DIJEFA: Dinasti International Journal of Economics, Finance & Accounting
E-ISSN: 2721-303X
P-ISSN: 2721-3021
https://dinastipub.org/DIJEFA dinasti.info@gmail.com +62 811 7404 455
DINASTI PUBLISHER

DOI: https://doi.org/10.38035/dijefa.v7i3.6947
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Received: 07 June 2026 | **Revised:** 16 June 2026 | **Accepted:** 07 July 2026

The Effect of Sponsors Activation on Customer Engagement Behavior in the BRI Super League

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Abstract: This study examines the effect of Sponsors Activation on Customer Engagement Disposition (CED) and Customer Engagement Behavior (CEB) within BRI Super League, and investigates the moderating roles of Attitude Toward the Sponsor and Sponsorship Authenticity. A quantitative survey was conducted (n = 214) and analyzed using SEM-PLS with a higher-order construct approach. Results indicate that Sponsors Activation positively and significantly influences CED ($\beta = 0.399$; $t = 6.680$; $p < 0.001$) and CEB ($\beta = 0.417$; $t = 8.356$; $p < 0.001$). CED positively influences CEB ($\beta = 0.269$; $t = 5.909$; $p < 0.001$). Attitude Toward the Sponsor moderates the Sponsors Activation–CED relationship ($\beta = 0.269$; $t = 5.679$), while Sponsorship Authenticity moderates both the Sponsors Activation–CED ($\beta = 0.340$) and Sponsors Activation–CEB ($\beta = 0.432$) relationships. CEB is confirmed as a second-order reflective construct reflected by augmenting, co-developing, influencing, and mobilizing behavior. This research contributes to sport sponsorship and customer engagement literature by elucidating the mechanism through which sponsorship activation generates meaningful and sustainable customer engagement.

Keywords: Sponsors Activation, Customer Engagement Disposition, Customer Engagement Behavior, Attitude Toward the Sponsor, Sponsorship Authenticity, Sport Sponsorship.

INTRODUCTION

The development of modern marketing reflects a significant paradigm shift from transactional to relational approaches, emphasizing the cultivation of long-term brand–consumer relationships. In an era of intensifying competition, product homogeneity, and growing consumer bargaining power, companies can no longer rely solely on sales-oriented or awareness-based marketing communication. Instead, they must build sustained, meaningful consumer engagement—what the marketing literature conceptualizes as *customer engagement* (Brodie et al., 2011).

Customer engagement encompasses the psychological and behavioral states reflecting consumer involvement with a brand beyond mere purchase activity. Scholars emphasize that engagement manifests not only in attitudes or intentions but also in voluntary consumer

behaviors that generate value for the firm and other stakeholders (Jaakkola & Alexander, 2014). The literature distinguishes two primary levels: *customer engagement disposition* (CED)—the psychological readiness or propensity to engage—and *customer engagement behavior* (CEB)—the overt behavioral manifestation of that engagement (Hollebeek et al., 2014; Schönberner & Woratschek, 2022).

One of the most widely adopted strategies for building *customer engagement* is sport sponsorship, owing to its strong emotional character, loyal fan bases, and capacity for social identification between audiences and sponsored events (Cornwell & Kwon, 2020). However, research consistently demonstrates that sponsorship does not automatically generate engagement. Sponsorships limited to logo placement or passive brand association typically yield only awareness, without deeper involvement (Cornwell, Weeks, & Roy, 2005). Effectiveness therefore hinges on how sponsorship is activated through *Sponsors Activation*—an integrated set of activities designed to animate the sponsorship via direct interaction, consumer experience, and audience engagement across offline and digital touchpoints (Weeks, Cornwell, & Drennan, 2008).

The global sports sponsorship market was valued at approximately USD 70.2 billion in 2025 and is projected to reach USD 96.45 billion by 2030 (CAGR ~6.6%), reflecting growing corporate confidence in sport sponsorship as an effective marketing communication instrument (The Business Research Company, 2026). In Indonesia, football commands one of the world's largest fan bases, with an estimated 160 million supporters—placing the country third globally (Medy, 2025). This vast audience renders Indonesian football, particularly *BRI Super League* (the national professional league), a strategically significant sponsorship platform.

PT Bank Rakyat Indonesia (Persero) Tbk. (BRI), one of Indonesia's largest banks, serves as the title sponsor of BRI Super League. The league recorded attendance exceeding 996,763 spectators across 153 matches in the first half of the 2025/2026 season (Liga Indonesia Baru, 2026), underscoring its scale as an engagement platform. Despite the substantial scale of BRI's sponsorship investment and activation activities—ranging from in-stadium branding and experiential booths to integrated digital campaigns—the empirical effectiveness of these activities in generating *customer engagement* remains understudied in the Indonesian banking context.

Moreover, the sponsorship literature highlights that consumer evaluative factors—specifically *attitude toward the sponsor* and *sponsorship authenticity*—moderate the effectiveness of activation activities. *Attitude toward the sponsor* reflects consumers' overall evaluations of the sponsor (Speed & Thompson, 2000), while *sponsorship authenticity* captures perceptions of the sponsorship's genuineness, credibility, and congruence with the brand and event identity (Mazodier & Merunka, 2012). Both factors can amplify or attenuate the impact of *Sponsors Activation* on CED and CEB.

Against this backdrop, this study addresses the following research questions: (1) Does *Sponsors Activation* positively influence CED and CEB in BRI Super League? (2) Does CED positively influence CEB? (3) Does *Attitude Toward the Sponsor* moderate the *Sponsors Activation*–CED relationship? (4) Does *Sponsorship Authenticity* moderate the *Sponsors Activation*–CED and *Sponsors Activation*–CEB relationships? (5) Is CEB a second-order reflective construct reflected by *augmenting, co-developing, influencing,* and *mobilizing behavior*?

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative explanatory research design using cross-sectional survey methodology. Data were collected from 214 respondents who satisfied purposive sampling criteria: Indonesian citizens aged ≥18 years, who had attended at least two BRI Super League matches in the past three years, and who had been exposed to BRI's sponsorship

activation activities. An online questionnaire was distributed nationally during the 2025/2026 BRI Super League season.

The questionnaire comprised five constructs measured via a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree): (1) *Sponsors Activation* (5 items; O'Reilly & Horning, 2013); (2) *Attitude Toward the Sponsor* (3 items); (3) *Sponsorship Authenticity* (6 items); (4) CED (5 items); and (5) CEB (14 items across four dimensions: *augmenting*, *co-developing*, *influencing*, *mobilizing behavior*) (Schönberner & Woratschek, 2022; Jaakkola & Alexander, 2014; Roy et al., 2018). The minimum required sample was 165 (5× the 33 indicators), and 214 valid responses were obtained.

Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS 4. A two-stage approach was used to test CEB as a second-order reflective construct. The measurement model was evaluated for reliability (Cronbach's α and Composite Reliability), convergent validity (factor loadings ≥ 0.70; AVE ≥ 0.50), and discriminant validity (Fornell-Larcker criterion, cross-loadings, and HTMT ≤ 0.90). Hypotheses were tested via bootstrapping (5,000 subsamples) with significance threshold $t > 1.96$ ($p < 0.05$).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Profile

The sample (n = 214) was predominantly male (73.4%) and concentrated in the 21–30 age bracket (48.6%), consistent with the demographic profile of Indonesian football audiences. The majority held a bachelor's degree (54.2%) and were private sector employees (40.2%). Geographically, respondents represented 15 provinces, with the largest concentrations in DKI Jakarta (21.0%), East Java (16.8%), and West Java (12.6%). Crucially, 90.7% of respondents were BRI customers, affirming strong contextual relevance. A majority (48.6%) had attended more than 10 matches in the past three years, indicating high event involvement.

Measurement Model Evaluation

All constructs demonstrated strong reliability, with Cronbach's α ranging from 0.837 to 0.946 and Composite Reliability from 0.900 to 0.947 (Hair et al., 2022 threshold: $\alpha > 0.70$; CR > 0.70). Convergent validity was confirmed: all factor loadings exceeded 0.70 and AVE values ranged from 0.659 to 0.841 (threshold: AVE > 0.50). Discriminant validity was established through all three criteria—Fornell-Larcker (diagonal AVE square roots exceeded inter-construct correlations), cross-loading (each indicator loaded highest on its intended construct), and HTMT (all values < 0.90, maximum = 0.730 for CED–CEB.CO). Model fit was acceptable (SRMR = 0.090 < 0.10). These results confirm the measurement model as valid and reliable for structural testing.

Table 1. Measurement Model Reliability and Validity Results

Construct	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE	Factor Loading Range
Sponsors Activation	0.896	0.923	0.707	0.812–0.871
Attitude Toward the Sponsor	0.837	0.900	0.751	0.824–0.893
Sponsorship Authenticity	0.902	0.924	0.670	0.809–0.836
Customer Engagement Disposition (CED)	0.870	0.906	0.659	0.767–0.849
CEB – Augmenting Behavior	0.922	0.945	0.811	0.883–0.923
CEB – Co-Developing Behavior	0.905	0.941	0.841	0.875–0.945
CEB – Influencing Behavior	0.897	0.936	0.829	0.880–0.927

Construct	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE	Factor Loading Range
CEB – Mobilizing Behavior	0.925	0.947	0.817	0.897–0.909

Source: SmartPLS 4 output (2026)

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive analysis (Likert scale 1–5) revealed that all constructs registered mean values above 3.90, indicating generally positive evaluations. *Sponsorship Authenticity* achieved the highest mean (M = 4.052), followed by CED (M = 4.113) and CEB (M = 4.149, across all dimensions). *Attitude Toward the Sponsor* (M = 3.958) and *Sponsors Activation* (M = 3.930) also fell in the "high" category (3.40–4.29). Notably, CED5 ("I am interested in following future BRI initiatives"; M = 4.505) and CEB.MB4 ("I maintain a positive view of BRI despite negative news"; M = 4.547) recorded the highest individual indicator means, signaling strong psychological engagement and brand advocacy among the sample.

Second-Order Construct: Customer Engagement Behavior

CEB was modeled as a second-order reflective construct using a two-stage approach. All four first-order dimensions—*Augmenting Behavior* ($\beta = 0.845$; $t = 14.963$; $p < 0.001$), *Co-Developing Behavior* ($\beta = 0.864$; $t = 27.426$; $p < 0.001$), *Influencing Behavior* ($\beta = 0.801$; $t = 11.605$; $p < 0.001$), and *Mobilizing Behavior* ($\beta = 0.861$; $t = 21.063$; $p < 0.001$)—significantly and strongly reflected the second-order CEB construct, confirming its multidimensional nature (Roy et al., 2018).

Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

The structural model demonstrated high explanatory power: R^2 for CEB = 0.823 (substantial) and R^2 for CED = 0.536 (moderate), per Hair et al. (2022) benchmarks. All six hypotheses were supported (Table 2).

Table 2. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Path Coeff. (β)	T-stat.	p-value	f^2	Result
H1a: Sponsors Activation → CEB	0.417	8.356	0.000	0.738	Supported
H1b: Sponsors Activation → CED	0.399	6.680	0.000	0.320	Supported
H2a: Sponsorship Authenticity × Sponsors Activation → CEB	0.432	11.055	0.000	0.607	Supported
H2b: Sponsorship Authenticity × Sponsors Activation → CED	0.340	5.420	0.000	0.150	Supported
H3: Attitude Toward Sponsor × Sponsors Activation → CED	0.269	5.679	0.000	0.138	Supported
H4: CED → CEB	0.269	5.909	0.000	0.256	Supported

Source: SmartPLS 4 output (2026)

Discussion

H1a & H1b – Sponsors Activation → CEB and CED. The confirmation that *Sponsors Activation* positively influences both CEB ($\beta = 0.417$; $f^2 = 0.738$, large effect) and CED ($\beta = 0.399$; $f^2 = 0.320$, medium-large effect) aligns with Roy et al. (2018) and Schönberner and Woratschek (2022). Activation activities that enhance fan experiences—creative in-stadium engagements, digital campaigns, community interactions—translate into both psychological readiness and active behavioral contributions. The large f^2 for the CEB path is particularly

notable, indicating that activation quality is the single strongest driver of fan behavioral engagement in this context. This is consistent with the conceptual argument that activation serves as the mechanism converting passive sponsorship exposure into meaningful engagement (O'Reilly & Horning, 2013; Cornwell et al., 2005).

H2a & H2b – Sponsorship Authenticity as moderator. The moderation of *Sponsorship Authenticity* on both Activation–CEB (β = 0.432) and Activation–CED (β = 0.340) confirms that consumer perception of the sponsorship's genuineness is a critical boundary condition. When fans perceive BRI's involvement in the league as consistent, value-aligned, and credible, the impact of activation activities is amplified substantially. Conversely, sponsorships perceived as purely commercial or incongruent weaken engagement responses. These findings corroborate Beverland (2005) and Mazodier and Merunka (2012), extending their arguments to a large-scale sport sponsorship context in an emerging market. The finding that authenticity moderates the behavioral path more strongly than the dispositional path (f^2 = 0.607 vs. 0.150) suggests that authenticity is especially pivotal in converting sponsorship experiences into tangible behavioral outcomes.

H3 – Attitude Toward the Sponsor as moderator. The significant moderation of *Attitude Toward the Sponsor* on the Activation–CED relationship (β = 0.269) aligns with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) and Speed and Thompson (2000). Consumers with pre-existing positive evaluations of BRI are more receptive to activation messages, amplifying dispositional engagement. Notably, this moderator acts exclusively on CED (not CEB directly), indicating that attitudinal valence primarily shapes the psychological preparedness to engage, which subsequently cascades into behavior via the CED→CEB pathway.

H4 – CED → CEB. The positive CED–CEB relationship (β = 0.269; f^2 = 0.256, medium effect) supports Schönberner and Woratschek's (2022) proposition that psychological disposition is an antecedent of behavioral engagement. This sequential mechanism—activation builds disposition, disposition drives behavior—is conceptually grounded in the Reasoned Action Approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen & Albarracín, 2007) and the Theory of Customer Engagement Marketing (Harmeling et al., 2016). The implication is clear: companies seeking to maximize CEB must first cultivate CED through relevant, resonant, and repeated activation experiences.

CONCLUSION

This study provides comprehensive empirical evidence on the mechanism through which *Sponsors Activation* generates *customer engagement* in the context of Indonesian sport sponsorship. Six key conclusions emerge. First, *Sponsors Activation* positively and significantly drives both CED and CEB in BRI Super League, confirming activation's central role in bridging sponsorship investment and engagement outcomes. Second, CED serves as a critical psychological antecedent of CEB, validating the sequential disposition-to-behavior engagement process. Third, *Attitude Toward the Sponsor* amplifies the effect of *Sponsors Activation* on CED, highlighting the importance of overall brand reputation management alongside activation design. Fourth, *Sponsorship Authenticity* strengthens both the Activation–CED and Activation–CEB pathways, demonstrating that perceived genuineness of the sponsorship relationship is a powerful lever for engagement—particularly at the behavioral level. Fifth, CEB is confirmed as a second-order reflective construct, validating its multidimensional operationalization comprising *augmenting, co-developing, influencing,* and *mobilizing behavior* as manifestations of a common engagement construct.

Theoretically, this study enriches the sport sponsorship and customer engagement literature by integrating activation, disposition, behavioral outcomes, and dual moderators within a single empirically tested model—previously unexplored in the Indonesian banking industry context. Practically, the findings advise BRI to invest not only in activation breadth

and creativity, but also in building authentic, long-term sponsorship narratives that resonate with football fans' values. Designing participatory programs that encourage user-generated content, fan feedback, and community mobilization would further convert fan dispositions into active behavioral engagement, yielding sustainable brand advocacy and value co-creation. Future research should employ longitudinal designs, explore cross-sport contexts, and incorporate additional constructs such as *fan identification*, *brand trust*, and *perceived value* to further delineate the engagement formation process.

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