



## SPONSORSHIP EVALUATION OF SOCCER TEAMS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF SÃO PAULO STATE LEAGUE

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### ABSTRACT

Brazil is developing in sport management, what gets Brazilian soccer teams to take less advantage over the several means of raising income that exist, among which there is sport sponsorship. In this sense, given its importance and considering the gap of studies using new methods for sponsorship evaluation in Brazil, as well as the importance of A-1 series of São Paulo State League (*Campeonato Paulista de Futebol*, in Portuguese) – which has not been studied yet –, this paper presents the brands that sponsored the 20 clubs that participated in the aforementioned championship in 2012. We separated the sponsors of the clubs into technical and commercial, pointing out the television media exposure time of each brand to demonstrate strategies that contribute to sport sponsorship and to the soccer teams. The research conducted was exploratory, with consultation to primary and secondary data. Therefore, the theoretical background used was about sport sponsorship and the Brazilian context, and sponsorship evaluation. The results pointed out to a configuration in which major international companies sponsored, preferably, major clubs, obtaining wide exposure on television media. On the other hand, smaller companies, located near the clubs' headquarters, sponsored clubs that participated with lower frequency in the championship, obtaining lower exposure on television media. Finally, the study provided the perception of the benefits that certain sponsorship strategies to smaller clubs may generate by allowing wider television media exposure when the clubs are sponsored concurrently.

**Keywords:** Soccer teams; Media exposure; Sponsorship evaluation; Sport marketing; Sport sponsorship.

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## AValiação DE PATROCÍNIO DE CLUBES DE FUTEBOL: UM ESTUDO EXPLORATÓRIO NO CAMPEONATO PAULISTA

### RESUMO

O Brasil está em desenvolvimento na gestão esportiva, o que faz com que os clubes brasileiros de futebol obtenham menos vantagens com as diversas formas de geração de recursos que existem, destacando-se, dentre elas, o patrocínio esportivo. Nesse sentido, dada a importância desse, considerando a lacuna de estudos envolvendo novos métodos para avaliação de patrocínios no contexto brasileiro e a importância do Campeonato Paulista de Futebol - que ainda não foi estudado -, este estudo identificou as marcas que patrocinaram os 20 clubes da Série A1 do referido campeonato no ano de 2012. Os patrocinadores foram separados em técnicos e comerciais, sendo apresentada a exposição em mídia televisiva de cada clube a fim de demonstrar estratégias que contribuem ao patrocínio esportivo e aos clubes de futebol. A pesquisa conduzida foi exploratória, com consulta a dados primários e secundários. A revisão teórica abarcou a temática dos patrocínios esportivos e o contexto brasileiro, bem como a avaliação de patrocínios. Os resultados demonstraram uma configuração em que grandes empresas internacionais patrocinaram, preferencialmente, clubes maiores, obtendo ampla exposição em mídia televisiva. Por outro lado, empresas menores, localizadas próximas à sede dos clubes, patrocinaram, preferencialmente, clubes que participaram com uma frequência menor nos últimos campeonatos, obtendo uma exposição mais baixa em mídia televisiva. Finalmente, o estudo propiciou a percepção de benefícios que certas estratégias de patrocínios a clubes menores podem gerar, permitindo ampla exposição em mídia televisiva se estes forem patrocinados conjuntamente.

**Palavras-chave:** Clubes de futebol; Exposição em mídia; Avaliação de patrocínio; Marketing esportivo; Patrocínio esportivo.

## EVALUACIÓN DE PATROCINIO DE CLUBES DE FÚTBOL: UN ESTUDIO EXPLORATORIO EN EL CAMPEONATO PAULISTA

### RESUMEN

Brasil está en desarrollo en la gestión deportiva, lo que hace que los clubes brasileños de fútbol obtengan menos ventajas con las diversas formas de generación de recursos que existen, destacándose, entre ellas, el patrocinio deportivo. En este sentido, dada la importancia de este, considerando la brecha de estudios que involucra nuevos métodos para la evaluación de patrocinios en el contexto brasileño y la importancia del Campeonato Paulista de Fútbol (*Campeonato Paulista de Futebol*, en Portugués) - que aún no ha sido estudiado -, este estudio identificó las marcas que patrocinaron a los 20 clubes del Campeonato en el año 2012. Los patrocinadores fueron separados en técnicos y comerciales, siendo presentada la exposición en medios de televisión de cada club para demostrar estrategias que contribuyen al patrocinio deportivo ya los clubes de fútbol. La investigación conducida fue exploratoria, con consulta a datos primarios y secundarios. La revisión teórica abarcó la temática de los patrocinios deportivos y el contexto brasileño, así como la evaluación de patrocinios. Los resultados demostraron la configuración en que grandes empresas internacionales patrocinaron, preferentemente, clubes más grandes, obteniendo amplia exposición en medios de televisión. Por otro lado, empresas menores, ubicadas cerca de la sede de los clubes, patrocinaron, preferentemente, clubes que participaron con una frecuencia menor en los últimos campeonatos, obteniendo una exposición más baja en medios de televisión. Finalmente, el estudio propició la percepción de beneficios que ciertas estrategias de patrocinio a clubes menores pueden generar permitiendo una amplia exposición en medios de televisión si éstos son patrocinados conjuntamente.

**Palabras clave:** Clubes de fútbol; Exposición en los medios de comunicación; Evaluación de patrocinio; Marketing deportivo; Patrocinio deportivo.

## INTRODUCTION

The billionaire values of the business involving sport sponsorship in the sports industry are present in several studies (Crompton, 2004; Grynberg, & Rocha, 2010; Mattar, & Campomar, 2011). The importance of such sponsorship may be explained through several reasons, such as its influence on brand strategy (Cliffe, & Motion, 2005), the emergence of recent studies on purchase intention relationship (Bachleda, Fakhar, & Elouazzani, 2016), and the fact that the value of brand exposure on in-program time is between 20 and 35% of the value of exposure on commercial time (Jensen, & Gobbs, 2014; Olson, & Thjømmøe, 2009).

Concerning sport marketing, sponsorship to soccer teams has deepened in Brazil, especially due to the negotiation of companies interested in associating their brands to sports (Rocco Júnior, Giglio, & Mazzei, 2014). In structural terms, considering the sources of income of 24 main Brazilian clubs in 2014, sponsorships corresponded to nearly 14% of the average income, against 13% of the income resulting from players trading and 36% of the income from TV share. That is, the sponsorships are not yet fully developed as sources of income for the clubs when compared to the situation of Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF - *Confederação Brasileira de Futebol*, in Portuguese), that obtained 69% of its income from sponsorships and only 19% from broadcasting rights in 2014 (BDO Publicações, 2015). Supporting the possibility of an increase in the business related to sponsorships, Gasparetto (2013) compared the incomes, the brand value, and the brand market of Brazilian soccer teams to the main Brazilian companies and demonstrated that the values of the former group are much lower than the values of the latter.

Among the sponsorships made in Brazil, sport sponsorship is the most targeted, especially in the last years given the various

international sports events that occurred in the country (Moraes, 2016b). In Brazil, nearly a third of the companies invest until 200 thousand reais per year in sponsorship, 7% invest from 1 million to 10 million, and 5% invest over 10 million. However, there is a structural problem in those investments: once several companies do not finance anything besides the sponsorships, they do not aim to activate their products or get closer to the consumers (Moraes, 2016a).

In this sense, the Association of National Advertisers affirms that, in the United States, there is a growing need to demonstrate sponsoring results (Hartley, 2015), supported by the growing pressure of sponsoring companies in knowing the financial returns of sport sponsorship, including the adoptions of packages with sport sponsorship evaluation (Crompton, 2004). However, the same association states that only 35% of the market evaluates the effectiveness of the sponsorships and only half of the market isolates the impact of sponsorship in other marketing initiatives (Hartley, 2015).

We may consider that Brazilian research on sport sponsorship is incipient, focused either on the analysis of specific cases with little sport sponsorship (Scharf, 2010; Grynberg, & Rocha, 2010) or on major clubs from A-Series of Brazilian Série A League - *Campeonato Brasileiro de Futebol*, in Portuguese (Rocco Júnior, Giglio, & Mazzei, 2014; Gaspar et al., 2014). Besides, Brazilian studies on methods of sponsorship evaluation are also insufficient. At international level, however, there are studies reviewing methods (Crompton, 2004; O'reilly, & Madill, 2009) and an increase in alternative methods to evaluate sponsorship in the last years (Jensen, & Cobbs, 2014; Slåtten et al. 2017; Vance et al., 2016; Walraven et al., 2016). Regarding Brazilian market, despite the growing need to demonstrate the results of sponsorships

(Hartley, 2015), a great number of companies do not measure such results (Leite, 2016).

Concerning sponsorship evaluation, specifically, Meenaghan and O'Sullivan (2013) state that, although there is a need for paradigm shift with regards to media exposure metrics and sponsorship awareness aiming at a greater involvement, media exposure analysis (MEA) "can and does have a significant role to play in effective sponsorship management (p. 411)" when using measurable raw data to compare rival brands, including comparisons in temporal contexts.

In Brazil, exposure related to media is considered the main benefit generated by sport sponsorship (Leite, 2016). In addition, as an advantage of the analysis, media exposure is the only means of sponsorship evaluation that can be done without the entrance in the sports event (Crompton, 2004). In spite of the existence of problems resulting from this type of evaluation, such as the absence of evaluations focusing on intent to purchase and return on investment (Crompton, 2004), O'Reilly and Madill (2009) highlighted, in their sponsorship evaluation methods review, that the focus on both results had not been observed in the majority of studies they analyzed. In this sense, it is important to consider that some sponsorships focus on specific objectives among many others that may be aimed (Walraven et al., 2016), generating the possibility of having media exposure as one of them.

The results presented in this paper are important due to the scarcity of studies about sport sponsorship in Brazil (Mattar, & Campomar, 2011); the lack of exploratory research on marketing and sport marketing in Brazil (Sampaio, & Perin, 2006; Mazzei et al., 2013), as well as studies that consider club sponsoring during a whole championship; and the lack of studies about sponsorship evaluation methods in Brazil. Working on the assumption that sport marketing may guide income sources (Gaspar et al., 2014), this study aims at contributing to the sponsorship evaluation methods field, which does not

present consensus over the best methods to use (Crompton, 2004; O'reilly, & Madill, 2009). We also aim at contributing specifically to the sponsorship evaluation made through media exposure approach, considered positive by several authors – in some aspects – and by Brazilian companies (Crompton, 2004; Hartley, 2015; Leite, 2016; Meenaghan, & O'Sullivan, 2013; Jensen, & Gobbs, 2014; Olson, & Thjømmøe, 2009).

This way, by conducting an exploratory study, the general objective of this research was to identify the brands that sponsored the clubs that participated in the A-1 Series of São Paulo State League - *Campeonato Paulista de Futebol*, in Portuguese, and their television media exposure during this championship, which runs in the first semester of 2012 in the state of São Paulo-Brazil and is organized by São Paulo Football Federation - *Federação Paulista de Futebol*, in Portuguese. This way, we aimed at finding relationships between clubs profiles and sponsors profiles as well as demonstrating the strategies used by the latter. This study is innovative because it provides the generation of a context of clubs' sponsoring in the aforementioned championship, which has not been studied so far.

We chose to study A-1 Series of São Paulo State League because (i) it consists in Brazil's oldest soccer tournament - being organized since 1902 -, (ii) it comprises clubs of long-standing foundations with large or small number of supporters (Globo.com, 2016), and because (iii) it occurs in a Brazilian state of significant per capita domiciliary income and number of inhabitants (IBGE, 2016). We chose to study the year of 2012 for the reason that the finals comprised a major club (Santos Futebol Clube) and a club of lower prominence (Guarani Futebol Clube) – the former with a greater number of participations in the championship in the last years and a higher number of supporters.

In the following sections, we initially describe a theoretical background on sport sponsorship, the Brazilian context and

sponsorship evaluation. Then, we present the methodology used in the study. In the results section, we identify the clubs' sponsorships and their television media exposure and, therefore, discuss some sponsorship strategies. Finally, we present the data discussion and our closing remarks.

## 2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Sport Sponsorship and the Brazilian Context

Sport sponsorship consists in transfer of materials to corporations, which aim at being recognized as connected to the sponsored company towards the public (Pitts, & Stotlar, 2002). For a better understanding of the several definitions of sponsoring and to specify the meaning of such transfers, see Slåtten et al. (2017), and for a better understanding of its research context, see Walliser (2003). In this sense, sport sponsorship may be considered an effective mean of communication because of the indirect way the messages conveyed reach the consumers; the prestige of sport; and the involvement, as well the identification, of fans with it (Zucco, 2015). This way, sport sponsorship comprises better results to sponsors given the stronger connection and the broader prestige that exists between fans and sport (Zucco, 2015). Another benefit refers to the construction of brand awareness, defined, in summary, as brand recognition (Jalleh et al. 2002; Scharf, 2010). However, besides the benefits, there is, still, little academic discussions about sport sponsorship in Brazil (Mattar, & Campomar, 2011).

We shall highlight some studies on sport sponsorship carried out in Brazil that demonstrate the initial phase of discussions in the area, specially related to sponsorship evaluation. Scharf (2010) studied Figueirense Futebol Clube through the perception of members of clubs supporters. The author revealed that 242 members that participated in the study were able to recognize the brand of

the sponsoring company of the club. From that, half the sample informed they already knew the brand and 42.10% informed having known it only after it got involved in actions related to the club. Gaspar et al. (2014) analyzed sport marketing actions between 2008 and 2013 in 5 Brazilian clubs with higher income in Brazilian Série A League in 2012. The authors could notice that the actions of higher value consisted of master sponsoring – when the company displays its brand on the T-shirts of the uniforms – and membership programs.

Mattar and Campomar (2011), directly influenced by Melo Neto (2003), detailed the decision process of sport sponsorship in the phases of definition of sponsoring objectives; proposals reception, proposals evaluation and selection of proposals; execution and supervision of sponsoring actions; control over sponsoring actions; and measurement and evaluation of sponsoring results. In the same study, the authors concluded that, for most of the companies, the main defined objectives for sport sponsorship were associated to media exposure.

A broader study conducted by Rocco Júnior, Giglio and Mazzei (2014), investigating the 12 most important Brazilian clubs in the states of São Paulo, Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro and Rio Grande do Sul during 1984 and 2013, observed that technical sponsors – the ones that supply the clubs with sporting goods – consisted of 24 different brands from six countries. Besides, the samples also revealed that regional Brazilian companies were prominent in the supply of sporting goods, reaching 41.6% of the suppliers.

Finally, the study of Grynberg and Rocha (2010) focused on the analysis of effective sport sponsorship through the examination of the recall of the brands displayed by Brazilian National Football Team – *Seleção Brasileira de Futebol*, in Portuguese, which was analysed as low, probably because of the distance in time of the matches.

## 2.2 Sponsorship Evaluation

Hartley (2015) highlights the presence of subjective decisions, with the recurrence of decisions previously made and excessive influence of a single manager, as a reason for the scarcity of sponsorship evaluation. In Brazil, a great number of companies do not measure their sponsorship outcomes and, when they do, only a few hire specialized external companies to avoid biased analysis (Leite, 2016).

Media exposure consists in the most common type of sponsorship evaluation conducted, even though it does not consider consumers' behaviors and attitudes (Hartley, 2015). In Brazil, Leite (2016) also considers brand exposure as the main benefit generated by sport sponsorship to the detriment of other non-conducted analysis. Among the non-conducted sports evaluation, we shall highlight digital media metrics, social media analysis or behavioral analysis related to the sponsorship (Hartley, 2015).

Studies on sponsorship evaluation are scarce (Crompton, 2004). Crompton (2004) reviews some difficulties in this kind of evaluation, such as the implementation of the studies together with other promotional tools, what obstructs individual analysis and the possibility of using several uncontrollable economic variables. For Crompton (2004), sponsorship effectiveness evaluation may be done in three stages: measures of media exposure; monitor changes in awareness, image; and intent to purchase or sales. The first stage, which is important for the study here reported, may be done through the comparison of the value of sponsorship-generated media and the equivalent advertising space or time – such as, length of television coverage, length of radio mentions and extent of press coverage.

In this sense, Crompton (2004) made some considerations concerning media exposure: (i) the quality of exposure, the size of the audience and the audience demographics may influence the comparison of advertising space or time; (ii) sponsorship and advertising

have different objectives and, therefore, comparing the exposure times of both is challenging; and (iii) media exposure is the only means of sponsorship evaluation that can be done without the entrance in the sports event. In the end of his study, Crompton (2004) stated the need for changing the perspective of the sport sponsorship generated results that are connected to the image, to the awareness and to media exposure concerning sales increase and sales intention.

A review study by O'Reilly and Madill (2009) divided the methods of sponsorship evaluation into the areas of (i) recognition, recall and awareness; (ii) image and attitude; (iii) brand, service and product effects; (iv) media output; and (v) behavior. The authors highlighted that a great part of the models focused on the analysis of awareness. In their opinion, the measuring of sponsorship results may occur through tangible factors – number of sales or number of consumers – or through intangible ones – loyalty and brand awareness.

Olson and Thjømmøe (2009) compared the effectiveness of sport sponsorship to a professional handball team in relation to television advertising considering differing criteria, such as brand recognition, sponsor brand linking and purchase intention. The authors proposed a model to better financially choose between sponsorship and TV advertising. The study showed that sponsorship together with TV advertising presents better results in the multi-criteria analysis conducted.

Reviewing several studies on sport sponsorship, Demir and Söderman (2015) created an approach to strategic sport sponsorship. The authors identified three sponsorship strategies – investment, relation and animation – with six activities – philanthropy, brand alteration, alliancing, dealmaking, activation and collective. For each of the activities, there would be levels of action – individual, organization, network and event. Furthermore, the authors proposed the concept of regime – the most important principles that

influence strategic sponsorship activity –, which divides itself into purpose, activities/resources and goal.

Considering the gap of approaches that use companies' perspectives, and not consumers', to analyze sponsorships, Slåtten et al. (2017), reviewing other studies with a personal sample, created the Sponsorship Motive Matrix (SMM) to examine companies' motives to sponsor sports events. The authors divided the matrix in two axis whose ends have different concepts: opportunistic motives and altruistic motives in one axis, and external motives and internal motives in another. This way, the motives in each end were classified as market, society, bond or clan.

Other relevant recent studies used more robust data analysis techniques. Walraven et al. (2016) used Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) to analyze the efficiency of 72 sport sponsorships, from which only 12,5% were efficient. The authors support that it was possible to verify the sponsorships with the same results, but with lower costs, and that sponsorship duration has a positive effect in efficiency. Jensen and Cobbs (2014), through the construction of regression models, validated the relations between successful F1 teams and higher brand exposure, and between F1 teams with medium success and a bigger probability of positive ROI (Return-On-Investment) of sponsorship. Chen and Reams (2013), on the other hand, used the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to create a model to analyze team attachment of an American college soccer based on the variables 'sponsor image', 'purchase intentions' and 'word of mouth'.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

We conducted the first stage of data collection through São Paulo Football Federation website and through other news webpages that provided the championship ranking. Thus, we listed the clubs that participated in the A-1 Series of São Paulo State League from 2000 to 2012. We also

ranked the participant clubs into groups based on their frequency of participation in the championship to better understand data and to facilitate comparisons among the sponsors with probable distinct profiles.

On the second stage of data collection, we used media broadcasted information – newspaper websites, news portals, magazines and companies – to identify the technical and the commercial brands that sponsored the soccer teams of São Paulo State League in 2012. Technical sponsoring brands are the ones that connect to the sports industry and that supply the clubs with sports goods. Commercial sponsoring brands, on the other hand, are the ones focused on the display of several brands, not necessarily related to the sports industry. We analyzed the profile of technical and commercial sponsors of the championship through the identification of the brands exposed on the soccer uniforms in televised matches.

We quantified the exposure time of technical and commercial brands that sponsored the clubs through broadcast and cable TV as the third stage of data collection. Concerning broadcast TV, we considered Globo Television Network – *Rede Globo de Televisão*, in Portuguese, and Bandeirantes Television Network - *Rede Bandeirantes de Televisão*, in Portuguese. The cable TVs, on the other hand, were Premier Football Club (PFC – *Premier Futebol Clube*, in Portuguese), Sportv1, Sportv2 and Sportv3, television networks that require monthly subscription. The quantification considered the results of a research conducted in 2012 by Informídia Sports Researches – *Informídia Pesquisas Esportivas*, in Portuguese, which provided the data and further clarification through e-mail. Data quantification regarding broadcast and cable TV was done through the hours of live matches transmission and matches TV replays. The company provided its research service from January 21 to July 31 in 2012.

Data analysis was done through the use of descriptive statistics, which aimed at comparing the average number of sponsors per

club and their exposure values between higher and lower frequency clubs in the League, which was also done through a qualitative analysis of the sponsoring companies' profiles. We also used qualitative analysis of such companies in the identification of strategies in lower frequency clubs.

## 4 RESULTS

### 4.1 The Classification of the Clubs in the History of the Championship

The clubs that participated in São Paulo State League from 2000 to 2012 are identified in Chart 1. The collected data shows that 41 clubs were involved in the championship in the aforementioned period, with particular emphasis on a great number of clubs from the countryside of the state of São Paulo-Brazil. The number of participations per club varied from one to 13 times.

**Chart 1 – Soccer teams that participated in São Paulo State League from 2000 to 2012**

Number of participation	Soccer Teams
13 time(s)	São Paulo Futebol Clube; Sociedade Esportiva Palmeiras; e Sport Club Corinthians Paulista.
12 time(s)	Associação Atlética Ponte Preta; e Santos Futebol Clube.
11 time(s)	Associação Desportiva São Caetano; Associação Portuguesa de Desportos; Ituano Futebol Clube; e Mogi Mirim Esporte Clube.
09 time(s)	Esporte Clube Santo André; Guarani Futebol Clube; e Rio Branco Esporte Clube.
08 time(s)	Botafogo Futebol Clube; e Paulista Futebol Clube LTDA.
07 time(s)	Associação Atlética Portuguesa (Santos); Clube Atlético Bragantino; e Marília Atlético Clube.
06 time(s)	América Futebol Clube; Clube Atlético Juventus; União Barbarense Futebol Clube LTDA.; e União São João Esporte Clube.
05 time(s)	Esporte Clube Noroeste; Grêmio Barueri Futebol LTDA.; Guaratinguetá Futebol LTDA.; Mirassol Futebol Clube; e Oeste Futebol Clube.
04 time(s)	Associação Atlética Internacional de Limeira.
03 time(s)	Rio Claro Futebol Clube; Sertãozinho Futebol Clube; e Sociedade Esportiva Matonense.
02 time(s)	Clube Atlético Linense; Clube Atlético Sorocaba; e Esporte Clube São Bento.
01 time(s)	Associação Atlética Internacional; Associação Esportiva Araçatuba; Atlético de Monte Azul; Comercial Futebol Clube; Esporte Clube XV de Piracicaba; Grêmio Catanduvense; Rio Preto Esporte Clube; e São Bernardo Futebol Clube.
	<b>Total amount of clubs: 41</b>

**Source:** Author (based on newspaper websites, news portals, magazines and companies).

We noticed that major clubs, that is, those with higher number of supporters, higher incomes and usually from much older

foundations, such as Sport Club Corinthians Paulista, São Paulo Futebol Clube and Sociedade Esportiva Palmeiras are in all 13



editions of São Paulo State League studied. Among the major clubs, only Santos Futebol Clube was not in the championship in 2002. To foster results understanding and propitiate better comparisons among the sponsors, the clubs that participated in the championship were also classified into four groups: ‘frequent’, participating in up to eight editions; ‘medium frequency’, with participations varying from three to seven; and ‘low frequency’, which participated only two or less

times during the studied period. We adopted these categories on the analysis that follows.

#### 4.2 Technical Sponsors and the Exposure Time

The amount of broadcasting and the amount of broadcasting hours of São Paulo State League on broadcast and cable TV was noteworthy, totalizing 999 hours and 594 broadcastings, as exhibited in Chart 2.

**Chart 2 – Amount of broadcasting and amount of broadcasting hours in the championship**

	Globo	Bandeirantes	SporTV1	PFC	SporTV2	SporTV3	Total
Amount of broadcasting	37	23	193	148	49	144	594
Broadcasting hours	80h	51h	272h	308h	77h	211h	999h

**Source:** Author (based on Informídia Sports Researches).

Cross-referencing the clubs’ television media exposure data with technical sponsorship identification data, we could verify the exposure time of these brands in television media, as in Chart 3. Each club has

one technical sponsor and there was a total of 14 brands related to different technical sponsors, from which we highlight Nike, Aktion, Kanxa, Lupo Sport and Nakal, that sponsored more than one club.

Chart 3 - Technical sponsors and hours of television exposure

Clubs	Brands exposed on the uniforms	Hours on broadcast TV	Hours on cable TV	Total of hours
<b>The four major clubs (13 times)</b>				
Santos Futebol Clube	Nike	28	166	194
São Paulo Futebol Clube	Reebok	26	168	194
Sociedade Esportiva Palmeiras	Adidas	43	121	164
Sport Club Corinthians Paulista	Nike	61	155	216
<b>Frequents (12 to 8 times)</b>				
Associação Atlética Ponte Preta	Mega Sport	8	90	98
Associação Desportiva São Caetano	Wilson	6	64	70
Associação Portuguesa de Desportos	Lupo Sport	8	74	82
Ituano Futebol Clube	Kanxa	4	52	56
Mogi Mirim Esporte Clube	Stadium	6	84	90
Guarani Futebol Clube	Lupo Sport	16	106	122
Botafogo Futebol Clube	Geração Sport	11	58	69
Paulista Futebol Clube LTDA	Rota do Mar	6	69	77
<b>Medium frequency (7 to 3 times)</b>				
Clube Atlético Bragantino	Kanxa	6	78	84
Mirassol Futebol Clube	Nakal	0	70	70
Oeste Futebol Clube	Aktion	4	65	69
Guaratinguetá Futebol LTDA	Nakal	4	67	71
<b>Low frequency (up to two times)</b>				
Clube Atlético Linense	Aktion	6	60	66
Comercial Futebol Clube	No Stress	4	63	67
Esporte Clube XV de Piracicaba	<i>Deffende Sportissimo</i>	4	62	66
Grêmio Catanduvense	Aktion	6	60	66

**Source:** Author (based on newspaper websites, news portals, magazines, companies and Informídia Sports Researches).

Most of the television media exposure time was destined to the technical sponsors of the four major clubs, which, on average, obtained 192 hours of broadcasted matches. The technical sponsors consisted of the traditional brands and multinational companies Nike, Reebok and Adidas, which had the highest number of broadcasting hours on broadcast and cable TV – on average, respectively, 39.5 hours and 152.5 hours. We may explain this situation given the clubs' large number of supporters, what may guarantee wider audience to television networks.

On the second group, technical sponsors presented an average of 83 hours of matches broadcasted by television networks, being 8 hours on broadcast TV and 75 hours on cable TV. That is, while the difference of

broadcasting between broadcast TV and cable TV in the first group was of 20%, in the second group, the difference decreased for about 10%. The sponsoring companies with higher exposure hours in this group were from Guarani Futebol Clube, the club that disputed the finals of São Paulo State League in 2012 against Santos Futebol Clube. However, we shall mention that the average of exposure hours of the sponsoring companies of Guarani Futebol Clube was lower than the ones presented by the first group.

On the third group, technical sponsors had approximately 73.5 hours broadcasted by television networks. This group had the most reduced amount of broadcasting hours on broadcast TV – about 3.5 hours. On the fourth and final group, the technical sponsors displayed

an average of 66.2 hours on cable and about 5 hours on broadcast TV, higher than the previous group mainly because of the lack of broadcasting of Mirassol Futebol Clube on open TV. We may highlight, though, that the two last groups had even lower media exposure.

We may notice that the technical sponsors of the three final groups of clubs are non-traditional brands whose companies' headquarters are located in the countryside of the state of São Paulo – such as Aktion, Lupo Sport and Nakal, that jointly sponsored seven clubs –, and that they displayed lower media exposure than the first group. That is, those companies may be classified as smaller and regional of the state of São Paulo.

### 4.3 Commercial Sponsors and Exposure Time

Before detailing commercial sponsors and the exposure time of each group, it is important to highlight that there were 80 different brands related to commercial sponsoring companies. From them, we shall

emphasize Banco BMG, Nativa FM 89,1, Sabesp and Unimed, sponsoring two clubs each, and especially, Faz um 21 Embratel and Lupo Sport, which sponsored, respectively, seven and four clubs – regarding the latter, the figure of 4 sponsorships do not consider technical sponsorship. Besides, it is important to understand that inasmuch the study went through a group to another, in the order presented in the results, there was an increase in the average number of sponsorships per club. The four major clubs obtained an average of 4 sponsors per club; the frequents, 4.25; those with medium frequency, 5.25; and those with lower frequency, 5.5.

#### 4.3.1 The Four Major Clubs

Television media exposure time of the commercial sponsors of major clubs are listed in Chart 4.

**Chart 4 – Commercial sponsors and hours of television exposure**

Clubs	Brands exposed on the uniforms	Hours on broadcast TV	Hours on cable TV	Total of hours
<b>The four major clubs (13 times)</b>				
Santos Futebol Clube	Banco BMG	28	166	194
	Netshoes	28	166	194
	Seara	28	166	194
	CSU	x <sup>2</sup>	x <sup>1</sup>	x <sup>1</sup>
	Tenys Pé	x <sup>1</sup>	x <sup>1</sup>	x <sup>1</sup>
São Paulo Futebol Clube	Wizard Idiomas	26	168	194
	Lenovo Computadores	x <sup>1</sup>	x <sup>1</sup>	x <sup>1</sup>
	Tim	x <sup>1</sup>	x <sup>1</sup>	x <sup>1</sup>
Sociedade Esportiva Palmeiras	Banco BMG	43	121	164
	KIA	43	121	164
	Skill Escolas de Idiomas	43	121	164
	Arcor	x <sup>1</sup>	x <sup>1</sup>	x <sup>1</sup>
Sport Club Corinthians Paulista	Bozzano	61	155	216
	NeoQuímica Genéricos	61	155	216
	Jontex	61	155	216
	Fisk	61	155	216

**Source:** Author (based on newspaper websites, news portals, magazines, companies and Informídia Sports Researches).

<sup>2</sup> The 'x' marked on the columns of Chart 4, 5 and 7 represents sponsors that displayed their brands only during the final matches of the championship.

The commercial sponsors of the major clubs had an average of 194 total hours of television media exposure with the matches broadcast, being 44 hours on broadcast TV and 150 hours on cable TV. We could notice the presence of major Brazilian companies and multinational ones, such as Lenovo, Kia, Arcor, Banco BMG and Tim – from which we shall highlight Banco BMG, sponsoring two clubs.

The total television exposure hours of the four major clubs of São Paulo state demonstrate that the winner of the championship was not the club with the widest exposure on television media. Santos Futebol Clube won the League in 2012 and Guarani Futebol Clube was the vice-champion. However, Sport Club Corinthians Paulista had the highest time on television networks, with 216 hours (61 on broadcast TV), followed by São Paulo Futebol Clube and by Santos Futebol Clube, both with 194 hours (26 and 28, respectively, on broadcast TV) and, in third place, by Sociedade Esportiva Palmeiras, with 164 hours (43 hours on broadcast TV).

This way, the widest exposure time was held by the brands that sponsored Sport Club Corinthians Paulista, with 216 hours (61 on broadcast TV). We shall highlight that the club had the highest exposure time even not reaching the finals of the championship. Besides, the club's main sponsoring company, Hypermarchas, shared its available time among three brands from its portfolio – Bozzano, Neo Química and Jontex. The second most important sponsor was Escola de Idiomas

FISK, a language school, whose obtained exposure was higher than other language schools as commercial sponsors, such as Skill and Wizard.

The second widest exposure media time belongs to the sponsors of Santos Futebol Clube, with 194 hours. Three sponsoring companies – Banco BMG, Netshoes and Seara – displayed their brands during the whole championship. Tenys Pé sponsored only one match and had, therefore, the time of a match for exposure. However, Tenys Pé used the image of the main athlete playing for Santos Futebol Clube at the time – Neymar da Silva Santos Júnior – in other communication strategies. CSU Card System, another single match sponsor, was responsible for processing and managing the cards of the club's membership program.

São Paulo Futebol Clube shared the same amount of total exposure time with Santos Futebol Clube – the winner of the League – and played the whole championship without a main sponsor, exhibiting only the brand Wizard on the sleeves of the club's official uniform T-shirt. Besides this, in 2012, the club signed a sponsoring contract to display on its uniform the brand STi, same brand that sponsored Santos Futebol Clube from 2007 to 2011.

#### 4.3.2 Frequent Clubs

Television media exposure time of the commercial sponsors of the frequent clubs are listed in Chart 5.

Chart 5 – Commercial sponsors and hours of television exposure

Clubs	Brands exposed on the uniforms	Hours on broadcast TV	Hours on cable TV	Total of hours
<b>Frequents (12 to 8 times)</b>				
Associação Atlética Ponte Preta	Atacadão Guarujá	8	90	98
	GVT	8	90	98
	Mack Color	8	90	98
	Sikafill e Sika	x <sup>1</sup>	x <sup>1</sup>	x <sup>1</sup>
Associação Desportiva São Caetano	Universo Tintas	6	64	70
Associação Portuguesa de Desportos	Banco Banif	8	74	82
	Irwin Ferramentas	8	74	82
	Leograf Gráfica e Editora	8	74	82
	Minds English School	8	74	82
	Lupo Sport	8	74	82
Ituano Futebol Clube	Açovia Estruturas	4	52	56
	Água Schin	4	52	56
	Conspar Urbanismo	4	52	56
	IOB Folhamatic Tecnologia de Sistemas	4	52	56
	Itupetro;	4	52	56
	Kanxa	4	52	56
	Nova Schin	4	52	56
Mogi Mirim Esporte Clube	Amortecedores Monroe	6	84	90
	Faz um 21 Embratel	6	84	90
	Unimed	6	84	90
Botafogo Futebol Clube	Andra Materiais Elétricos	11	58	69
	Brascopper	11	58	69
	Faz um 21 Embratel	11	58	69
	São Francisco Saúde	11	58	69
	Sócio Pantera	11	58	69
Paulista Futebol Clube LTDA	Araldite	6	69	75
	Faz um 21 Embratel	6	69	75
	Lupo Sport	6	69	75
	Maxi	6	69	75
	YES! Inglês e Espanhol	6	69	75
Guarani Futebol Clube	Asa Alumínio	16	106	122
	Atacadão Guarujá	16	106	122
	Cabrino	16	106	122
	DNA Vidros	16	106	122

**Source:** Author (based on newspaper websites, news portals, magazines, companies and Informídia Sports Researches).

The commercial sponsors of the frequent clubs had an average of 80 hours of media exposure with the matches broadcasting, being 8 hours on broadcast TV and 72 hours on cable TV. Thus, the brands sponsoring this group of clubs had, on average, a smaller amount of exposure hours than the brands that sponsored major clubs. Despite this, we shall observe that

this group comprises a higher amount of commercial sponsors per club when compared to the first group.

In addition, opposing to the group of major clubs, the most successful club in the championship was the one that obtained the widest number of exposure hours. This way, Guarani Futebol Clube, the vice-champion of the

League, was the most prominent club in terms of exposure time on broadcast and on cable TV, with 16 and 106 exposure hours respectively. In addition, commercial sponsors of this club had the best exposure outcome of the group, comprising non-multinational companies, that is, smaller companies usually placed in the same city of the club's headquarters.

The commercial sponsors of Associação Atlética Ponte Preta excelled on exposure time on cable TV, probably because the club reached the final phases of the championship. Such sponsors comprised companies placed in cities near the club's headquarters and connected to the construction industry. The commercial sponsors of Botafogo Futebol Clube obtained the second best number of broadcasting on open TV, highlighting once more companies placed in the same city of the club's headquarters. The commercial sponsors of Associação Portuguesa de Desportos consisted of a bank and Lupo Sport, with the presence of smaller companies, placed in cities near the

club's headquarters. The commercial sponsors of Associação Desportiva São Caetano had a single sponsor and, again, comprised a company placed in a city near the club's headquarters. The prominent commercial sponsors of Mogi Mirim Esporte Clube were Embratel – common to several other teams – and Unimed – that, in national level, had already presented a sponsorship policy to soccer teams. The commercial sponsors of Paulista Futebol Clube were Lupo Sport and Embratel, as well as companies placed near the city of the club's headquarters. Finally, the sponsors of Ituano Futebol Clube also held intense activity in the same city of the club's headquarters – the city of Itu –, with highlight to the brand Cervejaria Schincariol, funded in the aforementioned city.

#### 4.3.3 Medium Frequency Clubs

Television media exposure time of the commercial sponsors of the clubs classified as 'medium frequency' are listed in Chart 6.

**Chart 6 – Commercial sponsors and hours of television exposure**

Clubs	Brands exposed on the uniforms	Hours on broadcast TV	Hours on cable TV	Total of hours
<b>Medium frequency (7 to 3 times)</b>				
Clube Atlético Bragantino	Alumbra Materiais Elétricos	6	78	84
	Faz um 21 Embratel	6	78	84
	Nativa FM 89,1	6	78	84
	Sabesp	6	78	84
Mirassol Futebol Clube	Gelius Móveis	0	70	70
	Jomarca	0	70	70
	Kodilar	0	70	70
	Levity	0	70	70
	Poty	0	70	70
	Redesol	0	70	70
	Rosalito	0	70	70
Oeste Futebol Clube	Santa Maria	0	70	70
	Rádio 104.9 Itápolis	4	65	69
	JT Automóveis	4	65	69
	Lupo Sport	4	65	69
	PhytoEssence Fragrâncias	4	65	69
Guaratinguetá Futebol LTDA	Triângulo Alimentos	4	65	69
	Candide	4	67	71
	Faz um 21 Embratel	4	67	71
	SPR Franquias	4	67	71
	XPS Sports	4	67	71

**Source:** Author (based on newspaper websites, news portals, magazines, companies and Informídia Sports Researches).

The commercial sponsors of the clubs with medium frequency had an average of 73 total hours of media exposure with matches broadcasting, being 3 hours on broadcast TV and 70 hours on cable TV. That is, the brands of such group of clubs obtained, on average, a smaller exposure amount than the brands that sponsored major clubs. However, considering the brands of the frequent clubs, the average of hours of this group presents a substantial decrease on broadcast TV, whereas on cable TV the values are similar. Besides, we observe the presence of brands that did not obtain any exposure on broadcast TV in this second group, which is the case of the sponsoring companies of Mirassol Futebol Clube.

The commercial sponsors of Clube Atlético Bragantino obtained the widest exposure, similar to the sponsors of the frequent clubs. Once again, Embratel was one of the

sponsors together with companies placed in the same city of the club's headquarters. The prominent sponsoring companies of Oeste Futebol Clube were Lupo Sport, and, mostly, smaller companies from the countryside of the state of São Paulo. The main sponsoring companies of Guaratinguetá Futebol Clube LTDA were Embratel and two other companies connected to the sports industry. The commercial sponsors of Mirassol Futebol Clube were the ones with the worst amount of exposure hours on broadcast TV – zero hours – and consisted of companies mainly from the region of the city of the club's headquarters

#### 4.3.4 Lower Frequency Clubs

Television media exposure time of the commercial sponsors of the low frequency clubs are in Chart 7.

**Chart 7 – Commercial sponsors and hours of television exposure**

Clubs	Brands exposed on uniforms	Hours on broadcast TV	Hours on cable TV	Total of hours
<b>Low frequency (up to two times)</b>				
Clube Atlético Linense	Faz um 21 Embratel	6	60	66
	Lupo Sport	6	60	66
	Mariflex	6	60	66
	Oregon Blindados	6	60	66
	Proseg Segurança	6	60	66
	Sabesp	6	60	66
Comercial Futebol Clube	Faz um 21 Embratel	4	63	67
	Guaraná Xamego	4	63	67
	Noble Créditos Tributários	4	63	67
	Joli	x <sup>1</sup>	x <sup>1</sup>	x <sup>1</sup>
	Superpar	x <sup>1</sup>	x <sup>1</sup>	x <sup>1</sup>
Esporte Clube XV de Piracicaba	Caterpillar	4	62	66
	FMC Agrícola	4	62	66
	Raizen	4	62	66
	Supricel	4	62	66
	Unimed	4	62	66
Grêmio Catanduvense	Guaraná Cotuba	6	60	66
	Lorensid Ventiladores	6	60	66
	Maranhão Supermercados	6	60	66
	Matilat	6	60	66
	Nativa FM 89,1	6	60	66
	PAS Padre Albino Saúde	6	60	66

**Source:** Author (based on newspaper websites, news portals, magazines, companies and Informídia Sports Researches).

The commercial sponsors of the low frequency clubs obtained an average of 66 total hours of media exposure with the matches broadcasting, being 5 hours on broadcast TV and 61 hours on cable TV. That is, once more, the brands in this group of clubs obtained a much smaller average number than the sponsoring brands of major clubs. However, concerning the average of hours on broadcast TV, the number was wider than the number of the sponsors of the group of medium frequency clubs and close to the frequent group. Besides, we observe that all sponsors were exposed on broadcast TV in this group.

The commercial sponsors of Grêmio Catanduvense and Atlético Clube Linense obtained the widest exposure in the group on broadcast TV. Concerning the number of hours on cable TV, the media exposure of the group presented similar numbers. Companies placed in the clubs' city headquarters commercially sponsored both clubs. However, Atlético Clube Linense was prominent with the presence of two previously mentioned companies: Lupo and Embratel.

The commercial sponsors of Esporte Clube XV de Piracicaba are the same enterprises placed in the club's city headquarters or operating in the area. For Comercial Futebol Clube, the scenario did not change, that is, the sponsoring companies

comprised mainly sponsoring companies from the region, with the prominence of one major company: Embratel. It is worth mentioning that during the television broadcast of the match between Comercial Futebol Clube and Sport Club Corinthians Paulista in the city of Ribeirão Preto, in the state of São Paulo, there was the specific sponsoring of two regional companies: Joli and Superpar.

#### 4.4 Sponsors Strategies for Low Frequency Clubs in the Championship

Through the data of television media exposure of the technical and commercial sponsors, we could understand one of the reasons why major companies – usually multinational ones – sponsor major clubs, investing, therefore, higher values. This happens because there is a wider exposure of the brands on broadcast and cable TV. However, Embratel – a Brazilian telecommunications company founded in 1965 that, since 2011, belongs to Claro's controller, América Móvil – used a different sponsorship strategy. It displayed the brand 'Faz um 21 Embratel' – in English, 'Call 21 Embratel' – in several clubs with low exposure when considered individually, but with wide exposure when considered altogether, as Chart 8 displays.

Chart 8 – Television exposure of Embratel in hours

Brand displayed on the uniform	Clubs with comercial sponsorship	Hours on broadcast TV	Hours on cable TV	Total of hours
"Faz um 21 Embratel"	Botafogo Futebol Clube	11	58	69
	Clube Atlético Bragantino	6	78	84
	Clube Atlético Linense	6	60	66
	Comercial Futebol Clube	4	63	67
	Guaratinguetá Futebol LTDA	4	67	71
	Mogi Mirim Esporte Clube	6	84	90
	Paulista Futebol Clube LTDA	6	69	75
Total		43	479	522

**Source:** Author (based on newspaper websites, news portals, magazines, companies and Informídia Sports Researches).



This way, besides sponsoring countryside clubs with low frequency in the championship, Embratel obtained wide television exposure values, with 43 hours on broadcast TV and 479 on cable TV, totalizing 522 hours. Concerning the exposure hours on broadcast TV, only Sport Club Corinthians Paulista, with 61 exposure hours, exceeds the 43 hours obtained by Embratel, the same amount acquired by Sociedade Esportiva Palmeiras. That is, we notice that it was compensatory for Embratel to invest on several smaller clubs, once the exposure times were close and even exceeded the amounts obtained by some major state clubs and once the investment values were probably lower than the ones spent on the sponsoring of a major club.

Besides Embratel, Lupo Sport – a sport brand used by Lupo company, which is specialized in clothes production and is located in the city of Araraquara, in São Paulo state - used a similar strategy. Based on the exposure time of the brand, we could notice it had 414 hours of exposure on television networks, being 374 hours on cable TV and 40 hours on broadcast TV, considering both technical and commercial sponsoring. Such amounts were relevant when compared to the amounts displayed by widely exposed clubs and close to the exposure amount presented by Sociedade Esportiva Palmeiras itself. We shall highlight that such sponsoring strategy seems to be compensatory, once it obtained relevant exposure through investment values that were probably lower than the ones spent to sponsor a major club.

**Chart 9 – Television exposure of Lupo in hours**

Brand displayed on the uniform	Clubs with technical sponsors	Hours on broadcast TV	Hours on cable TV	Total of hours
Lupo Sport	Associação Portuguesa de Desportos	Repeated value was not considered here, once it has been considered in commercial sponsorship		
	Guarani Futebol Clube	16	106	122
	<b>Clubs with commercial sponsors</b>			
	Associação Portuguesa de Desportos	8	74	82
	Paulista Futebol Clube LTDA	6	69	75
	Oeste Futebol Clube	4	65	69
	Clube Atlético Linense	6	60	66
Total		40	374	414

**Source:** Author (based on newspaper websites, news portals, magazines, companies and Informídia Sports Researches).

## 5 DATA DISCUSSION

The generation of the context of sport sponsorship – considering the brands exposed on the uniforms – that sponsored 20 teams in the A-1 series of São Paulo State League in 2012 demonstrated a total of 14 brands related

to technical sponsoring companies and 80 brands related to commercial sponsoring companies. The high figure of about 5 sponsoring brands per club means that the championship is relevant for the market and

also for a great number of clubs – this latter assumption may be even more highlighted since São Paulo State League was the main championship in which the great majority of clubs, especially those who are not part of the four major ones, participated.

With the separation of different sponsor groups, based on the number of participations in the championship in the last 13 years, we may notice that commercial sponsors of the four major clubs were, on average, in lower number when compared to the three other groups. However, they consisted of major companies, usually multinational. On the other hand, commercial sponsors of the three other groups, which held clubs with lower frequency in the championship, consisted of sponsoring companies with a great variety of areas of activity, usually located near the clubs' headquarters.

Considering the aforementioned context, in which it may be difficult to reach sponsoring objectives once many brands are associated to a single event (Walliser, 2003), we could notice that, despite the average increase in the number of sponsorships of clubs with lower frequency in the championship, such differences were not so disparate. That is, although there are some cases with great discrepancy, the average variance among the number of sponsors in the groups was not so high.

Concerning the technical sponsors of the four major clubs, we noticed that they also consisted of major multinational companies, whereas the sponsors of the other groups comprised smaller companies located near the clubs' headquarters. These findings support the results of the samples of Rocco Júnior, Giglio and Mazzei (2014) that observed the existence of many technical sponsors, with the prominence of regional Brazilian companies.

Also through the separation of different sponsors groups, it was possible to notice that technical and commercial sponsors of the four major clubs obtained higher levels of exposure when compared to the three other

groups. On average, the commercial sponsorship of the major clubs had 44 hours on broadcast TV and 150 hours on cable TV. When we compare the average of exposure of the three other groups together – 5.3 on broadcast TV and 67.7 on cable TV, with standard deviation, respectively, of 2 and 4.8 – we find that the sponsorship value of the major clubs were almost 10 times higher on broadcast TV and more than the double on cable TV. This means that minor companies located near the headquarters of the last three analyzed groups do not reach a great television media exposure when compared to the four major clubs.

Although it is hard to analyze the regime concept with the available results, we may infer that the sponsors of low media exposure and low frequency soccer teams have their strategy attached to the idea of sponsoring as investment, as well as related to philanthropic activity (Demir, & Söderman, 2015) and to the external/altruistic motive of society in the SMM (Slåtten et al., 2017). This way, such sponsors try to improve their reputation in the area where they are located, what, we shall highlight, does not consist in denying other strategies/interests.

Concerning the high frequency clubs in the championship, with high media exposure, we may infer that they also have their strategy attached to the idea of sponsoring as investment, but related to brand alteration activity (awareness, image and building brands) (Demir, & Söderman, 2015), and also to external/opportunistic motive of market in the SMM (Slåtten et al. (2017).

There was two opposing situations concerning major media exposure. First, technical and commercial sponsors of Sport Club Corinthians Paulista, even not being it the winner, had higher media exposure compared to all other sponsors. Second, we also noticed that one of the most successful clubs in the championship – Guarani Futebol Club, the vice-champion of the League –, even not being it one of the four major clubs, could obtain high media exposure, especially on broadcast TV,

when compared to the three other groups. The latter case supports the relation that exists between higher brand exposure and better results in competition, as analyzed by Jensen and Cobbs (2014) in the F1 context.

Regarding strategies involving sponsors of low frequency clubs, we may notice that the companies Embratel and Lupo obtained wide television exposure values through, we infer, lower costs values, especially when compared to the ones used to sponsor a major club. This strategy identification responds to the analysis conducted by Walraven et al. (2016), inasmuch as it propitiates the verification of sponsorships done with the same results – in media exposure – that may present lower costs.

## 5 Closing remarks

We demonstrated the context of sport sponsorship of the teams in the A-1 series of São Paulo State League through the identification of the clubs' sponsors and their media exposures. It was possible to find different characteristics for the sponsors of more traditional clubs when compared to less frequent clubs concerning the companies' profiles and the length of media exposure. Besides, we also found some specific strategies related to lower frequency clubs.

This study's main theoretical contribution consists in the provision of a sponsorship evaluation in the Brazilian context. The study broadened the evaluation methods for soccer teams' sponsorship in the field through an exploratory research that is easily replicable and which does not require robust techniques, considering the need for alternatives in sponsorship evaluation (Crompton, 2004; O'reilly, & Madill, 2009; Jensen & Cobbs, 2014; Slåtten et al. 2017; Vance et al., 2016; Walraven et al., 2016).

Still regarding contributions, this study also (i) demonstrated the existence of a great number of regional companies as technical sponsors, broadening the research conducted by Rocco Júnior, Giglio and Mazzei

(2014), and (ii) supported the relation between higher brand exposure and better results in competition in terms of media exposure (Jensen, & Cobbs, 2014). However, concerning the latter, we could observe that better results in the competition do not necessarily overcome structural factors that involve other clubs, such as the four major, which consist in the ones with greater media exposure. Still, innovatively, the study demonstrated that even clubs with non-relevant results in the championship, and which probably have lower values in sponsorship, may have high media exposure when sponsored together.

The main practical contribution of the study corresponds to the possibility of generation of decision support to companies that wish to participate in sport sponsorship in a regional competition of soccer teams, once teams have, in general, high media exposure and a relevant number of sponsors. Besides, there is an opportunity for sponsoring countryside less frequent clubs, once (i) they may have high media exposure when sponsored together, (ii) they do not present a high average of sponsors, what might impair exposure, and (iii) the media exposure of such clubs, although lower than the exposure obtained by the four major clubs, is not insignificant. Finally, this exploratory study may enable other analysis by mainly regional competing companies in the state.

The study here reported did not have the intention to be totalizing towards sponsorship evaluation theory, what meets the exposed literature review, once studies are always specific and non-totalizing (Crompton, 2004; O'Reilly, & Madill, 2009). Precisely, this study focused on the analysis of media exposure, that is, it relates to the first stage of the sponsorship effectiveness evaluation proposed by Crompton (2004), which is mainly important because it consists in the main benefit generated by sport sponsorship to Brazilian companies (Leite, 2016).

As limitations, we may point out that the collected data of media exposure allowed

MEA exposure metrics – that is, there was no monetary comparisons – to only one year of the championship. Further qualitative analysis would be appropriate, specially referring to other sponsorship evaluation stages and, mainly, to the quality of exposure – that is, TV exposure of the matches in soccer games neither occurs the same way for different uniform sponsors, whose brands are placed in different parts of the uniform, nor in terms of audience size and profile. Another limitation is due to the need to verify, together with sponsoring companies, whether the identified strategies had been planned and if they had a previously defined objective. This way, we notice that the results here presented shall be analyzed without generalizations.

As future researches, we suggest more analysis regarding the efficiency of soccer teams sponsorship, as well as more studies concerning media exposure; the combination of empirical studies involving expenses in soccer sponsorship hours and TV advertising hours together with an analysis of the quality of exposure and audience; an analysis, through exploratory studies, of the sponsoring scenario in other soccer championships, in other countries, and in other sports; as well as the development of discussions considering discourse analysis theory on sport sponsorship with regards to the way and the spaces in which sponsorships are presented on media. We encourage, therefore, deeper studies on the soccer teams of the countryside of Brazil.

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