COMMUNITY SPORT EVENTS AND THE IMPACTS OF A PUBLIC HEALTH AGENDA

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ABSTRACT

Research relating to community sport event sponsorship tends to focus on the stereotypical realm of taboo sponsorship which traditionally includes tobacco, alcohol and gambling. However, products, such as soft drinks, confectionary and fast food are now being viewed by some event stakeholders and community members in a similar fashion. This change has been attributed to increasing public health concerns. This paper presents research findings from a study which details the impact a public health agenda is having on the management of New Zealand based community sport events and a new range of sponsors. Previous research within this field have tended to appear in health and nutrition focussed publications. This paper moves discussion on the topic into the sport, event and business management fields. Results demonstrate the changing nature of public health initiatives, event stakeholder alignment considerations and the development of policy and legislation limiting community sport event stakeholder relationships.

KEYWORDS

Community Sport Events, Sponsorship, Public Health Agenda

INTRODUCTION

A community sport event (CSE) is an event staged for social, fun and entertainment value, with a primary target of local community audiences (Batty, 2014). Whilst sport events are considered tools for economic and regional development (Green, 2001; O'Brien, 2007), CSEs can also enhance social development, improve public health, develop social cohesion and generally contribute to community wellbeing (Edwards, 2015). These community-based events can also aid in the enhancement of cultural traditions and overall empowerment of the communities in which they take place (Schulenkorf & Edwards, 2012). As the range, number and popularity of CSEs continues to grow rapidly so too does the number of event associated stakeholders (Carter et al., 2011; Donaldson & Finch, 2013; Klapp, 2006; Masterman, 2007; Pettigrew et al., 2013). Consequently, many companies are choosing to take on stakeholder roles in association with CSE's, particularly in the form of sponsorship, in order to increase awareness and sales of their products or services amongst the general public and associate themselves with the broad range of CSE attributed

benefits (Becker-Olsen & Hill, 2006; Cliff & Motion, 2005; Cornwell, Roy & Steinard, 2001; Ferkins & Garland, 2006; Pettigrew, Pescud, Rosenburg, Fergusson & Houghton, 2012; Waaeras, 2007). However, event sponsorship as an activity is undergoing some fundamental changes (Meenaghan, 2013).

One such change is exemplified by a wider range of companies facing criticism for promoting unhealthy products and/or services in association with CSEs. Literature pertaining to this issue has tended to focus on the stereotypical realm of taboo sponsorship which traditionally includes 'unhealthy' sponsors promoting products such as tobacco, alcohol and gambling (Cunningham, Cornwell & Coote, 2009; Lamont, Hing & Gainsbury, 2011; Maher, Wilson, Signal and Thomson, 2006; McDaniel & Mason, 1999). Yet, in recent times other products such as soft drinks, confectionary and fast food have been criticised by some event stakeholders and community members in a similar fashion (British American Tobacco New Zealand, 2013; Carrigan & Carrigan, 1997; Collins & Vamplew, 2002; Dominion Breweries, 2013; Kelly, Baur, Bauman, King, Chapman & Smith, 2012; Ludwig & Nestle, 2008; Laugesen & Swinburn, 2000; Sam, Batty & Dean, 2005). This increased criticism of unhealthy sponsor products is due, in part, to increasing public health concerns and the emergence of a public health agenda (Maher, Wilson, Signal and Thomson, 2006). A public health agenda is considered a vehicle by which to influence social choice and individual community members on health associated issues (Davis and Jones, 1996; Koplan & Brownell, 2010; Ludwig & Nestle, 2008; Maher, 2006). More specifically, these public health agenda issues include an increase in the consideration of obesity, heart disease, smoking and diabetes (Lurie, 2010). The range of sponsor products considered as unhealthy by public health agencies and therefore deemed inappropriate for alignment with CSEs is expanding. This expansion has direct implications for event managers, the coordination of stakeholder alignments and the sustainability of current and future event sponsors. In order to maintain sponsorship as a viable source of funding for CSEs the factors influencing the changing nature of sponsorship need to be examined and understood.

This paper aims to contribute to the existing literature on CSE sponsorship and public health concerns by (1) Highlighting the changing perceptions of healthy sponsorship product alignments with CSEs (2) Identifying the major impacts of these changing perceptions on CSE management, and (3) Acknowledging the effects healthy sponsorship concerns have had on current and could have on future restrictive event sponsorship policy and legislation. The paper begins with an exploration of the research literature on the changing nature of CSE sponsorship. A brief overview of the methodology is provided followed by a discussion of the research findings. The paper concludes with a discussion of the ongoing relevance of the results and proposes areas for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ferkins and Garland (2006, p.276) consider sponsorship 'as the purchase of an exploitable opportunity associated with an activity not normally part of a company's core business that results in tangible benefits for the sponsor as well as benefiting the sponsored party'. Larger dollar sums are committed by sponsors to large-scale sport events due to the benefits associated with their scope. CSEs can also be attractive to sponsors as they boost corporate image and enable the sponsoring company to be seen to support the local community (Irwin et al., 2002; Monye, 2000; Paramino-Salcines et al., 2013; Pettigrew et al., 2012). This sentiment of supporting the local community stems from the business strategy of corporate social responsibility (CSR), whereby

community wellbeing and the concept of goodwill are considered key business outcomes (Kotler & Lee, 2004; Leonard & McAdam, 2003; Godfrey, Merril & Hannsen, 2009). Sponsorship offers companies directly alignment with the community wellbeing focus offered by CSEs. An initial benefit of a CSE is the economic support generated for the region in which it takes place (Green, 2001; O'Brien, 2007). Enhanced social development and improved public health are also considered positive spin-offs from CSE provision (Edwards, 2015). Additionally, community-based events can aid in the enhancement of cultural traditions and overall empowerment of community members (Schulenkorf & Edwards, 2012).

When sponsorship initially emerged as a marketing tool in the mid twentieth century, it was primarily tobacco, alcohol and gambling companies that attempted to counteract criticism of their products by sponsoring sport events (Collins & Vamplew, 2002). However, tobacco, alcohol and gambling sponsorships became increasing controversial by the late twentieth century due to their perceived advocacy of unhealthy behaviours (Boyle & Haynes, 2000). Many efforts were made to restrict their alignment with sport events. Fast food and soft drink manufacturers have recently stepped into the gap they left behind and are now facing similar criticism from sport event stakeholders, including media, public health officials and sections of the general public (Carter, Signal, Edwards, Hoek & Maher, 2013; Kelly et al., 2012; Pettigrew et al., 2012; Sam et al., 2005). This criticism is increasingly attributed to the push of a public health agenda (Donaldson & Finch, 2013; Koplan & Brownell, 2010; Ludwig & Nestle, 2008; Maher et al., 2006) and a noted increase in the consideration of ways in which to counteract obesity, heart disease, smoking and diabetes in association with sport (Lurie, 2010). From the sponsors' perspective 'the food industry sought credibility by teaming with respected partners' (Koplan & Brownell, 2010, p. 1487) and has implemented creative marketing strategies which depict or associate with physical activity in an attempt to offset high calorie levels and nutrient-poor foods. For example, between 2008 and 2013 Pepsi Co. donated USD $11.6 million to the YMCA to support events and to 'encourage kids and families to get excited about physical fun and activity and engage kids in play to be healthy' (Ludwig & Nestle, 2008, p. 1808).

Due to the rise in popularity of sponsorship as an advertising mechanism, there are an increasing number of ethical and moral considerations now associated with the sponsorship of sport events (Walliser, 2003). Public knowledge and attitudes concerning sport, health and consumer products have begun to change (Edwards & Inkson, 2006). Sport is acknowledged as not being 'separate from the rest of society, but inextricably linked with wider social, economic, political and historical influences' (Hindson, 2006, p.39). Sam et al. (2005, p. 10) suggested there has been an increasing demand for 'healthy' sponsors, noting that sport 'sponsorship by fast food franchises is becoming increasingly controversial'. Kelly et al. (2013) specifically noted that 'children's exposure to the marketing of unhealthy food and beverages, including sport sponsorship, has been identified as a potential contributor to the obesity-promoting environment' (p.72).

To further emphasise the reach of the public health agenda phenomenon, evidence is beginning to emerge which indicates its influence has expanded into generalised sport provision and an even broader range of sponsor products and services. For example, according to a study conducted by Cancer Council Victoria and the Obesity Policy Coalition, the majority of Australian's want fast food chains like McDonald's and KFC to stop sponsoring children's sport clubs and programs as their sponsorship encourages unhealthy diets (Bainbridge, 2013). Furthermore, results from a

November, 2013 study in the United Kingdom suggest that 'a 20 per cent tax on drinks with added sugar could reduce the number of obese and overweight people in the UK by 465,000'. New Zealand health experts and some government ministers have taken particular notice of the article and are calling for a similar tax to be introduced in New Zealand (Wannan, 2013).

Gwinner and Eaton (1999) originally noted that controversy associated with sponsors perceived as unhealthy or incompatible could have negative impacts on the event involved via image association. This stands to be the case in terms of the CSEs facing criticism for the unhealthy sponsor products they are aligning with and the implications for CSE management. Freeman (2007) argued that stakeholder relationships can fall under pressure as attempts are made by managers to align sponsor values with those of other stakeholders, especially whilst striving to uphold the positive images of all those involved. Another impact to consider is that CSEs have become dependent on sponsorship as a prominent source of funding. There is increasing concern surrounding legislation, policy development and potential restrictions on the types of sponsors and sponsors products with which CSEs align (Kolah, 2006; Pettigrew et al., 2013; World Health Organisation, 2007). Limitations on such funding could significantly impact the financial sustainability of CSEs (Boyle & Haynes, 2000; Davis, 2006; Garland & Ferkins, 2006; Jackson, Batty & Scherer, 2001).

Literature pertaining to CSE sponsorship and a public health agenda is limited. Pettigrew et al., (2013, p. 613) suggested that there is 'a lack of research to date on the public support and implications of restricting sponsorship of community events by food and beverage companies'. Edwards (2015) conceded that there is little theoretical or empirical research that has focussed on the role of sport in the process of community-based public health. Research to date on the shifting perceptions of unhealthy sponsorship (Carter, Signal, Edwards, Hoek & Maher, 2013; Kelly, Baur, Macniven, Chapman & Smith, 2012; Pettigew et al., 2012) is predominantly written from a nutrition and health science focus and published within the health science domain in journals such as BMC Public Health, Public Health Nutrition and Asia Pacific Journal of Clinical Nutrition. This paper intends to include discussion on CSE sponsorship and public health associated criticism of CSE sponsors into the sport, event and business management domain.

METHODOLOGY

Four New Zealand based CSEs were selected as case studies for the purpose of this research. These events were the Christchurch Star City to Surf, the McDonald's Youth Duathlon, the Adidas Auckland Marathon and the Ports of Auckland Round the Bays (n.b. associated naming right sponsors as noted at time of data collection). For the purpose of the research a CSE was defined as an event staged for social, fun and entertainment value, with a primary target of local participants (Batty, 2014). The events chosen illuminated evolving views associated with inappropriate CSE sponsors, in addition to highlighting the impacts of a public health agenda on CSE management. The cases were also chosen on the basis of their links with sponsors who had more recently fallen under scrutiny from event stakeholders, lacked regulation and were yet to be guided by legislation. Such sponsors included fast-food, confectionary and soft drink companies. The CSEs selected were New Zealand based. In an attempt to achieve a national geographical balance, two events were selected from the North Island (Auckland), and two from the South Island (Christchurch). Recurrent events with a minimum ten year history of operation were utilized in order to assess any potential changes in sponsorship acceptance through changes to long standing

established sponsor relationships. These criteria were designed to ensure that the chosen case studies could serve as examples of a wide array of CSEs, fill gaps in the current literature and provide a basis for wider application of the research outcomes.

A case study approach was utilised in order to gain an in depth understanding of CSEs and the meaning individuals or organisations ascribed to social issues (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2009). The detailed planning aspects associated with CSEs and the identification of their significance in relation to community development also justified the use of a qualitative approach for the purpose of the research project (Braun & Clark, 2006; Creswell, 2009; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Yin, 2004). Flyvbjerg (2006, p. 229) supports such an approach and argued that 'the generalizability of case studies can be increased by the strategic selection of cases' especially 'when the objective is to achieve the greatest possible amount of information on a given problem or phenomenon'.

Each case study incorporated in-depth semi-structured interviews with the event coordinator of the selected CSE. Interviews also took place with staff who represented the event stakeholder organisations. Initially key informants were approached and additional stakeholder respondents were identified via a snowball sampling technique. In order to strengthen the validity of the semi-structured interview findings document collection and analysis took place as a method of triangulation (Davidson & Tolich, 1999). Documents, including printed promotional materials, newspaper articles, organisation policy documents and stakeholder websites were utilised for the purpose of background information and for comparison with and triangulation of information collected from respondents. Merriam (2009) noted that documents such as written records and visual data are a valuable resource for confirming insights gained through interviews. This process was an unobtrusive way in which to examine an environment and to triangulate emerging findings (Creswell, 2009; Gratton & Jones, 2004; Jennings, 2001; Merriam, 2009).

A total of 24 interviews with stakeholder respondents (across the four events) took place.. The sample size for this study was justified based on: the research being limited by time and available funding (Hedges, 1995; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Perry, 1998); the creation of a conceptual framework being noted as acceptable from as few as four case studies (Eisenhardt, 1989); the use of four case studies allowing cross-case analysis in an in-depth, yet manageable manner (Gerring, 2007; Gilgun, 2001; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Perry, 1998; Simons, 2009; Stake, 1995); the stakeholders interviewed held key roles within each event and were therefore able to provide an in-depth and comprehensive viewpoint of the research, without information being spread too thinly (Mills, Durepos & Wiebe, 2010).

A three stage data analysis process was adopted which incorporated computer based software (Nvivo8) and manual open, axial and reflective coding method as supported by Auerbach and Silverstein (2003), Bazeley (2007), Gillham (2008), Holstein and Gubrium (1995) and Pope, Ziebland and Mays (2000). A cyclical process of analysis was also adopted which supported the use of constant comparison (Lyons & Coyle, 2007; Westbrook, 1990). From this analysis three key research themes were identified: The Rising Influence of a Public Health Agenda on CSE Sponsorship; Event Stakeholder Alignment Considerations, and; The Development and Implementation of CSE Policy and Legislation.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF KEY RESEARCH THEMES

The analysis of the research findings identified three key research themes associated with the influences public health concerns are having on CSE sponsorship alignments. Firstly, the criticism faced by CSE sponsors was confirmed as being driven by a public health agenda. Secondly, CSE managers acknowledged they were facing increased pressure in terms of managing event stakeholder alignments. Thirdly, in light of the criticism faced by sponsors and the pressure faced by CSE managers the development and implementation of restrictive event sponsorship policy and legislation was considered imminent. These three identified themes are discussed in further detail below.

The Rising Influence of a Public Health Agenda on CSE Sponsorship

Public health agenda influence was confirmed by respondents as the primary driver of CSE sponsorship criticism and also noted as evolving within the past decade to a point where it is placing increased pressure on CSE sponsorships. Criticism of CSE sponsors and their products was primarily linked to evolving health concerns, especially obesity, diabetes and heart health. Stakeholder values encapsulating public health agenda initiatives were noted by the majority of stakeholder respondents interviewed as being prone to change and expanding in scope. CSE stakeholder alignments were thus considered to be fluid in nature. For example, an event owner respondent acknowledged that in previous years a pizza restaurant chain had been a major sponsor of that event, but now the event would not want to be associated with that type of sponsor due to associated health concerns. Similarly, another event owner interviewed conceded that 'if McDonald's was to come on board as a new sponsor [with their event] now, the media would jump on it'. Additionally, a general sponsor respondent from the Auckland Marathon identified a public health agenda as a 'huge issue . . . I think it is part of the obesity thing and heart attacks'. This sentiment was further supported by the criticism the McDonald's Duathlon has started to receive of late, with such criticism referencing increasing concern of obesity levels in New Zealand. A District Health Board featured the event in their publication noting that

> Fast food companies have had various sponsorship connections with sporting organisations [and events] of all sizes. . . [While these] may be beneficial in providing greater opportunities for physical activity, [they] may also promote greater levels of consumption of unhealthy food.
>
> <div align="right">(Waikato District Health Board 2011, p. 8).</div>

The acknowledgement from various event owners and managers that a public health agenda was predominantly driving the criticism of their events' sponsors emphasised the high level of influence public health agenda advocate groups can have on CSEs. In this regard, the pressure of a public health agenda is challenging an increasing number of CSE managers to re-consider their sponsor alignments. These findings coincide with the perspectives of Collins and Vamplew (2002), Donaldson and Finch (2013), Koplan and Brownell (2010), Ludwig and Nestle (2008) and Maher et al. (2006), all of whom note that criticism of sponsorships is increasingly being attributed to the push of a public health agenda. Consequently, public health agenda pressure is impacting upon event stakeholder alignment considerations.

Event Stakeholder Alignment Considerations

Due to the influence of a public health agenda, CSE managers are now facing external pressures when it comes to considering the stakeholders aligning with their events. The respondents interviewed in this study acknowledged that an underlying public health agenda was not only responsible for a growing number of CSE sponsors and their products being deemed inappropriate (by individual members of the community, community groups and corporate organisations) but that the pressure from these individuals, groups and organisations had to be factored into the decisions made by CSE managers.

The inappropriateness of certain sponsor products and the pressures for stakeholders to conform to a public health agenda are explained by Freeman (2007) as incorporating ethical responsibilities, in that individual stakeholders must consider the moral consequences of their actions. The responses from interviewees in this study coupled with Freeman's (2007) explanation confirm Carrigan and Carrigan's (1997) initial predictions of a trend of increased ethical investments in sport. A major sponsor respondent from the McDonald's Youth Duathlon who was interviewed also conceded that the public needed to be educated to purchase healthier food options. Much of this focus was noted in an interview by a corporate team entrant, to be spurred on by 'changing health considerations'. These comments further emphasise Freeman's (1984) view that a societal influence can play an instrumental role in defining an organisation's considerations and actions. In the case of this study, the societal influence presented itself in the form of a public health agenda, whilst the considerations and actions of organisations related to event stakeholder choices to align with CSE sponsors and their products or services.

> Interviewees from corporate team participants, facilitators and recipient charities, whose business interests fell within the public health realm, suggested that they felt compelled to influence the choices related to and the management of CSEs with which they were involved. For example an event recipient charity respondent noted that 'it would be very contentious' for their organisation to align with a seemingly unhealthy event sponsor. I would probably say 'no' because of our values and public perception . . . McDonald's and ourselves going hand in hand for this event? It's just not going to work.

This perspective emphasises a conscientious effort for stakeholders to align their values with organisations and causes with similar values as their own and to consider their public image. It also demonstrates the overarching influence of a public health agenda on CSE management. This perspective also connects the health of communities to the health of individuals (Lurie, 2010), whereby the promotion and provision of CSEs could be deemed as positively or negatively influencing the health of individual community members. This approach was confirmed in an interview with a corporate team entrant respondent from the City to Surf, who noted that

> The linkage between healthy behaviour [partaken in at a community sporting event] and the unhealthy consequence of acquiring a sugary energy drink [at the end of an event] is providing the message that it is normal . . . and that's wrong. From a health perspective we need to be aware of what [health] message we are giving to individual members of our community.

Recipient charity, event owner, major sponsor and general sponsor respondents interviewed highlighted an increase in more specific health concerns such as obesity and cardiovascular disease. Furthermore, the need to consider a public health agenda was noted by these interviewees as influencing many of their management, marketing and sponsorship decisions. Decisions made in response to an identified public health agenda were calculated in relation to the impact they had or could have had on the stakeholder's overall image. CSE stakeholder respondents including event owners, corporate team entrants and facilitators noted they were now more careful in assessing with which sponsors they aligned themselves. Fast food providers, particularly, were noted as contentious by event owner, corporate team entrant, event facilitator and recipient charity respondents. 'We absolutely do not want to be endorsing [fast food restaurants] in any way or brands like that' (recipient charity respondent).

As a result CSE stakeholders experiencing the pressure of a public health agenda have tended to move away from alignments with food and beverage brands and products perceived by stakeholders as unhealthy. This pressure is illustrated by an event facilitator respondent from the Auckland Round the Bays event who stated that it would be interesting what our take would be if an organisation came to us and pitched a mass participation event and at the same time one of their sponsors was KFC or McDonald's or Lion Nathan [beer] . . . That would be the stage when we would have to sit back consider if it was going to be a problem for us.

The comments and feedback from the research respondents highlight important considerations for CSE managers. The impact of a public health agenda is forcing CSE stakeholder networks to be restructured, primarily due to the pressure being placed on existing sponsor relationships and especially those that involve manufacturers of unhealthy products. Furthermore, the pool of potential CSE sponsors could be substantially reduced based on the public health agenda stance that CSE's should not align with soft drink, confectionary or fast food products. Despite some CSE stakeholder voluntary shifts away from unhealthy food and beverage brand alignments, the pressure of a public health agenda is beginning to impact upon the development and implementation of CSE policy and legislation. These impacts are also of increasing concern to CSE managers and their existing sponsors.

Development and Implementation of CSE Policy and Legislation
An analysis of the interview findings and of the document analysis conducted as part of this study confirmed that a public health agenda has begun to directly influence the development and introduction of CSE sponsorship policy and legislation. Such policy and legislation was identified as being initiated by CSE stakeholders through their organisational internal policies and/or by external local and national government legislation.

In relation to internal policy development, a number of respondents highlighted considerations in various policy documents and publications associated with their organisations. For example, the issue of obesity was frequently on the minds of a major sponsor respondent from the Auckland Marathon and City to Surf. This consideration was in relation to the production and provision of company products and was expanded on in their company's 'Compliance and Social Responsibility Charter'. This document stated 'the committee will review reports and, where appropriate, make recommendations to the Board in respect of obesity and other social issues which may be relevant to the company'. Similarly, a recipient charity for the Auckland Round the Bays, Auckland Marathon

and the City to Surf identified a need for people to take steps to choose and eat healthier foods in their organisation's Strategic Plan (2009-2012). This need included 'making heart healthy food choices for all New Zealanders'. Meanwhile, a City to Surf corporate team entrant considered their organisation as having 'a responsibility to protect and promote health [with]in [the]Canterbury' region, based on their community publication 'Health First'. The same respondent acknowledged that their organisation was in the process of developing an 'Ethics of Association Sponsorship Policy' document, designed specifically to direct who they should consider sponsoring and which community based events with which they may align.

From an external policy perspective the Public Health Bill 177-2 (2007), enacted by New Zealand Parliament, incorporated a series of voluntary and compulsory guidelines which broadly referenced the need for a code of practice for sport sponsors and the products they market. The major sponsor respondent for the Auckland Round the Bays, Auckland Marathon and the City to Surf made reference to this, noting that in 2006 and 2007 the New Zealand government was close to introducing legislation which would limit the types of products which could be associated with events and schools:

> It nearly happened. Ultimately if we got the right set of circumstances again and a government with the willpower to make it happen, then absolutely it would happen.

The debate regarding public health agenda associated restrictive legislation re-emerged a matter of years later with suggestions being made that a tax should be imposed on beverages with high sugar contents (New Zealand Herald, 2015). While a tax on high sugar content beverages would not be considered as direct regulation of permissible CSE sponsorship, such legislation are likely to be a factor in CSE decisions about appropriate sponsorships. Discussion has also come to the fore in regards to restricting fast food advertising (Fisher, 2012) with calls stretching as far as legislation being introduced to restrict Coca Cola's sponsorship of the All Blacks (Radio New Zealand News, 2014).

The respondent from the recipient charity for the Auckland Marathon, Auckland Round the Bays and the City to Surf recommended the introduction of some form of government regulation in order to ensure public health initiatives could be achieved at CSEs. The recommendation aligns with those of the World Health Organisation (Hawkes, 2007) and the Waikato District Health Board (2011), both of which suggested a need for advertising regulations and the introduction of a fat or sugar tax and restricting access to unhealthy products. In support of the call for sponsorship regulation, Yarrow and Jasinski (1996) and Close et al. (2007), suggested that government authorities tend to have an integral role in influencing CSE coordination. Koplan and Brownell (2010, p.1487) added that 'government intervenes frequently to improve public health'.

The increasing calls for soft drink, fast food and confectionary sponsorship legislation to be implemented along with processes that are already underway to limit alternate forms of advertising for these products is having and will have further significant consequences for CSE managers and the financial viability of CSEs. One of the major sponsor respondents interviewed noted that as a result of government legislation some CSEs may cease to exist due to the associated restrictions on stakeholder alignments and funding sources. For those events that do survive, the loss of sponsorship funding could result in offsets to CSE participants and attendees in the form of

increased entry fees. For example, the event manager of the Auckland Marathon noted that 'without sponsors you'd be paying double. For the marathon you'd probably four times what you're paying now'. Tamburri (1998) argued along the same lines, noting that when tobacco regulating event sponsorship legislation was adopted in Canada the event sponsorship industry lost a consequential annual $CAD 60million per annum. Similar findings were identified from Boyle and Haynes (2000), Davis (2006), Ferkins and Garland (2006) and Jackson et al. (2001). Ludwig and Nestle (2008) suggested that government regulation could begin with additional warnings being added to fast food commercials, outlining the likely consequences of consuming hydrogenated fat and high levels of sugar. The key argument here is that the influence and pressure of a public health agenda and the threat of consequential internal policies or external legislation serves to restrict (1) sponsorship advertising (2) CSE funding, and (3) CSE stakeholder alignments by further limiting the pool of sponsors that would be considered appropriate to sponsor a CSE.

CONCLUSION

This paper has presented research findings from a study of the effects a public health agenda is having on CSE sponsorship and stakeholder alignments. Findings have demonstrated a number of critical outcomes associated with the changing nature of CSE sponsorship. Firstly, a public health agenda is placing increasing pressure on CSE's. Managers interviewed felt they needed to avoid sponsor relationships with manufacturers of soft drink, confectionary and fast food products due to CSE perceived advocacy of key community health concerns, such as obesity rates and diabetes. Secondly, this means that CSE managers are increasingly unable to ignore calls to disassociate their stakeholders and their events from unhealthy sponsor products, thus re-evaluating their stakeholder networks and associated supportive resources. Thirdly, the heightened support for restrictions on soft drink, confectionary and fast food products has resulted in and is likely to increasingly result in the implementation of new restrictive sponsorship policies and possibly legislation. Lastly, CSE managers perceived that their events will undoubtedly face difficulties in sourcing sponsorship funding due to restrictions imposed via internal organisation policy or external legislation. This could result in increased costs being offset to participants or at worst, the events ceasing to exist due to a lack of sustainable funding.

In association with these findings, future research is recommended in order to identify possible links between a public health agenda and corporate social responsibility and to establish a more detailed analysis of public health agenda influences on community sport sponsorship as opposed to solely CSE sponsorship. As the research was conducted in New Zealand, similar studies could be conducted in different contexts, to determine if there are cultural influences on public health agenda for CSE's. The construction of a theoretical framework through which to analyse these relationship influences will also help to contextualise and further understand the potential issues community sport event stakeholders face.

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