

Formatting Sport Organization Image as a Competitive Advantage Trying to Attract More Sponsors

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Growing sport phenomenon as a branch of business stimulates to analyze sport industry participants activity, which is now dynamical and requires specific knowledge. In our days industry produces various sport products where competition is very big, that is why it is essential to analyze how sport organizations achieve competitive advantage. One of the methods is image formatting.

*The article consists of four parts. **The first part** formulates the problem, aim and objectives of the article. The aim of the article is to ascertain how a sport organization image is formatted as a competitive advantage, trying to attract more sponsors.*

The aim is achieved with the help of the objectives formulated that seek: 1) to analyze and to identify what factors to determine and strengthen sport organization image, 2) to explore whether a formatting sport organization image is a competitive advantage and how it is formatting, 3) empirically verify whether a properly formatted sport organization image to attracts more sponsors, 4) investigate how it should be sport organization and sponsors images during cooperation, 5) to analyze theoretically and define what is proper sport organization image and empirically verify whether three parties concerned: sport product consumer, sponsor and sport organization itself identically identify formatted image.

Research methodology used in the article is a comparison analysis of scientific literature, qualitative structural interview, quantitative questionnaire survey methods.

In the second part there is done a scientific literature analysis and made theoretical studies of a formatting sport organization image, trying to determine the particularity of a sport organization image formatting and suggest a theoretical model version which could help to form a competitive image, which by Ferrand and Pages (1999) create bigger value and helps to get a competitive advantage.

In the third part there are described researches and results which show what factors have influence on a sport organization image and their importance. Results generalization and the comparison of scientific literature analysis are carried out.

The fourth part of the article presents conclusions.

Keywords: *sport organization, image formatting, competitive advantage, sponsors.*

Introduction

Sport industry is directly related with a nation development level. It conforms to general economic law. Smooth economic development needs permanent and secure growing of all ranges (Ciegis & Gineitiene, 2008). Dilation of market, growing organizations activities and the attempt to occupy a bigger part of a consumer market determines the fact that any organization competes in one big global market. The organization which wants to be successful and achieve competitive advantage need to standardize or adapt its activity and this will help to effectively satisfy consumer needs (Fasan & Agoro, 2007; Alimiene & Kuvykaite, 2008).

In the European Union countries sport industry in gross domestic product composes 3 % and creates 2 mln. Workplaces, which have to grow in ten years 60 % (Le Roux, Chantelat and Camy, 1999). Growing sport industry and globalization process accrue sport organization competition (Ratten and Tsiatsou, 2010). In our days sport industry are full of various sport products where competition is very big, that is why it is essential to distinguish a sport organization from other competitors (Abimola & Vallaster, 2007); Fasan & Agoro, 2007); Butkeviciene et al., 2008). One of the ways to achieve it is to format a suitable sport organization image which is valuable for consumers. This is why it is important to ascertain how is formatted a sport organization image which gives oneness.

Then in a market where there is a very big competition is necessary to achieve a long-term competitive advantage, which is satisfy consumer needs (Virvilate et al., 2009).

According to Abimola & Vallaster (2007) organization's competitive advantage depends on information and particular knowledge. This is why trying to enhance sport organization's competitive ability, which according to Brooks (1999), is the best way available to create a suitable sport organization image in the market. It is important to make theoretical studies: how a sport organization image is formatting as a competitive advantage. This aspect of a sport organization image formatting was analyzed by these authors: Ferrand and Pages, (1999), Brooks (1999), Shank

(2004), Alexandris, Douka, Papadopoulos & Kaltsatou (2008) and others, but generalized factors influencing sport organization image formatting and attraction of sponsors are still missing.

The aim of the article is to ascertain how a sport organization image is formatting as a competitive advantage, and how more sponsors are being attracted.

The aim is achieved with the help of the objectives formulated: 1) to analyze and to identify what factors determine and strengthen a sport organization image, 2) to explore whether a formatting sport organization image is competitive advantage and how it is formatting, 3) empirically verify whether a properly formatted sport organization image attracts more sponsors, 4) investigate how it should be sport organization and sponsors images during cooperation, 5) to analyze theoretically and define what is a proper sport organization image and empirically verify whether three parties concerned: sport product consumer, sponsor and sport organization itself identically identify formatted image.

Research methodology used in the article is the comparison analysis of scientific literature, a qualitative structural interview and quantitative questionnaire survey methods.

Trying to investigate what factors the sport organization LLAF uses for image formatting and determine their importance and find out its connection with sponsorship by using qualitative and quantitative researches.

Theoretic research of a formatting image as competitive advantage of a sport organization

According to Fasan and Agoro (2007) a sport organization must be creative and look for new various possibilities to enhance competitive ability. Organization's formatted image is to purposefully direct to target audience. Successful organization activity depends on purposeful resource usage (Burinskiene and Rudzkiene, 2007) and how on the ability of an organization to demonstrate itself for consumers (Butkeviciene et al., 2008).

To format a suitable and effective image is possible just when it is known what values of the image confront people. The basic reason of image formatting is creating and supporting an extra value (Suslavičius, 2006).

Organization's activity range and internal environment characteristics shows its values and define positive image formatting (Brooks, 1999; Abimola and Vallaster, 2007; Alexandris et al., 2008). Organization values must correspond with the symbols of organization activity and raise associations which consumers easily understand and interpret (Aaker, 1991; Amis et al., 1997).

An organization is distinguished from competitors, when the organization values create divergent emotions (Oxenfeldt, 1974; Ferrand and Pages, 1999).

This is why sport organization objectives of activities and expectation of consumers' compatibility are very important for sport organization image formatting. It necessary for that formatted image to be understood as a competitive value (Kotler & Armstrong, 1996; Vincent et al. 2007). Organization satisfies consumer needs through

created better value for consumers better than it could be done by a competitor (Dovaliene & Virvilaite, 2008). A sport organization image creates bigger value for consumers (Ferrand & Pages, 1999).

A sport organization image in present industry is a very important sport phenomenon, because a competitive image depends on sport organization sponsorship (Grant, 1991; Meenaghan, 1991; Amis, Slack, Berrett, 1999; Shank, 2004).

Theoretic model of a sport organization image

A sport organization image is properly formatted when it is purposefully directed to the target audience:

- consumers;
- sponsors.

Here lies sport organization particularity. A sport organization image must be formatted favorably for two segments. One of them is the last product consumer and another is organizations – sponsors which trying to achieve almost the same objectives, but with different range of activities (see Figure 1).

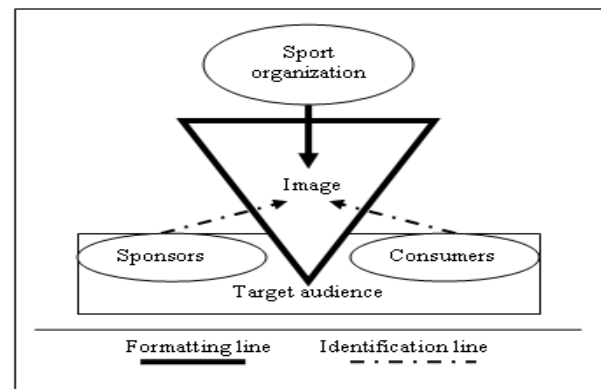


Figure 1. Theoretical model of sport organization image formatting

In order a sport organization image to be formatted effectively, three interdependent agents: sport organization, sponsors and consumers are to identify a formatted image in the same way. A suitable and purposeful organization image needs (1) ascertain how a sport organization shows itself in a market and how it looks like for itself (2) what her consumers identify and describe the image in the same way (3) if for that sport organization image is sponsored by sponsors.

Empiric research of a sport organization image

A sport organization image is being formatted in industry through sport organization products (Mason, 1999) and it is possible to achieve it using public relations which is very important for the successful development of a sport organization (Bernard et al., 2007).

The qualitative research helped to reveal sport organization product importance for a sport organization image. It was proved that the biggest influence on strengthening sport organization image is produced by the following aspects:

- Sportsmen
- Sport events
- Results of sportsmen which are achieved in sport event.

The research also shows that the factors of a sport product format images which have a big influence on sport organization’s product image. These factors format a sport product image in a complex and a sport organization image is formatted through the sport product.

For sport organization image very important is human resources – sportsman and good management. It needs for

good conditions to create good sport event that sportsmen could achieve how just is possible better results in that sport event.

By Shank (2004); Kazlauskaitė & Buciniene (2008) human resources are very important factors trying to achieve long-term competitive advantage.

Quantitative research declares all most the same results (see Figure 2) the biggest influence for sport organization image have and strengthen sport organization image are sport results (58%), sportsmen (21%) sport events (11%).

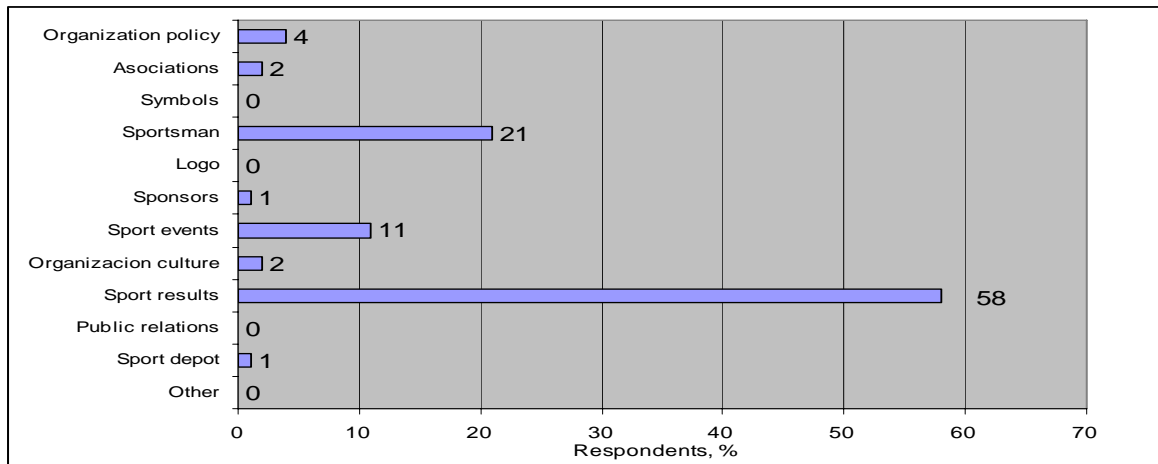


Figure 2. Factors which influencing sport organization image, assessment

Analyzing the results of the researches about sport organization image formatting it is important to make generalizations and to declare that a sport organization, an organization sponsor and sport product consumers identify the same factors which make the biggest influence and that these factors were interdependent.

A sport organization image is formatted through sport organization product components which must be of high quality. Shank (2004), states that a sport organization image formatting determines sport product quality and its presentation in the market and it shows a purposeful partnership with other organizations – sponsors.

Formatting of a sport organization image is

recommended by using the strongest sport organization parts to and through these strong parts try to achieve competitive advantage (Vignali, 1997; Alexandris et al., 2008).

According to Vincent et al. (2007) and Amis, Slack and Berrett, (1999), sport symbols and associations are very important for a sport organization image formatting.

The research results show the importance of symbols (71%); associations (70%) and organization identity (58%), which must have emotional profit (Janonis, Dovaliene and Virvilaite, 2007).

For the sport organization LAF (Lithuanian Athletics Federation) image is also very important: sport depot (66%), sport product (64%) and sponsors (57%) (see Figure 3).

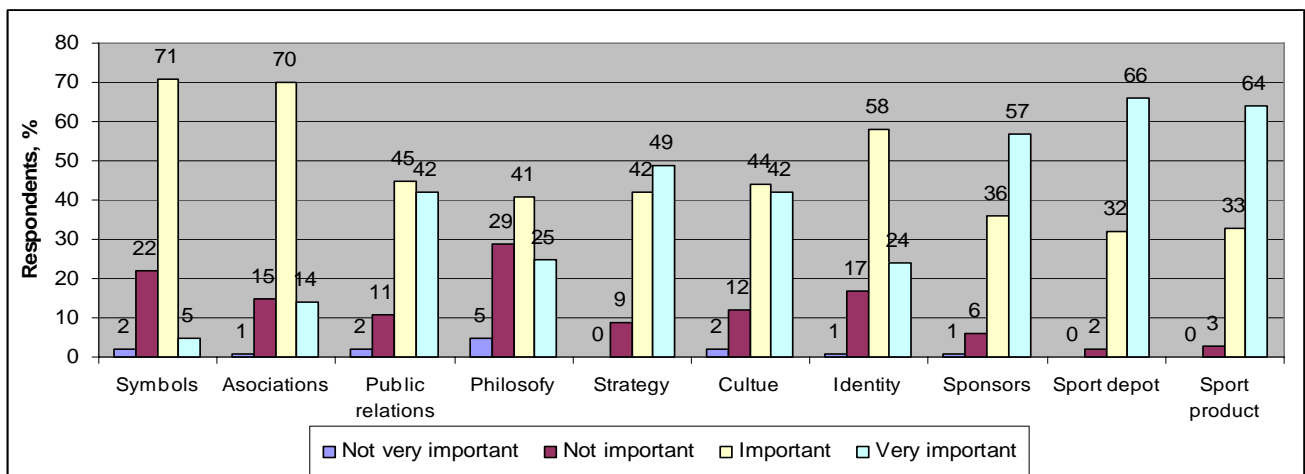


Figure 3. Factors which are important for sport organization image, assessment

Related associations are very important for sport organization, because sport organization image and sport organization sponsorship depend on them (Amis et al., 1999; Ferrand and Pages, 1999).

In the research sport organization and organization –

sponsor state that the sport organization LAF is associated with: velocity, nationality and purpose.

The sport organization LAF image is associated with: nationality (24%), purpose (22%) and velocity (17%). All results are shown in Figure 4:

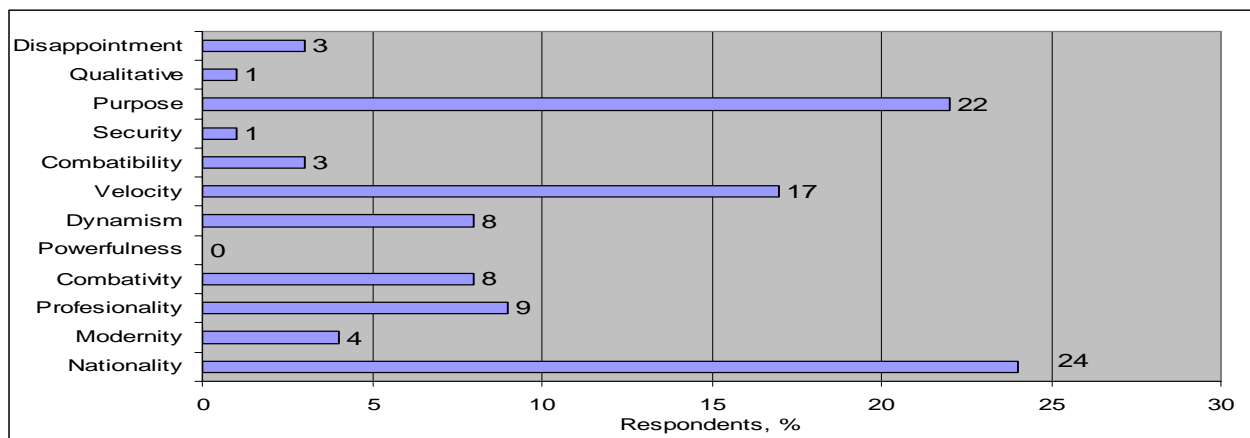


Figure 4. Sport organization LAF associations with different aspects, assessment

A sport organization using associations, symbols and organization identity tries to make a positioning strategy of sport products. Using these factors a sport organization tries to get a competitive advantage and to attract more consumers and organizations - sponsors (Amis, Slack and Berrett, 1999; Janonis, Dovaliene, and Virvilaite, 2007). In a positioning process an organization uses already known and identified attributes of organization product (Ostaseviciute and Sliburyte, 2008), which let to achieve a competitive advantage more effectively and it is very relevant to organizations - sponsors (Bernard et al., 2007).

The qualitative research has shown that the sport organization and organizations - sponsors in a long-term

partnership try to create stronger images and in this way to reach a competitive advantage. According to Ferrand and Pages (1996); Amis et al., (1999); Papadimitriou et al., (2008), sport organization sponsorship is a tool to create a stronger image and to consolidate competitive advantage. The research has revealed that organizations - sponsors image and sport organization image must be similar and strategically purposeful. Also it was found that sponsors images is important for sport organization and conversely.

Quantitative research ascertained that a good and properly formatted sport organization image could attract more sponsors. It has been declared by (80%) of the respondents (see Figure 5).

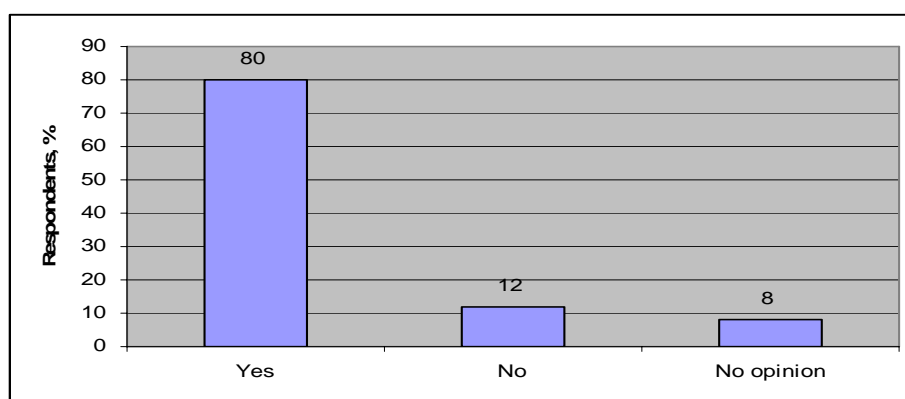


Figure 5. A suitable sport organization image can attract more sponsors, assessment

Nigel and Kevin (2000) state that a sport organization and organizations – sponsors partnerships is reasoned by seeking to consolidate and distinguish images in the market and to a reach a favourable opinion of consumers to offering products of a sport organization also to an organization – sponsor.

According to Urbanskiene et al., (2008) close partnership of organizations could more effectively satisfy consumer needs.

This is why a sport organization and organizations – sponsors must be symbiotic – support each other.

Karpavicius & Jucevicius (2009) state that for sport organization effective activity in business is necessary to create a business system for one common purpose. Shank (2004) states that organizations working together in partnership, consolidate declared values and it is probably the best way to consolidate a sport organization image.

Conclusions

1. A sport organization image is mostly biggest influenced by these factors: sportsmen, sport results and the results which were achieved in the event.
2. A formatted image of a sport organization is a competitive advantage. Products offered by a sport organization have the biggest influence on image formatting.
3. A properly formatted sport organization image could attract more sponsors.

4. A sport organization and organizations – sponsors images must be strategically purposeful and symbiotic, and long-term partnership is the best way to reach it.

5. A suitable formatted image is to be purposeful and a sport organization with organizations – sponsors should present themselves in to the market and realize that images uniformly. This is the image when three interdependent parts describes it uniformly by them values.

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Sporto organizacijų įvaizdžio formavimas kaip konkurencinis pranašumas siekiant pritraukti daugiau sponsorų

Santrauka

Problema. Didėjantis sporto kaip verslo šakos susidomėjimas skatina analizuoti sporto rinkos dalyvių – organizacijų veiklą, kuri šiuo metu yra dinamiška ir reikalaujanti išskirtinio pobūdžio žinių. Dabartiniu metu rinka prisotinta įvairios sporto produkcijos, konkurencija didelė, todėl būtina analizuoti kaip sporto organizacija įgyja konkurencinį pranašumą. Vienas iš būdų yra įvaizdžio formavimas.

Straipsnio tikslas – išsiaiškinti, kaip yra formuojamas sporto organizacijų įvaizdis kaip konkurencinis pranašumas, siekiant pritraukti daugiau sponsoriaujančių organizacijų.

Tikslui įgyvendinti išskirti šie uždaviniai: 1) išanalizuoti ir nustatyti kokie veiksniai lemia ir stiprina sporto organizacijos įvaizdžio formavimą; 2) ištirti, ar formuojamas sporto organizacijų įvaizdis yra konkurencinis pranašumas ir kaip jis formuojamas; 3) empiriškai patikrinti, ar dėl tinkamai suformuoto sporto organizacijų įvaizdžio padaugėtų sponsoriaujančių organizacijų; 4) ištirti, kokie turi būti bendradarbiaujant sporto organizacijų ir sponsoriaujančių organizacijų įvaizdžiai; 5) teoriškai išanalizuoti ir apibūdinti, koks yra tinkamas sporto organizacijų įvaizdis ir empiriškai patikrinti, ar trys suinteresuotos šalys: sporto produkcijos vartotojai, sponsoriaujanti organizacija bei pati sporto organizacija, identiškai identifikuoja formuojamą įvaizdį.

Tyrimo metodai. Taikyti tyrimo metodai: mokslinės literatūros analizė, kokybinis - asmeninis struktūrizuotas interviu, kiekybinis - anketinė apklausa.

Teorinis sporto organizacijos įvaizdžio formavimo kaip konkurencinio pranašumo, studijos.

Fasan&Agoro (2007) teigia, kad sporto organizacijos dabartiniu metu pasitelkdamos kūrybingumu turi ieškoti įvairių būdų, kaip didinti konkurencingumą.

Tinkamiausia ir efektyviausia įvaizdį galima suformuoti tik žinant, kokias vertybes vertina su įvaizdžiu susiduriantys žmonės, pagrindinis įvaizdžio formavimo motyvas yra vertės palaikymas ar didinimas (Suslavicius, 2006).

Sporto organizacijos įvaizdis šiandieninėje sporto rinkoje svarbus, tai yra sporto kaip fenomeno gebėjimo funkcionuoti sąlyga, nes nuo konkurencingesnio įvaizdžio priklauso ir sporto organizacijos sponsoriavimas (Grant, 1991; Meenaghan, 1991; Amis, Slack, Berrett, 1999; Shank, 2004).

Teorinis sporto organizacijų įvaizdžio formavimo modelis

Tinkamai suformuotas sporto organizacijos įvaizdis yra skirtas tikslinėms auditorijoms:

- vartotojams;
- sponsoriaujančioms organizacijoms.

Siekiant, kad sporto organizacijos įvaizdis būtų tinkamai suformuotas ir efektyvus, reikalinga, kad trys tarpusavyje sąveikaujančios šalys: pati sporto organizacija, sponsoriaujančios organizacijos bei vartotojai, identiškai identifiкуotų formuojamą įvaizdį.

Sporto organizacijos „LLAF“ įvaizdžio formavimo tyrimas

Kokybinis ir kiekybinis tyrimai skirti išsiaiškinti sporto organizacijos „LLAF“ (Lietuvos Lengvosios Atletikos Federacija) formuojant įvaizdį naudojamus veiksnius ir jų svarbą bei sporto organizacijos „LLAF“ įvaizdžio sąsajas su sponsoryste.

Kokybinis tyrimas - struktūrizuotas interviu buvo vykdomas „LLAF“ atstovų viešiesiems ryšiams ir su sponsoriaujančių organizacijų (AB Audimas, Kauno miesto savivaldybė, LKKA) atstovais. Kiekybinis tyrimas - anketinė apklausa buvo vykdoma apklausiant sporto paslaugų vartotojus. Apklausta 100 respondentų.

Kokybinio tyrimo metu išsiaiškinta, jog sporto organizacija ir sponsoriaujančios organizacijos sporto produktą išskaido į tris tarpusavyje susijusius veiksnius, kurie daro didžiausią įtaką ir stiprina sporto organizacijos formuojamą įvaizdį. Tai:

- sportininkai;
- renginiai;
- sportininkų per renginį pasiekti sportiniai pasiekimai.

Taip pat tiriamieji pažymėjo, kad šie sporto produkto veiksniai turi savo suformuotą įvaizdį, kurie tik po to lemia sporto organizacijos įvaizdį kompleksiskai.

Kiekybinio tyrimo rezultatai patvirtina kokybinio tyrimo rezultatus ir išskiria tuos pačius daugiausiai įtakos turinčius veiksnius: didžiausią įtaką turintis ir stiprinantis sporto organizacijos įvaizdį veiksnys yra sportiniai pasiekimai (58 %), sportininkai (21 %), renginiai (11 %). Sporto organizacijai formuojant įvaizdį, svarbu yra organizacijos simboliai (71 %), asociacijos (70 %) ir identitetas (58 %), kuris turi būti stipriai emociškai naudingas. Sporto organizacijai „LLAF“ įvaizdžiu, kaip teigia 66 % respondentų, labai svarbu ir sporto bazės, sporto produktas (64 % respondentų) ir sponsoriai (57 %

respondentų). Sporto organizacijos „LLAF“ įvaizdis kiekybinio tyrimo respondentams asocijuojasi su: tautiškumu (taip teigė 24 % respondentų), tikslo siekimu (22 % respondentų), greitumu (17 % respondentų). Dėl suformuoto tinkamo sporto organizacijos įvaizdžio gali padaugėti sponsoriaujančių organizacijų (taip mano net 80 % respondentų).

Apibendrinus kokybinio ir kiekybinio tyrimo rezultatus, galima teigti, jog sporto organizacija ir sponsoriaujančios organizacijos nurodo tuos pačius įvaizdžiui svarbius veiksnius.

Išanalizavus sporto organizacijų įvaizdžio formavimo ypatumus, apibendrinus teorinius sprendimus, suformavus sporto organizacijų įvaizdžio formavimo teorinį modelį ir atlikus empirinį tyrimą, galima daryti tokias išvadas:

- Sporto organizacijos įvaizdžio formavimui daugiausia lemiantys ir stiprinantys veiksniai yra sporto organizacijos sportininkai, jų sportiniai pasiekimai ir sporto organizacijos rengiami renginiai.
- Suformuotas sporto organizacijos įvaizdis yra konkurencinis pranašumas, kurio formavimui daugiausia įtakos turi sporto organizacijos teikiama produkcija.
- Dėl tinkamai suformuoto sporto organizacijos įvaizdžio padaugėtų sponsoriaujančių organizacijų.
- Sporto organizacijos ir sponsoriaujančių organizacijų įvaizdžiai turi būti strategiškai kryptingi ir simbioziniai. Tai geriausiai įgyvendinama dėl ilgalaikės partnerystės.
- Tinkamai suformuotas įvaizdis - tai kryptingas ir valdomas įvaizdis, kuris suvokiamas, kaip sporto organizacija pateikia save identiškai su sponsoriaujančiomis organizacijomis rinkai, o ji tą įvaizdį supranta adekvačiai. Tai įvaizdis, kai trys sąveikaujančios šalys formuojamą sporto organizacijos įvaizdį apibūdina vienodai pagal jų priimtas vertybes.

Raktažodžiai: *sporto organizacija, įvaizdžio formavimas, konkurencinis pranašumas, rėmėjai.*

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