

# How do companies benefit from sponsoring an event?

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Bachelor of Science

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## Affidavit

I hereby affirm that this Bachelor's Thesis represents my own written work and that I have used no sources and aids other than those indicated. All passages quoted from publications or paraphrased from these sources are properly cited and attributed.

The thesis was not submitted in the same or in a substantially similar version, not even partially, to another examination board and was not published elsewhere.

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## Abstract

Referring to the integrated communication mix, studies have shown that during the last years companies have recognized that the classic promotion strategies have been overtaken by the IMC, which focuses on creating relationships with the market. Events and sponsorship are one element of the IMC, as these new communication tools are a great opportunity to increase brand awareness and brand-image improvements. The purpose of this study was to examine sponsorship brand effects based on the relationships between event-image, sponsoring brand-image and visitors' self-image. Using a sample of 65 participants of the Viennese Police Ball sponsored by Ströck (Austria), correlation analyses and t-Tests were used to investigate the hypotheses. The results indicated that self-congruity influenced the sponsoring brand attitude. Moreover, the outcome of the t-Tests demonstrated that attendees who have visited the event before developed a positive attitude towards the sponsored brand. Awareness of the sponsorship developed not only a more favorable attitude towards the brand but also increased brand loyalty.

## Table of Contents

1	Introduction .....	7
2	Literature review.....	9
2.1	Marketing tools.....	9
2.1.1	Definition of marketing .....	9
2.1.2	Marketing Mix.....	9
2.1.3	Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) .....	10
2.2	Events as a marketing tool.....	11
3	Events.....	13
3.1	What are events?.....	13
3.2	History.....	13
3.3	Types of events .....	14
3.3.1	Corporate events .....	14
3.3.2	Public events .....	15
3.4	Characteristics of events.....	15
4	Sponsorship.....	17
4.1	Definition.....	17
4.2	Different sponsor categories .....	18
4.3	Different sponsorship sectors.....	19
4.4	How does sponsorship work and its benefits .....	20
4.5	Congruity relationship.....	21
4.5.1	Brand-image transfer .....	23
5	Case Study.....	24
5.1	Company Ströck.....	24
5.2	Hypotheses.....	25

6	Methodology.....	26
6.1	Measurement.....	26
7	Data analysis .....	27
7.1	Descriptive statistics .....	27
7.2	Correlation analysis.....	30
7.2.1	Event-image and sponsoring brand attitude (H1) .....	30
7.2.2	Brand-image and sponsoring brand attitude (H2) .....	31
7.2.3	Congruity and sponsoring brand attitude (H3) .....	32
7.2.4	Sponsoring brand-image and sponsoring brand loyalty (H4) .....	33
7.2.5	Congruity and sponsoring brand loyalty (H5) .....	34
7.3	Multiple Regression analysis.....	35
7.4	Independent t-Test .....	36
7.4.1	Visited the event before .....	36
7.4.2	Awareness of sponsorship .....	37
8	Conclusion.....	38
8.1	Results of research.....	38
8.2	Managerial implications.....	41
8.3	Limitations and future research.....	42
	Bibliography .....	44

## List of Tables

Table 1. Different types of public events .....	15
Table 2. Descriptive Statistics .....	27
Table 3. Correlation analysis: Event-image & Sponsoring brand attitude.....	30
Table 4. Correlation analysis: Brand-image & Sponsoring brand attitude .....	31
Table 5. Correlation analysis: Congruity & Sponsoring brand attitude .....	33
Table 6. Correlation analysis: Sponsoring brand-image & Sponsoring brand loyalty.33	
Table 7. Correlation analysis: Congruity & Sponsoring brand loyalty.....	34
Table 8. Independent t-Test "visited the event before" .....	37
Table 9. Independent t-Test "awareness of sponsorship".....	37

## List of Figures

Fig. 1. Promotional Mix.....	10
Fig. 2. Integrated Marketing Communication.....	12
Fig. 3. The sponsorship effects process .....	21
Fig. 4. Congruity Relationship .....	22
Fig. 5. Logo of Ströck.....	24
Fig. 6. Multiple Regression Analysis.....	35

# 1 Introduction

In recent years the popularity of using sponsorship has increased rapidly. The reason for this boost is that communication technologies have changed and the traditional marketing tools suffered a decrease in effectiveness (Novais & Arcodia, 2013). Moreover, sponsorship counts to the well-known communication mix and offers companies internal as well as external benefits (Chebli & Charbi, 2014). Advantages such as the increase of brand awareness, the improvement of a brand's image and reaching a wide range of target groups are the reasons why companies pursue this rather new communication tool (Novais & Arcodia, 2013). In addition, there is an upward trend of the amount spent on sponsoring as well as on the overall number of sponsoring (Javalgi, Traylor, Gross & Lampman, 1994). Concerning Sneath, Finney and Close (2006) event-sponsorship activities make up to 22% of the whole marketing communication budget.

Companies hope that sponsoring an event increases their brand position and brand awareness. The challenge of doing a sponsorship is to create a relationship with the customers and to evaluate a good communication strategy (Chebli & Charbi, 2014). Further, consumers will develop their own impressions of a sponsor; nevertheless, sponsors need to understand how to influence such relations (Novais & Arcodia, 2013). Events like music festivals, cultural events or sports events offer good opportunities for interaction with individual target groups of companies and to raise awareness of their brand. Sponsors hope that the event-image has a positive influence on their brand-image and on the sponsor itself. Therefore, the image of the sponsored activity should be transferred to the sponsoring brand (Novais & Arcodia, 2013).

As sponsorship is an element of the integrated marketing communication mix (IMC) it is the most powerful medium to interact and form relationships with stakeholders (Bowdin, Allen, O'Tolle, Harris & McDonnell, 2006). The number of companies which use sponsorship as a communication tool is increasing steadily because they recognize sponsorship as a new way of reaching their target audience and enhance their brand-image. In comparison to traditional media advertising the popularity of sponsorship is growing considerably fast (Nilsson & Öström, 2004). In addition to that, the expenditure on event sponsorship is increasing too.

Therefore, the global expenditure increased from £18.1 billion (2001) to about £29.1 billion (2005) and in the UK for example the annual expenditure on event-sponsorship amounts are about £816.3 million (Bowdin, Allen, O'Tolle, Harris & McDonnell, 2006). Sponsorship counts as the most popular communication tool; therefore, nearly every event is sponsored and it is almost not possible to organize events without sponsors. Even in North America, the spending on sponsorship has increased at an average of 20% annually during the last decades. Factors such as technological changes in the development of media and the growth of an event- & leisure-oriented society are the reason for this increase (Nilsson & Öström, 2004, p. 3).

However, there has been little research done on this new area, especially on the effectiveness and the impact of sponsorship. There is a lack of evidence for the relationship between sponsorship and brand-image and little publication on the sponsorship process.

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between self-congruity and sponsorship brand loyalty. Further, the correlation of the congruity between event-image and sponsoring brand-image was scrutinized. The following research questions are posed:

- How does the event-image/brand- image influence sponsoring brand attitude?
- How does the event-image/brand- image influence sponsoring brand loyalty?
- What is the relationship between event-sponsorship and customer congruity?

In summary, this thesis provides an extent description of marketing tools, events and sponsorship. Following this review, the case study including the hypotheses and research questions are presented. Third, the research methodology and study results are specified, followed by managerial implications and directions for future research.



## 2 Literature review

### 2.1 Marketing tools

#### 2.1.1 Definition of marketing

Often the term marketing is used as a synonym for advertising and personal selling. Although marketing covers all these activities it needs to be clear that it is an own tool used to provide services, goods and values. Different strategies such as distribution and communication are used to satisfy customers and make products and services available for them.

“Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners and society at large” (Lamb, Hair & McDaniel, 2011, p. 3).

#### 2.1.2 Marketing Mix

The marketing mix can be seen as a major concept and is defined as a “set of tactical marketing tools that the firm blends to produce the response it wants in the target market” (Kotler & Armstrong, 2016, p. 78). It helps to establish a strong position in the target market and delivers value to the customers.

It consists of four P’s – product, price, place and promotion.

- *Product*: are any kinds of goods and services which are offered to target markets. This does not mean that it is just about physical units. Even after-sale service, package, company image and brand name are meant by product. Further, a product should offer customer value and represents a certain status and reputation.
- *Price*: is what customers need to pay to obtain a product. Moreover, it is the most flexible element of the four P’s and can be changed quickly. This means that prices can be easily adapted to the market by increasing or lowering them. In order to that, prices can be used as a competitive advantage.
- *Place*: it is a distribution strategy that covers the activities to make products available at the right place and the right time for target groups. The goal of this strategy is that products arrive damage free at certain places.

- *Promotion*: covers advertising, sales promotion and personal selling. Promotion is used to inform and remind customers of products and their benefits (Lamb, Hair & McDaniel, 2011).

### 2.1.3 Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)

Integrated marketing communication is a combination and coordination of all promotional messages such as traditional advertising or event marketing. The aim is to make sure that the consumers get a clear, consistent and compelling message about the company and its brand (Lamb, Hair & McDaniel, 2011).

IMC concentrates on the promotion part of the marketing mix. During the last years, the importance of integrated marketing communications grew because companies recognized that today's usual way of promoting products is not as successful as it was before. Therefore, classic promotion strategies got overtaken by IMC focusing on creating relationships with the market. Due to the fact that traditional advertising channels such as radio, television and newspaper lost on range caused by overstimulation, communication tools with low scattering loss are required. These can be ensured by events in combination with promoting and creating relationships (Bowdin, Allen, O'Tolle, Harris & McDonnell, 2006).

Figure 1 illustrates the marketing mix and the components of a promotional mix.

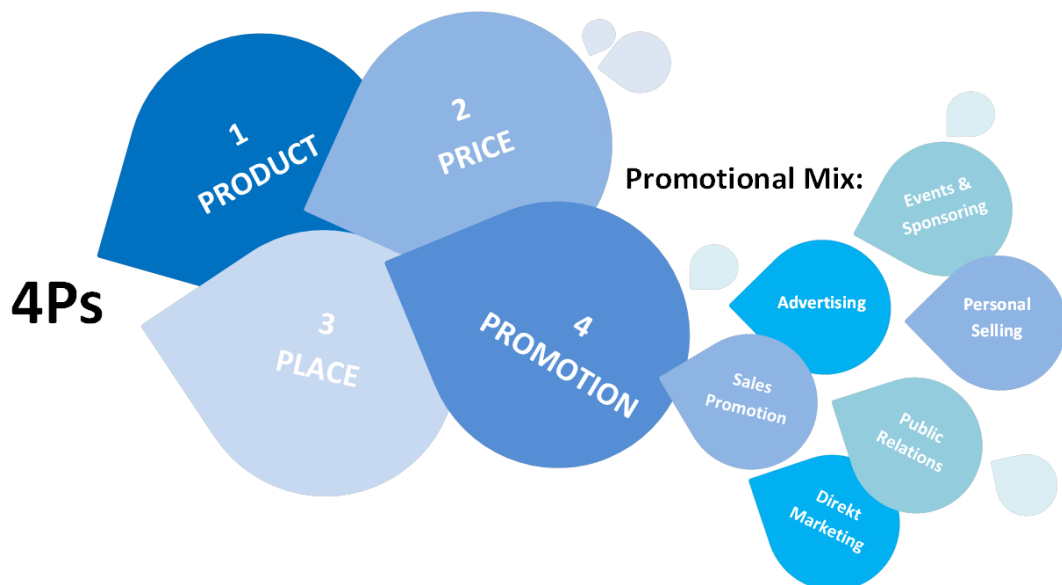


Fig. 1. Promotional Mix

Source: adapted from <https://de.kisspng.com/png-qrot2h/>

As it can be seen, promotion has several sub-points consisting of advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing and events.

The main goal of **advertising** is to make the audience aware and to remind them of the product. Advertising can even be used to change the customer perspective and manipulate their purchasing behavior.

In comparison to advertising, **personal selling** is used to create relationships to consumers in terms of personal interaction between seller and buyer. The sellers can react on preferences, raise interest and are able to adjust during oral presentations.

**Sales promotions** are used to attract customer attention in forms of e.g. discounts, coupons and premiums. These kinds of promotion are convenient for the short-run. The purpose is to persuade consumers to an immediate purchase instead of creating a long-term relationship between brand and customer.

**Public relation** is an interactive tool and combines diverse activities of the promotional mix to attract customers. At this tool, the company as a whole is considered and not just the products or services itself. The goal is to achieve an extensive understanding with the audience and to raise emotions. Further, the improvement of the image, which can be accomplished by sponsorships an event, is pursued.

When using **direct marketing** the companies target directly via web marketing, direct mailing, catalogs and sales channels. Direct marketing is an important factor that creates customer relationships and due to social media it can be done very easily (Todorova, 2015).

## 2.2 Events as a marketing tool

“Using an event as a strategic marketing tool involves planning a unique event or series of events for one or more target groups where people come together, either physically or virtually, at the invitation and initiation of a company/business, government body or non-profit organization. The client wishes to achieve an emotional added value by means of experience, to support a predefined objective

(communicative or otherwise) that has to be achieved among one or more of the target groups identified” (Gerritsen & Oldern, 2014, p. 5-6).

According to Gerritsen and Oldern (2014) the reason why events are used as a marketing tool and why they are high in the popularity stakes are as follows:

Firstly, traditional marketing tools lost their power of attracting people and therefore, it is difficult for them to capture the attention of their target groups. This indicates the problem of the intangibility of target groups. Newspapers are a great example of this issue because during the last years due to the rise in technological developments they became less attractive and lost the power of advertising. Secondly, events offer a great ability to create emotions and stay in customers’ minds. This is considerably important, as the feelings experienced by attendees at an event will be associated with the brand which subsequently improves the brand-image. Thirdly, events contribute to the quality of life in a company or city.

The IMC process for an event and how brand relationship is created by traditional as well as non-traditional media can be seen below in Figure 2.

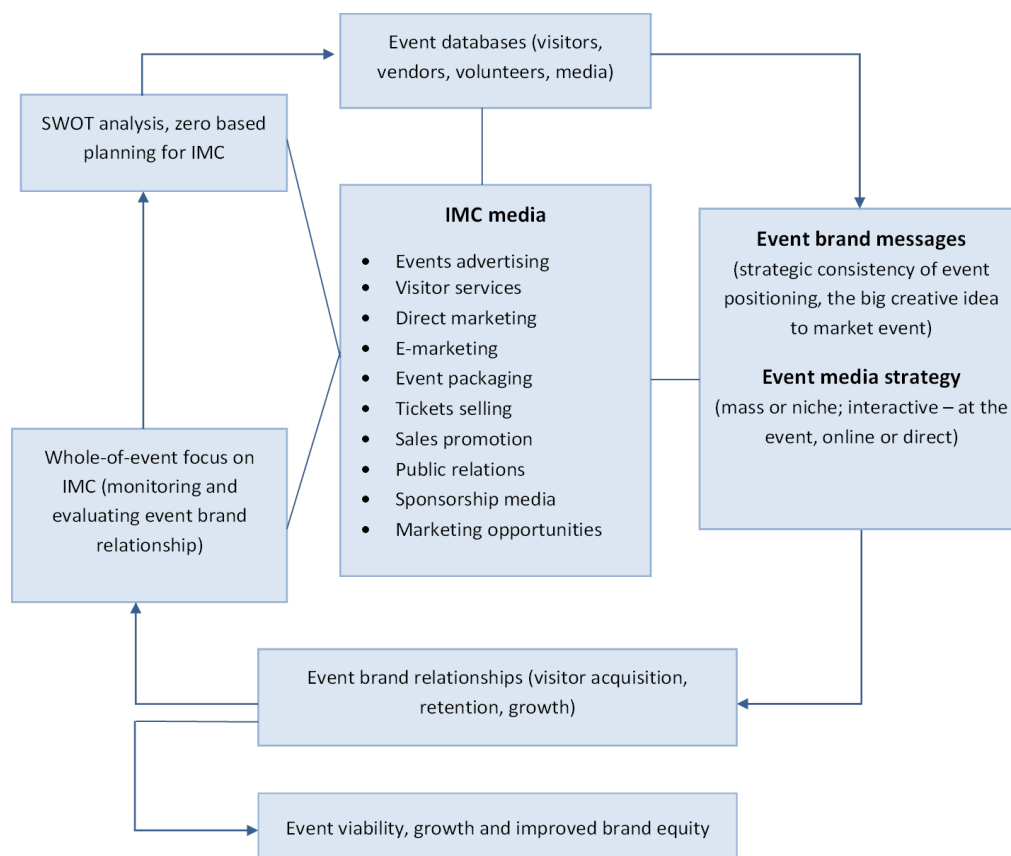


Fig. 2. Integrated Marketing Communication

Source: adapted from Bowdin, Allen, O'Tolle, Harris & McDonnell, 2006, p. 217

## **3 Events**

### **3.1 What are events?**

The term event can be interpreted in many different definitions and concerning Bowdin, Allen, O'Tolle, Harris and McDonnell (2006) the exact meaning or agreement over a specific term for the word event does not exist.

As cited by Bowdin, Allen, O'Tolle, Harris and McDonnell (2006, p. 560) the Chamber Dictionary (1998) defines events as,

“anything which happens; result; any incidence or occurrence esp a memorable one; contingency or possibility of occurrence; an item in a programme (of sport, etc); a type of horse-riding competition, often held over three days (three-day event), consisting of three sections, ie dressage, cross-country riding and showjumping; fortune or fate (obs); an organized activity at a particular venue, eg for sales promotion, fundraising.”

### **3.2 History**

Looking at the history of events one can see that events played an important role throughout the time. People used events for entertainment due to the fact that no TV or any other electronic devices existed.

A huge variety of different kinds of event between people could choose took place, however, they were mostly held for traditional reasons such as ceremonies or rituals. Further, games like the Romans gladiatorial games had a high state of popularity. During that time people already loved to be entertained; therefore, going out and attending events counted to their daily life.

Nevertheless, these events were extremely complex and difficult to organize. Although the technological skills were extremely low, some major events were developed and are still popular in the modern world. An excellent example of such complex events are the ancient Olympic Games. The requirement of high managerial skills and knowledge were essential.

Moreover, cultural events like the coronation of a Queen/King were celebrated accordingly. The complexity and effort for such events were fastidious; therefore, the military helped out and was responsible for the security to ensure a smooth and safe program (Shone & Parry, 2004). Despite the difficulty of carrying out such events people never stopped performing different kinds of events and fortunately the enthusiasm retained till today.

### **3.3 Types of events**

Events can be divided into two major types. On the one hand, there are corporate events which focus on the objectives and target groups, for instance personal events or companies' anniversary celebration. On the other hand, public events which are characterized by an overlapping of several objectives and are organized for the entertainment of visitors, for example festivals (Gerritsen & Oldern, 2014).

#### **3.3.1 Corporate events**

Corporate events can be categorized into three subgroups:

- *Business-to-business events*: here the business aspect is the purpose. The motive behind people's invitation and visit to the event are business reasons. However, leisure motives are not excluded. For example conferences or trade shows.
- *Business-to-consumer*: visitors go there to satisfy their leisure requirement but the main reasons for their invitation are business intentions. For example the Lego Kids Festival.
- *Business-to-employee*: these events focus on the employees of a company. The efforts of these employees will be rewarded and a sense of solidarity should be created. For example the team building days of ICT.

(Gerritsen & Oldern, 2014)

### 3.3.2 Public events

Speaking of public events it can be seen from Table 1, that this generic term covers many different kinds of event types. These events range from festivals, culinary events and parades to ceremonies, markets and sports events. Within these main categories individual subgroups exist for example speeches, weddings or silent marches which count to commemorations and ceremonies. The classification of further event types and their subgroups are listed below (Gerritsen & Oldern, 2014).

Table 1. Different types of public events

Source: adapted from Gerritsen & Oldern, 2014

<i>Festivals</i>	<i>Markets</i>	<i>Culinary events</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• music festivals</li> <li>• film festivals</li> <li>• theatre festivals</li> <li>• arts festivals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tourism markets</li> <li>• arts markets</li> <li>• pasar malam</li> <li>• folkloristic annual markets</li> <li>• village fairs</li> </ul>	
<i>Parades</i>	<i>Commemorations and ceremonies</i>	<i>Exhibitions/trade shows</i> <i>Sport events</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• carnival parades</li> <li>• demonstrations</li> <li>• flower parades</li> <li>• dance parade, love parade</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• centennial events</li> <li>• public holidays</li> <li>• silent marches</li> <li>• speeches</li> <li>• weddings</li> </ul>	

### 3.4 Characteristics of events

Concerning Shone and Parry (2004) there are eight properties which indicate the different characteristics of an event. These characteristics are uniqueness; perishability; ambience and service; labour-intensive; fixed timescale; intangible; ritual or ceremony; and personal interactions.

Without doubt, **uniqueness** is one of the most important characteristics of an event. Uniqueness always depends on the participants, dramaturgy, location and production of an event. Although an event is held annually, managers and organizers should continuously work on improvements and new characteristics. This is also known as **perishability**. The goal is to catch the audience attention and avoid boredom by offering new activities and attractions.

Further, an event should consist of a great balance between tangibility and intangibility. **Intangibility** refers to consumer perception and identification. The feelings they associate with the event such as happiness and memories are essential. Often events represent certain historical **rituals or ceremonies**. Nowadays it is not unusual if events create their own rituals which will contribute to the uniqueness of an event.

If an event is successful or fails depend on the **ambience and service** it offers. Sometimes something unplanned is happening, therefore, great management is needed and attention must be spent on every single detail. Ambience covers decoration, music, food and drinks, surroundings and technology.

Another indicator of success is **personal interaction**. Guests are involved and create the atmosphere. This means that although the event has the greatest location and decoration, if the audience interacts and reacts in the wrong way the event might fail.

Moreover, the event is just as good as the **labour** is. The communication between organizers and managers concerning the staffing is important. There are different types of staffs as they might have different qualifications and experiences. Therefore, the manager should keep the staff structure in mind and should choose suitable staff for different positions.

Regarding the event types, the time scaling can differ markedly. A **time scale** can be very short or can last over a longer period (e.g. over more days). It is recommendable to have a fixed time scale as certain tasks need to be accomplished within a specific timeframe. In addition, the right timing of breaks needs to be considered (Shone & Parry, 2004).



## 4 Sponsorship

### 4.1 Definition

“Sponsorship is a financial investment or materials on an activity, person, or event hand having access to a potential communication associated with this activity person, or event” (Chebli & Charbi, 2014, p. 915).

Often sponsorship is perceived as advertising; however, sponsorship is more related to promotion. Further, advertising is done through conventional media whereas sponsorship targets their audience via events (Javalgi, Traylor, Gross & Lampman, 1994). In addition, it must be clarified that sponsorship is a strategic marketing investment, not a donation or a grand and therefore, sponsors must be seen as business partners (Bowdin, Allen, O’Tolle, Harris & McDonnell, 2006).

Sponsorship can be perceived as a three-way relationship where the three main actors (sponsors, event agency and customers) are related to each other. The sponsor supports the event with knowledge, equipment or financial input. The event contributes to brand awareness as a service and both the event and its sponsors must create an emotional connection to the audience (Chebli & Charbi, 2014). The term brand can be defined as “A name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of these, that identifies the product or services of one seller or group of sellers and differentiates them from those of competitors” (Kotler & Armstrong, 2016, p. 263).

Sponsorship or sponsoring an event is attractive for companies due to the fact that it increases brand awareness, enhances brand-image and heightened sales volume (Nilsson & Öström, 2004, p. 4).

Beside this, sponsors expect an increase in sales and profit on account of the positive influence on their brand equity (Bowdin, Allen, O’Tolle, Harris & McDonnell, 2006). Brand equity refers to the “differential effect that knowing the brand name has on customer response to the product or its marketing” (Kotler & Armstrong, 2016, p. 275).

Moreover, the association to the event can be used for corporate-, marketing-, or media objectives. Nilsson and Öström (2004, p. 12) distinguished sponsorship objectives in three categories:

- media objectives (cost-effectiveness, reaching target markets)
- corporate objectives (image related)
- marketing objectives (brand promotion, sales increase)

## **4.2 Different sponsor categories**

Usually sponsoring is associated with cash; however, different sponsoring categories of how sponsors prove support exist on the market. The following abstract will compare the most common sponsoring types and examine how they differ from each other.

Starting with business sponsorship, where firms as sponsors contribute to events or support individuals via cash. In exchange, the logo or brand name of these companies will be placed on banners, sports clothes or sometimes they even receive free advertising (Leonard, 2018). The goal of cash sponsors is to increase publicity. However, the most expensive sponsorship of an event is the so-called “title sponsor”. At this level, the company name is included in the title of the event. For example Longines Global Champions Tour (Stovall, 2017).

The next category covers non-profit and foundation sponsorships. Usually sponsors support organizations, which follow a certain goal, with gifts in form of money. These are often founded by family trusts and big companies are involved. An example would be the support of an organization which builds schools and helps children in developing countries. Similar, federal programs which also support projects regarding education, health care and public housing. Here the government offers grants and support people who suffer from poverty (Leonard, 2018).

Another type of sponsoring is “in-kind” sponsoring, where companies contribute to the event through a specific service or product. At sport events companies usually provide clothes for the athletes or the working staff. Also, any kind of giveaways is covered by “in-kind” sponsorships (Stovall, 2017).

Lastly media sponsorship opportunities, where the event is promoted through TV, radio, print or social media channels. Cooperation with such a sponsor has incredible advantages as the marketing costs for the event will decrease markedly (Stovall, 2017).

### **4.3 Different sponsorship sectors**

Numerous researchers found out that sports events are in the leading position regarding event sponsorship. However, companies also make use of different kinds of events such as live music or art and cultural events, to communicate their brand-image and to raise brand awareness and brand loyalty.

Sports events cover 50% – 70% of the total event sponsorship and there is no doubt that throughout live TV e.g. of a football match, billions of people across the world can be easily reached. The aim of sport sponsoring firms is to reach a wide range of their target group, raise awareness and improve their brand-image. Brands such as McDonald's, Coca Cola or Visa who are sponsoring the world biggest sports events, including the Olympic Games, reached these goals and are on the top of the pyramid.

Nevertheless, companies nowadays recognized the great potential in sponsoring live music events as the associations between the brand and the event are considerably strong and high. This kind of marketing allows the targeting of ready-segmented and homogeneous audiences since it can be distinguished between certain age groups or lifestyles. Therefore, companies which will gain positive emotional associations toward their brand might consider a sponsorship in live music or festivals.

Regardless of sport, music or any art/cultural event, each kind depends on financial support, however, the art and cultural sector depends on sponsoring most. Besides the revenues of sold tickets; food and drinks; or program, income sources such as funding and donations are essential. Further, sponsoring in this sector can contribute to the so-called "good-will-effect" and will influence the brand-image positively (Lunt & Nicotra, 2019).

#### 4.4 How does sponsorship work and its benefits

According to Ferdinand and Kitchin (2017) sponsorship is both “a consumer and an industrial product. This means that a company may sponsor an event in order to communicate and engage with the event’s consumers, and a sponsor can also use sponsorship as a means to connect with and learn from other organizations” (p. 169).

It is established that consumers transfer the associations from an event onto the brand. Therefore, the implication is while sponsoring an event, organizations benefit from a positive perception and association. After achieving this important step successful sponsorship may lead to an increase of brand awareness and purchase; and consumers will develop interest toward the sponsored brand. These benefits all count to external benefits; however, internal benefits such as employee identification and discretionary effort will be positively affected too (Ferdinand & Kitchin, 2017).

Additional benefits of sponsoring an event include the followings:

- Access to specific niche/target markets
- Corporate brand-image creation/enhancement
- Building brand awareness for an organization and its services/products
- Influencing consumer attitudes about a product or service brand
- Associating a product or service with a particular lifestyle
- Improving relationships with distribution channel members
- Achieving product sale and merchandising opportunities
- Demonstrating product attributes
- Providing employee rewards and recognition
- Creating goodwill and climate of consent for an organization’s activities
- Entertaining key clients with corporate hospitality

(Bowdin, Allen, O’Tolle, Harris & McDonnell, 2006, p. 235-237)

There is evidence that goodwill is created when sponsoring an event, which will subsequently influence the consumer behavior or attitude towards the sponsor's brand. The following graph (Figure 3) illustrates the three different levels of goodwill creation and how sponsorship impacts an individual event or activity level.

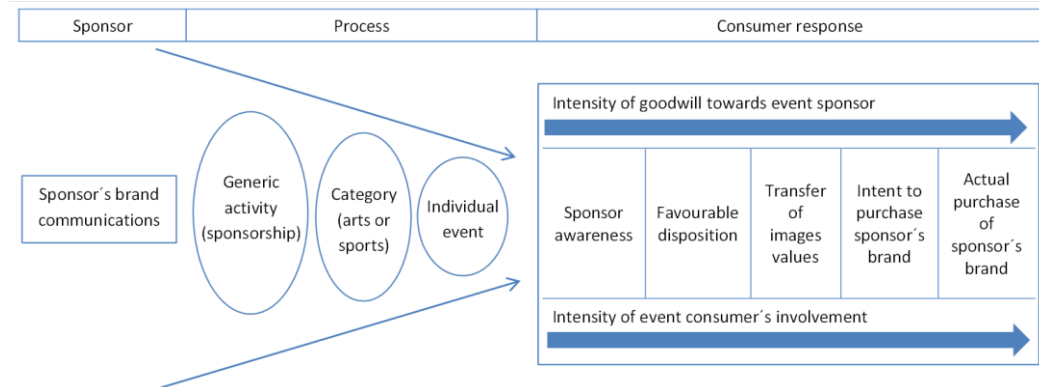


Fig. 3. The sponsorship effects process

Source: adapted from Bowdin, Allen, O'Tolle, Harris & McDonnell, 2006, p. 234

Moreover, the movements of the intensity of goodwill towards the event sponsor in parallel with the intensity of the event consumer involvement are demonstrated. As it can be seen the levels of goodwill consist of: generic level (consumer feelings about their engagement in sponsorship as an activity), category level (within sports audiences or arts) and at the individual activity level (fans). The association between the event and the sponsor's brand is stronger the more a person is engaged with what is being sponsored (Bowdin, Allen, O'Tolle, Harris & McDonnell, 2006).

#### 4.5 Congruity relationship

In recent years sponsorship has been used to enhance brand-image and to raise brand loyalty. Consumers buy products which they are able to identify with and with those they are able to express their personality and self-image to others. Further, consumer behaviors are affected by the match between consumer's actual self-image and the brand user image. Therefore, consumer behaviors such as brand attitude, brand preference, purchase motivation, brand satisfaction, and brand loyalty can be influenced (Sirgy, Lee, Johar & Tidwell, 2008).

Self-congruity is described as “the congruence between the individual’s self-concept and the value expressive attributes of an object” (Shin, Lee & Perdue, 2018, p. 171). In addition, self-concept is influenced by self-esteem and self-consistency motives, where self-esteem motives follow experiences that strengthen the self-concept. On the other hand, self-consistency motives concern to operate constantly with the self-image. Actual self-concept, ideal self-concept, social self-concept and ideal social self-concept are affected by the two motives mentioned (Shin, Lee & Perdue, 2018).

Transferring this knowledge to the sponsoring concept of an event it can be realized that self-congruity supports brand loyalty by two factors: customer involvement and customer awareness. This means that people who attend an event and are involved, who are able to identify with an event, and be aware of the company who sponsors the event are more loyal towards the brand. Researchers found out that the intention regarding brand loyalty depends on self-congruence and the consumer self-image (Sirgy, Lee, Johar & Tidwell, 2008).

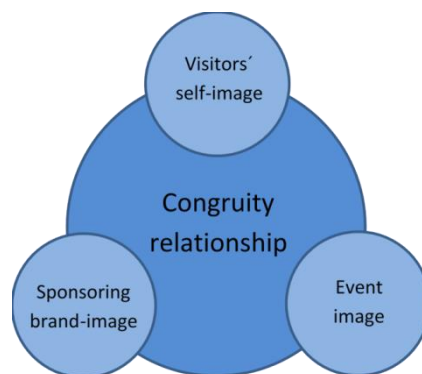


Fig. 4. Congruity Relationship

Source: adapted from Sirgy, Lee, Johar & Tidwell, 2008, p. 170

Moreover, brand loyalty depends on three different kinds of congruity: self-congruity with the sponsoring brand-image, self-congruity with the event-image, and congruity between the event-image and the sponsoring brand-image, see Figure 4. According to Shin, Lee and Perdue (2018) congruity is “the perception of fit between objects; humans evaluate different objects and develop attitudes based on the perceived congruity between them” (p. 170). Further, it must be known that when attending a sponsored event consumers acknowledge usually functional and image congruities between the sponsor and the event. Functional congruity means

when sponsoring brand's products are used, in comparison image congruity refers to the match between event-image and sponsoring brand-image. A high correlation between those two can lead to sponsoring brand recall, positive sponsoring brand attitude, image-transfer and purchase intentions (Shin, Lee & Perdue, 2018).

In summary, when it comes to brand loyalty there is evidence that when a brand sponsors an event their customers can identify with, loyalty towards the brand will increase. Followed by the favorable attitude the customers have toward the event which will be created by self-congruity with the sponsored event, and finally those feelings will be transferred to the firm sponsoring the event (Sirgy, Lee, Johar & Tidwell, 2008).

#### **4.5.1 Brand-image transfer**

When visiting an event customers perceive the surrounding and the meaning of an event. Nevertheless, the type of the event, event's characteristic and individual consumer factors play a significant role in the customer association (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999). Brand association can be defined as the "Informational nodes lined to the brand node in memory and contain the meaning of the brand for consumers" (Keller, 1993, p. 3)

According to Keller (1993) it can be distinguished between three types of brand associations: *attribute* – the characteristic of a product; *benefit* – the personal value of a product; and *attitude* –the brand evaluation by customers. Brand association can be associated with intangible or tangible attributes. Price, packaging and design refer to tangible attributes, whereas fun, energy or classiness can be related to intangible attributes. If the sponsored brand is similar to such tangible/intangible attributes, which will be raised by the event, these associations can be assigned to the linkage the consumer has experienced toward the brand (Novais & Arcodia, 2013). Brand-image refers to the "Perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory" (Keller, 1993, p. 3). The brand association to an event or activity can create, enhance or change a brand-image, known as brand-image transfer. The aim of brand-image transfer is to influence customer minds and change their behavior positively (Novais & Arcodia, 2013).

## 5 Case Study

### 5.1 Company Ströck

The bakery Ströck was founded in 1970 in Vienna and with about 75 stores it counts to Austria's most popular bakeries. Beside sustainability, social engagement is a core component of Ströck. The well-known bakery only sells bio-fairtrade coffee and the grain they use for their products are exclusively coming from Austria. Social projects such as the Life Ball or kidsrun4kids, gain great support from the company. Since 20 years Ströck has been a sponsoring partner of different events and individuals. They created the so called "Ströck-Sportteams", where many good sportsmen in different categories like swimming, equestrian, biking and table tennis represent the brand at different national as well as international events. This ranges from European championships to the Olympic Games in 2004 and 2012 respectively (Ströck "Bewusstkaufen", 2012).

Nevertheless, Ströck supports an amount of cultural events too. The Viennese Police Ball, which takes place every year in February, is one of these events. Today, the Viennese Police Ball is certainly one of the largest, most important and most beautiful events of the Viennese ball calendar. The proceeds from the festivities have always been used to purchase and preserve the instruments and music sheets of the Viennese Police Music Festival. Since 1992 the ball has been taken place at the Vienna Rathaus and has also served a good purpose, as part of the net profit is allocated to social institutions ("Wienerpolizeiball", n.d.).

According to Mrs. Dürrstein, who works for Ströck, the bakery provided in addition to give-away bags filled with biscuits and breads, a photo wall with logo and flowers.



Fig. 5. Logo of Ströck. Image downloaded in April 2019



## 5.2 Hypotheses

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between sponsorship and corporate image to fill in the information gap. The following research questions should be scrutinized:

- How does the event-image/brand-image influence sponsoring brand attitude?
- How does the event-image/brand-image influence sponsoring brand loyalty?
- What is the relationship between event-sponsorship and customer congruity?

According to these research questions the followed hypotheses will be tested:

H1: There is a significant relationship between the event-image and the attitude towards the sponsored brand.

H2: There is a significant relationship between the brand-image and the attitude towards the sponsored brand.

H3: There is a significant relationship between the self-congruity and the attitude towards the sponsored brand.

H4: There is a significant relationship between the brand-image and the loyalty towards the sponsored brand.

H3: There is a significant relationship between the self-congruity and the loyalty towards the sponsored brand.

H6: There is a significant effect of demographic and behavioral variables on the attitude towards the sponsored brand and subsequently on the brand loyalty.

H7: There is a significant relationship between previous visits of the event and attitude towards the sponsored brand.

H8: There is a significant relationship between previous visits of the event and loyalty towards the sponsored brand.

H9: There is a significant relationship between awareness of the sponsorship and attitude towards the sponsored brand.

H10: There is a significant relationship between awareness of the sponsorship and loyalty towards the sponsored brand.

## 6 Methodology

This bachelor thesis is grounded as a postpositivist perspective. This worldview takes the quantitative approaches into consideration. Compared to the other three worldviews (constructivist, transformative and pragmatism) the postpositivist method focuses on theory verification and uses empirical observations and measurements. Moreover, it represents a deterministic philosophy as the outcomes influenced by causes need to be identified. This study follows a correlational design as quantitative data will be collected and the relationship between two or more variables will be conducted. In addition, the data will be compared, analyzed and interpreted. Findings which are incongruent will be explained (Creswell, 2014).

Moving on to the quantitative data collection where simple random techniques as a non-experimental research design were elaborated. As the bachelor thesis specializes in event-sponsorship and not sponsorship in general, surveys were handed out to participants of an event sponsored by Ströck. The survey covered 10 main questions, including sub questions, which should help to clarify the congruity between different variables and how sponsoring effects brand loyalty. Moreover, the brand-image transfer was analyzed. Due to the fact that a lot of research regarding sports sponsorship has been done before, the aim of this thesis was to concentrate and collect data especially from a cultural event located in Vienna. Participants could voluntarily joined the survey and the data has been anonymized.

### 6.1 Measurement

The questionnaire consisted of several parts. At the first part of the survey, demographic characteristics of participants such as gender and age were measured. Also, attendees were asked if they know the brand Ströck. This was followed by questions covered in four main categories: event-image, sponsoring brand-image, congruity and sponsor brand loyalty. Each category consisted of 3-4 sub-questions based on previous research and can be found in Table 6. To measure the study variables a five-point Likert-type scales, ranging from 1 “strongly agree” to 5 “strongly disagree” were used. Only the items for “attitude” posit on a five-point semantic differential scale items (positive/negative, like/dislike, good/bad, favorable/unfavorable). To interpret the findings the mean, standard deviation and range of scores were provided.

## 7 Data analysis

To test the study hypotheses a post-event questionnaire was conducted within one week after the Viennese Police Ball. The event took place on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February 2019 and the surveys were handed out personally to participants of the event. Of the 70 completed surveys, 65 questionnaires were retained for the data analysis, 5 surveys were discarded due to missing values or extreme outliers. SPSS was used for the data analysis.

### 7.1 Descriptive statistics

Of the respondents, 62% were female and 38% were male. The age distribution of the respondents was 5% under 18 years, 22% between 18 and 25 years, 18% between 26 and 40 years, with a majority of 35% between 41 and 55 years, and 20% between 56 and 70 years. Surprisingly, all participants knew the brand Ströck and more than the half (57%) knew that Ströck sponsored the Viennese Police Ball. Only 42% have been visiting the event before and for 58% it was the first time visiting the Ball.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

<b>Event-image</b> (n=65)		<i>summative mean = 2,98</i>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
I felt like I am part of the event.	(E1)		2,77	1,18
Participating in the event reflected who I am.	(E2)		3,17	1,15
The image of the event represented my self-image well.	(E3)		2,97	1,10
My self-image and the image of the event were similar.	(E4)		3,02	1,19
<b>Brand-image</b> (n=65)		<i>summative mean = 3,30</i>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
I feel like I am part of Ströck.	(B1)		3,62	1,17
Buying Ströck products reflects who I am.	(B2)		3,22	1,11
The image of Ströck represents my self-image well.	(B3)		3,14	1,01
My self-image and the image of Ströck are similar.	(B4)		3,25	1,08

**Congruity between event-image and sponsoring brand-image**

<i>(n=65)</i>	<i>summative mean = 2,60</i>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
The event image represented the image of Ströck well.	(C1)	2,66	1,08
It was predictable for Ströck to sponsor the event.	(C2)	2,92	1,34
It made sense to me why Ströck sponsored the event.	(C3)	2,38	1,03
The image of the event and the image of Ströck fit together well.	(C4)	2,42	1,09

**Sponsoring brand attitude**

<i>(n=65)</i>	<i>summative mean = 1,90</i>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
positive/negative	(SBA1)	1,88	0,88
like/dislike	(SBA2)	1,94	0,77
good/bad	(SBA3)	1,80	0,75
favorable/unfavorable	(SBA4)	1,98	0,82

**Sponsoring brand loyalty**

<i>(n=65)</i>	<i>summative mean = 1,89</i>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
I will say positive things about the brand Ströck to other people.	(SBL1)	1,88	1,02
I will recommend Ströck products to other people.	(SBL2)	1,69	0,95
I will buy Ströck products next time.	(SBL3)	2,11	1,08

Overall from Table 2 it can be seen, that although the sponsor brand loyalty had a good reputation with an average mean of 1.89 and a low standard deviation, the sponsor brand-image performed rather weak representing a mean of 3.30.

In detail, event-image scored a summative mean of 2.98, which means that most attendees were unsure of agreement. However, the standard deviations of this category were rather high compared to the others, which indicated high inconsistency. Most participants felt like they were part of the event, however, the evaluation of the reflection from event on self-congruity received rather high disagreements. The similarity of self-image and the event were stable.

Considering the average mean of the category “Brand-image”, 3.30 respectively, the affiliation to Ströck and the self-congruity with the sponsoring brand-image could be improved. Most attendees were not able to identify themselves with the brand-image of Ströck.

Moreover, it can be assumed that there are other reasons why people buy Ströck products, as it does not reflect their personality.

The summative mean of the congruity between event-image and sponsor brand-image reached a value of 2.60 with a standard deviation of .90. For the event participants, it made sense that Ströck sponsored the Viennese Police Ball. Further, they thought that the image of the event and the image of Ströck fit together well, whereas it was not predictable that Ströck was a sponsor partner of the event.

Regarding Table 6, it can be seen that the attitude towards Ströck was positive. Almost all standard deviations were below .90, which represents low fluctuation and a good reputation of the sponsoring brand. It seems that most participants were satisfied and had a good and favorable attitude towards the brand Ströck.

In addition to the positive attitude, it can be seen that with a summative mean of 1.90, brand loyalty was rather high. The majority of attendees will recommend Ströck products to other people as well as say positive things about the brand. However, the loyalty of buying Ströck products next time was not as high as the other items, given the weakest scored performance in this category with a mean of 2.11 respectively.

## 7.2 Correlation analysis

In this section the correlations between different variables were tested. The p-value describes how significant the relationship between the tested variables is and gives information and evidence about the tested hypotheses. The asterisk rating system where  $p \leq .05$  (significant),  $p \leq .01$  and  $p \leq .001$  (highly significant) was applied.

### 7.2.1 Event-image and sponsoring brand attitude (H1)

The relationship between the self-congruity with the event-image and the sponsoring brand attitude was tested. As Table 3 shows, 38% of the results scored a significant p-value ( $p \leq .05$ ). Three out of four p-values scored a significant relationship regarding the fact of being part of the event and the sponsoring brand attitude (EI1). Almost 80% of attendees who said that they felt like being part of the event, had a positive attitude too ( $p = .004$ ).

Interestingly, participants who felt that the event reflected who they are have had a strong correlation in all aspects toward sponsoring brand attitude such as positive, like, good and favorable (EI2). The most significant effect on attitude had the self-reflection of the event with a p-value of .002. About 60% of the attendees had a positive attitude towards Ströck when attending the Ball.

However, the tested variables EI3 “the image of the event represented my self-image well” and EI4 “my self-image and the image of the event were similar” were not significant at all.

Table 3. Correlation analysis: Event-image & Sponsoring brand attitude

		Sponsoring brand attitude			
		SBA1	SBA2	SBA3	SBA4
Event-image	EI1	0,004	0,022	0,04	0,12
	EI2	0,002	0,02	0,01	0,025
	EI3	0,124	0,35	0,257	0,116
	EI4	0,274	0,089	0,264	0,10

### 7.2.2 Brand-image and sponsoring brand attitude (H2)

Table 4 illustrates the p-values of the correlation between self-congruity with brand-image and sponsoring brand attitude. As it can be seen, the most significant values were scored where the similarity between self-image and the image of Ströck were tested (BI4). In detail, over 30% of the participants who agreed with this statement had a positive perspective. The most significant correlation was tested with the likeability of Ströck ( $p = 0.006$ ). Moreover, people who felt that the image of Ströck represented their self-image well (BI3), tended to had a positive ( $p = .033$ ) and a good ( $p = .027$ ) sponsoring brand attitude. Astonishing, there was a 100% rate of agreeing on the statement of having a positive perspective as well as liking the brand Ströck.

However, there was no significance between how participants perceive Ströck (BI2) and if they felt being a part of the brand (BI1). Although 37 attendees disagreed with being a part of Ströck, about 40% who strongly disagree had a positive attitude towards the brand. Participants were asked if buying Ströck products represents who they are, and according to Table 4 it is evident that there was no significant relationship. Regarding this statement, only 4 out of 65 attendees strongly agreed and 9 strongly disagreed in correlation with a favorable attitude, the remaining 52 (80%) were in-between.

Table 4. Correlation analysis: Brand-image & Sponsoring brand attitude

		Sponsoring brand attitude			
		SBA1	SBA2	SBA3	SBA4
Brand-image	BI1	0,492	0,73	0,792	0,763
	BI2	0,082	0,264	0,166	0,558
	BI3	0,033	0,079	0,027	0,116
	BI4	0,08	0,006	0,05	0,003

### 7.2.3 Congruity and sponsoring brand attitude (H3)

The correlation between congruity between event-image and sponsoring brand-image; and the sponsoring brand attitude were analyzed. Overall, it can be seen that 75% of the tested variables had a significant p-value ( $p \leq .05$ ). The first row of Table 5 shows the p-values regarding if the image of Ströck was well represented by the event-image (C1). About 54 participants tended to agree on this statement. Accordingly, over 70% had a positive perspective of Ströck, followed by 80% who thought the brand has a good attitude.

Moving on to the prediction of Ströck sponsoring the event, the table proved high relationship regarding sponsoring brand attitude (C2). Astonishing, all four p-values were highly significant ( $p \leq .001$ ), which means that sponsoring the event had a strong influence on how the attendees felt about the sponsored brand. Over 80% who agreed on the congruity statement tended to rate Ströck positively. Regarding the likability of Ströck, the evaluations have shown that only values from 1 to 3 were chosen. Also the same outcome was proven by the rating of goodness. The outcome of favorability were more distributed than the others, however, the p-value (.000) indicated a high correlation between the two variables.

For almost 70% of the participants it made sense that Ströck sponsored the event (C3). Looking at the most significant p-value of this row ( $p = .000$ ) it can be said that people who totally agreed on the statement (over 90%) had a good impression of Ströck. Interestingly, attendees who totally disagreed also rated the sponsoring brand attitude rather low.

The relationship of the coherence between the event-image and the image of Ströck (C4) were not as significant as the other tested variables, however, two variables (positive and good) had significant p-values. General, participants who tended to agree on congruity, went for a higher attitude.



Table 5. Correlation analysis: Congruity & Sponsoring brand attitude

		<b>Sponsoring brand attitude</b>			
		SBA1	SBA2	SBA3	SBA4
<b>Congruity</b>	C1	0,008	0,006	0,014	0,08
	C2	0,000	0,001	0,000	0,000
	C3	0,004	0,001	0,000	0,068
	C4	0,003	0,151	0,012	0,079

#### 7.2.4 Sponsoring brand-image and sponsoring brand loyalty (H4)

The relationship between sponsoring brand-image and sponsoring brand loyalty was tested. As Table 6 shows, only two out of 16 p-values were significant. In detail, the first significant p-value ( $p = .012$ ) was testified between the sponsoring brand-image (B4, similarity between self-image and the image of Ströck) and the sponsoring brand loyalty (SBL1, saying positive things about Ströck to other people). However, looking at the percentage distribution it was not as coherent compared to the other tested correlations. There was no clear connection apparent for people who agreed on the brand-image statement automatically had a high brand loyalty.

Moving to the more significant p-value of this table ( $p = .001$ ), which was tested between sponsoring brand-image (B4, similarity between self-image and the image of Ströck) and sponsoring brand loyalty (SBL3, buying Ströck products next time). Overall, about 38% of the participants would buy Ströck products again. Interestingly, most people tended to disagree with the similarity between themselves and Ströck. Adding the numbers, an average of 57% was the result. However, one quarter of those would buy Ströck products again.

Table 6. Correlation analysis: Sponsoring brand-image & Sponsoring brand loyalty

		<b>Sponsoring brand loyalty</b>		
		SBL1	SBL2	SBL3
<b>Brand-image</b>	B1	0,142	0,55	0,275
	B2	0,07	0,21	0,55
	B3	0,16	0,112	0,119
	B4	0,012	0,335	0,001

### 7.2.5 Congruity and sponsoring brand loyalty (H5)

Table 7 demonstrates the correlation between congruity between event-image and sponsoring brand-image; and the sponsoring brand loyalty were analyzed. Overall it can be seen, that saying positive things about Ströck had the most significant p-values compared to the others. People who agreed on the congruity statement are more likely to buy Ströck products again, 80% respectively.

The most significant correlation, with a p-value of .000, was tested between congruity (C3, it made sense why Ströck sponsored the event) and saying positive things about Ströck (SBL1). More than 50% of those who agreed and 80% of the total output would only talk positively about Ströck.

Over 90% who agreed that the image of Ströck and the image of the event fit well (C4), would say positive things about the brand. Moreover, it is evident that those participants who totally disagreed would not talk positively about Ströck at all. Nevertheless, a total number of over 80% would recommend Ströck products to other people. Furthermore, it is evident that a high agreement resulted in high loyalty.

Table 7. Correlation analysis: Congruity & Sponsoring brand loyalty

		Sponsoring brand loyalty		
		SBL1	SBL2	SBL3
Congruity	C1	0,471	0,151	0,153
	C2	0,01	0,14	0,097
	C3	0,000	0,067	0,221
	C4	0,001	0,01	0,056

### 7.3 Multiple Regression analysis

To further the research, a multiple regression analysis was performed. The values such as the B-coefficient and the explained variable  $R^2$  were examined. The significance of demographic and behavioral variables on the attitude towards the sponsored brand and subsequently on the brand loyalty was tested.

Graph 5 illustrates that when the behavioral variables (event-image, brand-image and congruity) increase, sponsoring brand attitude becomes more favorable. Differently, the older the participants are the attitude forward the brand is going downwards.

Demographic variables for example, age and gender show that if one is younger, the attitude increases, b-coefficient of  $-.22$ , whereas for gender the b-coefficient is  $-.24$ . In contrast, the b-coefficients of behavioral variables such as event-image, brand-image and congruity are positive. This means that for example the predictor variable event-image increases for 1-unit, the outcome variable attitude will increase by the beta coefficient value of  $.16$ . Similarly, the b-coefficients for brand-image  $.09$  and congruity  $.46$ . None of the tested predictor variables had a significant b-coefficient value; however, congruity and age had significant p-values of  $.001$  and  $.026$  respectively.

According to the graph, H6 can be supported partly, as age and congruity explained 45% of the sponsored brand attitude, which indirectly impacts loyalty. In addition, loyalty can be explained by attitude with 39%. Both were characterized as highly significant ( $p \leq 0,001$ ).

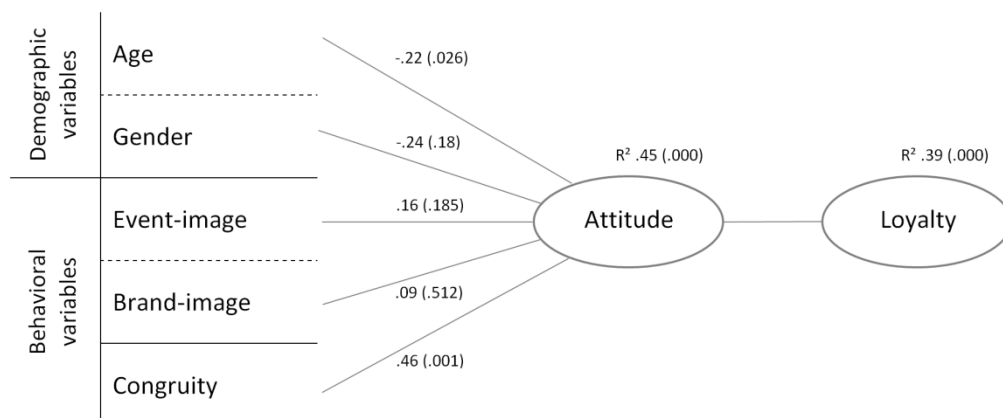


Fig. 6. Multiple Regression Analysis

## 7.4 Independent t-Test

For testing the significance of the hypotheses an independent t-Test for the following grouping variables:

- 1) have visited the event before
- 2) awareness of sponsorship was examined.

Before running an independent t-Test the homogeneity of the variables was tested. Regarding the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances all values were greater than 0.05, which indicates that the group variances can be treated as equal.

The following hypotheses were tested:

H7: People who have visited the event before have a better attitude forward the brand.

H8: People who have visited the event before are more loyal.

H9: People who are aware of the sponsorship have a better attitude forward the brand.

H10: People who are aware of the sponsorship are more loyal.

### 7.4.1 Visited the event before

Following, the independent t-Test with the grouping variable "visited the event before" was implemented to test H7 and H8. Group 1 represented the amounts of participants who have been to the event before, whereas Group 2 covered the amount of attendees who have not been visited the event previous. As it can be seen from Table 8, the p-value (.011) of attitude was significant, which means that H7 is supported. However, the p-value of loyalty was not significant. It also shows that participants who have been to the event before tended to have a better attitude towards Ströck as well as being more loyal to the brand.

Table 8. Independent t-Test "visited the event before"

		Mean	Sig. (.011)			Mean	Sig. (n.s.)
<b>Attitude</b>	gr. 1	1.64		<b>Loyalty</b>	gr. 1	1.60	
	gr. 2	2.09			gr. 2	2.04	
	mean dif.	<u>-0.45</u>			mean dif.	<u>-0.36</u>	

#### 7.4.2 Awareness of sponsorship

A second t-Test was performed to scrutinize H9 and H10 with the grouping variable "awareness of sponsorship" which is represented by Table 9. Group 1 represented the amounts of participants who have been aware of the sponsorship, whereas Group 2 covered the amount of attendees who have not been aware of the sponsorship.

Looking at the p-values (.000 and .026) it can be seen that both values were significant, therefore H9 and H10 are supported. Further, participants who have been aware of the sponsorship tended to have a better attitude towards Ströck as well as being more loyal to the brand.

Table 9. Independent t-Test "awareness of sponsorship"

		Mean	Sig. (.000)			Mean	Sig. (.026)
<b>Attitude</b>	gr. 1	1.64		<b>Loyalty</b>	gr. 1	1.66	
	gr. 2	2.25			gr. 2	2.20	
	mean dif.	<u>-0.61</u>			mean dif.	<u>-0.54</u>	

## 8 Conclusion

In conclusion, event-sponsorship is on a rise and already has and will have a major contribution to enhance brand awareness. It is established that attendees create personal emotions toward the event which will be associated to the sponsors' brand. Sponsors make use of this association and receive positive brand recognition. Moreover, the emotions will be transferred to the brand-image. An additional reason why sponsors finance such events is that they aim to increase their profit. Nevertheless, to reach the target group in the greatest and best way, sponsors should pay attention concerning the type of the event. Researchers found out that when a brand sponsors an event that their customers can identify with, loyalty towards the brand will increase. Followed by the favorable attitude the customers have toward the event which will be created by self-congruity with the sponsored event, and finally those feelings will be transferred to the firm sponsoring the event. Regarding that, the purpose of this study was to examine sponsorship brand effects especially for a cultural event located in Vienna using a congruity model on the relationships between event-image, sponsoring brand-image and visitors' self-image. In the following section the theoretical and managerial implications of the study results will be presented, concluding with directions for further research and key study limitations.

### 8.1 Results of research

In this study, the main aspects of how the sponsorship of an event contributes to the benefit of a company and the relationship between self-congruity and the sponsoring brand were examined. To accomplish the purpose of the research, different kinds of analysis were performed and tested. First, the correlation analyses regarding different variables were investigated. As suggested in the theory, these analyses tested the relationships between event-image, sponsoring brand-image and visitors' self-image. Furthermore, the attitude forwards the sponsoring brand and the sponsoring brand loyalty were scrutinized.

The most significant correlation was perceived between the congruity between event-image and sponsoring brand-image; and the sponsoring brand attitude (H3). Specifically, 12 out of 16 p-values were significant, which provided evidence that participants evolved a particular attitude of a sponsor based on their own

self-congruity and expectations. In addition, looking at the relationship of the summative values of these two variables, a highly significant relationship was found. Consequentially, hypothesis 3 was supported and accepted. A similar result was represented in a research paper of Shin, Lee and Perdue (2018) that proved the evidence of this hypothesis too.

Moreover, it was tested how the event-image influences the sponsoring brand attitude (H1). The results implied that consumers' attitudes toward the sponsoring brand were influenced partially by the event-image, as only items E11 and E12 had significant p-values.

Similarly, the tested relationship between sponsoring brand-image and the sponsored brand attitude demonstrated that with an increase in brand-image, especially of the items BI3 and BI4, the consumers regard the brand better. Therefore, H2 is only supported partially. The same result was conducted by Shin, Lee and Perdue (2018) who analyzed the effect of self-congruity with sponsoring brand-image on sponsoring brand attitude.

Following this, the brand loyalty was analyzed (H4). Surprisingly, only item BI4 proved significant values. Participants who were able to identify their self-image with the image of the brand tended to be more loyal. Hypothesis 4 could therefore be accepted partially. Additionally, with reference to Shin, Lee and Perdue (2018) where the same hypothesis was scrutinized, they figured out that self-congruity with sponsoring brand-image had no effect on sponsoring brand loyalty.

The outcome also indicated, that a high congruity between event-image and sponsoring brand-image; resulted partly in high sponsoring brand loyalty (H5). Specifically, the highest significance was found with item SBL1.

Overall, all hypotheses 1 to 5 were partially supported, due to the fact that none of them proved a completely significant relationship, as only a few individual items were significant and not all. However, initial items had a significant influence of the tested variables.

In terms of the correlations between the p-values of the summative variables a significant relationship of event-image and brand-image on attitude could not be found. Nevertheless, a highly significant relationship between self-congruity and attitude was recognized. Similarly, the same results applied to sponsoring brand loyalty.

To further the research, a multiple regression analysis was performed. This analysis showed that the demographic variables (age and gender) had a negative beta coefficient, whereas the behavioral variables (event-image, brand-image and congruity) had a positive beta coefficient. In other words, as behavioral variables increase, sponsoring brand attitude becomes more favorable.

Furthermore, the analysis predicted a significant influence of self-congruity and age on the sponsored brand awareness, which in turn positively influenced brand loyalty. This indicated that H6 gained partial support.

For testing the remaining hypothesis 7 to 10, two independent t-Tests were performed. The result of the first t-Test indicated that attendees who already have visited the event before developed a positive attitude towards the sponsoring brand. However, it does not automatically raise brand loyalty. Therefore, only hypothesis 7: People who have visited the event before have a better attitude forward the brand was supported.

Another t-Test was conducted to see how the awareness of the sponsorship affects customer attitude and customer loyalty. Based on the outcome, it is argued that people who were aware of the event sponsorship developed a more favorable attitude towards the brand. Furthermore, the result of the t-Test indicated that participants of the event had a higher brand loyalty when being aware of the sponsorship.

Specifically, both hypotheses H9 (People who are aware of the sponsorship have a better attitude toward the brand) and H10 (People who are aware of the sponsorship are more loyal) were supported. A similar study was conducted by Javalgi, Traylor, Gross and Lampman (1994). They analyzed the awareness of sponsorship and corporate image and found out, that people who are aware of the sponsorship have more favorable views of the sponsoring company than those who are unaware.



## 8.2 Managerial implications

As in the theory discussed, event sponsorship can help companies to increase their brand awareness and to improve their brand-image. This research can be used as a basis for establishing sponsoring strategies and to understand the development of customers' attitudes towards a sponsor brand.

For managers of the company Ströck, who wish to improve their brand-image and increase customer awareness, the study results proved empirical evidence to maintain event sponsorship as it adds a valuable and unique association to the sponsoring brand. Specifically, it was proven that participants who were aware of the sponsorship developed more favorable brand attitudes resulting in higher brand loyalty. Investing in advertising or carrying out a campaign could help Ströck to increase their brand recognition and brand awareness which will have a positive effect in the long run.

Furthermore, it is suggested to sponsor events where the target audience will perceive high congruity among event-image, brand-image and self-image. This is considerably essential, as the feelings experienced by attendees at an event will be associated with the brand which subsequently improves the brand-image (Gerritsen & Oldern, 2014). It is recommended to Ströck to focus on events where their brand-image and the image of the event they are sponsoring fit together well, as the study result demonstrated a tendency of inconsistency between the tested event and Ströck. To overcome this issue, companies could conduct a market study to figure out which kinds of events are suitable for their sponsorship to optimize sponsorship brand effects. In addition, by interviewing customers, event participants or managers the sponsor would be able to identify their relevant brand-image dimensions.

However, as in the literature part discussed, events and sponsorship are only one part of the promotional mix; therefore, the other elements should be considered too (Bowdin, Allen, O'Tolle, Harris & McDonnell, 2006). Nevertheless, from a consumer's attitudinal perspective the study was able to indicate that customers overall attitudes toward the sponsor were formed by different aspects such as sponsor characteristics, brand-image and event-image.

### **8.3 Limitations and future research**

Although this study gave a great insight into a conceptual model regarding sponsorship in terms of congruity relationships between event, sponsor and visitor, limitations and future research opportunities need to be considered.

First, this research examined the integrated congruity model. Additional research is needed to conduct further effects of sponsoring such as brand recall or brand attachment and activities which are involved in the congruity relationship creation. The brand association to an event or activity can create, enhance or change a brand-image, known as brand-image transfer (Novais & Arcodia, 2013). It is also necessary to measure why exactly sponsorship enhances a company's image.

Furthermore, self-congruity is determined by self-concept and self-esteem (Shin, Lee & Perdue, 2018). To understand how these motives impact the self-image further refinement of the self-congruity theory is needed. Moreover, an expansion of the tested variables such as actual self-concept, ideal self-concept, social self-concept and ideal social self-concept could provide a deeper understanding of the functionality of sponsorship (Shin, Lee & Perdue, 2018).

Thirdly, events and sponsorship are only one element of the promotional mix. This study did not tested the effects of how the IMC effects sponsoring in detail. Therefore, further research could provide a better understanding in response to the growing importance of the usage of sponsoring. The type of the event, event's characteristic and individual consumer factors play a significant role in the customer association (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999). To evaluate how different event characteristics such as uniqueness, perishability or interpersonal interactions influence the congruity model, additional research is essential as it might offer alternative explanations. Further, it would be interesting to evaluate why the audience accepts the information that is communicated through sponsorship.

The multiple regression analysis of this study demonstrated that the explanation of loyalty through attitude is rather weak. Future studies may explore the reasons or are able to offer additional explanations and interpretations.

Lastly, this study only examined a cultural Viennese event. Comparisons to other international events in terms of cultural context and cultural impact need to be further articulated. However, this research offers a great opportunity to be replicated by using broader samples. To extend this research different kinds of events need to be evaluated to provide comparable results. Similarly, different kinds of sponsors and sponsorships need to be examined and addressed in additional researches.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1

- Gender:  Male  Female
- Do you know the brand Ströck?  Yes  No
- Did you know that Ströck sponsored the event?  Yes  No
- Have you been to this event before?  Yes  No
- Age:  under 18  18-25  26-40  41-55  56-70  over 70

**Please indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the following statements.**

Strongly agree

strongly disagree

	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Event Image</b>					
I felt like I am part of the event.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participating in the event reflected who I am.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The image of the event represented my self-image well.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My self-image and the image of the event were similar.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sponsoring brand image</b>					
I feel like I am part of Ströck.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buying Ströck products reflects who I am.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The image of Ströck represents my self-image well.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My self-image and the image of Ströck are similar.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Congruity between event image and sponsoring brand image</b>					
The event image represented the image of Ströck well.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It was predictable for Ströck to sponsor the event.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It made sense to me why Ströck sponsored the event.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The image of the event and the image of Ströck fit together well.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sponsor brand loyalty</b>					
I will say positive things about the brand Ströck to other people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I will recommend Ströck products to other people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I will buy Ströck products next time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### Attitude

Overall, my attitude toward the firm sponsoring the event is

	1	2	3	4	5	
positive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	negative
like	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	dislike
good	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	bad
favorable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	unfavorable

## Appendix 2

Geschlecht:  männlich  weiblich

Kennen Sie die Marke Ströck?  Ja  Nein

Haben Sie gewusst, dass Ströck den Event sponsert?  Ja  Nein

Haben Sie diesen Event schon mal zuvor besucht?  Ja  Nein

Alter:  unter 18  18-25  26-40  41-55  56-70  über 70

**Bitte geben Sie an, inwieweit Sie den folgenden Aussagen zustimmen/nicht zustimmen.**

stimme zu

stimme nicht zu

	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Event Image</b>					
Ich fühle mich, als wäre ich Teil der Veranstaltung.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Die Teilnahme an dem Event spiegelt wider, wer ich bin.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Das Image von dem Event entspricht meiner Persönlichkeit.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meine Persönlichkeit und das Image von dem Event sind ähnlich.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Markenimage des Sponsors</b>					
Ich fühle mich, als wäre ich ein Teil von Ströck.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Der Kauf von Ströck-Produkten spiegelt wider, wer ich bin.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Das Image von Ströck repräsentiert meine Persönlichkeit gut.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meine Persönlichkeit und das Image von Ströck sind ähnlich.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Kongruenz zwischen Event-Image und Sponsor-Image</b>					
Das Event-Image repräsentiert das Image von Ströck.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Es war vorhersehbar, dass Ströck den Event sponsert.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Es macht für mich Sinn, dass Ströck den Event sponserte.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Das Image von Ströck und das der Veranstaltung passen gut zusammen.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sponsor-Markentreue</b>					
Ich werde anderen Menschen gegenüber positive Dinge über Ströck sagen.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ich werde die Produkte von Ströck anderen Menschen empfehlen.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ich werde beim nächsten Mal Produkte von Ströck kaufen.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Einstellung

Insgesamt ist meine Einstellung zu dem Unternehmen, das die Veranstaltung sponserte, folgende

	1	2	3	4	5	
positiv	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	negativ
zuneigend	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	abneigend
gut	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	schlecht
vorteilhaft	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	unvorteilhaft