	.351**	.437**	.404**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	137	157	157	157	157	157	156	156	155	156	157	155	156	157
BEAtt3	Pearson Correlation	.606**	.562**	1	.591**	.475**	.494**	.535**	.645**	.486**	.383**	.309**	.445**	.592**	.590**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	138	157	158	158	158	158	157	157	156	157	158	156	157	158
BEAtt4	Pearson Correlation	.573**	.527**	.591**	1	.478**	.456**	.472**	.498**	.428**	.418**	.313**	.494**	.530**	.522**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	138	157	158	158	158	158	157	157	156	157	158	156	157	158
BEAtt9	Pearson Correlation	.505**	.511**	.475**	.478**	1	.831**	.359**	.461**	.427**	.392**	.377**	.406**	.367**	.380**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	138	157	158	158	158	158	157	157	156	157	158	156	157	158
BEAtt10	Pearson Correlation	.534**	.457**	.494**	.456**	.831**	1	.397**	.469**	.464**	.378**	.407**	.476**	.365**	.406**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	138	157	158	158	158	158	157	157	156	157	158	156	157	158
BEIma1	Pearson Correlation	.614**	.332**	.535**	.472**	.359**	.397**	1	.674**	.658**	.524**	.435**	.502**	.608**	.697**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	137	156	157	157	157	157	157	156	155	156	157	155	156	157
BEIma2	Pearson Correlation	.550**	.505**	.645**	.498**	.461**	.469**	.674**	1	.582**	.599**	.502**	.607**	.600**	.666**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	137	156	157	157	157	157	156	157	156	156	157	155	156	157
BEIma3	Pearson Correlation	.417**	.410**	.486**	.428**	.427**	.464**	.658**	.582**	1	.682**	.600**	.563**	.455**	.557**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	136	155	156	156	156	156	155	156	156	155	156	154	155	156
BEIma5	Pearson Correlation	.403**	.294**	.383**	.418**	.392**	.378**	.524**	.599**	.682**	1	.552**	.579**	.396**	.500**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	137	156	157	157	157	157	156	156	155	157	157	155	156	157
BEIma6	Pearson Correlation	.351**	.287**	.309**	.313**	.377**	.407**	.435**	.502**	.600**	.552**	1	.637**	.341**	.455**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	138	157	158	158	158	158	157	157	156	157	158	156	157	158
BEIma7	Pearson Correlation	.452**	.351**	.445**	.494**	.406**	.476**	.502**	.607**	.563**	.579**	.637**	1	.493**	.569**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	136	155	156	156	156	156	155	155	154	155	156	156	155	156
BEIma8	Pearson Correlation	.603**	.437**	.592**	.530**	.367**	.365**	.608**	.600**	.455**	.396**	.341**	.493**	1	.807**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	138	156	157	157	157	157	156	156	155	156	157	155	157	157
BEIma9	Pearson Correlation	.620**	.404**	.590**	.522**	.380**	.406**	.697**	.666**	.557**	.500**	.455**	.569**	.807**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	138	157	158	158	158	158	157	157	156	157	158	156	157	158

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Correlations Emotional Customer Connection		EmotionalCC1	EmotionalCC2	EmotionalCC3	EmotionalCC4	EmotionalCC6	EmotionalCC7
EmotionalCC1	Pearson Correlation	1	.602**	.518**	.462**	.435**	.529**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	158	157	157	158	157	158
EmotionalCC2	Pearson Correlation	.602**	1	.688**	.578**	.553**	.539**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	157	157	156	157	156	157
EmotionalCC3	Pearson Correlation	.518**	.688**	1	.750**	.590**	.438**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	157	156	157	157	156	157
EmotionalCC4	Pearson Correlation	.462**	.578**	.750**	1	.668**	.326**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	158	157	157	158	157	158
EmotionalCC6	Pearson Correlation	.435**	.553**	.590**	.668**	1	.551**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	157	156	156	157	157	157
EmotionalCC7	Pearson Correlation	.529**	.539**	.438**	.326**	.551**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	158	157	157	158	157	158

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations Fan Involvement		FanInvolvement1	FanInvolvement2	FanInvolvement3	FanInvolvement4	FanInvolvement5	FanInvolvement6	FanInvolvement7
<b>FanInvolvement1</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.721**	.428**	.563**	.382**	.634**	.641**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	158	158	158	157	157	157	157
<b>FanInvolvement2</b>	Pearson Correlation	.721**	1	.644**	.753**	.574**	.788**	.827**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	158	158	158	157	157	157	157
<b>FanInvolvement3</b>	Pearson Correlation	.428**	.644**	1	.786**	.659**	.736**	.662**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	158	158	158	157	157	157	157
<b>FanInvolvement4</b>	Pearson Correlation	.563**	.753**	.786**	1	.655**	.859**	.759**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	157	157	157	156	156	156	156
<b>FanInvolvement5</b>	Pearson Correlation	.382**	.574**	.659**	.655**	1	.647**	.599**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	157	157	157	156	157	157	156
<b>FanInvolvement6</b>	Pearson Correlation	.634**	.788**	.736**	.859**	.647**	1	.846**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	157	157	157	156	157	157	156
<b>FanInvolvement7</b>	Pearson Correlation	.641**	.827**	.662**	.759**	.599**	.846**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	157	157	157	156	156	156	157

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

## 2.8 Correlation matrix

Correlations		Mean Emotional CC	Mean Brand Equity	Mean Fan Involvement
<b>Mean Emotional CC</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.599**	.461**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
<b>Mean Brand Equity</b>	Pearson Correlation	.599**	1	.372**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
<b>Mean Fan Involvement</b>	Pearson Correlation	.461**	.372**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

## 2.9 Cronbach's Alpha per factor

Reliability Statistics	Cronbach's Alpha		
	Cronbach's Alpha	based on standardized items	N of Items
<b>Emotional Customer Connection</b>	0.879	0.880	6
<b>Brand Equity</b>	0.935	0.935	14
<b>Fan Involvement</b>	0.937	0.936	7

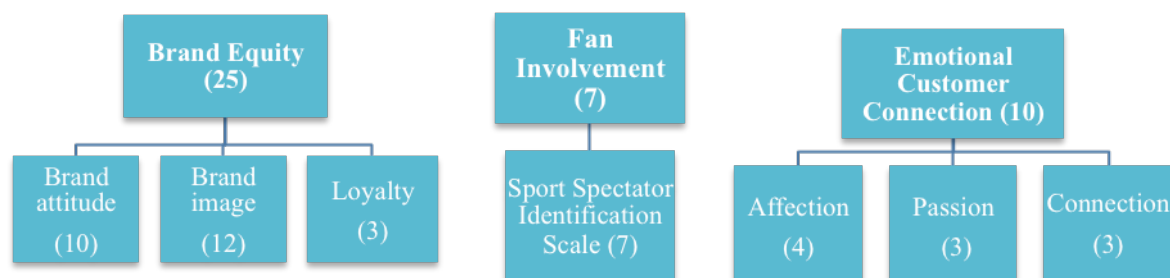
## 2.10 Three higher order constructs and the kept items

### Before factor analysing

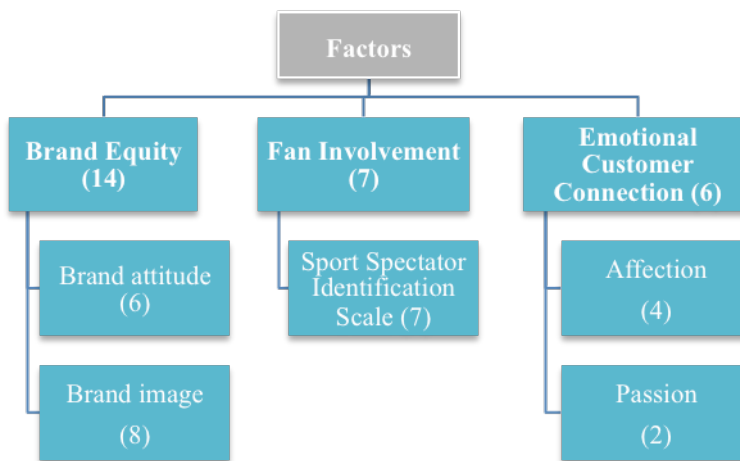
Construct 1: Brand Equity

Construct 2: Fan Involvement

Construct 3: Emotional Customer Connection



### After factor analysing



\* The numbers in the square brackets show the number of questions that are related to the item.

## 3. Main analysis

### 3.1 ANOVA (H1)

ANOVA Mean Brand Equity	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.578	1	.578	.819	.367
Within Groups	90.988	129	.705		
Total	91.566	130			

### 3.2 ANOVA (H2)

ANOVA Mean Brand Equity	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.373	1	3.373	2.572	.111
Within Groups	200.625	153	1.311		
Total	203.997	154			

### 3.3 Predictive power (H3)

Mean Brand Equity	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.597 (a)	.357	.352	.67583

Predictors: (Constant), Mean Emotional CC (a)

Dependent Variable: Mean Brand Equity

### 3.4 ANOVA (H3)

ANOVA Mean Brand Equity	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	31.903	1	31.903	69.850	.000 (b)
Residual	57.549	126	.457		
Total	89.453	127			

Dependent Variable: Mean Brand Equity

Predictors: (Constant), Mean Emotional CC (b)

### 3.5 Coefficients (H3)

Coefficients Mean Brand Equity	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	3.027	.235		12.905	.000		
Mean Emotional CC	.435	.052	.597	8.358	.000	1.000	1.000

Dependent Variable: Mean Brand Equity

### 3.6 Coefficients (control variables)

Coefficients Mean Brand Equity	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	.955	.593		1.612	.110		
Mean Emotional CC	.305	.054	.418	5.646	.000	.641	1.560
Gender	-.161	.107	-.096	-1.501	.136	.868	1.152
Age	-.004	.005	-.045	-.696	.488	.844	1.184
Education	.019	.044	.028	.431	.668	.824	1.213
SocialMediaUse	.122	.070	.107	1.758	.081	.949	1.054
Brand attitude	.308	.064	.377	4.794	.000	.571	1.752
Mean Product Involvement	.214	.074	.196	2.869	.005	.754	1.327

Dependent Variable: Mean Brand Equity

### 3.7 Between-subjects factors (H4)

Between-Subjects Factors		Value Label	N
Congruent	0	Incongruent	62
	1	Congruent	69
Storytelling	0	Non-storytelling	59
	1	Storytelling	72

### 3.8 Tests of between-subjects effects (H4)

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	1.897 (a)	3	.632	.896	.445
Intercept	3.108.363	1	3.108.363	4,402.463	.000
Congruent * Storytelling	.065	1	.065	.092	.763
Congruent	1.192	1	1.192	1.688	.196
Storytelling	.457	1	.457	.647	.423
Error	89.668	127	.706		
Total	3.265.219	131			
Corrected Total	91.566	130			

Dependent Variable: Mean Brand Equity

R Squared = .021 (Adjusted R Squared = -.002) (a)

### 3.9 Post-hoc test (H4)

Multiple Comparisons - Dependent Variable: Mean Brand Equity							
	(I) CongruentXStorytelling	(J) CongruentXStorytelling	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
LSD	Storytelling Congruent	Non-storytelling Congruent	.1639	.20493	.425	-.2417	.5694
		Storytelling Incongruent	.2371	.19929	.236	-.1573	.6314
		Non-storytelling Incongruent	.3113	.20294	.128	-.0903	.7129
	Non-storytelling Congruent	Storytelling Congruent	-.1639	.20493	.425	-.5694	.2417
		Storytelling Incongruent	.0732	.21543	.735	-.3531	.4995
		Non-storytelling Incongruent	.1475	.21882	.502	-.2855	.5805
	Storytelling Incongruent	Storytelling Congruent	-.2371	.19929	.236	-.6314	.1573
		Non-storytelling Congruent	-.0732	.21543	.735	-.4995	.3531
		Non-storytelling Incongruent	.0743	.21354	.729	-.3483	.4968
	Non-storytelling Incongruent	Storytelling Congruent	-.3113	.20294	.128	-.7129	.0903
		Non-storytelling Congruent	-.1475	.21882	.502	-.5805	.2855
		Storytelling Incongruent	-.0743	.21354	.729	-.4968	.3483

Based on observed means.

The error term is Mean Square(Error) = .706.

### 3.10 Parameter estimates (H4)

Parameter Estimates	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.	Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Intercept	4.776	.153	31.133	.000	4.473	5.080
[CongruentXStorytelling=1.00]	.311	.203	1.534	.128	-.090	.713
[CongruentXStorytelling=2.00]	.147	.219	.674	.502	-.286	.580
[CongruentXStorytelling=3.00]	.074	.214	.348	.729	-.348	.497
[CongruentXStorytelling=4.00]	0 (a)	.	.	.	.	.

Dependent Variable: Mean Brand Equity

This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant (a)

### 3.11 Between-subjects factors (H5)

Between-Subjects Factors		Value Label	N
Storytelling	0	Non-storytelling	57
	1	Storytelling	71
High Faninvolvement	0	Low fan involvement	60
	1	High fan involvement	68

### 3.12 Tests of between-subjects effects (H5)

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	10.556 (a)	3	3.519	5.409	.002
Intercept	3.012.718	1	3.012.718	4,631.037	.000
Storytelling	.672	1	.672	1.033	.311
HighFaninvolvement	9.984	1	9.984	15.346	.000
Storytelling * HighFaninvolvement	.379	1	.379	.583	.447
Error	80.668	124	.651		
Total	3.189.194	128			
Corrected Total	91.224	127			

Dependent Variable: Mean Brand Equity

R Squared = .116 (Adjusted R Squared = .094) (a)

### 3.13 Post-hoc test (H5)

Multiple Comparisons - Dependent Variable: Mean Brand Equity							
	(I) FaninvolvementDichotomous	(J) FaninvolvementDichotomous	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
LSD	Nonstorytelling High faninvolvement	Nonstorytelling Low Faninvolvement	.6732*	.21449	.002	.2486	10.977
		Storytelling Low faninvolvement	.4172*	.20030	.039	.0207	.8136
		Storytelling High faninvolvement	-.0364	.19639	.853	-.4251	.3523
	Nonstorytelling Low Faninvolvement	Nonstorytelling High faninvolvement	-.6732*	.21449	.002	-10.977	-.2486
		Storytelling Low faninvolvement	-.2560	.21013	.225	-.6719	.1599
		Storytelling High faninvolvement	-.7095*	.20641	.001	-11.181	-.3010
	Storytelling Low faninvolvement	Nonstorytelling High faninvolvement	-.4172*	.20030	.039	-.8136	-.0207
		Nonstorytelling Low Faninvolvement	.2560	.21013	.225	-.1599	.6719
		Storytelling High faninvolvement	-.4536*	.19161	.019	-.8328	-.0743
	Storytelling High faninvolvement	Nonstorytelling High faninvolvement	.0364	.19639	.853	-.3523	.4251
		Nonstorytelling Low Faninvolvement	.7095*	.20641	.001	.3010	11.181
		Storytelling Low faninvolvement	.4536*	.19161	.019	.0743	.8328

Based on observed means.

The error term is Mean Square(Error) = .651.

### 3.14 Parameter estimates (H5)

Parameter estimates	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Intercept	5.193	.133	39.164	.000	4.931	5.456
[FaninvolvementDichotomous=1.00]	-.036	.196	-.185	.853	-.425	.352
[FaninvolvementDichotomous=2.00]	-.710	.206	-3.438	.001	-1.118	-.301
[FaninvolvementDichotomous=3.00]	-.454	.192	-2.367	.019	-.833	-.074
[FaninvolvementDichotomous=4.00]	0 (a)	.	.	.	.	.

Dependent Variable: Mean Brand Equity

This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant (a)

### 3.15 Tests of between-subjects effects (3-way ANOVA)

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
Corrected Model	14.055a	7	2.008	3.122	.005	
Intercept	2.969.721	1	2.969.721	4,617.945	.000	
Congruent	1.338	1	1.338	2.081	.152	
Storytelling	.431	1	.431	.670	.415	
Fan Involvement	9.656	1	9.656	15.015	.000	
Storytelling * Fan Involvement	.556	1	.556	.864	.354	
Congruency * Fan Involvement	1.920	1	1.920	2.985	.087	
Congruency * Storytelling	.001	1	.001	.001	.976	
Congruency * Storytelling * Fan Involvement	.020	1	.020	.032	.859	
Error	77.170	120	.643			
Total	3.189.194	128				
Corrected Total	91.224	127				

Dependent Variable: Mean Brand Equity

R Squared = .154 (Adjusted R Squared = .105) (a)

### 3.16 Parameter estimates (3-way ANOVA)

Parameter Estimates	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Intercept	5.378	.175	30.730	.000	5.031	5.724
[Congruency=0]	-.427	.266	-1.603	.111	-.954	.100
[Congruency=1]	0a	.	.	.	.	.
[Storytelling=0]	.046	.277	.166	.868	-.502	.594
[Storytelling=1]	0a	.	.	.	.	.
[MeanFanInvolvement=0]	-.647	.258	-2.513	.013	-1.157	-.137
[MeanFanInvolvement=1]	0a	.	.	.	.	.
[Storytelling=0] * [MeanFanInvolvement=0]	-.319	.394	-.810	.420	-1.099	.461
[Storytelling=0] * [MeanFanInvolvement=1]	0a	.	.	.	.	.
[Storytelling=1] * [MeanFanInvolvement=0]	0a	.	.	.	.	.
[Storytelling=1] * [MeanFanInvolvement=1]	0a	.	.	.	.	.
[Congruency=0] * [MeanFanInvolvement=0]	.446	.383	1.166	.246	-.312	1.205
[Congruency=0] * [MeanFanInvolvement=1]	0a	.	.	.	.	.
[Congruency=1] * [MeanFanInvolvement=0]	0a	.	.	.	.	.
[Congruency=1] * [MeanFanInvolvement=1]	0a	.	.	.	.	.
[Congruency=0] * [Storytelling=0]	-.060	.393	-.152	.879	-.838	.719
[Congruency=0] * [Storytelling=1]	0a	.	.	.	.	.
[Congruency=1] * [Storytelling=0]	0a	.	.	.	.	.
[Congruency=1] * [Storytelling=1]	0a	.	.	.	.	.
[Congruency=0] * [Storytelling=0] * [MeanFanInvolvement=0]	.102	.576	.178	.859	-1.038	1.243
[Congruency=0] * [Storytelling=0] * [MeanFanInvolvement=1]	0a	.	.	.	.	.
[Congruency=0] * [Storytelling=1] * [MeanFanInvolvement=0]	0a	.	.	.	.	.
[Congruency=0] * [Storytelling=1] * [MeanFanInvolvement=1]	0a	.	.	.	.	.
[Congruency=1] * [Storytelling=0] * [MeanFanInvolvement=0]	0a	.	.	.	.	.
[Congruency=1] * [Storytelling=0] * [MeanFanInvolvement=1]	0a	.	.	.	.	.
[Congruency=1] * [Storytelling=1] * [MeanFanInvolvement=0]	0a	.	.	.	.	.
[Congruency=1] * [Storytelling=1] * [MeanFanInvolvement=1]	0a	.	.	.	.	.

Dependent Variable: Mean Brand Equity

This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant (a)

## **Appendix D – Interview report**

### **1. Background details of Triple Double and the interviewee**

Triple Double is a leading Dutch sport marketing organization that develops marketing concepts with a focus on sports for business companies. Since its start in 1997, the company still believes that sport offers an ultimate platform and associative theme to reach communicative and commercial goals. With a comprehensive knowledge base and experience in the field of marketing, (digital) media, sponsoring, management and commerce, they strive to connect brands and fans. By realizing this, their business is based on a complete approach, from strategy to execution and activation. Over the years Triple Double has successfully matured as a well-known brand in the field of sport marketing. The interviewee Koen van Haastert is a senior sport marketer at Triple Double since 2009. In his function, he is advisor for several brands such as NOC\*NSF, Randstad, Ernst & Young and Unibet. He is responsible for the strategical proposition development and brand campaigns of these companies. He is known for his all round sport marketing skills with a focus on strategy and result oriented sponsor activations.

### **2. Summary of the interview**

#### *2.1 Activating sports sponsorship in companies through storytelling*

Triple Double activates sport sponsoring in different manners, dependent on the brand, the company goals and the target group. For each case, they try to develop one concept, the story, which serves in fact as the umbrella under which they place all activities. Koen explains that they believe that storytelling is an essential part of sponsorship. Sponsorship is about telling a good and credible story, wherein a brand is bounded to a sport in a logical, relevant, unique and amusing manner. This means that the company is always using storytelling to activate sports sponsorship. Koen repeatedly emphasizes the role of social media when using storytelling. Social media is an important channel to communicate with the target group, especially in sports sponsorship. This is due to the fact that social media is fully integrated in sport. For instance, many athletes communicate with their fans via social media. This offers a great opportunity for brands. To activate sports sponsorship, Triple Double tries to tell the story of the sponsorship by the sport and the athletes. Hereby it is of great importance that this is done in a natural and believable way.

## *2.2 Integrating storytelling in brand communication*

Koen explains that their core business is based on integrating storytelling in brand communication. One of their customers, accountancy and consultancy organization Ernst & Young, is a partner of the Dutch Olympic Committee NOC\*NSF, which connected them to sports for many years now. They believe that they could tell their story via sports. In sports, they are claiming the domain coaching, because this is synonymous for the core business of Ernst & Young: trying to make companies perform better as a coach. The company supports all Dutch top coaches, as they believe in the power of good coaching, out of their own vision and right to exist. Through the sponsorship of and activation around coaches, Ernst & Young is able to explain its story as coach of the business field optimally via the metaphor of sport.

## *2.3 Results of storytelling in sports sponsorship*

With regard to results of storytelling in sports sponsorship, Koen cites that it is important to ascertain that sponsorship is built on a suitable story. This ensures the credibility of the story, which is positively reflected on the brand. For instance, Ernst & Young is seen as the coach of the business industry by the market due to its sponsorship over years. Triple Double is highly convinced that a sports sponsorship strategy is more successful when storytelling is integrated. They truly believe that sports sponsorship is an inherent part of storytelling.

## *2.4 The role of emotional customer connection*

When considering the emotional connection with people, its importance is acknowledged. Emotional connections with customers are determining the value of a brand, as brands exist by the relationship that is created with their customers. Naturally, many other aspects are partly determining whether people buy a certain brand or not, including price, availability and need. But, the story that is behind the brand, determines the real power of a brand.

## *2.5 The role of the influence of athletes on social media*

Athletes have a substantive influence on people. By using social media, this influence is even easier and quicker achieving a bigger group of people. Triple Double often deploys athletes in activations, whereby social media has a dominant role. When reflecting on past experiences, the deployment of athletes increases the success of a sponsorship of a brand. Unfortunately, it is still difficult to show that storytelling concretely leads to better company results, as there are no concrete measurements available. However, more and more cases of brands with good stories become visible showing its positive results, such as Red Bull and Procter & Gamble. These successful brands show positive results after implementing a sponsorship campaign

that is based on storytelling, such as a better brand image, higher loyalty and even increasing financial results. Thus, it could be assumed that the influence of athletes on social media plays an important role in the results of sports sponsorship for companies.

### *2.6 The importance of congruent brand-athlete combinations*

Even more important is the choice for the athlete that is sponsored by the company. The first step for brands when deciding to step into sports sponsorship is the careful consideration of the brand-athlete combination. It is essential that the brand and the athlete have matching values or characteristics, because this determines the credibility, naturalness and trust as perceived by customers. These are all aspects that contribute to the power of a positive brand communication. There are several examples of cases with incongruent sponsorship combinations that resulted in negativity due to its lack of credibility. For instance, a butcher that sponsored a team of female gymnasts saw his sponsorship ending up in a real fiasco, as people perceived the combination as implausible. In this way people perceive brand communications as kind of delusive, which harms the brand image.

### *2.7 The importance of fan involvement towards a sport*

According to the degree of involvement to the sport, Koen thinks that highly involved fans might play a beneficial role, but that it is not necessarily needed for a successful sponsorship. Ideally a target group has ‘something’ with the sport, but that is not always the case. The aim is to integrate sport in as many as possible elements of the operational management of a company in a relevant way. This creates an opportunity for sport to significantly contribute to company results and the relationship with customers.