Relationships Between Attitude, Corporate Image, and Purchase Intention in Sponsorship Events

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Abstract
This paper focuses on studying the associations of event attitude and brand attitude with corporate social responsibility image, corporate brand image, and purchase intention of sponsored brands in Saudi Arabia. The convenience sample of the study consisted of 360 consumers who responded to the data collection instrument. Multiple regression was used to test the study hypotheses. The findings of the study showed that event attitude and brand attitude positively and directly influenced the purchase intention of the sponsored brands. Furthermore, event attitude and brand attitude positively impacted the corporate social responsibility image and the corporate brand image. It was also found that corporate social responsibility image and corporate brand image demonstrated a positive impact on the purchase intention of sponsored brands.

1. Introduction
In April 2017, the General entertainment authority in Saudi Arabia had successfully run a variety of events in the region, such as sports, art & culture, shows and fun parks events in 17 cities around the country (http://www.aleqt.com/2017/09/18/article_1253301.html). This development indicates that Saudi Arabia is entering a promising era in the entertainment industry. Many companies consider these events as a challenge and an opportunity to enhance the corporation image and purchase behavior. In such events, the companies' role is not only to impress customers but also their suppliers, investors, employees, etc. (Gray & Balmer, 1998). Interestingly, achieving a positive image of the firm can result in a positive behavioral attitude toward this firm (Keller, 2003). The sponsorship events in Saudi Arabia are considered huge opportunities to expose consumers and potential customers to the brand and its products. Many local and global companies in Saudi Arabia engage in sponsorship activities. Sponsored events on occasions are one of the opportunities that shed lights on the firms' corporate image and impact on purchase behavior of sponsored brands. Unfortunately, the extant studies of sponsorship events and purchase intentions in Saudi Arabia are very rare. Accordingly, this paper is aimed at examining the effect of both event attitude and brand attitude on consumer's purchase intention, corporate social responsibility, and corporate image as well as the impact

of corporate social responsibility and corporate image on consumer's purchase intentions of sponsored brands in Saudi Arabia.

2. Literature Review
2.1. The Effect of Attitude on Purchase Intention and Corporate Image

Past studies have shown a significant effect of brand attitude on purchase intention. For example, Laroche and Brisoux have stated that customers' attitude toward a certain brand directly influences their intention to purchase (as cited in Laroche, Kim, & Zhou, 1996). Firms could seize customers' attitude toward the brand if firms were able to sponsor in events repetitively (Laroche, Kim, & Zhou, 1996). They also highlighted that merely brand attitude could have a strong influence on buying behavior. Foroudi, Dinnie, Kitchen, Melewar, and Foroudi (2017) have stated that the strong power of attitude on purchase behavior can be shaped through advertisements. Furthermore, positive event attitudes result in more customers buying behavior (Laroche, Kim & Zhou as cited in Kwon & Chung, 2018).

However, Firms' sponsorship in an event should be consistent with its brand, otherwise, the customers' attitude will be negatively influenced (Kwon & Chung, 2018; Macrae et al. a cited in Chien, Cornwell, & Pappu, 2011). Foroudi (2019) has stated that brand attitude impacts the reputed firm positively. In other words, customers' attitude toward a brand will result in a more positive corporate image in customers' minds. It has been stated that event attitude and brand attitude have a significant impact on corporate social responsibility and corporate image (Kwon & Chung, 2018). Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: There is a positive relationship between event attitude and purchase intention
H2: There is a positive relationship between brand attitude and purchase intention
H3: There is a positive relationship between event attitude and corporate image
H4: There is a positive relationship between brand attitude and corporate image

2.2. The Effect of Corporate Brand Image on Purchase Intention

Reyes, Nieto, and Pèrez (2018) have emphasized that corporate image is a vital aspect in processing and achieving the firms' objectives. The importance of corporate image is growing among firms because it influences customers' attitude, which as a result lead to influence customers' buying behavior. Moreover, some past studies have shown that corporate image is impactful on customers' buying decisions (Gatti, Caruana, & Snehota, 2012; Goldsmith, Lafferty, & Newell, 2000). Customers intend to buy a product from a firm that has a strong corporate image in their minds instead of relying on the products' performance (Zhang, 2015; Dick et al., as cited in Toldos-Romero & Orozco-Gómez, 2015). Kwon and Taerin (2018) have stated that the less the association of the brand in sponsorship, the more uncertain the customer become a purchaser. In other words, firms participating in sponsoring events have a powerful impact when it comes to customers' behavior. Sponsoring events is crucial to firms because it enhances the corporate image (Zhang, 2015). In addition, if the corporate image was affected by certain factors such as commercials (Dick et al., as cited in Toldos-Romero & Orozco-Gómez, 2015), it will increase the rate of purchase intentions (Tang & Hu, 2018; Attri & Jain, 2018; Foroudi, Dinnie, Kitchen, Melewar, & Foroudi, 2017).

Firms' reputation should be aligned with its activities because not reaching corporate image objectives will not only have any effect on the firms, but also it could lead to undesired outcomes (Reyes, Nieto, & Pèrez, 2018); such outcomes might be related to less buying behavior. Firms nowadays are more aware of sponsoring social events; such events are relating to corporate social responsibility 'CSR'. Although a study has shown that sponsoring corporate social responsibility events does not lead to customers' buying decisions (Ramesh, Saha,

Goswami, & Dahiya, 2019), many other studies have agreed on the existence of this effect. In addition, indulging in such events will influence customers' buying behavior instantly (Quintão & Isabella, 2015; Gatti, Caruana, & Snehota, 2012). Companies currently are investing their activities associated with corporate social responsibility because CSR is considered a "valuable asset" in affecting firms' performance such as customers' purchase intentions (Gatti, Caruana, & Snehota, 2012, p. 66). Thus, the following hypotheses is proposed as:

H5: *There is a positive relationship between corporate social responsibility and purchase intention*
H6: *There is a positive relationship between corporate brand image and purchase intention*

Accordingly, the research model of this study is presented in figure.1.
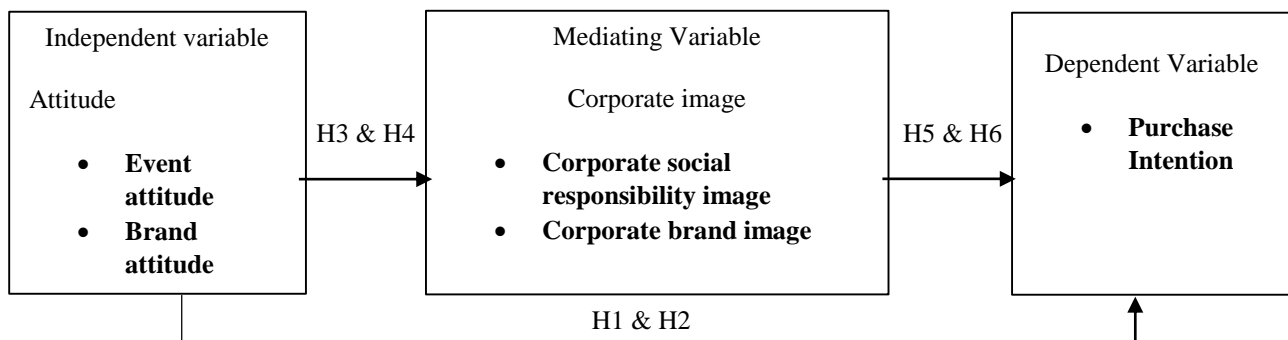
Figure.1: Research Model

3. Research Methodology
3.1 Sample Characteristics
As shown in table 1, the sample of this study was of 360 respondents. The majority of these respondents were males of 55.6% and the remaining were females. Our sample varied in their income, 65.6% had income less than 5000 SAR followed by 14.7% of participants who had income between 5000 and 9000 SAR. 57.8% of our sample aged from 19 to 25 followed by 24.4% of participants aged from 26 to 35. Moreover, 59.7% of participants held a bachelor degree followed by 25.6% who were in high school. 47.2% of participants spent one hour or below in social events such as the Saudi national day and 22.5% spent two hours followed by 18.1% of participants who spent only three hours. 71.1% of individuals were aware of the social event: 71.1% of the respondents knew about events through social media followed by 15.8% from friends. 67.2% of participants were aware of the brand name but only 32.8% were not aware. 71.1% of the respondents bought seven to ten times from a company sponsoring the events followed by 43.9% who purchased from one to three times, and interestingly 38.1% did not buy at all.

Table 1. Sample Characteristics

Category	Item	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	200	55.6
	Female	160	44.4
Income	Less than 5,000	236	65.6
	5,000-9000	53	14.7
	10,000 -14,999	37	10.3
	15,000-19,999	14	3.9
	above 20,000	20	5.6
Age	Valid below 18	30	8.3
	19-25	208	57.8
	26-35	88	24.4
	36-45	29	8.1
	46 and above	5	1.4
Education level	below high school	2	0.6
	High school	92	25.6
	Diploma	33	9.2
	Bachelor	215	59.7
	Masters'	13	3.6
	Doctorate	5	1.4
Time spent in sponsored events	One hour or below	170	47.2
	2 hours	81	22.5
	3 hours	65	18.1
	4 hours	22	6.1
	5 hours and above	22	6.1
How did consumers know about events?	Friend	57	15.8
	Family	13	3.6
	Advertisement	22	6.1
	Social media	256	71.1
	TV	5	1.4
	All above	7	1.9
Brand Recognition	Yes	242	67.2%
	No	118	32.8%
How many times did you buy from a company that sponsored events?	None	137	38.1
	1-3 times	158	43.9
	4-6 times	22	6.1
	7-10 times	256	71.1
	11 times and above	5	1.4
	All above	7	1.9
Total		**360**	**100**

3.2 Measurements

This research aims at investigating the influence of attitude on corporate social responsibility and the purchase intention as well as the influence of corporate image on purchase intention. The primary method adopted in this study was the questionnaire (survey). Questionnaire items included eight questions about demographic characteristics, six focusing on event attitude (EA) and brand attitude (BA), four on corporate social responsibility (CSR) image and four on corporate brand image (CBI), and three on purchase intention (PI). The scales of event attitude

and brand attitude was adopted from Stipp & Schiavone, and Roy & Cornwell (as cited in Kwon & Chung, 2018). The corporate image scale was adopted from Nguyen and Leblanc (as cited in Kwon & Chung, 2018). The purchase intention scale was adopted from Gedenk & Neslin, and Sharma & Patterson (as cited in Kwon & Chung, 2018). Scales were 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 "Strongly disagree" to 5 "Strongly agree."

3.3 Validity and Reliability Testing

The study was conducted and verified using SPSS software. Moreover, the validity and reliability of the study were verified through an expert discussion on the questionnaire items. To access the questionnaire's content validity, 360 questionnaires were collected. All 360 were used in the data analysis process. Despite that the test value in this study was verified in earlier work, it was re-verified to ensure a better result. The validity of the questionnaire used in this study was verified using principal factor analysis. Eigenvalue for all items exceeds 1.0. Moreover, the reliability of this study was verified by Cronbach's alpha. The scales of event attitude, brand attitude, CSR, good image of corporate, and purchase behavior have a high level of internal consistency greater than 0.7 which is considered a good level according to DeVellis (2003) and Kline (2005). Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin (KMO) analysis was conducted to ensure the sample adequacy, and they showed a value above 0.5. It is claimed that the values above 0.5 are better values (Kwon & Chung, 2018). Average variance extracted (AVE) ranged from .480 to .666. The acceptable AVE value is above 0.5 (Hair Jr. , Sarstedt, Hopkins, & Kuppelwieser, 2014), but it is acceptable to have a value less than 0.5 as in a value =0.480 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) . Moreover, the composite reliability (CR) tanged from .786 to .857. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), CR should have a value above 0.7, and our values exceed this limit. More details are listed in table 2.

Table 2. Validity and Reliability

Items		Factor Loadings	AVE	Alpha	CR
EA 1	I like this sponsorship event	.839	.666	.887	.857
EA 2	The sponsorship event is positive for me	.817			
EA 3	I am attracted to this sponsorship event	.792			
BA 1	I like the sponsor brands of the event	.744	.614	.857	.826
BA 2	Sponsor brands are positive	.762			
BA 3	Sponsor brands in the event feel good	.841			
CSR 1	Sponsor brands are likely to have a high contribution	.658	.502	.861	.800
CSR 2	Sponsor brands will pay attention to consumer issues	.735			
CSR 3	Sponsor brands will pay a fair tax	.790			
CSR 4	Sponsor brands will have a corporate spirit of respect	.642			
CBI 1	Sponsor brands will have excellent management	.683	.480	.850	.786
CBI 2	Sponsor brands will have excellent product quality	.719			
CBI 3	Sponsor brands are likely to grow	.609			
CBI 4	Sponsor brands will invest a lot in technology	.751			
PI 1	I will purchase the products of the sponsor brands	.791	.640	.872	.842
PI 2	I will be able to purchase sponsor brands	.809			
PI 3	I am likely to purchase the sponsor brands	.799			

Discriminant validity was conducted using a comparison between the square root of AVE shown in the diagonals of each construct and the correlations. The square root of AVE must be higher than the correlation values (Hair Jr, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2016), and most of the square root of AVE is greater than the correlations. More details of the discriminant validity and correlation analysis are listed in table.3.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity

	Purchase Intention	Event Attitude	Brand Attitude	CSR	CBI
Purchase Intention	**.800**				
Event Attitude	.601***	**.816**			
Brand Attitude	.628***	.716***	**.783**		
Corporate Social Responsibility	.679***	.666***	.661***	**.709**	
Corporate Brand Image	.651***	.666***	.618***	.710***	**.693**

*** $p < 0.05$

Note: Diagonals represent the square root of the AVE, while the off-diagonals represent the correlation

4. Hypotheses Testing
4.1 Effect of Attitude on Purchase Intention in Sponsoring Events
The results of the effect of attitude on purchase intention are listed in table.4. R2= .442. It explains 44.2% of the total variance in purchase intention. The value of F= 141.235, and it indicates a significant result; p< .05. Event attitude shows a significant effect on purchase intention ($\beta = .311$) and brand attitude as well shows a significant impact on purchase behavior ($\beta =.405$). Therefore, H1 and H2 are supported.

Table 4. Results of effect of attitude on purchase intention

Independent variable	B	SE	β	T
Event Attitude	.313	.057	.311	5.492***
Brand Attitude	.442	.062	.405	7.157***
R^2= .442	Adjusted R^2= .439	F-value= 141.235***		

Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention
*** $p < .05$

4.2 Effect of Attitude on Corporate Image in Sponsoring Events
The results of the effect of attitude on the corporate image are listed in table.5. R2= .583. It explains 58.3% of the total variance in corporate image. The value of F= 249.930, and it indicates a significant result; p< .05. Event attitude shows a significant effect on corporate image ($\beta = .460$) and brand attitude as well shows a significant effect on corporate image ($\beta = .364$.) Thus, H3 and H4 are supported.

Table 5. Results of effect of attitude on corporate image

Independent variable	B	SE	β	T
Event Attitude	.387	.041	.460	9.403***
Brand Attitude	.331	.045	.364	7.428***
R^2= .583		Adjusted R^2= .581	F-value= 249.930***	

Dependent Variable: Corporate Image
*** $p < .05$

4.3 Effect of Corporate Image on Purchase Intention in Sponsoring Events

The results of the effect of the corporate image on purchase intention are listed in table.6. R2= .519. t explains 51.9% of the total variance in purchase intention. The value of F is 192.320, and it indicates a significant result; p< .05. Corporate social responsibility image shows a significant effect on purchase intention ($\beta = .438$), and corporate brand image as well shows a significant effect on purchase intention ($\beta = .340$.) Therefore, H5 and H6 are supported.

Table 6. Results of effect of corporate image on purchase intention

Independent variable	B	SE	β	T
Corporate social responsibility image	.455	.054	.438	8.398***
Corporate brand image	.402	.062	.340	6.520***
R^2= .519		Adjusted R^2= .516	F-value= 192.320***	

Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention
*** $p < .05$

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This paper attempted to investigate the relationship of attitude that includes event attitude and brand attitude on corporate social responsibility image, corporate brand image, and purchase intention of sponsored events in Saudi Arabia. First, the effect of event attitude and brand attitude on purchase intention is momentous and direct in this study. This result is consistent with previous research stating that if customers' attitude toward a firm is noticeable and direct, they will be more inclined to buy (Chi, Ouyang, & Xu, 2018; Kwon & Chung, 2018; Laroche, Kim, & Zhou, 1996). Furthermore, companies should put more effort into advertisements in sponsoring events in Saudi Arabia to attract customers and increase their attitude positively. Authors of past studies have emphasized the importance of commercials to positively influence attitude (Foroudi, Dinnie, Kitchen, Melewar, & Foroudi, 2017; Dick et al. as cited in Toldos-Romero & Orozco-Gómez, 2015). In addition, companies should exist in sponsoring events occasionally to better influence customers' attitude (Laroche, Kim, & Zhou, 1996). An explanation of this result would be that Saudis' purchasing power is very high due to their high income, and the sponsoring events are increasing, in which companies participate. Furthermore, when individuals in Saudi Arabia enter a store, they tend to consider buying for friends, families, maids, and drivers. As a result, their attitude to purchase increases.

Second, the effect of vent attitude and brand attitude on corporate social responsibility image and corporate brand image is apparent on customers in sponsored events. Since there are positive relationships, it is deduced that individuals should have a positive perception of the firm to act positively toward it. This result is consistent with a past study claiming that a positive image of the firm in customers' mind leads to a positive attitude toward it (Kwon & Chung, 2018). Moreover, the consistency of the results matches Foroudi (2019) findings of brand attitude affecting the corporate image. These results explain that Saudi's perception of a firm changes if they saw a crowd around a store in an event. In other words, others' attitude changes firms' image in customers' minds because they believe in others' feedback more than the firms' feedback. Furthermore, Saudis usually follow trends occurring in the region, and they perceive the image of the firm positively when they follow such trends.

Third, corporate social responsibility and corporate brand image both have a positive influence on purchase intention in Saudi Arabia events such as the Saudi national day. Customers on such events have a high tendency to buy from a firm who has high social contributions in the society as well as a good reputation. This result contradicts one past study that stated that there is no effect of the corporate image on buying behavior (Kwon & Chung, 2018). On the other hand, another study contradicted the study result stating that corporate social responsibility does not affect purchase behavior (Ramesh, Saha, Goswami, & Dahiya, 2019). One explanation of this contradiction is that customers' perception toward a company in Saudi Arabia is dissimilar than in other countries; in other words, the significant results we obtained was implementable in Saudi Arabia not in other countries. Another explanation is that customers' perception in Saudi Arabia should have a consistently positive image in both corporate social responsibility and corporate brand image. This result explains that customers in Saudi Arabia may have lost trust in some firms; hence, they are now more concerned about the firms' image and their CSR activities. Moreover, corporate social responsibility in Saudi Arabia is aligned with religion, and customers give more attention to such CSR activities such as Zakat and Sadaqah; when a customer perceives a firm that engages in religious CSR activities, customers tend to see a good image of it, and hence their purchase intention increases. In addition, Saudis' self-image increases when they buy from a firm that have a good image.

6. Implications
Nowadays, firms in Saudi Arabia are more innovative than before when it comes to engaging in sponsorships events such as the Saudi national day. This research paper has some implications that would benefit managers. Attitude and corporate image are essential factors in studying the market in Saudi Arabia with the thriving economy occurring currently under the Saudi 2030 vision. In other words, this paper is beneficial for global firms if they consider entering the Saudi market. Furthermore, the objective for Saudi economics is "improving state efficiency" (Saudi Arabia Country Monitor, 2017, p. 2) which indicates the importance of firms' engaging in several activities to obtain customers' positive attitude toward the firm. This paper shows the significance of attitude's effect on corporate image and purchase intention in Saudi's sponsored events.

7. Limitations and Future Research
This study has some limitations that need to be investigated in future studies. One limitation of this paper is that it focuses only on sponsored events without taking into consideration this effect on regular days. Moreover, this study aimed at collecting respondents in Saudi Arabia without classifying whether the respondents were Saudis or non-Saudis. Another limitation is that this paper did not explain to which industry or product category the purchase behavior was

examined. Furthermore, although this paper examined two vital factors: attitude and corporate image, it did not consider other vital factor in Saudi Arabia such as the social factors.

Future studies can overcome these limitations by taking into consideration the following aspects. First, future studies could consider a crucial element that impacts attitude such as advertisements. Brand attitude is affected easily if exposed to some factors such as the exposure of advertisements. (Foroudi, Dinnie, Kitchen, Melewar, & Foroudi, 2017). Second, researchers would add to the literature examining the effect of attitude on corporate image and purchase behavior on regular days no on sponsoring events. Third, future research may be done to distinguish between Saudis' perceptions from foreigners'. Fourth, researcher may study the same relationships of this paper but for a particular industry or a product category. Fifth, it would be advantageous if future studies would include the impact of social factors such as values and reference groups.

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