Journal of Applied Marketing Theory

Volume 7 | Number 1 Article 1

4-2017

The Impact of Team Outcomes, Brand Connection, and Game Attendance on the Corporate Image of a Stadium Naming-Rights Sponsor

Terry Eddy
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, tweddy@uark.edu

Brendan Dwyer
Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, bdwyer@vcu.edu

Mark Slavich
Virginia Commonwealth University, slavichma@mymail.vcu.edu

Recommended Citation

Eddy, Terry, Dwyer, Brendan, and Slavich, Mark (2017). The impact of team outcomes, brand connection, and game attendance on the corporate image of a stadium naming-rights sponsor. Journal of Applied Marketing Theory, 7(1), 1-17. ISSN: 2151-3236 https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/jamt/vol7/iss1/1

Journal of Applied Marketing Theory
Vol. 7 No. 1, Page 1-17, April 2017
ISSN 2151-3236

The Impact of Team Outcomes, Brand Connection, and Game Attendance on the Corporate Image of a Stadium Naming-Rights Sponsor

Terry Eddy, Brendan Dwyer and Mark Slavich

AUTHOR INFORMATION

Terry Eddy
University of Arkansas
tweddy@uark.edu

Brendan Dwyer
Virginia Commonwealth University
bdwyer@vcu.edu

Mark Slavich
Virginia Commonwealth University
slavichma@mymail.vcu.edu

ABSTRACT

The impact of sport sponsorship on perceptions of the sponsor has become a well-established line of research, but the examination of the special case of stadium naming-rights sponsors has only just begun to gain momentum. The purpose of the current study was to examine the impact of primary tenet success/failure, game attendance, and team connection on the corporate image, reputation, and credibility of the naming-rights sponsor. MetLife Stadium in the New York City metropolitan area was chosen as the unique context for this examination. The results indicated that game attendance had a significant effect on respondents' image of MetLife. Full results, as well as practical and theoretical implications, are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

The impact of sport sponsorship on various perceptions of the sponsoring firm has become a reasonably well-established line of research. There is a wealth of literature focused on fan perceptions from numerous perspectives including image transfer, purchase intentions, attitudes, credibility, and corporate social responsibility of the sponsor (cf., Alexandris and Tsiotsou, 2012; Cornwell et al., 2005; Dees et al., 2010; Gwinner and Eaton, 1999; Rifon, Choi et al., 2004; Verity, 2002; Walraven et al., 2012). This surge in research attention is well-justified, as global sponsorship spending has increased more than any other marketing communication activity and has risen to an estimated all-time high of $53.1 billion, with over $13 billion of that total being spent on sport sponsorship in North America (*IEG*, 2014).

It is important to note that the dollar amounts changing hands for individual partnerships are typically largest in the case of stadium naming-rights, where annual agreements for tens of millions of dollars are being observed (*SportBusiness Journal*, 2011). Over the last several years, the New York City area in particular has been a hotbed for naming-rights activity in the United States. Citi Field took over as the largest major league stadium naming deal in 2008 ($400 million for 20 years), and Barclays Center became the largest major league arena deal in 2011 ($200 million for 20 years). MetLife then replaced Citi with the largest domestic stadium deal, when they signed a 25-year agreement to name MetLife Stadium in 2011 (the exact cost has never been released, but has been reported between $425 million and $625 million) (*SportBusiness Journal*, 2011). It has been suggested that the 2013 naming agreement for AT&T Stadium in Arlington, TX may have eclipsed

Journal of Applied Marketing Theory
Vol. 7 No. 1, Page 1-17, April 2017
ISSN 2151-3236

the terms for MetLife Stadium, and though the terms of AT&T's agreement have also not been made public, Cowboys owner Jerry Jones has been on record as saying that the deal is not the largest in the National Football League (NFL) (*Associated Press*, 2013).

Despite the volume of sponsorship research being conducted and the amount of money in play, inquiry specifically focused on naming-rights sponsorship has only recently begun to gain some traction (Lough and Pharr, 2010). While naming-rights are technically just a specific type of sponsorship inventory, scholars working in this area are generally in agreement that the large dollar amounts, longer contracts, and unique circumstances related to venue management make them a special case that require individualized inquiry (Chen and Zhang, 2012; Delia, 2014; Eddy, 2014). Most of the current naming-rights research is focused on team identification, attitudes toward the sponsor, and purchase intentions. In addition, most examine situations using either hypothetical sponsors or current, long-term sponsors (Chen and Zhang, 2012; Delia, 2014; Eddy, 2014; Reysen et al., 2012).

The current study aimed to contribute to this growing literature base by examining several areas in need of further exploration. First, the study utilized the activation of a new naming-rights sponsor (MetLife Stadium). Second, the services provided by MetLife fell into a category (irregular, long-term purchase decisions) in need of further research from a sponsorship activation perspective (Walraven et al., 2012). Third, the study sought to explore the relationship between self-brand (team) connection and the perceived image of the naming-rights sponsor – an approach that has not been used in the literature on naming-rights sponsorships. Lastly, a unique context was capitalized upon where the impact of team success and failure could be explored in conjunction with the same naming-rights sponsor. The following section highlights the current study's guiding framework, congruity theory, and introduces the control and outcome variables under examination.

THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT

Congruity Theory

Osgood and Tannenbaum (1955) proposed and tested congruity theory as an extension of balance theory. According to Heider (1958), balance theory involves a consumer's perceptions of how objects belong together based on previously held attitudes. For instance, are they linked by association, proximity, similarity, ownership or common fate? Stemming from the work of cognitive consistency, balance theory relies on the notion that a consumer seeks harmony of thought, and any misaligned attitudes within a thought structure will create dissonance. According to Dean (2002), "A balance theory explanation of sponsorship suggests three elements linked in a triangular relationship: the sponsor, the sponsored event, and the consumer (viewed from the perspective of the consumer)" (p. 79). Given this, balance theory provides an appropriate framework for evaluating attitude change among the sponsorship triumvirate as it is assumed the positive experience of attending a sporting event will then extend itself to corporate partner. What happens, however, if the experience is not positive? Will the negative experience also extend to a sponsor?

Congruity theory is an improvement upon balance theory in that it accounts for both direction of attitude change and the degree to which it changes. In other words, attitudes may be weakly or strongly held in either a positive or negative direction. In addition, congruity theory posits that incongruent attitudes may prompt attitude change toward both the other elements in the triad. Thus, congruity theory is the proper framework to test the possibility of both a positive and negative change in attitude toward the current study's sponsor, MetLife (Jagre et al., 2001).

As mentioned above, balance theory has been previously extended to sport sponsorship (see Crimmons and Horn, 1996). In addition, there is a great deal of research that has focused on the impact of "fit" between sponsee and sponsor (cf., Alexandris et al., 2007; D'Alessandro, 1998; Taylor, 1999). However, Dean (2002) utilized congruity theory in an examination of sponsorship outcomes for a non-profit event, and found that sponsorship of a non-profit event influenced consumer perception positively, even if respondents held a negative or neutral attitude toward the sponsor. Jagre et al. (2001) also proposed a conceptual framework grounded in congruity theory to measure sponsorship "fit." The researchers argued that the theory had been successfully applied to advertising and consumer behavior assessments for explaining recall and attitude formation; thus, an extension to measure the congruence between the sponsor and the event/team through the eyes of a consumer was logical. Based on this suggestion, the current study looked to utilize congruity theory as a theoretical framework. As a means to activate congruity theory within the context of naming-rights sponsorship, the concept of sponsor image transfer was explored.

Sponsor Image Transfer

Desired sport sponsorship outcomes come in many forms as motivations for becoming a sponsor vary greatly between organizations. Sponsor awareness research has dominated the literature despite acknowledgement that there is still much to learn about how sponsorships impact both sport organizations and corporate partners (Thjømøe et al., 2002). A recent surge of research led by Gwinner has sought to explore the branding impact specifically related to image transfer. According to Gwinner, Larsen, and Swanson (2009), image transfer is rooted in Keller's (1993) brand association research where the image of an event is transferred to the image of a sponsoring brand as an individual associates attitudes toward the event including attributes and benefits with the brand.

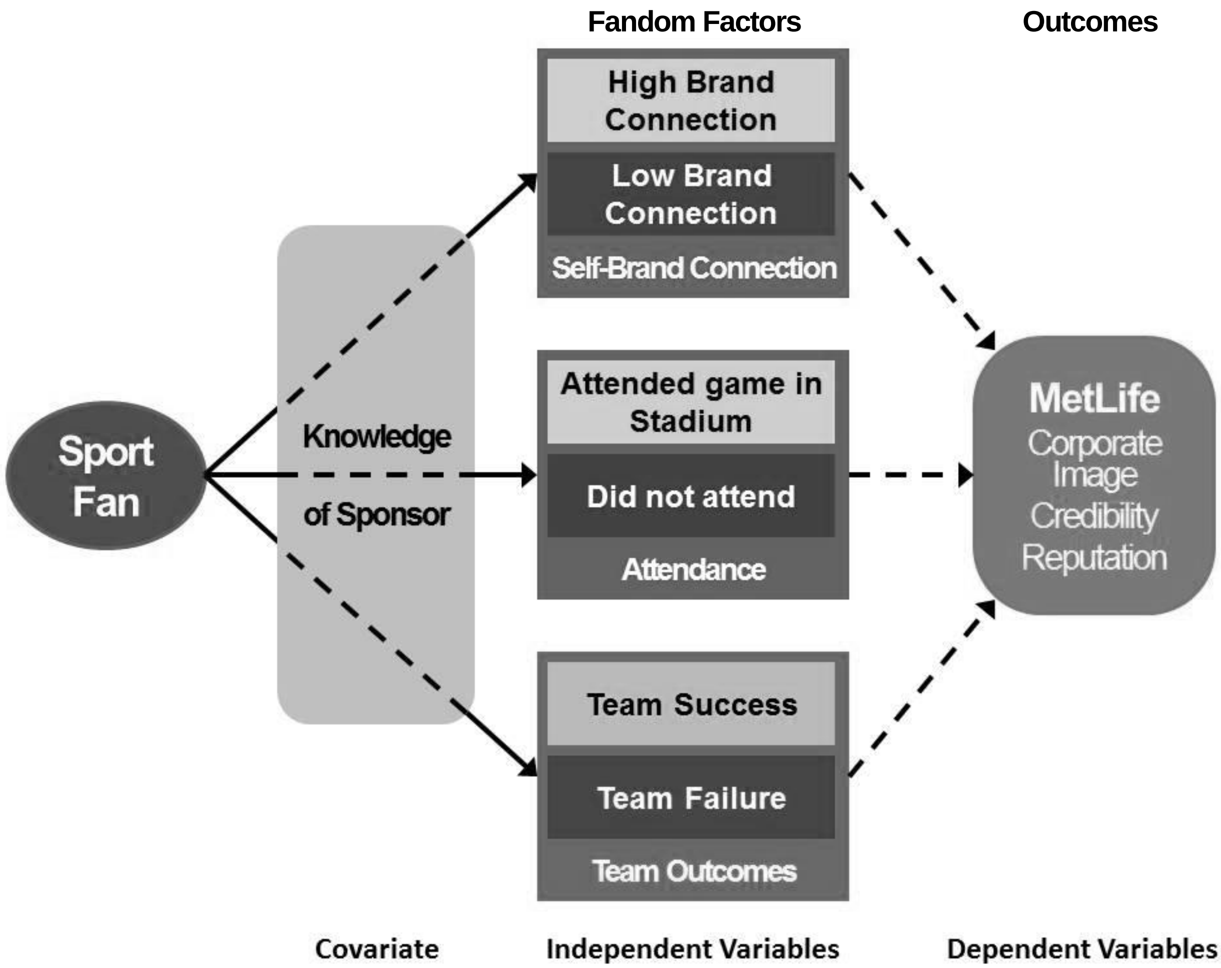
Gwinner and Eaton (1999) were the first to find a relationship between sponsor and sport event image, and Gwinner et al. (2009) confirmed the exploratory research specifically within a sporting context. However, image transfer research within the spectator sport literature remains limited, and findings are somewhat mixed (Walraven et al., 2012). In addition, the image transfer research focused on naming-rights sponsors is non-existent. The application of congruity theory, defined as related attitude change between two objects, to sport sponsorship lends itself intuitively to image transfer as the process has been found to moderate the relationship between an event/team and the sponsor within the mind of the consumer (Gwinner and Bennett, 2008). Thus, the current authors sought to explore the congruity between a set of team-related attitudes/behaviors and MetLife (see Figure 1). To do so, the following control variables were measured and analyzed: one's self-brand connection with NFL team, attendance, and preferred NFL team success or failure.

Self-brand connection

Past work on naming-rights sponsorships has uncovered significant positive relationships between team identification and sponsor-related attitudes and behavioral intentions (Chen and Zhang, 2012; Reysen et al., 2012). However, past work using hypothetical sponsors with a low level of congruity (arguably) with the sport property yielded no significant relationships between team identification and sponsor-related outcomes (Eddy, 2014). Since the context of this study is similar more so to the latter situation, team identification was replaced by self-brand connection. Borrowing from the work of Escalas and Bettman (2003; 2005), self-brand connection was operationalized as the extent to which sport fans incorporated team brands into their self-concept. Similar to the concept of team identification, self-brand connection within the context of spectator sport measures the link between fan and the team's brand more broadly, as opposed to the direct link with the on-field product. Since the dawn of sport sponsorship, corporate partners have sought the transfer of team affinity to their particular brand (Mason, 2005), and according to Escalas and Bettman, (2003) "Self-brand connections capture an important part of consumers' construction of self" (p. 340). Thus, a better understanding of how self-brand connection, as opposed to team identification, with a team relates to the image of a naming-rights sponsor should provide new insight into the consumer-property-sponsor triad.

Journal of Applied Marketing Theory
Vol. 7 No. 1, Page 1-17, April 2017
ISSN 2151-3236

Figure 1 – Framework for naming-rights congruity



Attendance

Event attendance also represents an important experience for sport fans as it relates to image relationship between team and sponsor (Lacey et al., 2007). Frequent event attendees often have better sponsor recall/recognition than those that attend fewer games (Pitts and Slattery, 2004), and more positive purchase intentions (Biscaia et al., 2013). In the case of a new stadium, the opportunity to experience the new amenities and take in the gameday atmosphere may potentially impact the perception of the naming-rights sponsor, as Fullerton and Bruneau (2013) identified a novelty effect associated with new stadiums. Lacey et al. (2007) were the first to empirically explore the impact of attendance on a multi-year sponsorship (as is the case with most naming-rights sponsorships), but the impact of game attendance on naming-rights sponsor processing has yet to be examined. A better understanding of the impact of event attendance on naming-rights sponsors should offer important insight for organizations and sponsors interested in long-term sponsorship agreements and activation.

Journal of Applied Marketing Theory
Vol. 7 No. 1, Page 1-17, April 2017
ISSN 2151-3236

Team success/failure

Lastly, while uncertainty and drama are popular and enticing attributes of competitive sport, the consequences associated with sport team success/failure may be an impactful outcome for corporate sponsors as they are linked directly with consumer attitudes about an event. In other words, when a team loses, do the perceptions of the team's corporate sponsors mirror the negative associations felt by the team itself (i.e. congruency between organizations)? In a study of individual game outcomes, Eisdorfer and Kohl (in press) found that sponsors of winning teams (on an individual game basis) did receive significant abnormal returns on stock prices; however, this proposition has not been examined over a full season in a sponsorship context.

Team outcomes also impact a fan's social identity through image management tactics. In particular, the concepts of basking in reflected glory (BIRGing) and cutting off reflected failure (CORFing) originated in the social psychological literature as behavioral mechanisms for individuals coping with the ups and downs of competitive spectator sports (Cialdini et al., 1976; Snyder et al., 1986). BIRGing occurs when individuals' want to broadcast their association with successful others, regardless of the triviality of their affiliation or connection to the successful individual or group (Cialdini et al. 1976). CORFing serves to distance individuals from unsuccessful teams or individuals (Wann and Branscombe 1990). While BIRGing serves as a way to enhance ego, CORFing serves as a way to preserve ego (Wann and Branscombe 1990). Madrigal (1995) highlighted the importance of personal BIRGing behavior, concluding it impacted one's desire to increase a connection to a sporting entity. Meanwhile, CORFing behaviors have also been recognized as refusal of team poster (Bizman and Yinon 2002) and avoidance of other fans (Gantz and Wenner 1995) after a loss. Regardless, team outcomes, most likely in the form of a win or a loss, influence fan behavior toward a team, yet little is known how these outcomes impact team stakeholders such as sponsors or advertisers.

The venue of interest in this study, MetLife Stadium in the greater New York City area, provided a unique and particularly noteworthy situation, as its two tenants, the New York Giants (NYG) and New York Jets (NYJ), had very different seasons during 2011-12. Notably, the NYJ preseason high expectations were not met and the NYG moderate expectations were far exceeded. Coming into the 2011-12 season, the NYJ were ranked seventh in ESPN's Power Rankings at the beginning of the season and had appeared in the AFC championship game the previous two seasons ("2011 NFL Power Rankings: Week 1," 2011). These expectations did not translate to on-field success as the NYJ failed to reach the playoffs and finished with an 8-8 record. The NYG, on the other hand, missed the 2010-11 playoffs, suffered several injuries in the preseason, and were ranked 15th in the ESPN Power Rankings ("2011 NFL Power Rankings: Week 1," 2011). Despite modest predictions, the NYG not only qualified for the playoffs, but also went on to win Super Bowl XLVI. This major discrepancy provided access to a unique dyadic context to explore the impact of team success and failure in conjunction with stadium naming rights outcomes within one sample. While the access to the sample was unique, the generalizability of team success/failure is not. In fact, the prospect of future team success or failure could directly impact a potential naming-rights sponsor's decision.

As for the outcome variables under investigation, the current study explored the corporate image, reputation, and credibility of MetLife. Often, these terms are used interchangeably but, as Gotsi and Wilson (2001) suggested, while a strong relationship exists, there is differentiation. Thus, the current study examined the concepts individually, recognizing that each term does command a separate meaning. In addition, these constructs provided a well-established backbone to the perceptual investigation of naming-rights sponsors.

Corporate image

The concept of corporate image was first analyzed in the 1950s. Since then, numerous definitions of the term have been posited. Dichter (1985) defined corporate image as "the total impression that the entity makes on the minds of individuals" (p. 75). Meanwhile, Martineau (1960) suggests that corporate image is a conglomerate of attitudes toward the company held by its various stakeholders. It is also important to understand that a corporation's image lies somewhat in the mind of each individual person (Javalgi et al., 1994).

Corporations make decisions affecting their image based on relationships not only with their consumers, but also with all of their stakeholders (Bratt, 1989; Gray and Balmer, 1998). With this in mind, when surveying the sports naming rights landscape, many corporations choose to link themselves with specific teams and sports in order to strengthen or alter their images in the minds of their business partners.

Compared to corporate reputation, images take less time to build. Its name, logo, signage, advertising, and communications all go into fashioning a strong image (Gray and Balmer, 1998). The time element translates into the perfect opportunity to use corporate naming rights to improve one's image. Instead of relying on other forms of sponsorship that may require more time to affect its image, corporations can enter into naming rights agreements with teams/facilities and have its name visible to its stakeholders in a short period of time. In addition, the variety of mediums (in-person, television, radio, internet) used in disseminating a corporation's name make this method a preferred choice to other types of sponsorship (Brown and DeGaris, 2013).

Previous research focusing on the effect of sponsorship on corporate image has generated mixed conclusions. Researchers revealed that corporate sponsorship effects on image differ among companies, with negative results possible (Javalgi et al., 1994). Pope and Voges (1999) found no relationship between a company's sports sponsorship and its image, pointing to consumers' use of a brand as having large impact on its image. Still, others have ascertained that sport is an effective vehicle for affecting corporate image (Copeland et al., 1996; Javalgi et al., 1994; Scott and Suchard, 1992; Thwaites, 1994).

Reputation

When examining corporate reputation, Weiss et al. (1999) look to Merriam Webster's dictionary to provide a definition for the concept, which expresses it as "an impression of public esteem or high regard judged by others" (p. 75). The authors also state that the difference between image and reputation is that an image reflects the core identity of a corporation while its reputation is a global perception of the organization in terms of its status in the marketplace.

Still, when it comes to sponsorship opportunities, a company's corporate image and reputation are very closely linked. An important attribute of corporate reputation is in its use of comparison to others. It establishes a firm's standing in its field relative to its competitors (Fombrun, 1996). Even if a company is satisfied with it's standing, an aggressive turn to corporate naming rights sponsorship may serve beneficial to help its reputation amongst its competition. Reputation management therefore should be a consistent action, occurring not just in response to a problem but also as a proactive measure (Weiss et al., 1999). Congruently, reputation theory holds that firms should actively monitor the reputation of both itself and others (Bromley, 1993; Emler, 1990).

Long-term sponsorship and naming rights also seem like a desirable option when considering the time component of a company's reputation, especially when compared to its image. Simply put, reputations take time to build and manage (Balmer, 1997). A corporate reputation is an evaluation conducted over a period of time and is based on a firm's consistent performance as well as effective communication (Gray and Balmer, 1998). Hence, a reputation strategy encompassing naming rights provides a corporation with an effective channel directly to its stakeholders.

Journal of Applied Marketing Theory
Vol. 7 No. 1, Page 1-17, April 2017
ISSN 2151-3236

Credibility

Fombrun (1996) describes corporate credibility as the extent to which a company's stakeholders believe in its trustworthiness and expertise. The factors of trustworthiness and expertise are emphasized in various other literature on the topic, emphasizing the vital role the attributes play in a company's credibility (Hovland et al., 1953; McGinnies and Ward, 1980; Ohanian, 1990). As seen with reputation, these two components take time to develop, another reason a company may turn to corporate naming rights as part of its marketing strategy.

Corporate credibility is important to a firm's marketing and branding. A lack of faith in a company can have an impact on its ability to sell products (Aaker and Joachimsthaler, 2000). Conversely, a company (or entrepreneur) is held in high regard when it is viewed as both credible and visible (Fombrun, 1996). In addition, positive credibility can enhance consumer purchase conditions (Lafferty and Goldsmith, 1999), and public relations and sponsorship are two ways to improve credibility (Lafferty et al., 2002). Simply put, successful advertising and credibility go hand in hand. The credibility companies have the opportunity to gain further highlights the role corporate naming rights can play in a firm's success.

Taken together and as mentioned in the introduction, the research available on stadium naming-rights sponsorships is underwhelming. Thus, inquiry surrounding the impact of this type of sponsorship is needed. Guided by congruity theory and following the review of image transfer, corporate image, reputation, and credibility literature, the following hypotheses were developed to guide the current inquiry:

- H1: Individuals with a high connection to their preferred team's brand will have more positive perceptions of MetLife's image, credibility, and reputation.
- H2: Individuals who have attended a football game at MetLife stadium will have more positive perceptions of MetLife's image, credibility, and reputation.
- H3: Individuals who prefer the more successful team (NYG) will have more positive perceptions of MetLife's image, credibility, and reputation than individuals who prefer the less successful team (NYJ).

METHOD

Sample and Data Collection

A total of 245 undergraduate and graduate sport management students from a large urban university in the New York City area were solicited at the conclusion of the 2011-12 NFL season, with 186 fully completing the paper and pencil questionnaire (75.9% response rate). College students were an appropriate population for this study since it seems likely that building brand awareness and brand image would be important marketing objectives for MetLife, particularly when focused on young adults that will soon enter the workforce (Cherkassky, 2005). Participation in the study was voluntary, and volunteers received an informed consent statement. No incentives were provided to those who completed the survey. Raw data were coded in Microsoft Excel, and statistical analyses were performed using *IBM SPSS Statistics 22*.

The sample was primarily male (85.3%) and white/Caucasian (58.6%), with an average age of 22.6 (SD = 6.527). Other participants identified themselves as black/African-American (15.1%), Hispanic (10.8%), Asian/Pacific Islander (4.3%), and Multiracial (8.1%). Over half (55.4%) of the respondents indicated that they preferred the New York Giants over the New York Jets, and 45.7% of the respondents indicated having attended a game at MetLife Stadium during the most recent NFL season. Since MetLife Stadium was the object of interest, the only team choices given to the respondents were the Giants and Jets; hence, it is possible that neither is their favorite NFL team.

This was of little concern in this study, however, as it is expected that the broader purpose of MetLife's investment is to reach individuals of all levels of identification in the local area surrounding the stadium – not just to focus on fans that hold the Giants or Jets as their favorite NFL team.

Instrumentation

Prior to data collection, the questionnaire was piloted on a small sample of graduate students at a large urban university in the mid-Atlantic, and it was deemed that none of the items that were minimally modified from the literature required further revision. The three dependent variables, namely credibility (Keller and Aaker, 1992), reputation (Weiss et al., 1999), and image (Javalgi et al., 1994), were measured using three, five, and six-item scales, respectively, per the literature. Theses scales were adapted from the traditional business literature to meet the specific needs of a sport fan/consumer population. In addition, the trustworthiness sub-dimension of Keller and Aaker's (1992) credibility construct was used given the context of financial services. Lastly, the relationship between these three variables has been hotly debated as it relates to which influences the other. However, for the purposes of this study, the constructs were adapted and utilized solely as outcome variables dependent on a number of other preceding factors.

The lone multi-item independent variable, self-brand connection (Escalas and Bettman, 2003), was measured using a seven-item scale. Self-brand connection was chosen over the more common team identification or attachment because of the focus on co-branding in naming-rights sponsorship. Also, the impact of team identification on perceptions of sponsors has been well established and this represents an opportunity to explore an additional factor within the sponsor-sponsee relationship. The other independent variables, namely attendance and team preference, were measured using single items. Given the specific aim of H3, it was important to validate the perceptions of the team's outcome from the previous year. Thus, participants were asked to rate the perceived success or failure of the previous season on a seven-point scale where one was "total failure" and seven was "total success." The results validated the uniqueness of the context in that the mean score (St. Dev.) for NYG fans was 6.900 (.455) yet was 2.762 (1.295) for NYJ fans.

To account for the participants' familiarity with MetLife, their knowledge of MetLife's products and services was assessed and included as a covariate. Respondents were asked to select products and services that MetLife offers from a list using unaided recall. The knowledge score was recorded as a percentage of the correctly identified MetLife products and services (Singh et al., 1988). Overall knowledge of MetLife products among the respondents was somewhat low with 37.6% of products correctly identified, on average. However, awareness ranged from 20.4% of Employee Benefit Services to 79.8% of Insurance Services. Thus, the majority of respondents were knowledgeable of at least one of MetLife's primary services.

All multi-item scales were administered using a 7-point Likert-type scale except for image, which used a 5-point Likert-type scale (to maintain consistency with the literature). Specific item information can be found in Table 1. It should be noted that self-brand connection was dichotomized into high and low levels based on the scale means (mean scores of four or greater were categorized as high, since four was the midpoint of the seven point scale). Similar dichotomization procedures have been used in the literature for other affective measures, such as team identification (Wann and Grieve, 2007).

RESULTS

Mean scores, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alpha values for the multi-item scales can be found in Table 1. Each of the four factors exhibited good internal consistency using the standard 0.7 criterion. The respondents' mean score on the 7-point self-brand connection scale was 3.329, indicating that their connection to the preferred team's brand was toward the lower end of the 7-point scale, though there was a high degree of variability (*SD* = 1.815). Consequently, 105 (56.5%) of the respondents were classified in the low group, with the remaining 81 being assigned to the high-connection group. Of the three dependent variables (image, credibility, and reputation), reputation had the highest mean score (5.169) compared to the neutral value, and both credibility (4.835) and image (3.242) had positive values compared to neutral. Thus, the respondents generally held somewhat positive views toward MetLife.

Table 1 – Survey Items, mean scores, and Cronbach's alpha values

Self-brand connection (M = 3.329, SD = 1.815, α = .947)
The [Fav team] reflect who I am
I can identify with the [Fav team]
The [Fav team] suit me well
I use the [Fav team] to communicate who I am to other people
I think the [Fav team] help me become the type of person I want to be
I consider the [Fav team] to be "me"
I feel a personal connection to the [Fav team]
Image (M = 3.242, SD = .616, α = .807)
MetLife offers quality products and services
MetLife is well managed
MetLife only wants to make money
MetLife is involved in the community
MetLife responds to consumer needs
MetLife appears to be a good company to work for
Reputation (M = 5.169, SD = 1.207, α = .966)
MetLife is professional
MetLife is successful
MetLife is well established
MetLife is stable
MetLife is regarded
Credibility (M = 4.835, SD = 1.219, α = .928)
MetLife is trustworthy
MetLife is dependable
MetLife is concerned about customers

Note: Image was measured on a 5-point scale, other factors measured on 7-point scale

To test the three hypotheses, the three dependent variables were tested via a full-factorial 2x2x2 between-subjects multiple analysis of covariance (MANCOVA), with dichotomized self-brand connection (H1), attendance (H2), and team preference (H3) as the subject variables and knowledge acting as the covariate. Although continuous variables are the norm, dichotomized variables for attitudinal measures, such as team identification, have been used in the sport marketing literature (Greenwell et al., 2002). Skewness and kurtosis values for the all variables suggested multivariate normality, and the sample size met the criteria of at least 20 degrees of freedom for the eight groups in the design (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007).

Using the Wilks' Lambda criterion, omnibus results of the MANCOVA indicated that attendance was a statistically significant main effects factor (F (3,175) = 3.307, p = .022), while team preference (F (3,175) = .383, p = .765) and self-brand connection (F (3,175) = .297, p = .827) were not significant. None of the four interaction effects between the three independent variables was significant, nor was the effect of the covariate (product knowledge). Post-hoc tests revealed that respondents who had attended a game at MetLife Stadium during the given year had significantly more positive perceptions toward MetLife's image, reputation, and credibility (see Table 2).

Table 2 – Hypothesis 2: Attendance and brand image

Attendance	Number of Observations	Image [a]	Credibility [b]	Reputation [c]
Did not attend	101	3.114 (.541)	4.660 (1.094)	4.958 (1.198)
Attended	85	3.394 (.668)	5.043 (1.328)	5.419 (1.175)

[a] Main effects result, $p = .004$; [b] Main effects result, $p = .021$; [c] Main effects result, $p = .008$

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the current study was to test the impact of selected fan beliefs and behaviors on a naming-rights sponsor's brand image. The case of MetLife Stadium was selected due to its uniqueness in terms of being a dual-tenant facility that was quite new at the time of data collection. Additionally, the use of self-brand connection, as opposed to the more commonly used concept of team identification, represented a new method for measuring fan connections to teams in the naming-rights literature. Further, the respondents' mean self-brand connection was just below the midpoint of the 7-point scale, which is considerably lower than the mean scores of affective measures (i.e. team identification) observed in past studies (cf. Chen and Zhang, 2012; Eddy, 2014; Reysen et al., 2012). The standard deviation for self-brand connection was also larger than what is typically observed in this area. Whether this was a function of the measures or sampling methods (or both), the sample in this study consisted of a much broader range of individuals, in regard to their connection to the teams, than the highly identified samples that have been observed in other (naming-rights) sponsorship studies.

Although self-brand connection and team identification are not equivalent (as discussed previously), it was still somewhat unexpected that significant differences were not observed between levels of self-brand connection to the team (H1; Alexandris and Tsiotsou, 2012; Dees et al., 2010; Walraven et al., 2012). One explanation for this result could be a lingering novelty effect for this particular naming-rights agreement. New/young stadia command the highest prices for naming-rights sponsors, suggesting an optimal return in the long-term (DeSchriver and Jensen, 2003); however, the image transfer between one's connection to a team brand and a naming partner may require a number of years and interactions to fully develop. Additionally, in 2011-12 the name MetLife was not necessarily synonymous with the NYJ and NYG, in part because the stadium was not named after Metlife until the second year it was open. Consequently, MetLife was unable to capitalize on the increased visibility and name recognition that comes from being associated with a brand new facility. Additionally, research on frequency of interaction or involvement has been found to positively impact brand association (Keller, 1993); thus, a longitudinal approach to self-brand connection may be needed to fully understand this relationship.

H2 was the only hypothesis to be supported by the data, as the only significant differences observed in the independent variables were between game attendees and non-attendees. As such, the results provide some weight to the argument that measures of behavior should continue to be examined in sponsorship studies, in addition to affective and cognitive processing. In the literature, a variety of measures of affective and conative involvement (which is how the concepts of self-brand connection and preferred team in this study could be classified) have been examined, but actual behaviors, such as game attendance, tend to receive less attention (Walraven et al., 2012).

Journal of Applied Marketing Theory
Vol. 7 No. 1, Page 1-17, April 2017
ISSN 2151-3236

IMPLICATIONS FOR MARKETING PRACTITIONERS

From the sponsor's perspective, the findings here could suggest that activating the sponsorship in the stadium is more effective in strengthening the brand's image than the simple name association experienced by non-attendees or media consumers. Although this proposition was beyond the scope of the current study, there was no significant interaction effect between attendance and self-brand connection or success/failure; thus, it seems reasonable to suggest that there is something about the in-game experience that affected the respondents' perception of MetLife's image, independent of their team-related attitudes. With so much of sponsors' focus moving towards media-based activations (especially through social media channels), it is important for marketers to not forget that in-person (as opposed to virtual) experiential activations still wield significant influence over fans' perceptions.

The scenario used in this study allowed for the unique examination of the third hypothesis (H3), specifically whether fans would exhibit a success/failure bias, based on their preferred team's season performance, relative to their perceptions of the sponsor's brand image. Since image transfer is generally an important sponsor objective which has received some investigation previously (Gwinner and Eaton, 1999), and sponsors prefer to associate with successful organizations, it was expected that the Giants' success would transfer (to some degree) to MetLife, and vice versa for the Jets' failure. However, H3 was not supported as no significant difference was found between those who preferred the Giants and those who preferred the Jets.

This finding should actually come as good news for both sponsors and properties/teams, because it suggests that fans may be resilient to the effects of winning/losing (at least within a particular season) in regards to how they process sponsorship. Typically, whether or not a team is winning is factored into potential sponsors' decisions and valuations (Ewing, 2007). This has been most evident recently in world soccer, with some of the lucrative sponsorship agreements that have been signed following championship titles for teams like Barcelona, Bayern Munich, Atletico Madrid, and Manchester United (see Smith (2014) for a more thorough discussion). However, the effects of winning on sponsors, and in this case a sponsor's brand image, may not be as pronounced as once thought. Winning is clearly out of the control of marketers, so if the effects of sponsorship are somewhat robust to game/season outcomes, this would be very encouraging for long-term sponsorship effectiveness. However, it should be noted that self-brand connection to the team was weaker in this sample than expected from past research - it is possible that the success/failure bias may only apply to highly-identified/committed individuals, which has been found in other iterations of the success/failure bias (Dwyer, Eddy, and LeCrom, 2014; Madrigal and Chen, 2008; Wann and Dolan, 1994). In either case, this result is somewhat encouraging, but is still preliminary and requires further research.

When looking back to the mean factor scores for the dependent variables, the participants held somewhat positive perceptions overall about the image, credibility, and reputation of MetLife's brand, which interestingly does not align with recent findings regarding fans' resistance and anger toward naming-rights agreements (Reysen et al., 2012; Woisetschlager et al., 2014). Although the concept of anger was not examined directly in this study, it seems unlikely that fans would hold a positive perception of the sponsoring brand's image if they were in some way upset by the naming-rights agreement itself. In previous work on naming-rights valuation, the age of the facility, as well as the length of time that the previous facility name had been in place, are both factors that have a negative relationship with naming-rights sponsorship value (DeSchriver and Jensen, 2003; Gerrard et al., 2007). Hence, sponsors see more value in naming deals where past name affiliations are less entrenched among fans and local residents, so it seems likely that the same effect would be observed at the level of fan perceptions. Reysen et al. (2012) and Woisetschlager et al. (2014) both used scenarios in which the facilities had longer-term, non-corporate names prior to the introduction of a naming-rights sponsor. Therefore, it seems reasonable to suggest that the partially-conflicting results in the current study are due to the fact that Metlife Stadium had only been open under the original name of New Meadowlands Stadium for approximately 16 months before the MetLife deal came into effect. The results here would suggest that the concepts of anger and resistance need further examination in a greater variety of naming-rights scenarios in the same study so that direct comparisons can be drawn.

As with any research, there were several limitations to this study. First, while college students are clearly an important target market for many industries, the results here should not be extended to broader demographic groups. The age of the sample may have also led to the somewhat low degree of knowledge about MetLife's products; however, this does not appear to have affected the participants' ability to form a brand image for the sponsor. Next, while the sponsorship situation in this study was the 'youngest' of the real-life scenarios in the literature (data were collected approximately five months after the MetLife deal was signed), fans may have stronger emotional reactions closer to the time that a deal is announced. While event studies have found that announcements of naming-rights deals do not significantly affect sponsor stock prices at the time of signing (Leeds et al., 2007), the effect on fans could be different. Similarly to self-brand connection mentioned above, images and reputations take time to be established (Balmer, 1997), so longitudinal research on the change in fan perceptions from the time of signing through the term of the sponsorship could also be extremely valuable. As mentioned in the method section, the dependent variables used were adapted from the traditional business literature to meet the needs of the population under examination. While the instrument was piloted and tested for content validity and reliability, there is the potential for validity issues since the instruments were developed for varying reasons.

Finally, given the uniqueness of this scenario (dual-tenants in the same sport), the factors examined in this study should be extended to other situations encompassing a greater number of fan groups and sponsor product types. The impact of sponsors' product(s) or service(s) was only touched on in this study, and typically has not played any part in the research in this area or in the research on sponsor fit, which is frequently examined in a general sense (Gwinner and Bennett, 2008; Speed and Thompson, 2000). Consumers' opinions and intent to purchase sponsor products could be very different when comparing longer-term, irregular types of purchases (i.e. banking, cars) to the much lower-commitment purchases (i.e. food, beer, electronics) that have been examined more frequently (Dees et al., 2010; Gwinner and Bennett, 2008). Although this proposition was beyond the scope of this study, it requires greater inclusion and consideration in this research space going forward.

REFERENCES

Aaker, DA & Joachimsthaler, E 2000, 'The brand relationship spectrum', *California Management Review*, vol. 42, no. 4, pp. 8-23.

Alexandris, K, Tsaousi, E & James, J 2007, 'Predicting sponsorship outcomes from attitudinal constructs: the case of a professional basketball event', *Sport Marketing Quarterly,* vol. 16, no. 3, pp. 130-139.

Alexandris, K, Tsiotsou, RH & James, J 2012, 'Testing a hierarchy of effects model of sponsorship effectiveness', *Journal of Sport Management*, vol. 26, no. 5, pp. 363-378.

Associated Press 2013, 'Cowboys stadium to be renamed AT&T stadium', viewed 10 October 2014, http://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/nfl/cowboys/2013/07/25/cowboys-stadium-at-t-stadium/2586977/

Balmer, JM 1997, 'Corporate identity: past, present and future', *University of Strathclyde Working Paper Series.*
Biscaia, R, Correia, A, Rosado, AF, Ross, SD & Maroco, J 2013, 'Sport sponsorship: the relationship between team loyalty, sponsorship awareness, attitude toward the sponsor, and purchase intentions', *Journal of Sport Management,* vol. 27, no. 4, pp. 288-302.

Bizman, A, & Yinon, Y 2002, 'Engaging in distancing tactics among sport fans: Effects on self-esteem and emotional responses', *Journal of Social Psychology,* vol. 142, no. 3, pp. 381-392.

Bratt, RG 1989, *Rebuilding a low-income housing policy*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, PA.
Bromley, DB 1993, *Reputation, image and impression management*, John Wiley & Sons, Chinchester, UK.

Brown, B & DeGaris, L 2013, 'Passion transfer in sports advertising: sports passion and attitude toward advertising', *Journal of Applied Marketing Theory,* vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 16-28.

Chen, KK & Zhang, JJ 2012, 'To name it or not name it: consumer perspectives on facility naming rights sponsorship in collegiate athletics', *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics,* vol. 5, pp. 119-148.

Cherkassky, I 2005 'Market focus – College students', viewed 15 September 2014, http://www.targetmarketingmag.com/article/market-focus-college-bound-28679/1

Cialdini, R, Borden, R, Thorne, A, Walker, M, Freeman, S, & Sloan, L 1976, 'Basking in reflected glory: Three (football) field studies', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* vol. 34, no. 3, pp. 366-387.

Copeland, R, Frisby, W & McCarville, R 1996, 'Understanding the sport sponsorship process from a corporate perspective', *Journal of Sport Management*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 32-48.

Cornwell, TB, Weeks, CS & Roy, DP 2005, 'Sponsorship-linked marketing: opening the black box', *Journal of Advertising,* vol. 34, no. 2, pp. 21-42.

Crimmins, J & Horn, M 1996, 'Sponsorship: from management ego trip to marketing success', *Journal of Advertising Research,* vol. 36, no. 4, pp. 11-21.

D'Alessandro, D 1998, 'Event marketing: winners, losers, and chumps', *Vital Speeches of the Day,* vol. 64, no. 10, pp. 296-301.

Dean, DH 2002, 'Associating the corporation with a charitable event through sponsorship: measuring effects on corporate community relations', *Journal of Advertising,* vol. 31, no. 4, pp. 77-87.

Dees, W, Bennett, G & Ferreira, M 2010, 'Personality fit in NASCAR: an evaluation of driver-sponsor congruence and its impact on sponsorship effectiveness outcomes', *Sport Marketing Quarterly,* vol. 19, no. 1, pp. 25-35.

Delia, EB 2014, 'Subconscious (un)attachment to a sponsor: an irrational effect of facility naming rights', *Journal of Sport Management,* vol. 28, no. 5, pp. 551-564

DeSchriver, TD & Jensen, PE 2003, 'What's in the name? price variation in sport facility naming rights', *Eastern Economic Journal,* vol. 29, no. 3, pp. 359-376.

Dichter, E 1985, 'What's in an image', *Journal of Consumer Marketing,* vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 75-81.

Dwyer, B, Eddy, T & LeCrom, CW 2014, 'Destined for success? team identification and attributional bias of NFL fans', *Journal of Sport Behavior,* vol. 37, no. 4, pp. 333-350.

Eddy, T 2014, 'Measuring effects of naming-rights sponsorships on college football fans' purchasing intentions', *Sport Management Review,* vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 362-375

Eisdorfer, A & Kohl, E 2017, 'Corporate sport sponsorship and stock returns: evidence from the NFL', viewed 1 June 2015, http://cfr.ivo-welch.info/2017/eisdorfer-kohl.pdf

Emler, N 1990, 'A social psychology of reputation', *European Review of Social Psychology,* vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 171-193.

Escales, JE & Bettman, JR 2003, 'You are what they eat: the influence of reference groups on consumer connections to brands', *Journal of Consumer Psychology,* vol. 13, no. 3, pp. 339-348.

Escales, JE & Bettman, JR 2005, 'Self-construal, reference groups, and brand meaning', *Journal of Consumer Research,* vol. *32*, no. 3, pp. 378-389.

ESPN.com 2011, '2011 NFL Power Rankings: week 1', viewed 10 October 2014, http://espn.go.com/nfl/powerrankings/_/year/2011/week/1

Ewing, J 2007, 'Sports sponsorship: a risky game', viewed 15 September 2014, http://www.businessweek.com/stories/2007-06-07/sports-sponsorship-a-risky-gamebusinessweek-business-news-stock-market-and-financial-advice

Fombrun, CJ 1996, *Reputation: Realizing value from the corporate image*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, MA.

Fullerton, S & Bruneau, CL 2013, 'The novelty and nostalgia effects of a new major league baseball stadium as measured by its impact on attendance, the corresponding costs of attending, and ticket revenue', *Journal of Applied Marketing Theory,* vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 1-15.

Gantz, W & Wenner, L 1995, 'Fanship and the television sports viewing experience', *Sociology of Sport Journal,* vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 56-76.

Gerrard, B, Parent, MM & 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,* vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 10-24.

Gotsi, M & Wilson, AM 2001, 'Corporate reputation: seeking a definition', *Corporate Communications: An International Journal,* vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 24-30.

Gray, ER & Balmer, JM 1998, 'Managing corporate image and corporate reputation', *Long Range Planning,* vol. 31, no. 5, pp. 695-702.

Greenwell, TC, Fink, JS & Pastore, DL 2002, 'Perceptions of the service experience: using demographic and psychographic variables to identify customer segments', *Sport Marketing Quarterly,* vol. 11, no. 4, pp. 233-241.

Gwinner, K & Bennett, G 2008, 'The impact of brand cohesiveness and sport identification on brand fit in a sponsorship context', *Journal of Sport Management*, vol. 22, no. 4, pp. 410-426.

Gwinner, KP & Eaton, J 1999, 'Building brand image through event sponsorship: the role of image transfer', *Journal of Advertising,* vol. 28, no. 4, pp. 47-57.

Gwinner, KP, Larson, BV & Swanson, SR 2009, 'Image transfer in corporate event sponsorship: assessing the impact of team identification and event-sponsor fit', *International Journal of Management and Marketing Research,* vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 1-15.

Heider, F 1958, *The psychology of interpersonal relations*. John Wiley & Sons, New York, NY.

Hovland, CI, Janis, IL & Kelley, HH 1953, *Communication and persuasion,* Yale University Press, New Haven, CT.

IEG 2014, 'Sponsorship spending growth slows in North America as marketers eye newer media and marketing options', viewed 10 October 2014, http://www.sponsorship.com/IEGSR/2014/01/07/Sponsorship-Spending-Growth-Slows-In-North-America.aspx#.UvbF5EKwIdI

Jagre, E, Watson, JJ & Watson, JG 2001, 'Sponsorship and congruity theory: a theoretical framework for explaining consumer attitude and recall of event sponsorship', *Advances in Consumer Research,* vol. 28, no. 1, pp. 439-445.

Javalgi, RG, Traylor, MB, Gross, AC & Lampman, E 1994, 'Awareness of sponsorship and corporate image: an empirical investigation', *Journal of Advertising,* vol. 23, no. 4, pp. 47-58.

Keller, KL 1993, 'Conceptualizing, measuring, and managing customer-based brand equity', *The Journal of Marketing,* vol. 57, no. 1, pp. 1-22.

Keller, KL & Aaker, DA 1992, 'The effects of sequential introductions on brand extensions', *Journal of Marketing Research,* vol. 29, no. 1, pp. 35-50.

Lacey, R, Sneath, JZ, Finney, ZR & Close, AG 2007, 'The impact of repeat attendance on event sponsorship effects', *Journal of Marketing Communications,* vol. 13, no. 4, pp. 243-255.

Lafferty, BA & Goldsmith, RE 1999, 'Corporate credibility's role in consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions when a high versus a low credibility endorser is used in the ad', *Journal of Business Research,* vol. 44, no. 2, pp. 109-116.

Lafferty, BA, Goldsmith, RE & Newell, SJ 2002, 'The dual credibility model: the influence of corporate and endorser credibility on attitudes and purchase intentions', *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice,* vol. 10, no. 3, pp. 1-12.

Leeds, EM, Leeds, MA & Pistolet, I 2007, 'A stadium by any other name: the value of naming rights', *Journal of Sport Economics,* vol. 6, no. 28, pp. 581-595.

Lough, N & Pharr, J 2010, 'The use of multi-tiered marketing strategies in sport', *Journal of Applied Marketing Theory,* vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 8-23.

Madrigal, R 1995, 'Cognitive and affective determinants of fan satisfaction'. *Journal of Leisure Research,* vol. 27, no. 3, pp. 205-213.

Madrigal, R & Chen, J 2008, 'Moderating and mediating effects of team identification in regard to causal attributions and summary judgments following a game outcome', *Journal of Sport Management,* vol. 22, no. 6, pp. 717-733.

Martineau, P 1960, *Developing the corporate image*, Charles Scribners Sons, New York, NY.

Mason, K 2005, 'How corporate sport sponsorship impacts consumer behavior', *Journal of American Academy of Business,* vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 32-35.

McGinnies, E & Ward, CD 1980, 'Better liked than right trustworthiness and expertise as factors in credibility', *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin,* vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 467-472.

Ohanian, R 1990, 'Construction and validation of a scale to measure celebrity endorsers' perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness', *Journal of Advertising,* vol. 19, no. 3, pp. 39-52.

Osgood, CE & Tannenbaum, PH 1955, 'The principle of congruity in the prediction of attitude change', *Psychological Review,* vol. 62, no. 1, pp. 42-55.

Pitts, BG & Slattery, J 2004, 'An examination of the effects of time on sponsorship awareness levels', *Sport Marketing Quarterly,* vol.13, no.1, pp. 43-54.

Pope, NK & Voges, KE 1999, 'Sponsorship and image: a replication and extension', *Journal of Marketing Communications,* vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 17-28.

Reysen, S, Snider, J & Branscombe, NR 2012, 'Corporate renaming of stadiums, team identification, and threat to distinctiveness', *Journal of Sport Management,* vol. 26, no. 4, pp. 350-357.

Rifon, NJ, Choi, SM, Trimble, CS & Li, H 2004, 'Congruence effects in sponsorship: the mediatng role of sponsor credibility and consumer attributions of sponsor motive', *Journal of Advertising,* vol. 33, no. 1, pp. 30-42.

Scott, DR & Suchard, HT 1992, 'Motivations for Australian expenditure on sponsorship – an analysis', *International Journal of Advertising,* vol. 11, no. 4, pp. 325-332.

Singh, SN, Rothschild, ML & Churchill, GA 1988, 'Recognition versus recall as measures of television commercial forgetting', *Journal of Marketing Research,* vol. 25, pp. 72-80.

Smith, C 2014, 'Soccer's richest kit and shirt sponsorships belong to the most valuable teams', viewed 1 December 2014, http://www.forbes.com/sites/chrissmith/2014/ 05/07/soccers-richest-kit-and-shirt-sponsorships-belong-to-the-most-valuable-teams/

Snyder, C, Lassegard, M & Ford, C 1986, 'Distancing after group success and failure: Basking in reflected glory and cutting off reflected failure', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* vol. 51, no. 2, pp. 382-397.

Speed, R & Thompson, P 2000, 'Determinants of sports sponsorship response', *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science,* vol. 28, no. 2, pp. 226-238.

SportsBusiness Journal 2011, 'Naming rights deals', viewed 15 September 2014, http://www.sportsbusinessdaily.com/Journal/Issues/2011/09/19/In-Depth/Naming-rights-deals.aspx

Tabachnick, BG & Fidell, LS 2007, *Using multivariate statistics*, 5th edn, Pearson Education, Inc, Boston, MA.

Taylor, T 1999, 'Audience information the key to sports marketers', *Marketing News,* vol. 33, no. 2, p. 10.

Thjomoe, HM, Olson, EL & Bronn, PS 2002, 'Decision-making processes surrounding sponsorship activities', *Journal of Advertising Research,* vol. 42, no. 6, pp. 6-15.

Thwaites, D 1994, 'Corporate sponsorship by the financial services industry', *Journal of Marketing Management,* vol. 10, no. 8, pp. 743-763.

Verity, J 2002, 'Maximizing the marketing potential of sponsorship for global brands', *European Business Journal,* vol. 14, no. 4, pp. 161-73.

Walraven, M, Koning, RH & van Bottenburg, M 2012, 'The effects of sports sponsorship: a review and research agenda', *The Marketing Review,* vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 17-38.

Wann, DL & Branscombe NF 1990, 'Die-hard and fair-weather fans: Effects of identification BIRGing and CORFing tendencies', *Journal of Sport & Social Issues,* vol.14, no.2, pp. 103-117.

Wann, DL & Dolan, TJ 1994, 'Attributions of highly identified sports spectators', *The Journal of Social Psychology,* vol. 134, no. 6, pp. 783-792.

Wann, DL & Grieve, FG 2007, 'Use of proactive pessimism as a coping strategy for sport fans: the importance of team identification', *Journal of Contemporary Athletics,* vol. 2, no. 4, pp. 341-356.

Weiss, AM, Anderson, E & MacInnis, DJ 1999, 'Reputation management as a motivation for sales structure decisions', *Journal of Marketing,* vol. 63, no. 4, pp. 74-89.

Woisetschlager, DM, Haselhoff, VJ & Backhaus, C 2014, 'Fans' resistance to naming rights sponsorships: why stadium names remain the same for fans', *European Journal of Marketing,* vol. 48, no. 8, pp. 1487-1510.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Terry Eddy, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of Recreation and Sport Management and director of the Sport Consumer Research Lab at the University of Arkansas. His research interests include sport sponsorship, consumer behavior, and sport finance.

Brendan Dwyer, Ph.D., is an associate professor and the director of research and distance learning for the Center for Sport Leadership at Virginia Commonwealth University. His research interests include sport consumer behavior with a distinct focus on the media consumption habits of fantasy sport participants, and sport ticketing and pricing.

Mark Slavich is a Ph.D. student at the Center for Sport Leadership at Virginia Commonwealth University. His research interests include sport tourism and the fan experience.

