

# The Congruence between the Sponsor-Sponsored Unit and its Effect on Behavioral Responses

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## Abstract

This research emphasizes on the role of congruence between the sponsor and the sponsored unit that effect sponsor's brand image, attitudes towards it and the memorization of the sponsor's name. The contribution of this research is highlighted especially during the sponsorship of national football team during the 2018 football World Cup. Because of the increasing cost of sponsorship, it has become essential for sponsors to understand how the direct and indirect audience responds to their congruence with the sponsored sports team; and which of the two types of audiences is more and more receptive to their actions. Specifically researchers were not conscious about the level of congruence that optimizes the effects on the sponsor. Therefore, this research aims to characterize the congruence between the marks of the sponsors and the football team through a survey administered face to face. Then, we test the global model to determine if the sponsorship operation has more impact on the sponsor in case of high, low or average congruence? To respond to our research questions we selected two samples from customers that were exposed to the sponsoring actions two ascertain the exploratory and confirmatory steps. The first sample consists of 200 interviewees and the second 400 are considered as an acceptable representation guarantee for our research. In addition, we propose to validate the research model and test the inherent hypotheses that analysis the relationship between the chosen constructs.

**Keywords:** *Congruence, Sponsored unit, Brand image, Attitudes, Memorization of the sponsor's name.*

## 1. Introduction

The saturation in the area of television advertising of certain products and its prohibition in other sectors of activity (like tobacco), we observe that companies are increasingly moving towards sponsorship as a means of communication to develop the brand image and the reputation of the company. In this sense, most of the sponsors' investments are now focused on the sporting field given the importance of the audience of sporting events and the "intensity of the emotions generated" (Abassi and Chandon, 2006).

Some authors study the effect of exposure to a sporting event or sponsorship event first on memorization, image, and intention to buy (Abbassi, 2005); secondly, brand awareness and a change of attitude towards the brand (Mazodier, Chandon, 2004); and finally on the image of the sponsor, the behavioral intention and the attitude towards the sponsor (Alexandris and Tsiotsou, 2012). Other authors point out that one of the objectives of a sponsorship campaign is to make a brand as present as possible in the minds of consumers (Abbassi and Chandon, 2006); as well as the development of notoriety, the improvement of the image and the intention of purchase and the reinforcement of favorable attitudes towards the company (Fleck-Dousteysier, 2007).

Moreover, the researchers have not agreed on the level of congruence that optimizes the effect on the sponsor. Some argue that the stronger the congruence, the greater the impact on the sponsor's attitude and image (Gwinner and Eaton 1999 and Jagre Watson and Watson, 2001). On the other hand, other researchers believe that a moderate incongruence is more effective than a strong congruence or incongruence (Jagre, Watson and Watson, 2001, Fleck-Dousteysier, et al., 2005). So, does sponsoring lead to the development of the brand image, attitudes towards the brand and the memorization of the name of the sponsor? And what is the role of congruence between the sponsor and the sponsored unit in this mechanism?

In fact; does the congruence between the sponsor and the sponsored unit play a role in the development of the sponsor's brand image and attitudes towards it and, secondly, in the improvement of the memorization of the sponsor's name.

### 1.1. Literature review

It would be advisable, before looking for the effectiveness of a sponsoring operation, to question the existence of a link between the sponsor and the sponsored unit (evoked by various authors, such as Kamins, 1990, D'Astous and Bitz, 1995, Didellon, 1997, Fleck-Dousteyssier et al., 2005 ...). Thus, does the existence of a link between the sponsor and the sponsored unit - called congruence - make it possible to improve the effectiveness of a sponsorship operation?

The congruence hypothesis marks the degree of connection or perceived adequacy between the message conveyed by the brand and the celebrity (Kamins, 1990). In other words, the two messages transmitted (by celebrity and brand) must be congruent to ensure good persuasion.

This hypothesis validates Petty et Al's (1983) double information processing model, which argues that incongruence can have positive effects on the audience because it pushes him to reflect on the meaning of association. and subsequently on the brand image.

The audience of the event looks for the eventual link between the sponsor and the sponsored entity. This compatibility helps the success of the association between them (Anne and Chéron, 1991). An adequate perceived association enhances the effectiveness of sponsorship, especially from the point of view of image and attitude (Sandler and Shani, 1989, 1993, Meenaghan, 1998, 1999, D'Astous and Bitz, 1995, Copeland et al., 1996, Didellon 1997, McDaniel 1999, Gwinner and Eaton 1999). An appropriate relationship develops the memorization of the sponsor after Johar and Pham (1999). And, it strongly influences the process of choosing the sponsor's brand because of the credibility of the association between the two parties (Speed and Thompson, 2000).

In the first place, some researchers use the term "link between the sponsor and the event on a continuum from very strong to very weak" was not tested by Hayes and Otker (1988), but they only suggested that " the impact of sponsorship on the image of the sponsor "will be stronger if the link is real and logical.

In addition, a nonlinear effect of the "link between the sponsor and the sponsored entity" on the perception of the image of the sponsor was mentioned by D'astous and Bitz, (1995). This

perception "evolves when the link goes from weak to moderate" and unlike "when the link goes from moderate to strong".

"The relatedness" is defined by Johar and Pham (1999) as "the existence of a semantic link between the sponsor and the event". This semantic link enhances the sponsor's reminder. In addition, Rodgers (2003) reports that "The relevance" is defined as "the close and natural link between the sponsor's product and the sponsored site". The author adds that "the relevance between the sponsor and the sponsored site improves the sponsor's reminder, the attitude towards him and the intention to purchase his products". In addition, the site's credibility has a "moderating effect"; in other words, the higher the credibility, the more positively the relevant sponsor is evaluated. Secondly, other researchers have been interested in the concept "The congruity or fit" (Jagre, Watson and Watson, 2001) and define it as "consistency with previous expectations and patterns". These authors have not tested this consistency, but they take the hypothesis as a slight inconsistency or a "weak fit" between the sponsor and the event allows a higher recall than a strong or moderate fit and leads to a less favorable than a high or moderate fit. A moderate level of incongruence between the sponsor and the sponsored unit may be beneficial if it is perceived as interesting and positive, according to Meyers-Levy and Tybout (1989).

In addition, Sheinin and Schmitt (1994) report that moderate incongruence leads to more favorable perceptions than congruence or strong incongruence. In addition, the concept of "fit or congruence" is defined by Speed and Thompson (2000) as the attitude of the individual towards the association of the event and sponsor (well matched or well adapted). These authors lead to the following three results. First, the good match between the sponsor and the event affects the intent to purchase the sponsor's brand. Then, "the congruence between the sponsor and the sponsored entity improves the sponsorship response: the interest in the sponsor, the more favorable attitude toward him and the intention to use his products". And finally, "congruence moderates the response to sponsorship and interest in the event (the stronger the congruence plus the interest in the event has impact) and also moderates the perceived importance of the event (The less the congruence is strong, the more the perceived importance of the event has impact ».

Other authors emphasize the distinction between "native fit" and "created fit" (Becker-Olsen and Simmons, 2002). First, "The native fit" measures when the company and the sponsored cause are perceived as going well together, regardless of any communication. While, "The created fit" derives from communications and not inherent to organizations. These authors find that with the presence of sponsorship, a "weak fit reduces the capital of the firm while a high fit increases it". Moreover, the differentiation between "fit", "association" and "complementarities" is advanced by Basil and Basil (2003) as follows. The "Fit" is a complementary association; "the association" is the degree to which the private enterprise and the organization share common points; and "complementarities" exists between two entities that have a mission or a related objective.

These authors note that in the case of complementary alliance, the intention to purchase will be stronger, the attitude vs the alliance will be more favorable and the perception of an alliance will be stronger. So, a "fit is better than no fit" even if it is negative.

The importance of the compatibility between the event and the image of the sponsor induces the success of the association between them (Anne and Chéron, 1991).

This association entails a transfer of the event to the image of the sponsor (Otker and Hayes, 1988). They explain that the stronger the fit, the more exposure to the event has a significant impact on the sponsor's image. If, however, the link is inadequate, the sponsor will be negatively affected (McDonald, 1991).

In addition, Mc Donald, (1991) has distinguished between the "direct relevance" that exists when using the sponsor's product in the event and the "indirect relevance" that exists "when certain aspects of the image of the sponsor correspond to those of the event ". He did not test this link, but only poses the hypothesis "of a need for fit for the godfather" by mentioning the negative effects of a discrepancy. Third, other authors use the term similarity such as, Gwinner (1997) who distinguishes between "functional-based similarity" when the "mark is actually used by participants during the event" and that " image-based "when" the image of the event is linked to the image of the brand ". He did not test those similarities that "create stronger links

between the sponsor and the sponsored entity and improve image transfer".

According to Louis (2004), "similarity" is the "degree to which individuals perceive that the association between the sponsor and the sponsored entity is logical or not". This link may be due to a perceived similarity between the sponsor and the sponsored entity in terms of image. The author also emphasizes the "multi - dimensionality of perceived similarity" and the existence of emotional transfer when image similarity is strong.

For Mc Daniel (1999), the "matchup between the sponsor and the event" is like the "similarity between the sponsor's attributes and those of the event". This link may be due to a perceived similarity between the sponsor and the sponsored entity in functional terms. The author demonstrates that this "match up" has "a positive effect on the attitude towards advertising for sponsorship (especially if there is a congruence) but no visible effect on the brand and the intention to 'purchase'.

The image of the event is transferred to the sponsor's brand image and the two are linked by sponsorship according to Gwinner and Eaton (1999). This transfer will be stronger in the case of similarity (functional and image) with the event than in the case of similarity absent. "Image transfer is stronger in case of image similarity than functional similarity". Finally, Didellon (1997) uses the term "perceived adequacy" and defines it as the "overall positive judgment of the logical connection between the sponsor and the sponsored entity". He assumes that if this adequacy is strong or moderate, the strength of the cognitive and affective transfers between the two will be identical.

Among all these terms used by researchers to call our concept into consideration, we opt for the term "congruence between sponsor and sponsored unit" in our research.

### 2.1. The main determinants of congruency

Based on the literature review, we consider four determinants of the congruence between the sponsor and the sponsored unit; namely, knowledge of the sponsor's brand, knowledge of the sponsored unit, involvement with the sponsor's product, and involvement with the sponsored unit. These determinants have been studied by some authors including Meziou (2010),

### 1.1.1. The knowledge

Knowledge is a concept that has emerged in the field of consumer behavior. The literature review shows different researches done on knowledge. We begin by defining this concept and then showing its effects.

The rated or subjective knowledge of a brand is the level of knowledge that a viewer thinks they have of it (Korchia, 2001). Some researchers also define it as "all the information stored in memory" (Flynn and Goldsmith, 1999).

Other authors argue that brand awareness is "a cognitive representation of brand-related experience stored in the consumer's long-term memory" (Korchia 2004, Engel et al., 1995, cited by Meziou Ben Jouira R. 2010).

### 1.1.2. Congruence involvement

The first time the effect of congruence involvement was studied Shaefer and Keillior (1997). They confirm that in case of congruence, the implication towards the product affects the attitude towards the mark. In the same vein, Koo (2004), cited by Meziou (2010) adds that this involvement has a positive impact on congruence, but cannot be verified. In addition, McDaniel (1999) argues that involvement has an impact on congruency.

Moreover, the implication changes according to the context in which it is located (announcement, product or event). We observe three types of contexts presented by Zaichkowsky (1985a,b) as follows. Physics that groups the characteristics of the object causing the change and the increase of interest. Then, personal that brings together the needs, values and interests that motivates an individual towards an object. Also, situational refers to anything that increases the relevance or interest of the object temporarily. These authors spoke of the implication-stake in close connection with the purchasing situation and its perceived risks (Ratchford, 1987, Le Roux et al., 1997). In fact, if the implication is strong, the research of information will be intense. While, if the implication is not very intense and its perception and weakly risky, then the research of information will not be intense.

### 1.1.3. Relationship between congruence and attitude towards the brand

The research on concept attitude is very old. As early as 1935, Allport defined attitude as a mental state of a person who gathers information and experience acquired to order his preferences and perceptions of the environment, and then to choose how he will respond to it.

In marketing, this concept is widely treated. Some researchers argue that sponsorship is based on persuasion (Didellon-Carsana, 1997). Kapeferer (1988) states that the latter amounts to any change in attitudes or behaviors through messages. In addition, the attitude is seen as the positive or negative customer orientation towards a product or brand (Assael, 1987). In addition, Mitchell and Olsen (1981) add that branding is an overall assessment of a brand's customers. Sponsorship operations can induce cognitive attitudes or responses, such as beliefs, emotional responses, such as emotions (Laborde and Bories, 2009) and other responses such as perceived interests. Didier (2005) has retained two dimensions only of the attitude of the initial scale of Didellon-Carsana (1997); namely, the cognitive and affective dimension. The attitude of customers towards the sponsor is also defined as an expression of emotional responses. However, we will take into consideration, in our research, the three dimensions of the attitude toward the brand (cognitive, affective and perceived interest) in order to define it in a global way.

The effect of congruence on the attitude toward the brand can be estimated as follow. Thus, the congruence between the sponsor and the sponsored unit seems to have a positive impact on the change of attitude. Gwinner (1997) argues that the congruence between the sponsor and the sponsored unit has an impact on the customer's attitude toward the brand. Ganassali and Didellon, (1996) state that sponsorship can simultaneously develop cognitive (perceptions and beliefs) and affective (feelings and emotions) responses. And then, the sponsored unit can bring about a change in attitudes and therefore emotional responses.

In fact, the affective reactions towards the congruence between a brand and a sports team positively affect the affective reactions towards a brand (Bories, Pichon, Laborde and Pichon, 2014). And therefore, the change of attitude towards congruence (toward acceptance) is necessary to

change the attitude toward the sponsor's brand. Other authors confirm that low congruence leads to a poorer attitude than strong or moderate congruence (Jagre et al., 2001).

**1.2. Hypotheses and the research model**

**1.2.1. Hypotheses**

Hypothesis 1: The greater the knowledge of the sponsor's brand towards the sponsored unit, the greater the congruence between the sponsor's brand and the sponsored unit.

Hypothesis 2: The greater the involvement in the sponsor's brand / sponsored unit, the greater the congruence between the sponsor's brand and the sponsored unit.

Hypothesis 3: The greater the knowledge of the sponsor's brand towards the sponsored unit, the higher positive attitude toward the sponsor's brand.

Hypothesis 4: The greater the involvement in the sponsor's brand / sponsored unit, the higher positive attitude toward the sponsor's brand.

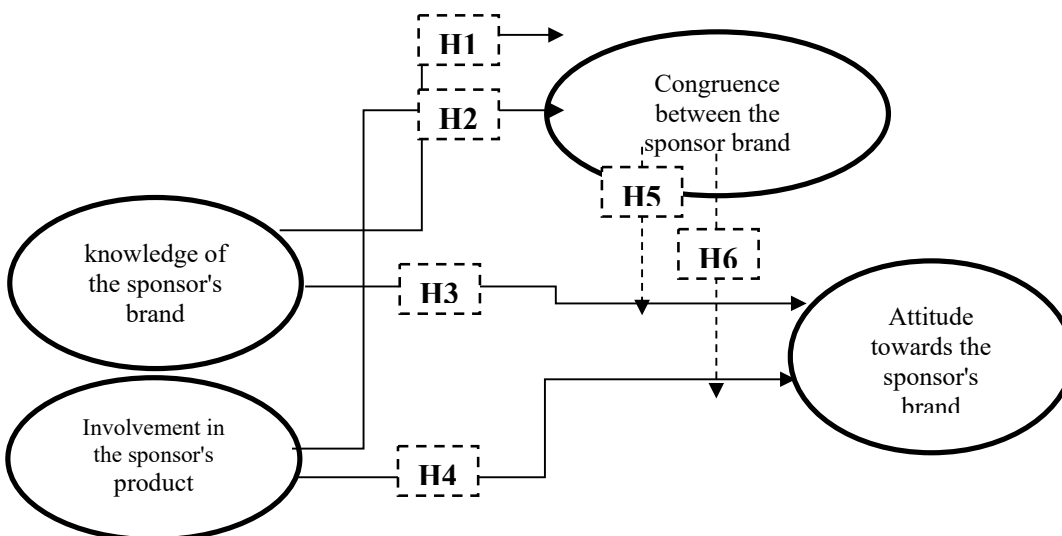
Hypothesis 5: The congruence between the sponsor's brand and the sponsored unit has a moderating role between consumer knowledge and its attitude.

Hypothesis 6: The congruence between the sponsor's brand and the sponsored unit has a moderating role between consumer involvement and its attitude.

**1.2.2. The research model**

Thus, the conceptual model can be designed as follows: (figure 1).

**Figure 1. The research model**



**2. Methodology**

**2.1. Sampling and surveys**

To answer to our research problematic we collect the needed data, in two samples from consumers' exposed to the sponsoring in the World Cup event. Therefore, we select the customers from Northern Border Province in Saudi Arabia that can deliver information about the effects of the congruence between sponsor and sponsored unit on the customers. The first sample allowed us to purify measurements by SPSS software the scales, and the second deserved to check the hypotheses and validates the research model by AMOS.(Toukabri, et al. , 2021 ; Toukabri. 2022, 2021, 2019).

**2.2. Measurements**

**2.2.1. Measure of congruence**

Abbassi (2005) concludes that the scale of Gwinner and Eaton (1999) appears "more complete and more precise" than that of Speed and Thompson (2000) because it considers the two dimensions of functional adequacy and image . And she adds that the functional adequacy is not very interesting to take into account because the use of the products of the sponsor is not systematic. While, the adequacy of the image is a very complex concept to analyze given its multidimensional nature. (Toukabri and Ibrahim, 2016 ; Toukabri and Ghali, 2017),

### 2.2.2. Measure of knowledge

In the literature review, we observe various scales of measurement of brand knowledge. We retained the five elements of brand knowledge as recommended by (Meziou, 2010). That are the evaluated or subjective knowledge of a brand is the set of perceptions that a customer can have of what he knows; or the level of knowledge that this customer believes he has on a brand; the objective knowledge is what a client really knows about a subject. In other words, it appeals to expertise; the experience is the set of direct exposures relating to familiarity; the number of associations relating to this brand and stored in memory; and the mixed measures group items belonging to different measures.

### 2.2.3. Measure of involvement

Since the implication concept is considered as "a hypothetical variable", we cannot measure it directly "but we must grasp it through its causes" (Kapferer and Laurent, 1986). Therefore, these researchers develop indicators of involvement based on its causes that are distinguished into four types (Meziou, 2010); personal interest in the type of product (at which level the product is important and makes sense to the individual), the functional risk perceived and related to the purchase of the product according to Bauer (1967), the psychological risk that comes down to the value of the sign granted by the customer to the product, the hedonic value of the product (the ability to engender pleasure or a pleasant feeling or emotional potential).

The authors develop different scales of measurement of product involvement following the Churchill (1979) paradigm, including the scale of Zaichkowsky (1990) with two dimensions (cognitive and affective) in ten items of differential semantic type. 'Osgood in seven points used in the advertising context.

### 2.2.3. The congruence determinants

#### 2.2.3.1. Knowledge of the sponsor's brand

The assessed or subjective knowledge of a brand is the level of knowledge that an individual thinks he has about it (Korchia, 2001). To measure this concept, we adopted the Likert-type Korchia scale (2001b) which is composed of three items at seven levels. This scale is used by Meziou (2010) in his research

in the context of television sponsorship. Table 6 below shows this scale.

**Table 1. Knowledge of the sponsor's brand**

What do you think is your level of knowledge of X? (from bad to excellent).
Compared to the average consumer, would you say your knowledge of X is (zero to excellent).
I know X very well (from Strongly disagree to Strongly agree).

#### 2.2.3.2. Knowledge of the sponsored unit

As Meziou (2010) proceeded in his research, we replace the sponsor brand with the sponsored unit in the Korchia (2001) scale to obtain the assessed knowledge scale of the sponsored unit in Table below. below.

**Table 2. Knowledge of the sponsored unit**

What do you think is your level of knowledge of Y? (from bad to excellent)
Compared to the average consumer, would you say your knowledge of Y is (zero to excellent)
I know Y very well (from Strongly disagree to Strongly agree)

#### 2.2.3.3. Involvement in the sponsor's product

To measure the involvement in the sponsor's product, we use the Ratchford scale (1987) which was translated in 1997 by Le Roux et al., Relating to involvement in the product category. These authors evoke the strong relationship between stake-implication with the purchasing situation and its perceived risks. In fact, if the involvement is strong, the research will be intense. Whereas if the involvement is not intense and whose perception is low risk, the research will not be intense. This scale, shown in Table 8 below, helps us position the sponsor's brand based on their level of involvement. It includes three items of Likert differential semantics at seven levels.

responses such as emotions (Laborde and Bories, 2009). Didier (2005) only retained two dimensions,

**Table 3. Involvement in the sponsor's product**

The purchase of this product represents: 1: An unimportant decision	—————▶	7: A very important decision
The purchase of this product requires: 1: Little thought	—————▶	7: A lot of thinking
For this product there are: 1: Little to lose if you choose the wrong brand	—————▶	7: A lot to lose

**2.2.3.4. Effects of congruence**

After having made the tour of the determining variables of the congruence between the brand of the sponsor and the sponsored unit, it remains to present the scales of pre-established measures of the resulting variables, namely the brand image, the attitude towards the brand and memorizing the name of the sponsor.

**2.2.3.5. Brand image**

This concept is extensively studied in the literature review. According to Kapfer and Thoenig (1994), the brand image perceived by an individual vis-à-vis a brand is manifested by his mental representations (cognitive and affective). This individual receives information associated with the brand that affects the existing association between him and the brand. To measure brand image, we opt for the use of the scale of Villarjio and Sanchez (2005) inspired by the scale of Aaker and Alvarez Del Blanco (1995). This scale, shown in Table 10 below, contains seven items and is of the Likert type (strongly agree to strongly disagree).

**Table 4. Brand image**

Some characteristics of X come to mind quickly.
I can quickly remember the slogan or logo of X.
X has a strong personality.
I have a distinct impression of the type of people who use the X brand
X has a strong image
The intangible attributes of the X brand are reason enough to buy it
The quality of brand X is higher than the price we pay

**2.2.3.6. Attitude towards the sponsor's brand**

Sponsorship operations can induce cognitive responses such as beliefs and other affective

the cognitive dimension and the affective dimension of the initial scale of Didellon-Carsana (1997). We adopt the Didellon-Carsana (1997) Sponsor's Brand Attitude Scale measure which has three dimensions. It is of the Likert type with five levels of which we add two levels to conform to the measurement of the other variables of the questionnaire. Then, we choose to take all the dimensions of this scale to better understand the different facets of this concept. This scale is presented in Table below.

**Table 5. Attitude towards the sponsor's brand**

Cognitive dimension (belief, competitiveness)	X is a brand with a competitive spirit n
	X is a successful brand
	X is a dynamic brand
Dimension of perceived interest	X is a brand that shows fighting spirit
	X is an important mark
	X is a good brand
Affective dimension (attitude, hedonism)	X is a quality mark
	X is a nice mark
	X is a brand that I like
	X is a brand that I support
	X is a brand that I love

**2.2.3.7. Memorizing the name of the sponsor**

According to the literature review, the concept of memorization is measured through three elements, namely the top of mind, spontaneous memorization and assisted memorization (Anne, 1992). The top of Mind is measured by the item, what is the first brand spontaneously cited? The spontaneous memorization is measured by the item, what brands of X sponsors do you know? And the assisted notoriety is measured by the item, do you know the brand of sponsor X? To this end, for greater clarity and precision, we adopt the questions presented by Abbassi (2005) in

his research on memorization. In fact, to measure the three types of memorization, we ask the questions presented in Table below.

**Table 6. Memorizing the name of the sponsor**

Top of mind	What are the sponsoring brands or companies? Give the name of the first sponsor you remember Give the name of the second sponsor you remember
Spontaneous memorization	Give the name of the third sponsor you remember Give the name of the fourth sponsor you remember
Assisted memorization	Which of the sponsors in the list below have you seen? (list of seven elements)

**2.2.3.8. Global congruence**

To directly measure the variable "overall congruence between the sponsor brand and the sponsored unit", we opt for the scale used by Fleck-Dousteyssier et al. (2005), through three items presented below:

**Table 7. Overall congruence between the sponsor brand and the sponsored unit**

The event and the sponsoring company go well together
The company is fully in line with the event
This company seems appropriate to me as a sponsor for this event
Finally, we can resume the congruence determinants in the following table.

**Table 8. The congruence determinants**

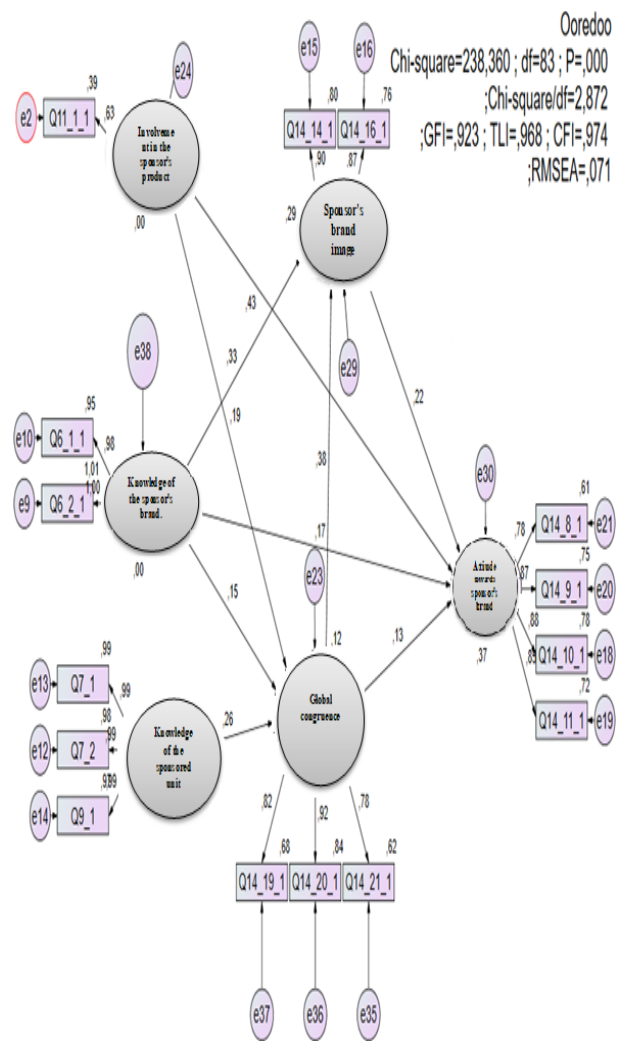
Concept	Auteurs de référence	de	Nombre d'items
Knowledge of the sponsor's brand.	Korchia (2001)		3
Knowledge of the sponsored unit	Korchia (2001)		3
Involvement in the sponsor's product	Le Roux et al.(1997) Ratchford (1987)		3
Sponsor's brand image	Villarjio et Sanchez (2005) d'Aaker et Alvarez Del Blanco (1995)		7
Attitude towards the sponsor's brand	Didellon-Carsana (1997)		11
Memorizing the	Abbassi (2005)		2 questions

name of the sponsor	Anne, (1992)	(11 responses)
Global congruence	Fleck-Dousteyssier et al. (2005)	3

**2.2.3.9. The model fit and hypotheses validation**

**2.2.3.9.1. The model integrating the congruence between the brand of the sponsor**

Global validated model integrating the congruence between the brand of the sponsor Ooredoo and the Tunisian football team (case of strong congruence).



**Figure 2.** Global conceptual model integrating the congruence between the brand of the sponsor Ooredoo and the Tunisia football team

The overall conceptual model integrating the congruence between the brand of the sponsor



Ooredoo and the Tunisia football team is presented in figure 26 below. In the following table, we detail different indicators explained as follows:

- The regression weight table shows the indices of all the existing relationships between the elements of this model (“Estimate” column) with their level of significance. We deduce that these relationships are significant ( $P < 0.05$ ).

- The second indicator given by table 40 of the appendix relates to the variances linked to each element of the model, namely the knowledge variable of the sponsored unit as well as the error terms. These variances are significant (except that related to  $e_9$ ).

In fact, this model is validated for the sponsor brand Ooredoo and shows good fit as shown in Table below.

**Table 9.** Fit indices of the Ooredoo model with congruence

Absolute fit indices	GFI	RMR	RMSEA		
Values	0,923	0,098	0,071		
Incremental adjustment indices	NFI	RFI	IFI	TLI	NFI
Values	0,961	0,951	0,975	0,968	0,961
Parsimonious adjustment index	CMI	N/df			
Value	2,872				

On the one hand, we conclude that thanks to this model, congruence keeps these three determinants in a significant way, namely the involvement with the sponsor's product, the knowledge of the sponsor's brand and that of the sponsored unit. If these determinants each increase by one then the congruence increases by 19%, 15% and 26% respectively. So the last variable, knowing the sponsored unit most affects the congruence between the sponsor's brand and the sponsored unit. Hence, hypothesis 1 is globally confirmed (H1a, H1b, H1c are all validated).

First, the involvement with the sponsor's product, in the model validated for the sponsor's brand Ooredoo, is represented by a single significant item, presented below, among the two retained in the purification phase. Q11-1. Buying this sponsor's brand takes little

or a lot of thought. Second, knowledge of the sponsor's brand is reflected in two significant items among the three retained in the purification phase, namely: Q6-1. In your opinion, what is your level of knowledge of this sponsor? Q6-2. Compared to an average viewer, would you say your knowledge of this sponsor is poor or excellent? And thirdly, the knowledge of the sponsored unit is recalled by three significant items presented below, which relate to the items retained in the purification phase. Q7-1. In your opinion, what is your level of knowledge of the Tunisian national football team? Q7-2. Compared to an average spectator, would you say that your knowledge of the Tunisian national football team is poor or excellent? Q9-1: I know the Tunisian national football team very well.

In addition, the direct measurement of the congruence between the sponsor's brand and the sponsored unit is represented by its three significant items, cited in the following: Q14-19: The national football team and its sponsor go well together? Q14-20: The sponsor is very well suited to the national football team? Q14-21 This company seems appropriate as a sponsor of the national football team? On the other hand, the congruence variable shows two significant effects. Its first effect is on the brand image and the second is on the sponsor's brand attitude. If the level of congruence increases by one then its effects change by 38% and 13% respectively. Hence, hypotheses 2a and 2b are confirmed. Hypothesis 2c has not been validated in this case because memorization is not significant in the case of strong congruence. In fact, in the overall brand model of the sponsor Ooredoo, the brand image retains the same two significant items retained in the previous purification phase, indicated in the following: Q14-14 This sponsor has a strong personality? Q14-16.This sponsor has a strong image? While, the attitude towards the sponsor brand keeps four significant items of the five items retained in the previous purification phase as follows: Q14-8 This sponsor's brand is nice? Q14-9.The brand of this sponsor is a brand that I like? Q14-10: This sponsor's brand is a brand I support? Q14-11 This sponsor's brand is a brand that I love? Thus, in the case of strong congruence, there is no significant direct effect of congruence on memorization.

In addition, there are various other direct relationships between the determinants and the effects of congruence. First, involvement with the

sponsor's product directly affects attitude towards the sponsor's product. At this term, if the involvement with the sponsor's product increases by one then the attitude towards the sponsor's brand improves by 43%.

Hence, hypotheses 2a and 2b are confirmed.

Hypothesis 2c has not been validated in this case because memorization is not significant in the case of strong congruence. In fact, in the overall brand model of the sponsor Ooredoo, the brand image retains the same two significant items retained in the previous purification phase, indicated in the following: Q14-14 This sponsor has a strong personality? Q14-16. This sponsor has a strong image? While, the attitude towards the sponsor brand keeps four significant items of the five items retained in the previous purification phase as follows: Q14-8 This sponsor's brand is nice? Q14-9. The brand of this sponsor is a brand that I like? Q14-10: This sponsor's brand is a brand I support? Q14-11 This sponsor's brand is a brand that I love?

Thus, in the case of strong congruence, there is no significant direct effect of congruence on memorization. In addition, there are various other direct relationships between the determinants and the effects of congruence. First, involvement with the sponsor's product directly affects attitude towards the sponsor's product. At this term, if the involvement with the sponsor's product increases by one then the attitude towards the sponsor's brand improves by 43%. Hence, hypothesis 6 is confirmed. Second, the sponsor's brand awareness directly affects the sponsor's brand image on the one hand (33%) and the attitude towards the sponsor's brand on the other hand (17%). As such, if the sponsor's brand awareness increases by one unit then the sponsor's brand image improves by 33% and the attitude towards the sponsor's brand by 17%. Hence, hypothesis 7 is partially confirmed (H7a, H7b). Third, branding has a direct impact on the sponsor's brand attitude. Hence, we conclude that if the brand image increases by one then the sponsor's brand attitude increases by 22%. Hence, hypothesis 3 is confirmed. This validated global conceptual model of the Ooredoo sponsor brand, which takes into account the role of the variable "the congruence between the sponsor brand and the sponsored unit", is shown in Figure 1.

### 2.2.3.9.2. Discussion the results of the model without congruence between the brand of the sponsor

There are three determinants of strong congruence, namely involvement with the sponsor's product, knowledge of the sponsor's brand as well as knowledge of the sponsored unit. We show that brand awareness directly affects the sponsor's brand image and the sponsor's brand attitude. Whereas involvement with the sponsor's product only affects the attitude towards the sponsor's brand. However, knowledge of the sponsored unit does not affect the sponsor's branding in this model. In addition, the memorization of the name of the sponsor does not seem significant in this case of strong congruence (case of the brand of the sponsor Ooredoo). Indeed, we have shown that a strong congruence does not affect the memorization of the name of the sponsor according to our research. Thus, none of the determining variables of congruence directly affect memorization. So, to be remembered, the sponsor should not choose a sponsored unit to which he is strongly congruent.

Finally, to confirm the moderating role of the variable "congruence between the sponsor brand and the sponsored unit", and verify the existence of the relationships mentioned above, we propose to retest the previous model of Ooredoo without taking into account this variable.

Validated global model not integrating the congruence between the brand of the sponsor Ooredoo and the Tunisia football team (case of strong congruence). The objective of this global conceptual model, not integrating the congruence between the brand of the sponsor Ooredoo and the Tunisia football team, is to measure the importance of the change in the relationships validated in the previous model. This model is shown in Figure. 2 below. In table 10 of the appendix, various indicators are detailed as follows:

- The regression weight table shows the indices of all the existing relationships between the elements of this model ("Estimate" column) with their level of significance. We find that these relationships are all significant at a confidence level of around 95% ( $P < 0.05$ ).
- The second indicator given by table 41 of the appendix relates to the variances linked to each element of the model, namely the variable knowledge

of the sponsored unit as well as all the error terms existing in the model. These variances are significant (except for e9 as in the previous model integrating congruence).

In fact, this conceptual model is validated for the sponsor brand Ooredoo and shows good fit (see Table 10 below).

**Table 10.** Fit indices of the Ooredoo model without congruence

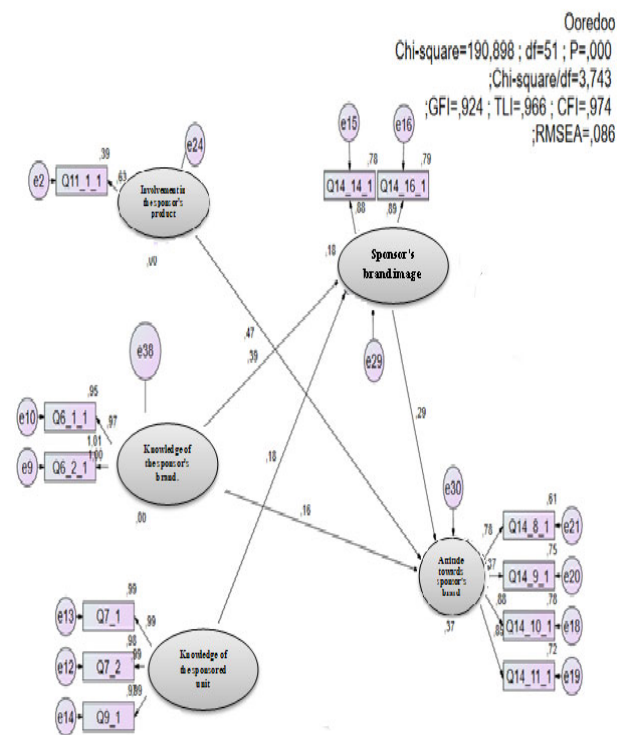
Absolute fit indices	GFI	RMR	RMSEA		
Values	0,924	0,108	0,086		
Incremental adjustment indices	NFI	RFI	IFI	TLI	CFI
Values	0,965	0,954	0,974	0,966	0,974
Parsimonious adjustment index	CMIN/df				
Value	3,743				

We observe that the fit indices of the latter model are slightly better than those calculated in the model integrating the variable of congruence between the brand of the sponsor and the sponsored unit.

In the absence of the congruence variable between Ooredoo and the Tunisian football team of our conceptual model, we observe the existence of the same variables of the previous model linked to each other, namely the implication towards the sponsor's product, the knowledge of sponsor brand, knowledge of the sponsored unit, sponsor brand image and attitude towards the sponsor brand. Therefore, congruence is a moderating variable and not a mediator. The five variables of the model keep their same significant items detailed in the first model.

First, there is the same relationship between commitment to the sponsor's product and attitude to the sponsor's brand. If the involvement with the sponsor's product increases by one then the attitude towards the sponsor's brand rises by 47% (a slightly higher effect than that in the previous model). Hence, hypothesis 6 is confirmed. Additionally, knowledge of the sponsor's brand affects the sponsor's brand image. If the sponsor's brand awareness increases by one then the sponsor's brand image rises by 39% (a higher effect than in the previous model). Also, knowledge of the sponsor's brand affects attitude toward the sponsor's brand. If the first increases by one unit then the attitude towards the sponsor's brand

improves by 16% (a slightly smaller effect than in the previous model). Hence, hypothesis 7b is confirmed. However, we observe a new relationship, which does not exist in the previous model, between the knowledge of the sponsored unit and the brand image. If the knowledge of the sponsored unit increases by one then the sponsor's brand image increases by 18%. This relation was eliminated in the previous model by the variable congruence. Hence, hypothesis 8a is confirmed. Second, the relationship between image and attitude is slightly reinforced in this model. If the first increases by one then the second improves by (29%). Hence, hypothesis 3 is confirmed. This overall conceptual model is presented in Figure 3. below.



**Figure 3.** Global conceptual model without taking into account the congruence between the brand of the sponsor Ooredoo and the Tunisia football team

This model keeps the same determinants of a strong congruence are three in number, namely the involvement with the sponsor's product, the knowledge of the sponsor's brand as well as the

knowledge of the sponsored unit. We show that brand awareness directly affects the sponsor's brand image and the sponsor's brand attitude. Whereas involvement with the sponsor's product only affects the attitude towards the sponsor's brand. Unlike the previous model incorporating congruence, knowledge of the sponsored unit affects the sponsor's branding in this model only. In addition, the memorization of the name of the sponsor does not seem significant in this case of strong congruence (case of the brand of the sponsor Ooredoo). Indeed, we have shown that a strong congruence does not affect the memorization of the name of the sponsor according to our research. Thus, none of the determining variables of congruence directly affect memorization. So, to be remembered, the sponsor should not choose a sponsored unit to which he is strongly congruent.

**2.2.3.9.3. The validation of research hypotheses**

We group together in table 58 below, the validation of our research hypotheses by sponsor, as well as by type of model (whether or not integrating the congruence variable). This step is essential in order to be able to stop the achievement of our research objectives set at the beginning.

**Table 58: Validation of hypotheses by sponsor**

Hypotheses	Global Model	Model without congruence
H1 : H1a H1b H1c	Supported Supported Supported	
H2 : H2a H2b H2c	Supported Supported Rejected	
H3	Supported	Supported
H4	Rejected	Rejected
H5	Rejected	Rejected
H6	Supported	Supported
H8 : H8a H8b H8c	Supported Supported Rejected	Supported Supported Rejected
H9 : H9a H9b	Rejected Rejected	Supported Rejected
Total : 15	9/15	5/9

This model keeps the same determinants of a strong congruence are three in number, namely the

involvement with the sponsor's product, the knowledge of the sponsor's brand as well as the knowledge of the sponsored unit. We show that brand awareness directly affects the sponsor's brand image and the sponsor's brand attitude. Whereas involvement with the sponsor's product only affects the attitude towards the sponsor's brand. Unlike the previous model incorporating congruence, knowledge of the sponsored unit affects the sponsor's branding in this model only. In addition, the memorization of the name of the sponsor does not seem significant in this case of strong congruence (case of the brand of the sponsor Ooredoo). Indeed, we have shown that a strong congruence does not affect the memorization of the name of the sponsor according to our research. Thus, none of the determining variables of congruence directly affect memorization. So, to be remembered, the sponsor should not choose a sponsored unit to which he is strongly congruent.

**5. Conclusion**

The model of the congruence between the brand of the sponsor Ooredoo and the Tunisia football team shows the following results: If the level of relevance rises by 1 then the level of congruence rises by 65%. And if the expected side rises by 1 then the level of congruence rises by 19%. Indeed, in the event of strong congruence (Ooredoo), relevance has a greater impact on congruence than the expected side which has an average impact. Our results are opposite to those advanced by the literature review (Fleck-Dousteysier et al., 2005) where relevance intervenes in the formation of congruence more than the expected side. In addition, we validate in our research two items among the five validated by Fleck-Dousteysier et al., (2005), namely our two items on the expected side. For the global conceptual model integrating the congruence between the brand of the sponsor Ooredoo and the Tunisia football team, we put forward the following results:

There are three determinants of strong congruence, namely involvement with the sponsor's product, knowledge of the sponsor's brand as well as knowledge of the sponsored unit. We show that brand awareness directly affects the sponsor's brand image and the sponsor's brand attitude. Whereas involvement with the sponsor's product only affects

the attitude towards the sponsor's brand. However, knowledge of the sponsored unit does not affect the sponsor's branding in this model. In addition, the memorization of the name of the sponsor does not seem significant in this case of strong congruence (case of the brand of the sponsor Ooredoo). Indeed, we have shown that a strong congruence does not affect the memorization of the name of the sponsor according to our research. Thus, none of the determining variables of congruence directly affect memorization. So, to be remembered, the sponsor should not choose a sponsored unit to which he is strongly congruent. Hence, this model validates 9 variables out of 15 as follows: H1a, H1b, H1c, H2a, H2b, H3, H6, H7a and H7b.

Finally, to confirm the moderating role of the variable congruence between the sponsor brand and the sponsored unit and verify the existence of the relationships cited above, we propose to retest the previous model of Ooredoo without taking this variable into account. The overall conceptual model, not integrating the congruence between the brand of the sponsor Ooredoo and the Tunisia football team, advocates the following results:

In addition to the conclusions advanced by the previous model, this model adds a significant relationship through which knowledge of the sponsored unit affects the sponsor's brand image. Indeed, we have shown that a strong congruence does not affect the memorization of the name of the sponsor according to our research. Thus, none of the determining variables of congruence directly affect memorization. So, to be remembered, the sponsor should not choose a sponsored unit to which he is strongly congruent. Hence, this model validates 5 out of 9 variables as follows: H3, H6, H7a, H7b and H8a. Our research contributions can be distinguished into three types, namely theoretical, methodological and managerial, explained below. Our theoretical contribution lies in linking the congruence between the sponsor's brand and the sponsored unit to the sponsor's branding, attitudes towards the sponsor's brand and memorization of the sponsor's name. This contribution is highlighted especially on the occasion of the sponsorship action of the Tunisian football team during the 2018 football world cup. In other words, we seek to determine the determinants of attitude towards the sponsor brand as well as the moderating role of congruence between the sponsor brand and the sponsored unit.

In addition, we analyze the effects of involvement with the sponsor's product as well as knowledge of the sponsor's brand and that of the sponsored unit on the congruence between the sponsor's brand and the sponsored unit. In addition, we determined the level of congruence between the brand of each sponsor considered in our research and the Tunisia football team. And therefore, we can generalize for what level of congruence can we guarantee a high impact on brand image, attitudes towards the brand and memorization of the sponsor.

The methodological contribution can be presented as follow. First, the authors who have previously dealt with the subject of the impact of sports sponsorship on sponsor brands have all targeted a sporting event sponsored by the sponsors. So instead of the event, we took into consideration in our case a sponsored unit, namely the Tunisia football team for two reasons:

- Innovation in the sports field covered and the strengthening of our research contribution.
- The lack of means of the sponsors of the Tunisia football team which prevents them from sponsoring the 2018 World Cup. They were content to sponsor the Tunisia football team to reach Tunisian customers. Thus, we have chosen an event of international scope, namely the 2018 FIFA World Cup, to be able to ensure that an important target is interested in our research, such as the direct and indirect audience of the matches of the Tunisia football team. Then, the peculiarity and innovation in our subject is not marked by the variables studied or the research context but rather by its methodology and the progress of different research stages as well as its calculation techniques to meet the research objectives. precise. In fact, in our research, we have combined both qualitative and quantitative methods to answer our problem. First, we adapt the scale for measuring the congruence between the sponsor's brand and the sponsored unit, respecting the Churchill (1979) paradigm, using focus groups, individual interviews with experts, calculation of indicators and finally a preliminary survey.

Second, we modeled the congruence between the sponsor's brand and the Tunisia football team through a final survey. Third, we validated our overall conceptual model to determine in which cases the sponsorship operation has the most impact on the sponsor: strong, weak or medium congruence. And

lastly, we validated more than half of our research hypotheses for each chosen sponsor.

The methodological contribution can be resumed as follow. The results of our research are of interest to the brand established in Tunisia, namely Ooredoo as well as Tunisian sports teams.

We determined the level of congruence for this brand. As such, this research can provide certain indications to practitioners who invest in the field of sponsorship. For example, when the sponsor pursues a dual objective of image and attitude improvement then it is in his interest to choose a sponsored unit with which he is strongly or moderately congruent.

On the other hand, if the sponsor pursues a triple objective of image, considerable improvement in attitude and memorization then it is in his interest to choose a sponsored unit with which he is moderately congruent.

Moreover, if the sponsor pursues a memorization objective then it is in his interest to choose a sponsored unit with which it is weakly congruent because memorization of the name of the sponsor is negatively linked with congruence. And subsequently, this memorization considerably improves the attitude towards the brand which is also developed by the image. And therefore, the sponsor achieves the threefold goal in this case. In addition to efforts in sponsorship operations, it is important that sponsors make use of traditional communication (eg mainstream media advertising) to maximize their chances of success. In fact these two means are complementary.

After highlighting the contributions of our research, it is objective to clarify our research limits. Then, we encountered different search limits which we quote as follow. The difficulty of reaching the direct audience during the event. The possibility of the sponsor's brand going unnoticed by the audience. The risk of misunderstanding the congruence between the sponsor and the sponsored unit. In addition to the limitations of our research, there are several ideas that we were unable to consider but which remain possible in future research.

Future avenues of research may have different avenues of research including those cited below. The consideration of other variables such as the notoriety of the sponsors or the involvement of the sponsored unit or the event, which are excluded from our conceptual model, can be integrated into subsequent research. The choice of other sponsors to consider

may change the results obtained. The choice of another national event or another team or sport could have given other results to the conceptual model. Carry out cross-cultural comparisons concerning the effectiveness of sponsorship operations. In fact, the importance and popularity of a sport can vary from country to country. And therefore, reactions to sponsorship operations will be different. In addition, it is interesting to know whether the effectiveness of the sponsorship is linked to the outcome of the match event or to the role played by the mood factors (in the stadium or in the cafes).

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