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**THE ROLE OF SCHADENFREUDE AND FAN IDENTIFICATION IN
CONSUMER RESPONSES TOWARDS A RIVAL TEAM'S SPONSOR**

ABSTRACT

The corporate sponsorship of sports persons, teams and events has for many years been used to leverage brand equity. Whilst acknowledged in both theory and practice, the darker side of sporting rivalries and their effect on sponsorship outcomes is less well understood. An empirical model is tested for comprehending soccer fans' responses towards the primary sponsor of their main rival. Higher levels of fan identification and schadenfreude are found to have a significant and negative affect on favorability towards the brand sponsor. The study presents important implications for sponsorships operating where an in-group / out-group dynamic is prevalent.