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Thanks.

**Prof. Aliyu Muhammadu Bunza**  
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## TABLE OF CONTENT

|                              |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |            |
|------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------------|
| Title Page                   | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | i          |
| Imprint                      | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | ii         |
| Editorial Board              | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | iii        |
| Editorial Consultant         | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | iii        |
| Editorial Note               | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | iv         |
| Call for Paper               | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | v          |
| Information for Contributors | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | vi         |
| Table of Content             | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | vii - viii |

**Principals' Leadership Dimensions and Teachers Performance Among Secondary Schools in Oyo Metropolis, Oyo State.**

Dr. Lateef Adeyemi Yusuf, Aminu Malami Sifawa.....1

**Teaching Mathematics in Integrated Qur'anic Schools Under National Basic Curriculum in Nigeria: Management Implication**

Omosidi, A. S. Ph.D. ....13

**School Facilities Management in Large Public Secondary Schools and Teachers' Productivity in Kwara State**

ATOLAGBE, Adedapo . Adetiba., OPARINDE, Olayiwola Raheef., UMARU, Haliru Alhaji.....28

**Corruption and Teacher Education in Nigeria: The Way Forward (Islamic Perspective)**

Dr. Ja'afar Agaji Abdullahi.....42

**Moral Education in the Nigerian School Setting: An Antidote for Corruption**

AKINSEMOYIN, LasbatOmoshalewa, UYANNE, Elizabeth Obiageli Ph.D., IYEKOLO, Alexander Olushola Ph.D., YAYI, Timothy Opeyemi.....51

**Citizenship Education and Democratic Culture: Possible Tools for Nation-Building in The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Nigeria**

Abdulrahman Adamu, Muhammad Abdullahi.....63

**Kwara State Lecturers' Perception of Management Strategies for curbing Industrial Strike Actions in Nigerian Universities**

Bello M.B. Ph.D., Yusuf, A. Ph. D., and Amali, I.O.O. Ph.D.....77

**Exploring Alternative Sources of Financing Technical Education in Nigeria for Sustainable National Development**

Salisu Abba Yangaiya PhD.....93

**Influence of Sport Sponsorship on Consumer Behaviour of Students in University of Ilorin**

ABDULRAHEEM Yinusa Owolabi., ABDULRAHEEM Mulikat.....102

|                                                                                                                                          |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| <b>Teenage Pregnancy and the Attitude of Parents Toward Sexual and Gender Based Violence in Southwest Geopolitical Zone, Nigeria.</b>    |     |
| Tolu Ogunleye PhD.....                                                                                                                   | 115 |
| <b>Computer Literacy and Instructional Practice Among Lecturers Of Adamu Augie College of Education, Argungu, Nigeria</b>                |     |
| Usman Mohammed, Rufai Ahmad, Buhari Marafa, Abubakar Sadiq Lawal, Mohammed Umar Dogondaji.....                                           | 128 |
| <b>Concurrent Validity of 2010 to 2013 SMOE and NECO JSCE In Private Schools In Delta Central Senatorial District</b>                    |     |
| Ekakitie R . Eloho, Orheruata U. Matilda and Osunde U. Augustine.....                                                                    | 154 |
| <b>Analysis of Social Media Usage and Academic Performance Among Undergraduate Students' Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto, Nigeria</b> |     |
| Usman Mohammed, Buhari Marafa, Abubakar Sadiq Lawal, Mohammed Umar Dogondaji.....                                                        | 164 |
| <b>Career Imposition: A Worsening Situation</b>                                                                                          |     |
| Yakub Salihu Muhammad Ph.D.....                                                                                                          | 183 |
| <b>The Dynamic of Muslim Responses to Western Education: The Model Of Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905)</b>                                     |     |
| Huzaifa Aliyu Jangebe.....                                                                                                               | 196 |
| <b>Contribution of Library in Curbing Reading Culture among Nigerian Youth</b>                                                           |     |
| Aminu Muhammad, Mukhtar M. Magaji.....                                                                                                   | 210 |
| <b>Counselling for the Reduction of Material and Child Mortality in Nigeria</b>                                                          |     |
| Yakub Salihu Muhammad Ph.D, Issa Gaata Abdullahi .....                                                                                   | 219 |
| <b>Nursing Mothers' Perception and Access to Insecticide Treated Net (ITN) Towards Malaria Control in Giwa LGA of Kaduna State</b>       |     |
| Yusuf Dambo.....                                                                                                                         | 232 |
| <b>Revisiting the Fall of Hamdallahi : The French Factor</b>                                                                             |     |
| Mas'ud Bello.....                                                                                                                        | 247 |
| <b>The Role of Islam Toward Enhancing Security of the Nigerian Nation</b>                                                                |     |
| Qaasim-Badmusi Saheed Biodun.....                                                                                                        | 257 |
| <b>Tsakanin Kabi Da Sakkwato: Kar Ta San Kar Aljani Ya Taki Wuta (Daular Kabi a Ma'aunin Bakandamiyar Buda [Dautanoma])</b>              |     |
| Aliyu Muhammadu Bunza.....                                                                                                               | 268 |
| <b>Electoral Conflicts and the Democratic Process in Osun State, Nigeria: 1999 – 2007</b>                                                |     |
| Ojo, Olusola Matthew, PhD,.....                                                                                                          | 290 |

**The Nigerian Police and the Infringement of Fundamental Human Rights**

Niyi Adegoke PhD, LL.B.....308

**The Establishment and Collapse of Cotton Ginneries in Gusau, Zamfara 1987 - 2007**

Mas'ud Bello.....326

**Analysis of Foreign Words in Selected English Speeches of Alhaji Ahmad Sani Yariman Bakura**

Isah Abdulmumini, Mudassir Ismaila Moyi.....344

**Giredi Na Biyar A Karan Harshen Sakkwatanci**

Isah S. Fada .....355

١. أسلوب الحوار النبوي في إقناع المخاطب من منظور كتاب "النور الخالد".....١٣-١
٢. الحلقات العلمية وأثرها على المجتمع الزمفري.....٤١-١٤
٣. الطب الإسلامي والواقع المعاصر من منظور السنة النبوية.....٥٤-٤٢
٤. اللغة العربية وآدابها في التعليم العالي في نيجيريا بداية وتطوراً.....٧١-٥٥
٥. اهتمامات الجهادية في مجال طلب العلم: الشيخ عبد الله بن محمد فودي نموذجاً.....٩٨-٧٢
٦. صور من صيغ المزيّد الثلاثي وأثر سياقتها في كتاب "من إلورن إلى تمبكتو" لمشهود محمود جمبا.....١٠٩-٩٩
٧. من خصائص اللغة العربية بين القدامى والمحدثين.....١٢٤-١١٠



# FEDERAL UNIVERSITY, GUSAU

JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES AND EDUCATION (JHE)

## INFLUENCE OF SPORT SPONSORSHIP ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR OF STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN

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### Abstract

*The study examined the influence of sport sponsorship on consumer behaviour of Etisalat Nigeria. Sport sponsorship is considered to be an effective brand communication strategy and a fundamental dimension of the marketing mix. The aims of the study are to examine the influence of sport sponsorship on consumer behaviour of students in University of Ilorin, and to determine the relationship between sport sponsorship and sales. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study, the population of the study comprised all the students of University of Ilorin who participated in the marathon race of 2015. However 33.3% of the participants were selected using judgemental sampling method, 505 participants were selected for the study out of the 1515 participants. Two research hypotheses were formulated for the study and tested, a structured questionnaire was designed on a five point likert rating scale that was validated by experts in the Department of Marketing and Human Kinetics, University of Ilorin. The null hypotheses formulated was tested using multiple regression analysis. There was a significant influence of sport sponsorship on consumer behaviour. Among the recommendations made based on the findings of the study include; Management of Etisalat Nigeria should always draw a strategic plan for any sport sponsorship program and should invest more on sport sponsorship to better influence consumer buying behaviour.*

**Key words:** Sport sponsorship, consumer behaviour, organisation, business, events

## Introduction

Business owners must be able to create awareness, build brand image and maintain good reputation in every environment they find themselves. In order to satisfy customers, business owners must creatively manage their marketing mix to gain a competitive advantage. Promotion has been the usual way by which businesses communicate with their target audiences most especially through mass media (Jobber, 2001). The communication mix available to businesses in the past include publicity, personal selling, sales promotion and advertising, but today sponsorship is an additional tool for businesses to communicate with their target audiences to in turn influence their buying behaviour. Sponsorship is a business method for communicating and marketing which in the short run and long term, has the aim of contributing to the sponsor's brand awareness and image as well as increasing the sponsor's sales.

Sport is said to be an important source of physical well being, it is an activity involving physical exertion, skill and/or hand-eye coordination as the primary focus of the activity, with elements of competition where rules and patterns of behaviour governing the activity exist formally through organisations (Ralph, 2015). Over the years, the idea of businesses sponsoring sporting activities is growing rapidly. Sport sponsorship is now a means by which businesses can create awareness and communicate their sales messages to influence consumer buying behaviour positively, this is because it gives opportunity to reach out to customers and potential customers which can eventually increase the sales of a business. According to Tim (2014) sponsorship combine advertising and sales promotions with public relations. Sponsorship increase awareness of a company or product, build loyalty with a specific target audience, help differentiate a product from its competitors, provide merchandising opportunities, demonstrate commitment to a community or ethnic group or impact the bottom line. Like advertising, sponsorship are initiated to build long – term associations. Organisations sometimes compare sponsorships with advertising by using gross impressions or cost-per-thousand measurement. Despite the usefulness of sport sponsorship to marketing communication performance many businesses do not understand the concepts of sport sponsorship and how it works. This has spurred the researcher to looking into the influence of sport sponsorship on consumer buying behaviour in etisalat, Nigeria.

The act of creating awareness and building brand image cannot be ignored by businesses that wish to stand the test of time, especially in today's competitive environment where marketers find themselves. Businesses must be able to create awareness and build

brand image through the use of effective sport sponsorship to reach out to their targeted audience. It is just not enough for businesses to focus on marketing communication mix of advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and publicity but reaching out to audience through sport sponsorship should be considered. In today's sporting activities virtually everything is for sale and businesses are buying in a big way. The idea of businesses sponsoring sporting activities has become the order of the day. It is a give and take relationship, the sponsor is giving out something (not always money) in exchange for something (examples: creating awareness, influencing buying behaviour, building brand image and good reputation). Sport sponsorship is considered to be an effective brand communication strategy and fundamental dimension of the marketing mix.

It is unfortunate that many industries including telecommunication industry today remain unsure of how sport sponsorship works and how it can influence consumer behaviour, therefore this study sought answers to the following questions

- i. What is the effect of sport sponsorship on consumer behaviour in Etisalat Nigeria?
- ii. Is there any relationship between sport sponsorship and sales of Etisalat products?

The main objective of the study is to examine the influence of sport sponsorship on consumer behaviour of University of Ilorin students while specific objectives include to:

- i. examine the effect of sport sponsorship on consumer behaviour in Etisalat Nigeria; and
- ii. assess the relationship between sport sponsorship and sales of Etisalat products

## **Literature Review**

### **Evolution of Sport Sponsorship**

As advertising and marketing strategy has evolved over the last 30 years, no one tactics that companies and organizations use to reach consumers has undergone more transformation than sponsorship. Sponsorship has gone from a mere novelty in which brands paid to be associated with "cool" properties in sports, arts, and entertainment, to arguably the most important weapon in the more than \$100 billion world of advertising

In decades past, advertising executives could buy vast quantities of commercial airtime on network television and bombard viewers with ads; the formula was simple – whoever spent more, won. Yet as consumers watch less live television and the selection of viewing options has increased exponentially, brands are forced to shift advertising spend to find new ways of engaging potential customers and clients. According to Andy England, Chief Marketing Officer of beverage giant MillerCoors, "One of the biggest challenges for marketers is

fragmentation — not just in terms of the proliferation of brands/styles in so many CPG [consumer packaged goods] categories, but also in terms of consumer interests and the way they engage in those interests. Twenty years ago, you could advertise on the networks; sponsor the four big sports; get involved with a few big-name concert tours and rest assured that your brand message was being delivered. Now, you have dozens of cable channels with programming that draws passionate followers, let alone original programming that lives only on online; emerging sports and local sports opportunities; a music landscape that is much more diverse; the impact of social media; and new trends and passions emerging every day!”

In other words, the options available for an individual to spend their free time have become essentially limitless. While it took years of diminished returns to realize this, consumer brands have now recognized that simply paying for their logo to appear next to that of a professional sports team, or purchasing advertising television or in stadium advertising during games no longer provide the same return on investment. Consequentially, there has been an escalation of advertising spend brought on by an proverbial arms race of rowing competition coupled with a limited market of potential consumers. Finding ways to stand out is no longer an option, but a necessity ( Jason, 2013)

### **Sport Sponsorship**

Businesses today operates in a very competitive environment and are forced to seek for other means of reaching consumer in a more appropriate way. Sponsorship is the fastest growing medium in the market, when compared to advertising and sales promotion. It is used by businesses to effectively communicate their sales messages to targeted audience. Sponsorship is now viewed as a cost effective alternative promotion strategy with an ability to transcend national and cultural barrier and brings about greater media coverage of these events combined with the rising cost of media advertising and increasing public indifference to conventional forms of communications ( Meenshan, 1998). In general, sponsorship can be illustrated as a mutually beneficial business relationship between two parties being named as sponsor (usually companies) and sponsored (Olkkonen , 2001).

According to Jobber (2007) sports sponsorship is a marketing tool that is frequently used by companies to reach a wide audience on a global basis so as to be placed higher than their competitors and to create awareness as well as make a higher profit margin. Through this platform, specific target audience alongside potential customers are reached as it able to penetrate through quite effectively in the promotional mix and as such, is a significant

method being used by many organizations. In the same vein Lagae (2005) was of the opinion that sport sponsorship is any commercial agreement by which a sponsor contractually provides financing or other support in order to establish an association between the sponsor's image, brand or products and a sport sponsorship property in return for rights to promote this association and/or for granting certain agreed direct or indirect benefits.

Sport marketing involves all the activities that intend to satisfy the demand and desire of customer. More and more companies are adding sport sponsorship to the marketing mix alongside traditional advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and publicity because it is believed that people are passionate about sporting events and could be a means of promoting their brand.

### **Benefits and Objectives of Sport Sponsorship**

The benefits and objectives of companies involvement in sport sponsorship varies from author to author. Jobber (2007) identified the following benefits and objectives:

**Creating promotional opportunities:** Sponsoring events is a great way for companies to promote their brands, logos and products

**Improving community relations:** Social responsibility is a factor of why companies get involved in sponsorship. Sponsorship of schools can help boost the reputation of a company in its given community. This will give a caring and socially responsible image to the consumers

**Fostering favorable brand and company associations:** This objective is linked to association for a company or brand. The point is meant for a company to associate itself with an event and hopefully, the positivity of the event can be relayed to their products as well.

**Creating entertainment opportunities:** Companies sponsor events not only for publicity but also to reach out to customers that are highly placed in various fields. Successful employees also benefit from this as they are highly rewarded when top celebrities participate in an organized event.

**Gaining publicity:** Sponsorship provides a good platform to reach millions of audience worldwide where some of them are likely to become customers due to the publicity provided by various media coverage internationally which aids in facilitating this process. Sponsorship

of certain major events like football aids in drastically producing awareness shifts for various products.

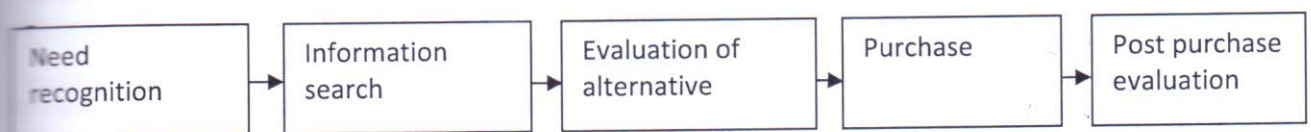
### Consumer Behaviour

Arun & Meehakshi (2012) stated that there is enormous variability in the way customers buy and use products. They may buy the same product but use it for different purposes, some customers will buy a product after a lot of consultations, where as others will make the purchase decision of the service product in complete solitude. Some customers will buy a product from upscale stores while others will buy the same product from a modest store close to where they stay. Some customers may buy a product that is a reflection of their social standing where as others will buy the product for purely functional reasons. The types of behaviour that different customers demonstrate in buying and using the same products, and the different types of behaviour that the same customer demonstrates in buying different products, evaluates marketing to a discipline much more intricate than product management. By studying the behaviour of customers, it becomes possible to segment the market in new ways and serve them with different marketing mixes even if the product of the various marketing mixes may be the same.

### The Consumer Buying Process

By knowing how consumer buys, the marketers can allocate a marketing budget and direct efforts to the stages in the processing that affect consumer's buying behaviour.

Arun and Mecenakshi (2012), stated that the buying process is divided into various stage – Need recognition, Information search, Evaluation of alternatives, Purchase and Post purchase evaluation of decisions. This is shown in a diagram below:



**I. Problem Recognition:** The decision-making process begins with the recognition that a problem exists. The problem may be functional like a slow computer or a small house. The marketers will have to communicate the new level of function benefit at the product in an exaggerated way so that the consumer feels at a disadvantage owning the current product.

**ii. Search for Information:** The consumer, after recognizing the need for a product, searches for alternatives that may fulfil his needs, and evaluates these alternatives on the basis of various choice criteria.

**iii. Evaluation of alternatives:** The evaluation process may be done more carefully and logically in some cases, for example, consumer durables. In case of convenience goods, which are purchases for one-shot consumption, the evaluation may be less. Occasionally, it may be impulse buying too. Evaluation requires designing and application of suitable criteria.

**iv. Purchase and post-purchase:** Purchase and post-purchase evaluating decision once the customer has zeroed in on the right choice, he purchases the product and companies are expected to follow to assure the customer that he has bought the right product.

### **Factors Influencing Consumers Buying Behaviour**

Consumer decision to buy a particular product does not occur in a vacuum. There are several individual and social factors that strongly influence consumers buying behaviour. Charles, Joseph, and Carl, (1992) claims that individual factors affect consumer buying behaviour, unique to each particular person, these factors include perception, motivation, learning, values, beliefs and attitudes, personality, self-concept, and lifestyle.

**i. Perception:** Perception is how we see the world around us and how we recognize that we have a consumption problem.

**ii. Motivation:** The study of motivation allows marketers analyze the major forces influencing consumers to purchase or not to purchase products.

**iii. Learning:** Almost all consumer behaviour results from learned behaviours. Learning is the process that creates changes in behaviour, immediate or expected, because of experience and practice. It is not possible to directly observe learning.

**iv. Values, Beliefs and Attitudes:** Learning helps individuals shape their value systems, in turn, values help determine self-concept and personality

**v. Personality:** Each consumer has a unique personality; personality is a broad concept that can be thought of as a way of organizing and grouping the consistencies of an individual's reactions to situations.

**vi. Self – Concept:** Self concept or self perception is basically how consumers perceive themselves. Self – Concept consists of individual attitudes, perceptions, beliefs and self-evaluations.

**Lifestyles:** People's lifestyles reflect their personalities and self concepts. A life style is a person's mode of living as identified by his or her activities, interests and opinions. Arun and Meenashi (2012) affirmed that apart from the internal factors which is individuals influences, external factors (social influences) also influence consumer behaviour. These factors are not individualistic and are external to the individual. These factors include Culture, social class, reference group and family influences.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Theory of Planned Behaviour**

The construct 'perceived behavioural control' is formed by combining the perceived presence of factors that may facilitate or impede the performance of a behaviour and the perceived power of each of these factors. Actual behavioural control refers to the extent to which a person has the skills, resources, and other prerequisites needed to perform a given behaviour. Actual behavioural control is difficult to accurately assess and so perceived behavioural control is measured through specially designed questionnaires and serves as a proxy measure of the influence. Since its publication the TPB has become the dominant expectancy-value theory, and has been applied in a wide variety of behavioural domains (Shaw and Shiu,2000).

The theory of planned behaviour is, in principle, open to the inclusion of additional predictors if it can be shown that they capture a significant proportion of the variance in intention or behaviour after the theory's current variables have been taken into account

### **Congruity Theory**

Congruity (congruence) theory has been applied in social psychology to the investigations of memory as well as for explaining attitude formation. According to the principle of cognitive consistency, people value harmony among their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, and they are motivated to maintain uniformity among these elements (Solomon 1996). Researchers conducting studies on incongruity have used a variety of terminologies interchangeably such as congruent/incongruent, expected/unexpected, and consistent/inconsistent (Heckler and Childers 1992).

The congruity model was originally formulated as a specific explanation for the attitude change that occurs when a *source* is connected to a particular *attitude object*. The statements that sources make about objects are associative when the statement implies a positive connection and dissociative when the statement implies a denial of a connection. The third element of congruity theory is the *evaluation* laced on both the source and the object by the person whose attitude is being considered (Shaver 1987). The theory predicts that the value of the more negatively valued element will rise when linked to a positively valued one (Solomon 1996).

### Empirical Reviews

Georg, Kwasi, Robert and Samuel (2012), carried out a study on the effect of sponsorship on marketing communication performance: A case study of Airtel Ghana. The aim of the study was to have a clear understanding of how sponsorship contributes positively to marketing communication performance. The methodology is based on social techniques, which examines opinions, behaviours and perceptions by asking people questions. Questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from 100 respondents who filled and returned the questionnaires. The result shows that sponsorship contribute positively to marketing communication performance and consequently increase organizational value. They concluded that products of sponsoring companies are patronized by consumers as a result of their sponsorship of events.

James (2008) examined new media, branding and global sports sponsorship in USA. A systematic review was conducted in order to collect and review articles, research studies, e-newsletters, public relations releases, technology industry reports and other materials that addressed the relationship between globalisation, sports sponsorship, branding and new media technologies. A total of 54 documents were reviewed out of which 24 was selected because of their relevance to the topic area. The result indicate that new paradigm is emerging which involves thematically linked, integrated, strategic global marketing initiatives driven by new media applications, which have enhanced the value sport sponsorship. He concluded that new media is changing the nature of the marketing mix as sport sponsorship becomes an increasingly powerful and engaging tool for brands.

### Methodology

This section discusses the procedure employed in achieving the research objectives which include data type and sources, data collection as well as method of data presentation and analysis. The study adopts a descriptive survey and quantitative method to enhance proper understanding of the research variables and made use of structured questionnaire to elicit information from students of University of Ilorin. The variables of the study are consumer behaviour (dependent) and sport sponsorship (independent). Multiple regression analysis was used to test the research hypotheses.

The population of the study are students of University of Ilorin who participated in the marathon race, 2015. One thousand five hundred and fifteen (1515) students participated, out of which 33.3% (505) were selected using judgemental sampling method. The questionnaire used to elicit information was capable of finding out the level of sport sponsorship influence on consumer behaviour in Etisalat Nigeria. The study made use of a questionnaire as the data collection instrument. The questionnaire was divided into parts, part I elicit information on the personal data of the respondents such as age, gender and department while part II consists of items measuring sport sponsorship influence on consumer behaviour with five point Likert scale answers ranging from (1= strongly agreed and 5 strongly disagree)

The study employed a primary source of collecting data to get the required information for the study. The primary data were obtained using structured questionnaires. The questionnaires were administered by the researchers and four assistants, this enabled the researchers to interact and shed more light on areas that are not cleared to the respondents. Out of the 505 questionnaires administered 380 was filled and found usable.

### Data Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the influence of sport sponsorship on consumer buying behaviour in Etisalat Nigeria. The result is shown in the tables below:

### Hypothesis

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Sport sponsorship does not have significant influence on consumer behaviour in Etisalat Nigeria

**Table 1: Model Summary**

| Model | R    | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1     | .833 | .694     | .693              | .24412                     |

a. Predictors: (constant), Sport-sponsorship

**Table 2: ANOVA<sup>b</sup>**

| Model |            | Sum of Squares | Df  | Mean Square | F       | Sig. |
|-------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|------|
| 1     | Regression | 51.111         | 1   | 51.111      | 857.653 | .000 |
|       | Residual   | 22.527         | 378 | .060        |         |      |
|       | Total      | 73.638         | 379 |             |         |      |

a. Predictors: (constant), Sport\_ sponsorship

b. Dependent variable: Consumer\_behaviour

**Table 3: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

| Model |                   | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | T      | Sig. |
|-------|-------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
|       |                   |                             |            |                           |        |      |
|       |                   | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |        |      |
| 1     | (Constant)        | .206                        | .124       |                           | 1.663  | .097 |
|       | sport_sponsorship | 1.113                       | .038       | .833                      | 29.286 | .000 |

a. Dependent variable: Consumer\_behaviour

### Dscussion of findings

**Table 1:** The result of this study revealed that the value of  $r^2$  is 0.694 (Which accounted for 69.4% of variance) of consumer behaviour is explained by sport sponsorship. This implies that sport sponsorship has significant influences on consumer buying behaviour in Etisalat Nigeria by 69.4%, while the remaining 30.6% are explained by other variables which are outside the model. Hence, sport sponsorship influences consumer behaviour in Etisalat Nigeria.

**Table 2:** The Anova results as presented in table 2 shows that the value of F cal. is 857.653 with significant value of 0.000. Since the significant value is less than 0.05, it means that sport sponsorship has influence on consumer behaviour. The findings is in line with that of George, Kwasi, Robert and Samuel (2012) which revealed that sponsorship contribute positively to marketing communication performance and consequently increase organizational value.

**Table 3:** The coefficient table was used to test if the independent variables (sport sponsorship) contributed to the dependent variable (consumer behaviour). The t value in this study was significant at 0.05 alpha level. The result of the coefficient table implies that for one additional use of "sport sponsorship", the gross performance, which is proxy for consumer buying behaviour, increased by 83.3%. This implies that sport sponsorship during events helps influences consumer behaviour.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

Every organization that has something to offer must communicate its message in one way or the other, to the target audience to create awareness. There are various ways in which organisations can create awareness and promote their products. Sport sponsorship is an effective marketing strategy that can be used by organisation. The act of creating awareness and promoting products cannot be ignored by businesses that wish to stand the test of time, especially in today's competitive environment. Businesses must be able to create awareness, promote their products and build brand image through the use of effective sport sponsorship to reach out to their targeted audience. Based on the findings the study concludes that sport sponsorship is an essential factor to be considered by Etisalat Nigeria in influencing consumer behaviour. The following recommendations are made based on the findings of this study:

- i. The use of sport sponsorship by Etisalat Nigeria to create awareness and promote their products should be maintained
- ii. Etisalat Nigeria should invest more on sport sponsorship to better influence consumer behaviour.
- iii. Management of Etisalat Nigeria should draw strategic plan for sport sponsorship programmes and should make it a part of their integrated marketing communication campaign.

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