8-1-2011

Consumer attitudes toward naming-rights sponsorships in college athletics

Terence Eddy

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

CONSUMER ATTITUDES TOWARD NAMING-RIGHTS SPONSORSHIPS IN COLLEGE ATHLETICS

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Terence Eddy

College of Natural and Health Sciences
School of Sport and Exercise Science
Sport Administration

August, 2011

This Dissertation by: Terence Eddy

Entitled: *Consumer attitudes toward naming rights sponsorships in college athletics*

has been approved as meeting the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in College of Natural and Health Sciences in School of Sport and Exercise Science, Program of Sport Administration

Accepted by the Doctoral Committee

____
David Stotlar, Ph.D., Chair

____
Dianna Gray, Ph.D., Committee Member

____
Robert Heiny, Ph.D., Committee Member

____
Vish Iyer, Ph.D., Faculty Representative

Date of Dissertation Defense ____

Accepted by the Graduate School

____
Robbyn R. Wacker, Ph. D.
Assistant Vice President for Research
Dean of the Graduate School & International Admissions

ABSTRACT

Eddy, Terence. *Consumer attitudes toward naming-rights sponsorships in college athletics*. Published Doctor of Philosophy dissertation, University of Northern Colorado, 2011.

Despite its popularity, college sport overall has struggled as a commercial enterprise. With these economic difficulties in mind, the issue of commercialism has been at the forefront of college athletics since the 19th century, and corporate sponsorship is considered by some to be an especially destructive element to the egalitarian nature of amateurism.

While there can be little debate that naming-rights sponsorships can be quite lucrative, many institutions are hesitant to fully explore naming-rights. Institutions may consider corporate names for smaller areas of the facility, such as club or suite levels, but changing the name of the stadium or field is considered by some administrators to be an attack on the tradition of the football program. Although these concerns for tradition seem warranted, little is known about how fans might actually perceive a change in a stadium name.

Data collection for the study took place from October to December of 2010. The study was conducted at a variety of NCAA Division I - Football Bowl Subdivision stadiums around the United States. Participants were contacted using an intercept survey distribution method at tailgating areas prior to college football games and were asked to

complete a 39-item survey instrument. A total of 800 participants completed the survey, with 731 considered acceptable for inclusion in the analysis.

Once data collection was complete, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with an oblique rotation technique was used to determine the exact structure of the multi-dimensional constructs. Using the factor structure from the EFA, two multiple linear regressions were conducted. Next, a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was run to determine if the dependent variables from the above tests differed based on various demographics and involvement related factors. Both of the regression equations yielded significant models, and there were four individual factors where groups differed in the MANOVA.

In summary, it appears that there are significant relationships between many of the variables in this study. Having an understanding of the interplay between these variables relative to fan behaviors is important for athletic administrators, particularly those that are considering finding a naming-rights sponsor. However, the data suggest that the strength of these relationships vary greatly between fans groups associated with different college football teams.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are a vast number of people that have influenced me both personally and professionally throughout my doctoral program, as well as previously in my life that brought me to this point. I would like to specifically recognize just a few of those people here.

First, I would like to thank my research advisor, Dr. David Stotlar, for his commitment over the past three and a half years. Your expertise and experience have taught me not only the necessary skills to graduate, but also how to be a professional in higher education. I hope that one day I can have even a fraction of the influence on the Sport Management community that you have had. I would also like to thank Dr. Dianna Gray for her steadfast support throughout my time at UNC. I am grateful for the experience of being your teaching assistant, and also for your frequent advice on my research. I have learned so much from you in terms of both teaching and research, and you have been a major influence on my growth as a doctoral student. I would also like to acknowledge my other two committee members, namely Dr. Bob Heiny and Dr. Vish Iyer. Your unique viewpoints made a great contribution not only to my dissertation, but also to the way that I approach research. I would also like to grant a special thank you to Professor Linda Sharp. You constantly challenged me to be better, and helped my work and writing mature immensely. I am extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with you.

Next, I would like to show my appreciation for all my colleagues from the UNC family, particularly Rebecca Stewart, Cody Havard, Lamar Reams, Dr. Stephen Shapiro, Dr. Alan Morse, and Dr. Joris Drayer. Your collegiality, cooperation, support, advice, and friendship have meant more to me than you will ever know, and I look forward to our future together. In particular, I would like to single out Dr. Brendan Dwyer. You have been an incredible mentor, and I simply could not have made it this far without your help and guidance. I will never be able to thank you enough for your tireless support that has undoubtedly made me a better person and scholar.

I would like to reserve another thank you for the person that started my journey in the field of Sport Management, namely Dr. Dallas Branch at West Virginia University. You took a chance on a mathematician that loved sports, and you have been a major influence on me ever since. The passion and dedication you have shown to help your students succeed is remarkable, and I can only hope to someday have such a positive influence on so many people.

Most importantly, I would like to finish by thanking my parents, Roland and Barbara Eddy. Your unwavering support in all my endeavors has meant the world to me, and there is no way I would have been able to have any of my experiences without that support. As two people that largely dedicated their lives to higher education, you showed me from a young age how fulfilling life as an academic can be. I hope that I have made you proud.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

College sport has been transformed from an amateur activity, similar to the British model of university sport, into a highly rationalized form of commercial entertainment (Sack, 1987). Despite its popularity, college sport overall has struggled as a commercial enterprise. In 2008, only 25 NCAA Division I Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) athletic programs reported positive net revenues, and the gap between profitable programs and the remaining institutions has continued to grow (Fulks, 2009). According to the Knight Commission, of the 93 institutions that reported negative net revenues at the time of this study, the deficits averaged $9.9 million per institution that year (Weiner, 2009); further, if it were not for the popularity of college football and men's basketball, the bottom line for most athletic departments would be even more dire. This being the case, many athletic departments, out of necessity to survive, now serve to harness this interest in football and basketball to build identification and generate resources for other athletic teams, as well as the university as a whole (Toma, 2003). This task has become paramount as a university's athletic community extends to the entire university or in some cases the entire state, and intercollegiate football and basketball games draw alumni and other supporters back to campuses (Zagacki & Grano, 2005; Pan & Baker, 2005).

With these economic difficulties in mind, the issue of commercialism has been at the forefront of college athletics since the 19th century. This notion of commercialism has manifested itself as what is typically referred to as the “arms race” in college athletics. The basic premise of the arms race is that many schools are competing for a few elite athletes, the recruitment of which will hopefully bring wins and boost both attendance and enrollment figures (Grant, Leadley, & Zygmont, 2008). In order to keep up with other institutions, schools are spending increasing amounts on athletics, which most cannot afford. Reputations of universities have become increasingly intertwined with athletics, so administrators are hesitant to decrease their athletic spending and run the risk of changing the public perception of their institutions (Sperber, 2000).

The arms race has existed almost since the beginning of college sports but escalated in the 1970’s and 1980’s, when increased revenues from television networks fed the growth of athletic departments as a commercial enterprise (Grant et al., 2008; Sperber, 2000). With this influx of funds from television, the NCAA also changed competition requirements that forced schools into enlarging their athletic programs and facilities (Sperber, 2000). Administrators have also attempted to attract top athletes by having the most modern facilities available, which can also accommodate as many fans as possible to maximize revenues (Grant et al., 2008). While American universities survived in the 1920’s without federal support, the major universities felt the need for self-promotion through athletics, as a method of advertising and gaining financial backing from alumni and the state (Smith, 2008). As the arms race in college athletics escalated, these practices would continue and grow. By the end of the 20th century, most athletic departments had gained multiple corporate sponsors for their football programs in order to keep up with spending across college athletics (Sperber, 2000).

Corporate sponsorship is considered by some to be an especially destructive element to the egalitarian nature of amateurism (McAllister, 1998). At one time, the NCAA was very restrictive regarding the visibility of logos in its members' athletic facilities, but members are now attracting more sponsors because the NCAA has relaxed these previously stringent restrictions on the use of corporate insignia (Zimbalist, 1999). Others suggest that the huge upsurge and broad market orientation of American sports can be attributed to the commercial character of the media world, which can be observed in the multi-billion dollar television contracts associated with college football and basketball (Lobmeyer & Weidinger, 1992). In all, while corporate logos and the media contribute to the commercialization of intercollegiate athletics, there is an elaborate nexus of corporate connections that sustains big-time college athletics (Zimbalist, 1999).

The institutions that have embraced the growth of sponsorship in college athletics are also beginning to turn to naming-rights agreements as an additional form of sponsorship revenue. Several Division I (FBS) football programs have secured naming-rights partners for their stadia, including Louisville, Maryland, Minnesota, and Texas Tech (Bentubo, 2007). While there can be little debate that naming-rights sponsorships can be quite lucrative, many institutions are hesitant to fully explore naming-rights. Institutions may consider corporate names for smaller areas of the facility, such as club or suite levels, but changing the name of the stadium or field is considered by some administrators to be an attack on the tradition of the football program (Bentubo, 2007). Although these concerns for tradition seem warranted, little is known about how fans might actually perceive a change in a stadium name, or how they might change their behaviors if such a sponsorship became a reality at their favorite team's stadium. Hence, it is important for athletic departments to understand the behaviors of their football fans, particularly in terms of ticket and merchandise purchasing intentions, in order to keep themselves viable economically.

The study of sport consumer behavior can be readily used by practitioners to achieve several goals, such as understanding fans' attitudes and behaviors (Mullin, Hardy, & Sutton, 2000). Consumer behavior is a large sub-area of marketing that can be defined as the "activities directly involved in obtaining, consuming, and disposing of products and services, including the decision processes that precede and follow these actions" (Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard, 1995, p. 4). Similarly, sport consumer behavior has been defined as the process involved when individuals select, purchase, and use sport-related products and services to satisfy needs or receive benefits (Funk, 2008). Past research in consumer behavior within the business literature has sufficiently progressed so that the decision-making process can be adequately understood (Engel et al., 1995). When attitudes and behaviors are understood by marketers, the risks of marketing failure can be substantially reduced.

The research on consumer behavior has been extended into the realm of sport in order to better understand fan and spectator attitudes and behaviors. Fan attitudes are an important aspect of the decision-making process when it comes to fan behavioral intentions, such as attending future games, and purchasing team merchandise or sponsors products. A fundamental concept in sport consumer behavior, which has also been found to have an effect on attitudes toward sponsorship, is team identification (Madrigal, 2000; Zhang, Won, & Pastore, 2005). The concept of team identification has been derived from identification with social groups in social identity theory, and can be thought of as an individual's internal orientation to a team (Trail, Anderson, & Fink, 2000; Trail, Robinson, Dick, & Gillentine, 2003). In general, individuals with high identification to a team will attend more games, buy more merchandise, and have more positive feelings about team sponsors (Madrigal, 2000; Trail, Anderson, & Fink, 2005). In the context of college athletics, however, attitudes toward commercialization can have a moderating effect on team identification when attempting to determine a fan's attitudes toward sponsors (Zhang et al., 2005). Thus, more research that addresses both of these concepts simultaneously should be helpful in creating a deeper understanding as to how college football fans feel about corporate sponsorships, and how their various purchasing behaviors are related to these feelings.

Statement of Problem

Despite the rise in the visibility of sponsorships at college athletic venues, there is a dearth in the knowledge base regarding how various stakeholders perceive sponsorship. In particular, it is unclear whether the changing sponsorship landscape has affected how fans consume college athletics. Attitudes toward sponsorship have received some attention in sport research (Meenaghan, 2001), but fan attitudes toward sponsorship in the college athletic setting require further exploration, due to the notion of amateurism inherent in college athletics. There is research suggesting that some individuals who are avid fans of a college team may have strong negative feelings toward sponsorship, which are not normally observed in avid fans in other sport settings. It has been suggested that this difference can arise due to college fans' feelings towards amateurism and commercialism (Zhang et al., 2005). Hence, it appears that sponsorship research in college athletics could benefit from being combined with other areas of sport research to give a broader understanding of this phenomenon.

The purpose of this study was to investigate fans' attitudes and behaviors related to sponsorship, tradition, and commercialization in college football. In particular, this study examined the case of naming-rights sponsorships, the size and scope of which elicited strong responses from those individuals that feel passionately about commercialism in college athletics. Thus, a goal of this research was to fill the gap in the literature regarding the polarizing topic of commercialization, and how this notion affects fan behaviors (Zhang et al., 2005). Further, some of the research listed above has begun to explore how attitudes towards sponsorship and identification affect behavioral intentions; however, perceptions of team tradition, which play a role in a fan's feelings toward their favorite team (Boyle & Magnusson, 2007), have been largely overlooked or treated as an implicit factor of team identification. A unique aspect of this study, therefore, was that perceptions of tradition were brought to the forefront in order to examine the relationship between feelings toward tradition and fan behavioral intentions. Further, this study investigated whether fans believe the name of a facility is an important symbol of the team's tradition.

Given that sport consumption can be unpredictable, having a better understanding of consumers' behavior can arm sport managers with strategies to attract and retain faithful consumers. Through this study, college football fans were given the opportunity to convey their attitudes and opinions that can be used by college athletic administrators, particularly for formulating sponsorship plans. With these issues in mind, the following set of research questions was developed to direct this study:

Research Questions

Q1 To what extent are team identification, venue attachment, perceptions of team tradition, group norms, and attitudes toward commercialism related to fans' intentions to purchase sponsor products?

Q2 To what extent are team identification, venue attachment, perceptions of team tradition, group norms, and attitudes toward commercialism related to fans' intentions to purchase tickets and merchandise?

Q3 Do these fan purchasing and consumption intentions differ based on age, gender, ethnicity, education level, donor status, alumni status, season ticket holder status, number of years as a fan of the team, and/or number of games attended per year?

Q4 To what degree are fans' intentions to purchase tickets and merchandise related to fans' intentions to purchase sponsor products?

Rationale for the Study

Naming-rights are a unique form of sponsorship both in the size and scope of the sponsorship agreements themselves, as well as the visibility associated with naming a facility. The results of a preliminary qualitative study of college athletic administrators indicated that naming-rights sponsorships represent a level of commercialism for which some athletic programs are not yet prepared (Eddy, 2010). These administrators suggested that maintaining athletic tradition and avoiding fan discontentment were the major reasons why they have not pursued potential naming-rights partners. Curiously, the same administrators did not believe that a naming-rights sponsorship would necessarily alienate their fan base, from either an attendance or donation standpoint. However, none of the institutions in that study had done any research on the topic, and acknowledged that these feelings were merely an educated guess (Eddy, 2010). Therefore, more research on the attitudes and behaviors of fans in association with naming-rights sponsorships was necessary.

Consumer behavior is an area of sport marketing that has attracted considerable interest among scholars, as studying consumer behavior can have a direct and recognizable impact on the financial situation of sport organizations. However, research in sport consumer behavior is by no means complete and could benefit from a broadening in focus. Part of the problem with sport consumer behavior research is that not enough is known about fan identification to the team and points of attachment, such as the venue and team tradition, to develop broad theoretical models. It appears that sampling procedures could be contributing to this lack of understanding of sport fan behaviors. Studies in naturalistic settings are necessary to improve our understanding of sport consumers (Funk, Mahony, & Havitz, 2003); however, many of the sampling frames used in research on consumer behavior tend to be somewhat artificial. Many studies only sample fans of one or two teams, and in some cases the fans are exclusively students of a university. While students are an important demographic in terms of merchandise sales in college athletics (Zhang et al., 2005), they have less impact in terms of ticket revenue, since much of the revenue associated with student tickets generally comes from athletics fees that remain consistent from year to year. While such samples may be adequate to validate a particular model, these models offer limited insight into fan behaviors in general until they have been tested on larger samples of important stakeholder groups. Hence, this study used a sample of college football fans that support the team with their spending power by attending games.

Another area of sport consumer behavior that requires more exploration, particularly within college athletics, is the effect of the venue as a point of attachment. McEvoy, Nagel, DeSchriver, & Brown (2005) discovered that older stadiums in professional baseball tend to draw more fans, likely due to the fact that fans build a relationship with a facility over time. While specific venue attributes have been examined in consumer behavior with varying results (Boyle & Magnusson, 2007; Gladden & Funk, 2002; Trail, Robinson, & Kim, 2008), the overall character of the stadium as a point of attachment needs further investigation, especially in college football where facilities tend to be older and an important symbol of the campus as a whole.

Considering the narrow nature of some of the sampling frames mentioned above, a more complete understanding of fan's attitudes towards commercialization and sponsorship will add to the body of knowledge, as well as help athletic departments when evaluating current and prospective sponsorship deals. In particular, there has been very little work in the area of naming-rights sponsorships in college athletics. Therefore, the results of this study offer insight into how fans feel about naming-rights sponsorships in college athletics, and to what degree these feelings impact their future behaviors if their favorite college football team decided to sell the naming rights to their stadium. Naming rights deals can be quite lucrative, so it is important for administrators to have as much information as possible to assess the potential of such an agreement.

Delimitations

This study examined the relationship between attitudes toward sponsorship/commercialization, team identification, team tradition, and future behavioral intentions at a limited number of NCAA Division I (FBS) institutions. It cannot be assumed that the results of this study can be generalized or extrapolated directly to other Division I (FBS) athletic programs. Further, conclusions cannot be drawn for other types of institutions such as two year colleges, or other four year colleges at other levels of the

NCAA. Also, the variables examined in this study were selected based on a review of literature regarding sponsorship outcomes and conative loyalty in various sport-related settings. Thus, this study does not imply that the selected variables are the only variables that influence behavioral intentions for college football fans.

Limitations

1. This study relied primarily on quantitative data to explain the effects of team involvement and attitudes toward commercialization on behavioral intentions.
2. A survey instrument, administered by the author, was used for data collection. Given the nature of survey research, it cannot be assumed that the information provided by the respondents is completely accurate.
3. Respondents were only representative of the institutions used in the sampling frame for this study and, therefore, were not necessarily representative of fans of other universities.
4. The respondents were college football game attendees, so their perceptions and behaviors may not necessarily be generalizable to fans who do not attend games at their favorite team's home stadium.
5. Since none of the football programs in the sample for this study had naming-rights agreements associated with their stadiums, actual behaviors could not be extracted from fans. Behavioral intentions based on affective state have been found to be a good predictor of what a fan will do in the future (Ajzen, Czasch, & Flood, 2009; Laverie & Arnett, 2000), but it still cannot be directly implied that individuals would actually exhibit the behaviors that they indicated in this study.

Definition of Terms

Attitudes toward commercialization: Attitudes toward commercialization has been defined as "one's cognitive and affective reaction to the excessive commercial utilization of intercollegiate athletics with an undue emphasis on profit" (Zhang et al., 2005). In this study, the terms commercialization and commercialism were used interchangeably.

Behavioral Intentions: Behavioral intentions can be defined as a consumer's inclination to act, based on their current affective state (Laverie & Arnett, 2000; Lee, Sandler, & Shani, 1997). In this study, the participants' affective state was associated with their feelings on naming-rights in college athletics. These perceptions were used to measure intentions of team consumption (attending future games, continuing to support the team) and sponsor behavioral intentions (future attitudes and purchasing of products). When the term behavioral intent is used in this study (rather than indicating the specific behavioral category), the author is referring to both of these constructs simultaneously.

Conative Loyalty: Conative loyalty is closely related to behavioral intentions, in that individuals indicate an intention to purchase the product in the future. In past studies, the concept of conative loyalty has been measured using fan intentions to continue supporting their favorite team and purchase tickets, merchandise, and clothing (Trail et al., 2005). In this study, the terms conative loyalty and team consumption intentions were used interchangeably.

Division I (FBS): The highest level of intercollegiate athletic competition within the NCAA, and the level at which the most money is made, and spent, on athletics. The Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) of Division I has 120 member institutions ("NCAA," 2010).

Naming-rights agreement: A sponsor or donor is granted the right to name (or re-name) a particular venue (Nagel, 1999).

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA): The NCAA is the largest organization that governs intercollegiate athletics. The NCAA's core purpose is to govern competition in a fair manner and to integrate athletics into higher education, with a particular focus on the experience and treatment of student-athletes ("NCAA," 2010).

Sport Consumer Behavior: The process involved when individuals select, purchase, and use sport-related products and services to satisfy needs and receive benefits, including the decision processes that precede and follow these actions (Engel et al., 1995; Funk, 2008).

Team Identification: An individual's internal orientation in regards to a team, which can result in feelings or sentiments of close attachment to that team, as well as other groups that share similar attitudes (Trail et al., 2000; Trail et al., 2003).

Team Involvement: A set of tangible behaviors that help to illustrate an individual's commitment to a team, such as number of games attended and the amount of money spent on team-related activities.

Venue Attachment: The connection that a fan has with a sport venue, and the perceived role that the venue plays in the history and tradition of a team.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature review for the present study is divided into four sections. The first section describes aspects of social identity theory that are pertinent to the development of this study. The second section is focused on aspects of consumer behavior; in particular, various attitudinal and behavioral intent factors are examined. The third part is an investigation of selected aspects of branding, particularly brand equity and brand strategy. The fourth and final section focuses on naming-rights agreements for sport facilities. This segment will introduce past research in regards to naming-rights, current trends, and highlight the paucity of research on this topic in the context of college sports.

Social Identity Theory

Social identity theory is centered on the relationships between self, role, and society. The self is composed of multiple selves, some of which are more important than others, and these multiple selves allow people to exist in various social units that impact their overall identities (Stryker, 1980; Laverie & Arnett, 2000). Individuals also strive to achieve or maintain a positive social identity in order to boost self-esteem, and this positive identity derives largely from favorable comparisons that can be made between the groups they belong to and other groups with which they do not associate (Brown, 2000). Social identity theory is considered applicable to fan behavior in sport, since fan behavior is socially visible, involves relationships with others, and one can experience satisfaction associated with being a member of a fan group (Laverie & Arnett, 2000).

Within the context of sport and social identity theory, Trail et al. (2000) defined identification as “an orientation of the self in regard to other objects, including a person or group, that results in feelings or sentiments of close attachment” (p. 165-166). A person’s identification to a group can change over time, especially when a change in context occurs for some aspect of the group. Highly identified individuals are more resistant to change, but less identified individuals are more likely to further decrease their identification should a significant change occur (Ethier & Deaux, 1994). This is important to the current investigation; particularly the relationship between a change in name of a college football stadium and the team’s associated fan group identities. Additionally, a main focus of social identity theory research has been on the relationship between identity salience and behavior, which has been found to be quite strong. For example, attachment and involvement have had a moderate impact on identity salience, and that identity salience has explained approximately 15% of the variance in past sport event attendance behavior (Laverie & Arnett, 2000). Thus, identity salience is an important concept in predicting behaviors of social groups, particularly fan groups in sport.

Social Groups

The multiple role-identities mentioned above also give meaning to one’s past behavior and provide direction for future behavior, as well as help to dictate group membership (Ervin & Stryker, 2001). In fact, it has been stated that an individual’s social identity is derived primarily from their group memberships (Brown, 2000). Social groups have been defined as collections of people who perceive themselves to be members of the same social category and share emotional involvement in this category. Also, there must be some consensus from individuals from outside the group that acknowledges that the group exists (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). People attempt to locate themselves in the social context through their claims to various social groups, in addition to their individual traits and characteristics (Deaux, Reid, Mizrahi, & Ethier, 1995). In order to have a particular social identity, an individual must be like others in a certain group in some ways, and see things in a manner consistent with the perspective of the group (Stets & Burke, 2000).

Group members will have a propensity to seek out tangible symbols that reflect the desired group identity. Members of the group will then tend to publicize the relationship between a symbol and the group's identity, so that the symbolic significance of the object becomes socially recognized (Ledgerwood & Liviatan, 2010). In terms of fan groups in college athletics, there has been little focus on what objects are considered important symbols of the team. More research is necessary to discover what these symbols are, and exactly how important they are to fan groups. In particular, it is necessary to ascertain whether altering a symbol would qualify as a change that would affect identification. The stadium has received some attention as a symbol for group identification (Boyle & Magnusson, 2007), but it is important to determine how altering the 'personality' of the stadium may affect members of fan groups, as well as the role that the name of the stadium plays in this symbolic representation of a team.

Group Norms

Group norms can be defined as an individual's perceptions of how other group members feel about a certain event or idea (Madrigal, 2000). Social identity and group norms interact to influence behavioral intentions, and these perceived expectations matter the most to those who are highly identified within a particular group. For example, those highly identified individuals, who also perceive high levels of pressure from other group members, will be most likely to form intentions that they believe are consistent with those of the group (Terry & Hogg, 1996). With this situation in mind, it seems reasonable that the extent to which group norms influence intentions is likely to vary depending upon an individual's identification with the group (Madrigal, 2000). Group norms influence the responses of individuals for whom the group is a salient or important basis for self-definition, but people who do not meet this criteria are largely unaffected by group norms (Smith, Terry, & Hogg, 2007). As mentioned previously, individuals that are highly identified will engage in behaviors consistent with the group; additionally, these individuals will still exhibit these behaviors regardless of whether they are anonymous or accountable to the group. Further, stronger attitude-consistent intentions tend to occur when exposed to a supportive group norm than when the individual believes the group norm is non-supportive or ambiguous (Smith, Hogg, Martin, & Terry, 2007).

Group identification and group norms have been found to contribute to consumer loyalty, and it has been suggested that the motivation to become a loyal consumer stems from the individual's desire to be a member of the group (Oliver, 1999). While it has been suggested that loyalty cannot always be achieved, often due to the nature of the product category (Oliver, 1999), this does not appear to be the case when examining sport. Within the context of sport sponsorship, perceived group norms have been shown to be a significant predictor of purchase intentions in NASCAR fans. Additionally, group norms partially mediated the relationship between fan identification and purchase intention (Levin, Beasley, & Gilson, 2008). Further, favorable purchase intentions are more likely to occur when such intentions are perceived as important to other members of the group (Madrigal, 2000). However, it should be noted that identification appears to compensate for lower levels of group norms when forming intentions to purchase from a team sponsor. Hence, while group norms may be an important factor in sponsor purchase intentions, fan identification is likely to be a stronger determinant of future purchasing.

Sport Consumer Behavior

Fan Motives

Much of the research in sport consumer behavior tends to focus on motives relative to a certain sport product and how such factors affect attendance or participation (Funk et al., 2003). Motives for consumption behavior are mostly based on social and psychological needs, and include vicarious achievement, acquisition of knowledge, aesthetics, social interaction, drama/excitement, escape, family, physical attractiveness of participants, and quality of physical skill of the participant(s) (Trail et al., 2000). Motives vary based on the individual, as it has been suggested that spectators and fans may be different segments; lumping them together as those who attend may not be appropriate in terms of predicting behavior. In general, spectators want to see a good game and enjoy themselves, whereas fans want to see the team win, as well as further strengthen their level of identification (Trail et al., 2003). With these two groups in mind, motives for attendance can be segmented into three categories: those that apply to fans of successful teams (vicarious achievement), those that apply to spectators or fans of unsuccessful teams (aesthetics, physical skills, drama, and knowledge), and those that apply to all spectators and fans (escape and social interaction) (Trail et al., 2003).

Of the motives for consumption behavior listed above, vicarious achievement has frequently been found to be the strongest overall motive of attendance across various sports (Fink, Trail, & Anderson, 2002b; Trail et al., 2003; Pan & Baker, 2005; Funk & James, 2006; Woo, Trail, Kwon, & Anderson, 2009). Hence, fans who attend games not only feel happy when their team wins, but also experience a sense of personal success due to their presence at the event and level of emotional attachment they hold with their favorite team. While achievement may be the most important motivation for fan attendance, other motivations that have been found to help predict fan attendance, including eustress, social interaction, presence of star players and nostalgia (Judson & Carpenter, 2005; Pan & Baker, 2005; Funk & James, 2006; Wann, Grieve, Zapalac, & Pease, 2008; Woo et al., 2009). These factors are somewhat important fan motivations as well, but aesthetics, player skills, drama and knowledge acquisition have been found to be more important to spectators, particularly in the context of college football (Woo et al., 2009).

Two fan motivations in particular tend to be stronger in aggressive, contact sports like football, namely eustress and social interaction. Eustress (i.e., euphoric stress) refers to a high level of excitement and arousal achieved by watching sports, and has been found to be highest in aggressive sports (Wann et al., 2008). Also, group affiliation/social motivations have been found to be higher in football, and are possibly reflected in common activities such as tailgating and Superbowl parties (Wann et al., 2008). It should be noted here that venue and tradition have not been found to be important motivations for attendance (Funk & James, 2006). However, the sample used by Funk and James (2006) included a combination of college and professional sport fans, with no clear connection to a specific venue. Thus, the results of that study do not appear to extend directly to this investigation. Further, specific venue attributes such as parking, concessions, restrooms and service quality have not been significant deterrents, or predictors, of fan attendance (Trail et al., 2008). However, Sutton, McDonald, Milne, & Cimperman (1997) have suggested that a team's history and tradition can be valuable in building fan identification, which is discussed in the next section.

Fan Identification

While determining what motivates individuals to attend sporting events is important, marketers are also concerned with understanding the psychological connection, or identification, between a fan and the team. Identification is a mechanism whereby people copy and imitate others they admire. It can be accomplished by identifying with others through consumption behavior, when the individual imitates a manner of dress, or has similar feelings towards a sports team (Robertson, 1970). Sutton et al. (1997) defined fan identification as the commitment and emotional involvement customers have with a sport organization. Sutton et al. (1997) created a conceptual framework in which fan identification was directly impacted by four managerial factors: team characteristics, organizational characteristics, affiliation characteristics, and activity characteristics. Within the context of sport consumer behavior, fan identification is a manifestation of social identity theory, as indicated previously (Underwood, Bond, & Baer, 2001).

Fan identification is important in the context of fan behavioral intentions because individuals that are high in identification have better attendance habits and show the greatest potential for attending future events (Sutton et al., 1997; Matsuoka, Chelladurai, & Harada, 2003; Judson & Carpenter, 2005). Fans with high levels of identification are said to behave differently than those with lower levels of identification because highly identified fans tend to have a stronger sense of attachment to the team (Sutton et al., 1997). Individuals that identify strongly with a team have also been shown to display conative loyalty, which is the behavioral intention to continue purchasing a product, usually through tickets and merchandise in the context of spectator sports (Fink, Trail, & Anderson, 2002a; Trail et al., 2005). Trail et al. (2005) devised a model for sport conative loyalty, using a framework suggested by Ervin and Stryker (2001). This model concentrated on mood and self esteem responses, and team identification was included as an ancillary aspect of self-esteem (see Figure 1). This model explained the most variance (49%) in conative loyalty and had the best fit of the models proposed in that study.

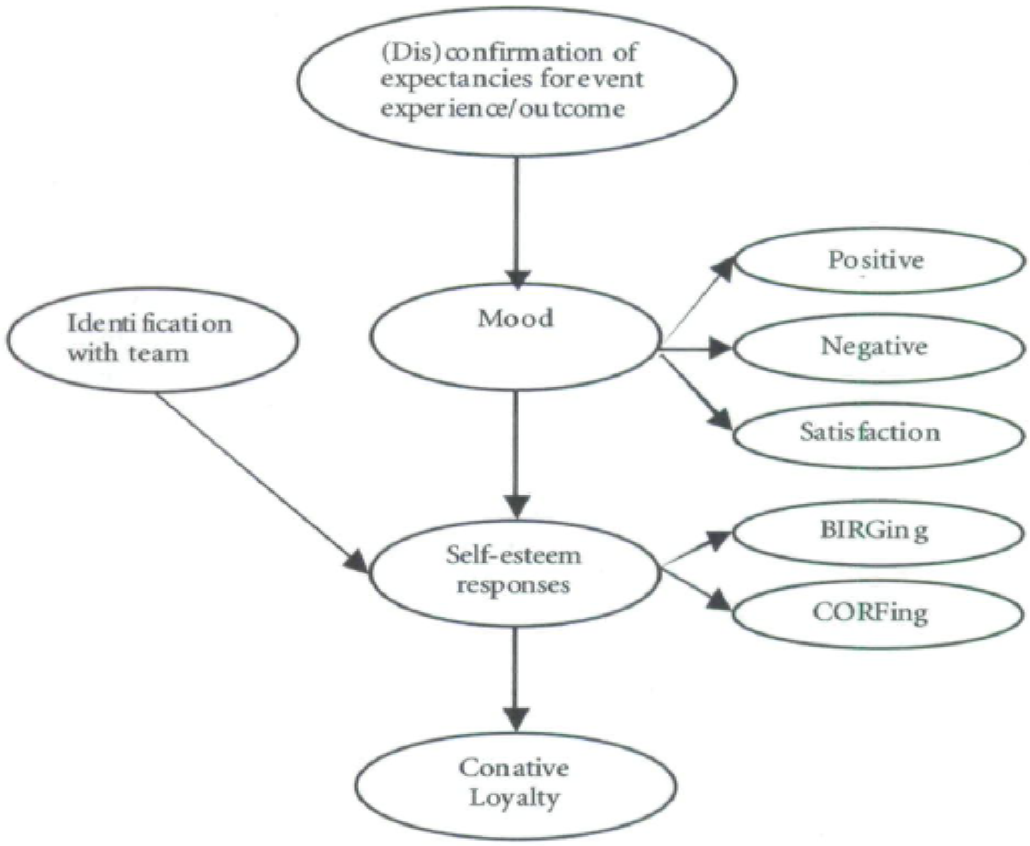

Figure 1 Sport Spectator Conative Loyalty, from Trail et al. (2005).

When considering college sports, the identification with the organization also includes the university as a whole (not just the athletic department), which is then highly correlated with the surrounding community (Robinson & Trail, 2005; Woo et al., 2009). Attachment to the university has also been found to contribute to building conative loyalty, though attachment to the team is still a stronger predictor (Kwon, Trail, & Anderson, 2005). While the university itself creates an additional point of identification or attachment, it should be noted that a subgroup of individuals has been identified that are high in college team identification, but have low purchase intentions (Zhang et al., 2005). It has been postulated that this group is comprised of amateurism-oriented consumers who, while identifying highly with a particular team or school, are concerned or unhappy with the level of commercialism in college athletics to the point that it adversely affects their future purchasing behavior (see Figure 2) (Zhang et al., 2005).

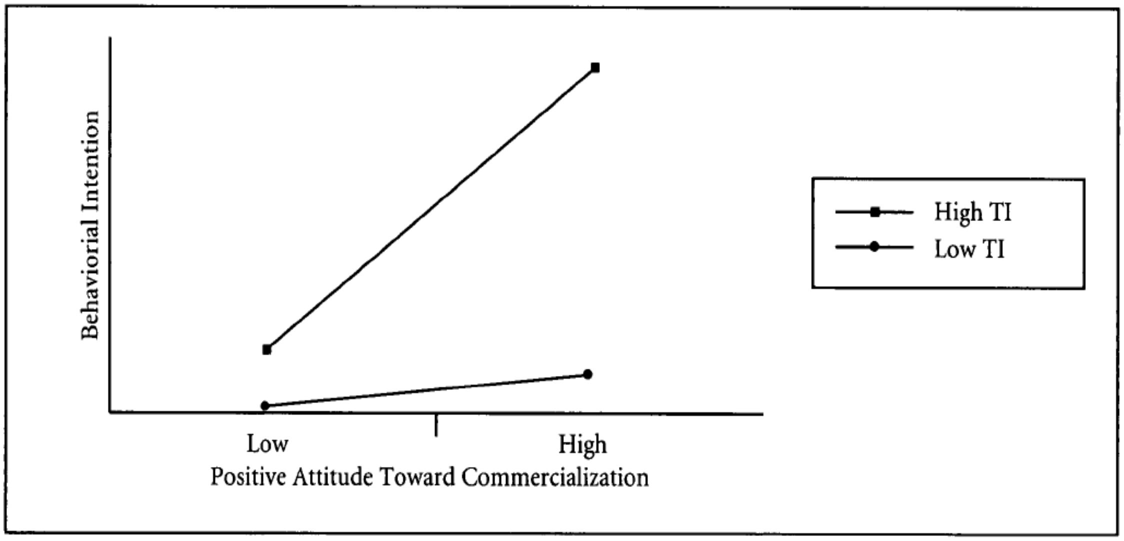

Figure 2 Behavioral intention for high versus low team identification (TI) by attitude toward commercialization (Zhang et al., 2005)

In terms of developing and maintaining attachment, service marketplace characteristics, such as venue and team history, have been found to enhance one's social identity to a team, which can lead to improved brand equity (see Figure 3) (Boyle & Magnusson, 2007). In terms of professional sports, civic pride and team identification are considered the primary benefits of having a team, so it is considered critical, to some, that the team's playing space bear a name that commemorates the relationship among team, city, and fans (Boyd, 2000). The sports venue also provides a stable, tangible representation of the team's identity. This is particularly true in college athletics, where players will only be associated with a team for a short period of time (Boyle & Magnusson, 2007). It has been suggested that commemorative names in some way anchor the stadium or arena in the local area, while a corporate name provides little connection between team and community, even if the corporation has ties to the region (Boyd, 2000). Therefore, it seems reasonable to suggest that by altering the name and tradition associated with an athletic facility, there could be a trickle-down effect that might adversely affect psychological attachment and attitudes toward commercialism.

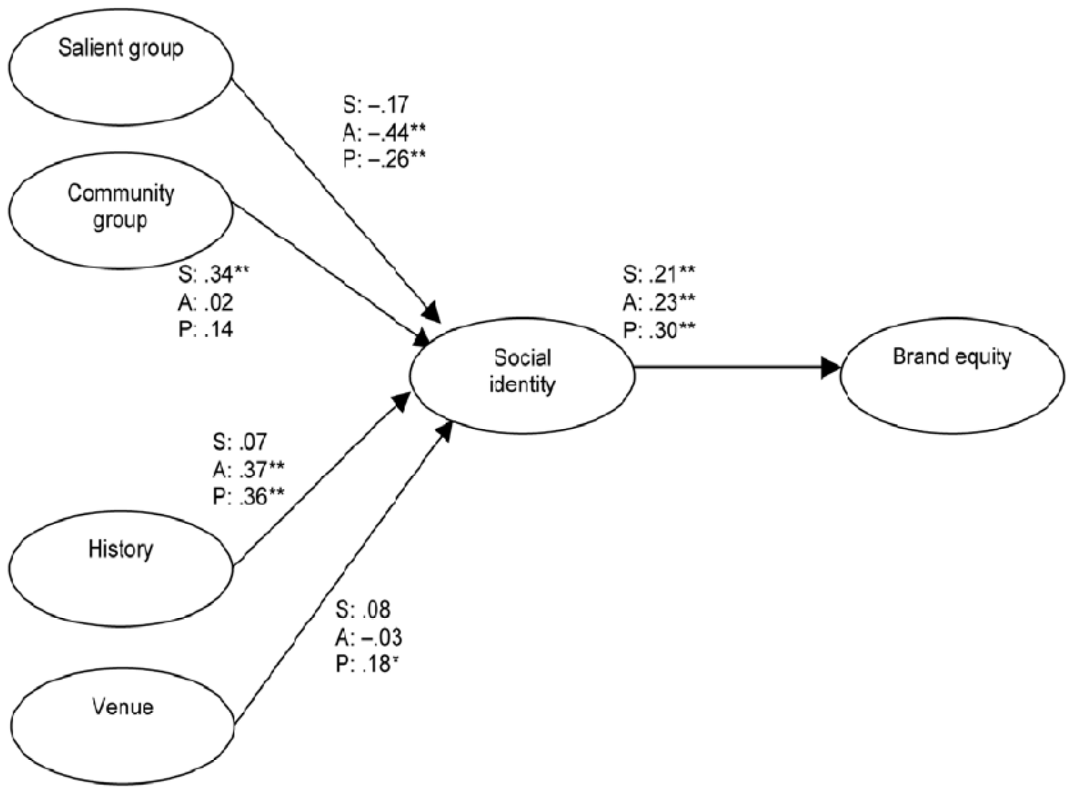

Figure 3 Structural path model, S=student, A=alumni, P=public (Boyle & Magnusson, 2007).

Measures of Sport Consumer Behavior

Various conceptual frameworks have been created to attempt to explain and categorize how fan perceptions affect their emotional and financial commitment to a favorite team (Sutton et al., 1997; Mahony, Madrigal, & Howard, 2000; Trail et al., 2000; Funk & James, 2001; Trail et al., 2003; Stinson & Howard, 2004; Koo et al., 2006; Koo

& Hardin, 2008; Trail et al., 2008; Woo et al, 2009). One of the most developed and tested models in sport consumer behavior is the Psychological Continuum Model (PCM). The PCM represents a cognitive approach that places existing fan behavior theory and research under one umbrella, and identifies factors thought to influence the connection to a sport object (Funk & James, 2001). The PCM consists of four stages: Awareness, Attraction, Attachment, and Allegiance. People can move up and down the continuum based on a number of factors, and will not necessarily reach allegiance (Funk & James, 2001). Awareness and Attraction signify the weakest relationships, where behavior can be difficult to predict. The Attachment stage outputs, on the other hand, indicate a strengthening in the connection as the sport object takes on emotional, functional, and symbolic meaning and behavior becomes more frequent and expressive (Funk, 2008). Attachment behavior tends to increase in complexity, frequency, and becomes more strongly linked to emotional, functional, and symbolic meaning (Funk, 2008). Further, Allegiance reflects the strongest relationship between the individual and team, and describes when this relationship becomes persistent and influences behavior (Funk & James, 2006). The psychological connection to the sport object increases as you move up the PCM elevator (Funk, 2008), so it is important for sport practitioners to understand how these relationships can be strengthened. Therefore, the goal for marketers, within the concepts of the PCM, is to move their spectators and fans to higher levels of the continuum and attempt to keep them there.

While the PCM is an effective framework for sport consumer behavior, there are alternative scales which can be more readily used to measure behaviors of fans. One such scale that can be utilized to measure attitudinal loyalty is the Psychological

Commitment to a Team (PCT) scale (Mahony et al., 2000; Kwon & Trail, 2003). The psychological commitment to team (PCT) scale segments sport consumers into a hierarchy, somewhat similar to the PCM, that is based on loyalty, and utilizes both behavioral and attitudinal measures (Mahony et al., 2000). Additionally, while the PCM has generally been used to examine professional sports, the PCT has been tested on samples of both professional and college football fans.

Another scale that has been used to investigate behavior in college athletics is the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC), which allows interpretation of the impact of psychological motives on event attendance, purchase of merchandise, and other consumptive behavior (Trail & James, 2001). The MSSC is designed to measure the motives of fan consumption listed above, namely vicarious achievement, escape, social interaction, appreciation of physical skills of the athletes, aesthetics, drama, physical attraction, family and knowledge (Trail and James, 2001; Woo et al., 2009). When used to investigate fan motives in college athletics, the MSSC has shown good internal consistency in samples of Division I-A sport attendees (Robinson & Trail, 2005). Aspects of the MSSC have also been used in combination with the Points of Attachment Index (PAI) to examine college football and basketball fans (Robinson & Trail, 2005). The PAI is especially useful in studies of intercollegiate athletics as it allows the researcher to measure connections to various aspects relating to the team, including coach, player, university, sport, and level of sport (Robinson & Trail, 2005; Woo et al., 2009). Practically, it may be more functional to use the SPEED scale, which is designed to measure five facets of motivation: Socialization, Performance, Excitement, Esteem, and Diversion (Funk, Filo, Beaton, & Pritchard, 2009). The SPEED scale is a parsimonious measurement tool of motives to explain past sport event attendance and current levels of team commitment (Funk et al., 2009); however, the SPEED scale is a relatively new hybrid approach of creating consumer profiles that requires more use and replication in order to validate it as an effective measure of sport consumer behavior.

Finally, there are several other measures that could be useful in examining fan responses to sponsorships in college athletics. The Team Identification Index (TII) is a three item scale that measures an individual's overall level of identification with a sport team, rather than concentrating on specific motives and points of attachment, and has exhibited good reliability and validity (Trail et al., 2005). In order to test the identification and conative loyalty aspects of the model in Figure 1, Trail et al. (2005) used the TII in combination with the Intentions for Sport Consumption Behavior Scale (ISCBS). The ISCBS measures conative loyalty in sport spectators and includes items representing intentions about future attendance, merchandise purchasing, and overall support of a specific team. Together, these scales allow the researcher to measure conative loyalty while accounting for fan identification. In terms of the team and university brand, the Team Association Model (TAM) can be used to measure brand image (Gladden & Funk, 2002); however, it should be noted that the TAM has been considered so complex that it is difficult to use as a research tool, and needs to be adapted in order to be useful (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer, & Exler, 2008).

Attitudes toward Sponsorship

Sport represents a unique advertising vehicle through which companies can deliver messages to specific target markets (Trail & James, 2001). Sponsors not only connect with consumers by associating themselves with sport organizations, they also differentiate themselves from competitors (Madrigal, 2001). In the 1980s, sponsorship was viewed primarily as an alternative to advertising, and served a similar purpose in terms of increasing visibility and exposure. As sport sponsorship has grown, the emphasis has shifted towards more direct benefits such as intent-to-purchase and sales increases (Crompton, 2004). Consumer perceptions and attitudes toward traditional advertising have been studied for quite some time by marketers, whereas attitudes toward the brand/sponsor have been largely overlooked and need to play a bigger role in the research of sponsorship (Poon & Prendergast, 2006). In general, sponsorship is seen as less coercive and persuasive than advertising (Meenaghan, 2001). Advertising is often seen as a money-making tool that yields no benefit to society, while sponsorship tends to be perceived as more of a philanthropic endeavor, even though the goals of advertising and sponsorship are similar. While television advertising is considered irritating and intrusive, sponsorship and stadium signage have generally become an accepted part of sport (Meenaghan, 2001). Advertising is also limited to influencing the consumer's perception of a particular product, whereas sponsorship can change the consumer's perception of a specific sponsor. This can transfer positively to the brands of the sponsor in terms of willingness to purchase (Harvey, 2001; Harvey, Gray, & Despain, 2006). However, it is possible that continued placement of advertising within the game itself (i.e., signage on the field of play) will become increasingly irritating to viewers and attendees (Bennett, Ferreira, Tsuji, Siders, & Cianfrone, 2006).

The purchasing behavior of fans, which is of great interest to sponsors, is closely linked to psychological and emotional attachment. The link between attitudes and behavior presents the marketer with opportunities to predict consumer behavior and to measure advertising effectiveness (Robertson, 1970). In terms of sport, an individual's affective state, either positive or negative, influences future sport spectator consumption behaviors that include event attendance and merchandise purchasing (Trail et al., 2000). Psychological and emotional attachment, as well as affective state, is often manifested within the concept of team identification in sport settings. Team identification has been identified as having a positive relationship with sponsor recognition, attitudes toward sponsors, and sponsor purchase intentions (Davies, Veloutsou, & Costa, 2006; Dees, Bennett, & Villegas, 2008; Gwinner & Swanson, 2003; Kim & Kim, 2009; Madrigal, 2000; Pope & Voges, 2000; Smith, Graetz, & Westerbeek, 2008; Zhang et al., 2005). Similarly, committed supporters of a team will be those most affected by the sponsorship in forming a more positive image of the sponsor or intending to purchase their brand (Davies et al., 2006; Lacey, Sneath, Finney, & Close, 2007). Also, involvement and enthusiasm toward a sport in general have been found to increase sponsor recall and recognition rates for specific sport properties (Cornwell, Relyea, Irwin, & Maignan, 2000). Further, individuals are more likely to have favorable purchase intentions when such intentions are perceived to be important to other fans, and particularly individuals with similar levels of team loyalty and identification (Madrigal, 2000).

While not all customers will feel the influence of sponsorship equally (Gwinner & Swanson, 2003), marketers should be aware that sponsorships will tend to have the greatest impact on the behaviors of those who consume more of the sport product and less, if any, effect on those individuals who can be classified as less committed spectators. Marketers must also be careful when considering potential sponsors that are also sponsors of rival organizations. In a study investigating sponsorship in NASCAR, fans tended to have positive feelings about their favorite driver’s sponsors, but at the same time they had negative feelings about the sponsors for drivers they dislike, particularly rivals of their favorite driver (Madrigal, 2001; Dalakas & Levin, 2005). While joint sponsorships between rival teams have been found to increase overall sponsor awareness, highly identified fans are more likely to reject such a sponsorship. This is a problem since highly identified fans are expected, based on the findings above, to have the most positive feelings towards sponsorships related to their favorite team (Davies et al., 2006).

The overall attitude towards a product or brand is formed based on a number of attitudes toward each of the product attributes (Robertson, 1970). While team identification can affect attitudes toward particular sponsoring companies, fan involvement has had a lesser impact on purchase intentions than did attitudes toward the sponsor itself, and the belief that the sponsors were supporting the team (Dees et al. 2008). Significant relationships have also been found between an intention to purchase a company’s product and the company’s corporate image/brand or perceived integrity (Pope & Voges, 2000; Sneath, Finney, & Close, 2005; Zhang et al., 2005; Smith et al., 2008). Further, favorable purchase intentions were more likely to occur when consumers held a positive image of the sponsoring companies and had a high level of sports involvement (Ko, Kim, Claussen, & Kim, 2008).

Within college athletics, it has been found that the more that members of the university community realize that sponsorships benefit the entire university community, and not just athletics, the more positive their attitude toward the sponsor and the university brand becomes (Baker, Faircloth, & Simental, 2005). Similarly, negative information about a sponsor of college athletics has negatively influenced consumer attitudes toward the sponsor, purchase intentions, and attitudes toward the university itself (Kuzma, Veltri, Kuzma, & Miller, 2003). Further, varying attitudes towards the level of commercialization in college athletics may influence stakeholders' reaction to sponsorship (Zhang et al., 2005). This relates back to the notion of amateurism that is still considered important in college athletics, as fans seem to be more sensitive to commercialization in college athletics than other forms of sport. Consumers who see sponsorship as an increase in the commercialization of sports are less likely to develop positive attitudes toward the sponsor, and thus benefits of sponsorship can be lost for both parties (Alexandris, Tsaousi, & James, 2007). Consequently, marketers in college athletics must be cognizant of the reputation and business practices of potential sponsors, in addition to being sensitive towards increasing the perceived level of commercialism through the implementation of a particular sponsorship, as a negative image can be transferred back onto the university community and affect consumer attitudes toward both brands.

Another aspect of attitudes toward sponsorship that is important to consider is the idea of sponsor fit. Those individuals that perceive a proper fit between an event and sponsor show better attitudes toward the sponsor and better purchase intentions (Roy & Graeff, 2003; Koo et al., 2006; Gwinner & Bennett, 2008). Individuals with high perceived brand/sport event image fit may also transfer these favorable associations to their evaluation of the sponsor's corporate image, and therefore may have a more favorable attitude toward the sponsoring brand (Koo et al., 2006). While having the correct fit between a sponsor and an athletic department can be advantageous for both parties, if the proper fit is not readily observable, then fan attitudes toward commercialism can be negatively affected. Individuals have been shown to have more negative attitudes toward sponsors that are perceived to be incongruent or a bad fit with an event, but it is important to note that repeated exposure to sponsorship messages has been found to change attitudes of consumers to become more positive towards the same sponsors (Dardis, 2009). However, marketers must be tactful in how these messages and experiences are delivered, especially in college athletics, so as not to seem like the institution is simply trying to make money from incongruent sponsors, and thus raising the level of commercialism at their institutions. When sponsors interfere or begin to manipulate the activity itself, fans can develop resentment towards the sponsor and sport organization (Meenaghan, 2001).

Branding

Another notion that is important when examining how fan groups feel about a particular sport entity or sponsor is the brand of the team/sponsor. In the current investigation, both the team brand and sponsor brand are being investigated, so both are discussed in this section. A brand is a distinguishing name and/or symbol intended to identify the goods or services of a particular company, and to differentiate those goods or services from those of competitors (Aaker, 1991). These names, symbols, and logos are part of the building blocks in the creation of a brand’s identity (Upshaw, 1995). Brands are differentiating assets for companies (Keller, 1993) and brands can take on various forms, particularly in the case of a college athletic department’s brand. Often, athletic brands borrow aspects and values from their university communities that become part of their own identities such as tradition, level of commercialism, and student quality/demographics. Some brands in the market often seek to duplicate the cues of leading national brands as closely as possible hoping for a generalization effect (Robertson, 1970). A consumer will create perceptions of a brand based on brand associations, which can be anything that is linked to the brand in an individual's memory, including the values listed above. In particular, these links will be stronger when based on multiple experiences or exposures to the brand (Aaker, 1991). Therefore, college athletic departments must be aware of what brand associations they may be creating with various sponsorships, and how these brand associations are likely to be perceived by fan groups.

Brand Loyalty

Brand associations represent bases not only for purchase decisions, but also for brand loyalty (Aaker, 1991). Brand loyalty is a measure of the psychological attachment that a customer has to a particular brand (Aaker, 1991). The consumer has a tendency to develop brand loyalty, which is an important advantage to the marketer of an established brand (Robertson, 1970). Some of this brand loyalty is created via impressive values, which are the feelings that a brand or product evokes during its use: cozy, intimate, cheerful, etc. These values can then generate specific consumer needs, motivate behavior, and influence choice process (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009), not dissimilar to the attendance motives and points of fan identification that were discussed above. Another foundation of brand loyalty is trust, which is established when a customer's experience is consistently reliable, or continually beats their expectations (Neumeier, 2003). Neumeier (2003) also mentions that brands can occasionally be inconsistent without damaging trust, as long as the defining attributes of the brand are not abandoned. However, when an existing association is inconsistent with a new experience, particularly when a brand is attempting to reposition itself, the existing associations can inhibit the repositioning effort. When the associations are especially strong and important to a group of consumers, a repositioning may potentially alienate this group of consumers from the 'new' version of the brand (Aaker, 1991). In the context of college sports, a repositioning could occur in a variety of ways, such as with the building of a new facility, new sponsorship agreements, or new marketing campaigns designed to grow an underrepresented group in the current fan base.

Brand Image

While team performance is certainly important to building the brand of a sport organization (Couvelaere & Richelieu, 2005), there are other factors that contribute to brand image. Brand image refers to perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held by consumers (Keller, 1993). In fact, Neumeier (2003) argues that a brand itself is neither a logo nor corporate identity system, rather it is a feeling that a person has about a product, service, or company. In essence, thinking of the brand as an identifier has been rendered obsolete by the importance of reputation and image. While the core product in the sport industry is subject to constant variations in composition and quality, non-product-related brand attributes allow for stability and continuity (Bauer et al., 2008). Non-product-related brand attributes that can be used to build brand image are logo design, venue, product delivery, and tradition (Funk, 2008; Kaynak, Salman, & Tatoglu, 2008). The effect of non-product-related brand attributes on brand attitudes has been found to be triple that of product-related benefits, including head coach, star player, and success (Bauer et al., 2008). In particular, a team's facility can contribute to the creation of brand associations, especially for those attending the game, in terms of the facility's age, amenities, and aesthetics (Gladden & Funk, 2002). Fan loyalty is positively influenced by a fan's brand attitude (Bauer et al., 2008), so it is important for marketers to understand how the various brand attributes of the organization work together in order to build an overall brand image.

Brand Equity

Brand equity refers to the subjective views of the brand held by consumers, as opposed to the brand value, which is the actual financial worth of the brand (Aaker, 1991; Temporal, 2010). Building brand equity requires favorable, strong and unique brand associations that work to differentiate the brand from competitors (Keller, 1993). In Aaker's (1996) model, brand equity can be broken down into four major categories, which have been touched upon in this section: (1) brand awareness, (2) brand loyalty, (3) perceived quality, and (4) brand associations. Within the context of this framework, there are three steps that lead to the development of brand equity in professional sports: (1) defining the identity of the sports team, (2) positioning the sports team in the market, and (3) developing a brand strategy (Couvelaere & Richelieu, 2005; Gladden, Mahony, & Apostolopoulou, 2005; Underwood et al., 2001). While there may be differences in the individual aspects that define the brand of a professional team versus that of a college team, it seems reasonable to suggest that the steps in brand equity development should be similar. Finally, it has also been suggested within the context of sport that strengthening social identity can lead to greater customer-based brand equity (Underwood et al., 2001).

The establishment of naming rights deals can assist universities in building brand equity, as they can afford to lend greater support their facilities (Lee, Miloch, Kraft, &

Tatum, 2008). In one case, a tremendous facelift and expansion project for Memorial Stadium at Troy University was possible because of their naming agreement with Movie Gallery (Lee et al., 2008). As a mid-major institution, Troy was able to build their brand by updating their facilities to be more consistent with those of a Division I (FBS) institution. While this strategy was considered a success at Troy, the same effect might not necessarily be observed at a more prominent institution (Lee et al., 2008). A market or segment leader faces a twofold task: to maintain the strength of the core values and at the same time cover the vulnerable points with extensions (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). While the core values in college athletics are adapting to embrace corporate influence, there is still a heavy emphasis on tradition and amateurism, enough so that the reaction to a naming-rights agreement at a brand leader would likely be viewed very differently (Bentubo, 2007). Successful brands often combine a high degree of legitimacy with a limited degree of difference (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009); hence, with naming-rights deals still being relatively new and less common in college athletics than professional sports, the most successful college athletic brands have remained consistent with their facility naming by not securing corporate naming-rights.

Brand Strategy

Brand strategy is a long-term process which provides direction for interactions with stakeholder audiences. It also generates the leadership, distinction and trust necessary to build long-term relationships with customers and investors (Thompson, 2004). Brand strategy gives focus and direction to brand management, and provides a platform for consistency in brand-related activities (Temporal, 2010). Putting an emphasis on short-term results can have a damaging effect on long-term brand equity

(Aaker, 1991), so having a brand strategy that is focused on the future perceptions of the brand is important in order to protect against this attractive shortcut. It should be noted that effective brand strategies are not created by managers in seclusion – they should be based on the insights of consumer and how the brand is perceived (Temporal, 2010). More specifically, sport entities and sponsors must use research to develop an understanding of how to unite their brands in the mind of their target markets by using sport as a cultural platform (Farrelly, Quester, & Burton, 2006). Successful brand strategy, therefore, requires a joining of internal values and external expectations (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). Hence, in the frame of college athletics, it is important for athletic departments to understand the realistic expectations placed on their brand.

A legitimacy problem can arise when a brand does not sufficiently fit the generic product expectations (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009). If marketers implicitly or explicitly promise a certain level of performance that the team does not achieve, there will likely be a greater negative response from the fan base than there would have been in the absence of high expectations that were created by the organization (Sutton et al., 1997). This process of managing expectations must be ongoing, as customer and stakeholder expectations are dynamic; companies cannot rely on research that provides a snapshot of just one point in time (Franzen & Moriarty, 2009).

Some research in sport has suggested that the development and implementation of a brand strategy should be profitable for sport organizations (Couvelaere & Richelieu, 2005). A brand strategy that leads to the creation of a strong brand will then enable a team to go through cycles in performance without having a detrimental effect on the team's brand equity. Sport teams have begun to position themselves as brands in order to take advantage of the emotional responses and loyalty that they observe in their fans (Underwood et al., 2001), so it is important that sport managers begin to understand the value of a brand strategy in maximizing the effectiveness of fan attachment for the organization (Couvelaere & Richelieu, 2005). On the other hand, it has been suggested that sponsorship can also be an influential platform for the brand strategy of sponsoring companies.

Brands can build points of difference through leveraging sponsorship associations and experiences, which is an important aspect of brand equity (Cliffe & Motion, 2004). Cliff and Motion (2004) created a framework that outlines the process of leveraging sponsorship for brand strategy, and they indicated that to attain the customer objectives (i.e., brand awareness) in the brand strategy, a multiple sport-type sponsorship strategy must be employed. Of particular interest in this case, commercial sports sponsorships have been found most effective in creating brand awareness, which is consistent with other research in this area (Cliffe & Motion, 2004; Gladden & Funk, 2002; Meenaghan, 2001). In a recent study, Frederick & Patil (2010) found that sporting events are the preferred vehicle to articulate co-branding associations, and that the strategic goals in doing so are to create brand awareness, brand experience, and brand image, as well as goodwill and brand loyalty. Further, respondents in that study indicated that naming rights for sports venues are a particularly important form of brand exposure (Frederick & Patil, 2010). Hence, more research is necessary to determine the impact that the name of a facility has on the brand of the sponsor, as well as the brand of the sport organization.

Naming Rights

Naming Rights and Sponsorship in College Athletics

Athletic directors have increasingly relied on various revenue streams to obtain the funds necessary to operate their programs (Tomasini, Frye, & Stotlar, 2004). One such source of revenue that has begun to gain acceptance on the college sport landscape is corporate naming rights. The naming-rights landscape in college athletics, however, looks vastly different from that of professional sport. Of those professional sport venues that have a naming-rights partner, the agreement pays an amount that is negotiated between the sponsor and selling organization, and in most cases the agreement lasts for a fixed-period of time (often 20-30 years). These types of negotiations are especially complicated in the college sector, due to the presence of an athletic director, a president, a board of trustees, and other groups (Lee, 2001). Colleges, in contrast to professional sports, tend to name sport facilities after major donors, requiring the lead donor to contribute a certain percentage (generally 30-50%) of the cost of construction or renovation (Cohen, 1999). When dealing with donors, naming rights are also in perpetuity – an important difference from professional facilities (although there are a handful of these cases, i.e., Nationwide Arena). Usually, the college cannot jettison the original donor’s name and replace it with the name of the lead donor on the renovation. Thus, a way must be found to incorporate both the original and new donor names, which leads to some of the long, drawn-out facility names that can be observed in college athletics (Crompton & Howard, 2003). This history of naming in perpetuity could actually be advantageous in attracting sponsors for colleges that choose to go with a corporate name, as perceived sponsorship success is also positively correlated with naming contract length (Clark, Cornwell, & Pruitt, 2002). Longer sponsorship relationships tend to lead to stronger perceived effects on brand equity, due to the repeated sponsorship links with the consumer (Cornwell, Roy, & Steinard, 2001). Most football and basketball facilities, however, still carry the names of famous alumni and supporters, and it has been suggested that it is unlikely that many of their names would be displaced in favor of a corporation (Lee, 2001).

Although most early collegiate naming rights agreements were modest in comparison to those negotiated by major league teams, agreements signed since 2000 have begun to approximate values realized by professional venues (Crompton & Howard, 2003). There is still a resistance, however, among schools that are wary of increasing commercialism on campuses to sell naming-rights of their facilities to corporate entities. Many institutions struggle to find the appropriate balance between maintaining the ideals of amateurism and academic integrity, and the increasing expense of sustaining big-time collegiate athletic programs (Crompton & Howard, 2003). Organizational opposition aside, college athletics is still an attractive environment for corporations that engage in sport sponsorship. In particular, it has been found that sponsors feel they can accomplish many of their objectives at the Division I (FBS) level, more than in the other divisions within the NCAA (Tomasini et al., 2004). Further, a university's football community extends to the entire university, and in some cases the state (Zagacki & Grano, 2005), so there is a great deal of exposure amongst desirable demographics that can be gained by partnering with a college athletic department. In addition, it is possible that the sponsorship activations gained via college athletics can have a greater impact than those in professional sports, due to the high level of psychological attachment that has been observed in college sport fans (Zhang et al., 2005).

Value and Impact of Naming Rights

There has been some investigation to determine what motivates corporations to commit to long-term, multi-million dollar agreements. It has been postulated that in the early days of naming-rights, deals were done simply to satisfy the egos of CEO's who had a desire to not only make an investment for their company, but to also have the chance to join an exclusive club (Mount, 2004; Leeds, 2004). Beyond the ego boost, many executives believe, according to Bernstein (2004), that naming rights are a cost effective way of advertising, as the exposure gained is believe to generate more impressions per dollar than traditional advertising (DeSchriver & Jensen, 2003; Nagel, 1999). It is believed that the exposure and awareness factors are generally the most attractive aspects to corporations that are investigating naming-rights possibilities (Copeland, Frisby, & McCarville, 1996; Deschriver & Jensen, 2003). This is especially true in the cases of smaller companies that have the most room to grow in terms of brand recognition with the general public (Howard & Crompton, 2004). Further, it has been suggested that naming-rights deals make much more sense for smaller, lesser-known companies anyway, as opposed to the larger, well-known corporations, which tend to be more prevalent in the naming-rights market (Mount, 2004). Other motivations for committing to a naming-rights partnership include brand positioning, projecting a positive image within the community (people tend to take a more positive view of a corporation if they helped bring a new facility to the region and, hence, keep the team in the same city), securing seats/suites for client entertainment, and to create crosspromotional opportunities at the facility as part of an integrated marketing communications plan (Clark et al., 2002; Deschriver & Jensen, 2003; McCarthy & Irwin, 1998; Nagel, 1999).

One aspect of naming rights that has been examined in professional sports is how the value of a particular naming opportunity is established. The value associated with stadium naming rights is closely linked to several variables, including the size of the local market, stadium size, and the diversity of facility usage (Gerrard, Parent, & Slack, 2007). Population in the area around the facility, in particular, has a positive effect on price, since the corporations are essentially paying for additional advertising (DeSchriver & Jensen, 2003). The most important factor in determining whether a facility will be named, however, is the age of the existing name, and sponsors are also willing to pay more to name a facility that is home to a “new” team (DeSchriver & Jensen, 2003). The naming rights value of a new stadium is higher than that for a pre-existing facility, and the value for a pre-existing facility decreases over time, especially if the stadium has previously hosted major events (Gerrard et al., 2007). This could be viewed as a problem for college athletic departments, since in seven of the leading Division I conferences – ACC, Big East, Big Ten, Big Twelve, Pac-10, SEC, and WAC – the average stadium is nearly 60 years old. New construction has been limited, in part, because the threat of relocation does not exist, and because of the enormous costs associated with building a brand-new facility (Smith, 2008).

The overall impact of corporate naming-rights sponsorships is still up for debate, as the literature contains conflicting views on this subject. Some scholars have observed that the average stadium sponsor’s stock prices increased by 1.65% at the time of announcement of the deals – a result considerably in excess of the return associated with other major marketing programs such as Olympic sponsorships and celebrity endorsements (Clark et al., 2002). Thus, they believed that the exposure gained by naming a sport facility is at least in line with, if not superior to, the cost of other comparable communications vehicles (Clark et al., 2002). On the other hand, Leeds et al. (2007) found little evidence that there is a significant impact on the value of companies that bought naming rights, and no evidence that there was a permanent, positive impact. In terms of exposure, Hann & Shank (2004) found that the vast majority of their respondents could only name four or less NFL stadiums using unaided recall. Also, they found that a company's naming of a stadium does not influence purchase decisions, in terms of purchasing products from a company that is an NFL naming sponsor (Hann & Shank, 2004). This research also indicated that participants would not switch from one product to another based on a company's involvement as an NFL naming sponsor, nor will it affect consumers' perception of that company.

Companies do not use sponsorship as a philanthropic exercise, as mentioned above (Meenaghan, 2001); rather, they are concerned with the possible return on investment when making sponsorship decisions (Copeland et al., 1996). On the academic side, research in the area of sponsorship outcomes is still at a relatively early stage of development, as theoretical frameworks are not well established (Gwinner & Swanson, 2003; Crompton, 2004; Alexandris et al., 2007). There are limited measures for sponsorship evaluation available, and those that do exist are seldom used in practice (Stotlar, 2004). One problem is that it is generally accepted that it is impossible to put a direct dollar value on the return on investment of a naming-rights deal (Mount, 2004). A new way of estimating naming-rights values has emerged in the form of an entitlement evaluation system that uses a software package to run hundreds of thousands of simulations to formulate an evaluation (Lefton, 2010b), but even this method requires further refinement as it appears to yield inflated approximations of the value of naming opportunities. Many believe that naming-rights provide a greater degree of exposure than traditional advertising, which may be true, but it has been suggested that the strength of the message is greatly diminished when compared to television or billboard advertising (Mount, 2004). In terms of name recognition rates amongst the public, the recognition rate is highest in local areas and is higher in direct proportion to those facilities that have had the same name for longer periods of time, in the same manner as with consumer purchase intentions mentioned above (Nagel, 1999). In fact, research shows that 80 percent of naming-rights deals are done by companies headquartered in the same municipality as the facility; likely in order to maximize the effect of the higher local recognition rates (Lefton, 2009). Corporations must be careful to note, however, that there can be a negative reaction exhibited toward the company that replaces a facility name, which will be discussed in more detail in the following section (Nagel, 1999). Although there is evidence to show that there can be high levels of name recognition amongst the public, the problem still remains whether or not this increased recognition leads to more sales or increased business.

There have been several examples of how naming rights deals in professional sports have created outrage in the community by conflicting with the ideals of commercialism held by fans in those markets. Sam Zell, who nearly became the owner of the Chicago Cubs, created a stir amongst the people of Chicago by stating that he was entertaining the possibility of selling naming rights to Wrigley Field (Dodd, 2008). From an economic standpoint, this seems like a reasonable idea, as experienced consultants have estimated that the naming-rights to Wrigley Field could sell for anywhere from $5 million to $11 million per year (Muret, 2008). However, the public was not amused by the possibility of naming-rights as a new revenue stream for the historic venue. A poll of 2000 voters in the Chicago area revealed that 53% of respondents indicated that they would no longer attend Cubs games if the name of Wrigley Field was sold to another corporation (Dodd, 2008). While the talks of renaming Wrigley Field ceased after the Cubs were sold to other investors, the new executive club at Wrigley Field is expected to bear the name of a corporate partner, which is still a departure from the traditional views held by the Cubs and their fans (Muret, 2010). On the other hand, the New York Yankees reportedly refused offers of as much as $50 million per year to buy naming-rights for the new Yankee Stadium, prior to its opening in April 2009 (Sandomir, 2008). While it is unclear what parties approached Yankee management and why exactly they were turned away, the Yankee Stadium name is synonymous with baseball in New York, so it seems reasonable to suggest that the Yankees did not wish to stir up a public relations firestorm similar to what transpired in Chicago.

Another famous example of strong public opposition to a stadium name change occurred in San Francisco in 1995 when Candlestick Park (a local fixture named after Candlestick Point in 1971) was renamed 3COM Park (Howard & Crompton, 2004; Liberman, 2003). Monster Cable would later take over naming-rights to the former Candlestick Park, again to more public outcry. What makes this situation unique, however, is that during the time of Monster Park, San Francisco voters passed a proposition to outlaw future naming-rights deals for the stadium after the deal with Monster (which paid the 49ers $1.5 million a year) expires in June 2008 ("Candlestick Park," 2008). This was a situation where the people of San Francisco continued to use the Candlestick name regardless of the naming-rights sponsorships in place ("Candlestick Park," 2008); a practice that is not uncommon in situations where an older stadium is given a new corporate name, which diminishes the impact of the naming sponsorship.

Current Trends in Naming Rights

The 2009 college football season marked a notable deviation from the traditional style of stadium construction. The University of Minnesota broke the established trend in college athletics of renovating aging stadiums, and decided to build a brand new, first-class venue. While it contains modern amenities, TCF Bank Stadium maintains a collegiate atmosphere that reflects the tradition of Gopher football, as well as many design features of the old Memorial Stadium (Muret, 2009a). The most prominent departure from tradition in this case was that Minnesota opted for a corporate naming-rights partnership that paid over $1 million per year, as opposed to exploring the conventional avenues of collegiate stadium naming. Despite the corporate name, Minnesota has successfully used the stadium to rebuild its football brand and tradition after playing in the Metrodome for nearly three decades; a downtown facility that was shared with two professional teams, and required students to commute to games (Muret, 2009a).

It has been estimated that several schools including Michigan, Ohio State, LSU and Stanford, could create roughly $2 million extra per year in revenue by selling naming rights. Notre Dame could likely command as much as $6 million per year from naming rights, due to its national television contract with NBC (Bentubo, 2007). It seems unlikely, however, that any of these programs will ever place a corporate name on their iconic facilities, due to their age and the sense of tradition that is centered around these stadiums. Michigan, for example, believes that the brand equity gained from their stadium without a naming-rights deal is more important to the school than the additional revenue (Bentubo, 2007). Despite the fact that most of the top programs have not pursued naming-rights deals, some experts believe that if one of the upper echelon programs, such as those listed above, does establish a naming-rights partnership, then other programs could follow (Bentubo, 2007). In the case of Minnesota, there was a need to build a new stadium to bring football back to campus, and naming-rights are generally accepted more easily by the public for new facilities; however, most large universities in the BCS conferences are not required to deal with this type of situation. Hence, it does not seem that the Minnesota deal will be looked upon as a benchmark for future naming-rights deals in college athletics. Some marketers conjecture that one of the big programs will soon sign a naming-rights deal and start this ripple effect of naming-rights across college athletics. University administrators, on the other hand, believe that each school has its own distinct culture, and that this ripple effect would be unlikely (Bentubo, 2007).

In terms of professional sports, there was virtually no communication between sport marketers and companies about buying naming rights for most of 2009 (Muret, 2009b). As naming rights became a convenient target during the economic meltdown, politicians tried to characterize them as nothing more than the corporate equivalent of a vanity license plate (Lefton, 2010b). The recent agreement between Amway and the Orlando Magic has become even more significant because of when it was reached, as there were only a small number of companies entertaining naming-rights due to the weak economic climate (Muret & Lombardo, 2009). The Amway Center represents one of the largest naming-rights deals for NBA-only arenas. The deal was originally to be signed for 20 years, but this was downgraded to 10 years when the recession hit (Muret & Lombardo, 2009). It should be noted in this case, however, that the owner of the Orlando Magic is also a co-owner of Amway (Muret & Lombardo, 2009), which was likely a driving factor for the deal getting done at this time. Sun Life and the Miami Dolphins were also able to come to a naming-rights agreement shortly before the 2010 Superbowl, in order for Sun Life to capitalize on exposure from the mega event (Lefton, 2010a). The deal was for between $5 and $7.5 million per year, and is interesting because Sun Life has generally stayed away from sports sponsorships. Thus, it appears that the marketplace is now active again after nearly a year without deals or talks, and it is believed that the value of stadiums has not diminished (Lefton, 2010b). Two naming-rights offers for the new downtown arena in Louisville were both declined by the university, as both offers were much less than the asking price of $40 million over 20 years, and officials remained confident that they will be able to secure a deal in the neighborhood of what they are looking for (Muret, 2009b). Between these few situations and the success of Minnesota's partnership with TCF Bank, it will be interesting to see whether the naming-rights landscape in college athletics takes off in the near future, or remains relatively dormant as it has in the past.

Conclusion

Clearly, there are some barriers to naming-rights sponsorships that are somewhat unique to college athletics. Despite the commercial nature of modern intercollegiate sports, the ideals of amateurism and tradition are still important to many fans and administrators. College football stadiums in particular tend to have less sponsor signage and commercial influences than other high profile sport facilities. Also, major college football stadiums tend to be older and more historic than many professional stadiums, which may devalue the naming opportunity based on some of the results listed above. Some of the research presented here, on the other hand, has shown that college sports fans can have positive feelings toward sponsoring companies, and that institutions can engage in sport sponsorship without becoming overly commercialized in the eyes of their key stakeholders. However, naming-rights deals are higher profile sponsorships that may affect the "personalities" of stadiums, which in many cases may act as tangible representations of entire college campuses. Therefore, it does not appear that the results of naming-rights research performed in the context of professional sports can simply be extended to college sports. In order to properly explain naming-rights in college athletics, studies are needed that focus specifically on college sport venues. Similarly, the current sponsorship research in college sports is inadequate in terms of explaining naming rights; thus, new research must be completed in order for these issues to be properly understood in the college atmosphere. With the amount of money that it seems is being left on the table for athletic departments, most of whom need every source of funding they can find, this research could be important to help administrators gain a better understanding of naming rights as a viable source of revenue.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The goal of the present study was to explore the effects of fan perceptions about sponsorship and commercialization in college athletics on future team consumption and sponsor purchase intentions. These relationships have garnered some attention in the literature, and in general these studies have suggested that team identification and feelings toward commercialization play a significant role in behavioral intentions (Alexandris et al., 2007; Madrigal, 2000; Trail et al., 2005; Zhang et al., 2005). However, the effects of highly visible naming rights sponsorships, and consequently the venue as a point of attachment, have received little attention. Therefore, this study sought to add to the literature in this area by examining these interactions using a sample of college football game attendees.

The discussion of the methodology that was implemented in this study is organized into four sections: (1) sample, (2) instrumentation, (3) design and procedures, and (4) statistical techniques and data analysis. The first section provides information on the study population, sample design, and determination of appropriate sample size. Next, the second section outlines the selection of variables and items for the instrument with a description of each scale, as well as the reliability and validity from previous studies for each construct. The design and procedures section presents the organization of the variables in regard to the research questions, and explains the overall process for collecting data. The final section will summarize the statistical techniques and data analysis employed in this study

Sample

Sample Design

The target population for the present study was college football game attendees at large NCAA Division I (FBS) institutions who were over the age of 18, in order to ensure a certain level of the participants' understanding of the survey questions. This population was selected because it was expected that the demographic characteristics of these individuals would be representative of all college football fans.

In order to turn this vast group into a useable survey population, a sampling frame was instituted. A sampling frame is a set of individuals that have a chance of being among those selected to adequately represent the population (Fowler, 2002). The sampling frame in this study consisted of game attendees at five Division I (FBS) institutions that were chosen based on various demographic factors, such as enrollment, conference affiliation, geographic location, and athletic department revenues. For these reasons, this aspect of the sampling frame will resemble convenience sampling.

Due to the large number of individuals at high-profile college football games, the subjects in the study were attendees of a football game at each institution, selected using a systematic randomization approach. In the hours leading up to the game, the researcher approached every i^{th} fan in areas around the stadium to participate in the study. Since the physical layout of potential respondents was impossible to determine in advance (rows in parking lots, scattered groups in a grassy field, etc.), the researcher had to determine an appropriate value for i on the day of data collection. Although somewhat unpredictable in terms of response rates and the number of potential respondents that can be contacted, this method of soliciting participants has been used effectively in other studies on sponsorship in college athletics (Madrigal, 2000).

Sample Size

Sample size is an important consideration in any study, as an adequately large sample will have significantly less sampling error and increased power in comparison to a smaller sample size (Hinton, 1995). However, establishing what is an adequately large sample is often difficult. One way of determining appropriate sample size is by examining the sample size requirements of the analyses that will be used (Fowler, 2002). Processes that are based on correlation coefficients, such as factor analysis and multiple linear regression, are more robust and reliable with larger sample sizes; in general, the larger the number of items analyzed, the more subjects should be included (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). One standard rule of thumb is that five respondents per item within an instrument is adequate, but larger samples will increase the generalizability of conclusions reached through exploratory factor analysis (EFA) (O'Rourke, Hatcher, & Stepanski, 2005). The largest scale in the present study was 6 items, so at least 30 respondents were required in order to run EFA. Others suggest that for factors with high communality and a variable/factor ratio of 4, that a sample size of 500 is necessary to yield results that are considered excellent, when compared to the population (Mundfrom, Shaw, & Ke, 2005). While this is a large discrepancy in terms of a minimum sample size, EFA and multiple linear regression are still considered to be best suited to large samples, so the higher value of 500, as determined by Mundfrom et al (2005), was the target sample size for this study.

Past studies in sport consumer behavior, particularly those on topics related to the current study, that have used similar methods for survey distribution (i.e., multiple intercollegiate athletic events) have often demonstrated strong response rates and large sample sizes, typically ranging from 72.8% to 80%, and 364 to 1280 respondents (Fink et al., 2002; Trail et al., 2003; Trail et al., 2005). Other studies in which data were collected at a single game exhibited response rates from 56% to 95% with sample sizes ranging from 115 to 615 respondents (Alexandris et al., 2007; Kim & Trail, 2010; Koo & Hardin, 2008). Given these trends in the literature, and employing a conservative approach, a response rate of 50% was anticipated, so in order to reach the target of 500 respondents, approximately 1000 total potential participants were contacted, or 200 participants at each individual football game.

Instrumentation

The survey used in this study contained 39 items divided into nine major parts: team preference/involvement (6 items), team identification (3 items), venue attachment (4 items), perceptions of team tradition (3 items), group norms (3 items), attitudes toward commercialism (6 items), sponsor behavioral intentions (5 items), team consumption intentions (5 items), and demographics (4 items). Most of these scales were adapted from past studies. All of the questions, except the team preference/involvement variables, were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree). This measurement was selected because most of the variables included in the study were measured on 7-point Likert scales in previous work.

Team Preference/Involvement variables

This group of variables was used to determine the respondent's favorite college football team, and provide information on the level of connection the individual has with their preferred program. These questions were then used to investigate differences in team consumption intentions and sponsor behavioral intentions based on the fan's level of involvement. In particular, these questions included the number of years the subject had been a fan of the team, whether or not they were a season ticket holder, whether or not they were an alumnus of the university, the number of games attended per year, and the amount the individual donates to the athletic department (if applicable). These variables were measured using single-item scales, which is a generally accepted method in sport research due to the limited ways in which these types of domains (i.e., game attendance) can be measured (Kwon & Trail, 2005). Respondents that did not indicate a favorite team were removed from the sample, as the survey questions no longer made sense outside of the context of a favorite team or athletic program.

Team Identification variable

Team identification has been defined as the orientation of self in regard to the team that results in feelings of close attachment (Fink et al., 2002). Identification is considered an important concept in sport consumer behavior, and is frequently examined in terms of its relationship with fan behaviors, attitudes, and perceptions. For this study, the Team Identification Index (TII) was selected because it has been found to be a reliable and valid measure of team identification. Also, the TII yields a continuous numerical value for team identification which is appropriate for the analyses in this study, unlike the Psychological Continuum Model, which fits each individual into a particular attachment level.

The TII is actually a subscale of the Points of Attachment Index (PAI), which measures several points for fan identification, such as individual players, coaches, and the sport, as well as the team (Trail et al., 2003). However, the TII has exhibited very good reliability and validity when used by itself as a measure of fan identification to the team (Fink et al., 2002; Harrolle, Trail, Rodriguez, & Jordan, 2010; Robinson & Trail, 2005; Trail et al., 2003). For example, in a study with a sample of 1279 attendees of college basketball games, the TII produced more than acceptable Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = .83$) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE = .62) scores (Trail et al., 2005). Thus, it was expected that the TII would provide valid and reliable scores for team identification in this study.

Venue Attachment variable

In order to determine whether the venue is an important point of attachment for college football fans, a variable measuring individuals' connection with the venue was included. A three item venue variable designed by Boyle and Magnusson (2007) was selected for the current instrument as it was shown to have good validity (AVE = .57) and reliability ($\alpha = .80$) in that study. This venue scale was based on the conceptual framework of Underwood et al. (2001), where it was argued that sport venues not only provide historic symbolism, they also provide an opportunity for fans to identify with one another as a group. One item was added to this scale, in order to probe the importance of the stadium's name in the traditions of the team, which read:

"The name of the stadium is an important part of the team's history and tradition."

Given the context of this study, the author believed that a question dealing with the importance of the current name of the stadium was necessary. However, given that the name is linked to tradition in this question, it was possible that this item could actually be better suited with the team tradition items described below. While the author did not believe this to be the case, it should be noted the actual placement of this item, as well as some of the other items, in the framework was subject to change upon EFA results.

Perceptions of Team Tradition variable

Along with the history associated with the venue itself, the overall tradition of the football team was an important factor in this study. The team tradition scale to be utilized was also modified from Boyle and Magnusson (2007), and it exhibited good reliability (α = .81) and validity (AVE = .59) in that sample as well. Since the role that the stadium's name plays in the tradition and history of a football program was important in this study, it was necessary to include this variable to get a sense of the overall history and tradition of the institution. In other studies of conative loyalty, perceptions and feelings of history and tradition at an institution have been overlooked (Trail et al., 2005; Zhang et al., 2005). Boyle and Magnusson (2007), however, found that alumni identification was related to an appreciation for a team's history, so the researcher believes it is important for those feelings to be collected here.

Group Norms variable

In order to measure fan perceptions of group norms, a scale was adapted from Madrigal (2000). The two item scale was modified to fit the naming rights context, as well as the 7-point Likert scale ([1] Strongly Disagree to [7] Strong Agree) that is being used in this study. The original scale demonstrated good reliability (α = .81) and validity

(AVE = .68) in that study (Madrigal, 2000). Both of these items were related to purchasing of sponsors products, so a third item was added to explore how individuals believed other fans would perceive a potential naming-rights sponsorship. That item was as follows:

"Most others fans of the team whose opinion I value would probably be disappointed if the stadium were to be re-named after a corporation."

Madrigal (2000) found that group norms were related to identification and impacted behaviors towards sponsors. Fan groups are closely knit and norms of the group are important, as observed in cheers and other fan traditions that are considered to be common knowledge within the group. Hence, the author believed it was important to determine how subjects believed others in the group would react to various behaviors. As with the concept of tradition outlined above, group norms do not appear to have been considered in some other studies that examined conative loyalty in college athletics (Trail et al., 2005; Zhang et al., 2005).

Attitudes toward Commercialization variable

This may be the most important independent variable in this study, as Zhang et al. (2005) found that attitudes towards commercialization can significantly affect behavioral intentions toward sponsors, particularly in those fans with high team identification. In order to ascertain fans' general perceptions regarding sponsorship and commercialism in college athletics, measurement items of attitudes toward commercialization were included on the instrument. The particular scale used here was adapted for a college athletics context by Zhang et al. (2005), as it was originally designed for a study on Olympic sponsorship (Lee et al., 1997). Lee et al. (1997) did not report validity for their four-item scale, but found it exhibited questionable reliability (α = .68). Zhang et al. (2005), on their other hand, found that their modified five-item scale displayed good reliability (α = .83), but validity was not reported once again.

The attitudes toward commercialization variable also contained elements of beliefs about sponsorship, based on a scale measuring attitudes toward sponsorship in a study by Alexandris et al. (2007). This scale was also adapted from Lee et al. (1997), as well as Madrigal (2001). In this version, the attitude toward sponsorship scale showed adequate reliability (α = .78), with no validity estimates provided (Alexandris et al., 2007). In total, five items from these scales were adapted for the current study: three based on Zhang et al. (2005), and two based on Alexandris et al. (2007). In order to examine how naming rights was perceived in contrast to other sponsorships, the following item was added by the author:

"Naming a stadium after a sponsor represents a higher level of commercialism than other types of sponsorship."

Sponsor Behavioral Intentions variable

The goal for the first dependent variable in the study was to determine how fans' purchase intentions and feelings toward a potential sponsor might be affected by a naming-rights agreement. The measurement items for this variable were also adapted from Zhang et al. (2005), where they exhibited strong reliability (α = .90). Again, this scale was based on Lee et al. (1997), where the reliability (α = .68) was slightly less than desirable. Constructs from purchase intention scales used by Alexandris et al. (2007), as well as Madrigal (2000), also provided motivation for the adapted items for this instrument. Although these factors were not directly modified for use in this study, the scales from both of the aforementioned studies demonstrated acceptable reliability and validity in those samples.

Team Consumption Intentions variable

The Intentions for Sport Consumption Behavior Scale (ISCBS) was adapted to measure team consumption intentions in this study (Trail et al., 2003; Trail et al., 2005). The ISCBS was developed from a conceptual model of sport consumption behavior proposed by Trail et al. (2000), and is designed to measure an individual's future intentions to support a team, attend games, and purchase merchandise. Previously the ISCBS has been used to measure future intentions based on the subject's feelings at the conclusion of a sporting event (Trail et al., 2005). In this study, the scale was adapted to examine future intentions based on a potential naming rights sponsorship. The ISCBS has also demonstrated good reliability ($\alpha = .84$) and validity (AVE = .58) in previous studies that sampled college basketball game attendees (Trail et al., 2003; Trail et al., 2005). Besides being revised to accommodate the potential naming rights sponsorship, the language in each item was softened from "more likely to (engage in behavior)" to "would be as likely to (engage in behavior) as I do now", as the author believed that since no actual test condition has occurred (such as the watching of a game in the previous studies) that this wording was more appropriate to enhance variability in this context.

Demographic variables

In this study, demographic information was collected in order for the researcher to gain a better understanding of the college football fans in the sample. The demographic variables included were gender, age, ethnicity and level of education. These variables were used to identify if differences could be found in terms of behavioral intentions based on these common characteristics. The four items in this section offered a variety of familiar responses in a multiple-choice format.

Design and Procedures

Design

This study was non-experimental, since there was no control group or multiple measures, and reflected a correlational research design (O'Rourke et al., 2005). Correlational research designs allow researchers to not only detect differences in group means or variables, but also to determine the precise degree of relationships between two or more variables (Borg, Gall, Gall, 1993). Correlational designs are also used when the variables are both continuous and categorical.

Research questions 1, 2, and 3 in the current study sought to determine the relationships between two dependent variables and sets of independent variables. Research questions 1 and 2 investigated the relationships between the independent variables (team identification, venue attachment, perceptions of team tradition, group norms, and attitudes toward commercialism) and team consumption intentions and sponsor purchase intentions. Research question 3 examined the relationship between the same two dependent variables and ten demographic and team involvement variables. Finally, research question 4 examined the correlation between the two dependent variables from the first 3 research questions, namely sport consumer intentions and sponsor purchase intentions. It should be noted that having respondents provide perceptions based on a hypothetical sponsorship situation was not an experimental manipulation; it was simply a perception of future behavior or intent. Hence, a non-experimental, correlational research design was most appropriate for this study.

Procedures

For the purposes of this study, an intercept survey distribution method was utilized. In the intercept method, a researcher obtains respondents in a populated public area (Rea & Parker, 2005). In this study, paper and pencil surveys were administered to individuals prior to college football games, around stadiums and in popular tailgating areas (Madrigal, 2000). This method of survey distribution increased the likelihood of reaching the desired population for the study. Some advantages of the intercept method are that the interviewer has an opportunity to explain any items that may be confusing to the survey-taker, and the interviewer can also ensure that questions are not skipped. Disadvantages of the intercept method, on the other hand, include a lack of respondent anonymity and potential interview bias via body language or the way that the survey is presented (Rea & Parker, 2005). Therefore, it was critical for the author to remain as neutral as possible when introducing the survey so as not to bias the responses. Also, no identifying information, such as names, was collected to ensure anonymity of the participants.

Data collection took place from October to December of 2010. Prior to data collection process, Institutional Review Board approval was obtained from the University of Northern Colorado. In intercept sampling, it is important that the researcher selects a location that is occupied by individuals from the target population (Rea & Parker, 2005). Therefore, the author approached potential respondents at a college football venue and verbally asked the individuals if they would like to participate in a study about sponsorship in college football. Those individuals that agreed to take part in the study were given a cover letter that describes the purpose of the study, contact information for the researcher, time required to complete the survey, and details regarding informed consent. This method was then repeated at various NCAA Division I college football games. If the response rate and overall number of participants was lower than expected, the researcher extended data collection until after the game ended in order to gain more time in which to approach potential subjects.

Statistical Techniques and Data Analysis

Statistical Techniques

The following statistical procedures were utilized to answer the research questions in this study: analysis of descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), multiple linear regression, Pearson correlation coefficients, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), and Tukey comparison post-hoc tests.

Descriptive statistics - An analysis of descriptive statistics was conducted prior to using any other statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and measures of distributions allow the researcher to better understand the data and recognize characteristics within variables (Huck, 2008). Analysis of descriptives also helped to identify data coding errors, outliers, possible assumption violations or necessary data transformations.

Reliability analysis – Reliability can be defined as “the extent to which measurements are free from random-error variance” (Hayes, 2008). The purpose of reliability is to measure the extent to which data collected through a survey instrument are consistent. The current study collected single observations for each survey respondent, which were combined to form a single score for each variable. It is important that these items were measuring the same thing, so the reliability of the survey instrument in this study was measured by testing internal consistency (Huck, 2008; Hayes, 2008). Internal consistency can be defined as the extent to which individual items correlate with one another (O'Rourke et al., 2005). A scale is considered to be internally consistent if its items are highly correlated, and there are several methods that can estimate internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha is the most widely used test of internal consistency in the social sciences (O'Rourke et al., 2005), and was the procedure of choice in this study as it is included in most statistical packages and does not need to be corrected for survey length.

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) **–** Factor analysis is applied to a single set of variables when the researcher is interested in determining if any variables in the set form underlying constructs that are independent of one another (Rencher, 2002; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Factor analysis can be used to evaluate score validity, to develop theory regarding the nature of the constructs, and to summarize relationships to identify clear factors to be used in subsequent analysis (Thompson, 2004). The overall goal of factor analysis is to reduce the redundancy among the variables by using a smaller number of factors (Rencher, 2002). The common steps in EFA include selecting observed variables, examining the correlation structure of the variables, extracting the underlying factors, rotating the factors, and interpreting the results (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

EFA was used to evaluate the validity of multi-item variables and to identify a factor structure to be used in subsequent analyses, such as multivariate analysis of variance and multiple linear regression. It was not necessary for the researcher to have expectations about the factor structure when applying EFA (Thompson, 2004). Since the variables in this study were largely derived from other studies where the items were grouped together using EFA, it could be argued that a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) might be more appropriate. However, it was possible that some of the items, including those added by the author, may load on other variables than what was expected due to the anticipated correlations between the variables. Therefore, it was the researcher's opinion that EFA was more appropriate.

Pearson correlation coefficients – Correlation measures describe the relationship between two variables. Pearson correlation coefficients are the most frequently used measure of association, as they measure the strength and nature of the relationship between two variables (Glass & Hopkins, 1996; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Correlations are the underlying processes in other statistical techniques, such as multiple regression and factor analysis. When using Pearson correlation coefficients, it is important that the data are both linear and independent in nature (Huck, 2008). In this study, Pearson correlations were used to determine pair-wise relationships between certain variables of interest, and also to gauge the amount of multicollinearity in the data. Multicollinearity occurs when two or more independent variables are highly correlated with each other, and can cause undesirable situations such as inflated standard errors of coefficients when using multiple linear regression (Hinton, 1995; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Multicollinearity can also cause regression coefficients to fail to demonstrate statistical significance or demonstrate the incorrect sign (O'Rourke et al., 2005).

Multiple linear regression – Multiple linear regression is used to assess the relationship between a dependent variable and a combination of two or more predictor variables (Borg et al., 1993). The purpose of multiple regression is to determine whether there are significant relationships between the dependent variable and independent variables and, if so, how much variance is accounted for by the independent variables (O'Rourke et al., 2005). Multiple regression is a popular technique in the social sciences, particularly when an examination of correlations on a multivariate level is necessary (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). When employing multiple regression, assumptions of linearity, independence, normality, and homogeneity of variances must be considered (O'Rourke et al., 2005). These assumptions were validated by inspecting residual plots and descriptive statistics.

Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) – MANOVA is a generalization of analysis of variance (ANOVA) which allows multiple dependent variables. MANOVA tests determine if mean differences among groups on a combination of DVs are likely to have occurred by change, rather than random error (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). MANOVA is preferred to multiple ANOVA procedures, as the researcher has a better chance of evaluating specific effects on the DV, and may find group differences that could be undetectable by a set of univariate ANOVAs. Also, one MANOVA instead of multiple ANOVAs decreases the chance for Type I error caused by multiple tests of potentially correlated independent variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

In this study, a main effects model of MANOVA was utilized. A main effects model tests for group differences between each independent variable individually, without consideration for interactions between the independent variables (Rencher, 2002). This model was adequate as the goal in this exploratory study was to investigate the effects of each variable individually. Also, with the large number of independent variables that were present in the MANOVA, this model was considerably simpler to analyze than a factorial model, in which all interaction terms are included. Although

MANOVA tests tend to be robust in lieu of assumption violations, it is still important to check for gross violations. Multivariate normality, homogeneity of variance/co-variance matrices, linearity and independence must be considered when conducting MANOVA (Rencher, 2002).

If the MANOVA in this study was significant, a post-hoc comparison procedure was used to determine which specific groups differ, as a significant MANOVA does not provide any insight as to which variables caused the significant difference (Huck, 2008; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). In order to determine which independent variables differ, a post-hoc Tukey test was used. The Tukey test was selected because it is considered to be fairly neutral in comparison to more liberal or conservative post-hoc tests, and it accounts for when group sizes are unequal (Huck, 2008).

Data Analysis

The first step in data analysis was to examine demographics and descriptive statistics for each variable. This preliminary examination helped validate necessary assumptions for the various statistical procedures to be utilized, including frequency of responses, normality, and evidence of outliers. Next, Pearson correlation coefficients were examined in order to give the researcher a better idea of how the variables are related, and to get an early gauge of whether or not multicollinearity was present in the multiple linear regression analyses. Further descriptions of the other data analyses were presented for each research question.

Research Question 1 – A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between sponsor purchase intentions and the desired predictor variables (team identification, venue attachment, perceptions of team tradition, group norms, and attitudes toward commercialism). Before regression analysis was run, the factor structure of the variables was scrutinized, as well as their reliability and validity. For these purposes, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was utilized.

Prior to EFA, multivariate normality was checked by examining skewness and kurtosis values for each item. The usual acceptable ranges of -1.0 to 1.0 for skewness values, and -1.0 to 2.0 for kurtosis values were used (Huck, 2004). Although EFA is relatively robust in lieu of minor violations of multivariate normality, any items that fell considerably outside of these ranges were dropped prior to running EFA. Also, Kaiser's measure of sampling adequacy was conducted to ensure that factor analysis is appropriate (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

An oblique rotation technique, such as promax, was necessary as several of the factors were correlated with each other. Oblique rotation makes it easier for the researcher to interpret the factor structure if the underlying variables are correlated (Rencher, 2002; Thompson, 2004). The ultimate number of factors and items within the factors were decided by the following common criteria: (1) eigenvalues for each factor must be greater than 1.0, (2) factor loadings of .32 for each variable, (3) at least two items must load on each factor, and most importantly (4) items must be interpretable by the researcher (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Once the factors were finalized, Cronbach's alpha test was conducted to determine the internal consistency of each factor.

The dependent variable for the multiple linear regression model was sponsor purchase intentions; the independent variables were the predictor variables listed above, pending necessary changes based on the factors that emerged through EFA. A Bonferroni-adjusted significance level of .025 was used for the overall model and each independent variable, as the same independent variables was used again for the analysis in the second research question. Prior to the regression analysis, the usual assumptions of linearity, independence, normality, and equality of variance were examined using residual plots and descriptive statistics (O'Rourke et al., 2005). Also, multicollinearity issues were evaluated by comparing Pearson correlation coefficients and checking the Type III Sum of Squares for each of the variables. If any variables were contributing significantly to multicollinearity they were dropped from the model via the process of backward selection, and a new multiple regression with fewer variables was rerun. This process was repeated until all factors in the model were significant and the overall F statistic for the model had been maximized.

Research Question 2: Similarly to the first research question, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between sport consumption intentions and the desired predictor variables (team identification, venue attachment, perceptions of team tradition, group norms, and attitudes toward commercialism). The factor structure from the first EFA was used again for this analysis. As before, the independent variables were the same predictor variables listed above, and this time the dependent variable was sport consumption intentions. The same Bonferroni-adjusted significance level of .025 was used since the same independent variables were also being used for this test. Assumptions and the possibility of multicollinearity were inspected once more using the same procedures as those outlined above.

Research Question 3: A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to determine whether significant differences existed between groups based on demographic and team preference/involvement variables (the independent variables), in regard to their sport consumptions intentions and sponsor purchase intentions (the dependent variables). Since there were multiple dependent variables of interest in this analysis, MANOVA was the most appropriate procedure available (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The demographic variables that were included in the model were gender, age, ethnicity, and highest level of education attained. The team preference/involvement variables included were favorite team, number of years as a fan, alumni status, season ticket holder status, donor status, and number of games attended per year. The dependent variables were the same as in the first two research questions, again pending necessary structure changes based on the results of the EFA. Since the independent variables in this analysis were different from those used previously, a significance level of .05 was used for this test. Prior to running the MANOVA, the necessary assumptions of multivariate normality, homogeneity of variance/co-variance matrices, linearity, and independence were validated using descriptive statistics and Box's *M* test for homogeneity of variance/co-variance matrices (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Since there were multiple independent variables present in this research design, a post-hoc procedure to MANOVA was necessary to determine which independent variables were significant, and to what extent (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). A common procedure used to uncover these differences is the Tukey comparison test (Huck, 2008). This test identified which independent variables had differences in their group structures based on the dependent variables. The Tukey test actually provided the most important information, as the research question asked specifically which groups differed based on their feelings toward the dependent variables.

Research Question 4: A Pearson correlation coefficient was conducted to examine the relationship between the two dependent variables from the first three research questions, namely sport consumption intentions and sponsor purchase intentions. A Pearson correlation coefficient was the most appropriate test as the correlation between the two continuous variables, both in terms of strength and direction, is of primary interest (Glass & Hopkins, 1996). Since this was a single test of correlation, a significance level of .05 was utilized. Prior to running the Pearson correlation, necessary assumptions of linearity and equality of variances were assessed using scatter plots and Levene's test for equality of variance. These assumptions must be met or the correlation procedure will provide misleading information concerning the strength of the relationship between the variables (Huck, 2008).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Description of the Sample

Potential respondents were approached in person on football game days near stadiums at seven universities in seven different states. The institutions spanned four NCAA Division I (FBS) conferences, located in the Western, Midwestern and Southern regions of the United States. The subjects in the study were game attendees and tailgaters that congregated around football stadiums in the hours leading up to game time.

Individuals were approached using a systematic randomization in selected nearby parking lots and asked if they would be willing to participate in the study. Those that accepted were given 10-15 minutes to complete the paper and pencil survey, and the surveys were collected by the researcher soon after completion. The researcher would leave the survey-takers alone while the questions were being answered, so as not to influence the respondents in any way. Additionally, no personal information was collected in order to protect the identities of the respondents, and no incentive was provided to those who took the survey.

In total, 800 surveys were collected, with 731 considered usable for analysis, yielding a usable survey rate of 91.4%. Of those 69 surveys omitted from the final analyses, most were unreadable or only partially complete. In the cases where only a question or two were omitted, the survey was kept and sample mean imputation was used to fill those few missing data values. Further, the number of surveys collected from each institution varied greatly, in most cases because cold weather led to late arriving crowds that spent less time outside the stadium in the hours leading up to the game, which greatly affected the number of potential respondents to be approached.

Demographics

A small selection of pertinent demographic variables were collected, namely age, education, ethnicity, and gender. The average age amongst the respondents was 37.31 years (SD = 13.08), with a range of 18-80 years. A further breakdown of age groups is available in Table 1. In terms of education level, 360 of the respondents (49.2%) indicated a Bachelors degree as their highest level of education earned. Overall, the sample was very highly educated, with 77.6% of the total respondents holding at least a Bachelors degree. Frequencies for each level of education are available in Table 2. The respondents in the sample did not represent a particularly diverse population, as most of the respondents (91.5%) classified themselves as White/Caucasian (see Table 3). Finally, 430 of the respondents (58.8%) indicated that they were male, while 215 (29.4%) indicated being female. 86 participants (11.8%) did not indicate their gender (see Table 4).

Table 1

Age

	Frequency	Percent
18-24	100	13.7
25-29	146	20.0
30-34	106	14.5
35-44	129	17.6
45-54	97	13.3
55+	92	12.6
Total	670	91.7

Note. 61 (8.2%) respondents did not indicate their age

Table 2

Highest degree earned

	Frequency	Percent
High School	83	11.4
Vocational Degree	24	3.3
Associates Degree	52	7.1
Bachelors degree	360	49.2
Masters Degree	136	18.6
Doctoral Degree	65	8.9
Other	6	.8
Total	726	98.9

Note. 5 respondents did not indicate their highest degree

Table 3

Ethnicity

	Frequency	Percent
Asian/Pacific Islander	11	1.5
White/Caucasian	669	91.5
Black/African American	8	1.1
Hispanic/Latino	24	3.3
Native American	5	.7
Other	4	.5
Total	721	97.8

Note. 10 respondents did not indicate their ethnicity

Table 4

Gender

	Frequency	Percent
Male	430	58.8
Female	215	29.4
Total	645	88.2

Note. 86 respondents (11.8%) did not indicate their gender

Team Involvement information

Another set of categorical variables, termed involvement information, were collected in order to better understand the nature of the respondents' relationships with the institution to which their favorite college football team belongs. Respondents first identified a favorite team, then within the context of that institution indicated their alumni status, whether they were currently a student at the institution, whether they were currently a football season ticket holder, number of years as a fan of the team, number of football games attended per season, and whether or not they were donors for the athletic program (and if so, how much they donated per year). 574 (78.5%) of the respondents indicated that their favorite college football team was one of the seven home teams in the games visited, while 157 (21.5%) selected another team as their favorite, most often the visiting team from each contest. The distribution of participants' loyalty between each of the teams is included in Table 5.

Table 5

Favorite team breakdown

Team identifier	Frequency	Percent
Team #1	145	19.8
Team #2	98	13.4
Team #3	91	12.4
Team #4	87	11.9
Team #5	63	8.6
Team #6	45	6.2
Team #7	45	6.2
Others	157	21.5
Total	731	100

Note. All respondents selected a favorite football team

Table 6 shows the distribution of participants relative to their alumni status with their favorite college football team's institution. The majority of respondents (390; 53.3%) had attended their favorite team's institution as a student, with 310 (42.4%) of those indicating that they graduated from that university. The vast majority of the respondents (91.7%) were not currently students at their favorite team's university. Further, 320 of the participants (43.8%) also indicated that they were season ticket holders for their preferred team (see Table 7).

Table 6

Alumni status

	Frequency	Percent
Never attended	338	46.2
Some attendance	80	10.9
Graduate	310	42.4
Total	728	99.6

Note. 3 respondents did not indicate status

Table 7

Season ticket holder

	Frequency	Percent
Has season tickets	320	55.7
Does not have season tickets	407	43.8
Total	727	99.1

Note. 4 respondents did not indicate if they had season tickets

Overall, respondents indicated having been fans of their favorite team for 25.14 years (SD = 12.54), on average. Also, individuals in the sample attended an average of 4.27 games per year (SD = 2.693). The breakdowns of length of time as a fan and number of games attended can be found in Tables 8 and 9, respectively.

Table 8

Length of time as a fan

	Frequency	Percent
0-10 years	115	15.7
11-20 years	176	24.1
21-30 years	233	31.9
Over 30 years	200	27.4
Total	724	99.0

Note. *7 respondents did not indicate how long they had been a fan of the team*

Table 9

Number of games attended last season

	Frequency	Percent
0-2 games	243	33.2
3-5 games	195	26.7
6 or more games	282	38.6
Total	720	98.5

Note. *11 respondents did not indicate their attendance habits*

In terms of donation habits, approximately one in three respondents (265; 36.3%) indicated that they were current donors to their favorite team's university. On average, donors gave $635.36 per year (SD = 2959.24), with a greatest annual donation of $50,000. For the purposes of future analysis, active donors were separated into two groups: minor donors (under $1000) and major donors (at least $1000). The breakdown of donor levels is illustrated in Table 10.

Table 10

Number of donors by donor level

	Frequency	Percent
Non donor	461	63.1
Minor donor (< $1000/yr)	122	16.7
Major donor ($1000+/yr)	105	14.4
Total	688	94.1

Note. 43 respondents did not indicate donor level

In summary, the representative respondent in the study was 37.31 years old, White/Caucasian (91.5%), male (58.8%), and held at least a Bachelors degree (77.6%). Further, the typical participant had attended their favorite team's institution (53.3%), was not currently a student at that university (91.7%), was not a season ticket holder (55.7%) (but attended 4.27 games last season), had been a fan of their favorite team for 25.14 years, and did not donate to the athletic program (63.1%).

Preliminary Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

Participants in the study responded to 28 survey questions designed to measure the following constructs: Fan identification, venue attachment, perceptions of tradition, attitudes toward sponsorship, attitudes toward commercialism, group norms, sponsor behavioral intentions, and conative loyalty. A 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree) was used in all cases to examine respondents' perceptions of these multi-dimensional scales.

Means and standard deviations for each of the survey items can be found in Table 11. Most of the items with which respondents mostly strongly agreed were within the fan identification, venue attachment, and perceptions of tradition constructs. Of the fan identification questions, the item with the highest mean was "I consider myself a 'real' fan of the team" (*M* = 6.42; *SD* = 1.14). In terms of the venue, respondents largely agreed that their "favorite team's home stadium is a unique place" (*M* = 6.30; *SD* = 1.20) and they "would be very upset if the stadium was torn down" (*M* = 6.00; *SD* = 1.61). When asked about the tradition of their favorite football team, participants agreed that "The university's football program has a special place in the history of the university itself" (*M* = 5.98; *SD* = 1.42) and "Its long and storied past makes the football program of today something special" (*M* = 5.90; *SD* = 1.53).

There were only a few items with which the participants disagreed in general (mean score less than 4.0), most of which were within the sponsor behavioral intentions construct. In fact, the three smallest mean scores belonged to this group of items, namely "I would feel better about a company than I do now if it purchased the name of the football stadium" (*M* = 3.05; *SD* = 1.70), "If a company were to pay to re-name my team's football stadium, I would be likely to buy their products" (*M* = 2.99; *SD* = 1.65), and "I think that a company paying to re-name our team's stadium would be a great help to our football program" (*M* = 3.20; *SD* = 1.95).

The final, overarching item which was added by the researcher was "I would agree with the university's decision if they were to sell the name to the stadium." This item was added as a stand-alone, uni-dimensional construct designed to measure the participants' overall perceptions of potential stadium naming-rights relative to their favorite football team, independent of future purchasing intentions. The average score on this item was near neutral (*M* = 3.44) with a large standard deviation (*SD* = 2.14); however, it should be noted that 510 respondents (69.8%) indicated that they disagreed or had neutral feelings toward this item (score of four or less).

Table 11

Descriptive Analysis of Survey Items

	Mean	SD
I consider myself a "real" fan of the team	6.42	1.14
I have a lot of great memories from attending games at my team's stadium	6.26	1.37
Being a fan of the team is very important to me	6.00	1.40
I would experience a loss if I had to stop being a fan of the team	5.69	1.76
My team's rich tradition is something you don't find at most other universities	5.35	1.74
The name of the stadium is an important part of the team's history and tradition	5.37	1.86
The university's football program has a special place in the history of the university itself	5.98	1.42
I would be very upset if the stadium was torn down	6.00	1.61
I would be as likely to wear the team's clothing as often as I do now if the stadium were re-named	4.93	1.86
I would likely purchase as much team merchandise as I do now if the stadium were to be re-named	4.53	1.91
If the stadium were re-named after a corporation, I would be likely to attend as many games as I do now	5.46	1.79
If the stadium were to be renamed after a corporation, my support of the team would not change	5.14	1.89
Sponsorship is good for the development of our football team	5.32	1.59
Sponsorship offers important financial support for my football team	5.46	1.45
On the whole, most other fans of this team would probably approve of my decision to buy products from one of our football team's sponsors	5.33	1.53

I would feel better about a company than I do now if it purchased the name of the football stadium	3.05	1.70
If a company were to pay to re-name my team's football stadium, I would be likely to buy their products	2.99	1.65
I think that a company paying to re-name our team's stadium would be a great help to our football program	3.20	1.95
In general, other fans would approve of me buying products from a company that paid to re-name our football stadium	3.97	1.74
Naming a stadium after a sponsor represents a higher level of commercialization than other types of sponsorship	5.12	1.89
Companies that sponsor college football should not try to commercialize it	4.11	1.87
Our football team is too commercialized	3.49	1.70
***Its long and storied past makes the football program of today something special	5.90	1.53
***I think my favorite team's home stadium is a unique place	6.30	1.20
***Sponsorship increases the level of commercialization in college football	5.73	1.45
***Most other fans whose opinion I value would probably be disappointed if the stadium were to be re-named after a corporation	5.47	1.77
***I feel that re-naming the stadium after a corporation would negatively affect the tradition of our football program	4.62	2.06
***I would agree with the university's decision if they were to sell the name to the stadium	3.44	2.14

****Items were removed from final analysis after EFA*

Exploratory Factor Analysis

The first statistical procedure to be used in the current study was exploratory factor analysis (EFA). While defining a factor structure for the survey items was not a primary goal in this study, it was necessary to use EFA to uncover the underlying multi-item constructs, as well as examine the factorial validity of the instrument, for use in subsequent analyses. Prior to running EFA, the necessary assumptions of normality and linearity were inspected (Huck, 2008). It should be noted that these assumptions are not completely necessary when EFA is being used to summarize relationships between items, but the solution is enhanced when the assumptions hold (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). One standard method for assessing normality is by examining histograms and checking descriptive statistics for skewness and kurtosis values. The rules of thumb are that skewness values should fall between -1 and 1, and kurtosis values should fall between -1 and 2. While not all of the items fell exactly between these usual ranges, none of the items appeared to exhibit gross violations of normality, and hence were considered acceptable for use. In terms of the linearity assumption, scatterplots were inspected and did not suggest the presence of any non-linear relationships between variables.

An EFA with principle components extraction was conducted on all 28 items on the survey. Three conditions were examined in determining the appropriate number of factors: 1) the factor eigenvalues must be greater than one, 2) the elbow in the scree plot must match the interpretation of the eigenvalues, and 3) the factors must be interpretable by the researcher. Promax factor rotation was used to minimize the effects of correlations between the items, yielding a clearer factor structure that was easier to interpret. Although the scales chosen for the survey represented the eight constructs listed above, only six factors emerged from the EFA. These six factors are as follows: Fan identification, Perceptions of tradition/venue, Conative loyalty, Attitudes toward sponsorship, Sponsor behavioral intentions, and Attitudes toward commercialism. The final factor structure includes 22 items loaded onto those six factors explaining 67.19% of the variance in the items, and can be found in Table 12.

Table 12

EFA factor structure

Factor	Item	Component 1	2	3	4	5	6
FID	I consider myself a "real" fan of the team	.899					
FID	I have a lot of great memories from attending games at my team's stadium	.879					
FID	Being a fan of the team is very important to me	.753					
FID	I would experience a loss if I had to stop being a fan of the team	.726					
PTV	My team's rich tradition is something you don't find at most other universities		.881				
PTV	The name of the stadium is an important part of the team's history and tradition		.810				
PTV	The university's football program has a special place in the history of the university itself		.728				
PTV	I would be very upset if the stadium was torn down		.629				
CON	I would be as likely to wear the team's clothing as often as I do now if the stadium were re-named			.904			
CON	I would likely purchase as much team merchandise as I do now if the stadium were to be re-named			.863			
CON	If the stadium were re-named after a corporation, I would be likely to attend as many games as I do now			.836			

		Component					
Factor	**Item**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
CON	If the stadium were to be renamed after a corporation, my support of the team would not change			.556			
ATS	Sponsorship is good for the development of our football team				.913		
ATS	Sponsorship offers important financial support for my football team				.879		
ATS	On the whole, most other fans of this team would probably approve of my decision to buy products from one of our football team's sponsors				.768		
SBI	I would feel better about a company than I do now if it purchased the name of the football stadium					.908	
SBI	If a company were to pay to re-name my team's football stadium, I would be likely to buy their products					.855	
SBI	I think that a company paying to re-name our team's stadium would be a great help to our football program					.544	
SBI	In general, other fans would approve of me buying products from a company that paid to re-name our football stadium					.529	
COM	Naming a stadium after a sponsor represents a higher level of commercialization than other types of sponsorship						.772
COM	Companies that sponsor college football should not try to commercialize it						.738
COM	Our football team is too commercialized						.736

Note. FID = Fan Identification, PTV = Perceptions of tradition/venue,
CON = Conative Loyalty, ATS = Attitudes toward Sponsorship,
SBI = Sponsor Behavioral Intentions, and COM = Attitudes toward Commercialism

The six items from the survey that were omitted in the final factor structure were removed due to either double loadings or lack of interpretability. None of the group norms variables loaded together and instead were distributed amongst other variables, or eventually deleted due to double loadings. Also, the venue attachment and perceptions of tradition items loaded together on one factor, with two of the items also being omitted due to double loadings, creating a hybrid variable. The rest of the factors were readily interpretable within the framework of the eight original constructs outlined above, with either three or four items loading on each. It should be noted that not all of the resulting scales are identical to those found in the literature. This was to be expected when adapting a large group of constructs with a high degree of similarity from a variety of studies by different researchers.

In order to examine reliability and validity of the scales, Cronbach's alpha and Average Variance Extracted values were obtained. Five of the six factors showed acceptable reliability (α values ranging from .746 to .842) and validity (AVE ranging from .53 to .73). The other factor, attitudes toward commercialism ($\alpha = .65$ and AVE = .56), exhibited acceptable validity but low internal consistency relative to the generally accepted lower bound of 0.7 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). In exploratory research studies, however, alpha values larger than .60 have been considered acceptable (Nunnally, 1978). Hence, the variable was kept and included in subsequent analysis. The exact values of internal consistency and validity for each factor can be found in Table 13.

Table 13

Table of Internal Consistency and Average Variance Extracted

Variable	α	AVE
Fan Identification (FID)	.837	.669
Perceptions of Tradition/Venue (PTV)	.815	.589
Conative Loyalty (CON)	.817	.643
Attitude toward Sponsorship (ATS)	.842	.732
Sponsor Behavioral Intentions (SBI)	.746	.533
Attitude toward Commercialism	.648*	.561

**Note*. Acceptable in exploratory research (Nunnally, 1978).*

Research Questions

In order to answer the research questions, additional statistical analyses were performed using the factor structure established through exploratory factor analysis (EFA) above. These additional analyses included Multiple Linear Regression, Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA), and Pearson Correlation Coefficients. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 18.0 was used to run all analyses in the current study. Results are presented in order by research question.

Q1 To what extent are team identification, venue attachment, perceptions of team tradition, group norms, and attitudes toward commercialism related to fans' intentions to purchase sponsor products?

As mentioned previously, EFA was used to establish the structures of the multi-dimensional variables relative to the survey items. Prior to regression, a table of Pearson correlation coefficients was produced in order to investigate pair-wise relationships between the variables. The correlations between factors can be found in Table 14.

Table 14

Correlations between factors

	FID	PTV	CON	ATS	SBI	COM
FID	1	.507**	.234**	.311**	-.038	-.015
PTV		1	-.008	.153**	-.202**	.070
CON			1	.302**	.279**	-.148**
ATS				1	.291**	-.147**
SBI					1	-.111**
COM						1

*Note. ** indicates significance at the .05 level*

A multiple linear regression was then conducted to examine the effects of Fan identification (FID), Perceptions toward tradition/venue (PTV), Attitudes toward sponsorship (ATS), and Attitudes toward commercialism (COM) on Sponsor behavioral intentions (SBI). First, the necessary assumptions of linearity, independence, normality, and equality of variances were examined. Inspections of descriptive statistics, residual plots and normal p-p plots suggested that none of the assumptions had been grossly violated. Since a majority of the factors were significantly correlated (see Table 14 above), tests to determine whether multicollinearity was present in the model were performed. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), multicollinearity is present when at least two different variables have condition indices of 30 and variance proportions greater than .50. There was one pair that had a variance proportion slightly greater than .50 but the conditioning index was not near 30 for any dimension, so it was presumed that there were no multicollinearity issues in the final regression model.

Since two regression analyses are being conducted on the same set of independent variables, a Bonferroni adjusted significance level of .05/2 = .025 was established a priori (Huck, 2008). The results of the regression can be found in Table 15. The overall model was significant ($F(4, 730) = 31.907$, $p < .001$) and explained 15.0% of the variance in Sponsor behavioral intentions. Both Perceptions toward venue/tradition ($p < .001$) and Attitudes toward sponsorship ($p < .001$) were found to be significant, while Fan identification and Attitudes toward commercialism were not significant. It should be noted that these results were consistent with the correlation table (see Table 14), except that Attitudes toward Commercialism were significantly correlated with Sponsor Behavioral Intentions, but Attitudes toward Commercialism was not a significant predictor in the regression model. However, the correlation between the two was quite small (-.111), so it is likely that some of the variability explained by Attitudes toward Commercialism was also explained by another variable, and thus the variable was not found to be significant in the overall model.

Table 15

Multiple Linear Regression Results (DV = Sponsor behavioral intentions (SBI))

Independent Variable	Beta	*t*	*p*-value
FID	-.019	-.471	.638
PTV	-.239	-5.996	<.001
ATS	.327	8.979	<.001
COM	.047	-1.338	.181

Note. (F(4, 730) = 31.907, p < .001), R^2 = .150

Q2 To what extent are team identification, venue attachment, perceptions of team tradition, group norms, and attitudes toward commercialism related to fans' intentions to purchase tickets and merchandise?

A second multiple linear regression was conducted to examine the effects of Fan identification (FID), Perceptions toward tradition/venue (PTV), Attitudes toward sponsorship (ATS), and Attitudes toward commercialism (COM) on Conative loyalty (CON). As before, the necessary assumptions were examined using descriptive statistics, residual plots and normal p-p plots, which again suggested that there were no assumption violations. This time, there were four pairs that had variance proportions greater than .50, but again the conditioning index was not near 30 for any dimension, so it is suggested that multicollinearity was not an issue in this model either.

As before, a Bonferroni adjusted significance level of .025 was established a priori. The model was significant (F(4, 730) = 30.312, p < .001), and explained 14.3% of the variance in conative loyalty. In this model, all four independent variables were found to be significant predictors of Conative Loyalty (CON). The direction and significance of the relationships were consistent with the correlation table (Table 14) except for

Perceptions toward tradition/venue (PTV), in that this variable was found to be a significant predictor of Conative loyalty (CON) in the Regression model, but the pair-wise correlation between the two was not significant. Since Perceptions toward tradition/venue (PTV) is not a particularly strong predictor in the model, this could indicate a minor degree of multicollinearity. The results of the regression model are illustrated in Table 16.

Table 16

Multiple Linear Regression Results (DV = Conative loyalty (CON))

Ind. Variable	Beta	*t*	*p*-value
PTV	-.158	-3.941	<.001
ATS	.237	6.492	<.001
FID	.238	5.751	<.001
COM	-.098	-2.819	.005

Note. ($F(4, 730) = 30.312$, $p < .001$), $R^2 = .143$

Q3 Do these fan purchasing and consumption intentions differ based on age, gender, ethnicity, education level, donor status, alumni status, season ticket holder status, number of years as a fan of the team, and/or number of games attended per year?

It was also important to determine if Sponsor behavioral intentions (SBI) and Conative loyalty (CON) differed based on demographic and involvement factors. The set of factors used in this study were age, gender, ethnicity, education level, donor status, alumni status, season ticket holder status, number of years spent as a fan of the team, and the number of the team’s games attended each year. A main-effects MANOVA model was utilized to determine whether the groups within the various demographic and involvement factors differed in regards to Sponsor behavioral intentions (SBI) and Conative loyalty (CON).

Prior to running MANOVA, it was necessary to examine assumptions of linearity, normality, independence, and equality of variance/co-variance matrices. Descriptive statistics (including skewness and kurtosis values), histograms, and scatterplots were analyzed, and it was determined that the assumptions of linearity, normality, and independence were not grossly violated. Also, since the sample sizes between groups were not equal in all cases, it was necessary to run a Box's *M* test to determine whether the variance/co-variance matrices were homogeneous (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The Box's *M* test was found not to be significant (p = .066); therefore, the equality of variance/covariance matrices assumption was not violated.

Since Box's *M* was not significant, it was determined that the Wilk's Lambda statistic should be used to determine whether the groups of each factor differed based on Sponsor behavioral intentions (SBI) and Conative loyalty (CON) (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). A significance level of .05 was used for this test. Results of the MANOVA indicated that there were significant differences between groups in the following factors: Age, gender, favorite college football team, and donor level. The results of the MANOVA are available in Table 17.

Table 17

MANOVA results (DV's = SBI and CON)

	F approximation	Significance
Age	3.521	.007
Gender	14.521	< .001
Favorite Team	3.262	< .001
Donor Level	4.167	.002

In order to determine exactly which groups differed, Tukey's HSD post-hoc test was utilized for the significant groups that contained more than two groups, namely age, favorite team, and donor level. The results of the post-hoc tests, along with group means, can be found in Table 18. In terms of age, there was one pair of groups that differed significantly on Conative loyalty, namely the 18-29 age group (M = 5.123) indicated that they would exhibit higher Conative loyalty than the 41+ age group (M = 4.938). It should be noted that when the age variable was included with the six categories outlined in Table 1, the variable was significant, but none of the groups exhibited significant differences on the Tukey post-hoc test. In order to get a better feel for the age differences, three age levels were used (namely 18-29, 30-40, and 41+ years) in the final MANOVA analysis. Next, males (M = 3.480) indicated significantly higher Sponsor behavioral intentions than did females (M = 2.970). Third, major donors (M = 3.714) differed significantly from both minor donors (M = 3.324) and non-donors (M = 3.1682) on Sponsor behavioral intentions. Also, major donors (M = 5.382) differed significantly from both minor donors (M = 5.023) and non-donors (M = 4.895) on Conative loyalty. Minor donors and non-donors did not differ significantly on either dependent measure.

Finally, there were numerous significant differences between pairs of favorite teams on both Sponsor behavioral intentions. Of these, respondents that indicated Institution #3 as their favorite differed significantly from three other institutions, the most of any of the teams in the sample. For a complete breakdown of significant differences between favorite teams on Sponsor behavioral intentions, see Table 18. None of the pairs of favorite teams exhibited significant differences on Conative loyalty.

Table 18

Significant post-hoc results to MANOVA

Factor	Dep. Var.	Group 1	Group 2	Grp 1 mean	Grp 2 mean	Sig.
Age	CON	18-29 years	41+ years	5.1233	4.938	.048
Gender	SBI	Males	Females	3.480	2.970	< .001
Donor level	SBI	Major don.	Minor don.	3.714	3.324	.019
Donor level	SBI	Major don.	Non-donor	3.714	3.169	< .001
Donor level	CON	Major don.	Minor don.	5.382	5.023	.050
Donor level	CON	Major don.	Non-donor	5.382	4.895	.001
Fav. Team	SBI	Inst. #1	Inst. #3	3.516	2.558	< .001
Fav. Team	SBI	Inst. #2	Inst. #3	3.776	2.558	< .001
Fav. Team	SBI	Inst. #6	Inst. #3	3.429	2.558	.001
Fav. Team	SBI	Inst. #2	Inst. #4	3.776	3.086	.043

Note. Groups 1 and 2 only include pairs of factor groups that significantly differed. Groups listed under Group 1 had higher mean values than those in Group 2 in all cases.

Q4 To what degree are fans' intentions to purchase tickets and merchandise related to fans' intentions to purchase sponsor products?

The final research question was designed to determine whether there was a relationship between the dependent variables from the other research questions, namely Sponsor Behavioral Intentions (SBI) and Conative loyalty (CON). A bivariate correlation procedure, such as a Pearson correlation coefficient, is most appropriate for determining the strength and direction of a relationship between two quantitative variables (Huck, 2008). According to Huck (2008), a correlation coefficient of .70 or greater indicates a strong relationship between the variables. The results of the Pearson correlation coefficient between Sponsor behavior intentions and Conative loyalty, available in Table 19, indicated a significant relationship. The two variables exhibited a weak, positive correlation (*r* = .279), according to the criteria of Huck (2008).

Table 19

Correlation between dependent variables

	SBI
CON	.279**

*Note. ** indicates significance at the .05 level*

Additional Analyses

Given that this study was largely exploratory in nature, the researcher determined that additional analyses were warranted, based on the results of the research questions. The purpose of these additional tests was solely to examine potential differences in results between different teams. In particular, the researcher wanted to determine if the regression models from research questions 1 and 2 would look different when broken down by individual team. First, the mean scores for the same set of independent variables (Fan identification, Perceptions toward tradition/venue, Attitudes toward sponsorship, and Attitudes toward commercialism) separated by team were computed. Six of the seven institutions had quite similar scores for Fan Identification (means between and 6.071 and 6.305), with only Institution #5 having a lower score of 5.615. Scores for Perceptions toward tradition/venue exhibited a wider range, with six of the seven mean scores between 5.444 and 6.428; again, Institution #5 had a lower score of 4.335. Finally, Attitudes toward commercialism had the lowest mean score of the four independent variables in all cases. All mean scores for the independent variables can be found in Table 20.

Table 20

Mean scores by favorite team

Team	*N*	FID	PTV	ATS	COM
Inst. #1	145	6.305	5.832	5.733	4.003
Inst. #2	98	6.172	5.444	5.577	4.188
Inst. #3	91	6.244	6.428	4.945	4.624
Inst. #4	87	6.148	6.198	5.425	4.014
Inst. #5	63	5.615	4.335	4.647	4.358
Inst. #6	45	6.122	5.572	5.884	3.900
Inst. #7	45	6.071	5.668	4.955	4.523

Note. N is the number of respondents that indicated the team as their favorite.

Next, multiple regression models were constructed in the same manner as in research questions 1 and 2. As before, a Bonferroni-adjusted alpha of .025 was used, as two regressions were being run on each team group within the data. Despite there being seven regression equations for each dependent variable, no additional adjustment was necessary as the separation into favorite team subsets yields mutually exclusive groups. The first set of regression models, with Sponsor behavioral intentions as the dependent variable, exhibited some differences when compared to the results of research question 1. For two of the institutions, no relationships were found - Institution #3 yielded a model that was not significant on SBI ($F(4, 90) = 3.561$, $p = .010$), as did Institution #7 ($F(4, 44) = .963$, $p = .438$). The five other regression models were significant, explaining 15.5 to 30.4 percent of the variance in Sponsor behavioral intentions. Three of these equations exhibited similar relationships as those found in research question 1, in terms of which variables were found to be significant predictors. These equations belonged to Institutions #1, #4, and #6, and can be found in Tables 21, 22, and 23, respectively.

Table 21

Regression Model for Institution #1 (DV = Sponsor behavioral intentions (SBI))

Ind. Variable	Beta	*t*	*p*-value
FID	-.099	-.965	.336
PTV	-.256	-2.741	.007
ATS	.312	3.605	< .001
COM	.063	.810	.419

Note. ($F(4, 144) = 6.430$, $p < .001$), $R^2 = .155$

Table 22

Regression Model for Institution #4 (DV = Sponsor behavioral intentions (SBI))

Ind. Variable	Beta	*t*	*p*-value
FID	-.117	-1.068	.289
PTV	.263	-2.386	.019
ATS	.490	5.191	<.001
COM	.053	.554	.581

Note. (F(4, 86) = 8.653, p < .001), R^2 = .297

Table 23

Regression Model for Institution #6 (DV = Sponsor behavioral intentions (SBI))

Ind. Variable	Beta	*t*	*p*-value
FID	.126	.726	.472
PTV	-.458	-2.845	.007
ATS	.389	2.443	.019
COM	-.157	-1.131	.265

Note. (F(4, 44) = 4.358, p = .005), R^2 = .304

The results of the other two significant regression models, belonging to Institutions #2 and #5, indicated different significant predictor variables from those in the three equations above. In those cases (as well as research question 1), Perceptions toward tradition/venue and Attitudes toward sponsorships were the two significant variables in each model. For institution #2, however, Attitudes toward commercialism was the only significant independent variable in the model. Also, Attitudes toward sponsorship was the only significant predictor in the regression model belonging to Institution #5. The results of regression for Institutions #2 and #5 can be found in Tables 24 and 25, respectively.

Table 24

Regression Model for Institution #2 (DV = Sponsor behavioral intentions (SBI))

Ind. Variable	Beta	*t*	*p*-value
FID	.175	1.690	.094
PTV	-.094	-.913	.363
ATS	.150	1.475	.144
COM	-.258	-2.546	.013

Note. ($F(4, 97) = 4.539$, $p = .002$), $R^2 = .163$

Table 25

Regression Model for Institution #5 (DV = Sponsor behavioral intentions (SBI))

Ind. Variable	Beta	*t*	*p*-value
FID	-.228	-1.892	.064
PTV	-.015	-.114	.910
ATS	.353	2.847	.006
COM	-.081	-.594	.555

Note. ($F(4, 62) = 3.707$, $p = .009$), $R^2 = .204$

Next, regression models for each institution using Conative Loyalty (CON) as the dependent variable were produced. Of the seven equations, three institutions produced models that were not significant on Conative loyalty: Institution #1 ($F(4, 144) = 2.833$, *p*

= .027), Institution #3 (F(4, 90) = 1.974, p = .106), and Institution #6 (F(4, 44) = 2.819, p = .038). Of the four institutions that yielded significant models, none of these exhibited a significant variable structure that was consistent with the results of research question 2, where all four independent variables were significant in that model. In fact, two of the four remaining institutions (Institutions #5 and #7) had only one significant predictor in the model, while the other two models yielded two significant predictors (Institutions #2 and #4). The results for these regression models can be found in Tables 26 through 29.

Table 26

Regression Model for Institution #2 (DV = Conative loyalty (CON))

Ind. Variable	Beta	*t*	*p*-value
FID	.401	3.972	< .001
PTV	-.247	-2.452	.016
ATS	.112	1.126	.263
COM	-.076	-.771	.443

Note. (F(4, 97) = 6.000, $p < .001$), $R^2 = .205$

Table 27

Regression Model for Institution #4 (DV = Conative loyalty (CON))

Ind. Variable	Beta	*t*	*p*-value
FID	.101	.875	.384
PTV	-.007	-.057	.955
ATS	.330	3.328	.001
COM	-.281	-2.803	.006

Note. (F(4, 86) = 5.935, $p < .001$), $R^2 = .225$

Table 28

Regression Model for Institution #5 (DV = Conative loyalty (CON))

Ind. Variable	Beta	*t*	*p*-value
FID	.052	.458	.648
PTV	.153	1.224	.226
ATS	.200	1.701	.094
COM	-.463	-3.597	.001

Note. ($F(4, 62) = 5.754$, $p = .001$), $R^2 = .284$

Table 29

Regression Model for Institution #7 (DV = Conative loyalty (CON))

Ind. Variable	Beta	*t*	*p*-value
FID	.104	.520	.606
PTV	-.052	-.277	.783
ATS	.483	3.129	.003
COM	-.146	-1.083	.285

Note. ($F(4, 44) = 4.690$, $p = .003$), $R^2 = .319$

Results Summary

In this chapter, descriptive statistics were analyzed for the 28 survey items representing the various multi-dimensional constructs of interests, followed by an exploratory factor analysis which defined the factor structure for the survey items. The factors that emerged from EFA were Fan identification, Perceptions of tradition/venue, Conative loyalty, Attitudes toward sponsorship, Sponsor behavioral intentions, and Attitudes toward commercialism.

Once the variable structure had been established, it was necessary to check assumptions for the subsequent multivariate procedures. These assumptions included linearity, independence, normality, and equality of variances. It was determined that none of the assumptions were grossly violated, and thus further statistical tests were appropriate. Also, each of the multi-dimensional constructs exhibited acceptable reliability and validity, under commonly employed parameters.

Various analyses were then performed to answer the four research questions presented in Chapter 1. Research question 1 examined the relationships between Sponsor behavioral intentions and Fan identification, Perceptions of tradition/venue, Attitudes toward sponsorship, and Attitudes toward commercialism. A multiple linear regression was used to determine which of the independent variables were significant predictors of Sponsor behavioral intentions. The overall model was found to be significant, explaining 15.0% of the variance in Sponsor behavioral intentions, but only Perceptions of tradition/venue and Attitudes toward sponsorship were significant among the independent variables.

Research question 2 investigated the relationships between Conative loyalty and the same set of independent variables used in research question 1. Similarly to before, a multiple regression model was created that explained 14.3% of the variance in Conative loyalty. This time, however, all four of the independent variables (Fan identification, Perceptions of tradition/venue, Attitudes toward sponsorship, and Attitudes toward commercialism) were found to be significant predictors in the model.

In research question 3, the goal was to determine if Sponsor behavioral intentions (SBI) and Conative loyalty (CON) differed based on a number of demographic and involvement factors. The factors of interest were age, gender, ethnicity, education level, donor status, alumni status, season ticket holder status, number of years spent as a fan of the team, and the number of the team's games attended each year. A main-effects MANOVA model was created to determine whether the groups within these factors differed in regards to Sponsor behavioral intentions and Conative loyalty. The results indicated that there were significant differences between the groups of four of the nine factors, namely age, gender, favorite college football team, and donor level. Post-hoc tests were run to determine exactly which groups within these factors differed significant on the dependent variables.

Research question 4 examined whether there was a relationship between Sponsor Behavioral Intentions and Conative loyalty, which were the dependent variables in the other research questions. A Pearson correlation coefficient suggested that there was a positive correlation between the two variables, but correlation was quite weak by generally accepted standards.

To finish, additional analyses were performed in an attempt to augment the results from the research questions. In particular, multiple regression models similar to those from research questions 1 and 2 were created, but this time the sample was segmented by favorite team. The results of these additional models indicated that the relationships between the usual set of variables were quite different between institutions.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Discussion of Results

Demographics and Involvement

The demographic and involvement variables were the first portion of the data to be analyzed. In terms of basic demographics, the respondents in this study were spread fairly evenly across all ages from 18-80 ($M = 37.31$), slightly more male than female (58.8% male), and predominantly Caucasian (91.5%). These core demographic variables were generally consistent with the related literature on fans of college sports (Boyle & Magnusson, 2007; Judson & Carpenter, 2005; Madrigal, 2000; Robinson & Trail, 2005; Trail et al., 2003). It was not surprising that the sample was highly educated, but it was expected that more individuals would have graduated from their favorite team's school. In fact, although over 75% of the respondents held at least a Bachelors degree, only about 50% of the respondents had ever attended (and not necessarily graduated) from their favorite football team's institution. It seems reasonable to suggest that the relationship or connection between an individual and their team may be different based on whether they actually spent any time at the institution, as athletics loyalty may be somewhat divided. While an answer to this question was beyond the reach of this study, this might be a reasonable issue to investigate amongst college sport fans.

In terms of the involvement variables, the respondents had strong attendance habits (*M* = 4.27 games per year) and indicated a long term identification with the team in question (fan for *M* = 25.14 years). Further, about 35% of respondents were athletic donors, about evenly split between major (more than $1000) and minor (less than $1000) donors. Clearly, the respondents in this sample are primarily members of the larger group that spend significant time and money on being college football fans and attending their favorite team's games. Thus, the attitudes and opinions of this sample are very important to college athletic departments, as they have already demonstrated a significant financial commitment to the athletic program.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed to determine the exact structure of the multi-dimensional constructs of interest in this study. Although eight factors were adapted from the literature, the EFA yielded only six unique factors: Fan identification, Perceptions of tradition/venue, Conative loyalty, Attitudes toward sponsorship, Sponsor behavioral intentions, and Attitudes toward commercialism. Although both the tradition and venue variables were adapted from Boyle and Magnusson (2007), changes in wording of the items were necessary to adjust for the context of stadium naming rights, and one item was also added by the researcher. Hence, because of some overlap in the questions it was not surprising that these items loaded together onto one larger variable. On the other hand, the group norms items adapted from Madrigal (2000) did not load with one another and became distributed across other variables. While unfortunate, this likely occurred as the content of the questions was very similar to some other areas, such as Attitudes toward sponsorship and Sponsor behavioral intentions. In the original study, Madrigal (2000) did not include these other constructs, so this potential issue was somewhat unforeseen.

There were also several items that had substantial double loadings, likely because of the correlations between many of the items. For example, the item "Sponsorship increases the level of commercialization in college football" loaded on both the Attitudes toward Commercialism and Attitudes toward Sponsorship factors, and was eventually deleted because the loadings were very similar even after Promax rotation. These double loadings and the Madrigal (2000) example show why EFA was more appropriate in this case than, say, confirmatory factor analysis, because the scales were adapted from multiple studies by different authors, so it was difficult to predict how the variables would interact when combined onto one instrument.

With these issues in mind, the factor analysis still yielded a clear factor structure that was readily interpretable. The factors were reasonably consistent with the original versions outlined in the literature review, other than the tradition/venue hybrid variable mentioned above. Each factor in the final structure exhibited adequate reliability and validity, so the six variables were kept for subsequent analysis.

Research Questions

For the first research question, a multiple regression model was created to determine whether Fan identification, Perceptions toward tradition/venue, Attitudes toward sponsorship, and Attitudes toward commercialism were related to Sponsor behavioral intentions. The overall model was significant, explaining 15.0% of the variance in Sponsor behavioral intentions, but only two of the independent variables were significant predictors in the model, namely Perceptions toward venue/tradition and

Attitudes toward sponsorship. In particular, individuals that had more positive attitudes toward sponsorship also tended to have more positive behavioral intentions toward a potential naming rights partner. On the other hand, those who had more positive perceptions of the institution's football tradition and stadium had more negative sponsor behavioral intentions. The finding with Attitudes toward sponsorship was consistent with the literature, as Alexandris et al. (2007) found that beliefs about sponsorship was a positive predictor of sponsors' image, and Dees et al. (2008) found that attitude toward sponsors was a significant predictor of sponsor purchasing intentions, which were the two components that made up sponsor behavioral intentions in the current study. Regarding perceptions toward tradition/venue, there was less to draw from in the literature to compare to the results from this study. The items for this variable were adapted from Boyle and Magnusson (2007), but in that study the authors examined venue and tradition in the context of social identity and brand equity, so there could be no appropriate comparison made with the results here.

The fact that Attitudes toward commercialism and Fan identification did not have significant relationships with Sponsor behavioral intentions was not consistent with previous research. For example, Zhang et al. (2005) found that both attitudes toward commercialization and team identification were significantly related to fan's behavioral intentions. It is possible that the difference in results might be partially attributed to the samples used in the studies. Zhang et al. (2005) used a smaller sample of 124 students at one large, Midwestern university, while the current study included 731 fans primarily from seven large institutions in a variety of locations around the country. Further, Dees, Bennett, and Villegas (2008) found that team identification was positively related to sponsor purchase and behavioral intentions, which was also consistent with previous literature in the area (Davies et al., 2006; Gwinner & Swanson, 2003; Madrigal, 2000; Pope & Voges, 2000). It should be noted that, again, the sample in Dees et al. (2008) was comprised of a large group of fans (351 respondents) from a single institution, which is in contrast to the current study.

It is possible that team identification not being significant in the model could be attributed to the nature of the data collected in this study; more specifically, the scores for fan identification in this study were very high and exhibited much less variability than the other variables used in the regression models. Perhaps the large sample size was not sufficient to find differences in fan identification, due to the data being skewed for the items that comprised the fan identification variable. While a data-driven anomaly seems to be the clearest explanation for lack of significance with this variable, it should be noted that fan identification was strongly correlated (r = .507) with perceptions toward tradition/venue, which had not been included in the previous studies listed above. Additionally, two of the items that were deleted prior to analysis based on EFA loaded strongly on both fan identification and perceptions toward tradition/venue. Clearly, there was a strong relationship between these two variables, and this relationship could have led to a finding that was inconsistent with previous literature. Finally, an underlying argument throughout this study was that the naming rights scenario within sponsorship is a unique case, so these results may simply be a manifestation of potential differences in how fans perceive naming rights sponsorships in comparison to more traditional partnerships.

In order to answer the second research question, a multiple regression model was created to determine whether Fan identification, Perceptions toward tradition/venue, Attitudes toward sponsorship, and Attitudes toward commercialism were related to Conative loyalty. Similarly to the first research question, the overall model was significant, this time explaining 14.3% of the variance in Conative loyalty. However, in this case all four of the predictor variables were found to be significant in the model. Unlike the last research question, fan identification was a significant predictor in this case and positively related to conative loyalty, which was consistent with the literature (Harrolle et al., 2010; Robinson & Trail, 2005; Trail et al., 2003). In terms of perceptions toward tradition/venue, Boyle and Magnusson (2007) found that history and venue were significant predictors of social identity, which in turn predicted brand equity. Here, the relationship between perceptions of tradition/venue and conative loyalty was negative, but since the two research designs are quite different it is again difficult to compare the two sets of results. Further, the constructs of attitudes toward sponsorship and commercialism had not previously been investigated in relation to conative loyalty, so those results were also without an adequate comparison in the literature.

The positive relationship between fan identification and conative loyalty was expected, given what was discovered in the literature. Interestingly, perceptions toward tradition/venue had a negative relationship with conative loyalty. This appears to be another unique finding given the context of a potential naming-rights sponsorship that was used in this study. It seems logical that individuals that felt strongly about their favorite team’s stadium and overall tradition would be more resistant to a change in the name of the venue, and might express their discontent with their purchasing power.

Similarly, it seems reasonable that fans who have more positive attitudes toward sponsorship would exhibit strong conative loyalty after a name change, which was what the data indicated in this study. The same results were also found with Attitudes toward commercialism, though it should be noted that a higher score on Attitudes toward commercialism indicated the perception of more commercialism in college athletics, hence the negative relationship in the regression equation.

The third research question investigated how groups in various demographic and involvement factors differed on Sponsor behavioral intentions and Conative loyalty. A main effects MANOVA model suggested that there were significant differences between groups based on age, gender, favorite team, and donor level. In terms of the demographic variables, the youngest group of respondents (18-29 years) indicated marginally, but significantly, higher conative loyalty than did the oldest group (41+ years). The most likely explanation for this difference might be that older fans have seen the stadium with a certain name for a longer period of time than younger fans, and might be more willing to protest a name change to the institution itself through their purchasing power. Also, males indicated that they would have higher Sponsor behavioral intentions than would females, so it appears that females would protest a name change by not purchasing sponsors products as often if they were to pay to rename the stadium. This is important to note since in many contemporary households, females frequently make many of the overall purchasing decisions.

When looking at the involvement variables, major donors differed significantly from both minor donors and non-donors on both Sponsor behavioral intentions and Conative loyalty. It was somewhat unexpected, however, that major donors actually indicated that they would have better Sponsor behavioral intentions and Conative loyalty than would the other groups. It seemed reasonable to suggest that those who contribute more money to the athletic department would be less accepting of a naming-rights agreement, but the data suggest exactly the opposite. It seems possible that major donors might have a closer relationship with their athletic department and be more familiar with the economic struggles in college athletics, and hence be more accepting of new, and more radical, revenue streams. However, it is also possible that donors would welcome a naming-rights sponsorship so that they could potentially decrease their level of commitment without feeling as though they were abandoning their favorite team. Informal conversations with respondents after the survey had been completed suggested that a handful of individuals would welcome a naming rights deal if it meant "they didn't have to give as much money" or "ticket prices would go down." Unfortunately, this is speculation that cannot be supported by the data here, as no questions were posed in the survey directly regarding changes in future donation habits.

The other involvement variable that yielded significant differences between groups was favorite football team. There were four pairs of institutions' fans that differed on Sponsor behavioral intentions, while none of the groups differed on Conative loyalty. Of the four pairs, respondents affiliated with Institution #3 indicated significantly lower Sponsor behavioral intentions that Institutions #1, #2 and #6. The final pair had fans of Institution #4 indicating significantly lower Sponsor behavioral intentions than Institution #2. Of all the respondents in the sample, those affiliated with Institution #2 had the highest overall Sponsor behavioral intentions (M = 3.776), while those indicating Institution #3 as their favorite had the lowest (M = 2.558). The results for Institution #3 were not surprising as, in the opinion of the researcher, that university has the football program that is most steeped in tradition, with the most loyal fan base, of any in the sample. Further, Institution #3 has the smallest sponsor presence (in terms of visible signage) inside their stadium of all the institutions in question. For these reasons, it was expected that these respondents would show their possible frustration with a naming rights deal by turning against the sponsor and refusing to buy the sponsor products. It should be noted that none of the institutions' fan groups suggested that they would, in general, have positive sponsor behavioral intentions (by having a mean score of greater than 4).

The fourth research question investigated whether there was a relationship between the two dependent variables from the other research questions, namely Sponsor behavioral intentions and Conative loyalty. The data indicated that there was a small positive correlation between the two constructs (r = .279), according to the general parameters for correlation coefficients (Huck, 2008), which was not surprising as there are clearly many other issues that contribute to explaining these factors. However, the primary motivation behind the inclusion of this research question was to determine whether or not the team and sponsor would be treated the same way by fans after a naming-rights sponsorship deal, and in turn whether these constructs should have been treated independently. The data clearly show that while there is some relation between these two types of behavioral intention, the fans in this sample indicated that their feelings toward their favorite team after a naming-rights deal would not always replicate their feelings toward a potential sponsor. Hence, it appears that the choice to treat these constructs separately has been justified.

Additional Analyses

After the research questions had been answered, the researcher decided that some additional analyses were warranted. The inspiration for more statistical testing was two-fold: 1) the models in the first two research questions explained less variability in the dependent variables than was expected, and 2) the fact that the largest significant differences between groups in the third research question was within the favorite team variable. Thus, additional regression models were created that were identical to those in the first two research questions, except that the data were segmented by favorite team and two regression models were created for each institutional subset in the data.

Prior to running the additional regressions, mean scores for each of the independent variables, segmented by institution, produced some interesting and unexpected results, the most notable of which are presented here. First, the scores for fan identification were high for almost all of the institutions, so it was difficult to make any comparisons on how fans at each institution perceived their personal level of identification. On the other hand, perceptions toward tradition/venue scores were more varied, and were also ordered in a manner consistent with the opinions of the researcher. For example, it has been mentioned here that Institution #3 has arguably the strongest tradition and most historical stadium, and the scores for Institution #3 were the highest of any school in the sample. The only slight anomaly, in the researcher's opinion, was with Institution #7 appearing in the middle of the scores, when it was expected that they would have the second or third highest mean score. Otherwise, the scores seemed to be more inflated than expected, but appear to have provided a good range of scores and the institutions generally fell in the order that was anticipated.

When examining the mean scores for attitudes toward sponsorship, it was not surprising that respondents affiliated with Institution #6 had the strongest positive feelings about sponsorship. This was expected as this particular program receives a great amount of support from a very large corporation that is based in the local area – the strongest such relationship to be found with any of the institutions in this study. As with the perceptions toward tradition/venue, some of the mean scores here were also higher than expected. In particular, attitudes toward sponsorship at Institution #3 were the second lowest among the institutions; however, with a mean of almost 5 the attitudes were fairly positive, when it was expected that these scores would be neutral or more likely negative, due to the lack of sponsorship presence in the stadium at Institution #3 that was mentioned previously. These few abnormalities aside, it appears that the variables yielded results that generally made sense intuitively in the context of the individual universities.

When looking at the regression models that had Sponsor behavioral intentions as the dependent variable, there were some clear inconsistencies between the individual institution samples. Three of the models (Institutions #1, #4, and #6) behaved in a similar manner to the overall regression equation from research question 1, in that they had the same significant predictors, but the models for Institutions #4 and #6 explained almost twice of the variance in Sponsor behavioral intentions than did the model for Institution #1. On the other hand, models for Institution #2 and Institution #6 explained similar amounts of variance (16.3% and 20.4%, respectively), but had different significant predictors than the other models. In particular, the model for Institution #2 yielded Attitudes toward commercialism as the only significant predictor, while Attitudes toward sponsorship was the only significant predictor in the model for Institution #6. Finally, the overall models for the other two institutions, #3 and #7, were not significant.

Similarly to the last case, the additional models where Conative loyalty was the dependent variable also yielded conflicting results. Even more dramatically than last time, the four institutionally segmented models that were significant (Institutions #2, #4, #5, and #7) each had a different group of significant predictor variables from each other. These were also inconsistent with the overall model for Conative loyalty, where all four of the independent variables were significant, whereas here no individual equation had more than two significant predictors. Despite the dissimilarities in structure, these four models all explained more than 20% of the variance in Conative loyalty, a marked improvement on the 14.3% of explained variance in the general model. Further, this time three of the institutions (Institutions #1, #3, and #6) yielded models that were not significant when using the Bonferroni-adjusted alpha.

It is difficult to say exactly why such different factor relationships would have emerged when the data were segmented by favorite football team. However, it does appear that there are certain institutional factors at work that are more likely to dictate fans' attitudes about naming rights sponsorships and related behavioral intentions than the general constructs that were employed in this study. For example, the data subset for Institution #3 did not produce a significant model for either Sponsor behavioral intentions or Conative loyalty. The nature of the athletic tradition at Institution #3 has been mentioned above, so it could be that those fans indicated the weakest behavioral intentions because of the football team's history and the university's minimalistic approach to athletic sponsorship, and those issues potentially have a greater impact on future decision making than any of the factors used here. Although logical conclusions were not readily available in all cases for these subset models, the major goal of this section was met in that notable differences in results were found for respondents affiliated with different universities. It should also be noted that some of the sample sizes might be considered small for a robust regression equation with four independent variables. However, this was not a major concern, again due to the exploratory nature of this particular set of tests.

Conclusions

Theoretical Implications

The purpose of this study was to explore how a variety of sponsorship-related and institutional-related factors might be linked to individuals' feelings toward naming-rights sponsorships in college athletics. The frameworks for the dependent variables and two of the independent variables, namely Attitudes toward sponsorship and Fan identification, have been examined frequently in a variety of contexts in the literature. On the other hand, Attitudes toward commercialism and Perceptions toward tradition/venue have received minimal attention. Overall, research on naming-rights sponsorships in any context has been limited, so this study has begun to fill the void in this area of the literature, as well as offer a different perspective on sponsorship research in general.

The relationship between Attitudes toward sponsorship and the dependent variables builds on what has been found in the general sport sponsorship literature, in that those with more positive attitudes toward sponsorship would have better overall behavioral intentions in the event of a new naming-rights agreement at their favorite team's stadium (Alexandris et al., 2007; Dees et al., 2008). It seems reasonable to suggest that in future studies where sponsorship effectiveness is an overall theme, the construct of attitude toward sponsorship should be included either as a variable or covariate.

On the other hand, Fan identification did not have the strong, positive relationships with behavioral intentions in this study that have been observed in previous inquiries (Dees et al., 2008; Robinson & Trail, 2005; Trail et al., 2003; Zhang et al., 2005). While fan identification was a significant predictor of Conative loyalty in general, it was not significant in most of the other situations investigated here. It is possible that there were too many highly identified fans in the sample which led to an overall lack of variability in this particular factor. However, it was noted previously that Fan identification had a strong relationship with Perceptions toward tradition/venue in this study – a variable which has received little attention in the sponsorship literature. More research is necessary to determine whether the results for fan identification in this study were simply an anomaly, or whether the interplay with tradition and venue factors is an implicit mediator of the relationship between fan identification and behavioral intentions that has gone unnoticed in past studies.

Attitudes toward commercialism also did not have a significant relationship with Sponsor behavioral intentions, which partially contradicted the previous research in this area where attitudes toward commercialism was used as a mediating factor for fan identification (Zhang et al., 2005). It should be noted that while this factor was found to be valid and reliable by exploratory standards (Nunnally, 1978), this particular subscale needs further refinement. In the preliminary factor structure there were six items that loaded on the Attitudes toward commercialism factor, but three of these were deleted due to double loadings and an overall lack of interpretability. By decreasing the number of items in the scale, it is likely that reliability was adversely affected, as Cronbach's alpha tends to have a direct correlation with the number of items in a scale (Huck, 2008). Therefore, it is the opinion of the researcher that the results for Attitudes toward commercialism were largely inconclusive in this study and still warrant future consideration of this construct in sponsorship studies, particularly in the context of college athletics.

It should be noted that the objective of this study was not to create models that explained large amounts of variance in the dependent variables. Instead, the goal was to look primarily at certain factors that had been largely underrepresented in the sponsorship and consumer behavior literature, and determine whether inclusion of these variables in future sponsorship studies is justified. Hence, there are other variables outside of the realm of this study that are closely related to Sponsor behavioral intentions and Conative loyalty, which likely caused the R^2 values in the models here to be low. Additionally, it appears that trying to answer these questions with a general sample actually hurt the models in this study. When the additional analyses were performed, the institutionally-segmented models ranged from not significant to having R^2 values of 20-30%, the upper end of which was more consistent with what was expected prior to the study being performed.

This wide range of results suggested that there were specific institutional factors at play that were more important in some cases than the general attitudes of interest in this study. As an additional example to that of Institution #3 which was provided in the last section, Institution #6 also yielded results that might have been more readily interpretable through institutional factors. As mentioned previously, respondents associated with Institution #6 had the highest mean score for Attitudes toward sponsorship, and informal conversations with respondents also indicated that most fans had strong positive feelings toward the university's major athletic sponsor from the local area. It seemed that this largely positive relationship influenced respondents from that group to have higher general attitudes toward sponsorship, because when indicating their attitudes toward sponsorship, they were likely thinking about their experiences with this particular sponsor. However, a few fans also mentioned informally that they were attached to the name of the stadium, and would not be in favor of a name change even if it was purchased by the well-liked sponsor. This could explain why Attitudes toward sponsorship was only a small significant predictor of Sponsor behavioral intentions in this case.

With this in mind, future studies that investigate naming-rights agreements in college athletics might be better suited to approach the topic on a school by school basis. While we usually think that wide ranging studies in a variety of settings will increase the generalizability of the work, this approach may not make sense in this case. Due to the individual nature of many of the ancillary factors surrounding this topic, generalizable results across all "similar" institutions may simply not be attainable, and using methods similar to case studies would better control for these unique factors. This approach has been used in the literature on divisional reclassification in college athletics, as the situation surrounding a reclassification is usually completely distinct between institutions (Dwyer, Eddy, Havard, & Braa, 2010), so that approach to methodology may also be effective in sponsorship research in college athletics.

This study also had a very small student population, whereas some previous studies have used large proportions of respondents from student populations (Boyle & Magnusson, 2007; Dees et al., 2008; Haan & Shank, 2004; Zhang et al., 2005). The purpose here was to focus on the behaviors and attitudes of different fan groups and largely ignore students, in the spirit of Madrigal (2000), although students have been considered important in research of college athletics (Zhang et al., 2005). As was alluded to previously, for this inquiry it was more important to survey individuals who have already demonstrated a financial commitment to the athletic department, whereas students generally represent a group that has the potential to make a future financial commitment. It should be noted that in the MANOVA in research question 3, students did not differ significantly from non-students on the dependent variables; however, the current student group was so small compared to the non-student group in this study that it is difficult to make a strong assertion that students' behavioral intentions are similar to those of non-students. Hence, it might be beneficial for future research to put a greater emphasis on comparing students to non-student groups.

Finally, it appears that the idea of treating naming-rights agreements as a special case has been justified in this study. It appears that the variables in this study do not exhibit the same relationships when viewed in a naming-rights context as when they are examined in general sponsorship scenarios. Despite some of the inconsistencies between the fans of different teams in this study, it seems that the variables in this study are important in the exploration of naming-rights sponsorship in college athletics. With the addition of other factors specific to each institution, it appears that the creation of a model to better explain fan perceptions toward naming sponsorships would be appropriate.

Practical Implications

One of the central motivations for this study came from a previous study by the researcher, in which it was found that college athletics administrators were hesitant to explore naming-rights agreements for a variety of reasons, which largely revolved around unconfirmed opinions of how fans would perceive a name change (Eddy, 2010). The results presented here indicate that if a stadium's name were changed because of a naming-rights agreement, fans' future attendance, merchandise purchasing, and overall support of the team would likely not change dramatically. Further, it should be encouraging to administrators that higher level donors indicated that they would have better Sponsor behavioral intentions and Conative loyalty relative to other groups of fans. These individuals have already made a considerable financial commitment to the university and have a great impact on the athletic department through their donations, so the fact that they would appear to be on board with a stadium name change should be taken as a positive. With these results in mind, it seems reasonable to suggest that a naming-rights deal would yield positive net revenues for a university, as it does not appear that revenue from fan-related sources would suffer a noticeable decrease.

Though naming-rights would appear to be a positive from a financial standpoint, it should be noted that fan behavioral intentions could be more negative at certain institutions. While Conative loyalty had at least neutral mean scores for each of the seven institutions in this study, this is not to say that it would be the case at all universities. Also, when asked in general whether they would be in favor of a naming rights agreement, the fans for a majority of institutions indicated a fairly neutral stance, but fans at Institutions #3, #4 and #7 all indicated that they would not agree with overall decision to sell naming-rights. Thus, the potential for a public relations crisis, which was also suggested in previous research (Eddy, 2010), is something of which administrators must be aware. In order to offset any potential negativity, athletic departments might consider educating their fans on the importance of sponsorship, and how sponsorship is necessary to the success of the program, in addition to donations and ticket sales. Individual institutions should also perform research with their own fans in order to determine the attitudes and behaviors of important fan groups in their particular case. This gives further support to the idea of researching individual institutions when trying to determine attitudes toward naming-rights sponsorships.

It should also be mentioned again that there was a significant, negative relationship between the behavioral intentions and perceptions toward tradition/venue. Thus, naming-rights sponsorships might be more viable, from an institutional standpoint, at universities that do not have as rich and storied athletic traditions as can be found at some of the more prominent football institutions in the country. Given the results here, it seems reasonable to suggest that fans that see their favorite football team as less historic or have less of an attachment to the venue might be more receptive to a naming-rights sponsorship. This would be consistent with what can be observed in the current naming landscape where, in the opinion of the researcher, the majority of schools that currently have naming-rights sponsorships for their football venues are not among those with the most storied traditions or historic venues.

Traditionally, the dissemination of sponsor benefits has revolved around the concepts of recall and recognition (Nagel, 1999). Cornwell et al. (2000) found that higher identified fans have been recall and recognition, but in the greater scheme of sponsorship effectiveness, attitudes toward sponsorship and sponsor behavioral intentions must also be considered. While recall and recognition is a necessary pre-condition for sponsorship effectiveness, the impact is limited if the person that recalls the sponsorship is not in favor of sport sponsorship or does not care for the sponsoring company, or does not have good sponsorship purchasing intentions in general. Unfortunately, the data in this study indicate that respondents' behavioral intentions toward the sponsor may not be as positive as their future attendance habits. Reaching desirable groups of consumers is one of the objectives of sport sponsorship, so it may be difficult to justify a sponsorship where there may not be a significant return on investment from key stakeholders. Hence, the value of a naming-rights sponsorship in college football for a sponsor may not be as high as some other sponsorship opportunities.

Although sponsor behavioral intentions tended to be low in this study, this should not completely discourage sponsors from pursuing naming-rights agreements with college football teams. The football stadiums belonging to the universities represented in this study have had the same names for lengthy periods of time, which has been found to negatively affect the value of a potential naming-rights sponsorship (DeSchriver & Jensen, 2003). Thus, sponsors might be best suited to target institutions with newer stadiums. In situations where fan perceptions toward the venue are less strong, as mentioned previously, a naming sponsor may also gain exposure without the negative feelings that might materialize at another institution. The acceptance of a naming-rights sponsor by fans might also be assisted by a good perceived fit. As was seen in the case of Institution #6 here, individual situations might turn out to be more positive if the corporation already has high brand equity and a good relationship with the university and local area. Overall, it does not appear that fans would stay away from games, so in the worst case a large degree of sponsor impressions and recognition would certainly be available for a naming sponsor, but it is difficult to determine from the results of this study whether sponsors would actually increase their brand equity through this type of relationship with the university.

In all, naming rights sponsorships could be a lucrative revenue stream that might not be as detrimental to the tradition and overall brand equity of an athletic program as previously suspected. There may be some issues with value to the sponsor due to lower sponsor behavioral intentions, but the data suggest that stadium naming rights in college football should not be so quickly dismissed by either sponsors or universities. The combination of a sponsor with strong local brand equity and a university where athletic tradition is not considered as important as at some other institutions might produce a situation where a naming-rights sponsorship would yield a mutually beneficial partnership.

Limitations

The current study was constructed based on established theory, but should still be considered exploratory and preliminary. The factors in this study were adapted from related areas in the literature, as there was no direct basis of research to draw upon for application. Hence, there were areas that might be important in answering these questions, such as distinct institutional facts mentioned above, that could not have been predicted prior to the execution of this study. Further, the survey was adapted from multiple studies from a variety of authors, so adjustments to ensure a more consistent survey might yield stronger results.

While the individual respondents were selected at using stadium intercept sampling, the institutions that were included in the sampling frame were selected using convenience sampling, based on the college football schedule and ease of access for the researcher. The on-site survey had to be completed at the time of contact, as no mail back or web-based survey options were implemented. Adding these data collection methods, which could have allowed the survey to have been completed at the participants' convenience, might have yielded a large sample. The time of year when data were collected also affected the sample sizes for some of the institutions, which resulted in reasonably large differences between certain pairs of schools. At three of the collection sites the weather was quite cold, which appeared to cause late arriving crowds and fewer possible respondents in the hours leading up to the game, thus collection should have been completed earlier in the fall semester.

Despite having a fairly large sample size, the results of this study are still not completely generalizable to all universities, since all of the institutions in this sample compete in the BCS conferences within NCAA Division I (FBS) football. Also, the respondents were mostly Caucasian, which resulted in limited ethnic diversity, and there were also very few students in the sample. Hence, the results here should not be extended to students or minorities. Finally, the sample was comprised solely of college football game attendees, so the results of this study may not be consistent with the attitudes and behaviors of non-attendees, which are another important fan group in college athletics as they can still have a substantial impact on donations, merchandise sales, etc.

In terms of building theory, it should be noted that causal relationships cannot be established due to the methodology used in this study (Huck, 2008). While relationships between factors can be established, an experimental research design is necessary to determine cause and effect (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Also, behavioral intentions were the dependent variables being measured in this study; behavioral intentions are a good indicator of, but cannot directly predict, future behaviors (Ajzen et al., 2009). Finally, a generic company in a hypothetical situation was used as the context for the items on the survey. Introducing actual names of corporations can create biases based on respondents' previous experiences (Keller, 1993), but given the distinct institutional factors that appeared to play a significant role in this study, using actual sponsor names could yield more applicable results.

Recommendations for Future Research

An important goal of this study was to gain preliminary, but interpretable, results that would generate recommendations for future research. In this vein, the purpose of performing additional analyses was not to obtain conclusive results, but to provide an indication for the direction of future studies. Stadium naming-rights sponsorships in college football have received little attention in the literature, so significant work remains before theory can be firmly established in this area. With that in mind, there were some specific recommendations based on the findings here as to some logical next steps in this component of sponsorship research.

1. This study should be replicated at different levels of college sport, as the institutions here all belong to the most prominent conferences in college football. Also, certain regions of the country were better represented in this study than

others. More importantly, this study only surveyed respondents about football stadia. Fan perceptions might differ considerably if the context were changed to men's or women's basketball, as well as the Olympic sports. These other naming opportunities could be quite lucrative for sponsors and universities as well, so more investigation across different sports is also necessary.

2. As alluded to previously, various unique institutional factors appeared to affect the results in this study when all institutions were examined together. Hence, future studies should concentrate on large samples that represent a smaller number of institutions. Although this will affect overall generalizability, it appears that the relationships of interest may be clearer than those in this study, which may then eventually lead to a new factor structure that would yield more generalizable results.
3. A unified survey instrument should be created, preferably through a full validation process for scale development, such as the method proposed by Churchill (1979). An instrument similar to Trail et al.'s (2005) Motivations Scale for Sport Consumption would allow for easier replication of the study, so that firmer comparisons could be made between fans of different institutions. Further, the institutional factors that were mentioned in the previous discussion should be integrated into the survey instrument as well. This could be in the form of a separate section of the survey, or by framing the items in such a way that allows slight modifications for institutional context, without significant altering the overall reliability and validity of each sub-scale.

4. It is also possible that the methods of data analysis used in this study may not have revealed the exact nature of the relationships between the variables. Other techniques, such as structural equation modeling, might be better suited to examine the potentially complex interplay between the variables of interest in this study. Structural equation modeling is a statistical procedure that can test more intricate variable relationship structures, as well as uncover latent variables that may be undetectable via other analyses (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007).
5. Finally, similar research should be performed at institutions that currently have naming-rights partners for a major athletic venue. Surveying fans of these teams would likely give a better picture of actual behaviors towards a naming-rights sponsor, since those individuals have already formed their attitudes of a particular sponsoring company and exhibited purchasing behaviors toward that organization.

REFERENCES

Aaker, D. A. (1991). *Managing brand equity: Capitalizing on the value of a brand name.* New York, NY: The Free Press.

Aaker, D. A. (1996). *Building strong brands.* New York, NY: The Free Press.

About the NCAA. (2010). *NCAA.org*. Retrieved from http://ncaa.org/wps/wcm/connect/public/ncaa/about+the+ncaa

Ajzen, I., Czasch, C., & Flood, M. G. (2009). From intentions to behavior: Implementation intention, commitment, and conscientiousness. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 39*(6), 1356-1372.

Alexandris, K., Tsaousi, E, & James, J. (2007). Predicting sponsorship outcomes from attitudinal constructs: The case of a professional basketball event. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, *16*, 130-139.

Associated Press. (2008, March 1). Candlestick Park, Again. *The New York Times*, p. D4.

Baker, S. M., Faircloth, J. B., & Simental, V. (2005). Perceptions of university-corporate partnership influences on a brand. *Journal of Marketing Theory & Practice, 13*(2), 32-46.

Bauer, H. H., Stokburger-Sauer, N. E., & Exler, S. (2008). Brand image and fan loyalty in professional team sport: A refined model and empirical assessment. *Journal of Sport Management, 22*, 205-226.

Bennett, G., Ferreira, M., Tsuji, Y., Siders, R., & Cianfrone B. (2006). Analysing the effects of advertising type and antecedents on attitude towards advertising in sport. *International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship, 8*(1), 62-81.

Bentubo, J. (2007, August 31). Colleges forgoing millions in naming-rights deals. *SportsBusiness Daily,* n. p.

Bernstein, A. (2004). Naming-rights sponsor ordered to pay back tab to Predators. *Street & Smith's Sportsbusiness Journal, 6*(47), 32.

Borg, W. R., Gall, J. P, & Gall, M. D. (1993). *Applying education research: A practical guide* (3rd ed.). White Plains, NY: Longman Publishing Group.

Boyd, J. (2000). Selling home: Corporate stadium names and the destruction of commemoration. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 28*(4), 330-346.

Boyle, B. A., & Magnusson, P. (2007). Social identity and brand equity formation: A comparative study of collegiate sports fans. *Journal of Sport Management, 21*, 497-520.

Brown, R. (2000). Social identity theory: Past achievements, current problems and future challenges. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 30*, 745-778.

Chavanat, N., Martinent, G., & Ferrand, A. (2009). Sponsor and sponsees interactions: Effects on consumers' perceptions of brand image, brand attachment, and purchasing intention. *Journal of Sport Management, 23*, 644-670.

Churchill G.A. (1979). A paradigm for developing better measures of marketing constructs. *Journal of Marketing Research, 16*, 64-73.

Clark, J. M., Cornwell, T. B., & Pruitt, S. W. (2002). Corporate stadium sponsorship, signaling theory, agency conflicts, and shareholder wealth. *Journal of Advertising Research, 42*(6), 16-32.

Clifee, S. J., & Motion, J. (2005). Building contemporary brands: A sponsorship-based strategy. *Journal of Business Research, 58*, 1068-1077.

Cohen, A. (1999). The name game, *Athletic Business,* July, 37-43.

Copeland, R., Frisby, W., McCarville, R. (1996). Understanding the sport sponsorship process from a corporate perspective. *Journal of Sport Management, 10*, 32-48.

Cornwell, T. B., & Maignan, I. (1998). An international review of sponsorship research. *Journal of Advertising, 27*(1), 1-21.

Cornwell, T. B., Relyea, G. E., Irwin, R. L., & Maignan, I. (2000). Understanding long-term effects of sports sponsorship: Role of experience, involvement, enthusiasm and clutter. *Sports Marketing & Sponsorship, 2*(2), 127-143.

Cornwell, T. B., Roy, D. P., & Steinard, E. A. (2001). Exploring managers' perceptions of the impact of sponsorship on brand equity. *Journal of Advertising, 30*(2), 41-51.

Couvelaere, V., & Richelieu, A. (2005). Brand strategy in professional sports: The case of French soccer teams. *European Sport Management Quarterly, 5*(1), 23-46.

Crompton, J. L. (2004). Conceptualization and alternate operationalizations of the measurement of sponsorship effectiveness in sport. *Leisure Studies, 23*(3), 267-281.

Crompton, J. L., & Howard, D. R. (2003). The American experience with facility naming rights: Opportunities for English professional football teams. *Managing Leisure, 8,* 212-226.

Dalakis, V, & Levin, A. (2005). The balance theory domino: How sponsorships may elicit negative consumer attitudes. *Advances in Consumer Research, 32*, 91-97.

Dardis, F. E. (2009). Attenuating the negative effects of perceived incongruence in sponsorship: How message repetition can enhance evaluations of an “incongruent” sponsor. *Journal of Promotion Management, 15*, 36-56.

Davies, F., Veloutsou, C., Costa, A. (2006). Investigating the influence of a joint sponsorship of rival teams on supporter attitudes and brand preferences. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, *12*(1), 31-48.

Deaux, K., Reid, A, Mizrahi, K., & Ethier, K. A. (1995). Parameters of social identity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 2*, 280-291.

Dees, W., Bennett, G., & Villegas, J. (2008). Measuring the effectiveness of sponsorship of an elite intercollegiate football program. *Sport Marketing Quarterly, 17,* 79-89.

DeSchriver, T. D., & Jensen, P. E. (2003). What’s in the name? Price variation in sport facility naming rights. *Eastern Economic Journal, 29*(3), 359-376.

Dodd, M. (2008, February 28). For some Cubs fans, renaming Wrigley is deal-breaker. *USA Today*, p. 1C.

Dwyer, B., Eddy, T., Havard, C., & Braa, L. (2010). Stakeholder perceptions of an athletic program’s reclassification from NCAA Division II to NCAA Division I (FCS) membership: A case study. *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics, 3*, 76-97.

Eddy, T. (2010). *Corporate naming-rights sponsorships and their limited presence in NCAA Division I athletics.* Manuscript in preparation.

Engel, J. F., Blackwell, R. D., & Miniard, P. W. (1995). *Consumer behavior*. Fort Worth, TX: Dryden Press.

Ervin, L. H., & Stryker, S. (2001). Theorizing the relationship between self-esteem and identity. In T. J. Owens, S. Stryker, & Goodman, N. (Eds.), *Extending self-esteem theory and research: Sociological and psychological currents* (pp. 29-55). Cambridge: University Press.

Ethier, K. A., & Deaux, K. (1994). Negotiating social identity when context change: Maintaining identification and responding to threat. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 67*(2), 243-251.

Farrelly, F., Quester, P., & Burton, R. (2006). Changes in sponsorship value: Competencies and capabilities of successful sponsorship relationships. *Industrial Marketing Management*, *35*, 1016-1026.

Fink, J. S., Trail, G. T., & Anderson, D. F. (2002a). Environmental factors associated with spectator attendance and sport consumption behavior: Gender and team differences. *Sport Marketing Quarterly, 11*(1), 8-19.

Fink, J. S., Trail, G. T., & Anderson, D. F. (2002b). An examination of team identification: Which motives are most salient to its existence? *International Sports Journal*, *6*(2), 195-207.

Fowler, F. J. (2002). *Survey research methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Franzen, G., & Moriarty, S. (2009). *The science and art of branding.* Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

Frederick, H., & Patil, S. (2010). The dynamics of brand equity, co-branding and sponsorship in professional sports. *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing, 7*, 44-57.

Fulks, D. L. (2009). *2004-2008 NCAA revenues and expenses of Division I intercollegiate athletics programs report*. Retrieved from http://www.ncaapublications.com/productdownloads/RE09.pdf

Funk, D. C. (2008). *Consumer behavior in sport and events: Marketing action.* Oxford, UK: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Funk, D. C., Filo, K., Beaton, A. A., & Pritchard, M. (2009). Measuring the motives of sport event attendance: Bridging the academic-practitioner divide to understanding behavior. *Sport Marketing Quarterly, 18,* 126-138.

Funk, D. C., Haugtvedt, C. P., & Howard, D. R. (2000). Contemporary attitude theory in sport: Theoretical considerations and implications. *Sport Management Review, 3*, 125-144.

Funk, D. C., & James, J. D. (2001). The psychological continuum model: A conceptual framework for understand an individual's psychological connection to sport. *Sport Management Review, 4*, 119-150.

Funk, D. C., & James, J. D. (2004). The fan attitude network (FAN) model: Exploring attitude formation and change among sport consumers. *Sport Management Review, 7*, 1-26.

Funk, D. C., & James, J. D. (2006). Consumer loyalty: The meaning of attachment in the development of sport team allegiance. *Journal of Sport Management, 20*, 189-217.

Funk, D. C., Mahony, D. F., & Havitz, M. E. (2003). Sport consumer behavior: Assessment and direction. *Sport Marketing Quarterly, 12*(4), 200-205.

Gerrard, B., Parent, M. M., & Slack, T. (2007). What drives the value of stadium naming rights? A hedonic-pricing approach to the valuation of sporting intangible assets. *International Journal of Sport Finance, 2,* 10-24,

Gladden, J. M., & Funk, D. C. (2002). Developing an understanding of brand associations in team sport: Empirical evidence from consumers and professional sport. *Journal of Sport Management, 16*, 54-81.

Gladden, J. M., Mahony, D. F., & Apostolopoulou, A. (2005). Toward a better understanding of college athletic donors: What are the primary motives? *Sport Marketing Quarterly, 14*, 18-30.

Grant, R. R., Leadley, J., & Zygmont, Z. (2008). *The economics of intercollegiate sports.* Hackensack, NJ: World Scientific Publishing Co.

Gwinner, K., & Bennett, G. (2008). The impact of brand cohesiveness and sport identification on brand fit in a sponsorship context. *Journal of Sport Management, 22*, 410-426.

Gwinner, K., & Swanson, S. (2003). A model of fan identification: Antecedents and sponsorship outcomes. *Journal of Services Marketing, 17*(3), 275-294.

Haan, P., & Shank, M. (2004). Consumers' perceptions of NFL stadium naming rights. *International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship, 5*(4), 269-281.

Harrolle, M., Trail, G., Rodriguez, A., & Jordan, J. (2010). Conative loyalty of Latino and non-Latino professional baseball fans. *Journal of Sport Management, 24*, 456-471.

Harvey, B. (2001). Measuring the effects of sponsorships. *Journal of Advertising Research, 41*(1), 59-65.

Harvey, B., Gray, S., & Despain, G. (2006). Measuring the effectiveness of true sponsorship. *Journal of Advertising Research, 46*(4), 398-409.

Hayes, B. E. (2008). *Measuring customer satisfaction and loyalty: Survey design, use, and statistical analysis methods.* Milwaukee, WI: Quality Press.

Hinton, P. R. (1995). *Statistics explained: A guide for social science students.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Howard, D. & Crompton, J. (2004). *Financing Sport* (2nd ed.). Morgantown, WV: Fitness Information Technology, Inc.

Huck, S. W. (2008). *Reading statistics and research* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.

Judson, K. M., & Carpenter, P. (2005). Assessing a university community's identification to sport in a changing climate. *Sport Marketing Quarterly, 14*, 217-226.

Kaynak, E., Salman, G. G., & Tatoglu, E. (2008). An integrative framework linking brand associations and brand loyalty in professional sports. *Brand Management, 15*(5), 336-357.

Keller, K. L. (1993). Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity. *Journal of Marketing, 57*(1), 1-22.

Kim, Y., & Kim, S. (2009). The relationships between team attributes, team identification and sponsor image. *International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship, 10*(3), 215-229.

Kim, Y. K., & Trail, G. (2010). Constraints and motivators: A new model to explain sport consumer behavior. *Journal of Sport Management*, *24*, 190-210.

Ko, Y. J., Kim, K., Claussen, C. L., & Kim, T. H. (2008). The effects of sport involvement, sponsor awareness and corporate image on intention to purchase sponsors' products. *International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship, 9*, 79-94.

Koo, G. & Hardin, R. (2008). Difference in interrelationship between spectators' motives and behavioral intentions based on emotional attachment. *Sport Marketing Quarterly, 17*, 30-43.

Koo, G., Quarterman, J., & Flynn. L. (2006). Effect of perceived sport event and sponsor image fit on consumers' cognition, affect, and behavioral intentions. *Sport Marketing Quarterly, 15,* 80-90.

Kuzma, J. R., Veltri, F. R., Kuzma, A. T., & Miller, J. J. (2003). Negative corporate sponsor information: The impact on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. *International Sports Journal*, *7*(2), 140-147.

Kwon, H. H., & Armstrong, K. L. (2004). An exploration of the construct of psychological attachment to a sport team among college students: A multidimensional approach. *Sport Marketing Quarterly, 13,* 94-103.

Kwon, H. H., & Trail, G. T. (2003). A reexamination of the construct and concurrent validity of the psychological commitment to team scale. *Sport Marketing Quarterly, 12*(2), 88-93.

Kwon, H. H., & Trail, G. (2005). The feasibility of single-item measures in sport loyalty research. *Sport Management Review, 8*, 69-89.

Kwon, H. H., Trail, G. T., & Anderson, D. F. (2005). Are multiple points of attachment necessary to predict cognitive, affective, conative, or behavioral loyalty? *Sport Management Review, 8*, 255-270.

Kwon, H. H., Trail, G. T., & Lee, D. (2008). The effects of vicarious achievement and team identification on BIRGing and CORFing. *Sport Marketing Quarterly, 17*, 209-217.

Lacey, R., Sneath, J., Finney, R., & Close, A. (2007). The impact of repeat attendance on event sponsorship effects. *Journal of Marketing Communications, 13*(4), 243-255.

Laverie, D. L., & Arnett, D. B. (2000). Factors affecting fan attendance: The influence of identity salience and satisfaction. *Journal of Leisure Research, 32*, 225-246.

Ledgerwood, A., & Liviatan, I. (2010). The price of a shared vision: Group identity goals and the social creation of value. *Social Cognition*, *28*(3), 401-421.

Lee, J. (2001). Colleges feature fewer chances, more hassle, *Sports Business Journal, 4*(18), 8-13.

Lee, J., Miloch, K. S., Kraft, P., & Tatum, L. (2008). Building a brand: A case study of Troy University. *Sport Marketing Quarterly, 17,* 178-182.

Lee, M. S., Sandler, D. M., & Shani, D. (1997). Attitudinal constructs toward sponsorship: Scale development using three global sporting events. *International Marketing Review, 14*(3), 159-169.

Leeds, E. M., Leeds, M. A., & Pistolet, I. (2007). A stadium by any other name: The value of naming rights. *Journal of Sport Economics, 8*(6), 581-595.

Leeds, M. (2004). The Corporate Name Game. *USA Today Magazine, 133*(2710), 71.

Lefton, T. (2009). TD Ameritrade titles new home of college WS. *Street & Smith's Sportsbusiness Journal, 12*(8), 1.

Lefton, T. (2010a). CBS: It's Sun Life for Super Bowl. *Street & Smith's Sportsbusiness Journal, 12*(38), 4.

Lefton, T. (2010b). Naming-rights metric gives the edge to Cowboys Stadium. *Street & Smith's Sportsbusiness Journal, 12*(37), 9.

Levin, A. M., Beasley, F., & Gilson, R. L. (2008). NASCAR fans' responses to current and former NASCAR sponsors: The effect of perceived group norms and fan identification. *International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship, 9,* 193-204.

Liberman, N. (2003). More than just a name: five deals to learn from. *Street & Smith's Sportsbusiness Journal, 6*(28), 41.

Lobmeyer, H., & Weidinger, L. (1992). Commercialism as a dominant factor in the American sports scene: Sources, developments, perspectives. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 27,* 309-326.

Madrigal, R. (2000). The influence of social alliances with sports teams on intentions to purchase corporate sponsors' products. *Journal of Advertising*, *29*(4), 13-24.

Madrigal, R. (2001). Social identity effects in a belief-attitude-intentions hierarchy: Implications for corporate sponsorship. *Psychology & Marketing, 18*(2), 145-165.

Mahony, D. F., Madrigal, R., & Howard, D. (2000). Using the psychological commitment to team (PCT) scale to segment sport consumers based on loyalty. *Sport Marketing Quarterly, 9*(1), 15-25.

Matsuoka, H., Chelladurai, P., & Harada, M. (2003). Direct and interaction effects of team identification and satisfaction on intention to attend games. *Sport Marketing Quarterly, 12*(4), 244-253.

McAllister, M. P. (1998). College bowl sponsorship and the increased commercialization of amateur sports. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication, 15*, 357-381.

McCarthy, L. M., & Irwin, R. (1998). Names in lights: corporate purchase of sport facility naming rights. *Cyber-Journal of Sport Marketing, 2*(3), n.p.

McEvoy, C. D., Nagel, M. S., DeSchriver, T. D., & Brown, M. T. (2005). Facility age and attendance in Major League Baseball. *Sport Management Review, 8*, 19-41.

Meenaghan, T. (2001). Sponsorship and advertising: A comparison of consumer perceptions. *Psychology & Marketing, 18*(2), 191-215.

Mount, I. (2004). Exploding the Myths of Stadium Naming. *Business 2.0, 5*(3), 82-83.

Mullin, B. J., Hardy, S., & Sutton, W. A. (2000). *Sport Marketing*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Mundfrom, D. J., Shaw, D. G., & Ke, T. L. (2005). Minimum sample size recommendations for conducting factor analyses. *International Journal of Testing, 5*(2), 159-168.

Muret, D. (2008). Wrigley name holds big payoff. *Street & Smith's Sportsbusiness Journal*, *10*(39), 4.

Muret, D. (2009a). Gophers' golden moment. *Street & Smith's Sportsbusiness Journal, 12*(21), 1.

Muret, D. (2009b). Twins, U.S. Bank plan 'touch and go' pay system at Target Field. *Street & Smith's Sportsbusiness Journal*, *12*(27), 14.

Muret, D. & Lombardo, J. (2009). Amway puts name on new Magic arena. *Street & Smith's Sportsbusiness Journal*, *12*(15), 1.

Muret, D. (2010). Cubs building all-inclusive club on suite level. *Street & Smith's Sportsbusiness Journal*, *12*(40), 4.

Nagel, M. (1999). *Recognition of corporate-named professional sports facilities and the implications for future sponsorship agreements.* (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Northern Colorado, 1999).

Neumeier, M. (2003). *The brand gap*. Indianapolis, IN: New Riders Publishing.

Nunnaly, J. C. (1978). *Psychometric theory*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Oliver, R. L. (1999). Whence consumer loyalty. *Journal of Marketing, 63*, 33-44.

Olsen, K. B. (2003). Questioning the name game: An event study analysis of stadium naming rights sponsorship announcements. *International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship,* 5(3), 181-192.

O'Rourke, N., Hatcher, L, & Stepanski, E. J. (2005). *A step-by-step approach to using SAS for univariate & multivariate statistics* (2nd ed.). Cary, NC: SAS Institute Inc.

Pan, D. W., & Baker, J. A. W. (2005). Factors, differential market effects, and marketing strategies in the renewal of season tickets for intercollegiate football games. *Journal of Sport Behavior, 28*(4), 351-377.

Poon, D. T. Y., & Prendergast, G. (2006). A new framework for evaluating sponsorship opportunities. *International Journal of Advertising, 25*(4), 471-488.

Pope, N. K., & Voges, K. E. (2000). The impact of sport sponsorship activities, corporate image, and prior use on consumer purchase intention. *Sport Marketing Quarterly, 9*(2), 96-102.

Rea, L. M., & Parker, R. A. (2005). *Designing & conducting survey research: A comprehensive guide*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Rencher, A. C. (2002). *Methods of multivariate analysis*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Robertson, T. S. (1970). *Consumer Behavior.* Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company.

Robinson, M. J., Trail, G. T., Dick, R. J., & Gillentine, A. J. (2005). Fans vs. spectators: An analysis of those who attend intercollegiate football games. *Sport Marketing Quarterly, 14*, 43-53.

Roy, D. P., & Graeff, T. R. (2003). Consumer attitudes toward cause-related marketing activities in professional sports. *Sport Marketing Quarterly, 12*(3), 163-172.

Sack, A. L. (1987). College sport and the student-athlete. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues, 11*, 31-48.

Sandomir, R. (2008, February 8). You Can’t Buy the Naming Rights, But Call It the Billion-Dollar Ballpark. *The New York Times, p. 2.*

Smith, A., Graetz, B., & Westerbeek, H. (2008). Sport sponsorship, team support, and purchase intentions. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, *14*(5), 387-404.

Smith, D. R. (2009). College football and student quality: An advertising effect or culture and tradition? *American Journal of Economics and Sociology, 68*(2), 553-579.

Smith, J. R., Hogg, M. A., Martin, R., & Terry, D. J. (2007). Uncertainty and the influence of group norms in the attitude-behavior relationship. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, *46*, 769-792.

Smith, J. R., Terry, D. J., & Hogg, M. A. (2007). Social identity and the attitude-behavior relationship: Effects of anonymity and accountability. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *37*, 239-257.

Smith, R. A. (2008). Far more than commercialism: Stadium building from Harvard's innovations to Stanford's 'Dirt Bowl.' *International Journal of the History of Sport*, *25*(11), 1453-1474.

Sneath, J. Z., Finney, R. Z., & Close, A. G. (2005). An IMC approach to event marketing: The effects of sponsorship and experience on customer attitudes. *Journal of Advertising Research*, *45*(4), 373-381.

Sperber, M. (2000). *Beer and circus: How big-time college sports is crippling undergraduate education.* New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company.

Stets, J. E., & Burke, P. J. (2000). Identity theory and social identity theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *63*(3), 224-237.

Stinson, J. L., & Howard, D. R. (2004). Scoreboards vs. mortarboards: Major donor behavior and intercollegiate athletics. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, *14*, 129-140.

Stotlar, D. (2004). Sponsorship evaluation: Moving from theory to practice. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, *13*, 61-64.

Stryker, S. (1980). *Symbolic interactionism; A socio-structural version.* Menlo Park, CA: Benjamin/Cummings.

Sutton, W. A., McDonald, M. A., Milne, G. R., & Cimperman, J. (1997). Creating and fostering fan identification in professional sports. *Sport Marketing Quarterly, 6*(1), 15-22.

Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2007). *Using multivariate statistics* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.

Tajfel, H. (1982). *Social identity and inter-group relations*. New York: Academic Press.

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. In S. Worchel & W. G. Austin (Eds.), *Psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 7-24). Chicago: Nelson Hall.

Temporal, P. (2010). *Advanced brand management: Managing brands in a changing world* (2nd ed.). Singapore: John Wiley & Sons (Asia) Pte. Ltd.

Terry, D. J., & Hogg, M. A. (1996). Group norms and the attitude-behavior relationship: A role for group identification. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 22*, 776-793.

Thompson, A. B. (2004). Brand positioning and brand creation. In R. Clifton & J. Simmons (Eds.), *Brands and branding* (pp. 79-95). Princeton, NJ: Bloomberg Press.

Toma, J. D. (2003). *Football U: Spectator sports in the life of the American university.* Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.

Tomasini, N., Frye, C., & Stotlar, D. (2004). National collegiate athletic association corporate sponsor objectives: Are there differences between divisions I-A, I-AA, I-AAA? *Sport Marketing Quarterly, 13,* 216-226.

Trail, G. T., Anderson, D. F., & Fink, J. S. (2000). A theoretical model of sport spectator consumption behavior. *International Journal of Sport Management, 1,* 154-180.

Trail, G. T., Anderson, D. F., & Fink, J. S. (2005). Consumer satisfaction and identity theory: A model of sport spectator conative loyalty. *Sport Marketing Quarterly, 14,* 98-111.

Trail, G. T., & James, J. D. (2001). The motivation scale for sport consumption: Assessment of the scale's psychometric properties. *Journal of Sport Behavior, 24*(1), 108-127.

Trail, G. T., Kwon, H. H., & Anderson, D. F. (2009). Does advertising mitigate the negative effects of losing on satisfaction and conative aspects of sport attendance? A case study in intercollegiate athletics. *International Journal of Sport Communication, 2,* 109-124.

Trail, G. T., Robinson, M. J., Dick, R. J., & Gillentine, A. J. (2003). Motives and points of attachment: Fans versus spectators in intercollegiate athletics. *Sport Marketing Quarterly, 12*(4), 217-227.

Trail, G. T., Robinson, M. J., & Kim, Y. K. (2008). Sport consumer behavior: A test for group differences on structural constraints. *Sport Marketing Quarterly, 17,* 190-200.

Underwood, R., Bond, E., & Baer, R. (2001). Building service brands via social identity: Lessons from the sports marketplace. *Journal of Marketing Theory & Practice, 9*(1), 1-13.

Upshaw, L. B. (1995). *Building brand identity: A strategy for success in a hostile marketplace.* New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Wann, D. L., Grieve, F. G., Zapalac, R. K., & Pease, D. G. (2008). Motivational profiles of sports fans of different sports. *Sport Marketing Quarterly, 17,* 6-19.

Weiner, J. (2009). *College sports 101: A primer on money, athletics, and higher education in the 21st century.* Retrieved from Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics website: http://www.knightcommission.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=344&Itemid=84

Woo, B., Trail, G. T., Kwon, H. H., & Anderson, D. (2009). Testing models of motives and points of attachment among spectators in college football. *Sport Marketing Quarterly, 18,* 38-53.

Zagacki, K. S., & Grano, D. (2005). Radio sports talk and the fantasies of sport. *Critical Studies in Media Communication, 22*(1), 45-63.

Zhang, Z., Won, D., & Pastore, D. L. (2005). The effects of attitudes toward commercialization on college students' purchasing intentions of sponsors' products. *Sport Marketing Quarterly, 14,* (177-187).

Zimbalist, A. (1999). *Unpaid professionals: Commercialism and conflict in big-time college sports.* Ewing, NJ: Princeton University Press.

APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT

UNIVERSITY *of* NORTHERN COLORADO

Informed Consent for Participation in Research

Project Title: Consumer attitudes toward naming-rights sponsorships in college athletics

Researcher: Terry Eddy, School of Sport and Exercise Science, University of Northern Colorado, Butler-Hancock 261E, Greeley, CO, 80639; 970-351-2802.

Advisor: David K. Stotlar Ed.D., Director, School of Sport and Exercise Science, University of Northern Colorado, Gunter Hall 2590, Box 39; Greeley, CO 80639; 970- 351-1722.

You are being asked to participate in a study of college football fans. The purpose of this confidential survey is to better understand your feelings toward naming-rights sponsorships in college athletics. Due to the economic benefits associated with sponsorships in NCAA Division I, it is important for the university to understand your perceptions of corporate stadium names. Therefore, your opinions are extremely valuable.

Please take your time to participate in this survey, and think about each question carefully. Some of the questions may seem similar to you, or may not be worded exactly the way that you would like them to be, but please mark the answer most like your opinion and proceed to the next question. There are no "correct" answers to any question. The data collected in this study may be published; however, your name or other information will remain anonymous. By completing the survey, you give consent to participate in the study. Your participation is very important to the researcher. Thank you for your time and assistance.

Participation requires the completion of the attached survey; it should take you approximately 5 minutes to complete. While there are no direct benefits to you, the information you provide will help athletic and university administrators to meet the needs of fans. In addition, there are no foreseeable risks to participating in this study. Respondents must be at least 18 years old in order to participate in this study.

Questions regarding this study may be directed to Terry Eddy, University of Northern Colorado, Butler-Hancock 261E, Greeley, CO, 80639; 970-351-2802.

Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please proceed with the interview by indicating your age and verbally indicating that you would like to participate in this research. You may keep a copy of this form to retain for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact the Sponsored Programs and Academic Research Center, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-1907

APPENDIX B

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

College Football Sponsorship Survey

The purpose of this confidential survey is to better understand your opinions on sponsorship in college football. I would appreciate you providing your opinions on the history/tradition of your favorite team and your beliefs about sponsorship, particularly stadium naming-rights agreements. Your opinions will be valuable for college athletic administrators to better understand how fans feel about athletic traditions and sponsorship within college athletics.

Please take the time to complete this survey. Read each question carefully and decide how you feel about it. It is important that you complete all the questions as accurately as possible, even though some of the questions may seem similar to you, or may not be worded exactly the way that you would like them to be. Even if you are not certain about the exact answer to a question, give your best estimate and continue working through the questionnaire. There are no "correct" answers to any question. By completing the survey, you give consent for participation in this study.

Please identify your favorite college football team ________________________

Use the sport team identified above to answer the rest of this survey.

Are you currently a student at this university? YES / NO (please circle)

About how long have you been a fan of this team? __________ years

About how many of your favorite team's games do you attend per year? ___________________

Do you donate money to the university's athletic department? YES / NO (please circle)
If so, how much do you normally give each year? $_________

Are you an alumnus of this team's university? YES / NO (please circle)
If not, did you ever attend the university? YES / NO (please circle)

Are you a season ticket holder for this team? YES / NO (please circle)

Please indicate how you feel toward your favorite team to each prompt below.
(1- Strongly disagree, 4- Neither disagree or agree, 7- Strongly agree)

I consider myself to be a "real" fan of the team.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have a lot of great memories from attending games at my team's stadium	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Its long and storied past makes the football program of today something special	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Being a fan of the team is very important to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would experience a loss if I had to stop being a fan of the team.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I think my favorite team's home stadium is a unique place	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The name of the stadium is an important part of the team's history and tradition	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would be very upset if the stadium was torn down.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My team's rich tradition is something you don't find at most other universities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The university's football program has a special place in the history of the university itself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

MORE ON BACK

Please indicate how you feel about the following sponsorship issues/scenarios.
(1- Strongly disagree, 4- Neither disagree or agree, 7- Strongly agree)

Sponsorship offers important financial support for my favorite team.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sponsorship is good for the development of our football team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
On the whole, most other fans of this team would probably approve of my decision to buy products from one of our football team's sponsors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Sponsorship increases the level of commercialization in college football.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Our football team is too commercialized	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Companies that sponsor college football should not try to commercialize it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Naming a stadium after a sponsor represents a higher level of commercialization than other types of sponsorship	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Most other fans whose opinion I value would probably be disappointed if the stadium were to be re-named after a corporation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
In general, other fans would approve of me buying products from a company that paid to re-name our football stadium	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Please assume that your favorite team has just sold the name of their stadium to a corporation when responding to the following questions (i.e., Memorial Stadium becomes Acme Stadium).
(1- Strongly disagree, 4- Neither disagree or agree, 7- Strongly agree)

I think that a company paying to re-name our team's stadium would be a great help to our football program	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
If the stadium were to be renamed after a corporation, my support of the team would not change.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel that re-naming the stadium after a corporation would negatively affect the tradition of our football program.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would feel better about a company than I do now if it purchased the name of the football stadium	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
If a company were to pay to re-name my team's football stadium, I would be likely to buy their products.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would likely purchase as much team merchandise as I do now if the stadium were to be re-named.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would be as likely to wear the team's clothing as often as I do now if the stadium were re-named.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
If the stadium were re-named after a corporation, I would be likely to attend as many games as I do now.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would agree with the university's decision if they were to sell the name to the stadium.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Gender: MALE/ FEMALE (please circle) Age (as of Dec. 31, 2010): ____________

How would you classify yourself? (please circle one)

a. Asian/Pacific Islander c. Black/African American e. Native American
b. White/Caucasian d. Hispanic/Latino f. Other ______________________

What is the highest level of education you have attained? (please circle one)

a. High school b. Vocational Degree c. Associates degree d. Bachelors degree
e. Masters Degree f. Doctoral Degree g. Other ______________________

Thank you for your input