



Brand Building for Small-Scale Sport Event : The Process of Brand Building for  
Chinese Sports Event

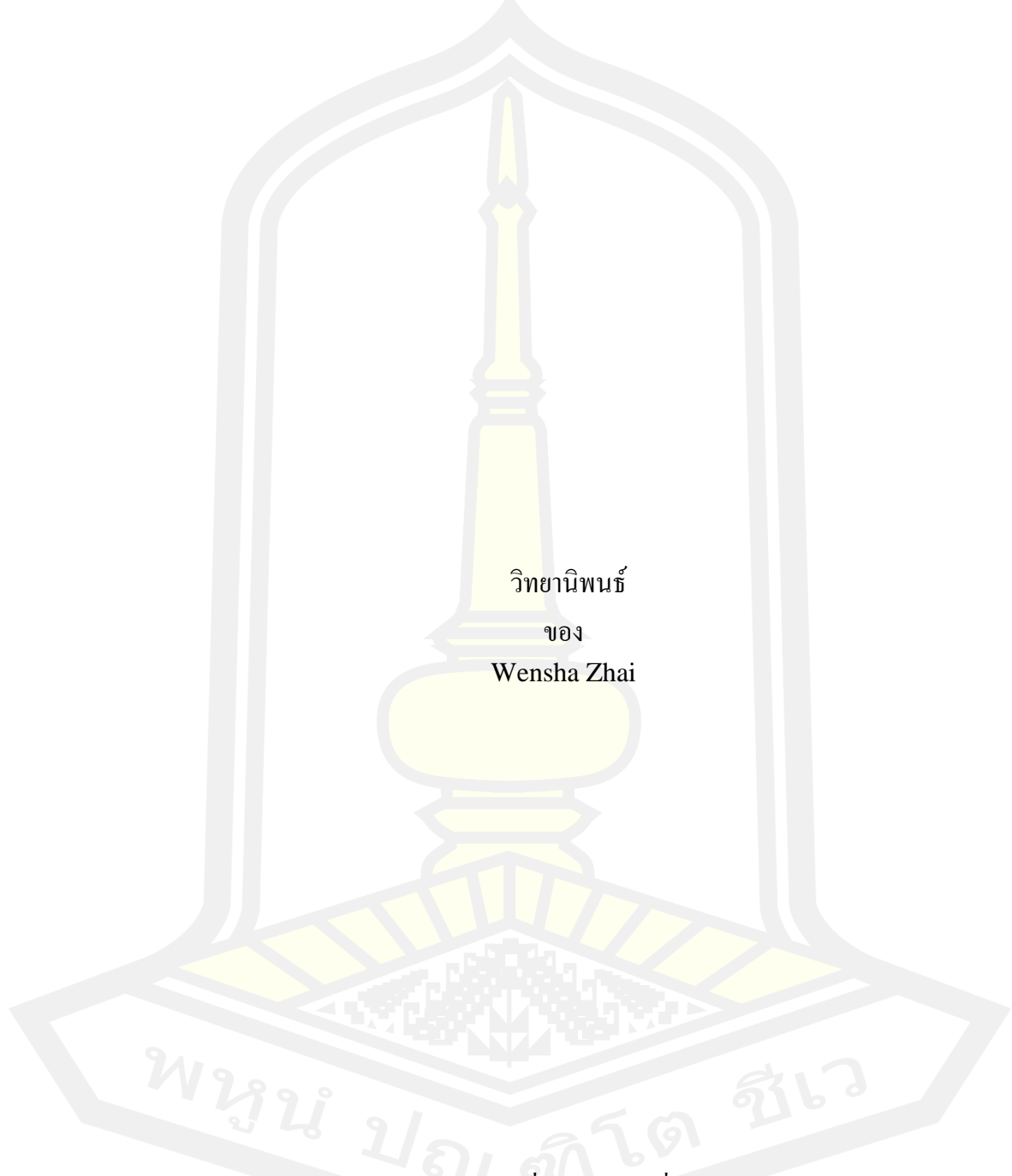
Wensha Zhai

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Exercise and Sport Science

November 2022

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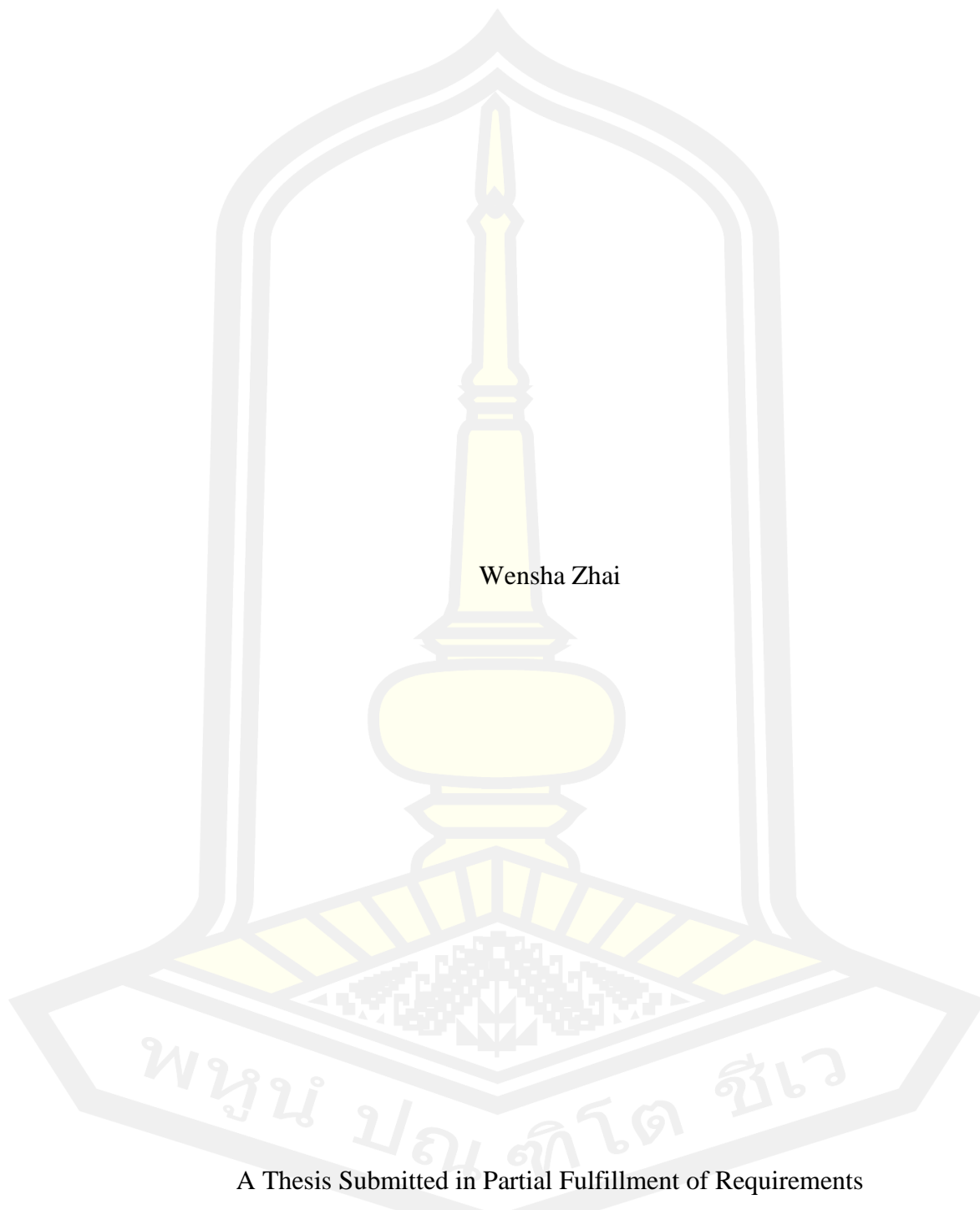


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Brand Building for Small-Scale Sport Event : The Process of Brand Building for  
Chinese Sports Event



Wensha Zhai

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements  
for Doctor of Philosophy (Exercise and Sport Science)

November 2022

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### ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this study is to explore the brand-building process for small-scale sports events. Small-scale sports event branding is analyzed using semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and expert evaluation. The results show that Keller's brand resonance theory has important implications for the brand-building of small-scale sports events. Event awareness, positioning, image, participant feelings, participant judgment, and resonance can affect the brand-building of small-scale sports events. Therefore, this study proposes that the brand-building of small-scale sports events should first strengthen consumers' knowledge and specific understanding of events through event positioning and awareness. Then, according to the consumer's experience, establish the activity image in the consumer's mind. Ultimately, emotional and rational feedback will resonate with the event and gain brand effect. This study provides a strategic basis for sports event development for sports event managers from the brand management perspective. Based on the event's resonance, managers can understand at which stage their consumers exist in the event's resonance, which is crucial to developing the event brand. Finally, suggestions are provided for future research to provide a more comprehensive understanding of small-scale sports event branding.

Keyword : Brand, Brand Building, Sports Events Brand, Small-Scale Sports Events

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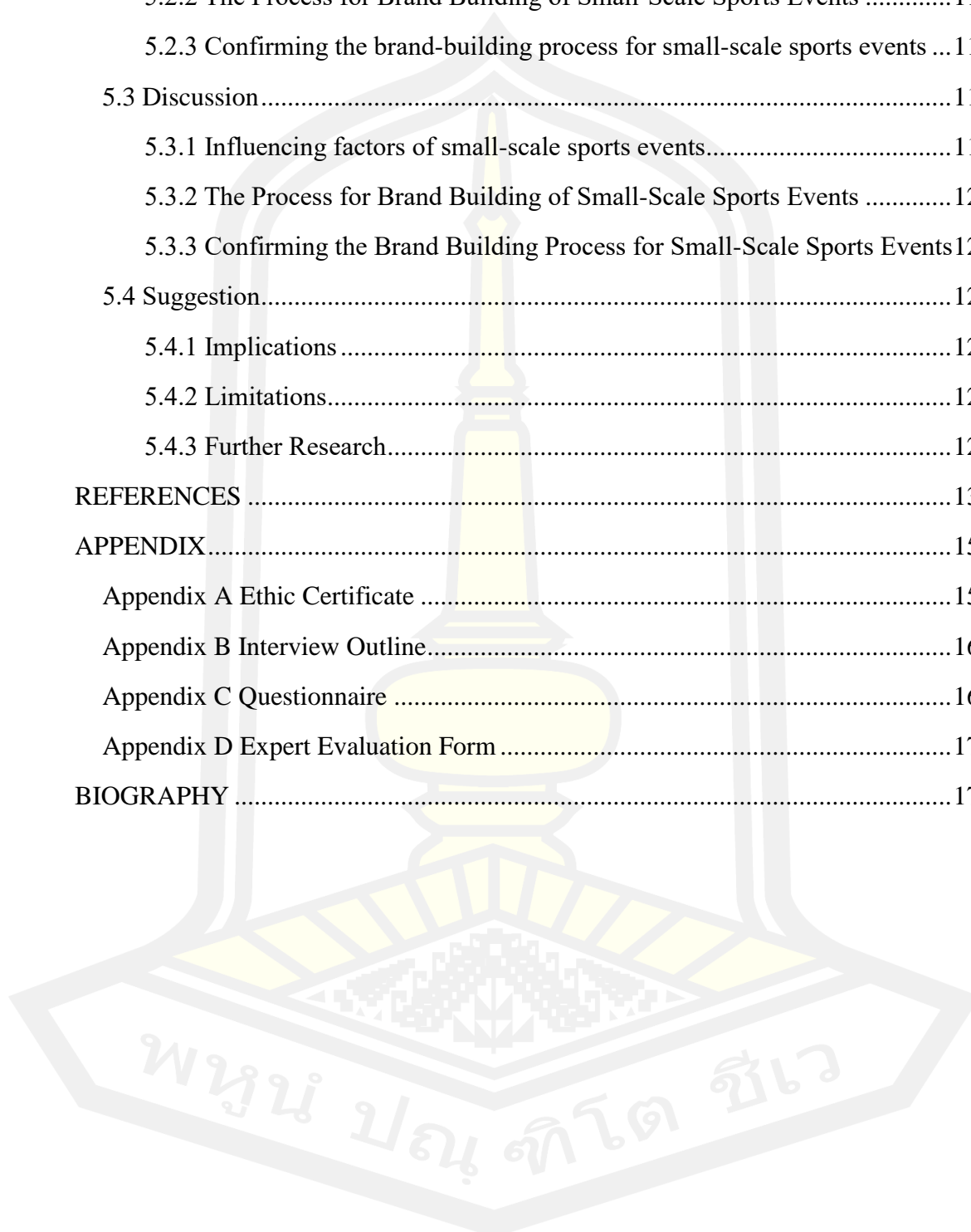
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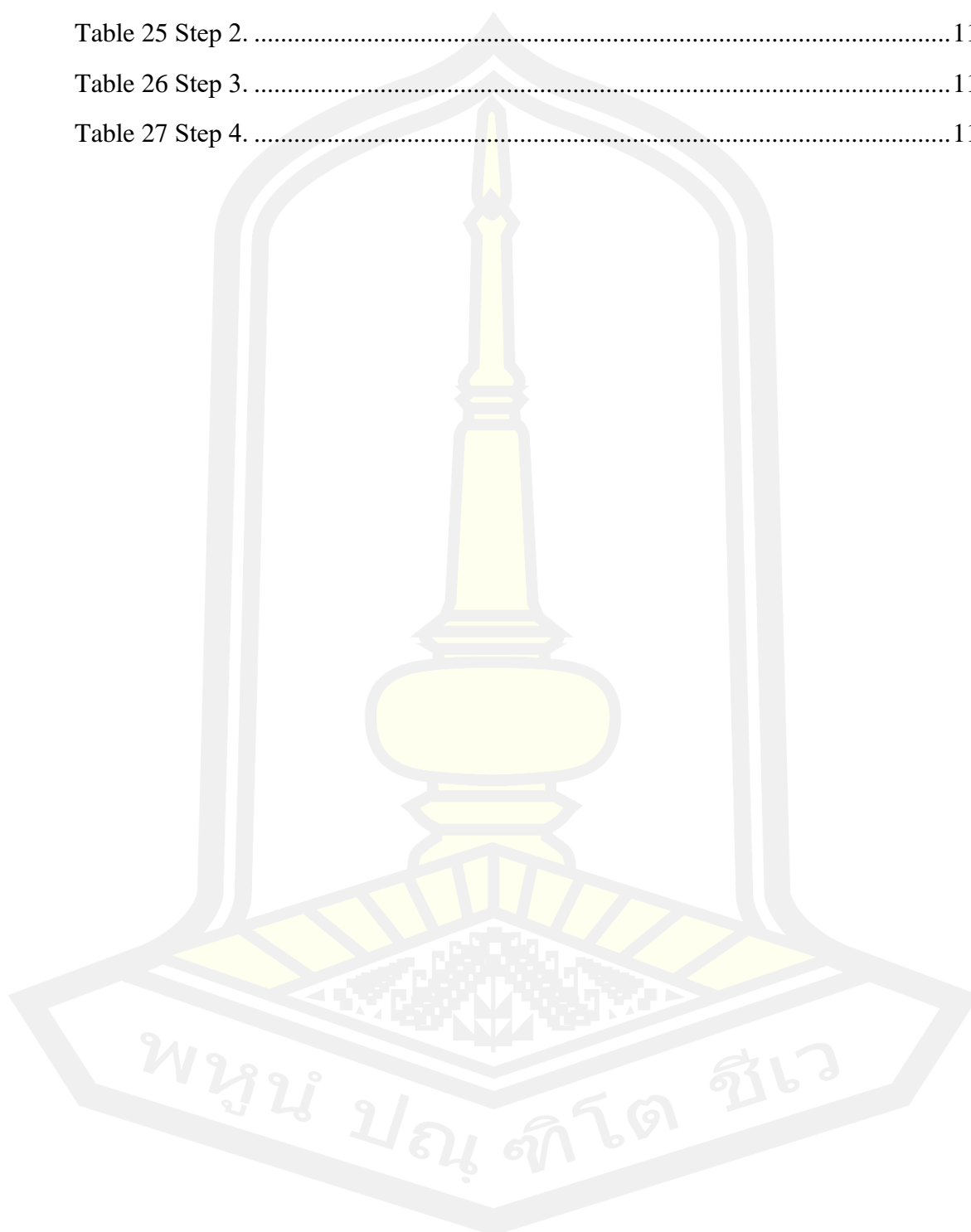
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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research Background

Sports events are an effective means of tourism attraction and recreational activities in the sports industry (Wong & Tang, 2016). Sports events can increase media attention for a region, city, or country. They can produce economic, touristic, political, and cultural benefits (Malchrowicz-Moško & Poczta, 2018). Further, sports events can improve a regional or national image, and enhance tourist loyalty (Akhoondnejad, 2018; Osti, Disegna, & Brida, 2012). Sports events come in various forms and scales-of-size, while large-scale international comprehensive sports events such as the World Cup and the Olympic Games have attracted high international media interest (C.-K. Lee & Taylor, 2005). There are medium-sized comprehensive events such as national championships. Then, there are small-scale sports events at the local or regional level, such as the Universiade and urban marathons (Higham, 1999; Koo, Byon, & III, 2014).

Modern cities and regions usually hold large-scale sports events to enhance local prestige and improve a regional image. In particular, the Olympic Games and other large-scale sports events have formed a complete brand system and have enjoyed high popularity. These events attract numerous tourists and sponsors, and bring economic and political benefits to the host country and region (Getz, 1998; Hall, 1992). Australia successfully created commercial value through the 2000 Olympic Games by taking advantage of Olympic Brand positioning (L. Chalip, 2002). Germany has improved the international perception of itself through sports events, which can cause tournaments to leverage strategy (Grix & Jonathan, 2012 ). Britain has used the influence of the Olympics to increase participation in mass sports after its games were conducted (Kokolakakis, Lera-López, & Ramchandani, 2019). These studies have also suggested that large-scale sports events have considerable commercial value. Through the strength of their brand (Malchrowicz-Moško & Poczta, 2018), large-scale sports events have attracted more attention to the host region and have provided an opportunity for these regions to show themselves to the

world (Kim, Jun, Walker, & Drane, 2015). Therefore, contemporary cities usually improve their status by holding large-scale sports events (Bull & Lovell, 2007), thus promoting the redevelopment of places (Konstantaki & Wickens, 2010; N.Soutar & B.McLeod, 1993).

Although large-scale sports events have produced a series of positive effects, some scholars still have doubts about holding large-scale sports events. They criticize the adverse effects of the Olympic Games and other large events (Feng & Hong, 2013; Hiller, 2006; Scandizzo & Pierleoni, 2018; Smith, 2009). Some researchers believe that using facilities leftover from large-scale sports events then increased tax revenues which has led to a tremendous financial burden (Feng & Hong, 2013; Hiller, 2006; C.-K. Lee & Taylor, 2005). In 1976, Canada incurred a tremendous debt for hosting the Olympic Games, which it paid off after 30 years (Kozak, 2010). Athens built sports facilities for the Olympic Games. However, after the Olympic Games, Athens has been plagued by the problem of facility damage for an extended time. This problem also plagued Cape Town. The utilization problem plagued their stadium built for the 2010 World Football Championships in Cape Town after the match, the attendance rate after the game was less than 10%, the local team was reluctant to move from the old stadium to the new stadium, and the non-event activities did not meet expectations (Alm, Solberg, Storm, & Jakobsen, 2016). At the same time, safety, and traffic congestion during the event lead to adverse psychosocial effects (Kim et al., 2015). Crowds and rising prices during large-scale sports events can also deter potential visitors. During the Athens Olympic Games, foreign visitors to Greece decreased by 700,000 compared with the previous year (Owen, 2005). Even before they held the Olympic Games in Barcelona, some citizens said they would leave Barcelona to avoid the crowd (Owen, 2005). Thus, scholars have questioned the tourism growth of large-scale sports events (Brown, Chalip, Jago, & Mules, 2007).

Therefore, some researchers are interested in small-scale sports events. They argue that they typically host smaller events within existing facilities compared to larger sporting events. Small-scale sport events promote the sustainable use of stadiums and reduce the host city's or region's financial burden and resource pressure. It provides economic benefits for the host city or region (Aiche, Buning, & Newland, 2020; Fotiadis, Xie, Li, & Huan, 2016; Koo et al., 2014). Small-scale sports events

were more manageable than larger events. Holding small-scale sports events has increased residents' pride (Moon, Ko, Connaughton, & Lee, 2013). Moreover, they have had a more positive impact on the host city or region (Higham, 1999; Veltri, Miller, & Harris, 2009; Zaki, 2017). Thus, researchers have suggested focusing on smaller sports events. However, compared with large sports events, the small-scale sports events' branding process is still inadequate.

The brand has become a critical factor in spotlighting products in the sports industry market (Dyreson & Mark, 2015; Kunkel, Funk, & Hill, 2013; J. W. Lee, Miloch, Kraft, & Tatum., 2008; J. H. Yun, III, & Sweeney, 2021). After years of development, the Olympic Games and other large-scale sports events now have a complete brand system. Their brand awareness and brand image have become advantages. This advantage has attracted the participation of people from all walks of life. It has increased the host country's exposure, strengthened the host country's tourism industry, and has had the opportunity to publicize its sponsor's products to a global audience. The brand advantage of these large-scale sports events enhances the pride of the host country, stimulates corporate participation, and enjoys widespread public support (Beech, 2007). Every sports organization needs to expand its brand advantage through marketing (Bouzdine-Chameeva, Ferrand, Valette-Florence, & Chanavat, 2015; Dyreson & Mark, 2015; Hautbois, Parent, & Séguin, 2012). Previous studies have also shown that sports brands have meaningful symbolic connections to the spectators. It helps the socialization of family or friends when participating in sports events and enhances the sense of pride (Kunkel et al., 2013; Pritchard & Funk, 2010; J. H. Yun et al., 2021). It has also become a common way to improve the image of regions and countries by holding sports events (Laurence Chalip & McGuirty, 2004; Ziakas, 2020). Branding has become the focus of the sports industry (Cowley, 1991) and should be paid attention to by sports organizations. Holding sports-branded events has also become an effective way to distinguish the host place from its competitors (Afshardoost & Eshaghi, 2020; Moon et al., 2013; Vernadakis, Zetou, Derri, Bebetos, & Filippou, 2014; Bebetos, & Filippou, 2014; Bebetos, & Filippou, 2014).

In the early days of the 1980s, branding mainly focused on promoting traditional goods and service companies, which gradually attracted the desired



attention (Ishaq & Maria, 2020; Srinivasan, 1979). Brand management expert David Aaker (1996) believes that creating and managing brand identity in the branding process is the foundation. A company differentiates and identifies its products or services by name, logo, symbol, and other elements. These identities create an identity for their products or services (Aaker, 1996; K. L. Keller, 1993). When a product or service has an identity, it can manage its brand equity through brand strategy (Couvelaere & Richelieu, 2005; Ghodeswar, 2008). However, compared with traditional goods and service products, brand management is still a relatively recent phenomenon in the sports industry (Gordon & James, 2017; Yağiz, 2021). In order to ensure the healthy development of the sports industry, sports event organizers should establish a strong brand, provide substantial asset protection for the sports industry, and prevent sharp fluctuations in income due to the performance of those sports brands, which will be in the best interests of the stakeholders. Therefore, both teams and athletes, as well as organizers and participants, should pay attention to brand equity in the sports environment (J. Gladden, 2013; Thompson, Martin, Gee, & Geurin, 2018).

Since the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the Chinese government has focused on event brands. The “Guiding Opinions on Accelerating the Development of the Sports Competition Performance Industry” (Guo Fa [2018] No. 121) emphasized guiding opinions on the branding of sports events. Scholars considered it necessary to create a national traditional sports event brand with Chinese characteristics (Jianzhong, Haihong, & Shuijian, 2018; Xiaowen, 2020). Taijiquan (or Thai Chi) is a world-renowned traditional sport in China and has a broad, massive foundation. The population of practitioners in long-standing sport of Tai Chi is about 40 million (General Administration of Sports of China, 2017). The China National Sports Center and the Chinese Wushu Association have concentrated on creating a series of Taijiquan events at the local and regional levels, forming a platform for Taijiquan competitive exchange. Such an example is the Jiaozuo International Taijiquan Exchange Conference (General Administration of Sports of China, 2017.0309). However, some scholars have discussed small-scale sports events with local characteristics. They think that the market-oriented level of small-scale sports events is relatively sparse. Therefore, it is necessary to develop characteristic event brands

(Jianzhong et al., 2018) and further clarify the brand's strategic planning and development (Yan-xing, 2018). A consumer-based brand equity framework can help managers understand sports brand building (James M. Gladden & Funk, 2002; Maderer, Holtbruegge, & Woodland, 2016; J. H. Yun et al., 2021).

Both Aaker and Keller offer conceptual frameworks for consumer-based brand equity. Aaker believes that for consumers, a brand is a multi-dimensional structure that represents consumers' cognition and identification of the brand (Chernatony, Veloutsou, Christodoulides, & Cottam, 2008). This cognition and identification meet consumers' psychological performance and social needs, including functional and emotional value (L De Chernatony & F., 1998). Jason W. et al. studied the development of university brands based on Aaker's theory (J. W. Lee et al., 2008). Hsueh-wen Chow et al. tested customers' opinions on the value of brand tourism factories through Aaker brand equity (Chow, Ling, Yen, & Hwang, 2016 & Hwang, 2016 & Hwang, 2016; Chu et al., 2018). Aaker and Keller's discourse on consumer-based brand equity is widely used.

Based on consumer-based brand equity and brand knowledge, Keller put forward a model to build the brand equity process, which is called the brand resonance model. Keller argues that loyalty to a brand is enhanced when the brand has a strong resonance with the customer. He divided the brand building process into four steps (Farhana & Islam, 2012; K. L. Keller, 2001a; Luiz Rodrigo Cunha Moura, Ferreira, de Oliveira, & da Silveira Cunha, 2019 & da Silveira Cunha, 2019 & da Silveira Cunha, 2019; Tsai, Lin, & Li, 2014; von Ahrens, 2016). The first step's focus is to gain the recognition of customers, and customers' awareness of the brand (K. L. Keller, 2001a). The second step is to establish the brand's meaning in customers' minds through brand association, namely in performance and image (K. L. Keller, 2001a; Márkus & Fallmyr, 2014; Luiz Rodrigo Cunha Moura et al., 2019; Storm & M, 2015; Tsai et al., 2014). The third step is to elicit the customer's response through the customer's judgment and feelings towards the brand (Adrian, 2014a; K. L. Keller, 2001a). The final step is to establish a strong relationship between the customer and the brand, and achieve brand resonance by transforming the brand response (Keller & Lane, 2016; K. L. Keller, 2001a). The brand resonance model is based on what consumers represent in their minds, and it focuses on the relationship and recognition

between consumers and brands (K. L. Keller, 2001a; Márkus & Fallmyr, 2014; Luiz Rodrigo Cunha Moura et al., 2019).

The development of China's sports industry mainly includes three directions: one is the sports manufacturing industry; the second is the sports venue industry and leisure sports tourism; and the third is the development of sports event brands (Gang, 2017). However, compared with the first two, the development of sports event brands is a slow process (Gang, 2017; Guang-zhu, 2017). It is difficult and expensive to host large-scale brand sports events. Many cities and regions have also turned to small-scale sports events without expensive infrastructure. In traditional Chinese sports, Taijiquan, as the quintessential sport of China, is widely loved because of its unique way of body-building, low requirements for field equipment, and difficulty in participation. To form an event platform for Tai Chi competition and exchange, the Wushu Administrative Center of the General Administration of Sports of China and the Chinese Martial Arts Association has focused on three Taijiquan series brand events: the World Taijiquan Health Conference, the Handan International Taijiquan Sports Conference, and the Jiaozuo International Taijiquan Exchange Competition (National Bureau of Statistics, 2017). The China Jiaozuo International Taijiquan Exchange Competition is the largest mass sports event in China, having been held for 28 years with 15 sessions.

Researchers have proved that brands can bring benefits to sports events. However, few studies have explored the formation process of sports event brands; and the cultivation, management, and maintenance of brand equity are unclear (K. L. Keller & Moorthi, 2003; Parent, 2008). For organizers to effectively build a brand for their sports events, they need to be aware of factors that may impact the branding process (Parent, Eskerud, & Hanstad, 2012). Moreover, compared with large-scale sports events, there are few studies on small-scale sports events (Gibson, Willming, & Holdnak, 2003; Pritchard & Funk, 2010). This research is based on Keller's brand-building model and tries to analyze the process of small-scale sports event brand formation, from the early stage to the event brand, and then to the results of owning the brand, including creating and managing to achieve a more comprehensive branding process.

## 1.2 Research Problem

According to market needs, the State Council of China has proposed a policy to relax the approval of commercial and mass sports events. With this background, China's sports events will usher in a golden period of development (Ge, 2015). However, compared with the sports manufacturing, venues, and the leisure sports tourism industry, sports event brands in China started late and developed slowly (Gang, 2017; Guang-zhu, 2017).

Researchers studying equity (Couvellaere & Richelieu, 2005; Ross, 2006), sports participation (Akhoondnejad, 2018), organization management (Dyreson & Mark, 2015; M.Gladden & C.Funk, 2001; Parent, 2008), and other dimensions study sports event brands. Researchers believe that hosting brand events can also effectively distinguish the host place from its competitors (Laurence Chalip & McGuirty, 2004; Moon et al., 2013). However, most of the research is conducted on large-scale sports events; while some researchers have questioned the sustainability of those large-scale sports events (Smith, 2009). Some researchers believe that using facilities left over from large-scale sports events (Hiller, 2006), and increasing taxes, lead to a financial burden (Feng & Hong, 2013; C.-K. Lee & Taylor, 2005). Meanwhile, problems such as safety and traffic congestion during the events will lead to adverse social and psychological effects (Kim et al., 2015; Zouain, Lohmann, Cardoso, Virkki, & Martelotte, 2019). Studies indicate that small-scale sports events can bring more benefits to the community (Coates, 2012; Fotiadis et al., 2016; Koo et al., 2014). There are few studies on small-scale events compared with large-scale events (Gibson et al., 2003; Mark, 2010).

The literature on sports brand equity is limited, and even less research on sports event brand equity is based on audience perspective (Ross, Russell, & Bang, 2008). Simultaneously, there are few studies on the process of sports event brand generation, including the creation and management of sports event brands and the results of the brand's impact on events (Hautbois et al., 2012). The operation and management of sports events in China are still at the marketing level, and the sports event brand is still in the initial stage of creation (Xiangling & Xinpu, 2013). Some problems exist in Chinese sports event brands, such as an insufficient interaction

between the event brand and the audience, unclear identification of event symbols, and weak penetration of sports events. Therefore, it is urgent to build, protect and enhance the brand equity of Chinese sports events based on customer orientation (Zhihui, Yu, Bing, & Wucheng, 2014).

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

1. To discuss the influencing factors in the process of brand building for small-scale sports events.
2. To analyze the relationships among the influencing factors in the process of brand building for small-scale sports events.
3. To explore the process of building a small-scale sports event brand.
  - 3.1 To analyze the relationship between event awareness and event image in the process of branding small-scale sports events.
  - 3.2 To analyze the relationship between event image and judgement in the process of branding small-scale sports events.
  - 3.3 To analyze the relationship between event image and participant feelings in the process of branding small-scale sports events.
  - 3.4 To analyze the impact of participant judgement and feelings on event resonance in the process of branding small-scale sports events.
4. To evaluate the brand building process model of small-scale sports events.
5. To confirm the brand building process model of small-scale sports events.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

Q1: What are the factors that affect the brand building of small-scale sports events?

Q2: What is the brand building process of small-scale sports events?

Q3: Does brand awareness have a positive impact on brand image in the brand building of small sports events?

Q4: Does active brand image affect judgment positively during brand building of small-scale sports events?

Q5: Does a positive brand image create a positive feeling in the brand building of small-scale sports events?

Q6: Can event awareness positively mediate participants' feelings through event image?

Q7: Can event awareness positively mediate participants' judgement through event image?

Q8: Does the judgment in the brand building of small-scale sports events affect the resonance between the brand and consumers?

Q9: Does the feeling in the brand building of small-scale sports events affect the resonance between the brand and consumers?

### **1.5 Research Significance**

Brands occupy an influential position in the modern sports industry (Bodet & Chanavat, 2010; Richelieu et al., 2011; Vincent et al., 2009). Keller believes that the fundamental purpose of building brand equity is to gain brand loyalty (K. L. Keller, 1993). Studies have also proved that strong sports brands can obtain more benefits (Bouzdine-Chameeva et al., 2015), and brand loyalty increases with the brand equity of sports brands (J. Gladden, 2013). With the establishment of solid event brands, consumers are willing to pay higher prices for tickets (J. M. Gladden & Milne, 1999; Rai, Yousaf, Itani, & Singh, 2021).

Enhancing brand equity through marketing is in the interest of all sports organizations (Jianzhong et al., 2018; Parent et al., 2012). However, there is not enough empirical research to support the brand building of small-scale sports events. Most of the studies only study one-sided factors such as brand personality and brand sponsorship of sports events. Meanwhile, few studies investigate the process of brand formation of sports events and the influence of relationships among various factors, especially for small-scale sports events.

This study discusses the brand building process for small-scale sports events. Understanding the relationships among brand factors in the brand building of small-scale sports events is helpful. It is conducive to the sustainable development of small-scale sports events. This study's most important theoretical contribution is the

application of brand equity theory in sports events. Through investigation and analysis, this study attempts to determine whether the brand's establishment affects people's participation in small-scale sports events.

## **1.6 Definition of Terms**

### **1.6.1 Brand**

The American Marketing Association (1960) defines a brand as a name, term, sign, symbol, design, or a combination of these, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers, and differentiate them from competitors. Kapferer (2004) defines it as meeting customer expectations, and Keller (2008) defines it as consistent customer satisfaction. This study considers that a brand are symbols, combination of products or services with a distinguishing identity to meet consumer expectations.

### **1.6.2 Brand-Building**

Brand-building involves the identification of one thing to distinguish it from another (Klopper & North, 2011). The brand is a multi-dimensional structure representing consumers' cognition and identification of this brand (Chernatony et al., 2008). This study defines a brand building as a product or service to create an identity so that it is recognizable and gains consumer perception and recognition.

### **1.6.3 Sport Event brand**

Event brand is the combination of event and brand. The brand's essence is a symbol, and the core content is brand culture recognized by customers. The essence of the event is activity, and the core content is sports competition (Liang, 2014). Therefore, the event brand can be described as a symbol with a unique cultural connotation that takes sports competition or service as the core product and is accepted and recognized by customers or customer groups.

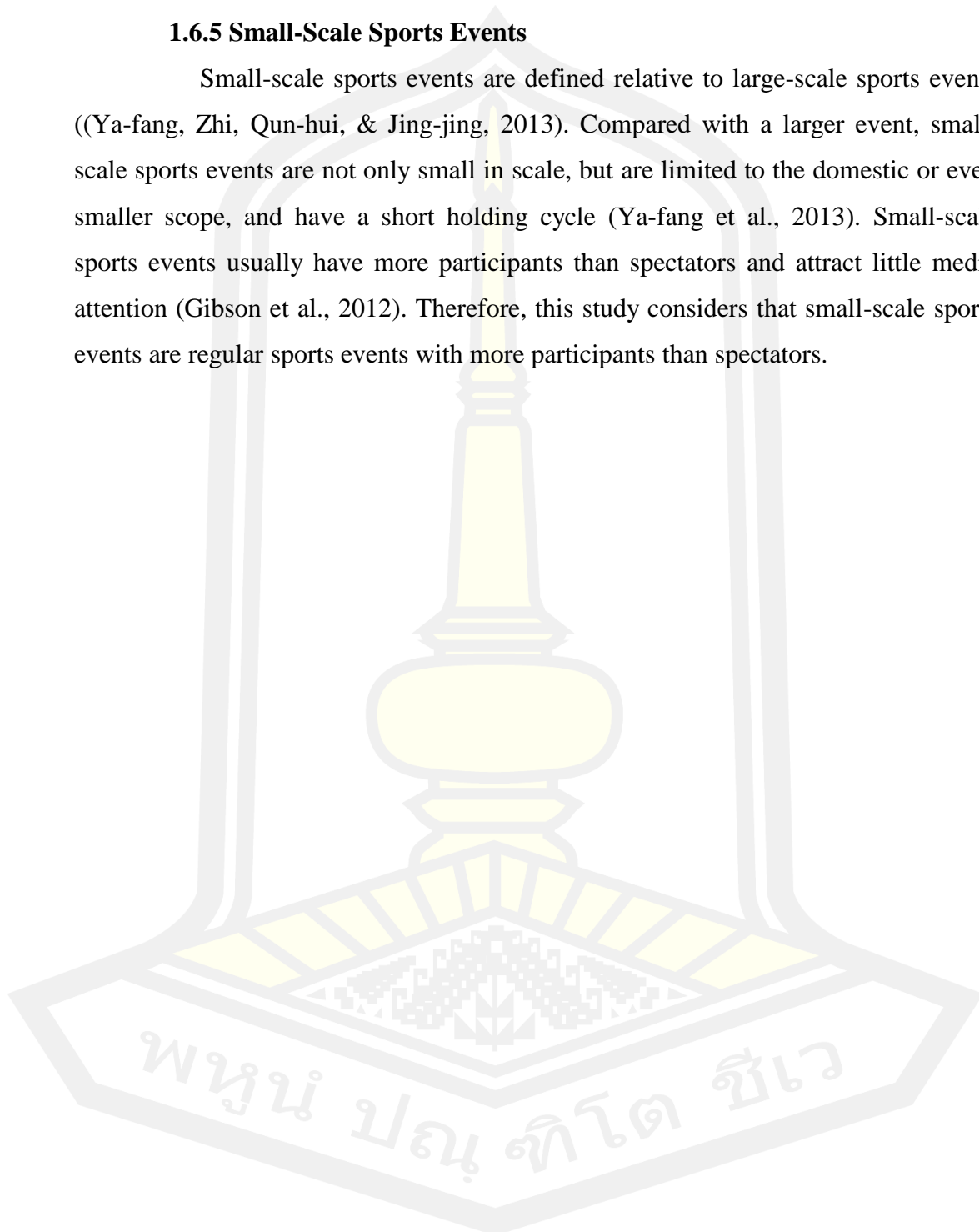
### **1.6.4 Brand Equity**

Aaker D.A. Aaker (1991) defines brand equity as “a set of brand assets and liabilities associated with brands, brand names, and logos, which increase or decrease the value provided by products or services to companies and/or company

customers.” This study considers that brand equity is the added-value of goods or services brought by a brand, including those which are tangible and intangible.

### **1.6.5 Small-Scale Sports Events**

Small-scale sports events are defined relative to large-scale sports events ((Ya-fang, Zhi, Qun-hui, & Jing-jing, 2013). Compared with a larger event, small-scale sports events are not only small in scale, but are limited to the domestic or even smaller scope, and have a short holding cycle (Ya-fang et al., 2013). Small-scale sports events usually have more participants than spectators and attract little media attention (Gibson et al., 2012). Therefore, this study considers that small-scale sports events are regular sports events with more participants than spectators.





## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Research Procedure**

1. This study analyzes the brand building process of small-scale sports events. This is done in order to determine the factors that affect the construction of brand equity and the relationship between them in brand building of small-scale sports events. This study summarizes brand, brand equity, brand building, and small-scale sports events to understand the influencing factors of brand building for small-scale sports events. According to the literature review, this paper determines the study's theoretical basis: consumer-based brand equity.

2. Based on the theory of consumer-based brand equity and the summary of previous studies, the research variables of this study are determined. There are five dimensions: brand awareness, brand image, judgment, feeling, and brand resonance. It includes 12 sub-factors, namely: (a) brand recall, (b) brand recognition, (c) competitive image, (d) service image, (e) facility image, (f) brand judgment, (g) brand feeling, (h) attitude loyalty, (i) behavior loyalty, (j) brand attachment, (k) brand community and (l) active engagement.

3. According to the research variables and the research experience of other scholars, there has been designed the research methods to measure each variable involved in the research. First, the case study for this research has been determined as the China Jiaozuo International Taijiquan Exchange Competition. The China Jiaozuo International Taijiquan Exchange Competition has been held for 28 years, with 15 sessions. It is a brand sports event for the public and has a specific representation in similar sports events. This study used quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze and summarize the case study. The qualitative research mainly used interviews. The interviewees were mainly the event organizers, referees, and senior athletes. The quantitative research used a questionnaire to collect and analyze the required data.

4. After data collection, SPSS and Amos graphics software for analysis were used. Before putting forward opinions on brand building in small-scale sports events,

it is necessary to understand the relationship among various factors of brand building in small-scale sports events.

5. Combined with interviews and questionnaires, this study elaborates on the building process for small-scale sports event brands. It also discusses the relationships among the factors of brand equity. It is helpful for the organizers to refer to and expand the influence and attractiveness of the event.

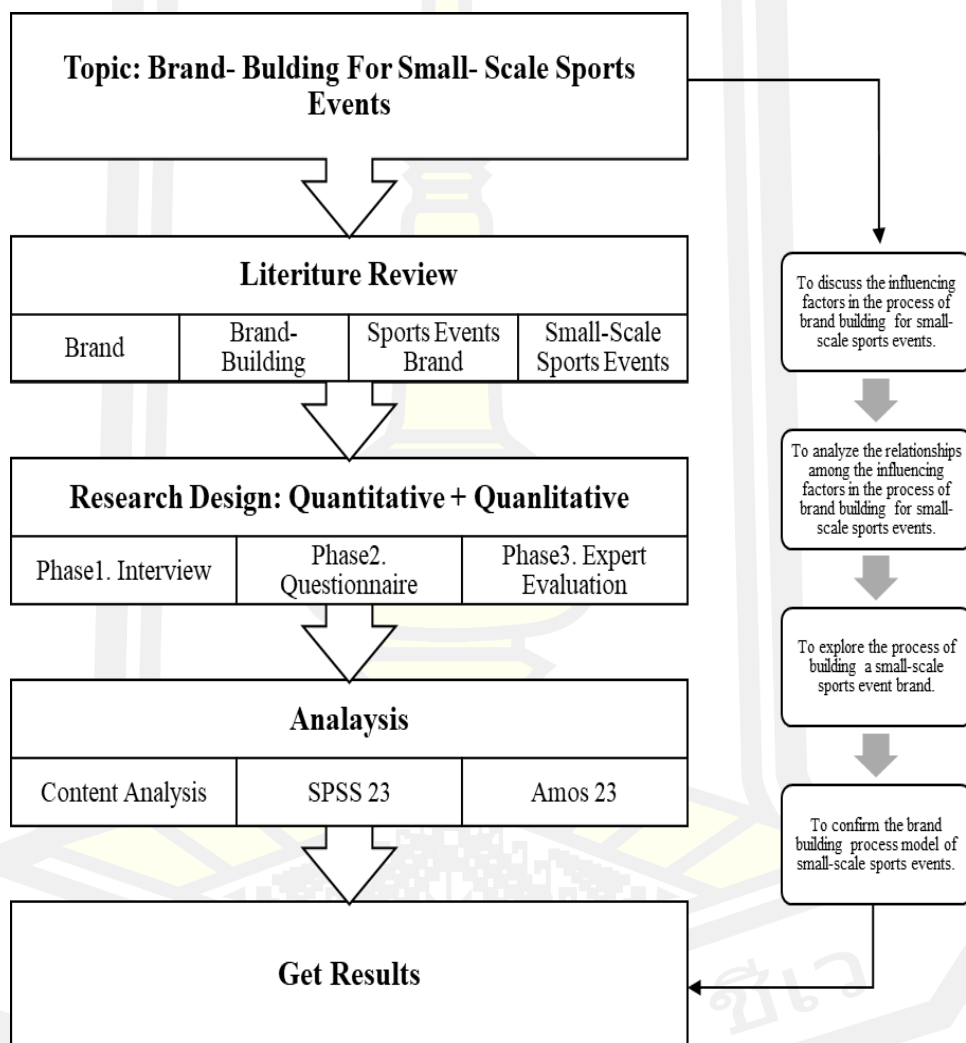


Figure 1 Research Procedure

## 2.2 Brand

The use of branding can be traced back to skin marks and burn marks used to determine ownership of animals or enslaved people (Bastos & Levy, 2012). In the 1880s, brands began to be used in the advertising industry widely. In the 1930s, based on the product management of Procter & Gamble, the first practice of brand management came into being (Heding, Knudtzen, & Bjerre, 2020). In the 1960s, advertising master David Ogilvy introduced the brand concept (Ying-shi, 2015).

The brand concept developed by the American Marketing Association is the most widely used. It describes that “a brand is a name, term, logo, symbol or design, or a combination of them, aimed at identifying the goods or services of one or a group of sellers, and distinguishing them from competitors.” This definition is still widely used today (Mort, Weerawardena, & Williamson, 2007). However, with the continuous development of branding, scholars have proposed that a brand should not simply be regarded as an identity but should include consumers’ overall judgment and feelings towards products, services, and companies (Aaker, 1997). The brand should also be committed to consistency and continuity based on the product (Kapferer, 1997). Therefore, Kapferer (2004) believes that brands should meet customers’ expectations (Shamoon, Sumaira, & Tehseen, 2011). The ultimate purpose of a brand is to gain the loyalty of consumers. Based on this, Hislop studies a brand from the perspective of its relationships and believes that brand is “the process of establishing a relationship or connection between the company’s products and the emotional perception of customers, which aims to create isolation in competition and build loyalty among customers (Hislop & Kate, 2001).”

Facts have proved that brands and consumers have a variety of emotional relationships (Aaker, 1997; Chen & Jia-shu, 2018; Márkus & Fallmyr, 2014). Alan Adamson believes that, from the standpoint of consumers, a brand is a product or service closely connected with consumers and something that exists in consumers’ minds (Adamson, 2007). This spiritual connection between brands and consumers helps to inspire consumers’ loyalty to products or services (J. M. T. Balmer, M.-N. Liao, & W.-Y. Wang, 2010; L. De Chernatony, 1999; Schmidt & Redler, 2018).

Researchers have different understandings of brands, but they are not contradictory. They have elaborated on brands from multiple perspectives. To summarize, this study considers that a brand is a product or service with clear identification, composed of a name, logo, design, or others to meet the consumers' expectations.

### **2.2.1 Brand Equity**

The researchers have used the concept of brand equity to represent the value-added products that a brand offers. After Srinivasan Srinivasan (1979) proved the added value of brand equity to brands, researchers gradually realized the importance of brand equity. After the 1980s, researchers began to research brand equity and define it from different perspectives. In its early days, it was defined as "the net present value of incremental cash flows generated by a series of associations and actions of the brand to consumers, channel members, and the parent company" (Leuthesser, 1998; Shocker & Weitz, 1988). The researchers expect a comprehensive definition to explain brand equity fully. Farquhar Farquhar (1989) defined brand equity as "the added value a brand gives to a product or service." Aaker (1991) defined brand equity as "a group of brand assets and liabilities related to the brand, brand name, and logo that increase or decrease the value provided by products or services to the company and/or the company's customers." This definition is also the most widely-cited definition of brand equity. Researchers have different definitions of brand equity, but all of them include the meaning of adding value to the product. The researchers agreed on the type of brand equity. One is firm-based brand equity, and the other is based on the consumer's brand equity. Consumer-based brand equity is considered the basis of firm-based brand equity. This research will be based on the consumer-based brand equity theory.

Based on consumers' brand equity, a brand is regarded as a bond, and the most fundamental factor is brand awareness (David A Aaker, 1991; K. L. Keller, 2001a; Tong & Hawley, 2009). The research on consumer-based brand equity has studied the influence of consumer perception on brands from consumers' perspectives. Mackay et al. (M.M MacKay, Romanuik, & Sharp) pointed out that consumer-based brand equity refers to the added value generated by a brand to consumers (M.M MacKay et al., 1997). From consumers' perspectives, brand equity

increases products' added value, leading to consumers' loyalty to products (Farquhar, 1989).

To explain consumer-based brand equity, Aaker (1991) proposed a brand equity model based on four dimensions: brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. According to him, brand equity is a set of brand equity and liabilities related to the brand, brand name, and logo, which can increase or decrease the added value of products. Researchers believe that Aaker's interpretation of brand equity also represents consumers' cognition and identification with brands (Chernatony et al., 2008). Yoo et al. Yoo and Donthu (2001) and Pappu et al. (2005) verified the conceptual model proposed by Aaker. Keller K. L. Keller (1993) who proposed a conceptual framework of brand knowledge to measure the different influences of consumers on marketing mix responses from two dimensions of brand awareness and brand image. Using this conceptual framework explains the consumer's perception and understanding of the brand and the importance of consumer understanding of this knowledge for marketing. On this basis, Keller (2001) proposed a brand resonance model to explain the structure of brand equity and further explain the brand process. A consumer-based brand equity framework can help managers better understand the establishment of sports brands (James M. Gladden & Funk, 2002).

### **2.2.2 Sports Brand**

The essence of sports competition requires sports organizations to attract many consumers and gain consumer loyalty (James, Kolbe, & Trail, 2002 ). The brand has been widely used in marketing as an effective means to distinguish competitors. Similarly, sports researchers have been paying attention to it.

As an essential contributor to sports events, professional sports leagues have attracted the attention of researchers. Professional sports leagues such as the NBA, FIFA, Super Bowl, and other famous professional sports leagues are highly prestigious and valuable brands (Kunkel, Funk, & King, 2014; Kunkel, Funk, & Lock, 2017). Vincent (2009) investigated the brand strategy of French professional rugby teams and believed that the brand strategy was beneficial to most professional sports teams (Couvellaere & Richelieu, 2005). This is because sports fans often associate the spiritual symbol of sports teams with the sports team brand (Ghodeswar, 2008). This

association generates a strong emotional connection between sports fans and sports teams (Chen & Jia-shu, 2018; Couvelaere & Richelieu, 2005). Teams or leagues can translate brand advantages into new products, thus creating new economic value for sports teams (Campbell Jr & Kent, 2002; Chen & Jia-shu, 2018). Gladden and Milne discussed the importance of brand equity in professional sports management. They suggested that brand logo design and stadiums are important prerequisites for brand development in the professional sports market (J. M. Gladden & Milne, 1999).

Sports events are another topic of concern for researchers. The commercial world of the 21st century is a brand economy. As an essential brand branch, the event brand can bring substantial economic benefits to the host country (Xiao-cao, 2018). As the most influential sports event brand, the influence of the Olympic Games has penetrated every corner of the world. The brand experience of the Olympic Games also provides a reference experience for other events (Zhihui et al., 2014). Researchers also believe that branded sports events have a positive impact on the promotion of national brands, and hosting sporting events can increase the visibility of destinations because media coverage of sports events increases the exposure and brand awareness of the destination (Harald Dolles, 2008; SHAMEEM, 2003; Ziakas, 2020). Knott (2015) et al. have offered the 2010 World Cup in South Africa as an example. They discussed the role of sports events in national brands. They believe that the national image of South Africa has improved after the World Cup, and sports events make a positive impression on the promotion of national brands (Knott, Fyall, & Jones, 2015).

Although the research on brands in the sports field is getting increasing attention, it mainly focuses on sports league brands (Kunkel, Doyle, & Funk, 2014), sports brand sponsorship, franchises, the Olympic Games, other large international sports events (Parent, 2008), and sports tourism (Fairley & O'Brien, 2018). Researchers conducted studies of strategic brand management, brand image, communication, and sponsorship, but rarely have applied the brand concept to sports events (Parent & Séguin, 2008).

### **2.2.3 Chinese Brand**

In China, brand research was carried out later, and the Beijing brand equity evaluation office was the first institution in China to pay attention to brand

equity (Liu Li-juan, 2013). China's research on brands initially focused on the perspective of enterprises and considered that brand is an intangible asset (LI Li, 1995; Shou-lin, 1995). It results from product marketing efforts (Dewei Li, 2001).

Wei Haiying and others (2005) believe that a brand is not just a name, a mark, or a set of symbols. An authentic brand should be an asset and a set of relationships. It is based on products or services and views relationships as the core. It is the information carrier of the organic integration of material, behavior, and culture. The wealth enterprises and consumers share (Hai-ying & Xiang-han, 2005). Subsequently, some scholars began to study brand equity from the consumers' perspective, believing that consumers are the core of brand equity (LIN Li, 2010). Researchers conducted empirical research on the components of brand equity (Zhi-hong & Bing-jia, 2018) such as cognition, experience, and evaluation of customers on the brand and the influence of brand knowledge on consumers (LIN Li, 2010; Zhuang & Jing, 2011).

However, most of the research on the brand in China still focuses on interpreting foreign concepts, and it has not yet formed a brand equity evaluation method with Chinese characteristics (Jie, 2019; Tai-hong, Sheng-bing, & Ji-ning, 2000). Therefore, it is necessary to explore the process of building Chinese brands based on consumer-based brand equity to provide brand managers with comprehensive recommendations.

### **2.3 Brand Building**

The need for marketing has led to the importance of branding, as well as building a solid brand and understanding of its impact on consumer behavior, which is a challenge for a company or organization in today's dynamic business market (Kalliopi Chatzipanagiotou, Christodoulides, & Veloutsou, 2018; Sultan, Akram, Abdulhaliq, Jamal, & Saleem, 2019; Talay, Townsend, & Yenyurt, 2015; Xiao, 2007). The goal of marketing is to gain consumer loyalty, which can cause products or services to occupy most of the market share, weaken the competitiveness of similar products, and push their products to a leading position in the market (Fu Guoqun, 1992). Therefore, brand building involves identifying products or services to

differentiate between different products or services (Klopper & North, 2011). Researchers believe the foundation of the branding process is creating and managing brand identity. Because a product or service first needs to create an identity to acquire one, when it then has that identity, its brand equity can be managed (Aaker, 1996; Couvelaere & Richelieu, 2005; Ghodeswar, 2008).

### 2.3.1 Measuring Consumer-Based Brand Equity

The brand equity theory of Aaker and Keller has significantly impacted the subsequent research on brand equity. Researchers have proposed several models for measuring brand equity (David A Aaker, 1991; Max Blackston, 1992; James M. Gladden & Funk, 2002; K. L. Keller, 1993, 2001a; Ross, 2006). These models are mainly based on Aaker's and Keller's research. Research in sports brands is also based on the research of Aaker and Keller (James M. Gladden & Funk, 2002; Ross, 2006; Yanling & Bing, 2017).

Farquhar (1989) divides brand equity into three parts: brand evaluation or loyalty, accessibility of attitude, and brand image\brand personality. Brand evaluation or loyalty is influenced by three factors: affective, cognitive, and behavioral (Farquhar, 1989).

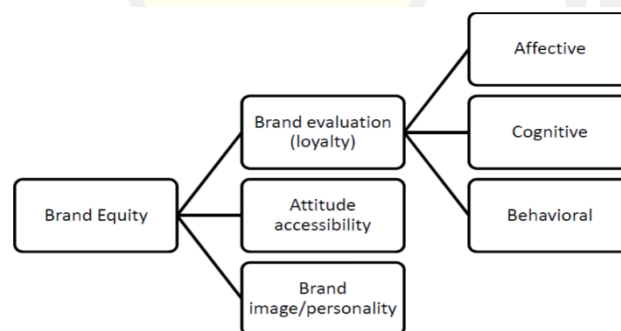


Figure 2 Farquhar's (1989) Brand Equity Model

Aaker first proposed that brand equity is affected by four dimensions: brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. Subsequently, additional dimensions of other proprietary brand equity have been added. Brand awareness refers to consumers' familiarity and understanding of the brand. Perceived quality represents consumers' overall evaluation of the brand. Consumers involved in



the brand understanding and evaluation can acquire brand loyalty and provide reasons for consumer choices of brands. Another aspect of other proprietary brand equity provides a competitive advantage for a product or service, so marketers reduce unnecessary marketing activities.

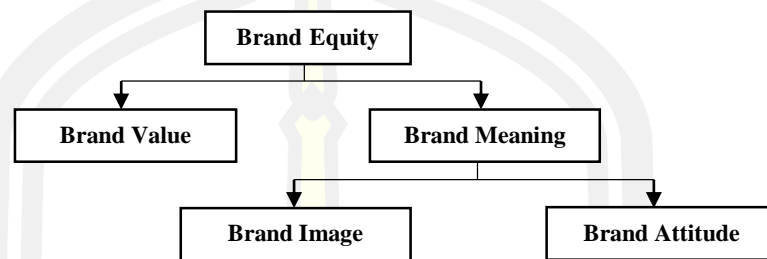


Figure 3 Blackston's (1995) Brand Equity Model

Aaker believes these dimensions make the same contributions to brand equity and represent consumers' cognition and recognition (Chernatony et al., 2008). Yoo and Donthu conducted an empirical study on the concept of Aaker brand equity. They developed a set of scales to measure brand equity according to the dimensions of Aaker brand equity (Yoo & Donthu, 2001). Judith and Richard Washburn and Plank (2002) surveyed 272 subjects to verify the brand equity model proposed by Aaker and the scale of Yoo et al. (Washburn & Plank, 2002).

Blackston Max Blackston (1992) is the first to realize the importance of the relationship between brands and consumers (M. Blackston, 2011). He believes that the brand image reflects only one component of the brand duality and that marketers understand the resonance of consumers and brands through customer satisfaction with the brand. Blackston Max Blackston (1995b) further explained the composition of brand equity, believing that brand equity consists of brand value and meaning, the brand value depends on brand meaning, and brand image and attitude constitute brand meaning (Max Blackston, 1995a).

Keller has proposed a conceptual framework of brand equity based on brand knowledge to explain and measure consumer-based brand equity. Keller's brand knowledge framework includes brand awareness and image (K. L. Keller, 1993). Brand awareness reflects the ability of consumers to identify brands under different conditions (Rossiter & Percy, 1987). Brand awareness is also affected by

recall and recognition. Brand image is defined as all the brand associations in consumers' memories. Keller's model provides the premise for building a strong brand.

Understanding sports brand equity in sports is also based on Aaker and Keller's research on brand equity. Building on Aaker's and Keller's work, the researchers propose a framework for understanding brand equity in an audience's sporting environment (James M. Gladden, Milne, & Sutton, 1998; Ross, 2006).

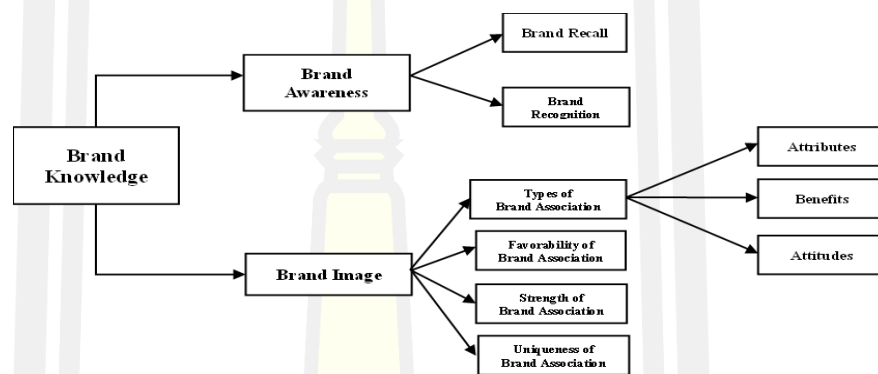


Figure 4 Keller (1993) Brand Knowledge Model

Gladden (1998) et al. put forward a similar model based on Aaker's brand equity model in the context of college sports. The antecedents and consequences of sports brand equity in colleges and universities are analyzed on this premise. Antecedents create brand equity and lead to brand consequences (such as ticket sales). These four factors are thought to be interrelated.

However, Ross (2006) believes that the existing research framework of sports brand equity is unsuitable for discontinuous and fully-ornamental sports events. Therefore, Ross (2006) proposes a spectator-based brand equity measurement model based on Keller's brand knowledge and cognitive perspective. This model explains the importance of customer experience to the brand equity of sports events.

Duan Yanling and Liu Bing (2017) used a questionnaire survey method based on Keller and Ross to survey 672 event club members and event audiences. According to the characteristics of Chinese sports events, the scale proposed by Ross has been revised and improved. They believed that the brand equity of sports events consists of two dimensions: brand image and awareness. Among them, event service,

community venue, brand logo, organizational attributes, social interaction, and sports consumption discounts are the critical driving factors of the brand image of Chinese sports events. The psychological commitment and identity of spectators to sports events are the main factors influencing the brand recognition of sports events.

Researchers have different views about how brand equity is formed, and the names of brand equity factors are different. However, both consider the composition of the brand itself and consumers' evaluation of the brand.

### **2.3.2 Brand-Building Process**

Keller (2001) first introduced the concept of brand building blocks in the CBBE process, where different interrelated brand concepts coexist (Kalliopi Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2018). Keller (2001) developed a brand resonance model based on consumer-based brand equity, which is an extension of Keller's (1993) brand knowledge concept. The architecture of this module follows a hierarchical structure, namely the brand pyramid. Brand resonance refers to the degree of synchronization between the consumer and the brand (K. L. Keller, 2016), and is concerned with the degree of relationship and identification between the consumer and the brand (K. L. Keller, 2001a; Márkus & Fallmyr, 2014; L. R. C. Moura, Ferreira, De Oliveira, De Moura, & da Silveira Cunha, 2017; Tri, 2014). Each of these modules' success depends on the implementation of the previous one (Kalliopi Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2018). This process emphasizes the impact of brand knowledge on the consumer-brand relationship, in addition to focusing on the consumer's perception of the brand (K. L. Keller, 2016). Keller's brand resonance model is divided into four steps (K. L. Keller, 2001a, 2016; Tsai et al., 2014; von Ahrens, 2016), including six modules. The first step is to generate brand salience to establish brand identity and enhance the possibility of brand selection. The second step establishes the brand's meaning in the consumer's mind through brand associations. This association comes from consumer experiences and other sources of brand information (Keller, 2001; 2016), with intangible and tangible associations, which are, respectively, brand performance and brand image (Keller, 2001; Storm, 2015; Márkus & Fallmyr, 2014; Tsai, Lin & Li, 2014). Keller believes that after consumers use and understand the brand and abstract thinking about it, they will lead to the consumer's reaction through the consumer's judgment and feeling of the brand, which is the third step of judgment and feeling.

Judgment is the rational response of consumers to the overall evaluation of the brand, and feeling is a series of emotional responses of consumers to the brand, such as enthusiasm, fun, and excitement (Keller, 2001; Adrian, 2014; Keller, 2016). The last step is to achieve a resonance between the brand and consumers by converting consumer response and establishing a long-term brand relationship. Keller's brand resonance model discusses the relationship between consumers and brands in brand building from the two paths of rationality and emotion (Aziz & Yasin, 2010; K. L. Keller, 2001a; Raut, Brito, & Pawar, 2020).

Urde conducts an empirical study on the process of corporate brand building based on core values. A conceptual framework of the corporate branding process is proposed, based on organizational, core-related, and added values. Urde (1999) divides the process of brand building into two parts: internal and external. The internal brand-building focus is on how the organization expresses and builds the brand, known in the model as internal brand identity. The external focus is on consumers' brand perceptions, building relationships with customers (Urde, 2003), building brand awareness, and building positive brand associations (Aaker, 1991; Melin & Urde, 1991). When the brand image and the customer's self-image reach a certain consistency (Higgins, 1987; Urde, 2003), there is a specific connection between the brand and the customer (Urde, 2003); this also becomes the foundation of the brand loyalty. Based on his work experience, Urde obtained relevant information on corporate branding, emphasized internal processes, and explained the importance of core values in corporate branding (J. M. T. Balmer et al., 2010; Urde, 2003).

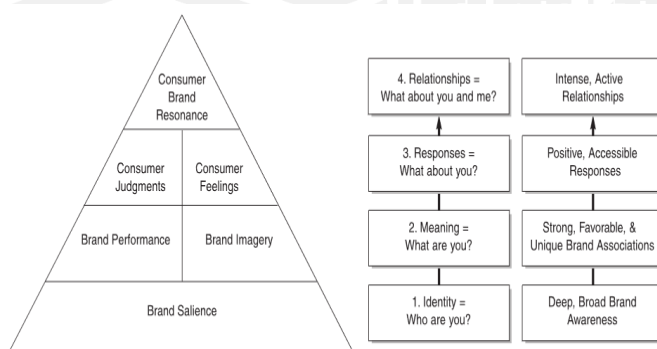


Figure 6 Urde's (1999) Core Value-Based Corporate Model

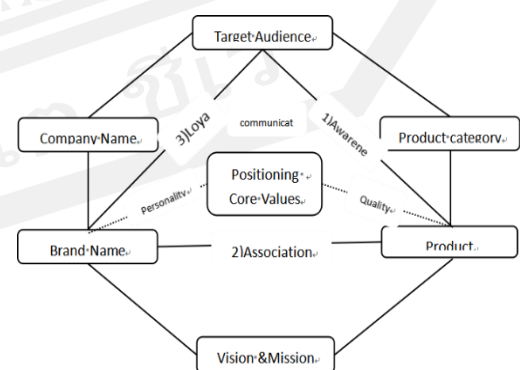


Figure 5 Keller's (2001) Brand Resonance Model

Davis (2002)'s understanding of the brand building process is based on brand equity management. According to Davis's definition, brand equity management is an investment method to improve brand profitability, asset value, and brand return. Davis (2002) divided the brand asset management process into four stages. The first stage is to understand the organizational goals and align the brand's efforts with the goals, called the brand vision. The second stage is understanding why consumers make purchasing decisions by understanding how consumers and competitors perceive their brands. It has been called "defining the brand image." The third stage is to lay the brand's foundation and develop the brand strategy. The fourth stage establishes the brand investment return standard to establish the appropriate brand culture. Davis breaks down the four stages into 11 steps.

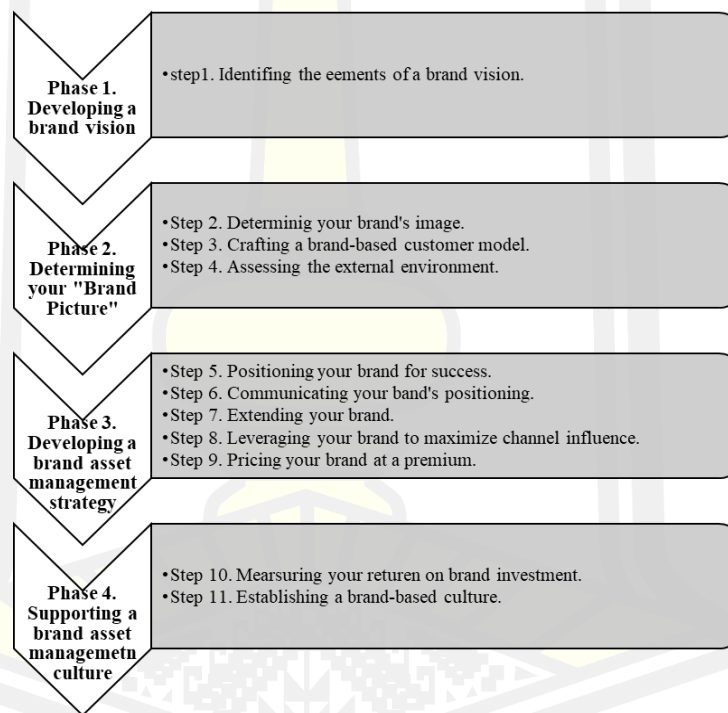


Figure 7 Davis's (2002) Brand Asset Management Process

In the brand-building process, Keller (1993) focused on the importance of brand knowledge and brand image. Urde (1999) discussed corporate branding from a combination of internal and external aspects by combining brand equity with the company's vision. Although there are many studies on CBBE, most of them only treat CBBE as a multidimensional and complex structure, as listed in the previous section measuring consumer-based brand equity models (Kalliopi Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2018; Hannes, L., & J., 2017; K. L. Keller & Lehmann, 2006; Lehmann, Keller, & Farley, 2008). Moreover, there is no agreement on its dimensions (Kalliopi Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019; Christodoulides & Chernatony, 2010). The lack of consensus on the concept and operation of CBBE and its impact on consumer behavior outcomes has led to many unanswered questions about building and managing strong brands (Hsieh, 2004; Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019). Therefore, it is necessary to clarify the brand-building process to provide managers with a strategic idea to strengthen the connection between the brand and consumers.

#### **2.4 Sports Events Brand**

Sports has been increasingly recognized as providing significant contribution to contemporary society (Gratton, C. and Henry, I.P., 2001; P.R. Emery, 2002; Harald, Sten, 2008; Knott, B., Fyall, A., & Jones, I, 2015). Cities worldwide choose sports and hosting sporting events as an urban strategy (Bunce, 1995; P.R. Emery, 2002; Graham, Chalip, Jago, & Mules, 2004). Sports events are usually considered as special events by project management. Rules, customs, and traditions influence its scale and format, and it has an organizational and cultural context as well as market potential. They provide competitive products and related services, catering to the needs of participating bodies sharing experiences, serving multiple purposes, and impacting various spheres of society and culture, nature and environment, politics, tourism, and the economy (Ye Qinghui, 2003). Developing sports event branding aims to establish a good relationship between consumers, the event, and form brand preferences to bring long-term marketing advantages to the event (Gandhi-Arora & Shaw, 2002; Okayasu, Nogawa, & Morais, 2010; Yichi, 2016).

However, researchers' interpretations of sports event branding are not uniform. Research on sport event branding has typically focused on destination branding through sporting events (Harald Dolles, 2008; Jago, Chalip, Brown, Mules, & Ali, 2003; Janice & Tichaawa, 2019; Knott et al., 2015). Researchers often refer to well-known and influential sports events as sports event brands (Emery, 2002; Malchrowicz-Moško & Poczta, 2018; Parent & Séguin, 2008). However, this is not representative of all sports events because these events can be divided into diverse categories such as large, medium, small, participatory, and spectator-focused events. Event brand is the combination of event and brand. The brand's essence is a symbol; the core content is a brand culture recognized by customers. The essence of the event is activity, and the core content is sports competition (Liang, 2014). Therefore, an event brand can be a symbol with a unique cultural connotation accepted and recognized by customers or customer groups with sports competition or service as the core product (Liang, 2014).

#### **2.4.1 Chinese Sports Event Brand**

Since the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, China has gradually realized brand events' multiple functions and values. China has issued a series of guiding policies to promote the development of sports events. In 2014, there was issued the government policy "Several Opinions of the State Council on Accelerating the Development of the Sports Industry and Promoting Sports Consumption" (GF [2014] No. 46). In 2018, the state policy of "Guiding Opinions on Accelerating the Development of Sports Competition Performance Industry" (GF [2018] No. 121) further emphasized the guiding opinions on event branding.

Various provinces, cities, and regions will hold unique brand events to enhance the venue's influence, and Chinese academic circles have gradually paid more attention to the research of event brands. Researchers think it is necessary to build traditional national sports event brands with Chinese characteristics (Jianzhong et al., 2018; Xiaowen, 2020). National traditional sports brand events have the characteristics of entertainment, characteristics, competition, a broad mass base, and huge market potential (Jianzhong et al., 2018). Hao Yan-xing conducted a field survey of the traditional sports conference "Nadam Fair" in Inner Mongolia, China, and discussed the construction and promotion of the "Nadam Fair" brand. He believed

that “Nadam Fair was “a classic event with unique nomadic characteristics, and is currently less market-oriented.” It is necessary to clarify further the development of brand strategic planning (Yan-xing, 2018). Aiming at a series of characteristic projects in Guangxi, Jianzhong Hu proposed that Guangxi event brands can develop characteristic event brands based on the forms of “sports participation tourism,” sports viewing tourism,” and “participation + viewing” (Jianzhong et al., 2018).

In addition to ethnic-specific projects, governments in China are committed to developing and introducing various international brand events, and have studied the impact of large-scale sports events on city brands. Wei Ming-ze and Yuan Lei (Yao, Huang, & Li), while taking the Olympic Games as an example, believe that holding large-scale international events is conducive to developing urban brands, which can strengthen the brand recognition of the hosting cities. Furthermore, it can take advantage of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics opportunity to build a Chinese ice and snow city brand (Ming-ze & Lei, 2019). Zhao Yun and Li Rongri studied the effect of brand image on brand loyalty by researching consumers of four professional events, including the China Open and Shanghai Rolex Masters, as survey objects. They believed that perceived value and trust played an intermediary role in the influence of brand image on brand loyalty (Z. Yun & Rongri, 2019). Based on Aaker’s brand equity theory, ZHANG Yongtao et al. (2019) studied the influence of sports event sponsorship on sports event brands from the perspective of brand image transfer. The research shows that the brand equity of sponsors positively influences the brand equity of sports events. However, the audience’s familiarity with events and the matching degree of corporate sponsorship cannot adjust the influence of brand awareness on the brand equity of sports events (Yongtao, Yang, Hong, & Shoujiang, 2019).

Since China has proposed the “Belt and Road” policy, Chinese sports brand events have ushered in new opportunities. Although China’s sports industry gradually attaches importance to the development of brands, it still lacks sports brands with Chinese cultural characteristics (Guang-zhu, 2017). Moreover, compared with China’s sports manufacturing and leisure industries, China’s sports event brand development is still slow (Gang, 2017; Guang-zhu, 2017). Some problems exist in Chinese sports event brands, such as insufficient interaction between the event brand



and the audience, unclear identification of event symbols, and weak penetration of sports events. Therefore, it is urgent to build, protect and enhance the brand equity of Chinese sports events based on customer orientation (Zhihui et al., 2014). It is difficult and expensive to host large-scale brand events. Many cities and regions have begun to turn to small-scale sports events without expensive infrastructure. How to build a brand for small-scale events has become a problem to be solved.

## **2.5 Small-Scale Sports Events**

Sports events come in various forms and sizes, from large-scale Olympic Games to medium-scale national championships and to small-scale events at the local or regional level (Kaplanidou, Jordan, Funk, & Ridinger, 2012; Koo et al., 2014). Small-scale sports events are relative to large international sports events (Ya-fang et al., 2013). Compared with international large-scale sports events, small-scale sports events are not only small, limited to domestic or even a smaller local scope, but also have a shorter holding cycle (Ya-fang et al., 2013).

Higham Higham (1999) defines small-scale sports events as “seasonal sports events held regularly (e.g., ice hockey, basketball, football, rugby), as well as various national activities, including the Paralympics and University Games.” Recently, more and more researchers have begun studying small-scale sports events. They argue that small-scale sports events can also positively impact tourism and the economy (Higham, 1999). More and more studies analyze the influence and effect of small sports and their function (Buning & Gibson, 2015; Laurence Chalip, 2004; Taks, Green, Misener, & Chalip, 2014).

Small-scale sports events are usually less affected by seasons, are flexible in organization, have limited venues and equipment, and represent a low financial burden (Gibson et al., 2003; Tian-zu & Jie, 2018). Gibson et al. (2012) analyzed the economic, social, and environmental aspects of small-scale sports events and their impact on sustainable tourism. Small-scale sports events have more proportionality and sustainability compared with large-scale sports events. Kotze (2006) investigated two ocean marathons in Cape Town, South Africa, and believed that small-scale sports events would not consume capital and resources, and could bring economic

benefits to the host area with the help of media reports. Ya-fang Bao et al. (2013) discussed the 2011 China disabled sports event as an example. They made an empirical analysis, believing that social influence and cultural image are essential factors that lead residents to support small-scale sports events.

The researchers suggest that regions lacking the ability to afford large sports events should consider holding small-scale sports events (Kotze, 2006). Small-scale sports events benefit the host place economically and socially at the individual and collective levels (O'Brien & Chalip, 2016). Small-scale sports events have become a meaningful way to develop mass sports in China. Understanding and developing small-scale sports events is in line with the needs of the growing sports industry in China (Rongrong, Yang, & Yin, 2018).

### **2.5.1 Taijiquan Competitions**

As a representative cultural symbol of China, Taijiquan is an excellent traditional sport of the Chinese nation (Hai-bin, 2018; Yue & Bo, 2020). Taijiquan has accumulated a broad mass base due to its unique way of exercise, low requirements for site equipment, and low difficulty in participation. According to incomplete statistics, the population of China that has practiced Taijiquan for a long time is about 40 million (General Administration of Sports of China, 2017), covering all age groups. The extensive mass base has promoted the vigorous development of the Taijiquan cultural industry and greatly enhanced the social participation of Taijiquan. Therefore, Taijiquan events have a broad market development potential.

In order to form an event platform for a competitive Taijiquan exchange, The Wushu Management Center of the General Administration of Sports of China has planned and implemented various Taijiquan mass events (Jing & Shuo, 2019). They will focus on establishing the Jiaozuo International Taijiquan Exchange Competition, Handan Taijiquan Exchange Competition, and other Taijiquan series of events (General Administration of Sports of China, 2017). The Jiaozuo Taijiquan Exchange Competition is the most frequently held and the longest-lasting Taijiquan competition in China. It has been held 15 times over 28 years since 1992 and has experienced various difficulties. Since 2005, it has been held every two years.

Although various types of Taijiquan competitions emerge endlessly in China, most of them stay in a small range of prefectures and cities, with a small

number of participants and with small influence. There are still problems from the brand building perspective, such as frequently changing the event name and logo, weak penetration of sports events (Bingbing, 2012). In the face of broad market prospects, how to create, enhance and protect the growing brand of small-scale sports events has also become a problem to be solved in the current event market.

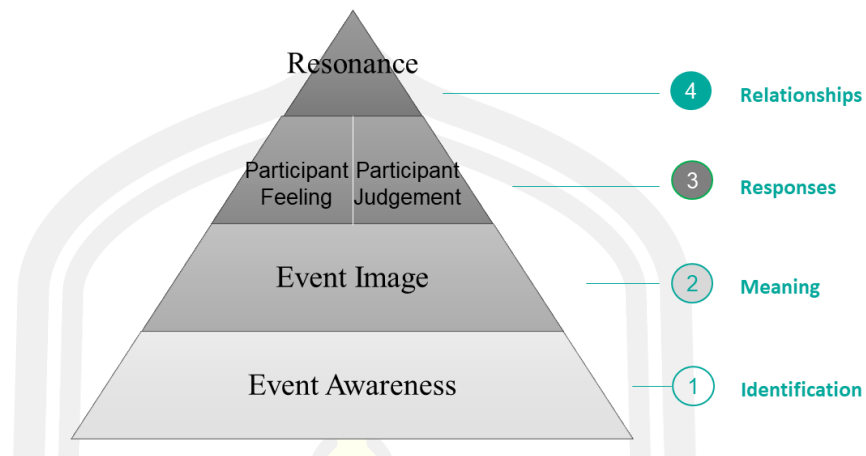
## **2.6 Conceptual Framework**

Keller's brand resonance model provided a theoretical basis for the brand building process of small-scale sports events. Although researchers have differing views on some factors of consumer-based brand equity, Keller (1993) and Aaker (1991) agree on basic models and definitions, some of which can improve brand loyalty, brand familiarity, or brand equity resonance. Nevertheless, managers need to create a unique and sequential plan to make the event compete in the marketplace. Therefore, this study applies Keller's brand resonance model to the brand construction of small sports events, making it easier for organizers to recognize the brand factors that affect the branding process of small-scale sports events.

### **2.6.1 Conceptualizing Sports Events Brand Based Brand Resonance**

#### **Model**

According to Keller's brand resonance model, there are four steps to building a brand (K. L. Keller & Moorthi, 2003). The first step is to establish brand salience in the minds of consumers (Keller, 2001; Brian & Jeffrey, 2017; Raut et al., 2020). Brand salience refers to profound brand awareness (Gordon & James, 2017), reflecting consumers' cognition of the brand and representing the brand's uniqueness



Source: Based on Keller (2001) Brand Resonance Model

Figure 8 Sports Events Brand Based Brand Resonance Model

in consumers' minds (David A Aaker, 1991). In sports events, audiences' understanding of the brand of the event also affects their participation in the event (Ekhveh & Darvishi, 2015; Ross et al., 2008).

The second step is to establish brand meaning in consumers' minds through consumer associations with the brand. Brand meaning is influenced by brand performance and image (Keller, 2001; Storm, 2015; Márkus & Fallmyr, 2014; Tsai, Lin & Li, 2014). However, some researchers argue that quality of sports service products cannot be controlled in the sports industry. Therefore, brand performance should be seen as a simple brand association (Gordon & James, 2017; Mullin, Hardy, & Sutton, 2007; Ross, 2006). Moreover, brand image and association originate from consumers' memories (Aaker, 1997; A. K. Das, Chatterjee, & Pal, 2016; K. L. Keller, 1993). Therefore, this study views brand association and image at the same latitude.

After consumers have established recognition and association with the brand, the third step is brand judgment and feeling which are used to arouse consumers' reactions to the brand. When the intensity of a sporting event causes excitement among consumers and participation in it makes consumers feel satisfied, it can also evoke positive feelings and make consumers positively comment on the event's brand. Finally, the consumer will resonate with the brand through a series of

consumer reactions to the brand. Consumers participate in activities to meet their social needs and enhance their interaction with the event brands (Wei, 2020). Consumers have established a strong relationship with brands (K. L. Keller, 2001b; Márkus & Fallmyr, 2014). These four steps describe the branding process for building a strong brand (Raut et al., 2020; Yousaf, Amin, & Gupta, 2017).

### **2.6.2 Antecedents: Event Awareness and Event Image**

#### **Event Awareness**

Event awareness is the consumer's knowledge of the event brand. Brand awareness can be interpreted simply as whether consumers are aware of a brand, or if consumers' recognition and recall of the brand in different situations is considered (Aaker, 1997; K. L. Keller & Moorthi, 2003). Researchers have identified brand awareness as a fundamental and essential attribute of brand equity (D.A. Aaker, 1991; Tong & Hawley, 2009). Brand awareness reflects how consumers know about a brand and reflects its prominence in their minds (D.A. Aaker, 1991). Brand awareness is critical in Aaker's five-factor model and Keller's brand knowledge model in consumer-based brand equity theory. Subsequent researchers have further explained brand equity. Among them, Gladden et al. (2002) studied brand equity in a college sports environment, Ross (2006) analyzed brand equity in a sporting event environment, and Yanling Duan and Bing Liu (2017) explored the measurement of brand equity in Chinese sporting event brands. In these models, brand awareness still occupies an important place (D.A. Aaker, 1991; Agarwal, 1996; Ekhveh & Darvishi, 2015; James M. Gladden & Funk, 2002; K. L. Keller & Aaker, 1992; Marisa Maio Mackay, 2001; Na, Marshall, & Keller, 1999; Raut et al., 2020; Ross, 2006; Yanling & Bing, 2017). Recall and recognition enable effective brand awareness measurement (Donthu & Yoo, 1998; Jamil & Wong, 2010; K. L. Keller, 1993; Klopper & North, 2011).

Recall reflects the ability of consumers to retrieve brands from memory under different conditions (Pierre, 2003). For example, when "sportswear" is mentioned, one will think of brand names or logos such as "Nike" or "Adidas." The recall is considered an appropriate measure for sports brand equity (J. Gladden, 2013). Branding aims to build a certain level of brand knowledge in consumers' minds and gain brand awareness (K. L. Keller & Moorthi, 2003). Consumers' ability to identify

a brand under various conditions reflects their perception of that brand (Ekhveh & Darvishi, 2015). Thus, recognition is considered another suitable measure of sports brand equity. Cognition has high explanatory power for sports brand equity and influences event brand strength (Ross, 2006; Ross et al., 2008). Ross et al. conducted a study on the brand equity of a sports team and showed that the audience's brand awareness determines the audience's loyalty to the event (Ross et al., 2008). Thus, event awareness can be understood as the consumer's knowledge and perception of the event in the branding of sporting events.

### **Event Image**

The event image is a comprehensive brand perception formed by consumers, based on their experience with the event brand information (Xiaoling, 2011; Z. Yun & Rongri, 2019). The event image reflects the awareness formed by consumers' associations with the event brand. Studies have shown that brand image reflects the product or service in consumers' memories and is the perception formed by consumers' associations with a product or service (Aaker, 1997; K. L. Keller, 1993). When consumers are satisfied with a brand, positive brand associations are created, resulting in a positive brand image (Aaker, 1991; Tong & Hawley, 2009; Marinova et al., 2011; Yoo et al., 2000). Thus, the brand image is a crucial element of spectator-based sports brand equity (Ross, 2006).

The sports environment contains various brand associations (J. Gladden, 2013). In a competitive sports environment, implementing a unique brand image strategy, coupled with event development and marketing means, can effectively enhance brand loyalty, thus gaining a competitive advantage (Hongliang, 2009). Therefore, brand management efforts can focus on brand image in the sports environment. In sports events, the image of competition, service, and facilities impact the image of the event. These images influenced consumers' evaluations of the brand.

### **Competitive Image**

Competition is the core component of a sports event brand. Competitive image refers to the overall impression of all stakeholders of the event during the bidding, holding, and ending process, including the overall evaluation of sports characteristics and scale level of events (Jia, 2013). This definition means that the brand image formed by the competitive image of consumers can form their

attitude towards the event brand, thereby establishing their loyalty to that event brand. In the brand building of sports events, brand image is a multi-dimensional image, and competition is its foundation. Researchers have studied the competitive image of some competitions. They believe that with the continuous improvement of the degree of commercialization of competitions, the focus on establishing the brand image of competitions should be on the competition itself (Xin-dan, Xing-yang, & Hui-fan, 2016). The primary means to guarantee brand loyalty is to maintain a higher competitive level, improve the intensity of the competition and enhance the ornamental value of the competition (Z. Yun & Rongri, 2019).

### **Service Image**

Service quality can positively influence customers' attitudes and behavior loyalty (Si-wen & Kai, 2019). Relevant research shows that the success of sports events is inseparable from the guarantee of high-quality services. Service image is a critical factor of brand image in sports events (Z. Yun & Rongri, 2019). According to the experience of large-scale sports events, voluntary activities are undoubtedly an essential part of the regular operation of sports events. Improving service quality and efficiency can enhance the level of the activity, enhance its competitiveness, and form a positive brand image (Rui-min & Hui-jun, 2020). The knowledge, responsibility, skills, and spirit embodied in voluntary service are conducive to the long-term development of sports event brands (Jin-feng & Jun, 2019).

### **Facilities Image**

The image of facilities is an effective means of establishing a brand image (Z. Yun & Rongri, 2019). Sports events are closely related to the construction of public facilities. Venues, transport, accommodation, and food can affect athletes' performances and spectators' experiences. The infrastructure of stadiums and gymnasiums is the fundamental factor in improving audience satisfaction (Zhaoyu, 2018). The continuous improvement of venue facilities and urban landscape features can improve the hosting ability of the sports events and the experience of watching the sports events. In addition, it is also an essential factor for audiences to choose sports events and form recommendation behaviors (Z. Yun & Rongri, 2019).

### **Event Awareness and Event Image**

Researchers have proposed that brand awareness is the foundation for building brand equity (Keller, 2001). They suggested that brand awareness should be established first in the brand creation process, and brand awareness should precede brand image (D.A. Aaker, 1991; Severi Erfan & Choon, 2013; Gill & Dawra, 2010; Washburn & Plank, 2002). This is because consumers first need to understand a brand in order to establish a series of connections. When consumers begin to make choices about brands, the first thing that comes to mind is the brand name or logo in their memory that shows brand awareness (Macdonald & Sharp, 2000). Once consumers identify a brand, they can form the meaning and image of the brand in their minds through a series of associations (Sürücü, Öztürk, Okumus, & Bilgihan, 2019). Consumers' knowledge of a brand can influence consumer behavior (Bora, Mathilda, Jeffrey, & Krzysztof, 2018; Ekhveh & Darvishi, 2015). Consumers' perception of a brand influences their association with that brand, which in turn influences the image of that brand in consumers' minds (Aaker, 1996; Jain, 2019; K. L. Keller, 1993; M.Gladden & C.Funk, 2001; Ross et al., 2008). Therefore, event awareness should precede event image when building a small sporting event brand.

#### **2.6.3 Participant Response (Participant Feelings and Judgement)**

Participant response is the consumer's reaction to the event brand as constructed through understanding and participation in the event. Consumers evaluate their perceptions and feelings about a brand, and their perceptions and feelings can influence their brand choice. Therefore, the product or service should meet consumers' expectations through the brand experience (Keller, 2001; Raut, 2015; Su, Yong, et al., 2018). Consumers' perceptions depend on their perceptions of any brand and what they imagine about it (Sultan et al., 2019). Consumers' perceived responses are essential in choosing a particular product or brand, and in influencing their behavioral intentions (Gordon & James, 2017). This perceived response is also applicable to the study of sports event brands.

#### **Participant Feelings**

Participant feelings reflects consumers' emotional responses to the brand (K. L. Keller, 2001b; Sandhe, 2016). This reaction can be positive or negative (Baird, 2015; Márkus & Fallmyr, 2014). Positive feelings are an important source of



trust, and consumers' good emotion toward brands contributes to their trust in brands (Libin, 2013; Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998; Yong, Ling-zhi, & Yun-yong, 2018). Milton Kotler (2005) proposed that the key to building a brand is to tap consumers' emotional needs and inject emotional value into the brand. Trust formed by feeling can provide stable and deep emotional belonging to consumers from an emotional perspective, thus strongly influencing consumers' purchase intentions and behavior towards brands (Yong et al., 2018).

In sports events, feeling is an important factor affecting brand loyalty. The feeling and trust of sports event brands jointly determine the nature of the relationship between consumers and event brands (Mazodier & Merunka, 2012; Yi & Siqing, 2014). For example, the strong emotional connection between fans and teams leads to fans' support for team events and purchasing alliance-branded products. Sports events help enhance brand loyalty intentions and behaviors by building feelings and trusting relationships with consumers (Yun & Rongri, 2019).

#### **Participant Judgement**

Participant judgments are consumers' overall evaluation of the tournament brand (Keller, 2001; Baird, 2015; Raut, 2015). Brand judgments reflect consumers' rational brand responses (Keller, 2001). Consumers will make myriad judgments based on all previous images and associations related to the brand (Gordon & James, 2017). Consumers judge a product's or service's overall superiority (A., 1988; Yaz, 2021). For sporting events, perception is not only a direct reflection of the sensory organs in the mind but also includes the primary evaluation of the objective things by the audience (Tao, 2015). Tournament judgments represent consumers' personal opinions about the tournament brand (Adrian, 2014a; Márkus & Fallmyr, 2014). In sports events, when consumers make a series of judgments based on their knowledge of the event, their experience of participating, and their experience of watching the event, this judgment influences consumers' choices (Gordon & James, 2017; Yaz, 2021).

#### **2.6.4 Event Image and Participant Response (Participant Feelings and Judgement)**

Like consumers of products in general, consumers of sporting events develop perceptions of event brands from advertising, media coverage, and other

sources; and then form event brand images through a series of associations. Studies have shown that consumers evaluate brand perceptions and feelings (Sultan et al., 2019). Once a brand image is formed in consumers' memories, it influences consumers' decisions and affects their choice of a brand (A. K. Das et al., 2016; J. K. Das, Prakash, & Khattri, 2016). For sporting events, which are highly experiential, consumers make a series of judgments based on their knowledge of the event and the competition, services, and facilities of the event, making it particularly important to create, maintain, and expand the event image (James M. Gladden & Funk, 2002; Sultan et al., 2019). This is because the establishment of the event image will influence the consumer's perception and judgment of the event brand.

### **2.6.5 Consequence: Event Resonance**

The event's resonance reflects the level of consumers' recognition of the event brand and represents the relationship between consumers and the event (Keller, 2001; Choudhury & Kakati, 2014; Adrian, 2014; Baird, 2015; Sandhe, 2016). According to Keller's (2001) brand resonance theory, consumers will psychologically establish their awareness of the brand and a brand image after understanding the brand. Consumers make a series of emotional judgments and evaluations of the brand through the generated brand image and establish a connection between themselves and the brand. Brand resonance plays a crucial role in the sustainable development of brand equity (Moore & Wurster, 2007). Moreover, consumers are loyal to the brand and actively participate, establishing a long-term relationship with the brand (Keller, 2001; Kumar, 2006). In the sports event environment, consumers reflect the audience's value appeal and willingness to participate through the perception and judgment of the event image (Tao, 2015). Brand resonance includes loyalty, attachment, community, and engagement (Keller, 2001).

#### **Attitude Loyalty**

Attitudinal loyalty is the degree of emotional and psychological love for a particular brand (Runyon & Stewart, 1987), which indicates the brand's durability. Some scholars believe that a monopoly and the lack of alternative products may influence consumers' buying behavior. Therefore, defining brand loyalty through repeat purchase behavior does not reflect consumers' actual thoughts. Researchers believe consumer loyalty is more reflected in consumers' deep commitment to the

brand. That is to say that external factors cannot easily change consumers' repeat buying behavior (Oliver, 1999). They will have a brand sense of belonging, relying on products or services (Jones & Sasser, 1995).

Sports events are a special kind of activity, and the loyalty of sports events should embody behavior loyalty and attitude loyalty. This is loyalty in behavioral performance and psychological perception.

### **Behavioral Loyalty**

Behavioral loyalty is mainly defined according to consumers' repeat purchase behavior. According to previous studies, scholars believe behavioral loyalty is accumulated and developed through multiple purchases (Pee, Jiang, & Klein, 2019). When consumers are satisfied with the product or service performance of the brand, they will increase their repeat purchase behavior of the product. Consumers who buy a product or service at least three times in a row can be considered loyal to the brand (R, 1964). Behavioral loyalty is the continuous use of a brand (Wei Fuxiang, 2001).

### **Brand Attachment**

Brand attachment refers to consumers' perceptions of the brand and how it defines and expresses itself (Schmalz & Orth, 2012). Attachment is an emotional connection between an individual and a specific object (Yan & Rong-ri, 2019). Brand researchers believe that attachment to objects will also be extended to product brands, thus forming an emotional connection between consumers and brands (Lucia, Harley, D., & Bettina, 2011). Marketing literature shows that when the brand's personality resonates with consumers' self-consciousness, it will help the brand establish consumers' attachments to the brand. When this emotional connection is established between consumers and the brand, consumers are more likely to choose the brand, thus bringing higher profits (Svetlana., 2015).

### **Brand Community**

Brand community means gathering customers who are interested in the same brand. With the continuous development of society, the brand community has become a new means of the brand model. Companies or organizations create, customize and distribute product and service information through brand communities to build and maintain consumer relationships (Doohwang, Soo, & Kyu, 2011).

Previous research has shown that brand communities provide platforms and networking opportunities for the same enthusiasts. It organically combines the relationships between consumers and brands, and between consumers and consumers (M.Gladden & C.Funk, 2001). Community perception can integrate community resources and provide social support, thus improving organizational satisfaction and stimulating organizational citizenship behavior (Blanchard & Markus, 2004). Consumers' experiences in the brand community can have a positive impact on consumers' brand loyalty (Minxue, Junyun, & Nan, 2015; Zhenquan, Yuwei, & Fei, 2010).

### Brand Engagement

Engagement is the behavior of consumers to consume goods, including reading relevant information, sharing information, and interacting with them (Madupu & Cooley, 2010). Engagement represents the user's input in delivering products and services (YanJun, 2010). With the development of the market economy, more and more consumers have begun to participate in brand activities. The main impact of active consumer engagement is reflected in brand satisfaction and loyalty. Consumer participation significantly impacts marketing strategies (Chang H. & Yen, 2009). Consumers' loyalty to brands is influenced by their participation behaviors (Tianhu, 2012). To summarize, this study proposes the following small-scale sports event brand building model (see figure 10).

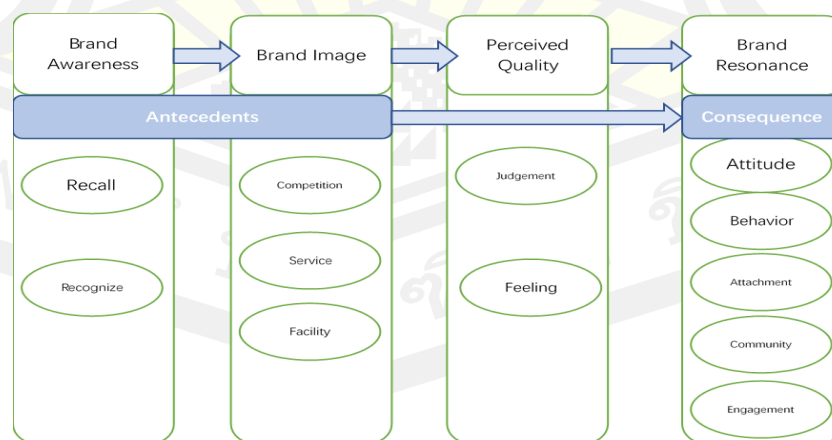


Figure 9 Proposal Brand Building Process for Small-Scale Sports Events

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The primary purpose of this study is to explore the process of brand building of small-scale sports events in China and to understand the relationship between various factors in the process of brand building of small sports events there. This is based on Keller's brand building theory (2001) and the investigation of the brand building process of small-scale sports events in China, combining qualitative and quantitative research.

The research is divided into three phases. The first phase conducted semi-structured interviews with organizers, referees, and senior athletes of small-scale sports events. This study uses interviews to clarify the influencing factors in the brand building of small-scale sports events. The second phase used a questionnaire to investigate the participants who participated in or watched the China Jiaozuo International Taijiquan Competition at least once. Meanwhile, the process of sports event construction influences relationships between various factors. The third phase validates the small-scale sports event branding model proposed in this study through expert evaluation, and the content of each stage is detailed in the following subsections.

Permission was obtained from the Human Ethics Committee of Maharakham University on April 22, 2021 before formal data collection, and the permission letter is attached in the appendix.

#### **3.2 Population**

The research population of this study includes participants of small-scale sports events, organizers, and referees of small-scale sports events. The reasons are as follows:

Considering that the spectators of small sports events are usually also event participants, the scope of influence of small-scale sports events usually starts from a

small area where the event is held. Therefore, the opinions of event participants help to explore the relationship between various factors in the process of brand building for small-scale sports events. The organizers have many years of experience organizing sports events and investigating the establishment of small-scale sports event brands from the organizers' perspectives. Referees have participated in the competition evaluation many times. They are important stakeholders of brand events, and their opinions are equally important. Furthermore, senior athletes as direct participants, their opinions should be taken into account. In order to achieve the purpose of this study, the study is divided into three stages.

### **3.3 Phase 1**

#### **3.3.1 Objective**

To discuss the influencing factors in the process of brand building for small-scale sports events.

#### **3.3.2 Subject**

Phase 1 is primarily for small sporting event organizers, referees, and senior athletes. The organizer has many years of experience in event organization and examines the establishment of a small sports event brand from the organizer's point of view. Some organizing committee members are university professors with rich practical experience and professional knowledge. Interviews with them can help understand their views on the event's brand. The referees have participated in the judging work of the competition many times and are influential stakeholders of the brand competition, and their opinions are equally important. Senior athletes have participated in different types of events within the same event. As participants, they have deep feelings about the events and can feel the brand differences of different events.

#### **3.3.3 Instrument**

The purpose of Phase 1 is to understand the influencing factors in the brand building process of small-scale sports events. The initial interview outlines were derived from brand building theory (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 2001; Keller & Aaker, 1992) and were designed according to the research purpose of this study.

The three-part interview outline is aimed at event organizers, referees, and senior athletes. Questions 1-11 focus on event organizers, with the following objectives: 1. Discuss the influencing factors in the brand building of small-scale sports events. 2. Explore the process of building a small sports event brand. Questions 12-15 explore the opinions of referees, and the purpose is to explore the influencing factors in the process of brand building of small sports events. Questions 16-26 are interviews with senior athletes, with the purposes of: 1. Discuss the influencing factors in brand building of small-scale sports events. 2. Explore the process of building a small sports event brand.

The validity of the interview syllabus was assessed using the Indexes of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) by a five-member expert panel. Five experts from different research fields evaluated the interview outline and made suggestions from different perspectives. The list of experts is as follows:

Table 1 List of Evaluation Experts.

Name	Area	University	Professional Title
SUN JR.	Sport Event; Sport Management	Wuhan University of Technology	Professor
YANG Y.	Sport Culture; Sport Event	Henan Polytechnic University	Associate Professor
WANG BL.	Traditional Chinese Sport Cultural	Henan Polytechnic University	Associate Professor
YANG L.	Sport Psychology	Taiyuan University of Technology	Associate Professor
C. Ruanguttamanun	Sport Business	Maharakham University	Asst. Prof.

The expert group assessed the consistency between the research purpose and the question design at this stage. In the evaluation form, “-1” means the question is inconsistent with the purpose, “0” means uncertain, and the score “1” means the

question design is consistent with the research purpose. Scored by five experts, after calculation, when the value of IOC is greater than or equal to 0.5 ( $\geq 0.5$ ), the project is valid (Ronna C. Turner & Laurie Carlson, 2003). In the first evaluation round, the scores of Q21 and Q23 were only 0.2, and the scores of Q6 and Q7 were 0.4, which did not meet the requirements of item validity. Q12, Q16, and Q19 scores are more significant than 0.5, but experts still proposed revisions. According to the suggestion of the expert group, the interview outline was redesigned and revised. After the revision, the second round of evaluation was carried out on the interview outline. The results of the second round of evaluation are as follows:

Table 2 The IOC Results of Interview Outline.

No.	ITEM	Results
Q1	How do you understand the concept of “brand”? How to understand the “brand of sports events”? Compared with the “brand” of traditional goods, is there any difference in the concept of “brand” in sports events?	1
Q2	Based on your experience and understanding, what are the components of a “sports event brand”? What kind of sport event can be called a “brand”?	1
Q3	What kind of brand do you think is a valuable brand for small-scale sport event? And why is that ?	0.8
Q4	What is the meaning of the logo and name of the event? What impact will these logos have on the event brand?	0.8
Q5	In your opinion, what do you suggest the event brand need to improve?	1
Q6	Can you quickly recall the logo and name of this event? Do you understand what it means? Do you think this (logo and name) will affect your choice of events?	0.8



Table 2 Continued.

No.	ITEM	Results
Q7	Based on your experience, what are the processes of sport event branding? What is the most important thing in this brand building process? What kind of effect do you expect to achieve?	1
Q8	Based on your experience, should the brand awareness of sports events be established before creating the brand image of sports events? Why and why not ?	1
Q9	What are brand building strategies currently adopted in China for small-scale sport event?	1
Q10	Compared with other similar events, what are the differences in building the brand of this event?	0.8
Q11	Do you have any other (brand building) suggestions for small-scale sports events?	0.8
Q12	How do you understand the concept of “event brand”?	0.8
Q13	Based on your experience, what are the important factors in brand building of a small-scale sport event?	1
Q14	Based on your participation experience, do you think the brand of the sport event affect the participants’ decision to attend ? What other brand factors are the affecting the choice of contestants?	0.8
Q15	What are the differences in brand building between this event and other similar events? Do you have any suggestions for a small-scale sport event?	1
Q16	How do you understand the concept of event brand? What factors do you think should be included in the concept of event brand?	0.8

Table 2 Continued.

No.	ITEM	Results
Q17	Can you quickly recall the logo and name of this event? Do you understand what it means? Do you think this (logo and name) will affect your choice of events?	1
Q18	When you choose to participate in a competition, what are factors affecting your choice?	0.8
Q19	According to your experience, what kind of sport event do you think has a “brand”? What are your considerations	1
Q20	How do you describe the brand of this event? How is it different from other events?	0.8
Q21	What do you think the value of the sport event brand is reflected in?	0.8
Q22	When you choose to participate in an event, which factor do you consider first? why?	1
Q23	What actions will affect the image of this event in your mind?	0.8
Q24	What aspects will affect your feelings and judgment about the brand of this event?	1
Q25	How does it affect you when you identify with an event brand and resonate with it? What is the impact on your participation behavior?	1
Q26	Do you have any suggestions for the organizers when building a brand of an event?	1

After further revision of the items, in the second round of IOC evaluation, the IOC value of each item was greater than or equal to 0.8 ( $\geq 0.8$ ), indicating that the item content validity was reasonable (Ronna C Turner & Laurie Carlson, 2003).

### 3.3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

In the first stage, through the purpose sampling method and the snowball sampling method (Berg, 2001; Creswell, 2012), five organizers, five referees, and five participants participated in the China Jiaozuo International Taijiquan Competition during which there were also semi-structured interviews with senior athletes. The purpose of the interview is whether the sample can answer the research question relatively wholly and accurately (Xiao-e, 2012), with 5-25 participants, and can better conduct research (Creswell, 1998). Thus, the 15 respondents met the study requirements.

First, for the purpose of sampling, the organizer Zhang XL. was chosen to participate. She is the deputy dean of the School of Physical Education of Henan University of Technology, China, as well as the director of the Sports Office of the Henan University of Technology, thus in charge of sports competitions. Referee Wang QF., is a professor in the School of Physical Education of the Henan University of Technology, and is China's national first-class martial arts referee. He has served as the chief referee of martial arts competitions many times. He has participated in the referee work of this competition since the early stage of the China Jiaozuo International Taijiquan Exchange Competition. Senior athlete Dong KL., currently a coach of a Wushu club in Henan Province, has practiced Taijiquan for more than 20 years and won the first prize in China Jiaozuo International Taijiquan Women's Chen-Style Taijiquan. Organizers and referees must have participated in organizing or refereeing work at least three times, and athletes are required to participate in at least three different competitions of the same type. After getting in touch with the three interviewees individually, they recommended other relevant persons for interviews (Berg, 2001) in order to be able to obtain the maximum amount of information.

### 3.3.5 Data Collection Procedure

Due to COVID-19's impact, the interviews were conducted face-to-face and via online videos. Before each interview the following actions were taken:

1. Researcher contacted the interviewees.
2. Participants agreed on a suitable time and place.
3. The researchers briefly introduced the purpose of the interview so that the interviewee could provide better information.

The interviewees were divided into three groups: organizers, referees, and senior athletes. In order to obtain information more effectively, each group first identified one interviewee. After the interview with the first interviewee in each group, they recommended other relevant personnel to conduct interviews to obtain the maximum amount of information (Berg, 2001). Each round of interviews lasted about 20-40 minutes, and the interviews were recorded with the interviewees' consent. All 15 respondents were interviewed from May 10 to June 21, 2021.

### 3.3.6 Data Analysis

According to the characteristics of qualitative research, data analysis should be carried out throughout the data collection process (Patton, 1990). The first stage mainly adopts the text analysis method. Interviews were transcribed and conceptualized after each interview (Strauss, 1987). According to the theoretical basis of this study and considering the characteristics of sports events, the data are analyzed using coding. The interview results presented four dimensions and 15 themes by sorting out the content of the interviews, decomposing the data into manageable segments, and coding the data by naming different segments (Schwandt, 2001). The interview results are shown in the table below, and details are explained in the next chapter.

Table 3 The Interview Content Coding Results.

Dimensions	Sub-Factors	Quote
Event	Recall	Yoo et al., (2000);
Awareness	Recognition	Atilgan et al. (2005)
Positioning		Interview
Event Image	Competitive image	Kaplanidou (2012);
	Service Image	Duan Feifei (2015);
	Facility Image	Zhao Fu, Li Rongri (2019)
	safety Image	Interview
	Organizational Image	

Table 3 Continued.

Dimensions	Sub-Factors	Quote
Participate feeling		Keller, (2001 ,2008);
Participate judgement		Umesh, Pedro, Prafulla, (2019)
Brand Resonance	Behavioral Loyalty	Kaplanidou (2012); Duan Feifei,
	Attitude Loyalty	(2015); Zhao Fu, Li Rongri, (2019)
	Event Attachment	Keller, (2001 ,2008);
	Event Community	Umesh, Pedro, Prafulla, (2019)
	Event Engagement	

### 3.4 Phase 2

#### 3.4.1 Objective

1. To analyze the relationships among the influencing factors in the process of brand building for small-scale sports events.
2. To explore the process of building a small-scale sports event brand.

#### 3.4.2 Subject

The main subject at this stage are the participants and spectators of small sports events. The spectators of small-scale sports events are usually also event participants, and the influence of small sports events usually starts from a small area where the event is held. Therefore, the opinions of event participants and spectators can help explore the relationship between various factors in the brand building of small-scale sports events. At least once, the respondents participated in or watched the Jiaozuo Taijiquan Exchange Competition.

#### 3.4.3 Instrument

As a survey tool at this stage, the primary purpose of the questionnaire is to explore the relationship between various influencing factors in brand building of small sports events. The questionnaire includes three parts. Before answering the questionnaire, the respondents will answer the first question, "Have you participated

in or watched the China Jiaozuo Taijiquan Competition?” If the answer is “Yes,” the respondents will be allowed to answer the following questions. If the answer is “No” the investigation will be discontinued. The questionnaire’s questions are derived from the brand building theory (Aker, 1996; Keller, 2001) and the results of the first-stage interviews. Event awareness was measured using the scales of Yoo et al. (2000) and Atilgan et al. (2005), including recall and recognition. According to the interview results, the analysis of event salience added event positioning factors. The event image adopts the scale of Kaplanidou (2012), Duan Feifei (2015), Zhao Yun, and Li Rongri (2019) on the brand image, including competitive image, service image, and facility image. At the same time, the interview content analysis increases the two factors of security and organizational norms. Event perception was measured from both perceptual and rational perspectives. The items of Keller (2001, 2008) and Umesh, Pedro, and Prafulla (2019) were adjusted for this study from both affective and judgmental perspectives. Event resonance includes five factors: attitude loyalty, behavioral loyalty, competitive attachment, community awareness, and active participation. Keller (2001,2008) and Umesh, Pedro, Prafulla, Kaplanidou (2012), Fei-Fei Duan (2015), and Zhao, Rong-Ri Lee’s (2019) scale were modified and adjusted to measure the resonance of the event. The purpose of adjustment and revision is to be more in line with the context of this study.

The first part consists of questions 2-9 to understand the basic background information of the respondents, including whether the respondents have participated in or watched the Jiaozuo Taijiquan Exchange Competition, the region, gender, age, educational background other related demographic characteristics.

The second part consists of 10-64 questions measuring the components of the brand equity of small sports events, using the Likert 5-point scale to measure the factors involved in this study. It includes four dimensions: event awareness, event image, event perception, and event resonance. This section is measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

The third part consists of 65 questions, which are open-ended questions such as “What do you suggest about the branding of small sports events?” This is done in order to collect participants' suggestions on the branding of small-scale sports events.

The questionnaires were translated before data collection. Since the data collection site is Jiaozuo City, Henan Province, China, the language used is Chinese and the scale used in the theoretical basis of this paper is English. Considering the accuracy of language expression, an expert majoring in English translation first translated the questionnaire into English and Chinese. Moreover, later it was translated from Chinese to English by another translator. Thus, it enabled comparing the questions' meanings to ensure the questionnaire's accuracy.

Five evaluation experts assessed the content validity of the questionnaire using the Expert Evaluation Form before the investigation (same as the first stage) through the IOC. There were two rounds of research tool evaluation in Phase 2. In the first round, the scores of Q8, Q18, and Q26 were only 0.4, and the Q1, Q19, Q28, and Q32 were only 0.6, which did not meet the requirements. According to the suggestions of the expert group, this study adjusted and revised the questions with unclear meanings. The researchers then split the questions that contained multiple items in the same question and added the questions not included in the first design. The number of questions in the original questionnaire was increased to 55 questions. The results of the revised questionnaire are as follows:

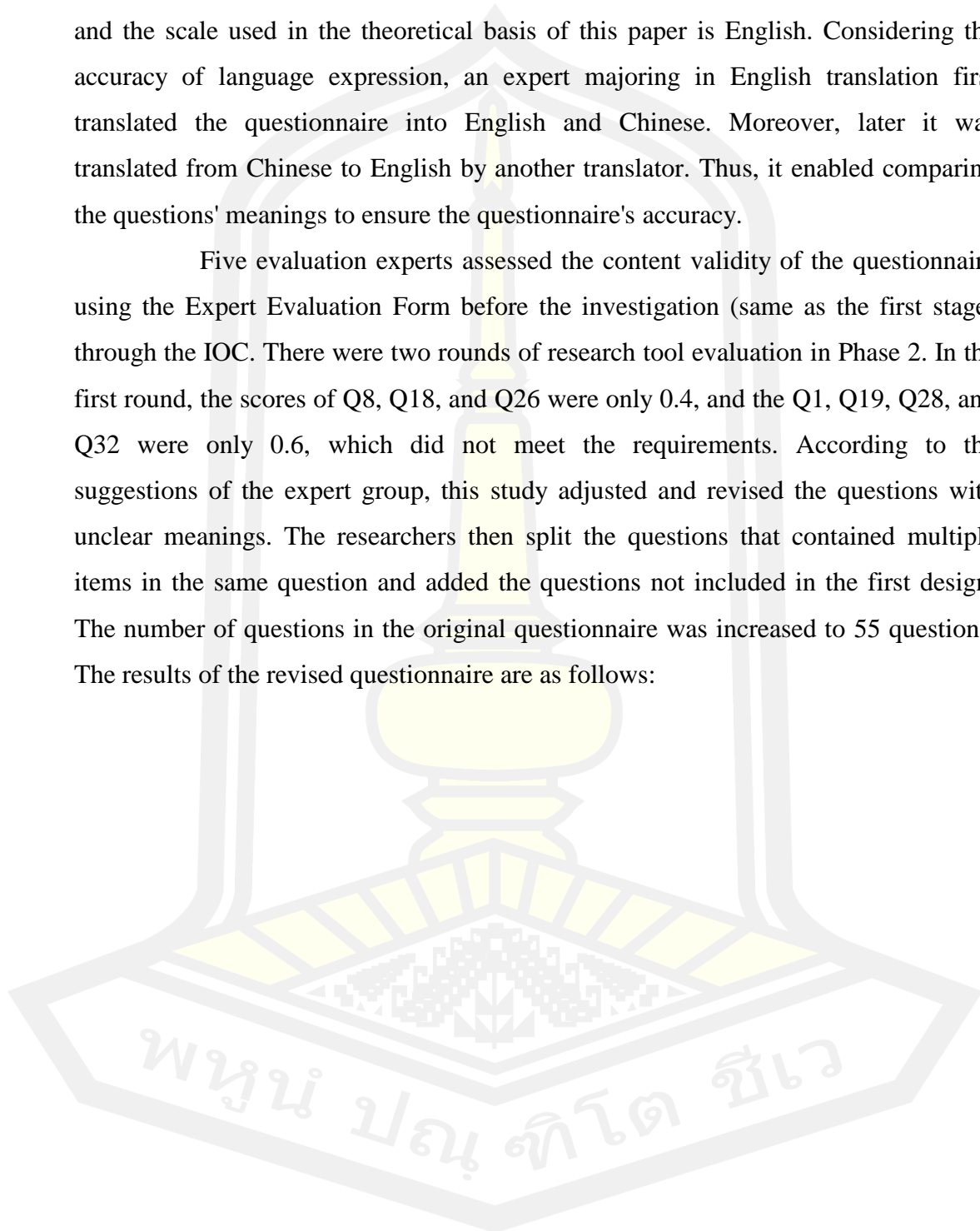


Table 4 The IOC Results of the Questionnaire

No.	Items	Action Taken	Result of Round1	Result of Round2
1	I can get information about the event from different public channels.	Keep it	1	1
2	I recognize the composition of the participants involved in this event.	Modify	0.4	1
3	Whether there are celebrities involved or not, it still has a great impact on me.	Newly added		0.8
4	I know the characteristics of this event.	Newly added		1
5	The event combines the characteristics of regional culture.	Keep it	1	1
6	I am aware of this sport event.	Modify	0.6	1
7	I can think of the name of the event quickly.	Keep it	1	1
8	I can think of the logo and symbol of the event quickly.	Keep it	1	1
9	I can identify the event among many other events.	Keep it	1	1
10	I know what this event is like.	Keep it	1	1
11	Athletes play on a highly competitive level.	Modify	0.8	1
12	The professionalism of the referees and other personnel determines the high standard of the event.	Modify	0.8	1
13	The level of the athletes is close, and the competition is fierce.	Newly added		1
14	The event represents the high level of other same events.	Keep it	0.8	1
15	The project setting of this event is very comprehensive.	Newly added		
16	The staff have a friendly attitude and decent behavior.	Keep it	1	

Table 4 Continued.



No.	Items	Action Taken	Result of Round1	Result of Round2
17	The event has a good and impressive atmosphere.	Keep it	1	
18	The event has considerate and convenient volunteer services.	separated	0.8	
19	The event has well-equipped and convenient facilities.	Keep it	1	1
20	Compared with other similar events, the event facilities of this event are more professional.	Keep it	1	1
21	The city hosting the event has unique scenery and good urban features.	Keep it	0.8	1
22	The host site has convenient transportation conditions.	separated	0.4	1
23	The host site provides good accommodation and catering conditions.	Modify	0.6	1
24	The event has very convenient medical services.	separated	0.8	1
25	The venue of the event has obvious emergency exit signs and the access to emergency exits is unobstructed.	Keep it	1	1
26	I have confidence in the security guarantee system of the event.	Keep it	1	1
27	The event is organized very efficiently.	Keep it	1	1
28	The work of all the people in the event is great.	Keep it	1	
29	The event is well managed.	Keep it	1	
30	I think the event is very interesting.	Modify	0.8	
31	The event gives me a sense of security.	Modify	0.4	
32	The event gives me a sense of identity.	Keep it	1	

Table 4 Continued.

No.	Items	Action Taken	Result of Round1	Result of Round2
33	The event gives me a sense of self-esteem.	Modify	0.6	
34	It is a valuable event.	Keep it	1	
35	This is a very innovative event.	Newly added		1
36	Personally, I think the event has something to do with me.	Modify	0.4	1
37	Compared with other events of the same type, it is an excellent event.	Keep it	1	1
38	The event will be my first choice in the same type of events.	Keep it	1	1
39	I will buy other products and services in the event.	Keep it	1	1
40	I will take part in the event next time.	Keep it	1	1
41	I will tell my friends about this series of events.	Keep it	1	1
42	Compared with other similar events, I am willing to pay more for taking part in the event.	Modify	0.8	1
43	I will invite my friends to watch or take part in the event together.	Keep it	1	1
44	I really love this event.	Newly added		
45	If this event is not held, I will miss it very much.	Newly added		
46	This event is very special for me.	Newly added		
47	For me, this event is not just an activity	Newly added		
48	I have a strong sense of identity with those who take part in the event.	Modify	0.8	
49	I feel like I almost belong to the same club as the other participants in this event.	Keep it	1	

Table 4 Continued.

No.	Items	Action Taken	Result of Round1	Result of Round2
50	This is the event for people like me.	Modify		
51	I keep in touch with the people who take part in the event.	Keep it	1	
52	I'd like to discuss the event with others.	Keep it	1	1
53	I'm always interested in learning more information about the event.	Keep it	1	1
54	I'm honored to let others know that I took part in the event.	Keep it	1	1
55	Compared with others, I will pay close attention to the information of the event.	Modify	0.8	1

It can be seen from the above table that after adjustment and modification, the scores for each item in the second round of evaluation are greater than or equal to 0.8 ( $\geq 0.8$ ), indicating that the items have good content validity (Ronna C Turner & Laurie Carlson, 2003).

#### **3.4.4 Pilot Test**

This study conducted a pilot test before the normal data collection. The purpose of pilot test is to ensure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, revise and adjust the questions in the research instrument (Bernard, 2000), and estimate the time to answer the questionnaire to better screen the recovered data.

The respondents participated in or watched at least one Jiaozuo Taijiquan Exchange Competition. This study was pre-tested using an online questionnaire procedure. In order to ensure the accuracy of the research objects, the respondents should have first answered whether they had participated in or watched the China Jiaozuo Taijiquan Competition before answering the questionnaire. If the answer was “yes,” the online questionnaire procedure continued, and the next question automatically came up for further measurement. If the answer was “No,” the questionnaire procedure was discontinued without further investigation. Before the prediction, this study selected ten subjects and calculated the answering time, and asked these subjects whether the questionnaire was easy to understand and whether there were any errors. After getting the answers, the average time to answer the questions was calculated to filter the data better. The questionnaire time for ten subjects was three to seven minutes.

Participants in the pre-test were members of the Taijiquan Association in Jiaozuo City, Henan Province, China; and students from the School of Physical Education (Taijiquan) of the Henan University of Technology. The test was completed in Jiaozuo City, Henan Province, from September 25 to October 3, 2021, and the people involved in the prediction met the research requirements of this study.

This study distributed 137 pilot test questionnaires through the online website, of which 16 people chose “no” when answering “whether to participate or watch out of date,” and 121 questionnaires were recovered, with a recovery rate of 88%. After sorting out the questionnaire data, firstly, according to the answering time, the questionnaires whose answering time was less than 180 seconds were screened

out. Because the online questionnaire program is used to issue and collect the questionnaires, each question must be answered in the questionnaire program, so there is no blank questionnaire and blank rate. In the second step, this study screened out the questionnaires with the same score of more than 90% such as cases when each of the 10-64 questions scored “1,” or all of them were “5.” After screening out the invalid questionnaires, there were 113 valid questionnaires, and the effective rate was 93%. SPSS23 was used to input and analyze the survey data.

The results of pilot test found that 55.8% (N=63) of the participants were male, and 44.2% (N=50) were female. Also, 43.4% (N=49) of the participants were between the ages of 18 and 25, and all but one participant, who was 16, were adults. Among the 113 respondents, 71.7% (N=81) had a bachelor's degree or were receiving undergraduate education, and the overall education level was relatively high. Also, 37.2% (N=42) of the respondents participated in the Jiaozuo Taijiquan Competition four or more times. The details of the pre-investigation information are shown in the table 5.

Table 5 Demographic Information of Pilot-Test.

	<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent (%)</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
<b>Gender</b>	1=Male	63	55.8	55.8	1.44	0.499
	2=Female	50	44.2	100		
<b>Age</b>	1=17 and below	1	0.9	0.9	30.29	12.148
	2=18-25	49	43.4	44.2		
	3=26-30	26	23	67.3		
	4=31-40	13	11.5	78.8		
	5=41-50	11	9.7	88.5		
	6=51-60	12	10.6	99.1		
	7=61 and more	1	0.9	100		

Table 5 continued.

	Variables	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>Education</b>	1=Primary and below	1	0.9	0.9	5.37	1.061
	2=Junior high school	2	1.8	2.7		
	3=Technical secondary school	3	2.7	5.3		
	4=High school	6	5.3	10.6		
	5=Junior college	9	8	18.6		
	6=Bachelor	81	71.7	90.3		
	7=Master	9	8	98.2		
	8=Doctor	2	1.8	100		
Times	1=1 time	27	23.9	23.9	2.65	1.209
	2= 2 times	28	24.8	48.7		
	3= 3 times	16	14.2	62.8		
	4= 4 times or more	42	37.2	100		
Total		113	100	100		

After pilot test, Cronbach's alpha value was analyzed using SPSS23, and Cronbach's alpha tested the reliability of the survey tool. Cronbach's alpha is often used to reflect measurement consistency and stability (Field, 2005). The acceptable lower limit for Cronbach's alpha is generally 0.7. It may be reduced to 0.6 in some exploratory analyses, but a good reliability coefficient should reach 0.9, and 0.8 is considered a good coefficient (J. Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006).

Table 6 Reliability Statistics (N=113)

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Factor</b>	<b>Number of Items</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
Event	Recall	3	0.773
Awareness	Recognize	2	0.706
Positioning		5	0.807
Event Image	Competition	5	0.876
	Service	3	0.841
	Facilities	5	0.841
	Safety	3	0.806
	Organize	3	0.868
Participate Feeling		4	0.846
Participate Judgement		4	0.835
Event	Behavior Loyalty	3	0.838
Resonance	Attitude loyalty	3	0.811
	Attachment	4	0.908
	Community	4	0.903
	Engagement	4	0.892
Total	55	0.968	

As shown in the table 6, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of each dimension ranges from 0.706 to 0.908, and all are greater than 0.7, indicating that the questionnaire has passed the reliability test. Further, the internal items have good consistency, and the research tool performs well in the Cronbach's alpha coefficient test.

### 3.4.5 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

The study screened 681 questionnaires. The study selected “1” for those who participated or watched the event, and “2” for those who had not participated nor watched. Using Excel to delete the questionnaires marked as “2,” there were 46 questionnaires marked as “2,” and 635 questionnaires were left. The second step was to delete the questionnaires according to answer time for those whose answer time was less than 180 seconds. There were 13 questionnaires deleted due to the answer time, and there then remained 622 questionnaires. In the third step, 80% of the questionnaires with the same score were deleted, with 45 questionnaires disqualified. The fourth step was to delete the questionnaires with the same IP address, of which were 15 questionnaires, thus leaving 562 questionnaires.

Considering the use of SEM at this stage, there are specific requirements for sample capacity. Some experts have suggested that the sample size should be at

least five times the item's size, and even more suitable would be ten times the item size (J. Hair et al., 2006). Some experts also suggested that the stability of the model needs to be considered, and the minimum sample size should be greater than 200 (R. Kline, Kline, & Kline, 2011) to reduce the problem of overfitting caused by a too-small sample size (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). At the same time, according to the 95% confidence level, the sample size should be at least greater than 384 (Chang-ying & Ming-min, 2006). The larger the sample size, the smaller the error. This study distributed 681 questionnaires to meet the above requirements and improve the rate of return, of which 562 were left, with an effective recovery rate of 82.5%. There were 562 copies that met the above requirements.

#### **3.4.6 Data Collection Procedure**

The online self-administrated survey collected sample data using the self-selected convenience sampling method. Due to the epidemic's impact, the offline interception and recovery method could not be used to conduct questionnaires. The data were collected from the population with available data through online questionnaires (Saunders, P., & Thornhill, 2009 ). Online questionnaires can effectively communicate with the target population (Garton, Haythornthwaite, & Wellman, 1999). Secondly, online surveys reduce the cost of data collection and improve the time efficiency of the data collection process (Bachmann, Elfrink, & Vazzana, 1996).

Through negotiation and discussion with the Taijiquan Association, coaches, and club leaders, the questionnaires were distributed and collected in the WeChat groups of Taijiquan enthusiasts and previous contestants through the Questionnaire Star software. The questionnaire first explained the research so that the respondents could better understand the intention of the research. Respondents were also informed that they were considered to have agreed to participate in this study when they filled out and submitted the questionnaire. They could withdraw from the study at any time, and their information would be kept confidential and would not be used for any purpose other than the analysis of this study data. In using the online questionnaire, considering the accuracy of the target group, the first question was "Have you have participated in the Jiaozuo Taijiquan Exchange Competition?" If answered "Yes," the next question then automatically came up. If the answer was



“No,” the software program automatically terminated the collection. A total of 681 questionnaires were distributed through the online procedure. The issuance and recycling of the questionnaire form were completed from October 12 to November 13, 2021.

### **3.4.7 Data Analysis**

This study explores the relationship between factors in small sports event brand building, and then uses the path model to test. The proposed model includes the direct relationship between event positioning, awareness (recall, recognition), event image (competitive image, service image, facility image, safety image, and organizational image), participate feeling, and participate judgement. Impact, event image, and perception directly impact the resulting event resonance. Furthermore, the mediating effect of event image, participate feeling, and participate judgement between event awareness and event resonance is to verify the application of Keller’s brand building theory in the brand building of small-scale sports events. The following section provides detailed confirmatory factor analysis results and normalized path analysis results.

#### **Normality test**

Before model testing, one could judge the normal distribution of the data by checking the kurtosis and skewness of the data. When the skewness and kurtosis values are in the range of  $\pm 1.96$ , the data is normally distributed at the level of 0.05, and  $\pm 2.58$  means the data is normally distributed at the level of 0.01 (J. F. J. Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998).

#### **Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)**

This study used structural equation modeling (SEM) to analyze the proposed small-scale sports event, brand-building model. Structural equation modeling is usually analyzed using a two-step approach. The first step was the measurement model, and the second step was the structural model. Measurement models should precede structural models (James, Mulaik, & Brett, 1992; Anderson, J. R., & Gerbing, 1988). The first step was to used confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to measure the proposed model. The purpose of CFA is to apply Keller’s brand-building theory to the field of sports events and analyze whether the factors and scales are consistent with previous research (Keller, 2001; Berry, 2000; Duan Yanling & Liu

Bing, 2017; Joreskog & Sorbom, 1996). It also shows the goodness-of-fit, discriminant validity, and convergent validity of the model, which provided the evaluation of scores and the structure designed by the researchers for the subsequent structural model. To further verify the influential relationships between the factors, the study carried out the second step model test, including a path test and mediation effect analysis. The measurement and structural models were tested using the same fit criteria, and it provided the detailed measurement and structural model results found in the next sections. For a complete model evaluation, this study analyzed descriptive statistics using SPSS 23, and SEM using Amos 23. The researchers tested the measurement model and the structural model using the same fit index criteria.

**The absolute fit index.** The absolute fit index determines how well the prior model fits the sample data (McDonald & Ho, 2002). Some indicators provide the most basic indication of how well the proposed theory fits the data (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008). The chi-square value is a traditional measure used to assess the overall model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999), but it is sensitive to sample size. The chi-square test almost always rejects the model at large sample sizes (Bentler, P., Bonett, Douglas, & G., 1980; Jöreskog, Sörbom, & Inc, 1993). Small samples may fail to distinguish between models that simulate well and models that simulate poorly (Kenny & McCoach, 2003). Due to the limitations of the chi-square test, researchers used relative/normed chi-square ( $\chi^2/df$ ) as a surrogate measure to evaluate model fit, minimizing the effect of sample size on model chi-square (Wheaton, Muthen, Alwin, & Summers, 1977). The recommended value for canonical chi-square is less than 3 (R. B. Kline, 2004). Because RMSEA is sensitive to the number of estimated parameters in the model, it tells one how well the model with optimally chosen parameter estimates fits the overall covariance matrix (Byrne, 1998). It is considered one of the most informative fit indices (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000). When RMSEA is less than 0.07, the model is considered a good fit (Steiger, 2007). The goodness-of-fit statistic shows how close the model replicates the observed covariance matrix (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000). The statistic ranges from 0 to 1. A value of GFI over 0.9 is traditionally regarded as indicating a good fit (J. Hair et al., 2006). Additionally, the closer to 1, the better the model fit. However, given the index's sensitivity, it has been suggested that it should not be used (Sharma,

Mukherjee, Kumar, & Dillon, 2005). AGFI is related to GFI and is a correction to GFI. According to the adjustment of degrees of freedom, the value of AGFI is between 0 and 1. Generally, greater than or equal to 0.9 indicates that the model fits well. It has also been suggested that greater than or equal to 0.8 indicates an acceptable model fit (Marsh, Hau, Balla, & Grayson, 1998). Considering the influence of sample size on these two indices, they are usually judged comprehensively with other indices and are not regarded as independent judgment indicators (Hooper et al., 2008). Root mean square residual (RMR) is the square root between the residual of the sample covariance matrix and the hypothesized covariance model. The RMR value of a well-simulated model is less than 0.05 (McDonald & Ho, 2002).

**The incremental fit index.** The incremental fit index is also known as the relative fit index (Miles & Shevlin, 2007). The statistic in this group of indicators is the Normed Fit Index (NFI), and the NFI recommended value is greater than 0.9 (Bentler et al., 1980). The Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI, also known as the Tucker-Lewis index), which can exceed 1.0 due to its non-canonical nature, is difficult to interpret (Byrne, 1998). Experts have proposed as low as 0.8 as a cutoff value, but recently 0.95 has been suggested as the recommended threshold (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) considers the sample size and is a modified form of the NFI (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The CFI needs to be greater than 0.9 to guarantee that an incorrectly formulated model will not be accepted (Hu & Bentler, 1999), and a value greater than 0.95 may be better (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Moreover, this study showed the model's goodness of fit, discriminant, and convergent validity. It scored assessments and provided investigator-designed structures for subsequent structural models. In order to further verify the influence relationships between the factors, the second step model test and the path test were carried out.

From the perspective of the model, multiple indicators meant that the model was complex, the absolute value of the measurement error was also large, and the model parameters also had relatively large standard errors (Little, Cunningham, Shahar, & Widaman, 2002). The project-packaging method appropriately solves this contradiction (Bandalos, 2002). The overall fitting of the initial model in this study was reasonable, but there were still unsatisfactory indicators. Considering the complexity of the model, the model was packaged into projects. Data analysis with

model complexity and low commonality was suitable for project-packaging (Marsh et al., 1998). The packing method was not suitable for measurement models. If the research purpose was to analyze the relationship between variables, and understand the relationship between latent variables, the packaging method was very useful (Little et al., 2002; Yan & Zhonglin, 2011). When the item was single-dimensional and homogeneous in the population, the structure parameter estimation was unchanged when the packing method was used, compared with the direct use of the original item (Sass & Smith, 2006; Yuan, Bentler, & Kano, 1997). Some errors in the item packaging will cancel each other out, the measurement error of the new indicator is relatively small, and the proportion of the common factor in the observation score increases, thus increasing the degree of commonality (Matsunaga & Masaki, 2008). After packaging, the fitting degree of the model was improved. Table 18 shows the detailed goodness-of-fit index after model-packing.

#### **Reliability and Validity**

The reliability of the model was tested by the factor loading, composite reliability (CR) value and Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Factor loadings greater than 0.6, CR and Cronbach alpha greater than 0.7 were considered acceptable values (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; R Kline, 2011).

Construct validity is judged by convergent validity and discriminant validity. Convergent validity was tested by CR and the average variance extracted (AVE) values. The AVE of each latent variable needs to meet a standard higher than 0.5 (J. F. J. Hair et al., 1998). Discriminant validity was determined by the absolute value of the correlation coefficient. It needs to be less than 0.5 (J. F. J. Hair et al., 1998) and less than the square root of the corresponding AVE (Baojuan & Zhonglin, 2011; Wanli, 2008).

#### **Path Analysis**

The critical ratio of standardized estimates greater than 2 indicates a significant difference from zero at the 0.05 level (Arbuckle & Wothke, 1999).

#### **Mediation Analysis**

The bootstrap method was used to estimate the indirect effects to test the mediating effect of the event image between event awareness, participant feelings,

and participant judgment. The mediating effect is between participant feelings and participant judgment between event image and event resonance. Considering the influence of the independent variable X on the dependent variable Y, if X affects Y through the influencing variable M, M is called an intermediary variable. If the independent variable affects the dependent variable through at least one mediating variable, then there is a mediating effect (Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

In this study, the statistical significance of indirect effects was obtained by using bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals (Arbuckle & Wothke, 1999). Bootstrap is a method of re-sampling from a sample; that is, the original sample is regarded as the Bootstrap population, and the bootstrap sample is repeated from the Bootstrap population to obtain a Bootstrap sample similar to the original sample (Wen, Marsh, & Hau, 2010). For this Bootstrap sample, the estimated value of the coefficient product can be obtained, all of which are denoted as  $\{\hat{a}\hat{b}\}$ . Using the bias-corrected confidence interval, the so-called bias-corrected non-parametric percentile bootstrap method is a method with higher testing power. If the confidence interval does not contain 0, the coefficient product is significant (Fritz & Mackinnon, 2007; Preacher & Hayes, 2008; Taylor, Mackinnon, & Tein, 2008; Zhonglin, Hongyun, & Jietai, 2012).

### **3.5 Phase 3**

In order to ensure the accurate determination of the brand building process of small sports events, the results of the first and second stages were further evaluated and tested using the expert evaluation method.

#### **3.5.1 Objective**

1. To evaluate the brand building process model of small-scale sports events.
2. To confirm the brand building process model of small-scale sports events.

#### **3.5.2 Subject**

Researchers suggested a minimum of 7 members for the expert evaluation team (Linstone, 1978). However, the size of the expert team ranges from 4 to 3000

members (Thangaratinam & Redman, 2005). The expert survey results' reliability depends on the experts' professional level, and the number of representatives should be determined by the quality of the experts rather than the number (Hasson, Keeney, & McKenna, 2000; Powell, 2003; Thangaratinam & Redman, 2005). In order to meet the research requirements and the needs of the actual situation, this study invited five managers and five referees. Experts were selected in relevant fields to evaluate the project content. Expert selection criteria are as follows:

1. Must be familiar with sports event organizations or sports event referees
2. Referees to be selected with intermediate titles, senior titles, or higher
3. A master's degree or higher is required.
4. Must agree to participate in this research

Sports event organizers are the plan and executive decision-makers of small-scale sports events. They are familiar with the various stages of event organization and have an intuitive understanding of event brands. Sports referees are essential stakeholders in small sports events, and their years of experience in participating in sports events can make solid suggestions for brand building of small sports events.

### **3.5.3 Instrument**

In this phase, this study used an expert evaluation form to evaluate and test the branding process of a small sporting event. The expert evaluation form adopted five levels which were: very reasonable, reasonable, average, unreasonable, and very unreasonable (Mengyi & Yuan, 2014).

Five experts on the research tool assessment panel assessed the Expert Evaluation Form. The expert evaluation form was adjusted according to the opinions of the research tool evaluation experts, mainly to adjust and modify the wording in the expert evaluation form, to accurately convey the connotation of this research, and to receive practical answers. The expert evaluation form was carried out in two rounds using the IOC evaluation. The results are shown in the table 7.

Table 7 The IOC Results of Expert Evaluation.

Process	Original	This Study	Details	Action
Process 1 Clarify the event positioning.		Positioning	Locating audience orientation of the event.	Modified
			Identifying the participant characteristics.	Modified
			Make clear the mission of the event, determine the role orientation and value proposition of the event.	Modified
			Integrate local characteristics of culture to the competition.	Modified
Enhance the event awareness.	Recall	Recall	Name the event that significantly reflects the event positioning.	Modified
	Recognition	Recognition	Develop and design event logo and symbol that recognizable.	Modified
			Through integrated marketing communications, create awareness of participants and enhance awareness of the event.	Modified
Process 2 Build event image			Enhancing visual communication for event recognition.	Modified
	Competition	Competition	Invite participation of high-level athletes.	Modified
			Invite qualified referees to ensure the fairness and publicity of the event.	Modified
			Categorizing competition groups to compete fairly.	Modified
			There are various and interesting competing events.	Modified
	Service	Service	Service staff display decent behaviors and good attitude.	Modified
			Offering good competition environment and experience for watching and participating.	Modified
			Provide reasonable and orderly volunteer services through volunteer training.	Modified

Table 7 Continued

Process	Original	This Study	Details	Action
	Facility	Facility	Well-providing facilities throughout the event. Tourism culture is also presenting through the event facilities. Provide convenient transportation facilities. Consider the needs of participants and provide suitable accommodation. Medical insurance at the competition site. The emergency passage is clearly marked and the passage is unobstructed.	Modified Modified Keep Modified Keep Keep Keep
		Safety	Prepare a complete emergency response plan.	Keep
		Organization	Arrange the event schedule reasonably according to the principle of feasibility. Have the service consciousness of maintaining the image of the event. Implement a reasonable way of event management.	Modified Modified Keep
Process 3				
Accept consumer feedback	Feeling	Feeling	Participants' perception of the event atmosphere. Participants' trust in the event brand. Participants' recognition of the value proposition conveyed by the event.	Keep Keep Keep
	Judgment	Judgment	Participants' emotional identification with the event experience. Participants' recognition of the event value. Participants' recognition of the innovation of the competition. Participants' satisfaction with the experience of the event. Participants' recognition of event competitiveness.	Keep Modified Keep Keep Keep Keep



Table 7 Continued

Process	Original	This Study	Details	Action
Process 4				
Resonate with consumers	Attitude	Attitude	Participant may have overall satisfied with the event.	Keep
	Loyalty	Loyalty	Participant will purchase additional products or services for this event.	Keep
			Participant will participate repeatedly.	Keep
	Behavior	Behavior	Participant will promote to people who around them.	Keep
	Loyalty	Loyalty	Participant will to pay a higher price for this event.	Keep
			Participant will Invite people to watch or participate this event.	Keep
	Attachment		Participants' will recognition of the individuality of the event.	Modified
			Participants' will recognition of the performance of the event.	Modified
			Participants' self-awareness may resonance with event personality.	Keep
	Community	Community	Participants identify with other participants.	Keep
			Participants actively interact with other event participants.	Keep
			Participants maintain relationships with other participants.	Keep
Engagement	Engagement	Participants actively recommend this event to the people around them.	Modified	
		Participants will follow the dynamics of the event.	Keep	
		Participants will follow the information of the event.	Modified	

### 3.5.4 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

At this stage, purposeful sampling was used to collect data from the population for which data were available (Berg, 2001; Creswell, 2012; Saunders et al., 2009 ). In the expert evaluation, the number of experts was required to be at least 5, and 10-15 were even more suitable (Ma Tianyu, 2022; Du Yaling, 2022). Qualitative studies have also suggested that 5-25 participants may be better for the study (Creswell, 1998). This study carefully considered five sports event organizers, five referees, and ten experts who met the above requirements.

### 3.5.5 Data Collection Procedure

This study distributed the experts' evaluation forms and collected it online. The issuance and recycling of the evaluation form were completed from March 27 to April 15, 2022.

### 3.5.6 Data Analysis

The evaluation form is analyzed from the following three aspects.

(1) The enthusiasm of experts. The enthusiasm of experts is measured by the effective recovery rate of the evaluation form. When the effective recovery rate is more than 70%, it means that experts' enthusiasm is high.

(2) The authority of experts. The expert authority coefficient (Q) is calculated by the expert's practical ability (Q1), the expert's judgment basis (Q2), and the expert's familiarity with the problem (Q3),  $Q = (Q1 + Q2 + Q3) / 3$ . When  $Q \geq 0.7$ , it is acceptable, and  $\geq 0.8$  indicates greater authority (Liangping & Guan Xue, 2013; Du Yaling, 2022; Liu Weitao, 2011).

Table 8 Expert Practice Competency Assignment (Q1)

Title	Senior title	Intermediate title	Other
Assignment	1	0.75	0.5

Table 9 Assignment of Expert Authority Coefficient (Q2)

Criterion	Impact on expert judgment		
	Big	Middle	Small
<b>Theoretical</b>	0.3	0.2	0.1
<b>Experience</b>	0.5	0.4	0.3
<b>Reference</b>	0.1	0.1	0.1
<b>Intuition</b>	0.1	0.1	0.1

Table 10 Assignment of Expert Familiarity with the Content (Q3)

Familiarity	Very familiar	More familiar	General	Less familiar	Very unfamiliar
<b>Assignment</b>	1	0.8	0.6	0.4	0.2

(3) The degree of coordination of expert opinions. This is used to reflect the convergence of expert opinions. It is usually expressed by the coefficient of variation CV and the Kendall coordination coefficient.  $CV=S/M$ , S is the standard deviation of the indicator, M is the average value, and the smaller the CV, the higher the coordination degree of experts. The Kendall coordination coefficient (Kendall's W) ranges from 0 to 1. The closer the value of W is to 1, the more consistent the expert opinions are, and the more reliable the results obtained (Habibipour et al., 2009).

Statistical analysis of the recovered data was performed using SPSS and Excel. In the verification and evaluation stage, the evaluation results are calculated according to the scores of the expert evaluation form. The average score of 10 experts was calculated, and the average score  $\geq 3.5$  which indicates that the project score was acceptable (Chang-zai, 2020; Mengyi & Yuan, 2014).

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESULTS**

This chapter presents the influencing factors in small-scale sports event brand building and the structural equation model (SEM) testing. The researcher conducted the results of this study in three phases.

The first phase explored the influencing factors in the process of brand building of small-scale sports events and reached a preliminary understanding of the process of brand building for these events. This study conducted 15 interviews with five event organizers, five event referees, and five senior athletes. The interview results showed that building a small-scale sports event brand involved event positioning, event awareness, event image, participant feelings, participant judgment, and event resonance. The interviews resulted in a further apparent connection between these factors. It demonstrated detailed consequences in Phase 1, in regards to the influencing factors of small-scale sports events.

The second stage discusses the relationship among the factors influencing small-scale sports event brand building. It proposes a brand building model for small-scale sports events. A survey was conducted of 681 participants who took part in or watched the China Jiaozuo International Taijiquan Competition. A total of 681 questionnaires were recovered, and 562 were left after the screening, with an effective recovery rate of 82.5%. The model proposed relationships between event positioning, event awareness, event image, Participant Feelings, participant judgment, and event resonance. Phase 2 showed detailed results in in regards to the brand building process of a small-scale sports events.

The third phase validated the proposed brand building process of small-scale sports events. Ten experts were invited to evaluate the various parts of small-scale sports events examples, which also proposed brand building processes through the expert evaluation form. The results showed that, in building the brand of small-scale sports events, the first step was to deepen consumers' understanding of the events through event positioning and awareness. The second step was establishing the event image through participation experience based on consumers' preliminary knowledge of the event. The third step was for consumers to give feedback on the event because

of their understanding and image. Finally, the study reached the fourth step, in which to strengthen the relationship between consumers and the event, and achieve the brand goal of loyalty to the event. It showed detailed results in Phase 3, confirming the small-scale sports event brand building process.

#### **4.1 Results of This Study**

The researchers divided the results into three parts. The first part shows the factors that influence the small-scale sports event brand building process, the second part shows the small-scale sports event brand building process, and the third part verifies the small-scale sports event brand building process. The detailed results for each section are given below.

#### **4.2 Phase 1. Influencing Factors of Small-Scale Sports Events**

The first phase explored the influencing factors in the process of brand building of small-scale sport events and preliminarily discussed the process of brand building of small-scale sports events. The samples of this phase were 15 interviewees with five event organizers, five event referees, and five senior athletes.

The interview content-coding results showed that brand building for small-scale sports events involved event positioning, event awareness, event image, participant feelings, participant judgment, and event resonance. This study regarded event positioning and awareness as antecedents of small-scale sports event building. One needs to establish the event's image in the minds of consumers through marketing methods. After consumers feel and judge the event image, they finally resonate with the event's brand. The interviews ultimately revealed that the branding of a small-scale sports events comprises four steps and six factors. The following explains these six factors.

##### **4.2.1 Antecedents: Event Positioning and Event Awareness**

###### **Event Positioning**

Brand positioning refers to the brand's unique position envisioned by the brand side among the target consumers (Ling, 2008). The organizers who started from "this event should have a clear positioning and what kind of competition it wants

to present to the audience, this competition has a clear competition positioning, such as people-friendly, and then high-end facilities, the characteristics of the event should be prominent.” Other sentences expressed the importance of the positioning of the event. Li said that if an event has a brand, “it should be associated with the distinguishing features or characteristics of the event.” She mentioned that “this event should have a clear positioning and what kind of event you want to present to the audience” is very important. The characteristics of sports events should be prominent. For example, besides competitions, many other activities can reflect the culture of the project so that more audiences can identify with the event culture and cause a resonance. It is essential to have a precise event positioning for the event. For example, anyone can come to participate. So long as everyone is interested, they can participate.

Another example is that the top players in this field have participated in this competition, which can also attract people interested in this project to participate,” Yang Song also believed that “the event must have a certain influence and representation.” He also mentioned that when creating the Jiaozuo International Taijiquan Competition, the event was integrated with national fitness activities and the concept of disseminating traditional Chinese culture, which provided guidance and clear goals for the event. Another manager, Zhang, also expressed her desire to “arouse the interest of participants” by “spreading the event's culture.” When asked about a suggestion for brand building of small-scale sports event, Li suggested that the current small-scale sports events “lack research in the project development process, and ignore the development of local special projects. For example, “they swarmed marathons and bicycle races.” She proposed to “focus on rooting in local characteristics, excavating traditional sports culture, and enhancing the audience's sense of identity.” In building a sports event brand, the position of the event brand determines the orientation of the event and can enhance the recognition of the event. A series of marketing methods should promote the target group and establish an image that can arouse consumers' associations (Chang-zai, 2020; Liping, 2017). The organizers consider even more the event's positioning. The referees paid attention to the event competition itself. As the bearer of the event, the athlete tests whether the event meets the organizer's expectations.

Respondents stressed the importance of positioning the event, believing that the organizers should know what the characteristics of the event are and what kind of event they want to present to the participants. Brand management has established the importance of positioning in the marketing literature (Hooley, Greenley, Fahy, & Cadogan, 2001; Iyer, Davari, Zolfagharian, & Paswan, 2019; Kotler, 2000). When building a small-scale sports event brand, organizers should be clear about what kind of event they want to hold, namely the event positioning.

### **Event Awareness**

From a brand perspective, brand awareness can be understood as whether consumers know a brand or not (K. L. Keller & Moorthi, 2003). The sample population was asked, “How do you understand the brand of a sports event?” Respondents believed that if an event can be called a brand, then it should include concepts such as “influential,” a “logo that can be recognized,” and a “name reflecting the positioning of the event.” Although the respondents did not directly mention the critical term of event awareness, according to brand theory, brand awareness is considered the recall and recognition of products in different situations (Aaker, 1997). Therefore, keywords such as “event name, event logo, and event symbol” can be regarded as the memory and understanding of the event, and are regarded as the event awareness.

### **Recall**

Recall reflects the ability of consumers to retrieve brands from memory under different conditions (Pierre, 2003). According to the organizer, “When we talk about brands, the most intuitive thing is their name and logo.” The name and logo of the event should also be considered, which also affects the event’s image. Usually, “the public is not aware of these sports events,” Yang said. “When the names of these sports events include the name of the region and country like ‘China (region) Competition’ or ‘Shanghai (region) Competition,’ then ordinary people may feel that event sounds great,” according to Yang. The athletes also affirmed the influence of the event’s name and logo. “I think this event’s brand name and logo are very important. For example, if their event is called ‘China (region),’ I feel very excited,” said Dong, a veteran athlete. He has taken part in many different events. Wu

mentioned, “If you are talking about the brand of this event, then my understanding is the name, logo or symbol given to this event.”

The organizers, athletes, and referees reached a consensus on this point. Guo is a referee with over 20 years of experience and the China Jiaozuo International Taijiquan Exchange Competition chief referee. He said, “They must consider the name for a brand. The name is important for organizing a competition. The competition’s branding depends mainly on the name.” “The name of the competition is critical. Like a company that builds a name brand, we hold some name-brand cup competitions,” said Wang, a referee who has taken part in refereeing activities since the early stages of the China Jiaozuo International Taijiquan Exchange Competition. This memory recall is considered a measure suitable for sports brand equity (J. Gladden, 2013).

### **Recognition**

Brand recognition is the ability of consumers to recognize the brand under various conditions (Ekhveh & Darvishi, 2015). Consumers usually identify the sports event brand through the name and logo of the event and can generate a series of associations to enhance their awareness of the event. “As soon as you talk about the Olympic Games, you know what the competition is like and what its logo represents,” Zhang said. Yang replied, “From the first Wenxian Taijiquan Annual Meeting to the China Jiaozuo International Taijiquan Exchange Competition, you can think of the change in the competition’s name. Also, you can think of the venue and specifications of this event.” The participants’ awareness of the event should be enhanced through publicity, and Wang Y believed that “names and mascots are also a type of early publicity.” He also talked about another competition in which he had taken part. “Wenxian County has held a hometown race in recent years, held four times a year. So much so that others didn’t want to come as soon as they heard about the Wenxian event. A good mechanism for the Jiaozuo Taijiquan Competition is that they are held once every two years, and people may think that it will take two years to miss this time to participate in this competition.”

However, organizers also pointed out the problems existing in establishing event recognition. Wang Ys said, “At present, in many events, especially our Taijiquan event, the logos of many events are very similar, and there are indeed



some problems in the characteristics and recognition of the logo.” Brand recognition plays a vital role in sports events, and participants’ awareness of the event determines their loyalty to the event (Ross, 2006).

#### **4.2.2 Establish Event Image**

The brand image reflects the product or service in consumers’ memories and is the perception consumers associate with a product or service (Aaker, 1997; K. L. Keller, 1993). Brand image is an essential factor of sports brand equity based on spectators, and it plays a vital role in sports brand equity (Ross, 2006). Event image refers to the comprehensive brand perception formed by consumers based on consumer experience and event brand information (Xiaoling, 2011; Yun & Rongri, 2019).

Therefore, in a sports event, brand image is a multi-dimensional concept. Consumers’ understanding and experience of the event affected the establishment of the event image in the minds of consumers. The results have shown that the images of competitions, services, facilities, safety, and organization affected consumers’ evaluations of the event brand.

#### **Competitive image**

The competitive image is the basis of the event image, and competitive quality is the embodiment of the core value of sports event services (Guoli, 2014; Yun & Rongri, 2019). “The sports event brand should focus on sports competition or sports service,” Li said. Organizers expressed the significance of the level of athletes, the level of referees, and the setting of competitive events to construct the event image. When asked, “What factors should be included in building the brand of a small-scale sports event?” organizers said, “From our organizers’ point of view, we should also consider the participation of high-level athletes in our small-scale sports event.” Song said that for the China Jiaozuo International Taijiquan Exchange Competition, the current thinking is “how to make high-level domestic teams more involved and attract domestic high-level athletes.” High-level opponents have also stimulated the athletes’ intention to participate in the competition. “For me, I pay attention to the sports level of the competitors.” Wei had repeatedly expressed the importance of “the competitive level of athletes.” Sports events need to improve their professional level further and provide the public with high-standard and high-quality events as far as possible (Wenli, Jie, & Huixuan, 2019).

Referees expressed the importance of the event in the competition itself. Wang believed setting up the project under “reasonable conditions, make the event more popular.” He cited another competition in which he participated, the Hong Kong International Wushu Festival. “This competition is also a mass event, and the age division of the event is exciting. Everyone who participates in the competition has an opportunity to win awards.” Both organizers and referees mentioned the point of “how to set up the project.” According to the characteristics of each place, they set the project up differently. “When you are in Jiaozuo, you can divide Chen’s Taijiquan in great detailed. If they go to Hebei, they can divide Yang’s Taijiquan in great detailed. Moreover, the event in Daqingshan is dominated by pushing hands,” Wang Y said, who is another referee. Moreover, Zhang talked about “In this kind of activity setting, we can also see the cultural atmosphere that this competition wants to create.” The contestants also shared this view. Contestants believed that a reasonable project setting gives them more choices as reflected by their response, “This event has more choices.” Pei, Dong, and several other athletes have raised this point.

Besides the competition, the quality of referees is also an issue that respondents said they would consider. “Event referees do not randomly find people to be referees. They are all official, and only qualified referees are selected,” Wang said. Another referee, Cheng, also believed that “if it can be called a brand event, then the requirements for referees may become more stringent.” Athletes also expressed their need for high-level referees. An athlete who had participated in multiple Taijiquan competitions said, “When I go to take part in the event, if the referees are unfair, it affected my view of this event.” Pei said, “This event’s referees are professional, and they know more about this project than at other similar events.” Competition is the core of sports events, including the overall evaluation of project characteristics, event scale, and competition level (Jia, 2013).

### **Service Image**

The service guarantee is an important factor for the successful execution of sports events (Guoli, 2014; Yun & Rongri, 2019). The referees have a deep understanding of this. Wang Ys pointed out that, “In organizing an event, even if a small examiner makes a mistake in his work, it still affects the mood of the athletes and the whole process of the event.” Pre-competition, “training of the referees and

staff” is very crucial. The referees have a deep understanding of this. Song also mentioned, “We recruited volunteers for each event year” to train volunteers in different positions. The athletes also communicated about the service quality of the event, thinking that from the initial registration of the event, they have a positive or negative impression of it based on the services provided by the event. “I took part in a competition before, and there was a problem with the registration which led to problems in communicating with the competition side. The staff’s attitude was not good, which affected the mood of the competition,” Pei said. Dong also pointed out that, “Compared to other events, this event has better services, including venue traffic and guidance.” Si affirmed the service provided by this event by commenting, “From the reception in the early stages to the weighing during the competition, you do not have to worry about any problems, and the service is better.” Si believed that especially the recording of even a small matter could mainly reflect the level of organization of this event, which is consistent with the vision of the event organizers. In answering the question about the important factors of building the brand of small-scale sports events, referee Wang M also mentioned that in some of the events, he participated. “There is no staff to maintain order at the game site,” which once caused chaos at a competition venue, and such events “cannot be branded.”

Three groups of interviewers have agreed with the view of service quality, and that the service image should become a link worthy of attention in small-scale sports event brand building. The improvement of the service quality can form a positive brand image and enhance the competitiveness of the event (Rui-min & Hui-jun, 2020).

### **Facility Image**

The facility image effectively establishes the brand image of sports events (Yun & Rongri, 2019). The construction of public facilities such as venues, transportation, and accommodation of sports events can affect athletes’ performances and spectators’ experiences. Organizer Li pointed out that “the transportation and accommodation of the stadium are intuitive to the participants” in holding sports events, and “the conditions of the venues are what we have to consider.” For most martial arts competitions nowadays, “almost every event has a professional martial arts carpet, and when the audience sees the specifications of your event, it certainly

improves their enthusiasm.” Zhang said, “Now people are pickier than before.” According to the characteristics of the event, the China Jiaozuo International Taijiquan Competition designed the gymnasium of “Yin and Yang Fish” and it became the new “Taiji Sports Center.” Song pointed out that they established this characteristic venue for “doing a good job in the exchange and dissemination of Taijiquan.” Depending on their work experience, the referees also agreed that the China Jiaozuo International Taijiquan Exchange Competition has excellent advantages in terms of venue facilities. Wang Ym also agreed that in the same type of event, “we can say the facilities and services of this event to be very good.” Professional venues can give participants a good experience and form a good image of the event. Venues and facilities are the basic guarantees for spectators to enjoy the service of the event (Guoli, 2014; Yun & Rongri, 2019).

Besides professional competition venues, the unique scenery of the event’s host city also resonated with organizers, participants, and referees. The China Jiaozuo International Taijiquan competition is not just a sports event. One organizer, Song, proposed that “because we have a well-known tourist attraction like Yuntai Mountain in Jiaozuo, we later combined this competition with tourism” to attract more people to take part. The local landscape features have also become an effective means for other events to attract participants. One of the referees, Guo, in making the same point, mentioned, “I once took part in an event in Huangshan. They also combined it with local tourism in Huangshan.” Another referee, Cheng, also mentioned that “some people might choose to take part in this competition because this place is perfect, but I have not been there; I want to go to this place to play,” which became the motivation for the event participants to choose the event. In the interviews with the athletes, they gave the recognition that, “the scenery of the host city is also something that attracts us” according to Pei’s opinion. “When we go out to compete, we will also consider traveling if there is sufficient time,” Si said. “When I bring my card, I get a free ticket to Yuntai Mountain.” The landscape feature of the venue of this event has been noticed and has attracted the attention of consumers. Therefore, when the organizer wants to establish the event’s image, the venue’s landscape should be considered.

### **Safety Image**

As an environmental factor for the smooth holding of an event, the organizer should also consider the important factor of service safety (Guoli, 2014). Based on the event safety news that has appeared in recent years, the safety of events has become an essential issue for Chinese sports event organizers to consider, and it has also attracted society's attention. Because of the characteristics of Taijiquan itself, the athletes did not express too much concern about it. Participant Pei mentioned that she would have a bad impression of the event by seeing negative safety messages about the event. Organizers and referees have given more consideration to this issue and believe that this is still an important issue that the organizers need to consider. "No matter what kind of event, safety is essential. You should have seen the accident in the event news some time ago. Now our country attaches great importance to the safety of this event from top to bottom," as pointed out by one referee, Guo. Organizer Li also proposed a similar view that "the current process of building a small-scale sports event brand often neglects safety measures to save money. Safety-related accidents occur from time to time." When answering, "What factors affect the brand building of small-scale sports events?" Zhang and Song also said that safety is a special consideration, including prepared emergency plans before each China Jiaozuo International Taijiquan Exchange Competition.

The lack of a safe hosting environment affects the audience's overall evaluation of the quality of other services at the event (Guoli, 2014). Because of the uniqueness of this event, and although the athletes did not frequently mention the feeling of safety and security, the organizers and referees believe this issue deserves attention. Security is a significant part of the smooth running of sports events and can affect the participation experience of participants. Therefore, when establishing the image of the event, the safety image should be considered.

### **Organizational Image**

Organizational image is the public's impression through the evaluation of the event management process (Zhihui et al., 2014). It can be understood that the sport event organizer manages the sport event activities carried out through planning, management, and control, in order to form a subjective impression in the audience's minds (Jian & Yue, 2009). The organizers all mentioned similar words, "normative and standardized." "Now everyone also pays great attention to the sense of the

experience of this competition, and the standard is not standardized,” Zhang said. It shows the organizers’ consideration of the standardization of the event organization. The organizer Wang YS also mentioned an event in which he participated. “There was a problem with the referee’s scoring system, but there was no preparation for the traditional scoring record. This caused a successive player to play for a long time. This situation not only affected the state of the athletes, but also delayed the process of the entire event.” This reflects the impact of the organization’s arrangements on the event, which also affected the participants’ evaluation of the event.

The referees also realized the importance of standardizing the organization. “I have also taken part in some events of non-governmental organizations, and the organization of this event is not very standard and formal,” Guo said. Wang YM offered a comment on a similar situation: “Standardization of the event should also be considered. There are many small-scale sports events that are very irregular.” He also stated that he had taken part in another event of the same type. “Referees are not familiar with the rules. There is no electronic system for scoring and scoring methods, and they used the most primitive means for scoring. There is no staff to maintain order at the scene, which is very irregular. How can it become a brand?” He considers this compared with other similar events by observing, “The organization of this competition is also more standardized.” Athletes also conveyed their views on how the event organization felt, and Si said that the reasonable process in the arrangement of the event organization was extremely meaningful to them. He talked about one of his competition experiences in noting, “They concentrated on the award session on the last day of the event, and you could not leave first when you finished your competitive event. We need to wait until the end of the event to waste our time and money.” It shows that the reasonable arrangement of the event by the event organization affects the overall evaluation of the event by the participants.

Sports event organizers should think about public preferences. Through the development of sports events, efforts are made to create an optimistic social image in many aspects, such as functional positioning, management level, service awareness, and talent use, in order to achieve the expectation of enhancing the influence of event organizations (Wenli et al., 2019; Yufeng & Yue, 2007).

### 4.2.3 Responses: Participate judgement and Participant Feelings

#### Participant Feelings

Participant feelings are the perceptual response of participants to the perception and evaluation of the event (K. L. Keller, 2001a; Sandhe, 2016). Consumers evaluated their feelings about the brand, influencing their brand choice. The referee Wang Q said, “In this kind of mass event, the participants are more concerned with a sense of participation and satisfaction.” Through a series of activities, the organizers hope to increase the audience's participation and attention. Li proposed that, “The extensive participation and attention of the public is also a reflection of the value of your brand.” The Jiaozuo International Taijiquan competition organizes activities such as “walking into the masses” and “master performances” to allow more people to get close to our activities, so that they can understand Taijiquan and have more of a sense of participation and recognition for this project. Yang offered the point that organizers need to achieve the goal of “attracting more audiences to identify with this culture and arouse resonance.” For a similar small-scale sports event, referee Wang Q also believed that “there may not be prize money, but there will be certificate medals that allow participants to gain a sense of self-identity, self-satisfaction, and feel happy to take part in these activities.” “If you take part in this competition and get a small award, you will receive self-satisfaction,” Referee Cheng mentioned, echoing the same view.

The athletes confirmed the emotional expression. Dong said, “From this event, I can also see many folk masters who have practiced thoroughly. It feels very meaningful and interesting.” From the competition, the athletes also communicated that, “I can gain a feeling of self-confidence and self-esteem from participating in this competition.” Some athletes did not directly mention the fun and self-esteem brought to them by the competition, but believed that “after participating in the competition, you can see the level of other people, and see your strengths and weaknesses, and you can improve yourself.” The emotions gained in the event were affirmed. Sports events strengthen the willingness and behavior of brand loyalty by establishing emotions with participants (Z. Yun & Rongri, 2019).

#### Participate judgement

The brand judgment reflects consumers' rational response to the brand (K. L. Keller, 2001a). Si cited that when he takes part in an event, "it depends on the gold content of the event, such as the provincial competition or this annual meeting in Jiaozuo. These certificates still have some influence," and in judging the value of the competition. Wei pointed out that when he makes choices about an event, he critiques the "athletic level of the contestants and the reputation of the event." Further, other athletes such as Dong, Si, and Pei, also mentioned the "fairness of the referees." The judgment on these factors influences their choices. When the athletes mentioned the competition service and the level of competition, they have already evaluated the competition. The referee, Wang Ym, proposed that "there are many small-scale sports events that are very irregular." They also commented on the organization of the event.

Participants made various associations about the event, established by their experiences and making judgments about the event. This judgment represents the participant's personal opinions on the event (Adrian, 2014b; Márkus & Fallmyr, 2014) which affected the participants' choice of the event. Participants made countless judgments about all previous images and associations of the event based on their own participation experience, and this judgment affected their choices (Gordon & James, 2017).

#### **4.2.4 Event Positioning and Event Awareness to Event Image**

Brand positioning is to establish an image that occupies the mental model of consumers (Liping, 2017). Regarding the China Jiaozuo International Taijiquan Exchange Competition, "the earliest positioning is this Taijiquan exchange activity," Song replied. With the development and expansion of the event activities, "we expanded it to sports tourism, and finally to economic and trade activities. The value-added service function of the event was expanded." It shows that the positioning and orientation of the event point out the direction for the development of the event. Wang Ys also mentioned that building a sports event brand is a complicated process by commenting, "You need to pay attention to the positioning of this event." The organizer also designed various activities outside the competition according to the needs of the event. Yang said, "Going into the crowd, the masters perform these activities and the organizers desire to let more people have close contact with our event so that they can understand Taijiquan. These activities have more of a sense of



participation and identity.” Consumers need to understand a brand to establish a series of connections, and brand positioning is the basis for establishing a brand image (Lu, 2017; Sürücü et al., 2019).

When consumers choose a brand, the first thing that comes to mind is the brand name or logo that can show brand awareness in memory (Macdonald & Sharp, 2000). Organizers consider that when building the brand of small-scale sports events, and Wang Ys answered, “You should embody your logo in all aspects of the event, and the logo is the focus of the brand because the logo is visible. If you don’t know what this thing is, how can you form an impression of it?” Yang also described that which showed the significance of brand identity. Li proposed that “you first have a clear identity,” and then participants can combine other activities to get an impression of this event. The brand image reflects consumers’ memories of products or services (K. L. Keller, 1993). Athletes Pei and Dong also said that when choosing to participate in an event, they first considered the awareness of the event: “Awareness also affects the image of the event in my mind.” Once consumers have identified a brand, they can form the meaning and image of the brand in their minds through a series of associations (Sürücü et al., 2019). In creating brand equity, brand awareness precedes brand association and image (D.A. Aaker, 1991; Washburn & Plank, 2002).

#### **4.2.5 Event Image to Participate judgement and Participant Feelings**

Consumers evaluated their perceptions and feelings about the brand (Sultan et al., 2019). In the interview, the organizer stated that it was imperative to let everyone feel the Taiji culture from the Jiaozuo International Taijiquan Exchange Competition. Besides the general event, they also organized “Taiji Exhibition, Masters Teaching Taiji Activities.” According to Li, this was to let participants feel the atmosphere of different events and “make the participants very satisfied.” The organizer, Song, also stated that to create a comfortable environment for participants, “we recruit numerous volunteers for training during each competition, including translation, guides, accommodation assistance, stadiums, awards, and others,” and to shape the image of the event. “We have done a great amount of work in establishing the professionalism of venues and facilities, integration with urban culture, and the comprehensive and inclusive settings of the competition systems.” He also said that some contestants “expressed thanks to the organizing committee by leaving us some

letters from volunteers” after the competition. These reflected the participants’ affirmation of the event experience. An athlete, Wei, also said that the “competition level” affected his choice of events. Another athlete, Si, emphatically mentioned the event process arrangements and standardized venue guidance arrangements. For example, “if the inspectors can perform this roll call particularly well,” he said, “the athletes enter the field and then to the competition. If the organizers can make reasonable arrangements at this stage, I will have a good evaluation of this event.” In addition, Dong said that the China Jiaozuo International Taijiquan Exchange Competition has done a good job in “traffic, venue, and guidance,” and the event services also affected her perception and evaluation of the event. Pei also mentioned an event where a major safety incident occurred recently. She said that “some negative news such as recent safety issues” would affect her evaluation of this event.

Creating, maintaining, and expanding a brand image is especially important for sporting events with a powerful experiential nature. When sports marketers understand what creates brand associations or which association factors influence a brand, they can develop marketing strategies to create new, favorable, brand associations and reinforce existing, positive, brand associations. This is because participants’ judgments are based on the image and association of the event which influenced their choices (James M. Gladden & Funk, 2002; Gordon & James, 2017; M.Gladden & C.Funk, 2001).

#### **4.2.6 Consequence: Resonance**

In sports events, the participants’ perceptions and evaluations of the event image reflect the participants’ value appeal and willingness to participate in the event (Tao, 2015). After the participants comprehend the event, they psychologically build up their awareness of the event and establish the event image. Through a series of emotional judgments and evaluations of the event image generated, the connection with the event was finally established.

When consumers are satisfied with a brand’s product or service, repeat purchases of that product will increase. In the interview with the athletes, the athlete, Wei, said that when he is more recognized for taking part in the event, he “will choose to take part repeatedly.” Some athletes stated they had taken part in the event at least three times, indirectly showing repeated participation in the event. “I took part and felt

that this experience was very good, thrilling, and the process enjoyable. I will be willing to come next time.” Wu also expressed his willingness to take part in the event repeatedly.

Simple repetitive behavior may be affected by problems such as a monopoly and lack of substitutes. Besides repetitive behavior, it should also reflect a deep commitment to the brand (Oliver, 1999). When the participants agreed with the event, Pei said, “If this event is fantastic, I will encourage the persons around me to take part, and will also encourage some of my students take part.” I learned from the interview that Dong and Si also led students to take part in the event, showing a deep commitment to the event. Si also mentioned, “For example, if the China Jiaozuo International Taijiquan Exchange Competition was held, we would have thought that this competition was going to be held a long time ago. I would have to prepare for the annual meeting and consider how to train well.” It indicated that one attaches great importance to the event psychologically. Participation via the behavior of consumers about the consumption of goods involves reading relevant information, sharing information and experience, and other interactions (Madupu & Cooley, 2010). When asked “What impact would it have on you if you recognized that this was an event brand?” the athletes confirmed their commitment to take part in the event. Dong told the researcher, “If I recognize this competition, I will also be willing to pay attention to some of its information.” Wei also said that when he recognized an event, he would be “willing to pay continuous attention to it.” Dong mentioned she was also willing to take part in some other activities, and Pei also affirmed that “I would also be willing to take part in some of his online and offline activities.” Further, through the understanding of athletes, when they take part in the event, they actively establish WeChat groups of participants and establish common contacts. Therefore, although the athletes did not explicitly mention the words “attitude attachment” or “community,” the brand building theory as to the understanding of athletes’ participation behavior deems that “attitude attachment” and “community” are still part of the results of event resonance. The reason is that participation in the behavior of consumers about the consumption of goods includes reading relevant information, sharing information and experience, and other interactive behaviors (Madupu & Coole, 2010).

### 4.3 Phase 2. The Process for Brand Building of Small-Scale Sports Events

This study proposed a small-scale sports event, brand-building model; and used path analysis to test the relationship between various factors in the process of small-scale sports event brand building. This study conducted a questionnaire survey on 681 participants who took part in or watched the China Jiaozuo International Taijiquan Exchange Competition, and ultimately left 562 responses after screening. The results consisted of three parts in this phase. The first part shows the demographic characteristics. The second part shows the normality test results. Finally, the third part tested the proposed models, including the measuring model and structural model.

#### 4.3.1 Demographics Characteristics

There were 562 questionnaires retained for the research. Due to the preconditions, only those who selected “yes” in the screening question “Have you participated in or watched the China Jiaozuo International Taijiquan Competition?” were retained. Items with an answer time of fewer than 180 seconds, the same IP, and 80% of the answers with the same option were excluded. It gave the detailed demographic information found in Table 11.

Table 11 Demographic Information (N=562).

	Variables	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>Gander</b>	1=Male	309	55	55	1.45	0.498
	2=Female	253	45	100		
	Total	562	100	100		
<b>Age</b>	1=17 and blow	2	0.4	0.4	37.31	11.441
	2=18-25	72	12.8	13.2		
	3=26-30	144	25.6	38.8		
	4=31-40	138	24.6	63.3		
	5=41-50	106	18.9	82.2		
	6=51-60	90	16	98.2		

Table 11 Continued.

Variables	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation
7=61 and more	10	1.8	100		
Total	562	100	100		
<b>Education</b>					
1=Primary and below		3	0.5	0.5	
2=Junior high school		12	2.1	2.7	
3=Technical secondary school		27	4.8	7.5	
4=High school		64	11.4	18.9	5.44
5=Junior college		101	18	36.8	1.17
6=Bachelor		309	55	91.8	
7=Master		35	6.2	98	
8=Doctor		11	2	100	
Total		562	100	100	
<b>Income (yuan)</b>					
1=0-3000		214	38.1	38.1	
2=3001-5000		128	22.8	60.9	
3=5001-7000		121	21.5	82.4	2.25
4=7001-9000		62	11	93.4	1.253
5=9001 and more		37	6.6	100	
Total		562	100	100	
<b>Times</b>					
1=1 time		217	38.6	38.6	
2= 2 times		149	26.5	65.1	
3= 3 times		74	13.2	78.3	2.18
4= 4 times or more		122	21.7	100	1.165
Total		562	100	100	

From Table 11, the results showed that the majority of the total 562 responders were male (55.0%) and the minority female at 45.0%. The average age of the respondents was 37.31 years old, and the oldest age was 68 years old. The age range was 16-68. Of the total respondents, 38.4% were ages 18-30. Respondents with the highest level of education were those with a doctoral degree (2.0%), 55.0% had a bachelor's degree, and 6.2% had a master's degree. The overall education level was relatively high. Of the respondents, 21.7% said that they had participated or watched

the sports event four or more times, and 38.6% had only participated or watched once. Respondents with a monthly income of \$0-445 US (0-3,000RMB) accounted for 38.1%, which may be related to the proportion of students in the interviewees. Only 6.6% of the respondents stated that their monthly income reached 9,000 yuan or more.

#### 4.3.2 Normality test

SPSS analysis results showed that the data skewness range was -0.536-0.06, and the kurtosis range was -0.633- -0.038. The normal distribution of the data is judged by checking the kurtosis and skewness of the data before model analysis. When the skewness and kurtosis values are between  $\pm 1.96$ , it normally indicates the data distribution is at the level of 0.05, and  $\pm 2.58$  means the data is normally distributed at the level of 0.01. No values above or below this range show that the data conform to a normal distribution and passes the normal test (see table 12).

Table 12 Normality test.

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
<b>BR1</b>	3.31	.949	-.042	-.286	<b>F1</b>	3.49	1.005	-.330	-.406
<b>BR2</b>	3.23	1.012	-.039	-.454	<b>F2</b>	3.45	1.023	-.236	-.509
<b>BR3</b>	3.12	1.017	.007	-.522	<b>F3</b>	3.40	.998	-.424	-.164
<b>BRE1</b>	3.33	1.018	-.228	-.305	<b>F4</b>	3.51	.969	-.328	-.325
<b>BRE2</b>	3.75	1.034	-.508	-.386	<b>J1</b>	3.68	.950	-.536	-.041
<b>BP1</b>	3.22	1.001	-.090	-.371	<b>J2</b>	3.51	.945	-.212	-.404
<b>BP2</b>	3.14	1.002	-.025	-.634	<b>J3</b>	3.40	.950	-.248	-.216
<b>BP3</b>	3.09	1.051	-.014	-.484	<b>J4</b>	3.53	.957	-.278	-.393
<b>BP4</b>	3.15	.965	-.020	-.259	<b>BL1</b>	3.60	.982	-.451	-.118
<b>BP5</b>	3.29	1.028	-.112	-.498	<b>BL2</b>	3.48	1.031	-.325	-.444
<b>CI1</b>	3.38	.944	-.072	-.447	<b>BL3</b>	3.62	.984	-.387	-.324
<b>CI2</b>	3.40	.946	-.220	-.286	<b>AL1</b>	3.57	1.036	-.452	-.333
<b>CI3</b>	3.38	.917	-.163	-.228	<b>AL2</b>	3.27	1.056	-.199	-.498
<b>CI4</b>	3.36	.925	-.130	-.278	<b>AL3</b>	3.48	.992	-.362	-.259
<b>CI5</b>	3.42	.948	-.211	-.263	<b>A1</b>	3.44	1.024	-.311	-.465
<b>SI1</b>	3.44	1.052	-.320	-.463	<b>A2</b>	3.44	.992	-.255	-.400
<b>SI2</b>	3.48	1.019	-.303	-.580	<b>A3</b>	3.34	.992	-.183	-.265
<b>SI3</b>	3.53	1.012	-.368	-.352	<b>A4</b>	3.36	1.025	-.201	-.408
<b>FI1</b>	3.48	.940	-.225	-.526	<b>C1</b>	3.46	.960	-.381	-.208

Table 12 Continued.

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
<b>FI2</b>	3.41	.929	-.144	-.417	<b>C2</b>	3.43	1.027	-.209	-.551
<b>FI3</b>	3.50	.945	-.217	-.519	<b>C3</b>	3.36	1.018	-.201	-.566
<b>FI4</b>	3.46	.915	-.156	-.353	<b>C4</b>	3.48	.961	-.187	-.460
<b>FI5</b>	3.45	.901	-.267	-.176	<b>EN1</b>	3.65	1.003	-.479	-.222
<b>SF1</b>	3.48	1.015	-.331	-.309	<b>EN2</b>	3.54	.971	-.413	-.229
<b>SF2</b>	3.51	.970	-.346	-.273	<b>EN3</b>	3.53	.977	-.475	-.127
<b>SF3</b>	3.61	.938	-.400	-.176	<b>EN4</b>	3.48	.992	-.313	-.258
<b>OG1</b>	3.45	.949	-.275	-.282					
<b>OG2</b>	3.51	.944	-.209	-.347					
<b>OG3</b>	3.54	.972	-.327	-.349					

### 4.3.3 Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

Structural equation modeling is mainly used to analyze the relationship between each variable. Usually, it includes two models, a measurement, and a structural model. The first step is to use confirmatory factor analysis to measure the proposed model. The purpose of CFA is to apply Keller's brand building theory to sports events and analyze whether the factors and scales are consistent with previous research.

#### Measurement Model Testing

The CFA was performed as previously described. The purpose of CFA was to apply Keller's brand-building theory to the field of sports events, and to analyze whether the factors and scales were consistent with previous studies. According to the theory and the results of the first research phase, the model has highly correlated dimensions. A first-order factor CFA model was constructed for event awareness, event image and event resonance, and AMOS23 was used to output the model.

The results in Figure 11 show that the recall and recognition normalization factor loadings range from 0.70 to 0.85, both exceeding 0.6. The CR were 0.8205 (recall) and 0.753 (recognition), respectively, greater than 0.7. The AVE were 0.604 (recall) and 0.606 (recognition), respectively, greater than 0.5. The recall and recognition were highly correlated, with a correlation coefficient of 0.75, suggesting that there may be a higher-level factor structure (see Figure 11), so the higher-order factor is named event awareness.

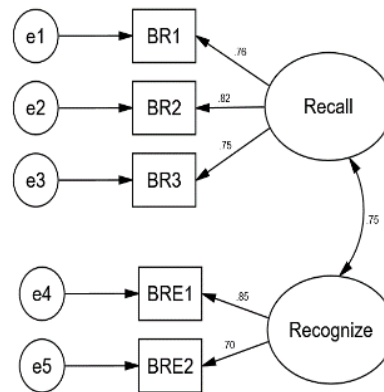


Figure 10 Event Awareness First-Order Confirmatory Factor Model Standardized Estimates Results.

Competition, service, facility, safety, and organizational image standardized factor loading from 0.748 to 0.894(see figure 12). CR from 0.842 to 0.914 (competition image:0.885, service image:0.842, facility image:0.914, safety image:0.863, organizational image:0.909). AVE ranges from 0.605 to 0.769 (competition image:0.605, service image:0.641, facility image:0.681, safety image:0.678, organizational image:0.769). Furthermore, the correlation coefficient among the five latent variables is not small (0.53-0.70), so the higher-order factor is named event image.

The standardization factors loading range for behavior loyalty, attitude loyalty, attachment, community, and engagement is from 0.809 to 0.898 (see figure 13). The CR range is from 0.884 to 0.915 (behavior loyalty:0.884, attitude loyalty:0.896, attachment:0.910, community:0.915, engagement:0.910), and the AVE range is from 0.716 to 0.742 (behavior loyalty:0.717, attitude loyalty:0.742, attachment:0.717, community:0.728, engagement:0.716). The correlation coefficient between the five latent variables is 0.61-0.80, so the higher-order factor is named resonance.

According to the theory and the results of the first-order CFA analysis, it is suggested that it may have a higher-level factor structure and construct the second-order CFA model of the brand construction model of small-scale sports events. The final model is shown in figure 14.



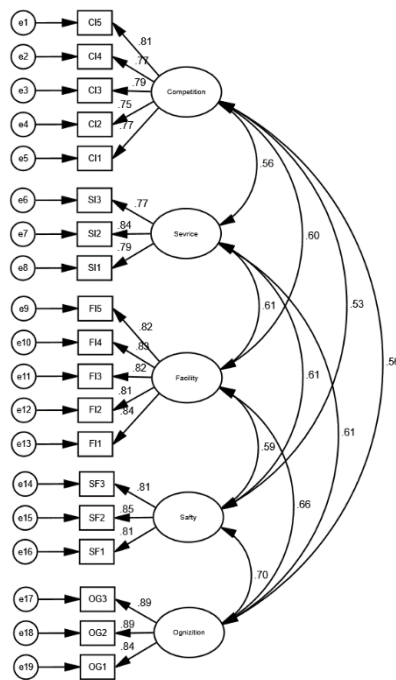


Figure 11 Event Image First-Order Confirmatory Factor Model Standardized Estimates Results

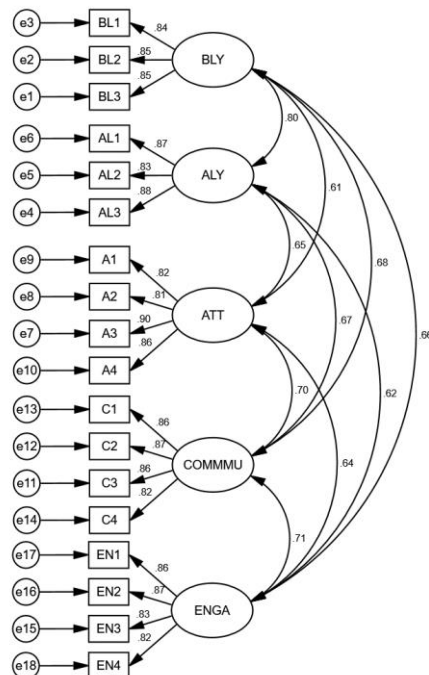


Figure 12 Resonance First-Order Confirmatory Factor Model Standardized Estimates Results.



Figure 13 divides the brand building of the small-scale sports event model into four dimensions, 6 factors, and 15 categories. Awareness (recall, recognition) and positioning in the first dimension are considered to increase participants' understanding of the event. Event image (competitive image, service image, facility image, safety image, and organization image) constitute the second dimension, which affects the participants' evaluations of the event. The third dimension is that the responses of the participant is divided into feelings and judgment from both rational and perceptual aspects. Eventually, customers acquire event resonance (behavior loyalty, attitude loyalty, event attachment, event community, and event engagement) in relationship to the event. Before further analysis, it is necessary to conduct an analysis of measurement model fit, composite reliability, convergent validity, and discriminative validity.

#### Model Fit

The fitting index provided the most basic indication of the degree of fit between the proposed theory and the data. Initial model fit results revealed  $\chi^2/df=1.508$ , RMSEA=0.03, CFI=0.966, NFI=0.905, NNFI=0.964, the detail shown in table 13.

Table 13 Goodness-of-Fit Indices of Initial Measurement Model.

<b>Indices</b>	<b>Initial</b>	<b>Accept Value</b>
$\chi^2/df$	1.508	<3 (Kline, 2005)
RMSEA	0.030	<0.07 (Steiger, 2007)
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	0.882	$\geq 0.90$ (Hair, Tatham, Anderson, & Black, 2006)
Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI)	0.870	$\geq 0.80$ (Marsh et al., 1998)
Root Mean Square Residuals (RMR)	0.032	<0.05 (McDonald & Ho, 2002)
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.905	$\geq 0.90$ (J. Hair et al., 2006)
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI; Tucker-Lewis index)	0.964	$\geq 0.90$ (Bentler & Bonett, 1980)
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.966	$\geq 0.90$ (Bentler, 1990)
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	0.966	$\geq 0.90$ (Bollen, 1989)

In addition, standardized factor loadings were examined to see if there were ways to improve the model fit. Table 13 shows the standardized factor loadings for the initial model.

Table 14 Standard Factor Loadings of Initial Measurement Model.

<b>Path</b>		<b>Loadings</b>	<b>Path</b>		<b>Loadings</b>
EAW	Recall	0.857		FI1	0.843
	Recognize	0.869		FI2	0.807
EIM	Competition	0.703	Facility	FI3	0.823
	Service	0.751		FI4	0.831
	Facility	0.802		FI5	0.822
	Safety	0.789		SF1	0.814
	Organization	0.833	Safety	SF2	0.851
Resonance	Engagement	0.796		SF3	0.805
	Community	0.844		OG1	0.845
	Attachment	0.788	Organization	OG2	0.893
	Attitude	0.834		OG3	0.893
	Behavior	0.846		F1	0.825
Recall	BR1	0.760	Feeling	F2	0.785
	BR2	0.814		F3	0.857
	BR3	0.752		F4	0.825
Positioning	BP1	0.732		J1	0.784
	BP2	0.818	Judgement	J2	0.824
	BP3	0.490		J3	0.754
	BP4	0.819		J4	0.836
	BP5	0.785		BL1	0.843
Recognize	BRE1	0.856	Behavior	BL2	0.852
	BRE2	0.699		BL3	0.848
Competition	CI1	0.766		AL1	0.874
	CI2	0.748	Attitude	AL2	0.825
	CI3	0.793		AL3	0.884
	CI4	0.770	Attachment	A1	0.818
	CI5	0.811		A2	0.810
Service	SI1	0.784	Attachment	A3	0.898
	SI2	0.846		A4	0.860
	SI3	0.770			
	En1	0.864		C1	0.858
	En2	0.871		C2	0.865
Engagement	En3	0.829	Community	C3	0.863
	En4	0.821		C4	0.826

The results of Table 14 show that the standardized factor loading range was between 0.490 and 0.898; and a factor loading of less than 0.6 (BP3) was deleted. Table 15 shows the detailed goodness-of-fit indices for the Re-specified model.

Table 15 Goodness-of-Fit Indices of Re-Specified Measurement Model.

Indices	Re-Specified	Accept Value
$\chi^2/df$	1.523	<3 (Kline, 2005)
RMSEA	0.032	<0.07 (Steiger, 2007)
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	0.883	$\geq 0.90$ (Hair, Tatham, Anderson, & Black, 2006)
Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI)	0.871	$\geq 0.80$ (Marsh, Balla, & McDonald, 1998)
Root Mean Square Residuals (RMR)	0.031	<0.05 (McDonala, Moon-Ho, 2002)
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.907	$\geq 0.90$ (Hair et al., 2006) <sup>5</sup>
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI; Tucker-Lewis index)	0.964	$\geq 0.90$ (Bentler & Bonett, 1980)
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.966	$\geq 0.90$ (Bentler, 1990)
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	0.966	$\geq 0.90$ (Bollen, 1989)

The results show that the goodness-of-fit result was reasonable. The CFA results show that the measurement model met the recommended threshold. The ratio of  $\chi^2/df$  ( $2055.655/1350=1.523$ ) was less than 3. RMSEA was 0.032, which met the standard of less than 0.07 for acceptable fitting. Acceptable models have  $\chi^2/df \leq 3$ ,  $AGFI \geq .90$ ,  $RMR \leq 0.05$ ,  $RMSEA \leq 0.07$ , CFI and NNFI greater than 0.90.

#### Reliability and Validity

The reliability of the model was tested by the factor loading, composite reliability (CR) value and Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The factor loading was significant at the 0.05 level. For the impact on the awareness of the event, the model

factor loading ranged from 0.855 to 0.871. The event positioning ranged from 0.732 to 0.819. The event image ranged from 0.704 to 0.832. The participant feelings ranged from 0.783 to 0.856, while the participant judgment ranged from 0.755 to 0.835, and the event resonance ranged from 0.788 to 0.844, all reaching or exceeding 0.6 (Kline, 2005). Consequently, the factors met the conditions. Table 16 shows the model's standardized factor loading, composite reliability (CR), average variance extraction value (AVE), and Cronbach's alpha for each structure.

Table 16 Estimate, CR, AVE, and Cronbach's Alpha of Measurement Model after Re-Specification.

		Estimate	AVE	CR	Cronbach's alpha
Event Awareness	Recall	0.856	0.746	0.854	0.839
	Recognize	0.871			
	Competition	0.703			
	Service	0.751			
Event Image	Facility	0.802	0.661	0.907	0.938
	Safety	0.789			
	Organization	0.833			
	Engagement	0.796			
	Community	0.844			
Event Resonance	Attachment	0.788	0.675	0.912	0.952
	Attitude	0.834			
	Behavior	0.845			
	BR1	0.760			
Recall	BR2	0.814	0.602	0.819	0.816
	BR3	0.752			

Table 16 Continued.

		Estimate	AVE	CR	Cronbach's alpha
Recognize	BRE1	0.855	0.611	0.756	0.749
	BRE2	0.700			
Positioning	BP1	0.732	0.623	0.869	0.868
	BP2	0.817			
	BP4	0.817			
	BP5	0.789			
	BP5	0.789			
Competition	CI1	0.767	0.606	0.885	0.884
	CI2	0.748			
	CI3	0.793			
	CI4	0.770			
	CI5	0.811			
Service	SI1	0.784	0.641	0.843	0.842
	SI2	0.846			
	SI3	0.770			
Facility	FI1	0.843	0.681	0.914	0.914
	FI2	0.807			
	FI3	0.823			
	FI4	0.831			
	FI5	0.822			
Safety	SF1	0.814	0.678	0.863	0.862
	SF2	0.851			
	SF3	0.805			
Organization	OG1	0.845	0.678	0.863	0.908
	OG2	0.893			
	OG3	0.893			
Feeling	F1	0.825	0.678	0.894	0.893
	F2	0.785			
	F3	0.857			
	F4	0.825			

Table 16 Continued.

		Estimate	AVE	CR	Cronbach's alpha
Judgement	J1	0.784			
	J2	0.824			
	J3	0.754		0.640	0.877
	J4	0.836			0.876
Behavior	BL1	0.843			
	BL2	0.852		0.719	0.885
	BL3	0.848			0.884
Attitude	AL1	0.874			
	AL2	0.825		0.742	0.896
	AL3	0.884			0.894
Attachment	A1	0.818			
	A2	0.81			
	A3	0.898		0.718	0.910
	A4	0.86			0.910
Community	C1	0.858			
	C2	0.865			
	C3	0.863		0.728	0.915
	C4	0.826			0.914
Engagement	En1	0.864			
	En2	0.871			
	En3	0.829		0.717	0.910
	En4	0.821			0.910

**Note: Estimate=factor loading, CR = composite reliability, AVE = average variance extracted**

The result of table 16 has shown that event awareness AVE=0.746, CR=0.854, Cronbach's alpha=0.839. In event positioning, AVE=0.623, CR= 0.869, Cronbach's alpha=0.868. For the event image, AVE=0.661, CR= 0.907, Cronbach's



alpha=0.938. As to event feeling, AVE=0.678, CR=0.894, Cronbach's alpha=0.893. Participate judgement showed that AVE= 0.640, CR= 0.877, Cronbach's alpha=0.876. Event resonance measured as AVE=0.675, CR= 0.912, Cronbach's alpha=0.952.

Event awareness included event recall (AVE=0.602, C.R.= 0.819, Cronbach's alpha=0.816) as well as event recognition (AVE=0.611, C.R.= 0.756, Cronbach's alpha=0.749). The event image included competitive image (AVE=0.606, CR= 0.885, Cronbach's alpha=0.884), service image (AVE=0.641, CR= 0.843, Cronbach's alpha=0.842), facility image (AVE=0.681, CR= 0.914, Cronbach's alpha=0.914), safety image (AVE=0.678, CR= 0.863, Cronbach's alpha=0.862) and organizational image (AVE=0.768, CR= 0.894, Cronbach's alpha=0.893). Event resonance included behavioral loyalty (AVE=0.719, CR = 0.885, Cronbach's alpha=0.884), attitudinal loyalty (AVE=0.742, CR= 0.896, Cronbach's alpha=0.894), attachment (AVE=0.718, CR= 0.910, Cronbach's alpha=0.910), community (AVE=0.728, CR=0.915, Cronbach's alpha=0.914) and event engagement (AVE=0.717, CR= 0.910, Cronbach's alpha=0.910). CR was between 0.756 and 0.915, and the Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.749 to 0.952, all higher than 0.7. It showed that the reliability was reasonable. The AVE of each latent variable also met a standard higher than 0.5. It showed that the convergent validity was reasonable.

Discriminant validity was determined by comparing the correlation coefficient between each factor with the square root of AVE. Table 17 shows discriminative validity.



Table 17 Discriminant Validity of Measurement Model.

	Event Awareness	Positioning	Event Image	Feeling	Judgement	Resonance
Event Awareness	0.746					
Positioning	0.463***	0.623				
Event Image	0.341***	0.344***	0.661			
Feeling	0.36***	0.202***	0.413***	0.678		
Judgement	0.371***	0.245***	0.448***	0.433***	0.640	
Resonance	0.349***	0.294***	0.477***	0.416***	0.476***	0.675
AVE Sqr	0.864	0.789	0.813	0.823	0.800	0.822

The diagonal values represent AVE.

\*\*\* Discriminant Validity significant at  $p < .001$ .

The result of Table 17 shows that event awareness, event positioning, event image, participant feelings, participant judgment, and event resonance all have a significant correlation ( $P < 0.001$ ). In addition, the absolute value of the correlation coefficient was less than 0.5, and all were less than the square root of the corresponding AVE, indicating that there was a correlation between the latent variables. A certain degree of correlation and a certain degree of discrimination between each factor indicated that the discriminant validity of the scale data was reasonable.

### Structure Model Testing

This study used a structural model to analyze the relationship between various factors in the process of brand building of small-scale sports events. Models were tested using the same goodness-of-fit criteria as the measurement models (James, Mulaik, & Brett, 1992; Anderson, J. R., & Gerbing, 1988). Indirect effects were estimated using the bootstrap method (Wen et al., 2010). The mediating effect of event image between event awareness, participant feeling, and participant judgment was tested. Further, there was a mediating effect of participant feelings and participant judgment between event image and event resonance.

### Model Fit

The overall fitting and structural parameter estimation of the proposed model were analyzed to test the size, direction, and statistical significance of the proposed model path (J. Hair et al., 2006). Model results  $\chi^2/df=1.596$ , GFI=0.877, RMSEA=0.033, CFI=0.962, NNFI=0.959, in the overall model fitting was reasonable. Figure 15 shows the structural model, and table 18 shows the goodness-of-fit of the structural model.

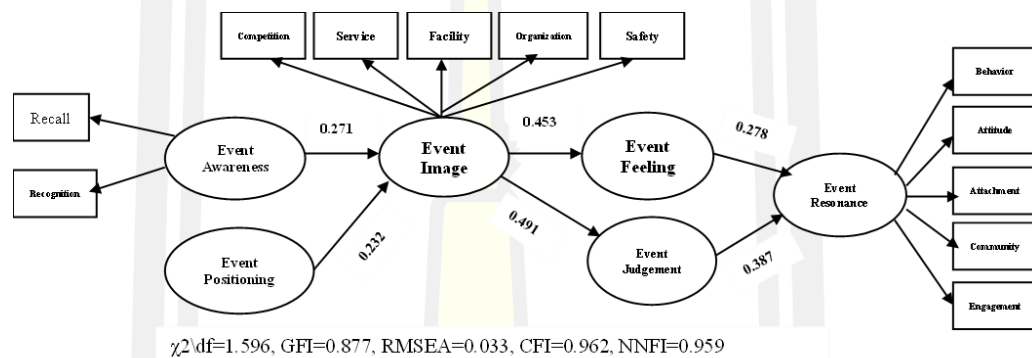


Figure 14 Structure Model of Small-Scale Sports Event Brand-Building Model

Table 18 Goodness-of-Fit Indices of Structure Model

Indices	Structure Model	Accept Value
$\chi^2/df$	1.596	<3 (Kline, 2005)
RMSEA	0.033	<0.07 (Steiger, 2007)
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	0.876	$\geq 0.90$ (Hair, Tatham, Anderson, & Black, 2006)
Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI)	0.865	$\geq 0.80$ (Marsh, Balla, & McDonald, 1998)
Root Mean Square Residuals (RMR)	0.063	<0.05 (McDonala, Moon-Ho, 2002)
Normed Fit Index	0.902	$\geq 0.90$ (Hair et al., 2006)5
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI; Tucker-Lewis index)	0.959	$\geq 0.90$ (Bentler & Bonett, 1980)
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.961	$\geq 0.90$ (Bentler, 1990)
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	0.961	$\geq 0.90$ (Bollen, 1989)

The results show that the model is still not ideal, and considering the model's complexity, the model is packaged. The model fitting results after packing are shown in Table 19.

Table 19 Goodness-of-Fit Indices of Packaging Model.

Indices	Packaging Model	Accept Value
$\chi^2/df$	1.969	< 3 (Kline, 2005)
RMSEA	0.041	< 0.07 (Steiger, 2007)
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	0.924	$\geq 0.90$ (Hair, Tatham, Anderson, & Black, 2006)
Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI)	0.909	$\geq 0.80$ (Marsh, Balla, & McDonald, 1998)
Root Mean Square Residuals (RMR)	0.067	< 0.05 (McDonala, Moon-Ho, 2002)
Normed Fit Index	0.925	$\geq 0.90$ (Hair et al., 2006) <sup>5</sup>
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI; Tucker-Lewis index)	0.957	$\geq 0.90$ (Bentler & Bonett, 1980)
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.962	$\geq 0.90$ (Bentler, 1990)
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	0.962	$\geq 0.90$ (Bollen, 1989)

The results from Table 19 shows that the model fitting was significantly improved after packaging. In packaging the model results  $\chi^2/df=1.969$ , GFI=0.924, CFI=0.962, NNFI=0.957, the overall model fitting was reasonable.

#### Path Analysis

The path results showed that the path from event awareness towards event image (Estimate= 0.271,  $p < 0.001$ ) was significant, and the path event positioning towards event image (Estimate = 0.232,  $p < 0.001$ ) was also significant. It shows that the participants have a strong awareness of the event brand. Also, participants who understand the event better may have more associations with the event, thus forming the image of the event in their minds. In particular, event awareness can have a remarkable impact on event image. This shows the necessity of enhancing participants' awareness of the event before establishing the event image.

The path event image towards participant feelings (Estimate = 0.453,  $p < 0.001$ ) and the path were significant. Further, the path event image towards participant judgment (Estimate = 0.491,  $p < 0.001$ ), path was also significant. It shows that the event image has a direct impact on the emotional reaction of the event and the evaluation of the event. Participants who have a higher evaluation of the event image may have a more positive emotional response to the event and a higher judgment of the event. Participants build up the image of the event through the experience of the event, thereby generating positive or negative emotional reactions and overall evaluation of the event. The event image is an important factor in the emotional response and rational evaluation of participants.

Table 20 Path analysis of Structural Model

Path	Unstandardized Estimate	Standardized Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Event Awareness→ Event Image	0.227	0.271	0.052	4.341	**
Positioning→ Event Image	0.162	0.232	0.039	4.124	**
Event Image→ Feeling	0.731	0.453	0.083	8.821	**
Event Image→ Judgement	0.712	0.491	0.077	9.261	**
Judgement→ Resonance	0.368	0.387	0.041	7.736	**
Feeling→ Resonance	0.238	0.278	0.048	5.822	**

\*\*\* Path analysis significant at  $p < .001$ .

The path participant feelings towards event resonance (Estimate =0.278,  $p < 0.001$ ) was significant. The path participant judgment towards event resonance (Estimate =0.387,  $p < 0.001$ ) was also significant. This indicates that the feeling of participants and the judgment of the event have a direct impact on the event resonance. Participants who have a positive emotional response and higher evaluation of the event are more likely to participate in more events, leading to a high degree of loyalty to the event brand. Table 19 shows the detailed path analysis results.

### Mediation Analysis

The bootstrap process was repeated 2000 times. The results have shown that the event awareness had a significant indirect effect on the participant feelings (CI=0.063-0.195) and the participant judgment (CI=0.070-0.212) through the event image. Event positioning has a significant indirect effect on participant feelings (CI=0.052-0.167) and participant judgment (CI=0.057-0.178) through event image. It shows that participants can indirectly influence the emotional reaction of the participants to the event and the participant judgment by the participants who enhance the awareness of the event and then establish the image of the event. The path from event awareness towards the event image, then through the participant feelings to establish a resonance with the event (CI=0.016-0.067), and event awareness towards the event image, then through the participant judgment to establish a resonance with the event (CI=0.027-0.091), were significant.

Table 21 Mediation Analysis for brand building of a small-scale sports event Model.

Path	SE	Effect Value	Bias-Corrected 95% CI		
			Lower	Upper	P
EW→ EI→ Feeling	0.033	0.123	0.063	0.195	0.001
EW→ EI→ Judgement	0.035	0.133	0.070	0.212	0.001
EW→ EI→ Feeling→ ER	0.013	0.034	0.016	0.067	0.001
EW→ EI→ Judgement→ ER	0.016	0.051	0.027	0.091	0
EP→ EI→ Feeling	0.028	0.105	0.052	0.167	0.001
EP→ EI→ Judgement	0.031	0.114	0.057	0.178	0.001
EP→ EI→ Feeling→ ER	0.01	0.029	0.013	0.054	0.001
EP→ EI→ Judgement→ ER	0.015	0.044	0.02	0.077	0.001

**Note: EW=event awareness. EI=event image. EP= event positioning. ER= event resonance.**

The path from event positioning towards the event image, then through the participant feelings to establish a resonance with the event (CI=0.013-0.054), and event positioning towards the event image, then through the participant judgment to establish a resonance with the event (CI=0.020-0.077) were also significant. It shows that participants form an emotional response to, and a rational judgment of the event

by enhancing their awareness of the event and then establishing the event image through event participation, which ultimately, indirectly affects the participants' resonance with the event. Detail shows in table 21.

#### **4.4 Phase 3. Confirming The Brand Building Process for Small-Scale Sports Events**

The third phase validated the small-scale sports event branding model using expert evaluation. This stage invited ten experts, including five event organizers and five referees. The results include three parts, and demographic characteristics are shown in the first part. The second part showed the expert consultation, including expert activity, authority, and coordination levels. The third part presented the results of the expert assessment.

The evaluation revealed that there are four steps involved in branding a small-scale sports event. Event positioning and event awareness together empower the first step of small-scale sports event branding, reinforcing consumers' understanding of the event through marketing tools. The second step is to create an event image in consumers' minds through competition, service, facility, safety, and organizational image. The third step is to deepen the relationship between consumers and the event through emotional and rational assessment of the event, ultimately translating into the fourth step of resonance with the event. This stage presented expert evaluation details in the following sections.

##### **4.4.1 Demographics Characteristics**

Researchers suggested a minimum of 7 members for the expert evaluation team (Linstone, 1978). However, the size of the expert team ranges from 4 to 3000 members (Thangaratinam & Redman, 2005). The expert survey results' reliability depends on the experts' professional level, and the number of representatives should be determined by the quality of the experts rather than the number (Hasson et al., 2000; Powell, 2003; Thangaratinam & Redman, 2005). In order to meet the research requirements and the needs of the actual situation, this study invited five managers and five referees. The structure of the expert group is shown in table 22.

Table 22 Demographic characteristics.

Item	No.	Percent (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation	Item	No.	Percent (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>Age</b>					<b>Title</b>				
<40	1	10	48.3	7.68	1=Senior	5	50	1.6	0.76
40-50	4	40			2=Intermediate	3	30		
>50	5	50			3=Other	2	20		
<b>Working Years</b>					<b>Referee Level</b>				
5-10	1	10	22.2	7.87	1=National	3	60	1.233	0.54
11-15	2	20			2=First Class	2	40		
>15	7	70			3=Other	0	0		

#### 4.4.2 Expert Evaluation

Ten expert evaluation forms were distributed in this investigation stage, and ten were recovered, with a recovery rate of 100%. The results show that experts have high motivation. According to the expert's self-assessment results, after calculation, the expert's practical ability Q1 is 0.85, the expert's judgment basis Q2 is 0.9, and the expert's familiarity with the problem Q3 is 0.82. Table 23. shown the detailed expert authority coefficient.





Table 23 Expert Authority Coefficient.

Expert	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q (Q1+Q2+Q3)/3
1	0.5	0.8	0.8	0.7
2	0.75	0.8	0.9	0.82
3	1	1	0.9	0.97
4	1	1	0.9	0.97
5	0.75	0.8	0.8	0.78
6	0.75	0.8	0.7	0.85
7	1	1	0.9	0.97
8	1	1	0.8	0.93
9	1	1	0.8	0.93
10	0.75	0.8	0.7	0.75
Total	0.85	0.9	0.82	0.86

The collective authority coefficient  $Q ((Q1 + Q2+Q3)/3)$  was  $0.86 > 0.8$ , and the personal authority coefficient ranged from 0.7 to 0.97, indicating that the results were highly reliable.

#### 4.4.3 The result of expert evaluation

The branding of small-scale sports events consists of four steps, which are: Step 1, establishing the salience of the event in the minds of consumers; Step 2, building the image of the event; Step 3, receiving feedback from consumers; and Step 4, acquiring resonance between the event and consumers. The coefficient of variation (CV) range 0.00-0.14 ( $CV=S/M$ ),  $< 0.25$  as conventionally suggested, and Kendall's  $W$  value 0.333,  $p < 0.001$ , are statistically significant and indicate reliable results.

Step 1 was achieved by clarifying the event positioning and enhancing the event awareness. Calculated from the evaluation results, the entries received consistent agreement from the experts with a mean range of 4.6-5,  $> 3.5$  conventional reference values, and a CV range of 0-0.11, indicating that the experts have a reasonably strong approval of achieving event salience through event positioning and event awareness. The results of Step 1 are shown in Table 24.

Table 24 Result of Expert Evaluation of Brand Building Process for Small-Scale Sports Events (Step 1).

Step 1	Factor	Details	Mean	S. D	CV
<b>Clarify event positioning</b>	Positioning	Locating audience orientation of the event.	4.8	0.42	0.09
		Identifying the participant characteristics.	4.8	0.42	0.09
		Make clear the mission of the event, and value proposition of the event.	4.6	0.52	0.11
<b>Enhance event awareness</b>	recall	Integrate local characteristics of culture to the competition.	5	0	0
		Name the event that significantly reflects the event positioning.	5	0	0
	recognition	Develop and design event logo and symbol that recognizable.	4.9	0.32	0.06
		Through integrated marketing communications, create awareness of participants and enhance awareness of the event.	4.8	0.42	0.09
		Enhancing visual communication for event recognition.	4.9	0.32	0.06

Step 2, building the event image, is achieved through competition, services, facilities, safety, and organizational image. The mean range is 4.5-5, greater than the conventional reference value of 3.5, and the CV range is 0-0.12, indicating that experts highly agreed on the measures to improve the event image. Among the items "Providing well for facilities throughout the event," some experts considered the following for small-scale events with low demand for venues. Although the facilities are not perfect, they can still attract a certain number of participants. In the first stage of the interview, some respondents also suggested that after the material living standard gradually improved, the participants often raised higher requirements for the venue facilities. Senior athletes also indicated that venue facilities affect the event's image in their minds. This study showed the detailed of step 2 in Table 25.

Table 25 Step 2.

Step 2	Factor	Details	Mean	S. D	CV	
<b>Build event image</b>		Invite participation of high-level athletes.	5	0	0	
		Invite qualified referees to ensure the fairness and publicity of the event.	5	0	0	
	Competition	Categorizing competition groups to compete fairly.	5	0	0	
		There are various and interesting competing events.	5	0	0	
		Service staff display decent behaviors and good attitude.	5	0	0	
	Service	Offering good competition environment and experience for watching and participating.	4.9	0.32	0.06	
		Provide reasonable and orderly volunteer services through volunteer training.	4.9	0.32	0.06	
		Well-providing facilities throughout the event.	4.9	0.32	0.06	
		Tourism culture is also presenting through the event facilities.	4.9	0.32	0.06	
	Facility	Provide convenient transportation facilities.	4.5	0.53	0.12	
		Consider the needs of participants and provide suitable accommodation.	5	0	0	
	<b>Build event image</b>	Safety	Medical insurance at the competition site.	4.9	0.32	0.06
			The emergency passage is clearly marked and the passage is unobstructed.	5	0	0
Organization		Prepare a complete emergency response plan.	5	0	0	
		Arrange the event schedule reasonably according to the principle of feasibility.	5	0	0	
		Have the service consciousness of maintaining the image of the event.	5	0	0	
	Implement a reasonable way of event management.	4.9	0.32	0.06		

Step 3 (see table 26) is to receive consumers' feedback, achieved from both emotional and judgmental aspects. The mean range is 4.6-5, greater than the conventional reference value of 3.5, with a CV of 0 to 0.11. Thus, this indicated that experts considered it feasible to measure consumer feedback from both emotional and rational perspectives. In the item "Participants' recognition of the innovation of the competition," some experts suggested organizing sports events, and innovation in sports competition programs are very difficult. However, some experts expressed that it is possible to have a wide range of competition programs, or focus on one type, and differentiate the events from other events.

Table 26 Step 3.

Step 3	Factor	Details	Mean	S. D	CV
<b>Accept consumer feedback</b>	Feeling	Participants' perception of the event atmosphere.	4.9	0.32	0.06
		Participants' trust in the event brand.	4.8	0.42	0.09
		Participants' recognition of the value proposition conveyed by the event.	4.6	0.52	0.11
<b>Accept consumer feedback</b>	Judgement	Participants' emotional identification with the event experience.	5	0	0
		Participants' recognition of the event value.	4.7	0.48	0.1
		Participants' recognition of the innovation of the competition.	4.8	0.42	0.09
		Participants' satisfaction with the experience of the event.	4.6	0.52	0.11
		Participants' recognition of event competitiveness.	5	0	0

Step 4 (see table 27) is to ensure resonance with the event by converting consumers' responses to the event. The mean of the items ranged from 4.3 to 5, and the CV ranged from 0 to 0.14, showing the experts' acceptance of the event's branding consequences. The experts suggested that the item, "Participant will purchase additional products or services for this event" faces the dilemma of having

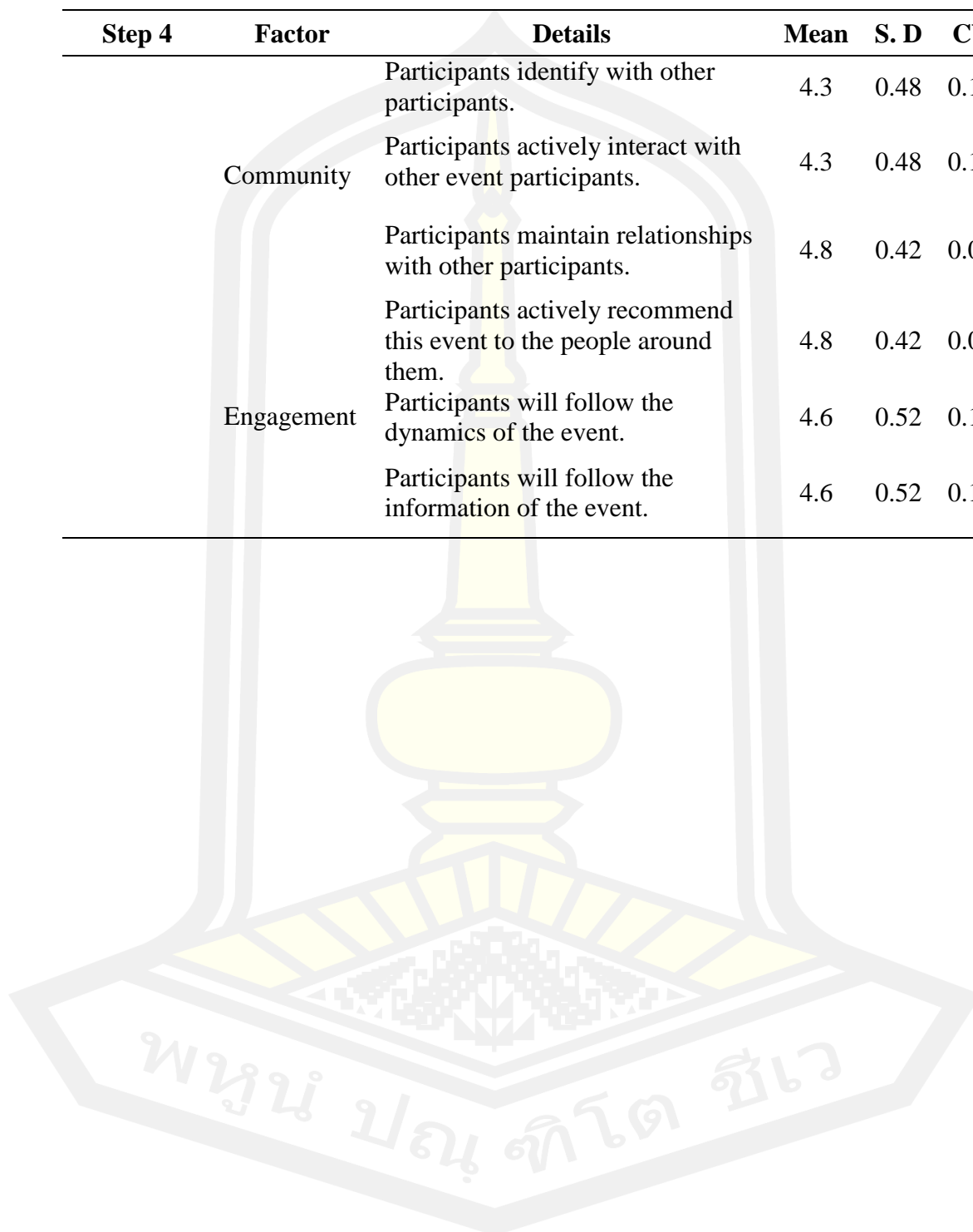
no additional products to purchase. However, this was an opportunity for the event organizers. Experts recommend the item “Participant will pay a higher price for this event,” expressing that the development of commercial events in China is insufficient, and relevant policies are required to prevent the phenomenon of charging indiscriminately. The project score is greater than the conventional reference value of 3.5. Moreover, the athletes in the first phase of interviews expressed that they were willing to pay a higher price for an event when they identified with it. Therefore, the item suggested by the experts is retained.

Table 27 Step 4.

Step 4	Factor	Details	Mean	S. D	CV
<b>Get Resonate with consumers</b>	Attitude Loyalty	Participant may have overall satisfied with the event.	4.8	0.42	0.09
		Participant will purchase additional products or services for this event.	4.1	0.57	0.14
		Participant will participate repeatedly.	5	0	0
	Behavior Loyalty	Participant will promote to people who around them.	4.4	0.52	0.12
		Participant will to pay a higher price for this event.	4.4	0.52	0.12
		Participant will Invite people to watch or participate this event.	4.3	0.48	0.11
<b>Get Resonate with consumers</b>	Attachment	Participants' will recognition of the individuality of the event.	4.9	0.32	0.06
		Participants' will recognition of the performance of the event.	4.9	0.32	0.06
		Participants' self-awareness may resonance with event personality.	4.8	0.42	0.09

Table 27 Continued.

Step 4	Factor	Details	Mean	S. D	CV
		Participants identify with other participants.	4.3	0.48	0.11
	Community	Participants actively interact with other event participants.	4.3	0.48	0.11
		Participants maintain relationships with other participants.	4.8	0.42	0.09
		Participants actively recommend this event to the people around them.	4.8	0.42	0.09
	Engagement	Participants will follow the dynamics of the event.	4.6	0.52	0.11
		Participants will follow the information of the event.	4.6	0.52	0.11



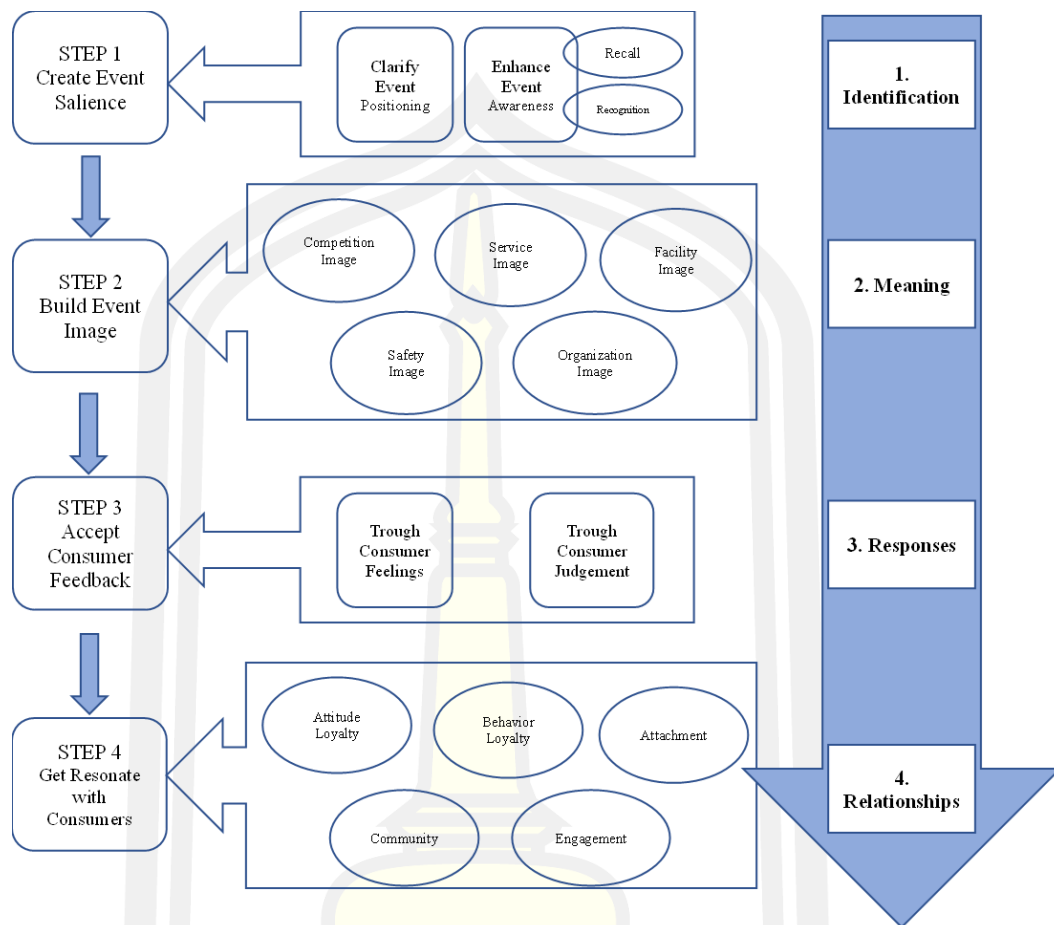


Figure 15 The Process of Small-Scale Sports Events Brand Building.



## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION, AND SUGGESTIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the reasons for the emergence of branding results for small-scale sports events. This study used a two-step approach for both the measurement and structural models (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; James, Mulaik, & Brett, 1982; David J. Ketchen Jr, 2013), and both models showed reasonable goodness-of-fit. The measurement model was based on Keller's brand construction theory, which artificially builds consumers' responses to brands on the extent of their perceptions of the brand. It achieves brand resonance by transforming brand responses and a strong relationship between consumers and the brand. This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part summarizes the findings of this study. The second part discusses the three phases in the study of brand building for small-scale sports events, the factors that affect the brand building of small-scale sports events, and the exploration and validation of the building process of small-scale sports event brands, respectively. The third part summarizes this study's applications and limitations, and suggests future research.

#### **5.2 Conclusion**

The study results analyzed the factors affecting the branding of small-scale sports events and the event-branding process.

##### **5.2.1 Influencing factors of small-scale sports events**

This study conducted interviews with event organizers, referees, and senior athletes to explore the factors influencing the brand building of small-scale sports events. The results concluded that event positioning, event awareness, event image, participant feelings, participant judgment, and event resonance are essential factors in building the brand of small-scale sports events.

Event positioning defined the unique position of the event in the target group, and organizers have clarified what kind of event they want to organize. The event salience was obtained through marketing tools that enhance consumer



awareness of the event. Event image is a multi-dimensional concept, and the results suggested that competition, service, facilities, safety, and organization influence the event's perception in consumers' minds. Once consumers have gained knowledge about the event, they evaluate it based on their previous experiences, including feelings and judgments. Consumers assessed their perceptions of the event, such as emotional evaluations like fun and confidence, and rational judgments like value and innovativeness. Brand outcomes of loyalty, community, attachment, and engagement were elicited when consumers expressed recognition of the events in which they participated.

### 5.2.2 The Process for Brand Building of Small-Scale Sports Events

This study proposed a model for brand building of small sporting events and tested the model using measurement model and path model. The results showed that the measurement model  $\chi^2/df = 1.516$ , CFI = 0.883, AGFI = 0.872, RMSEA = 0.03; and the NNFI was greater than 0.90. The measurement model is expressed by  $\chi^2/df = 1.957$ , CFI = 0.924, AGFI = 0.909, RMSEA = 0.041, and NNFI = 0.957. The path results indicated that event awareness (Estimate = 0.268,  $p < 0.001$ ) had a positive impact on event image. Event positioning (Estimate = 0.232,  $p < 0.001$ ) has a positive impact on event image. Event image positively influenced participant feelings (Estimate = 0.450,  $p < 0.001$ ) and participant judgment (Estimate = 0.490,  $p < 0.001$ ). Participant feelings (Estimate = 0.277,  $p < 0.001$ ) and participant judgment (Estimate = 0.388,  $p < 0.001$ ) can positively influence event resonance. At the same time, event awareness and event positioning mediated participant feelings and judgment through event image. Event image mediated the effect on event resonance through participant feelings and judgments.

The study results figured that the first step in building the brand of small-scale sports events was to form salience in the minds of consumers through event positioning and event awareness. The second step was establishing an image in the consumer's mind through competition, service, facilities, safety, and organization. Then, the third step was to respond emotionally and rationally according to the consumer's experience and knowledge of the event. The fourth step was to resonate with the event by converting consumers' reactions.

### **5.2.3 Confirming the brand-building process for small-scale sports events**

In this study, ten experts, including five event organizers and five event referees, were invited to evaluate the proposed process of branding small-scale sports events using an expert evaluation form. The evaluation results showed that the first step established the event salience with a mean value of 4.6-5 for each item score and a CV of 0-0.11. The second step was building the event image with a mean value of 4.5-5 and a CV of 0-0.12. The third step was receiving consumer feedback with a mean value of 4.6-5 and a CV of 0-0.11. The fourth step gained resonance with the event with a mean value of 4.3-5 and a CV of 0- 0.14. 0.14. It indicated that experts recognize the brand-building process of small-scale sports events.

## **5.3 Discussion**

Sports consumers will develop a strong emotional attachment to the event and build trust and loyalty to the sports brand. Parent & Séguin (2008) studied the branding of international one-off large-scale sports events and believed that large-scale events usually require a large amount of investment in a short period. Leadership is the first key to building a one-off large-scale sports event brand (Couvlaere & Richelieu, 2005; Parent & Séguin, 2008). Milena et al. (2012) conducted further research on the branding of large-scale sporting events. They argue that the event's leadership, context, and nature are critical components in branding. Smaller sporting events are usually more flexible, less financially burdensome, and more sustainable than larger events. This study believes that in the brand building of small-scale sports events, it is necessary to establish consumers' awareness of the events and strengthen the connection between consumers and small-scale sports events. The following chapters discuss the factors that influence small-scale sports event branding and the process of small-scale sports event branding.

### **5.3.1 Influencing factors of small-scale sports events**

#### **Antecedents: Event Awareness and Event Positioning**

The study's findings argued that event awareness was essential in event brand building. The purpose of branding was to create certain perceptions in the minds of consumers through marketing methods. This knowledge enables consumers

to evoke recognition of a product or service in different situations, thus influencing their choice of product or service (Aaker, 1997; Chandon, 2003; Ekhveh & Darvishi, 2015; K. L. Keller, 1993; K. L. Keller & Moorthi, 2003). They proposed that the first step in brand building is the construction of brand salience, namely, deep brand awareness (Keller, 2001; Walley, K et al., 2013; Jain, S et al., 2019). Some scholars have also disputed this, finding weak support for brand awareness on brand equity in a study of the Chinese sportswear market. In addition, there was a validation of the Turkish beverage industry, which concluded that brand awareness has no direct and significant impact on brand equity (Atilgan, Aksoy, & Akinci, 2005; Tong & Hawley, 2009). However, for sports events, from a cognitive perspective, researchers have identified brand awareness as a suitable element for sports events (Ross, 2006; Yanling & Bing, 2017; Yousaf et al., 2017). This is because, generally, when consumers are unaware of an event, they can visually build awareness of it through the event name and logo. Names and logos are considered effective means of creating awareness and facilitating the retrieval of small-scale sports event brands in the consumer's mind. For example, when an athlete participates in a competition called "China XXX," they feel excited and valued. Researchers have viewed brand equity as influenced by brand awareness (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 2001; Agarwal & Rao, 1996; G. Christodoulides et al., 2015; Bora, D. B, 2018). As to small-scale sports event brands, they deepen the recognition of the event brand by setting "a name that reflects the event's positioning" and "a logo that can be recognized" by the target group. When consumers choose a sporting event, the first thing that comes to mind is the event name or logo that shows event awareness. Therefore, event awareness is relevant in building small-scale sports events' brands.

However, this study suggested that event positioning was also a potent force in small-scale sports event brands. Organizers need to be clear about what kind of brand they want to convey. Firstly, they must clarify the positioning and group orientation of the event, consider reflecting regional characteristics, and then enhance consumer perceptions through marketing. Thus, it was also part of brand creation (Milena et al., 2012; Wang, Bo et al., 2016). For small-scale sports event brands, event brand positioning complements event brand awareness. The construction of a small-scale sports event brands should start with the event by deepening consumers'

perceptions of the event name, logo, and characteristics through marketing methods; and with event awareness that affects consumers' understanding of the event. Brand positioning makes the envisioned brand unique among the target consumers (Ling, 2008) and establishes the prominence of the small-scale sports event brand among the target population.

### **Establish Event Image**

The interviews indicated that event image is an integral part of event branding. Event image refers to consumers' comprehensive perceptions of event brands and plays a vital role in sports brand equity (Max Blackston, 1992; James M. Gladden & Funk, 2002; Ross, 2006; Xiaoling, 2011; Yanling & Bing, 2017). The brand image was usually perceived as necessary in brand equity, and consumers' associations with brands were created by brand image. Some researchers have a different view on this, arguing that brand personality plays a central, causal role in all configurations; and that consumers' associations with brands were built on brand personality (K. Chatzipanagiotou, Christodoulides, & Veloutsou, 2019). However, for small-scale sports events, the participants were commonly spectators of sports events as well. Therefore, consumers establish the image of an event based on past experiences. The image was a multidimensional concept, such as the event services' good qualities and the venue facilities' quality. Consumers experience a terrible impression of events due to negative safety news about the event. Researchers have found that event image was driven by multiple factors, with important drivers including event services, venue community, brand symbols, organizational attributes, social interactions, and in-event consumer discounts (Yanling & Bing, 2017). Some researchers also have different insights and believe that event image was driven by competition, service, and facility images (Feifei, 2015; Z. Yun & Rongri, 2019).

This study considered that brand symbols and event brand perceptions are prerequisites for event branding. Consumers can form an impression based on their experience when they know and understand an event. When they are satisfied with the event, social interaction is the participants' behavior and was the final brand outcome. However, this study considered that the safety and organizational image still need to be regarded. The safety efforts and the event's organization also affect the event's image in the minds of consumers. Based on the unique nature of sporting

events and the previous neglect of safety issues during event organization by event organizers, the organizers believed that safety and security were special considerations when organizing sporting events. Participants also suggested that the lack of safety efforts and negative news about safety during the branding process of small-scale sports events can affect participants' perceptions of the events. In addition to safety aspects, this study concluded that the organizational image of the event affects participants' overall evaluation of the event. The results of the interviews repeatedly mentioned the orderliness of the event organization process. All three groups of interviewers talked about the importance of an orderly organization, which participants also believed would affect their evaluation of the event's image. The management level of organizers can influence consumers' expectations of the image of sports (Wenli et al., 2019; Yufeng & Yue, 2007). Therefore, this study has argued that safety and organizational image should also be essential aspects of event brand image building.

#### **Event Perceived: Participant Feelings and Judgement**

The interview results concluded that participant feelings and judgments were necessary to brand small-scale sports events. Previous studies found that consumer reactions to brands include emotional and rational aspects. Feelings are a series of emotional responses consumers have to the brand, such as enthusiasm, fun, and excitement (Keller, 2001). Milton Kotler (2005) proposed that mining consumers' emotional needs and injecting emotional value into the brand are the key to building a brand. However, previous studies have also concluded that consumers' emotional responses to brands can be positive or negative (Baird, 2015; Márkus & Fallmyr, 2014; Yong et al., 2018). In a sports environment, fans' emotional bonds to the team lead to fans' support for the game already, and for purchasing products surrounding the event (Campbell Jr & Kent, 2002; Chen & Jia-shu, 2018; Couvelaere & Richelieu, 2005). Researchers have often considered perceived quality as a consumer response to a brand, and some have indicated that perceived quality affects brand loyalty and has less impact on brand equity (Gill & Dawra, 2010; Tong & Hawley, 2009). However, compared to traditional goods, in small-scale sports events, participants were more concerned with participation and satisfaction. Respondents reported that although some small-scale events they participated in did not receive material rewards such as

certificates and prizes, they still felt excited and satisfied. Therefore, the branding of small-scale sports events can be achieved by building emotions with the participants.

Judgment was another response to consumer feedback. The feeling was the consumer's emotional response, and then judgment was the rational response of the consumer. Keller understood brand judgment as to the consumer's overall brand evaluation. Baird's (2015) and Raut's (2015) studies supported this view. In a study of the drivers of brand equity in the sports service environment, it was found that consumers make a range of judgments based on previous knowledge, perceptions, and images of the brand (Adrian, 2014a; Gordon & James, 2017; Márkus & Fallmyr, 2014; Yaz, 2021). The present study further confirms this view. In the branding of small-scale sports events, the interviews revealed that participants evaluate events based on the value, level of competition, and service shown by the event. Consumers' judgments of small-scale sports event brands were derived from their perceptions and images of the events. Therefore, when building small-scale sports event brands, organizers can focus their efforts on prominence and image because consumers give their personal opinions based on their previous experiences.

#### **Consequence: Event Resonance**

The findings also suggested that event resonance results from the branding of small-scale sports events. Previous research has argued that brand loyalty is an influential element of brand equity due to brand construction (Atilgan et al., 2005; Kuvykaite & Piligrimiene, 2014). However, when consumers were satisfied with the events in which they participated, they exhibited attitudes and behaviors such as repeated participation and following event news. Brand resonance represents the relationship between the consumer and the brand; and generates loyalty and attachment, engagement, and community (Keller, 2001; Aliyev, 2018). Brand resonance reflects the level of consumer recognition of a brand (Adrian, 2014a; Baird, 2015; Choudhury & Kakati, 2014; Kumar, Guruvayurappan, & Banerjee, 2007; Sandhe, 2016). Brand resonance plays a crucial role in sustainability (Moore & Wurster, 2007). Although in the analysis of the interview results, this study concluded that brand resonance includes attitudinal loyalty, behavioral loyalty, engagement, and community; Keller's "attachment" factor was retained because of the need to summarize a comprehensive brand outcome in this study.

### 5.3.2 The Process for Brand Building of Small-Scale Sports Events

#### **The Antecedents of Event Branding: Positioning, Awareness to Image Building**

Both sporting event positioning and event awareness have a significant, positive impact on establishing a sporting event image during the branding process of small-scale sports events. Branding theory shows brand salience in consumers' minds through brand awareness (recall and recognition) and enhances consumers' identification of products and services. Researchers believe that creating and managing brand identity is the basis of the branding process (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2003; Klopper & North, 2011). Moreover, brand awareness facilitates the development of a positive brand image (Aaker, 1991; Manpreet Singh Gill et al., 2010; Washburn & Plank, 2002; Keller, 2003). The interviews concluded that participants' knowledge of the event affects participants' choices of the event. The findings further suggested that participants' perceptions of the event can directly influence the establishment of the event's brand image in participants' minds and ultimately influence their choice of the event. Therefore, in a small-scale sports event, the event name and logo should be reflected in prominent places such as venues and transportation to enhance consumers' awareness of the event and evoke the ability of the target group to retrieve the event from memory under different circumstances. The audience's perception of the event brand can impact the audience's participation in the event. Therefore, the first step in building a brand for a small-scale sports event was to create the event brand's prominence in consumers' minds. Then, one must establish the brand image (Aaker, 1991; Manpreet Singh Gill et al., 2010; Washburn & Plank, 2002; Keller, 2003). Brand awareness for small-scale sports events should precede the sporting event image.

However, this study found that positioning was also crucial in establishing the image in the minds of consumers. Marketing literature has also identified the importance of positioning (Hooley et al., 2001; Iyer et al., 2019; Kotler, 2000). Researchers argue that the branding process increases the appeal to the target consumers through positioning strategies, thereby influencing consumer preferences to achieve appropriate associations (Girish Punj & Junyeon Moon, 2002; Xie Ying et al., 2016; Liu Gang, 2012; Hu Jing, 2016; Heliff, 2010).

### **Event Image to Participant Feelings and Judgement**

The image of small-scale sports events directly impacted participants' feelings and judgment. Numerous studies in brand research have shown that consumers make evaluations based on brand associations, and that products or services should meet consumers' expectations of the brand through brand experiences (Moura & Ferreira et al., 2019; Keller, 2001; Raut, 2015). Most brand research refers to consumers' overall judgment of a product or service as quality perception (A., 1988; D.A. Aaker, 1991; Gordon & James, 2017; Sultan et al., 2019). Consumers elicit responses to brands through quality perceptions. Previous studies have also confirmed a positive correlation between brand image and perceived quality (Chow et al., 2016; Rao & Monroe, 1989; Shimp, 1982). Consumers gain an overall perception of a product through brand image (Philip et al., 1996; Sultan et al., 2019). It illustrates that brand associations caused by brand image significantly impact consumers' evaluations.

However, this study considered that consumers' reactions to brands are separated into emotional and rational reactions, namely feeling and judgment. Although previous studies have proposed dividing consumers' overall evaluation of a product or service into emotional and rational paths (Keller, 2001; Baird, 2015; Raut, 2015; Sandhe, 2016; Markus & Fallmyr, 2014), they have not made a direct path analysis of it. This study adds an empirical basis for this, where event image positively influences consumers' emotional responses and rational judgments during the branding process of small-scale sports events. It was shown that building brand equity in the sports environment is not the construction of mere associations; the event image can influence consumers' evaluation of the event. Associations represent consumers' evaluations and emotional responses to brand perception. Creating, maintaining, and expanding brand image is particularly important for sporting events that are incredibly experiential (James M. Gladden & Funk, 2002; Gordon & James, 2017). Sung Keun's (SK) Koo's (2014) study of sporting event image and satisfaction also illustrated that the image positively impacts consumer assessments and perceptions. Furthermore, brand image in a sporting environment influences consumer satisfaction and choice of events (Zhaoyu, 2018).



This study also verified the mediating role of event image between event awareness and event perception. Previous studies proposed that image factors mediate between awareness and brand equity in Aaker's brand equity. The relationship between brand awareness and brand equity is mediated through brand associations (S. Erfan & Ling, 2013; Gill & Dawra, 2010). However, few studies have investigated the mediating role of the brand image between brand awareness, and brand feeling and judgment under the brand resonance model. Brian S. Gordon & Jeffrey D. James (2017) validated the brand resonance model in the sports service environment. He confirmed the positive effect of brand awareness on brand image in the sports service environment.

Moreover, replacing emotions and evaluations in the brand resonance model with brand strengths and influences verified the positive role of brand image on brand strengths and influences. Therefore, this study suggested that organizers should consider building a strong event brand image when they build a small-scale, sports event brand. Thus, organizers must strengthen positive event associations by improving competition levels, and providing appropriate event services after consumers become aware of the event brand. Because participants are in the process of branding a small-scale sports event, participants assess their perceptions and feelings about the event based on their experiences. Participants' judgments based on their image of the event influence their choices (James M. Gladden & Funk, 2002; Gordon & James, 2017; M.Gladden & C.Funk, 2001; Sultan et al., 2019).

#### **Participant Feelings and Participant Judgment to Event Resonance**

The findings showed that participant feelings and judgments have a direct, positive impact on event resonance. Previous studies have also examined the brand outcomes that emotions can produce, and have concluded that positive emotions are an essential source of trust. Positive consumer feelings towards a brand contribute to consumer trust in the brand, which strongly influences consumers' purchase intentions and behaviors (Libin, 2013; Rousseau et al., 1998; Yong et al., 2018). Consumers' strong feelings toward a brand can produce a more resonant perception (Teoman Duman et al., 2018). As mentioned earlier, most previous studies have taken brand perception as consumers' overall evaluation of a product or service, emphasizing the positive relationship between brand perception and loyalty (Chow et

al., 2016; Gill & Dawra, 2010; Nogueira et al., 2018). This study considered loyalty as a behavioral consequence of consumers' resonance with the event brand. In addition to loyalty, consumers also produce behavioral or psychological outcomes such as attachment and involvement. Research from a sports perspective has focused on the relationship between participant feelings and event branding from the perspective of professional leagues, particularly those that activate emotional bonds that fans have with their teams lead to fan support for team and league product purchase behavior (Chen & Jia-shu, 2018; Couvelaere & Richelieu, 2005; Ghodeswar, 2008; Kunkel, Doyle, et al., 2014 2014 2014). In the study of Sung Keun (SK) Koo et al. (2014), satisfaction and behavioral intention in small marathon events suggested that satisfaction with marathon participation positively affected behavioral intention to participate in the marathon. Although their study did not directly investigate the influence of participant feelings and judgments on resonance, satisfaction reflected participants' identification with the event. It indicated that their judgments about the event impacted their choices. However, this study concludes that positive event branding results when event participants have favorable judgments about the event, including psychological and behavioral consequences, namely resonance.

This study also investigated participant feelings and judgment mediating between event image and resonance. The results indicated that event awareness could influence participants' feelings and judgment through event image, affecting event resonance. Branding research has typically examined the relationship between brand image and brand equity, maintaining that brand image or association can directly influence brand equity (Stella Kladoun et al., 2014; Tong et al.). Chatzipanagiotou, Christodoulides, & Veloutsou (2019) proposed that consumers' brand associations are primarily based on brand personality, which leads to the relationship between consumers and brands. However, Eda Atilgan et al. (2005) also suggested that brand associations do not possess a direct and significant effect on brand equity when they validated the beverage industry in Turkey. Erfan Severi et al. (2013) considered that perceived quality could moderate the relationship between brand image and brand equity. This study did not directly verify the relationship between event image and event resonance. However, the results concluded that participant feelings and judgment could influence the relationship between event

image and event resonance. Although most studies did not directly test the mediating role of participant feeling and participant judgment between event image and event resonance, it can still be concluded that consumers make a series of judgments based on the brand's image, and these judgments influence their choices. The findings mean that when consumers form an image of the event in their minds, they evaluated their perceptions of the event regarding how good they felt about it. When clients' perceptions and feelings were positive, they had positive behavioral consequences and vice versa.

### **5.3.3 Confirming the Brand Building Process for Small-Scale Sports**

#### **Events**

This study validated the small-scale sports event branding process. The findings indicated that the first step in branding a small-scale sports event was to create salience in the minds of consumers through event positioning and awareness. The second step was to build the event image in consumers' minds through experiencing the competition, service, facilities, safety, and organization. The third step was the feedback of consumers' emotional and rational responses to the event image, namely, feelings and judgment, to achieve the fourth step of consumers' empathy with the event. The final purpose of branding was that consumers acquire brand loyalty through understanding and evaluating the brand, giving them a reason to choose the brand again (D.A. Aaker, 1991; L. De Chernatony, 1999).

Moreover, branding theory suggests that the mental connection between the brand and the consumer helps to motivate consumers to be loyal to products and services (J. Balmer, M. N. Liao, & W. Y. Wang, 2010; L. De Chernatony, 1999; Schmidt & Redler, 2018). Previous researchers have provided factors that have influenced brand equity, specifically brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and other brand assets (D.A. Aaker, 1991; Ishaq & Maria, 2020; Shaalan, Hegazy, Tourky, Elshaer, & Ashour). Researchers have also recognized the emphasis on brand-consumer relationships, contending that marketers understand how consumers resonate with a brand through their satisfaction (Max Blackston, 1992; M. Blackston, 2011; MacInnis & Folkes, 2017). Keller (2001) first proposed the brand building blocks of the CBBE process concept, or the brand pyramid. However, the research on Keller's proposed brand pyramid was only conceptual, and the measurement of brand salience continues to extend to the measurement of brand

awareness (K. L. Keller, 2001a; Raut et al., 2020; Yousaf et al., 2017). On the other hand, this study has argued that brand positioning is also important in building brand salience and that organizers must first be clear about what they want to communicate. Ross (2006), and Yanling Duan & Bing Liu (2017) proposed sports brand equity and measurement in the sports environment based on Keller's (1993) brand knowledge model, respectively. However, neither gave a process for brand construction.

Nevertheless, many studies on consumer-based brand equity fail to provide a comprehensive view of the brand formation process, and lack the inclusion of consumer behavior in the branding process (Buil, Martinez, & Chernatony, 2013; Kalliopi Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2018; Rambocas, Kirpalani, & Simms, 2018).

Marketers use customer satisfaction to understand how consumers resonate with the brand. Generating associations through the brand image leads to brand consequences (e.g., ticket sales) (M. Blackston, 2011; J. Gladden, 2013; MacInnis & Folkes, 2017). Participants in small sports events are satisfied with the event through emotional and rational responses. The overall level of participant evaluation of the event leads to resonance with the event. The results suggest that event positioning complements how participants' knowledge of the event and event awareness collectively impact event image. Creating small-scale sports event brand equity leads to event brand consequences (e.g., repeat participation) through event perception. In addition, Ross (2006) proposed a spectator-based brand equity measurement model (Spectator-based brand equity) to explain the importance of customer experience to sports event brand equity. From the results of this study, the event's competition, service, facility, safety, and organizational image all reflect the participants' experience of the event. The participants' high evaluation of the event leads to a high level of empathy, reflecting the importance of consumer experience for the sports event brand.

Therefore, in a small-scale sports event, participants form an event image that exists in their minds through their level of understanding of the event's positioning and perception. There are various emotional connections between the small-scale sports event brand and the participants. Then, the relationship between the participants and the event is established through emotional reactions and rational judgments.

Previous studies have recognized the necessity of brands in the environment of sports events. However, few studies have empirically tested small-scale sports events' brand-building process from consumers' perspectives. The current research aims to fill this gap. Based on Keller's (2001) resonance model, this study validates the brand-building process of small sports events through semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and expert evaluation. This feasible framework will provide a theoretical basis and empirical support for small-scale sports event organizers to build their brands.

## **5.4 Suggestion**

### **5.4.1 Implications**

This study provided empirical support for applying Keller's (2001) brand resonance model to the sporting event environment, offering academic and practical insights into the branding of a small-scale sports events in China. Investigating event organizers, referees, and athletes in this study discovered that the brand resonance theory applies to the examination of how sports event brands are initially structured to achieve final brand outcomes. The brand resonance theory provides a workable framework for sporting event branding. Combined with the case of the China Jiaozuo International Taijiquan Exchange Competition, this study found that small-scale sports event brands first establish the event targets, deepen consumers' knowledge of the event, and establish the event image through marketing means. Ultimately, it achieves consumer resonance with the event and generates brand consequences. Therefore, Keller's (2001) brand resonance framework can serve as a guideline for small-scale sports event branding to help sports event managers build event brand awareness and achieve brand identity.

Furthermore, this study gives sports event managers a strategic basis for event development from a brand management perspective. Thus, sports event managers have an opportunity to concentrate on activities that improve the event experience and consider whether there is a possibility to improve the services at the event. By recognizing the positive relationship between event awareness, event image, and evaluation, sporting event managers can also be more aware of their event

development strategies. Managers can build on the event resonance to understand at what stage of the event resonance their consumers exist, which is critical to developing the event brand. With this knowledge, managers can build their event branding strategy to strengthen the consumer's connection to the event.

#### **5.4.2 Limitations**

One limitation of this study was that the pandemic restricted the event activities. It was not possible to intercept the participants directly at the event site. This study distributed and collected questionnaires online, making searching for the target population more challenging. Furthermore, although online distribution saves cost and time, it increases the difficulty of controlling the quality of questionnaires.

#### **5.4.3 Further Research**

Brand research on sporting events is still scarce, especially in building sports event brands. Although previous researchers have proposed a brand equity measurement scale applicable to the sports field, they still leave out a comprehensive summary of the brand building process. Therefore, one may suggest that future studies utilize and examine data from different regions and the events of more diverse sports. More samples are needed to test the accuracy of the brand-building model for small-scale sports events.

This study collected a large amount of data from people who participated or watched the event, based on the stakeholders' perspectives because they could provide more information about the event. Future research could collect data from people interested in the project but who have not participated in the event in order to understand their reasons for not attending or watching the event; and perhaps this will provide more information for small-scale sports event branding.

This study discussed the requirements for branding small-scale sports events from the consumer perspective. This perspective aims to expand the event's influence and awareness by attracting more consumers to participate in the event in response to consumer expectations. Future research could provide a more comprehensive understanding of small-scale sporting event branding through a financial return perspective.

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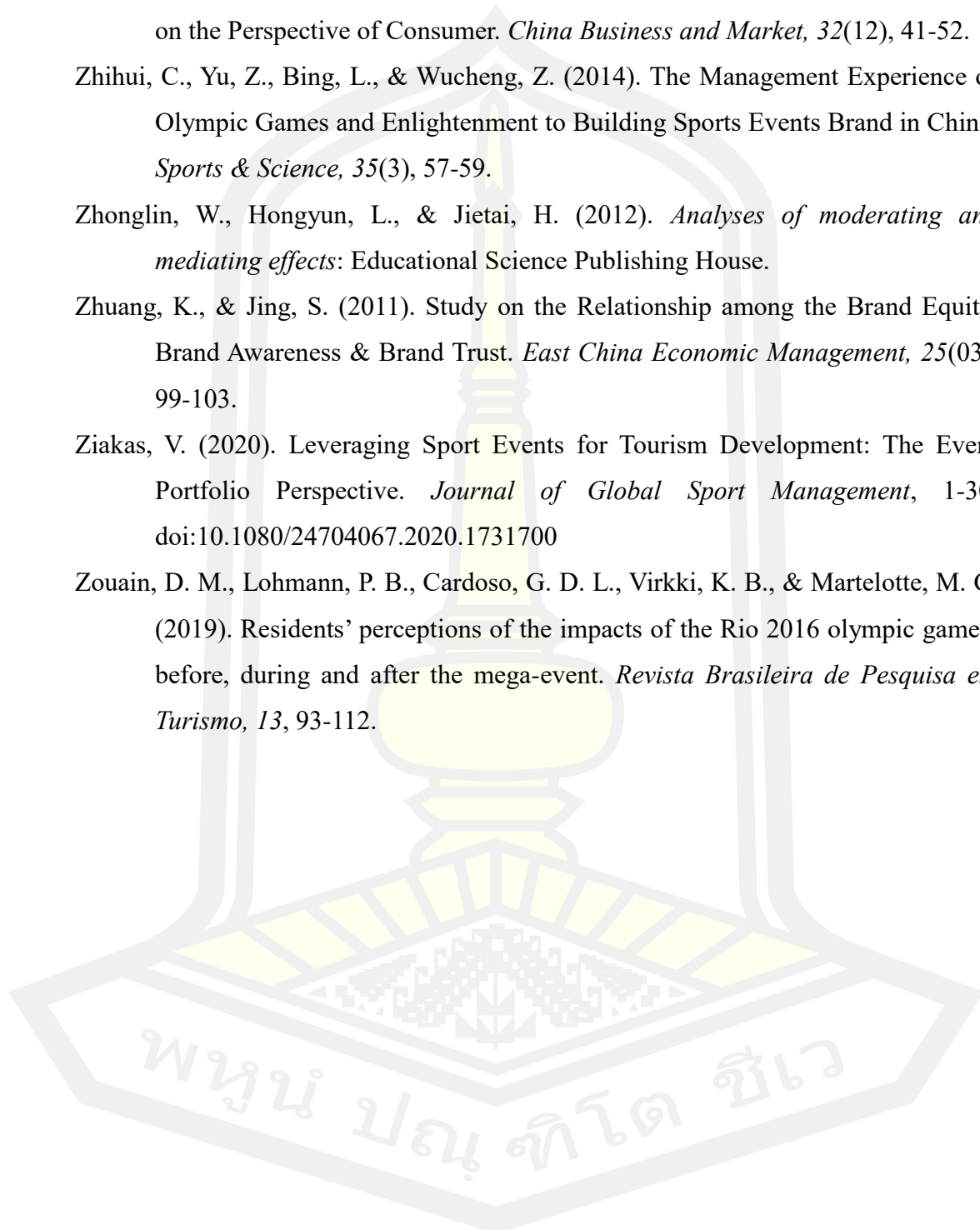
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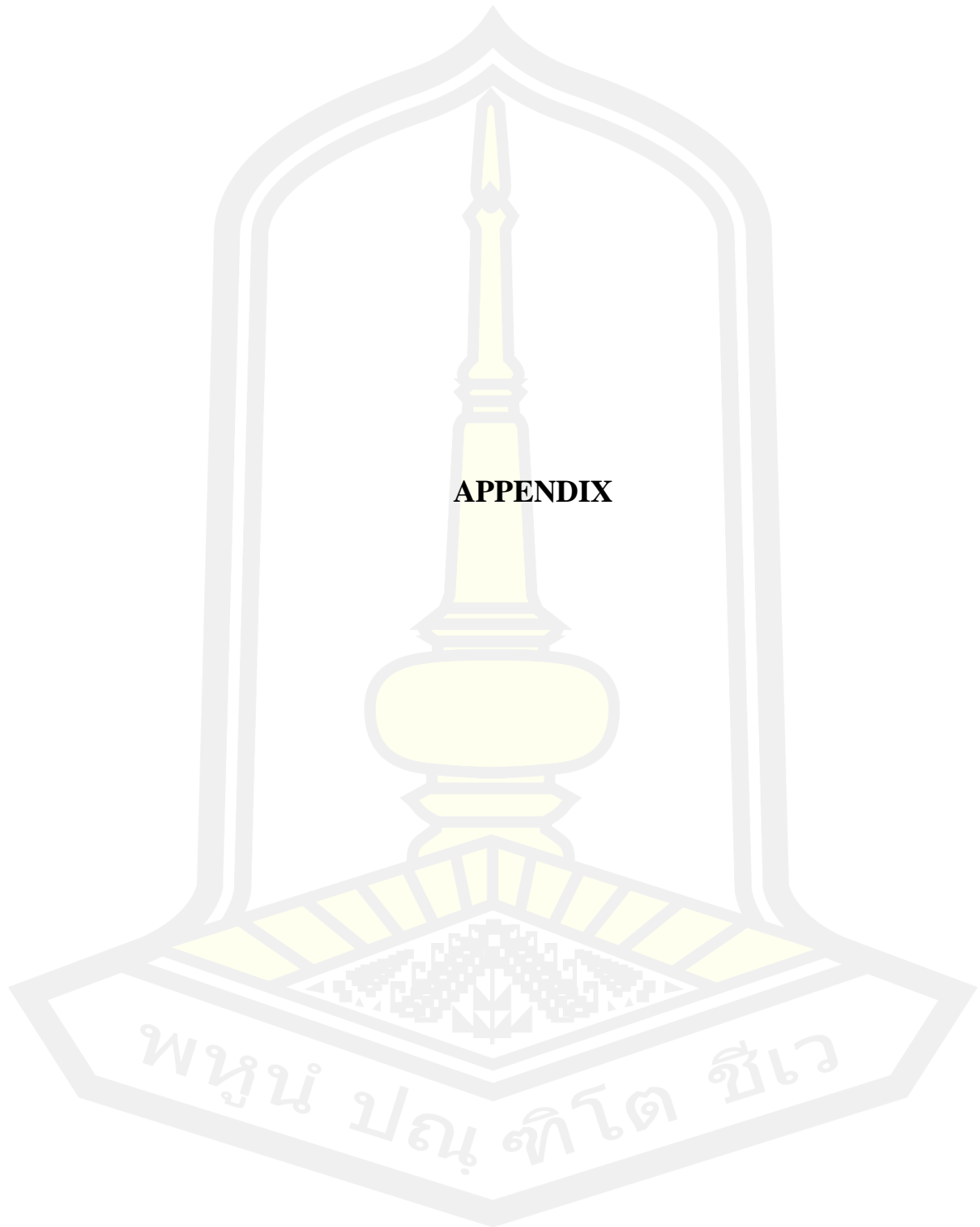


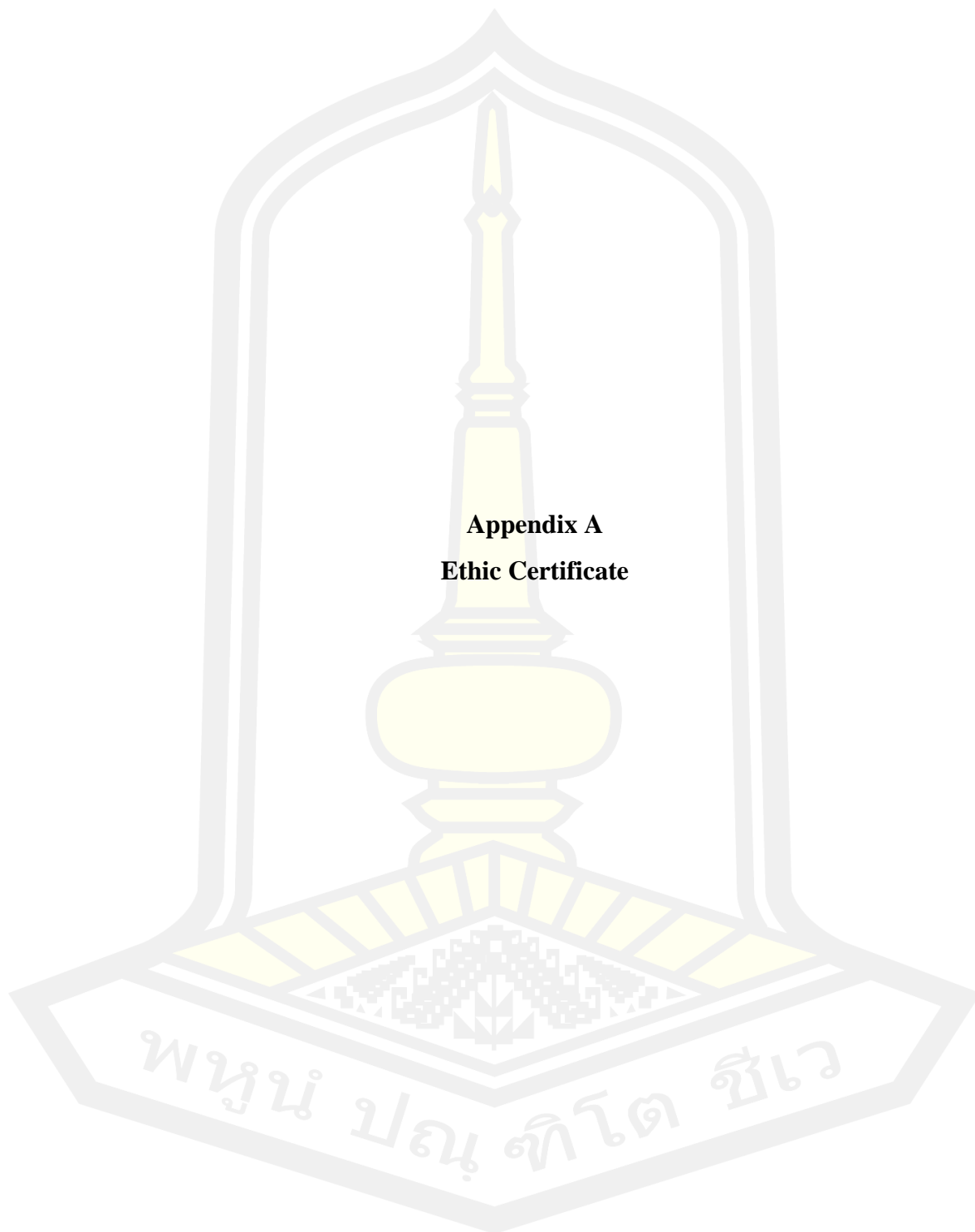
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**APPENDIX**





**Appendix A**  
**Ethic Certificate**



MAHASARAKHAM UNIVERSITY ETHICS COMMITTEE FOR  
RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Certificate of Approval

Approval number: 140-091/2021

**Title :** Brand Building For Small-Scale Sport Event: The Way Of Brand Building Of Chinese Sports Events.

**Principal Investigator :** Ms. Wen Sha Zhai

**Responsible Department :** Faculty of Education

**Research site :** Jiaozuo City, Henan Province, China

**Review Method :** Expedited Review

**Date of Manufacture :** 22 April 2021

**expire :** 21 April 2022

This research application has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects, Mahasarakham University, Thailand. Approval is dependent on local ethical approval having been received. Any subsequent changes to the consent form must be re-submitted to the Committee.

*Ratree S.*

(Asst. Prof. Ratree Sawangjit)

Chairman

Approval is granted subject to the following conditions: (see back of this Certificate)

ศูนย์ ปณฺ ฑิต โธ ข



**Appendix B**  
**Interview Outline**

พหุบัณฑิต ชีวะ

**Organizers:**

Q1: How do you understand the concept of “brand”? How to understand the “brand of sports events”? Compared with the “brand” of traditional goods, is there any difference in the concept of “brand” in sports events?

Q2: Based on your experience and understanding, what are the components of a “sports event brand”? What kind of sport event can be called a “brand”?

Q3: What kind of brand do you think is a valuable brand for small-scale sport event? And why is that?

Q4: What is the meaning of the logo and name of the event? What impact will these logos have on the event brand?

Q5: In your opinion, what do you suggest the event brand need to improve?

Q6: In the process of planning, organizing, and building the brand of the event, are there any aspects that you think will have an impact on the choice of consumers?

Q7: Based on your experience, what are the processes of sport event branding? What is the most important thing in this brand building process? What kind of effect do you expect to achieve?

Q8: Based on your experience, should the brand awareness of sports events be established before creating the brand image of sports events? Why and why not?

Q9: What is brand-building strategies currently adopted in China for small-scale sport event?

Q10: Compared with other similar events, what are the differences in building the brand of this event?

Q11: Do you have any other (brand building) suggestions for small-scale sports events?

**Referees:**

Q12: How do you understand the concept of “event brand”?

Q13: Based on your experience, what are the important factors in brand building of a small-scale sport event?

Q14: Based on your participation experience, do you think the brand of the sport event affect the participants’ decision to attend? What other brand factors are the affecting the choice of contestants?

Q15: What are the differences in brand building between this event and other similar events? Do you have any suggestions for small-scale sports events?

**Senior Athletes:**

Q16: How do you understand the concept of event brand? What factors do you think should be included in the concept of event brand?

Q17: Can you quickly recall the logo and name of this event? Do you understand what it means? Do you think this logo and name will affect your choice of events?

Q18: When you choose to participate in a competition, what are factors affecting your choice?

Q19: According to your experience, what kind of sport event do you think has a “brand”? What are your considerations in judging the brand of this sport event?

Q20: How difference between this event and other?

Q21: What do you think the value of the sport event brand reflected in?

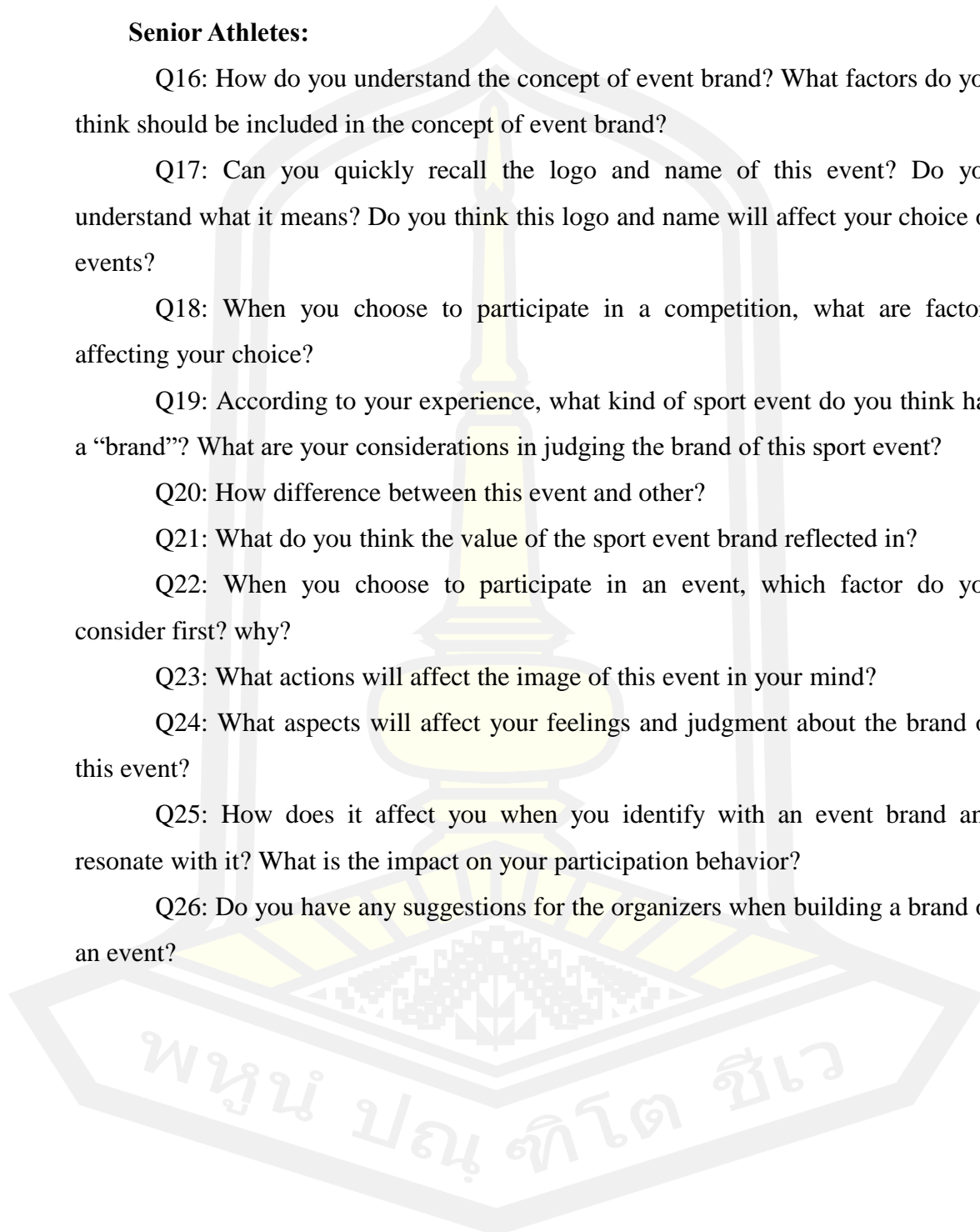
Q22: When you choose to participate in an event, which factor do you consider first? why?

Q23: What actions will affect the image of this event in your mind?

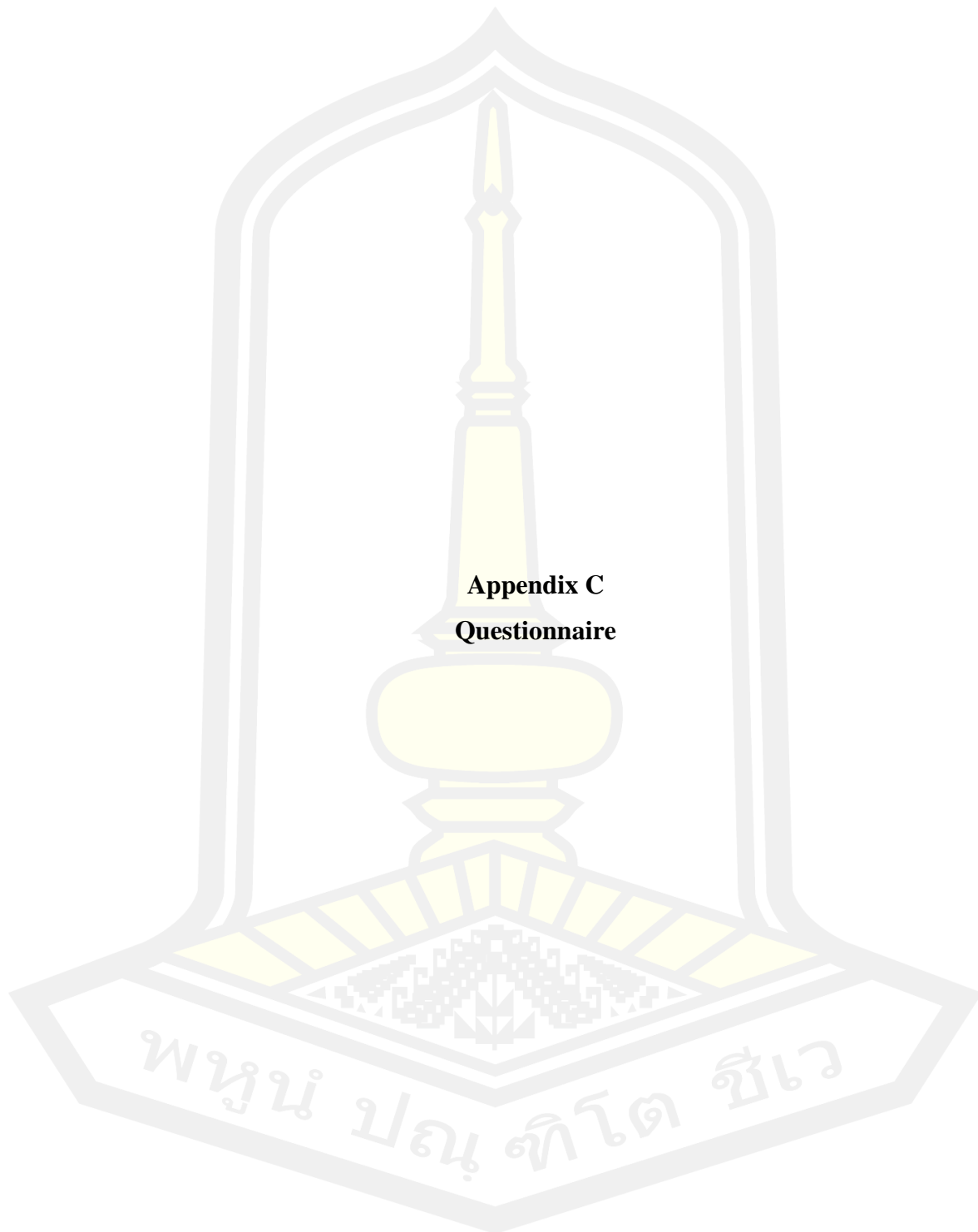
Q24: What aspects will affect your feelings and judgment about the brand of this event?

Q25: How does it affect you when you identify with an event brand and resonate with it? What is the impact on your participation behavior?

Q26: Do you have any suggestions for the organizers when building a brand of an event?







**Appendix C**  
**Questionnaire**

**Title: Brand Building for Small-scale Sport Event: The Way of Brand Building  
Process of Chinese Sports Event**

The purpose of this study is to explore the brand building process of small-scale sport event. This questionnaire is divided into three sections, the first section is the general information, a total of 7 questions. The second section is about the brand building of small-scale sports events, a total of 55 questions. The third section is an open question. please fill in truthfully according to your experience and feelings. Please read each question carefully before you answer. Your spontaneous and honest reply is very important to us.

**Section 1: General Information**

**Explanation:** Please tick  in the box  according to your actual situation. (Please tick only one box)

1 Gender:

Male       Female

2 Age: ..... years old

3 Your Occupation:

Government agency staff    Company employees    Businessmen  
 Service/Salesperson    Worker    Military    Student    Doctor    Teacher  
 Retired    Other.....

4 Your Income:

Below 3000 yuan    3001-5000 yuan    5001-7000 yuan  
 7001-9000 yuan    9001 yuan and above

5 Number of times you have participated\watched this event:

1 time    2 times    3 times    4 times and above

6 Your city of residence: .....

7 How did you get information about this event?

.....  
 .....  
 .....

## Section 2: Investigating about your opinions of small-scale sport event brand building

**Explanation:** Please rate each item from 1 to 5. please tick  $\surd$  in the mark according to your opinions. Using the scale range from 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly agree.

No.	Items	Strong Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strong Agree
8	I can get information about the event from different public channels.	1	2	3	4	5
9	I recognize the composition of the participants involved in this event.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Whether there are celebrities involved or not, it still has a great impact on me.	1	2	3	4	5
11	I know the characteristics of this event.	1	2	3	4	5
12	The event combines the characteristics of regional culture.	1	2	3	4	5
13	I am aware of this sport event.	1	2	3	4	5
14	I can think of the name of the event quickly.	1	2	3	4	5
15	I can think of the logo and symbol of the event quickly.	1	2	3	4	5
16	I can identify the event among many other events.	1	2	3	4	5
17	I know what this event is like.	1	2	3	4	5
18	Athletes play on a highly competitive level.	1	2	3	4	5
19	The professionalism of the referees and other personnel determines the high standard of the event.	1	2	3	4	5
20	The level of the athletes is close, and the competition is fierce.	1	2	3	4	5
21	The event represents the high level of other same events.	1	2	3	4	5
22	The project setting of this event is very comprehensive.	1	2	3	4	5
23	The staff have a friendly attitude and decent behavior.	1	2	3	4	5

No.	Items	Strong Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strong Agree
24	The event has a good and impressive atmosphere.	1	2	3	4	5
25	The event has considerate and convenient volunteer services.	1	2	3	4	5
26	The event has well-equipped and convenient facilities.	1	2	3	4	5
27	Compared with other similar events, the event facilities of this event are more professional.	1	2	3	4	5
28	The city hosting the event has unique scenery and good urban features.	1	2	3	4	5
29	The host site has convenient transportation conditions.	1	2	3	4	5
30	The host site provides good accommodation and catering conditions.	1	2	3	4	5
31	The event has very convenient medical services.	1	2	3	4	5
32	The venue of the event has obvious emergency exit signs and the access to emergency exits is unobstructed.	1	2	3	4	5
33	I have confidence in the security guarantee system of the event.	1	2	3	4	5
34	The event is organized very efficiently.	1	2	3	4	5
35	The work of all the people in the event is great.	1	2	3	4	5
36	The event is well managed.	1	2	3	4	5

No.	Items	Strong Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strong Agree
37	I think the event is very interesting.	1	2	3	4	5
38	The event gives me a sense of security.	1	2	3	4	5
39	The event gives me a sense of identity.	1	2	3	4	5
40	The event gives me a sense of self-esteem.	1	2	3	4	5
41	It is a valuable event.	1	2	3	4	5
42	This is a very innovative event.	1	2	3	4	5
43	Personally, I think the event has something to do with me.	1	2	3	4	5
44	Compared with other events of the same type, it is an excellent event.	1	2	3	4	5
45	The event will be my first choice in the same type of events.	1	2	3	4	5
46	I will buy other products and services in the event.	1	2	3	4	5
47	I will take part in the event next time.	1	2	3	4	5
48	I will tell my friends about this series of events.	1	2	3	4	5
49	Compared with other similar events, I am willing to pay more for taking part in the event.	1	2	3	4	5
50	I will invite my friends to watch or take part in the event together.	1	2	3	4	5
51	I really love this event.	1	2	3	4	5
52	If this event is not held, I will miss it very much.	1	2	3	4	5
53	This event is very special for me.	1	2	3	4	5
54	For me, this event is not just an activity	1	2	3	4	5

No.	Items	Strong Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strong Agree
55	I have a strong sense of identity with those who take part in the event.	1	2	3	4	5
56	I feel like I almost belong to the same club as the other participants in this event.	1	2	3	4	5
57	This is the event for people like me.	1	2	3	4	5
58	I keep in touch with the people who take part in the event.	1	2	3	4	5
59	I'd like to discuss the event with others.	1	2	3	4	5
60	I'm always interested in learning more information about the event.	1	2	3	4	5
61	I'm honored to let others know that I took part in the event.	1	2	3	4	5
62	Compared with others, I will pay close attention to the information of the event.	1	2	3	4	5

**Section 3: Please give some suggestions to the process of small- scale sport event brand building**

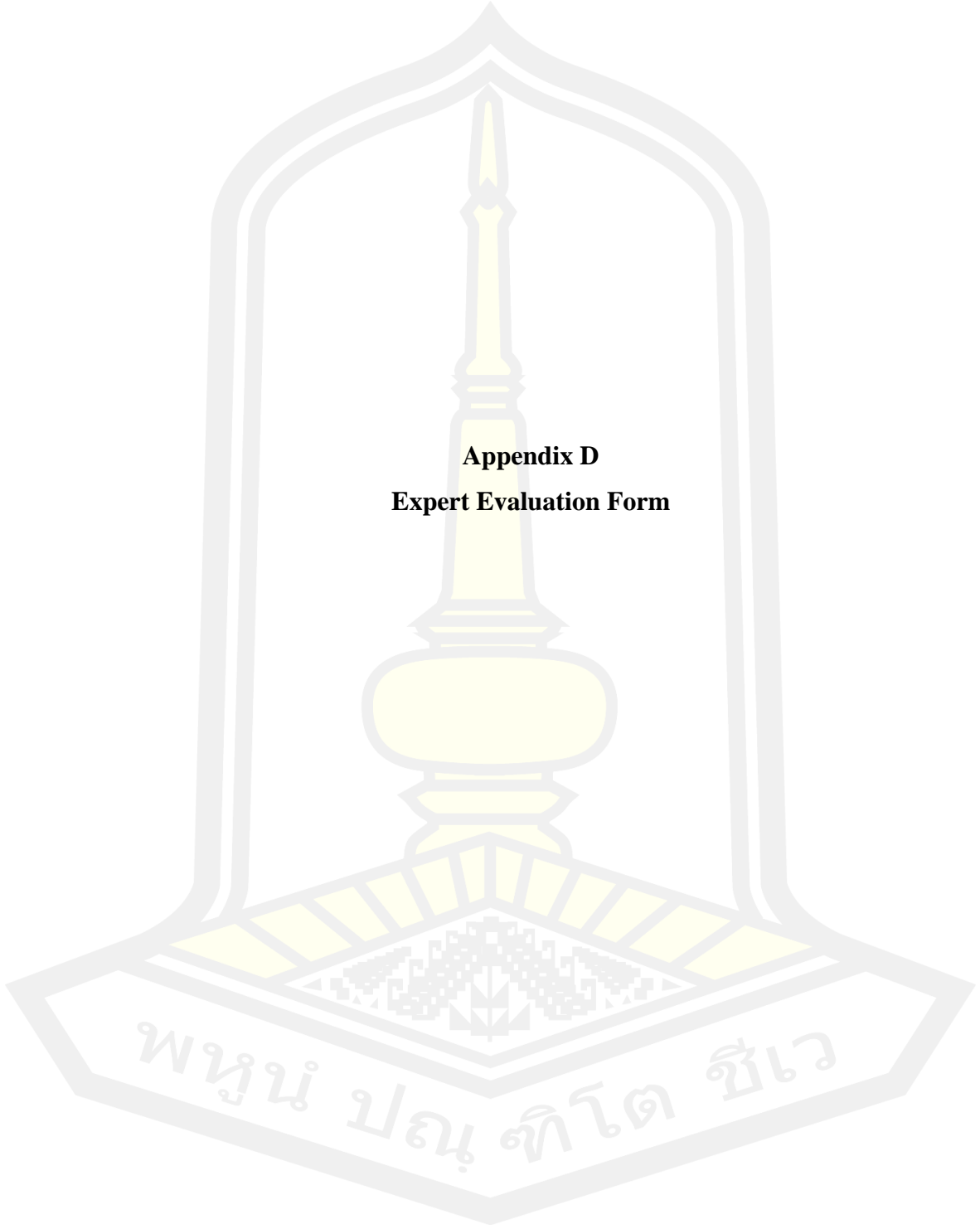
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**Thank you very much!**



**Appendix D**  
**Expert Evaluation Form**

พหุบัณฑิตวิทโย

### Step 1

The first step was to generate the brand salience of the event. The purpose was to establish brand recognition and improve the possibility for consumers to choose the event. This study considered brand awareness to reflect the brand salience in the minds of consumers (Aaker, 1991, p.114), the recognition and recall of the brand by consumers in different situations (Aaker, 1997).

During the first phase of the interview, some interviewees believed that positioning is equally important in brand building for small-scale sport event. Determining the target audience and the characteristics of the event through positioning can also effectively help organizers to establish the brand identity of the event and improve the recognition of the event by the participants.

The following table shows the details of each step and using the Likert 5-point scale to evaluate. Please evaluate the content in “item detail”, from “Strongly disagree” (1) to “Strongly agree” (5) (Kim & Kim, 2005). Please evaluate based on your experience.

Step 1	Factor	Details	Evaluation					Suggest ion
			1	2	3	4	5	
Clarify the event positioning.	Positioning	Locating audience orientation of the event.						
		Identifying the participant characteristics. Make clear the mission of the event, and value proposition of the event. Integrate local characteristics of culture to the competition.						
Enhance the event awareness.	recall	Name the event that significantly reflects the event positioning.						
	recognition	Develop and design event logo and symbol that recognizable.						
		Through integrated marketing communications, create awareness of participants and enhance awareness of the event.						
		Enhancing visual communication for event recognition.						



## Step 2

The second step was to establish the image of the event, through the experience of the participants and other brand information sources of the event, to establish the meaning of the event in the minds of the participants (Keller,2001;2016). Researchers' research on sports brand equity noted that the sports environment is full of various brand associations (J. Gladden, 2013). In a competitive sports environment, the implementation of a unique brand image strategy can effectively enhance brand loyalty, thus gaining a competitive advantage (Hongliang, 2009; Yun & Rongri, 2019). Therefore, in the sports environment, brand management efforts can be focused on brand image. In sports events, the image of competition, service, and facilities have an impact on the brand image of the event. These images influence consumers' evaluation of the brand.

In the first phase of the interview, experts believe that safety is also an important part of sports events, and orderly organization also have an impact on the branding of sports events.

Step 2	Factor	Details	Evaluation					Suggestion
			1	2	3	4	5	
Build event image	Competition	Invite participation of high-level athletes.						
		Invite qualified referees to ensure the fairness and publicity of the event.						
Build event image	Service	Categorizing competition groups to compete fairly.						
		There are various and interesting competing events.						
Build event image	Service	Service staff display decent behaviors and good attitude.						
		Offering good competition environment and experience for watching and participating.						
Build event image	Service	Provide reasonable and orderly volunteer services through volunteer training.						

Step 2	Factor	Details	Evaluation					Suggestion
			1	2	3	4	5	
	<b>Facility</b>	Well-providing facilities throughout the event. Tourism culture is also presenting through the event facilities. Provide convenient transportation facilities. Consider the needs of participants and provide suitable accommodation. Medical insurance at the competition site.						
	<b>Organization</b>	The emergency passage is clearly marked and the passage is unobstructed. Prepare a complete emergency response plan. Arrange the event schedule reasonably according to the principle of feasibility.						
	<b>Safety</b>	Have the service consciousness of maintaining the image of the event. Implement a reasonable way of event management.						

### Step 3

The third step was to stimulate the participants' positive response to the event through consumers' participation and understanding of the event in the second step. This study divided this step into judgments and feelings based on the original theory. Judgment is the rational response of consumers to the overall evaluation of the brand, while feelings are a series of emotional responses, such as consumers' enthusiasm, fun, and excitement of the brand (Keller, 2001; Adrian, 2014; Keller, 2016).

For sports events, perception is not only the direct reflection of sensory organs in the mind but also includes the audience's basic evaluation of objective things (Tao, 2015). Participants' perceptual reactions play an important role in the process of their selection of events, affecting the participants' behavioral intentions (Gordon & James, 2017).

Step 3	Factor	Details	Evaluation					Suggestion
			1	2	3	4	5	
<b>Accept consumers' feedback</b>	<b>Feeling</b>	Participants' perception of the event atmosphere.						
		Participants' trust in the event brand.						
		Participants' recognition of the value proposition conveyed by the event.						
		Participants' emotional identification with the event experience.						
		Participants' recognition of the event value.						
	<b>Judgement</b>	Participants' recognition of the innovation of the competition.						
		Participants' satisfaction with the experience of the event.						
		Participants' recognition of event competitiveness.						

#### Step 4

The last step was to maintain the participants' loyalty to the event and achieve the resonance of the event by increasing community awareness, active engagement, and other measures. From the rational and perceptual paths, this study discussed the relationship between participants and events in the process of brand building for small-scale sport event.

Participants make a series of emotional and rational judgments on the event through the generated image of the event. Finally, establish their relationship with the event. Participants' perception and evaluation of the event image reflect the audience's value demands and willingness to participate (Tao, 2015). Resonance plays an important role in the sustainable development of sport event brand equity (Moore & Wurster, 2007), which means that participants have established a long-term relationship with the sport event.

Step 4	Factor	Details	Evaluation					Suggestion
			1	2	3	4	5	
Get Resonate with consumers.	<b>Attitude</b>	Participant may have overall satisfied with the event.						
	<b>Loyalty</b>	Participant will purchase additional products or services for this event. Participant will participate repeatedly.						
	<b>Behavior</b>	Participant will promote to people who around them.						
	<b>Loyalty</b>	Participant will pay a higher price for this event. Participant will Invite people to watch or participate this event.						
	<b>Attachment</b>	Participants' will recognition of the individuality of the event. Participants' will recognition of the performance of the event. Participants' self-awareness may resonance with event personality.						
	<b>Community</b>	Participants identify with other participants. Participants actively interact with other event participants. Participants maintain relationships with other participants.						
	<b>Engagement</b>	Participants actively recommend this event to the people around them. Participants will follow the dynamics of the event. Participants will follow the information of the event.						

**Thanks for your help!**



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