

The impact of Covid-19 on sponsor agreements in football in the Balkan region

Bachelor Thesis for Obtaining the Degree

Bachelor of Science

in

International Management

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Vienna, 06.06.2022.

Affidavit

I hereby affirm that this Bachelor's Thesis represents my own written work and that I have used no sources and aids other than those indicated. All passages quoted from publications or paraphrased from these sources are properly cited and attributed.

The thesis was not submitted in the same or in a substantially similar version, not even partially, to another examination board and was not published elsewhere.

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Abstract

The research objective of this bachelor thesis is to examine the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on the achievement of direct and indirect objectives of sponsorship agreements in the football industry in the Balkan region, based on a sample of Serbian, Montenegrin, Croatian and Bosnian football clubs. The researcher has decided to conduct a qualitative research study and employ the expert interview methodology. Ten experts were thus interviewed to gather a sufficient volume of data for answering the research questions and achieving the research objective.

Findings from the expert interviews suggest that (1) the COVID-19 pandemic did not influence the amount of sponsorship agreements to decrease in any sampled Balkan country except for Bosnia & Herzegovina, which seemed to suffer the most intense economic harm from the pandemic; (2) economically weak sponsor companies mitigated economic risks by canceling sponsorships; (3) consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on sponsorships were asymmetric; (4) experts who recognized the importance of indirect objectives were more economically stable and (5) experts who recognized the importance of digital sponsorships were able to adapt to the pandemic more swiftly and leverage sponsorships more effectively.

Contextually to the research objective, these findings imply that higher awareness of the function and importance of indirect objectives and digital sponsorships is needed in order to achieve indirect and direct objectives of sponsorships more effectively and to maximize the profitability of sponsorship agreements. This may increase organizational success and promote increased economic stability across the entire football industry.

