

# Digital Sponsorship: Structured Literature Review

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**Keywords**— Digital Sponsorship, Brand Leadership, Game Design, Game Development, Structured Literature Review.

## 1 Subject Area

Brand Leadership and Management

## 2 Introduction

The field of digital sponsorship, specifically in the field of eSports, is one that requires further investigation, according to various authors (Huettermann, Trail, Pizzo & Stallone 2020), (Elasri-Ejjaberi, Rodriguez-Rodriguez, Sergio, Aparicio-Chueca & Pilar 2020). Furthermore it is unclear to what extent game design and level design effect how gamers perceive brand placement in digital games (Hwang, Ballouli, So & Heere 2017).

This paper will thus explore the current state of the literature regarding Digital Sponsorship in eSports, and more specifically the link between Game and Level Design and Brand Placement in eSports.

The Research Question that this paper wishes to explore is: To what extent has the link between Game and Level Design and Brand Placement in eSports been explored in the literature?

## 3 Literature

The field of Digital Sponsorship is still nascent, but there is a growing body of literature exploring various aspects of Digital Sponsorship. Some authors are comparing Digital Sponsorship to traditional forms of Sports Sponsorship (Huettermann et al. 2020), others are exploring the possibility of Brand Harm and Digital Sponsorship (Freitas, Contreras-Espinosa & Álvaro Pereira Correia 2019) and finally authors are generally commenting on the lack of detailed research within this field and performing their own exploratory literature reviews (Elasri-Ejjaberi et al. 2020).

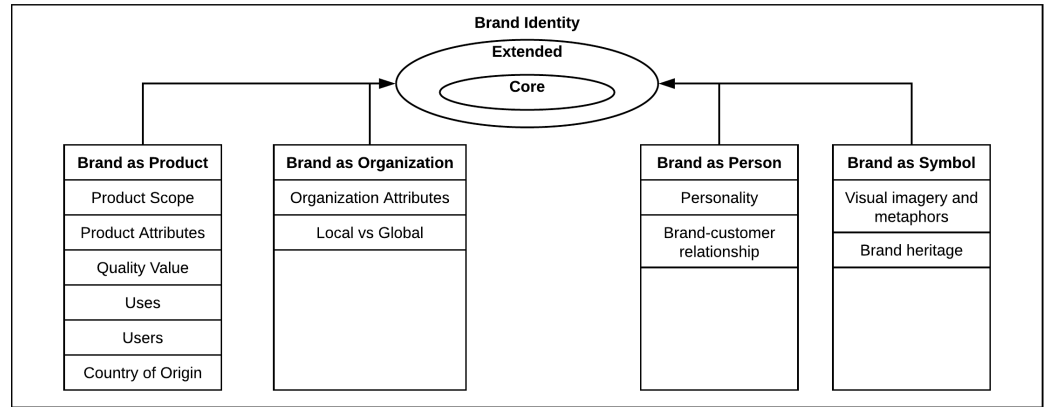
To help underpin the study Aaker’s Brand Identity model will be used to provide theoretical structure and classification to the literature reviewed and the summary of the literature that will be produced. (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2012)

## 4 Methodology and Data Analysis

The research data, being academic literature can be classified as highly mediated, but unstructured, using the mixed methods framework of Plowright (Plowright 2011). This classification naturally leads to performing a Structured Literature Review (Petticrew & Roberts 2008).

To ensure that the literature that is reviewed is structured into a logical format, Aaker’s Brand Identity model will be used. This review will focus primarily on the issue of Brand Identity, so the four brand identity perspectives (brand as a product, an organization, a person, and a symbol) will be used as the primary categories for classification (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2012). Each of these primary categories will then be sub-divided into the appropriate sub-category as shown below:

Figure 1: Brand Identity Model Adapted from Aaker



This approach will link the sources reviewed to the theoretical framework of Aaker’s Brand Identity model, and through doing so, identify any gaps in the literature.

This approach will also identify any aspects of the literature that are not present within Aaker’s model, and provide scope for adapting the Brand Identity model.

## 5 Ethical Clearance

No participants of any kind will be included in the study so no ethical clearance will be required.

## 6 Expected Findings and Results

A clearer understanding of what research has been done in the field of Digital Sponsorship of eSports will be provided. This will hopefully also lead to the identification of any gaps within the literature, especially any concerning the link between Game and Level Design and Digital Sponsorship.

## 7 Limitations of the Study

The study will be time limited to explore the most recent literature in the field, and will be limited to eSports games only, to ensure that the study is focused.

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