

SPONSORSHIP MOTIVES AND PURCHASE INTENTION AMONG FOOTBALL FANS IN PERAK

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Abstract. This study examines how football fans in Perak interpret sport sponsorship motives and how those perceived motives influence purchase intention. A quantitative cross-sectional survey was conducted with 382 football fans. The questionnaire measured altruistic sponsorship motivation, egoistic sponsorship motivation and purchase intention using items adapted from established sponsorship research. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression. Respondents reported high perceptions of altruistic motivation (mean = 3.94, standard deviation = 1.177) and egoistic motivation (mean = 3.79, standard deviation = 1.289), indicating that fans viewed sponsorship as both community-supportive and commercially motivated. The regression model explained 58.6% of the variance in purchase intention. Egoistic motivation showed a strong positive association with purchase intention (standardised beta = 0.919, $p < 0.001$), whereas altruistic motivation showed a significant negative unique association (standardised beta = -0.189, $p = 0.002$). The findings suggest that visible commercial value stimulates purchase intention more directly than goodwill alone. Sponsors should combine authentic football support with clear product benefits and fan-oriented activation.

Keywords: *sport sponsorship, egoistic motivation, altruistic motivation, purchase intention*

Introduction

Sponsorship in sport is no longer a small promotional add-on. For many clubs, it helps pay for operations, fan engagement and public visibility. For companies, it gives access to audiences that are emotionally attached to teams and competitions. Football is especially attractive because the relationship between supporter and club is not purely transactional. A logo placed on a jersey, a stadium board or a match-day campaign enters a social space where identity, loyalty and local pride already exist. Perak offers a useful local setting for this issue. Football supporters in the state meet sponsor messages through matches, jerseys, merchandise, social media, fan discussions and club-related promotions. These exposures matter because sponsors expect part of the fans' attachment to football to become positive attention toward the sponsoring brand. Earlier sponsorship studies have linked fan loyalty, sponsorship awareness and sponsor attitude with purchase intention (Biscaia et al., 2013). However, the Malaysian state-level evidence remains limited, particularly for Perak football fans. This study examines sponsorship motivation from the viewpoint of fans. Sponsorship motivation refers to the reason that consumers believe sits behind a sponsor's involvement in football. Two motives are central in this article. Altruistic sponsorship motivation means that fans see the sponsor as supporting football development, athletes, teams or the community.

Egoistic sponsorship motivation means that fans see the sponsor as seeking business returns, including brand popularity, improved image, market share and competitiveness.

The distinction matters because sponsorship recognition does not automatically produce purchase intention. A fan may notice a sponsor, appreciate its contribution and still buy from another brand. Sponsorship becomes commercially useful only when it shapes consumer choice. That conversion depends on how fans interpret the sponsor's purpose, whether the sponsor appears credible, and whether the sponsorship is connected to product relevance or purchase cues. Cornwell et al. (2005) describe sponsorship-linked marketing as a process that works through psychological mechanisms, not by exposure alone. The present article has two objectives. First, it identifies the level of altruistic and egoistic sponsorship motivation perceived by football fans in Perak. Second, it tests whether these two motive perceptions influence purchase intention. The study uses the Stimulus-Organism-Response logic as a broad guide (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974). Sponsorship activities operate as external stimuli, fan interpretation of the motive functions as the internal evaluation, and purchase intention represents the behavioural response.

Review of literature

Sport sponsorship and fan response

Sport sponsorship is commonly defined as an exchange in which a sponsor provides money, goods or services to a sport property in return for commercial association. The value of the exchange depends on more than the amount paid or the size of a logo. Sponsors need the association to be noticed, believed and connected to meanings that fans already attach to the sport property (Meenaghan, 2001; Gwinner, 1997). Sponsorship research normally treats consumer response as a sequence. Fans first become aware of the sponsor. They then form attitudes about the sponsor and may later develop intention or behaviour. Biscaia et al. (2013) found that attitude toward the sponsor was a strong predictor of purchase intention in professional football. This suggests that sponsors must manage the way fans interpret the relationship, not only the media space they buy. The Stimulus-Organism-Response framework is useful because it separates the sponsor message from the fan reaction (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974). Sponsorship signs, campaigns and promotions work as stimuli. Fans then judge the sponsor fit, motive and credibility. Those internal judgments can influence whether the fan intends to purchase sponsor-related products or services.

Altruistic sponsorship motivation

Altruistic sponsorship motivation refers to the belief that a sponsor supports football because it wants to contribute to the sport or the community. In a local football environment, this motive may appear through support for youth development, assistance to clubs, match organisation, athlete support or community programmes. When supporters believe that a sponsor is helping the sport, they may see the sponsor as a partner rather than a distant advertiser. Prior research often connects altruistic motives with favourable consumer evaluations. Li et al. (2022) reported that altruistic sponsorship motivation can influence consumer attitude and purchase intention. Olson (2010) also argues that sponsorship effects differ across contexts because consumers interpret each sponsorship relationship through the credibility of the setting. In football communities, the emotional value of local sport may make altruistic support especially

visible. Even so, altruism does not guarantee buying. A fan may respect a sponsor for helping football, yet may not treat that respect as a reason to choose the sponsor product. The practical challenge is therefore clear. Community support can build goodwill, but goodwill must be linked to product relevance, sponsor fit and visible activation before it becomes purchase intention.

Egoistic sponsorship motivation

Egoistic sponsorship motivation refers to the belief that a sponsor enters football mainly to achieve commercial aims. These aims include raising brand awareness, strengthening brand image, expanding market share and improving competitiveness. Such motives can be viewed negatively if the sponsor appears opportunistic or disconnected from the sport. Speed and Thompson (2000), for example, show that consumer response to sponsorship depends on perceived sincerity and the sponsor's relationship with the event. A commercial motive is not automatically harmful. Modern football supporters understand that sponsorship is an exchange. They may accept that brands invest because they expect measurable returns. When a sponsor communicates its products clearly, offers relevant promotions and maintains visible association with the club, commercial motive can become a buying cue. It can make the sponsor more memorable and can give fans a practical reason to consider the brand. This argument is consistent with research on sponsor fit and consumer response. Koo et al. (2006) found that fit between the sponsor image and sport event can influence cognitive, affective and behavioural outcomes. Zaharia et al. (2016) also stress that sponsorship studies should move beyond general good intentions and examine purchase behaviour more directly. In the Perak setting, egoistic motivation may therefore have a positive role when the sponsor's commercial message is clear and relevant.

Purchase intention

Purchase intention is the consumer's stated likelihood or plan to buy a product or service in the future. It is often used in marketing studies because it gives an early indication of possible buying behaviour, even though it is not the same as actual purchase. Dodds et al. (1991) showed that brand information, perceived value and quality perceptions can influence willingness to buy. In sport sponsorship, purchase intention is used to test whether fan exposure and sponsor interpretation can move beyond awareness. Studies have reported that team identification, sponsor attitude, brand familiarity and sponsor-team fit can influence whether fans consider sponsor products (Roy and Cornwell, 2003; Madrigal, 2001). This study contributes by testing whether the perceived motive behind sponsorship itself predicts purchase intention among football fans in Perak.

Conceptual framework

The framework positions sports sponsorship motivation as the independent construct and purchase intention as the dependent construct. Sponsorship motivation consists of altruistic and egoistic dimensions. The central argument is that fans interpret the sponsor's purpose before they decide whether the sponsor deserves purchase consideration. The study does not assume that altruistic and egoistic motives are opposites. A sponsor can be seen as community-supportive and commercially motivated

at the same time. The empirical question is which motive has stronger explanatory power when purchase intention is the outcome.

Independent Variables

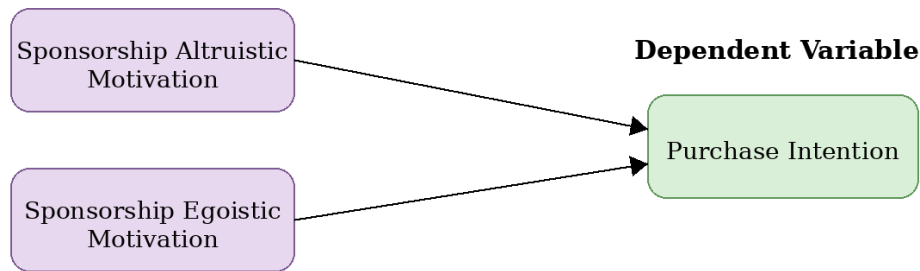


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study.

Materials and Methods

This study used a quantitative cross-sectional survey design. The design was appropriate because the objectives required measurement of sponsorship motivation levels and statistical testing of the relationship between sponsorship motive perceptions and purchase intention. A structured questionnaire was used so that responses could be compared across a large group of football fans. The target population consisted of football fans aged 18 years and above who resided in Perak and followed football through match attendance, television, online streaming, social media or other football-related media. The final dataset contained 382 usable responses. The sample size is consistent with the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size guideline for large populations. The instrument contained three sections. The first section measured demographic information, including gender, age, education, occupation, residence and football exposure. The second section measured sponsorship motivation. Four items measured altruistic motivation and four items measured egoistic motivation. The third section measured purchase intention using five items. All construct items were rated on a five-point Likert scale, from 1, strongly disagree, to 5, strongly agree. The instrument was adapted from Li et al. (2022) and adjusted to the football sponsorship setting in Perak. A pilot study with 35 football fans was conducted before the main survey. Cronbach alpha values were 0.708 for altruistic motivation, 0.735 for egoistic motivation and 0.762 for purchase intention. These values indicate acceptable internal consistency for social science research. Data were analysed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics were used to answer the first objective, while multiple linear regression was used to examine the effect of sponsorship motivation on purchase intention (*Table 1*).

Table 1. Instrument structure and reliability.

Construct / Section	No. of Items	Scale	Cronbach Alpha
Demographic profile	7	Nominal	Not applicable
Altruistic sponsorship motivation	4	5-point Likert	0.708
Egoistic sponsorship motivation	4	5-point Likert	0.735
Purchase intention	5	5-point Likert	0.762

Results and Discussion

Respondent profile

The final sample consisted of 382 football fans in Perak. Male respondents made up 60.5% of the sample and female respondents made up 39.5%. The largest age category was 25 to 34 years old, followed by 35 to 44 years old. Most respondents were economically active, with 49.5% employed and 27.7% self-employed. This profile is relevant for sponsorship research because economically active respondents are more likely to have direct purchasing capacity. Football exposure also varied. A total of 31.2% reported that they occasionally watched or attended football matches in Perak, while 29.6% did so frequently. This indicates that the sample included respondents with meaningful exposure to football sponsorship messages, but it also included lighter followers. That spread is useful because sponsors often target both committed fans and casual football consumers (*Table 2*).

Table 2. *Demographic profile of respondents.*

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	231	60.5
Female	151	39.5
Age		
18-24	74	19.4
25-34	92	24.1
35-44	85	22.3
45-54	73	19.1
55 and above	58	15.2
Education		
Secondary school	178	46.6
Bachelor degree	105	27.5
Diploma	85	22.3
Primary school	13	3.4
Master degree or higher	1	0.3
Occupation		
Employed	189	49.5
Self-employed	106	27.7
Student	64	16.8
Unemployed	23	6.0
Football exposure		
Frequently watch or attend	113	29.6
Occasionally watch or attend	119	31.2
Rarely watch or attend	97	25.4
Never watch or attend	53	13.9

Level of sponsorship motivation

The first objective was to identify the level of sports sponsorship motivation perceived by football fans in Perak. Both motive dimensions recorded high mean scores. Altruistic sponsorship motivation recorded mean = 3.94 (standard deviation = 1.177), while egoistic sponsorship motivation recorded mean = 3.79 (standard deviation = 1.289). The result shows that respondents did not read sponsorship as purely charitable or purely commercial. They recognised both forms of motive (*Table 3*).

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for sports sponsorship motivation.

Dimension	Mean	Standard deviation	Interpretation
Altruistic sponsorship motivation	3.94	1.177	High
Egoistic sponsorship motivation	3.79	1.289	High

Effect of sponsorship motivation on purchase intention

The second objective was to examine whether sponsorship motivation influences purchase intention. Multiple linear regression was conducted with purchase intention as the dependent variable and the two sponsorship motive dimensions as predictors. The model explained 58.6% of the variance in purchase intention, which indicates that perceived sponsorship motivation has substantial explanatory value in this sample. Egoistic sponsorship motivation showed a strong positive effect on purchase intention (standardised beta = 0.919, $p < 0.001$). Fans who perceived stronger commercial motivation were more likely to express intention to buy sponsor products or services. Altruistic sponsorship motivation showed a significant negative unique effect (standardised beta = -0.189, $p = 0.002$). This finding means that, after egoistic motivation was controlled, higher altruistic perception was associated with lower purchase intention (Table 4).

Table 4. Multiple regression of sponsorship motivation on purchase intention.

Independent Variable	Standardised Beta	p-value	Interpretation
Egoistic sponsorship motivation	0.919	< 0.001	Significant positive effect
Altruistic sponsorship motivation	-0.189	0.002	Significant negative unique effect
Model summary	R squared = 0.586		58.6% variance explained

The first important finding is the high level of both altruistic and egoistic sponsorship motivation. This is a realistic picture of modern football sponsorship. Fans in Perak appear to understand that sponsorship can help football while also serving brand objectives. This matters because it challenges the simple assumption that supporters only want sponsors to appear purely charitable. The respondents recognised commercial intent and did not necessarily reject it. The high altruistic score suggests that fans saw sponsors as contributing to football development, team support or community value. This supports earlier work that links perceived social contribution with positive sponsorship evaluation (Li et al., 2022; Olson, 2010). In a state football context, that interpretation is plausible. Local football carries community meaning, and sponsors that help sustain football may receive goodwill from supporters. The high egoistic score shows a second layer of interpretation. Fans also noticed that sponsors use football to improve brand image, popularity and market reach. This does not have to damage the sponsor. In commercial sport, supporters often expect brands to seek returns. What matters is whether the commercial motive feels relevant and whether the sponsor provides useful offers or experiences. A sponsor that hides its commercial purpose may appear vague. A sponsor that connects its products to the fan experience may become easier to remember and easier to choose.

The regression result makes the contribution of the study clearer. Egoistic sponsorship motivation was the strongest predictor of purchase intention. This suggests that commercially visible sponsorship is more likely to move fans toward buying. Brand presence, product communication, promotions, fan offers and sponsor-team fit may make the sponsor more salient when the fan is deciding what to buy. This agrees with

sponsorship research showing that attitude toward the sponsor and brand-related evaluations are central to purchase intention (Biscaia et al., 2013; Roy and Cornwell, 2003). The negative coefficient for altruistic motivation requires careful reading. It should not be interpreted as evidence that fans dislike community support. The descriptive result shows the opposite, because altruistic motivation was rated highly. The regression result means that altruistic perception did not add purchase-driving value once commercial motivation was included in the same model. A likely explanation is that fans separate appreciation from buying. They may approve of a sponsor helping football, but that approval does not automatically tell them what to purchase or why the sponsor's product is better than alternatives. Another possible explanation is statistical suppression. If altruistic and egoistic motives are correlated, the regression coefficient for altruistic motivation represents only its unique effect after the commercial motive is held constant. Future studies should therefore report tolerance, variance inflation factor and bivariate correlations. A mediation model could also test whether altruistic motive first improves sponsor attitude, which then influences purchase intention. The present finding is still useful because it warns sponsors not to rely on goodwill alone as a sales strategy.

For sponsors in Perak football, the practical message is direct. Community support remains valuable because it protects trust and legitimacy. However, sponsors that want higher purchase intention must also give fans a clear reason to buy. Examples include football-themed product bundles, sponsor discounts on match days, co-branded merchandise, product trials at stadium or fan events, loyalty rewards, and social media activations that connect the sponsor's product with the supporter experience. Football organisations can also use the finding when designing sponsorship packages. Clubs should not offer sponsors only passive logo exposure. They should build sponsorship platforms that combine community contribution with measurable activation. Youth programmes, fan engagement and grassroots support can sit beside direct product promotions. This balance allows sponsorship to remain credible while also giving brands a route to commercial return.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between sports sponsorship motivation and purchase intention among football fans in Perak. The findings show that fans perceived both altruistic and egoistic sponsorship motives at high levels. This indicates that football sponsorship is understood as a dual-purpose activity, involving support for the sport and commercial benefit for the sponsor. The regression analysis showed that sponsorship motivation significantly explained purchase intention. Egoistic motivation had a strong positive effect, while altruistic motivation had a negative unique effect after egoistic motivation was controlled. The main conclusion is that purchase intention in this context is driven more strongly by visible commercial value than by community goodwill alone. The study contributes local evidence to Malaysian football sponsorship research. It also refines sponsor strategy by showing that goodwill and purchase intention is not the same outcome. Sponsors should continue to support football development, but they must pair that support with credible, relevant and easy-to-act-on consumer activation. Several limitations should be recognised. First, the study was limited to football fans in Perak. The findings should not be generalised automatically to other Malaysian states, sports or fan cultures. Second, the data were self-reported, so

responses may be affected by memory, social desirability or differences in how respondents understand sponsorship. Third, the cross-sectional design captures perceptions at one point in time and cannot prove long-term causal effects. Fourth, the study focused only on altruistic and egoistic sponsorship motivation. Future research should include sponsor-team fit, fan identification, brand familiarity, sponsor credibility, attitude toward the sponsor and actual purchase behaviour. A structural equation modelling approach would allow researchers to test mediation effects more fully. Qualitative interviews would also help explain why fans can appreciate altruistic sponsorship yet not translate that appreciation into purchase intention.

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Conflict of interest

The authors confirm that there is no conflict of interest involve with any parties in this research study.

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