
Image management in sport organisations: the creation of value

Image
management in
sport

387

Alain Ferrand and Monique Pages
Université Claude Bernard, Lyon, France

Keywords *Brand, Consumer behaviour, Image, Sponsorship, Sport, Value*

Abstract *Aimed at the managers of sports organisations and sponsorship relationships who are seeking a useful information system to assist in their marketing decisions. Sets out to analyse how image can create value for sports organisations. It can contribute to the enhancement of their "brand equity", and bring about changes in consumer behaviour. The first section of this paper seeks to promote the understanding of image as a concept useful for such managers. The second section illustrates, through case studies, how image can serve as the basis for decisions and action within the domain of sports management. We suggest some specific principles, tools and methods which can be applied to this overall process.*

1. Introduction

Sports organisations, in their function as social phenomena, project an image to their environment. This image derives from a variety of facets: the connotations of the sport, the personalities of its leading exponents, its system of awards, etc. Sport encompasses a rich range of values and symbols. All these aspects can be expressed in image. The concept of image within the framework of marketing has been ascribed many meanings. It has been defined as:

- (1) general characteristics, feelings or impressions (Jain and Etgar, 1976);
- (2) brand personality (Arons, 1961; Martineau, 1958);
- (3) linkages between characteristics and feelings/emotions (Oxenfeldt, 1974);
- (4) a set of associations generally organised in a significant way (Aaker, 1991); and
- (5) the set of beliefs consumers hold about a particular object (Kolter and Armstrong, 1996).

As Campbell (1963) noted, these varying definitions are simply a reflection of a proliferation of authors and not a case of numerous phenomena. One problem with the above definitions is that they focus on the individual and his/her perceptions. In this paper, we take the view that the image of a sporting object or phenomenon is a social representation which shifts the focus from individuals to collectives.

Moscovici (1961) defined a social representation as an image construct and as a language, because it symbolises behaviour and social situations. Such representations represent a specific type of knowledge. Furthermore, they

contribute to elaborate social behaviour and to certain types of communication between people. According to Doise (1985), these psychological constructs can act as the basis for decision-making in connection with specific social positions. They determine the symbolic process intervening in a social relationship. Such social representations are specific to particular groups. They allow each group member to be in touch with the world and other members of this community, to make sense of their experience and their own reality. The categorisation process helps an individual to identify with particular groups on the basis of gender, geographical area, sport preference or event interest. According to Tajfel and Turner (1986), it is essential for an individual to achieve or to maintain a positive social identity as a member of his own group.

Sports organisations are becoming more and more preoccupied with their image. There is increasing recognition that image has the power to influence the behaviour of all those involved with a sporting organisation: its members, event spectators, journalists, sponsors, etc. Indeed, some consider that image has the potential to impact on consumer behaviour and thus to lead to change in brand equity. According to Aaker (1991, p. 15) "brand equity is a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to that firm's customers". It can be effective to consider a sports organisation or event, etc. as a brand. Some sports organisations are already running competitive brand marketing strategies. For example, the IOC's communication campaign to reinforce the position of the Olympics emphasises values such as friendship, unity, solidarity, universality, unity. Indeed it is these values which Olympic sponsors seek to portray in their sponsorship campaign. Thus the IOC provides a good example of the efficiency of integrated marketing communication based on a powerful sporting event supporting a world-wide identity based on universal values (Payne, 1996). In this way, the key issues from a practitioner's point of view are the need to quantify brand equity and to identify brand image elements that are likely to impact changes in consumer behaviour and thus lead to changes in brand equity.

It is not easy to manage this brand image process for a sport organisation in today's environment. According to Payne (1996), the marketing director of the International Olympic Committee, there are four keys to the successful management of sports organisations: viz. total control, integration of all the different programs together, a positive relationship with the business community partners and professionalism. Successful sports management must also take account of pressures and barriers, both internal and external as sports organisations are operating in an increasingly complex and competitive environment. They have common goals: to create loyalty amongst members, to increase the number of their spectators and to manage their sponsorship relationships.

In this paper we will focus on the operational aspects of image management as part of marketing policy within sports organisations using three case studies chosen to illustrate the breadth of its potential. The first case study uses the

example of a sports team with existing strong levels of support but which nevertheless seeks to deepen the level of commitment amongst less intensely loyal supporters. This study was undertaken with Olympique Lyonnais, a participant in the French national football championship. Olympique sought practical means to enhance its communication strategy in order to increase the proportion of its supporters choosing to become season-ticket holders. The second case study focuses on the use of image in differentiating the positioning of teams which share a geographic base but otherwise compete strongly. In this instance the two football clubs of Turin, Torino and Juventus, are used in illustration. In the third case, image analysis is applied to the process of determining an appropriate match or “marriage” between a sponsor and a sporting event. We present data and propose a method derived from the ATP Lyon Grand Prix tennis tournament and a potential sponsor.

2. Image creates value for sport organisations

Aaker (1991) considered that the representations which build an image can include perception which may or may not reflect the objective truth. Image as such suggests a form of current social knowledge shared by a group of people. Such shared social knowledge aims at a concrete management and mastery of the physical and socio-cultural environment. Image can thus direct both behaviour and communication activity as it works towards the establishment of a common vision of reality in a given social or cultural group. This understanding of image lends itself to the symbolic fields specific to a sport, a club or an event. We can conclude from these latter definitions of image that a sporting organisation, as a social object or phenomenon embodies a stock of image capital.

Aaker (1991) has analysed the contribution of image to the value of brand equity and we suggest that this framework can be applied to sporting organisations. Image can assist in the process of sifting and assessing information because it synthesises a set of characteristics. It can help an individual interested in sport to extract information from a vast array of available services and to make sense of it. For example, a deeply involved supporter will keep himself regularly and accurately informed by buying specialist magazines, whereas an uninvolved person will not even see the billboards advertising an event.

Image differentiates and positions the sports organisation. It can thus assist in decision-making in the face of a plethora of alternatives in the sports services offering. If a teenager decides to practise a sport, how will he choose between football, basketball or volley ball? Image can be influential in this decision. It can create a positive feeling for a sport or a club. This symbolic and socio-emotional dimension can also offer extension and partnership opportunities within the marketing domain. Some football clubs such as Manchester United, Juventus and FC Barcelona reflect images which can sustain support of a broader nature. The images of each of these clubs support merchandising activities which reinforce their communication and are also extremely

profitable. Manchester United, for example, in its latest financial year, to July 1997, received revenue from merchandising which was almost as great as that from gate receipts (£28 million compared with £30 million). Image can also be used to identify profitable sponsorship opportunities. In this process of identification of sponsorship opportunities, the sponsor attempts to align itself to one or more of its products with the image dimensions of the sport organisation. The sports organisation, in turn, has to assess the value of such a “marriage” with a prospective commercial partner. In the case of Manchester United its revenue from sponsorship and royalties was more than £11 million in the year to July 1997, demonstrating the potential value of image to the sponsorship element of marketing strategy.

3. Can club image influence fan behaviour?

In this section, we shall outline the contribution of the concept of image to the understanding of consumer behaviour in relation to sporting events by drawing on the example of the first of our case studies. Firstly we specify the methodology which can be used to make a reliable and valid image measurement tool and then use this to test our general hypothesis. The case involves Olympique Lyonnais, a professional football team, which has the second largest attendance in the French Championship with an average of 25,000 spectators. However, 56 per cent of these spectators attended less than one third of matches and only 32 per cent were season-ticket holders. The issue for this club therefore was to enhance spectator loyalty and thus to increase match attendance by encouraging a greater number of spectators to become season-ticket holders. In order to develop a club marketing strategy with this objective, it was necessary to understand the way in which these consumer/spectators make their decisions. Our hypothesis was that the intention to obtain a season-ticket could be explained by the image held of the Olympique Lyonnais (OL) football team. In order to test this hypothesis, a survey was carried out amongst spectators. Survey data was then measured using a methodology and instrument designed to capture the dimensions of perceived image, which, as a social representation, is a non-observable, psychological process. The main aspects of construction methodology for this tool are diagrammatically fitted in the operational framework presented in Table I.

Using as a reference the approach of Aaker and Day (1990) we defined 40 connotations which were put to 153 randomly selected spectators during one match. Using a five step smiling-faces scale these spectators were invited to indicate to what extent they agreed or disagreed with each item. We then carried out a principal component analysis, by using the Varimax procedure, to identify the different dimensions of the OL image present and to choose the variables of measurement that most correlated with these. The results are shown in Table II. We thus obtained six dimensions non-correlated amongst themselves.

In the second step and in order to test whether the perceived image of OL is explained by the intention to buy a season-ticket, a discriminant analysis was

Stage	Method	Sample
Collecting the associations made by the Olympique Lyonnais supporters about the club	Free association test. Each person has to answer to the following question: "For you Olympique Lyonnais is?"	Convenience sample $n = 50$
(1) Intensity of appreciation of the link between the club and each characteristic of the set	(1) Drawing up items by evaluation of 40 characteristic with a five level smiling face scale	153 spectators randomly selected from a single match
(2) Identification of the dimensions which are structuring the social representation field and selection of the most pertinent items	(2) Principal components analysis and Cronbach's α	
Validity and reliability assessment of the image measurement tool	Principal components analysis on the whole of the answers from the survey stage	989 non-season-ticket-holders, randomly selected during two matches
Survey and hypothesis test	Discriminant analysis	3 season ticket holding intention groups: G1: intending to ($n = 466$) G2: undecided ($n = 313$) G3: not intending to ($n = 208$)

Table I.
The different stages used for the survey

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6
War	0.85					
Revenge	0.78					
To confront	0.43					
Together		0.83				
Fun		0.75				
Emotion		0.64				
Uncertainty			0.88			
Unknown			0.48			
Privilege				0.86		
Reward				0.85		
Humour					0.85	
Laugh					0.84	
To fight						0.83
Power						0.65
Eigenvalue	2.92	2.28	1.33	1.21	1.04	0.87
Cumulative percentage	2.93	37.25	46.72	55.38	62.79	68.97
Chronbach alpha	0.68	0.66	0.37	0.53	0.47	0.45
Factors interpretation	Struggle	To live it up	Uncertain	Social positioning	Entertainment	Wrestling

Table II.
Principal components analysis (Varimax procedure) with the selected items relative to the OL image

carried out. To be meaningful for the purpose of analysis and interpretation the discriminant function estimated must be statistically significant. In Systat an approximate *F* statistic is calculated. Its value is highly significant beyond the 0.05 level (Table III). We can reject the nil hypothesis and thus consider that the OL image profile does explain the intention to subscribe. In this case the discriminant analysis calculates two canonical discriminant functions. Only the first is significant beyond the 0.05 level (Table IV).

We can interpret this first canonical discriminant function from its correlation with the measurement variables (Figure 1). This function is primarily associated with the qualities: “together” ($r = 0.54$), “privilege” ($r = 0.50$), “reward” ($r = 0.48$), “fun” ($r = 0.48$), “emotion” ($r = 0.38$) in opposition

Table III.
Multivariate statistics test

Wilks' Lambda	<i>F</i> -statistic	df	Probability
0.84	6.397	28,1942	0.00

Table IV.
Test of residual roots

Roots 1 through 2 Chi-square statistic	Canonical correlation			df		Probability	
172.484	0.38			28		0.00	
Roots 2 through 2 Chi-square statistic	Canonical correlation			df		Probability	
19.202	0.14			13		0.12	

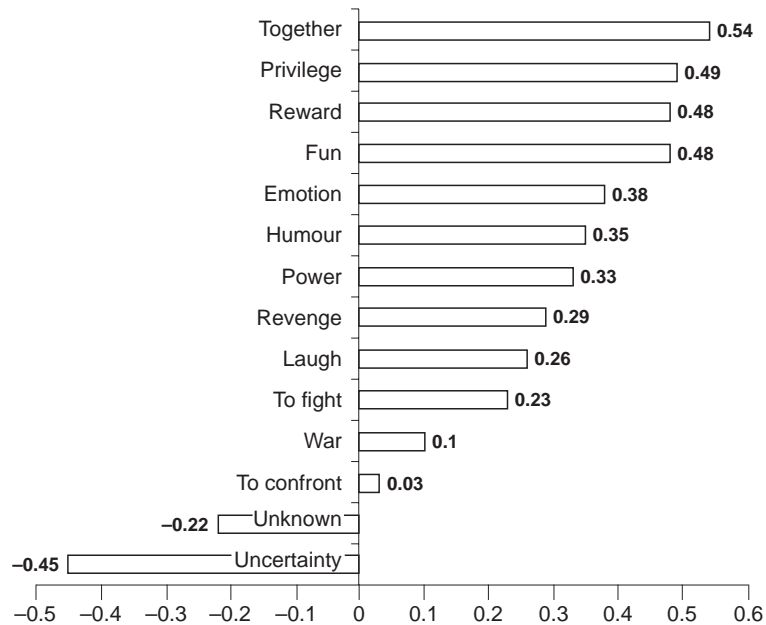


Figure 1.
Correlation coefficients between the measurement variables of OL club image and the first discrimination function

with “uncertainty” ($r = -0.45$). These measurement variables represent the strongest determinants of differentiation between the groups. They are connected with the second and the fourth function resulting from the principal components analysis. They express two dimensions: to “live it up” and social position.

The empirical results of this research showed that the image held of Olympique Lyonnais explains the propensity to acquire a season-ticket. The results also suggested some practical alternatives for a marketing communication strategy for the club in its pursuit of greater spectator loyalty. Its advertising should concentrate on symbolism linked to the communal pleasure associated with football fans. In June 1995 an advertising campaign (posters, newspaper and radio) was carried out. Each message was focused on the words which were identified with images held by the season-ticket owning groups: “together”, “privilege”, “reward”, “fun” ($r = 0.48$), “emotion”. A publicity slogan was adopted: “Olympique Lyonnais – Live the passion”.

Although the results of the multivariate tests are highly significant, the discriminant functions throw light on only a relatively small part of the inter-group variance. This leaves us to assume that there are other aspects to be taken into consideration such as level of involvement and the financial advantages of season-ticket holding which should be included in a more complex model.

4. Club image as a support to differentiation and positioning

The second case study focuses on the use of image as a means of differentiating between sporting organisations with some common characteristics. The example is that of Turin and its two major football teams, Torino and Juventus. Until the 1994/1995 season both teams were playing in the premier championship. For the 1995/1996 season, Torino was relegated to second division. Juventus sought to capitalise on this new situation to increase its support within Turin. The club therefore planned to adapt its marketing plan using better targeting and positioning based on its perception of its new competitive advantage. As an initial step in this process of refining the positioning of Juventus, a survey was carried out among the fans of these two clubs. One of its objectives was to determine the image positioning of both clubs. The same method as that described in Table I was again employed with a convenience sample for each club. The results of the two principal components analyses are presented in Tables V and VI. Using the Catell test the first four factors are highlighted.

These results demonstrate that these clubs have two distinctly different images. An interpretation of the image dimensions shows that Juventus is perceived by its fans to be a prestigious international team (factor 1), socially selective (factor 2), well-managed (factor 3) and acting with style (factor 4). In contrast, Torino is perceived by its fans to be a fighting and competitive team (factor 1), young and friendly (factor 2), collectively organised (factor 3) and passionate (factor 4). From this view point we can conclude that each club has a

Table V.
PCA Juventus results
(Varimax procedure)
(218 people living in
Turin and declaring to
be Juventus fans)

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Prestigious	0.76			
International	0.74			
Ambitious	0.74			
Elitist		0.86		
Distinguished		0.86		
Efficient			0.84	
Well managed			0.55	
Powerful			0.55	
Individual				0.86
Well-trained				0.48
Eigenvalues	4.23	2.08	1.61	1.34
Cumulative percentage	0.23	0.35	0.44	0.51
Factors interpretation	International prestige	Social selectivity	Well-managed	Personal and well-trained

Table VI.
PCA Torino results
(Varimax procedure)
(252 people living in
Turin and declaring to
be Torino fans)

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Firm-handed	0.83			
Vigorous	0.82			
Fighting	0.82			
Competitive	0.77			
Strong	0.75			
Likeable		0.77		
Young		0.74		
Organised			0.85	
Collective			0.84	
Passionate				0.82
Ardent				0.72
Eigenvalues	4.63	2.42	1.82	1.22
Cumulative percentage	0.26	0.39	0.49	0.56
Factors interpretation	Fighting spirit	Friendly	Collective organisation	Passionate

specific image and that it would be difficult for Juventus to attract Torino supporters. In attempting to win over Torino supporters it would be necessary to focus on a dimension which might be considered neutral such as the international prestige of Juventus. Nevertheless an alternative conclusion of this image analysis would be that each club offers distinct sponsorship opportunities. Juventus should obviously align itself with a company or product which shares its two specific image dimensions: that is, a prestigious international company which is seen to be socially selective. A more complete procedure for analysis of the prospects of a “sponsorship marriage” is presented in the next section.

5. Image as a tool for identification of sponsorship opportunities

The third case study seeks to illustrate the application of image measurement and management to sponsorship relationships in the sporting domain. The example used in this instance is that of the ATP Lyon Tennis Grand Prix (LTGP) and a potential sponsorship partner[1]. Sponsorship derives its energy from the emotional involvement in an event, a team or a sports star. To be effective sponsorship management has to be integrated into the marketing plan of the sponsoring company (Irwin and Asimakopoulos, 1992; Meenaghan, 1991a). A lack of coherence in sponsoring management can provoke a failure to achieve the stated objectives (Gilbert, 1988; Meenaghan, 1991b; Thwaites, 1993). Otker (1988, p. 82) in describing the conditions of an effective sponsorship relationship, outlines the perfect marriage as being a good match between “the image which the company wants to promote and the image of the sponsored body”. He observed that success is more likely when there exists already a real and logical link between the sponsor and the sport or the event. So before making his or her decision the sponsor must make an assessment of the compatibility between the images of his company or product and the sponsored event, and of how an association with the sponsored event would enhance the image of the company. In the next step the company has to assess how the attributes of a sponsored event or group would help the company reinforce its image or move it from its current state towards the image desired. The last step is to control the result of this action (Figure 2).

In order to undertake the two first steps, it is necessary to analyse the relationship between the social representations of the two respective images and to employ a measurement tool which can reflect both the linked and the specific dimensions of these images[2]. This method allows us to identify the different dimensions supporting the representation framework relative to this association. This is illustrated in Figure 3. To simplify this illustration only one dimension is presented in each category.

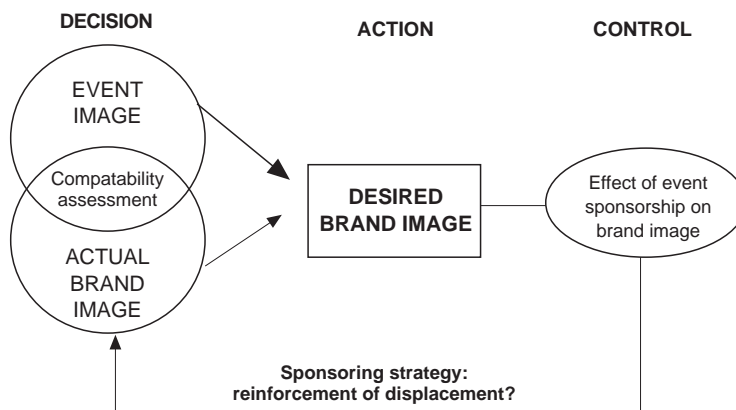


Figure 2.
The three steps in image
sponsorship
management

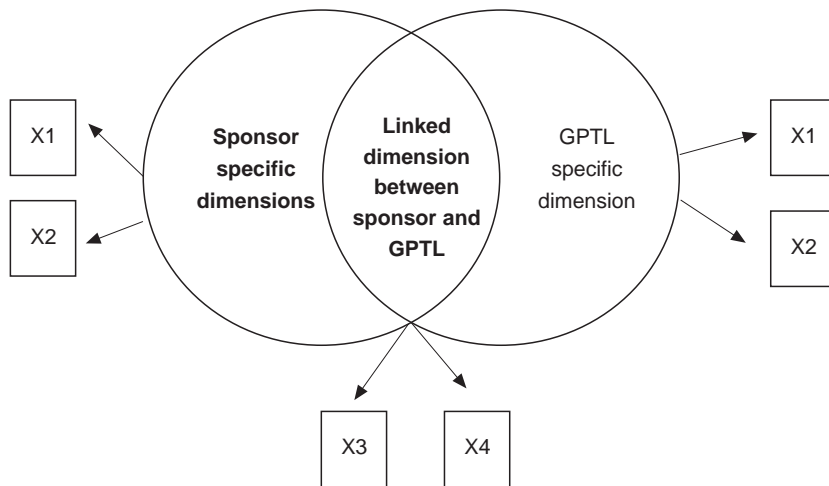


Figure 3.
Structure of the
symbolic fields to
outline the images
which are linked and
specific to each of the
two social objects

A full canonical analysis is suitable for this case. It allows us to analyse the relationships between two sets of metric variables: table X for the event and table Z for the sponsor. As a factorial analysis this computes canonical functions (image dimensions) which are linear combinations of measurement variables. These functions are ordered by “canonical couples”, as one of these functions is a combination of the variables of one set and the other is a combination of the variables of the other set. These two functions are more or less correlated (canonical correlation). If their canonical correlation is close to one, they are connected and they express a linked dimension between the two images. Ultimately some functions are derived which are not couples because their canonical correlation is nil or close to nil. These are described as specific factors because they are correlated with none of the variables of the other set. They express a specific dimension of one image referring to the other.

The different steps of this method are described in Table VII.

A full canonical analysis (Pontier *et al.*, 1987) allows us to determine the specific information from each set of variables analysing correlation coefficients which are nil or close to nil. Indeed several properties of subspaces associated with nil eigenvalues are underexploited. There are 20 measurement variables for the sponsor’s image and 24 for the image of the event. The analysis computes 20 interdependent canonical functions in the LTGP (X) and sponsor group (Z), as well as four specific canonical functions in the LTGP group. The sponsor group has no specific functions in the strict sense.

The results of these canonical analyses are presented in Table VIII which shows the retained canonical variables and the loading of the adjectives on these variables. The meaning of each canonical function is interpreted by means of its highest correlation with the measurement variables.

We used Bartlett’s (1950) test for determining the number of canonical functions to be retained. Accordingly, we have kept the first four canonical functions to analyse the information common to both LTGP and the sponsor.

Steps	Methods	Populations
Collecting the associations made about the LTGP and the sponsor	Free association test. Each person has to answer to the following questions: “For you LTGP is?” “For you this sponsor is?”	Convenience sample based on interest for the LTGP, $n = 30$ (half of them intended to buy Perrier’s Brand)
(1) Intensity appreciation of the link between the event and each adjective of this set	Seven steps semantic differential scale	Quota sample based on interest for the LTGP, $n = 162$ (half of them intended to buy Perrier’s Brand)
(2) Identification of the different dimensions which are structuring the representation framework relative to this association	Full canonical analysis	

Table VII.
The various steps undertaken

Those pairs of canonical functions with the highest correlations ($R_i = 0.70$ for the first common function (C1) and $R_i = 0.60$ for the second common function (C2) represent the image dimensions linked to both the event and the sponsor. Those pairs of canonical functions with lowest correlation (close to nil for SP1, SP2 and equal to nil for SG1 and SG2) would represent the attributes of the unique images of the two entities. The interpretations of the canonical functions represent the image characteristics of the two entities.

With a cut-off correlation of 0.40 the adjectives in the LTGP that were most highly correlated with the first canonical function were “attractive” ($r = 0.51$), and “spectacular” ($r = 0.42$). The adjectives in the sponsor set that were correlated the most with this function were “entertaining” ($r = 0.48$) and “pleasant” ($r = 0.44$). Based on the meanings of these adjectives, we interpreted the first pair of canonical functions as an enjoyable and satisfying entity. In the same way we can interpret the second canonical function as a trendy and upper class entity, the third as a go-ahead entity and the fourth as a captivating entity.

In order to determine the most specific dimensions of the LTGP we use the two last canonical functions which have a nil canonical correlation. The interpretation of the 23rd function brings to the fore the “pleasant” ($r = -0.50$) aspect of the event. The 24th function can be interpreted as an international and successful entity.

The most specific dimensions of the sponsor image can be analysed with the canonical functions which have a nil or a close to nil correlation coefficient. Thus we focus our attention on the 20th function which has the weakest correlation coefficient ($r = 0.06$). Considering its correlation with the measurement variables of the sponsor set we highlight “civilised” ($r = 0.36$) and “modern” ($r = 0.28$). However we can consider that the dimension which expresses modernity is not very strong as evidenced by the weak correlation.

The results of the present study suggest that this method can be used profitably by either the organisers of the event or the sponsor, or both. It can be

Table VIII.
Full canonical analysis
of the two tables of
variables: X (ATP
Lyon Tennis Grand
Prix) and Z (sponsor)

LTGP/SPONSOR	Linked information				Specific information		
	1	2	3	4	SPONSOR 20	LTGP 23	LTGP 24
Canonical function number: Variables		LTGP and SPONSOR Loading					
Set							
SPONSOR	0.69						
LTGP	0.51						
SPONSOR	0.48						
SPONSOR	0.44						
LTGP	0.42						
SPONSOR		0.60					
LTGP		0.57					
SPONSOR		0.50					
LTGP		0.43					
SPONSOR			0.46				
SPONSOR			0.43				
LTGP			0.43				
LTGP			0.43				
SPONSOR				0.61			
LTGP				0.45			
SPONSOR					0.36		
LTGP					0.30		
SPONSOR						-0.50	
LTGP							-0.46
LTGP							-0.40
LTGP							0.00
Canonical correlation (R _i)	0.70	0.67	0.65	0.61	0.06	0.00	0.00
Function interpretation	Enjoyable and satisfying	Trendy and upper class	Go-ahead	Captivating	Modernity	Pleasure	International success

used to make predictive estimates of the suitability of a sponsorship “marriage” between a sporting organisation and a company. Thus it can assist in strategic decision-making on the part of both groups. The identification of common and unique features of the social representations of the event and sponsor permits two different approaches to image sponsorship.

On the other hand the sponsor may choose to reinforce the common elements of the images of the two entities. In the present case, the sponsor’s communications may focus on the enjoyable and satisfying aspects. An alternative strategy could attempt to transfer the international and successful dimensions of the event’s image to the sponsor’s image. This approach would be appropriate should the sponsor be seeking to reposition its image. Such an approach may be less likely to succeed. Otker (1988, p. 81) suggests that “sponsorship should be judged (and researched) as a reinforcing and catalytic factor, rather than an initiating or locomotive factor”. However, both emphasising the current position and repositioning are logical sponsorship objectives.

6. Discussion

We focused on three key aspects of the image management process: a diagnostic phase, a positioning estimate and an analysis of the interactions between two images. A sports organisation such as Juventus can employ positioning strategies to achieve its strategic objectives to reinforce its position. A sports organisation needs to manage both the symbolic and functional dimensions to highlight its competitive advantages (Figure 4).

Positioning is directly connected with image which has to be attractive and distinctive. According to Ries and Trout (1981) positioning need not create something new and different. It may seek to change something which already exists in the mind of the prospect. The consistency approaches described by

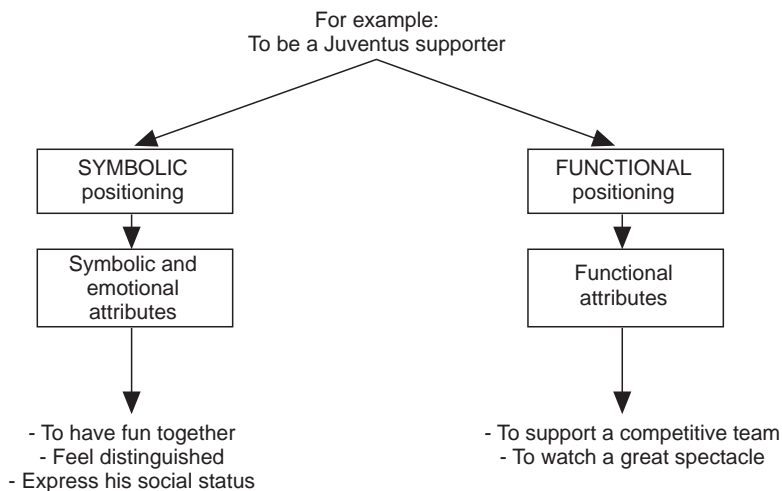


Figure 4.
Two aspects of
positioning by attributes

Festinger (1957), Heider (1958) and Osgood *et al.* (1957) reveal the individual's resistance to information which is not in accord with existing knowledge and past experience. In the second section, we showed that the image held of a football club explains the propensity to acquire a season-ticket. After the advertising campaign in June 1995, Olympique Lyonnais increased by 15 per cent its number of season-ticket holders. To communicate in this over-informed society, it is important to make one's messages easy to understand. In this regard the most effective message will be one which is relevant to one's communication target. Image measurement methods could also be used by a company seeking an effective sponsorship relationship since it provides, on the one hand, linked dimensions and on the other, the specific dimensions of the image of each party. For this latter analysis it is necessary to use two data analysis methods: principal components analysis and full canonical analysis.

From a theoretical point of view the image of a sporting organisation, as a social representation, has a high emotional content. This view of image, enables us to focus our attention on the emotional impact of the sports event's social experience and on the symbolic significance of the related images. Nevertheless we have to understand that image predisposes the consumer to act. But ultimately behaviour is linked to the intensity of the affective and symbolical component connected with the object. In some situations the individual may be more rational than emotional (high involvement purchase). In other situations the opposite is the case. Consuming the sports offering is complex. According to Lipovetsky (1987) this "hyper choice" leads to the need for emblems and to an over-consumption of symbols, fashions and models. In this post-modern society (Badot and Cova, 1992) consumption is characterised by "hyper plurality" (because everything is good to use) and by "hyper mixing" (because one can mix anything with everything). The consumer seeks to determine his identity through means of "emotional tribes" (Maffesoli, 1990). In this context the symbolical structures, supporting collective identities, can provide powerful explanations of the consumption decisions of these groups. Therefore, sports organisations, which can draw on this emotional anchorage and the related image capital of the people involved with it: members, spectators, sponsors, etc. can gain additional perspectives for their marketing strategies. Consequently it is important to analyse consumer behaviour using an appropriate model. In this way the experiential model (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982) attempts to explain consumer behaviour on the basis of the symbolic, hedonistic and aesthetic nature of consumption. It offers an interesting perspective for further research.

Notes

1. The data are factual but we have chosen to preserve the anonymity of the sponsor.
2. These data are factual but we decided to maintain the anonymity of the sponsor.

References

- Aaker, D.A. (1991), *Managing Brand Equity: Capitalizing on the Value of a Brand Name*, The Free Press, New York, NY.

-
- Aaker, D.A. and Day, G.S. (1990), *Marketing Research*, 4th ed., Wiley, New York, NY.
- Arons, L. (1961), "Does television viewing influence store image and shopping frequency?", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 37 No. 1, pp. 1-13.
- Badot, O. and Cova, B. (1992), *Le Néomarketing*, ESF, Paris.
- Bartlett, M.S. (1950), "Test of significance in factor analysis", *British Journal of Psychology*, No. 3, pp. 77-85.
- Campbell, D.T. (1963), *Psychology: A Study of a Science*, Mc Graw-Hill, New York, NY.
- Doise, W. (1985), "Les représentations sociales: définition d'un concept", *Connexions*, No. 45, pp. 243-53.
- Festinger, L. (1957), *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*, Row Peterson, Evanston, IL.
- Gilbert, D. (1988), "Sponsorship strategy is adrift", *The Quarterly Journal of Marketing*, Autumn, No. 6, pp. 6-9.
- Heider, F. (1958), *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relation*, Wiley, New York, NY.
- Hirschman, E.C. and Holbrook, M.B. (1982), "Hedonic consumption: emerging concepts, methods and proposition", *Journal of Marketing*, No. 46, pp. 92-101.
- Irwin, R.L. and Asimakopoulos, M.K. (1992), "An approach to the evaluation and selection of sport sponsorship proposal", *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, Vol. 2 No. 1, pp. 43-51.
- Jain, A.K. and Etgar, M. (1976), "Measuring store image through multidimensional scaling of free responses data", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 52 No. 2, pp. 23-32.
- Kolter, P. and Armstrong, G. (1996), *Principles of Marketing*, 7th ed., Prentice-Hall International Editions, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.
- Lipovetsky, G. (1987), *L'Empire de l'Éphémère*, Gallimard, Paris.
- Maffesoli, M. (1990), *Au Creux des Apparences*, Plon, Paris.
- Martineau, P. (1958), "The personality of the retail store", *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 36 No. 1, pp. 47-55.
- Meenaghan, T. (1991a), "The role of sponsorship in the marketing communication mix", *International Journal of Advertising*, Vol. 10 No. 1, pp. 35-47.
- Meenaghan, T. (1991b), "Sponsorship – legitimising the medium", *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 25 No. 11, pp. 5-10.
- Moscovici, S. (1961), *La Psychanalyse: Son Image et Son Public*, PUF, Paris.
- Otaker, T. (1988), "Exploitation: the key to sponsorship success", *European Research*, May, pp. 77-86.
- Osgood, C.E., Suci, G.J. and Tannenbaum, P.H. (1957), *The Measurement of Meaning*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, IL.
- Oxenfeldt, A.R. (1974), "Developing a favorable price-quality image", *Journal of Retailing*, Vol. 50 No. 4, pp. 8-14.
- Payne, M. (1996), "Sport organisation marketing", presented at the European Master in Sport Organisation Management research seminar, 13 December, IOC, Lausanne.
- Pontier, J., Jolicoeur, P. and Pernin, M.O. (1987), "Analyse canonique complete", *Statistique et Analyse de Données*, Vol. 12 No. 1 and 2, pp. 124-48.
- Ries and Trout (1981), *Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind*, McGraw-Hill, New York, NY.
- Samaranch, J.A. (1996), conference presented at the European Master in Sport Organisation Management research seminar, 13 December, IOC, Lausanne.
- Tajfel, H. and Turner, J.C. (1986), "The social identity theory of intergroup behavior", in Worchel, S. and Austin, W.G. (Eds), *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, Nelson Hall, Chicago, IL.
- Thwaites, D. (1993), "Sports sponsorship – philanthropy or a commercial decision?", *Journal of Promotion Management*, Vol. 2 No. 1, pp. 27-43.