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## **SPORT CONSUMPTION AMONG WOMEN VS. BRAND RECOGNITION OF OFFICIAL SPONSORS DURING UEFA EURO 2012**

Numerous studies prove that consumer confusion about official sponsors and ambushers recognition depend on spectator involvement in a sport event, but there is a deficit of literature available on the subject of women as fans. Therefore, the authors made an attempt to verify how event involvement in the UEFA Euro 2012 influenced the recognition of both sponsors' and ambushers' brands among female fans. The survey comprised a representative random sample of 523 Polish women above the age of 15 years. In order to verify the sport involvement among women respondents were asked questions about the quantity and intensity of the matches watched. Polish women showed high interest in 2012 UEFA European Championship. More than 20% of them declared that they had watched more than 11 matches. However, only approx. 30% of the women identified official sponsors' brands. It is also worth to add that those who were more involved and belonged to heavy viewers and moderate viewers recognised sponsors' brands much better than the other groups. This study proves that women are interested in football and they are quite engaged fans. Therefore authors claim that adequate information and media coverage should be sent towards them. It might be a suggestion for designers and planners of promotional campaigns to make an attempt to reach female audience with a clear message.

**Keywords:** brand recognition, sponsorship, ambush marketing, consumers, events, football, women

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Consumption of sport can be studied in many dimensions, a key aspect raised in this study is aspect of sport consumption as spectator attendance among women. The gender differences in sport consumption are quite strong. While in the literature, there is interest in the participation of women in sport<sup>3,4,5</sup>, there is not a vast amount of literature available on the subject of women participating in sports and the factors for their engaging. There is

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<sup>4</sup> H. Jones, P. Millward, B. Buraimo, *Adult participation in sport Analysis of the Taking Part Survey*, "Lancashire: University Of Central Lancashire" 2011, <http://www.gov.uk> (retrieved 4.06.2016).

<sup>5</sup> J. Sindik, D. Rendulić, S. Čorak, A. Lewis Perinić, *Analysis of the Relevant Factors of Retaining Women in Judo*, "Montenegrin Journal of Sports Science and Medicine" 3/2 (2014), p. 23-32.

also no research about the women level of involvement and interest in watching the sport event. That aspects are crucial because researchers claim that the biggest influence on a consumer recognition of a sponsor's brand is the extent to which consumers are committed to a sport event, as well as their attention, focus on, and interest in a given sport<sup>6,7,8</sup>. Also Piątkowska and Gocłowska<sup>9</sup> research proves that respondents who were more involved in the sport event performed better when identifying the official sponsors. The results they obtained provide strong evidence that spectators' sports involvement plays an important role in predicting their awareness of sponsor. Such active information can result in better understanding of and differentiation among official sponsors and ambush marketers, increasing women consumers' ability to screen out nonsponsoring companies<sup>10</sup>. It is important because nowadays the issue of ambush marketing is an area of increasing interest of researchers of sports sponsorship, little is known about what determines the correct recognition of the sponsor or a mistake for the ambush. And there is no research about women ability to recognition of sponsors and ambushers. The literature has long pointed out that ambush marketer misidentification occurs when consumers incorrectly believe that an ambush marketer that does not officially support an event is an official sponsor of that event<sup>11</sup>. These activities are so popular as it may result from the fact that an average fan is not able to distinguish official sponsors from companies passing themselves off as officials. Numerous authors stress that addressees of sport events confuse sponsors with ambushers, what has negative effects on factors of recognisability of official sponsors<sup>12,13,14</sup>. To gain in effectiveness, sponsors address marketing actions to specific target groups in which the consumers not only express interest in a particular sport discipline but also watch news about, show commitment to, and identify with the watched sporting event<sup>15</sup>. Therefore, we see that there is need to see if the women are interested and involved in football sport events. Are they in target group of sponsors and ambushers brands? It is crucial factor in determining sponsorship effectiveness and needs to be tested in depth.

<sup>6</sup> T. Meenaghan, *Understanding sponsorship effects*, "Psychology and Marketing" 18/2 (2001), p. 95–122.

<sup>7</sup> T. Lardinois, C. Derbaix, *Sponsorship and recall of sponsors*, "Psychology & Marketing" 18/2 (2001), p. 167–190.

<sup>8</sup> M.T. Pham, *Effects of Involvement, Arousal, and Pleasure on the Recognition of Sponsorship Stimuli*, "Advances in Consumer Research" 19/1 (1992), p. 85–93.

<sup>9</sup> M. Piątkowska, S. Gocłowska, *Brand recognition of official sponsors and ambush marketers during the UEFA EURO 2012 among various groups of sport consumers*, 2016 (in press).

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<sup>11</sup> E. Wolfsteiner, R. Grosh, U. Wagner, *What Drives Ambush Marketer Misidentification?*, "Journal of Sport Management" 2015/29, p. 137–154.

<sup>12</sup> L. Pitt, M. Parent, P. Berthon, P.G. Steyn, *Event sponsorship and ambush marketing: Lessons from the Beijing Olympics*, "Business Horizons" 53/3 (2010), p. 281–290.

<sup>13</sup> G. Nufer, A. Bühler, *How effective is the sponsorship of global sports events? A comparison of the FIFA World Cups in 2006 and 1998*, "International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship" 11/4 (2010), p. 303–319.

<sup>14</sup> M. Piątkowska, *Rozpoznawalność marek oficjalnych sponsorów i ambush marketerów podczas XXII Zimowych Igrzysk Olimpijskich w Sochi*, "Modern Management Review" XIX/21 (2014), p. 157–174.

<sup>15</sup> T. Meenaghan, *Understanding sponsorship effects*, "Psychology and Marketing" 18/2 (2001), p. 95–122.

It can be assumed that women involvement in a sport event consists of, above all else, either watching sport programs or direct participation in an event in which consumers show a high level of concentration and interest. This results in them noticing sport event sponsors. Therefore, the authors made an attempt to understand the factors that may lead to misidentification of official sponsors and to verify how event involvement in the UEFA Euro 2012 influenced the recognition of both sponsors' and ambushers' brands among female fans.

## 2. RESEARCH CONTEXT

This study concerns football's UEFA European Championship in Poland. The Championship is one of the largest sporting events in the world and is held every four years. In 2012, the event proved to be very popular with sponsors and ambush marketers because it was the first such major sport event held in Central and Eastern Europe.

Moreover, the Championship's prestige attracted a large television viewership in Poland and abroad. The majority of Polish consumers watched live broadcasts of the matches on television. Telewizja Polska, the official host broadcaster of the UEFA Euro 2012, noting record audience ratings when covering group matches. A total of 14.7 million people watched a live broadcast of a Poland-Russia match on three public television channels – TVP1, TVP Sport, and TVP HD<sup>16</sup>. At its peak, Polish audience ratings reached 16.234 million. In comparison, UEFA measured audience ratings of 299 million during the live broadcast of the Final in which Spain beat Italy in Kiev. This rating is 62 million higher than during the live broadcast of an Austria-Switzerland match during the UEFA Euro 2008.

The UEFA sponsorship program for the UEFA Euro 2012 began in 2009 by signing the initial sponsorship agreement. UEFA's global sponsor program consists of EUROTOP partners, UEFA European Football Championship (EURO) sponsors, and national sponsors. Some partners signed agreements covering two EUROTOP cycles, which cover additional national team final rounds until the end of 2017, including the UEFA Euro 2016. The EUROTOP category included: Adidas, Coca-Cola, Hyundai-Kia, McDonalds, Sharp. Other Euro sponsors included: Canon, Carlsberg, Castrol, Continental and Orange and national ones: Bank Pekao SA, MasterCard and E. Wedel.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

### Data collection procedure

A survey was conducted from 19 July to 23 July 2012 (18 days after the final match of UEFA Euro 2012) by means of Computer Assisted Personal Interviews. The survey comprised a representative random sample of 523 Polish women above the age of 15 years. The respondents were contacted personally and selected from a personal identification number frame run by the Department of the State Central Register and Computer Networks of the Ministry of the Interior and Administration.

Stratification included nine macroregions and seven different classes of town sizes. As a result of crossing the macroregions with the classes of town size, 55 strata were ob-

<sup>16</sup> TVP (2012, April 3), *Rekordowe wyniki oglądalności UEFA EURO 2012* [Record-breaking viewership during the UEFA Euro 2012], <http://www.tvp.pl/o-tvp/centrum-prasowe/komunikaty-prasowe/rekordowe-wynikiogladalnosci-uefa-euro-2012/7779718>.

tained, out of which 170 municipalities were drawn. These formed the basis on which addresses were drawn. Municipalities were drawn with a probability proportional to the number of their residents aged 15 years and older. An independent drawing of addresses was held from among 170 municipalities.

Six face-to-face interviews were conducted in each of the municipalities drawn. The selection of respondents was carried out using the Kish grid, which ensures that every family member in the household drawn had the same chance of being interviewed. After entering a residence, the interviewer noted the members within the household (aged 15 years and older) starting from the oldest person.

For the purpose of creating homogenous groups of consumers based on behavioral variables, i.e., the quantity and intensity of the UEFA Euro 2012 matches watched, hierarchical clustering adopting the Euclidean metric was conducted. The clusters with anomalies ( $n=2$ ) and no data ( $n = 139$ ) were discarded. Table 1 presents the characteristics of the study population which was subject to further analysis.

Table 1. Characteristics of the examined population

Factors	Entire population examined ( $N = 382$ )	
	n	%
Age		
15–29	113	29.5
30–39	67	17.5
40–49	63	16.5
50–59	71	18.5
> 60	69	18.0
Education		
elementary	71	18.5
basic vocational	83	21.6
secondary	173	45.2
higher	56	14.7
Place of residence		
rural area	145	38.1
town or city up to 20,000 residents	45	11.9
city 21,000–50,000 residents	48	12.6
city 51,000–99,000 residents	35	9.3
city 101,000–199,000 residents	37	9.8
city 200,000–500,000 residents	35	9.0
city >500,000 residents	36	9.4
Household net monthly income per capita		
≤ PLN 1,499.99	51	13.3
PLN 1,500–2,499.99	74	19.4
PLN 2,500–3,499.99	108	28.3
≥ PLN 3,500.00	149	39.0

Source: own study.

### Data analysis procedure

The statistics were calculated using the IBM® SPSS® Statistics version 21 program. The hierarchical clustering method using Euclidean distance method with average linkage method was adopted. The chi-square test of independence was performed for consumers to verify statistically significant differences between the measures of brand awareness of official sponsors and ambushers. The P-value for statistical significance is .05.

#### 4. SPORT CONSUMPTION OF POLISH WOMEN DURING UEFA EURO 2012

In order to verify the sport consumption among women during the UEFA Euro respondents were asked questions about the quantity and intensity of the matches watched. As for quantity the respondents were asked: The 2012 UEFA European Championship was co-hosted by Poland and Ukraine in June. Have you watched any Euro 2012 matches? If so, how many did you see? The question about intensity was posed as: Please think about the matches you watched within the 2012 UEFA European Championship. Did you watch them entirely or only fragments?

Polish women showed high interest in 2012 UEFA European Championship. More than 20% of them declared that they had watched more than 11 matches (Table 2). Among those who declared watching the matches on TV nearly a third (32.4%) declared they had always watched the entire or a large part of a match.

We conducted a hierarchical clustering that adopted a Euclidean metric in order to divide the population into homogeneous groups according to two psychographic variables: the quantity and intensity of the matches watched. As a result, we obtained five groups of the UEFA Euro 2012 consumers, regarding involvement in the event: 1) heavy viewers (n = 44; 11.6%), 2) moderate viewers (n = 36; 9.5%), 3) light viewers (n = 80; 21.0%), 4) very light viewers (n = 156; 40.8%), and 5) non-viewers (n = 65; 17.1%). Table 2 presents the frequency of answers concerning quantity and intensity of matches watched within five cluster groups.

Table 2. Quantity and intensity of matches watched during UEFA EURO 2012 within female cluster groups

Psychographic variables	Total	Heavy viewers (n=44)	Moderate viewers (n=36)	Light viewers (n=80)	Very light viewers (n=156)	Non-viewers (n=65)	
Quantity of watched matches	%	%	%	%	%	%	$\chi^2 = 439.9,$ $p < 0.0001$
<5	56.3	-	-	53.1	69.9	97.0	
6-10	22.7	-	-	46.9	30.1	3.0	
11-20	12.0	48.9	66.7	-	-	-	
>20	9.1	51.1	33.3	-	-	-	
Intensity of watched matches							$\chi^2 = 766.7,$ $p < 0.0001$
always watched the entire or a large part of a match	32.4	100.0	-	100.0	-	-	
usually watched the entire or a large part of a match	25.1	-	54.1	-	48.7	-	

sometimes watched the entire or a large part of a match and sometimes only fragments	25.3	-	45.9	-	51.3	-
usually watched only fragments	15.1	-	-	-	-	87.9
always watched only fragments	2.1	-	-	-	-	12.1

Source: own study.

### 5. BRAND RECOGNITION OF OFFICIAL SPONSORS AND AMBUSH MARKETERS DURING THE UEFA EURO 2012 AMONG VARIOUS GROUPS OF FEMALE SPORT CONSUMERS

In testing the brand recognition of official sponsors and ambush marketers during the UEFA Euro 2012, we adopted basic marketing communication criteria measuring the extent to which a brand is recalled by consumers, i.e., measuring brand awareness in the researched population: Top of Mind (TOMA), Unaided (UBA) and Aided Brand Awareness (ABA). In this paper authors provide only TOMA metrics which presents the percentage of consumers who spontaneously name a specific brand first. The respondents were asked: Do you know what brand/ company was the official sponsor of UEFA Euro 2012? Please name all the sponsors who come to your mind.

As far as TOMA is concerned statistically significant differences in brand recognition were observed ( $\chi^2 = 207.4$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). However it results from the very low response rate in "other" category (1.5%); (Table 3). There were no statistical differences in TOMA between sponsors (32.0%) and ambushers (32.6%). It needs to be emphasized, however, that such a high TOMA rate in the case of sponsors (32.0%) results from a high percentage of consumers who named a brand belonging to EUROTOP category (26.8%). The brand recognition rate was much lower for sponsors who belonged to the categories of EURO sponsors and national sponsors. A high percentage of female consumers could not think of any sponsoring brand. One-third of women (34.0 %) did not know or did not remember who the official sponsor of the event was.

Table 3. Brand recognition rate of businesses running promotional campaigns during the UEFA Euro 2012 according to TOMA metric (%) among women

Subject	Total	Heavy viewers (n=44)	Moderate viewers (n=36)	Light viewers (n=80)	Very light viewers (n=156)	Non-viewers (n=65)
Any sponsorship category	32.0	43.2*	36.1	38.3	30.5	17.2
EUROTOP	26.8	31.8	33.3	33.3	25.3	14.1
EURO sponsors	4.1	11.4	2.8	3.7	3.9	1.6
National sponsors	1.1	-	-	1.2	1.3	1.6
Ambushers	32.6	20.5	30.6	32.1	36.4	32.8
Other	1.5	4.5	-	2.5	0.6	-
Don't know/don't remember	34.0	31.8	33.3	27.2	32.5	50.0

\* statistically different  $p < 0.05$  heavy viewers vs. very light and non-viewers

Source: own study.

The results of a chi-square test of independence demonstrated that the affiliation to a group influences brand recognition of UEFA Euro 2012 official sponsors ( $\chi^2 = 8.2$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The highest TOMA rate was observed in the group of heavy viewers (43.2%). It was much higher than in the other groups: very light viewers ( $\chi^2 = 4.4$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and non-viewers ( $\chi^2 = 6.1$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). When analysing each group, a downward tendency can be observed: the lower the number of the watched matches, the lower the percentage of people who recalled a brand of the official sponsor as first. In the group of non-viewers, one in five respondents (17.2 %) correctly identified the official sponsor. The same rule applies to a test of brand awareness in each sponsorship category (EUROTOP and EURO sponsors) in which the TOMA metric was adopted. As far as national sponsors the rates are very low and may be observed only between light, very light and non-viewers. An inverse relationship exists in the case of people who had to identify the ambush marketers. In the group of heavy viewers, the TOMA rate of ambushers was the highest among very light viewers – 36.4 % and non-viewers – 32.8%. A half of the non-viewer respondents did not know or did not remember any brand connected with the analyzed event.

## 6. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY AND CONCLUSIONS

Farrell et al.<sup>17</sup> say that women are increasingly becoming vested fans of men's sport especially football. The results of this study confirm this hypothesis as women performed well as spectators – only 17% of them declared that they had not watched any match during UEFA Euro 2012 in Poland. It also turns out that among female spectators, most of them showed high interest in the event as they watched always or usually watched the entire or a large part of a match. However, only approx. 30% of the women identified official sponsors' brands without a mistake. It is also worth to add that brand testing rates depend on the involvement and interest of spectators in the match. Those who were more engaged and belonged to heavy viewers and moderate viewers recognised sponsors' brands much better than the other groups. And on the other hand, they indicated less frequently ambushers' brands. Obtained results confirm other studies available in the subject literature. Sandler and Shani<sup>18</sup>, Ko et al.<sup>19</sup> oraz Kinney et al.<sup>20</sup> state that consumer confusion about the official sponsors and ambushers depend on spectator involvement in a sport event and that reflects their interest in the event which, as a consequence, helps the spectators notice and remember the sponsors of an event.

Proving that women are interested in football, and that fans are involved match means that they are the target group of all companies who wish to carry out marketing campaigns before, during and after sport events, also those related to football. Therefore, adequate information and media coverage should be sent towards them. It might be a sugges-

<sup>17</sup> A. Farrell, J.S. Fink, S. Fields, *Women's Sport Spectatorship: An Exploration of Men's Influence*, "Journal of Sport Management" 2011/25, p. 190–201.

<sup>18</sup> D.M. Sandler, D. Shani, *Olympic Sponsorship vs. 'Ambush' Marketing: Who Gets the Gold?*, "Journal of Advertising Research" 29/4 (1989), p. 9–14.

<sup>19</sup> Y.J. Ko, K. Kim, C.L. Claussen, T.H. Kim, *The effects of sport involvement, sponsor awareness and corporate image on intention to purchase sponsors' products*, "International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship" 9/2 (2008), p. 79–94.

<sup>20</sup> L. Kinney, S.R. McDaniel, L. Degaris, *Demographic and psychographic variables predicting NASCAR sponsor brand recall*, "International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship" 9/3 (2008), p. 169–179.

tion for designers and planners of promotional campaigns to make an attempt to reach female audience with a clear message. It seems nevertheless that they seem to be neglected by sponsors and other companies engaged in sport events, mainly in masculine sports such as football.

There is a strong deficit concerning brand recognition during sport events focusing of women which makes impossible for authors to compare their results directly. The limitation of this study is definitely no answer to the question - why women despite watching the entire or most of the match are not able to faultlessly identify brand sponsors of the event? Solving this issue need further in-depth interviews and analysis in a more qualitative manner.

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### KONSUMPCJA SPORTOWA WŚRÓD Kobiet A ROZPOZNANIE MARKI OFICJALNYCH SPONSORÓW PODCZAS UEFA EURO 2012

W literaturze przedmiotu potwierdzono, że zaangażowanie kibiców ma wpływ na wyniki rozpoznawalności sponsorów i ambush marketerów. Natomiast wyraźnie odczuwalny jest deficyt prac naukowych dotyczących zaangażowania kobiet jako fanów widowisk sportowych. Z tego względu autorki podjęły próbę zbadania, jak zaangażowanie kobiet w wydarzenie sportowe UEFA EURO 2012 wpływa na rozpoznanie marek oficjalnych sponsorów imprezy oraz przedsiębiorstw stosujących ambush marketing. Badanie sondażowe przeprowadzono na reprezentatywnej próbie 523 Polek w wieku powyżej 15. roku życia. W celu identyfikacji kobiet będących kibicami badanego wydarzenia zadano pytanie dotyczące liczby oraz intensywności oglądanych meczów. Polki, jak wynika z przeprowadzonych analiz, okazały znaczne zainteresowanie piłkarskimi mistrzostwami Europy. Ponad 20% kobiet zadeklarowało, że obejrzało ponad 11 meczów. Jednakże tylko 30% Polek poprawnie zidentyfikowało marki oficjalnych sponsorów. Badane zakwalifikowane do grupy *heavy viewers* oraz *moderate viewers* znacznie lepiej rozpoznały marki sponsorów w porównaniu z innymi grupami. Badanie to dowodzi, że kobiety są kibicami piłkarskich wydarzeń sportowych oraz że są zaangażowanymi fankami. Autorki sugerują zatem, aby przekazy promocyjne marek sponsorujących daną imprezę sportową były adresowane także do tej grupy docelowej. Wyniki tych badań mogą być sugestią dla projektantów kampanii reklamowych dotyczącej podjęcia próby dotarcia do żeńskiej publiczności wydarzeń sportowych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** rozpoznawalność marki, sponsoring, ambush marketing, piłka nożna, kobiety

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