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EVALUATING MINOR LEAGUE BASEBALL SOCIAL IDENTITY,
SOCIAL IMAGE, AND BRAND EQUITY

By

Christan David Hanna
B.B.A., Nazareth College, 1991
M.B.A., Western Michigan University, 1994

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of the
College of Education and Human Development
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Leadership and Organizational Development

Department of Leadership, Foundations, and Human Resource Education
University of Louisville
Louisville, KY

August 2016

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A Dissertation Approved on

July 20, 2016

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents

David T. Hanna

and

Vicki A. Hanna

who worked incredibly hard to give me amazing life opportunities.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to begin with a special thank you to my co-chairs Dr. Chris Greenwell and Dr. Marion Hambrick. Your time and patience throughout this process have been greatly appreciated. Professor Anita Moorman, thank you for your committee membership, friendship, and guidance. Dr. Brad Shuck, I am so thankful that you joined the team. Your support, friendship, and generosity are deeply appreciated. Dr. Mary Hums played a critical role in easing my transition to the University of Louisville. Thank you for your assistance and friendship. The help of Erica Camp and Kelly Ising throughout my time at the University of Louisville requires a special thank you. Thank you to my parents for giving me the opportunity to be the first in the family to earn a college degree. This went much farther than we ever anticipated. Thank you to Dr. Chad McEvoy, Dr. Jonathan Jensen, and future doctor James Morton for your support and advice throughout this process. Special thanks to Dr. Sun Kang and Dr. Jason Rice for their support and wisdom. Jeff Levine, Alicia Cintron, Sam Schmidt, Mallory Perry, Matt Huml, and Jin Park are terrific friends whose support will not be forgotten. Jason Heggemeyer, Elizabeth Klatt, Brooke Buzard, Geoff Brown, Brian Williams, Stephanie Giorio, Howard Milton, Shirley Griffin, Dr. Kyle Mox, Dr. Dean Lee, and Dr. Kate Stewart have all played important supporting roles before and/or during my time in the program. Thank you all so much.

ABSTRACT

EVALUATING MINOR LEAGUE BASEBALL SOCIAL IDENTITY,
SOCIAL IMAGE, AND BRAND EQUITY

Christan D. Hanna

July 20, 2016

An understanding of brand equity, the value a brand adds to a product (Keller, 1993), can provide valuable information to sport managers. This is due to the fact price elasticity, competitive strength, and brand loyalty are consequences of brand equity (Keller, 2001). The degree to which fans identify with teams has been found to predict brand equity in major professional sport (Boyle & Magnusson, 2007) and major college sport (Watkins, 2014) contexts. One purpose of this study is to assess whether fan identification is predictive of brand equity in a MiLB context. Further, Lassar, Mittal, and Sharma (1995) found social image had a halo effect over performance, value, trustworthiness, and attachment as predictors of brand equity. An assessment of this relationship between social image and brand equity in a MiLB context, as well as comparisons with major college and major college sport for context, comprise another important purpose of this study.

A total of 458 surveys were collected for this study. The results indicated fan identification is predictive of brand equity in a MiLB context. In addition, results indicated MiLB social image differed from both major professional social image

and major college sport image. However, MiLB social image, major professional sport social image, and major college sport social image all shared strong relationships with brand equity. MiLB organizational affiliation (the team's affiliation with a MiLB parent) and MiLB league affiliation (the team's affiliation with its league) shared medium strength relationships with brand equity. These MiLB affiliations, however, had means that indicated participants found them more unimportant than important.

Implications included the fact Minor League Baseball teams should emphasize their venue and their ties to the community based on the fact these variables were statistically significant predictors of fan identification. Because MiLB social image is weaker than that of major professional sport and major college sport teams, new and relocating MiLB team should consider avoiding competitive sport marketplaces. Neither the MiLB team's affiliation to its league nor its MLB parent proved impactful, indicating marketing messages related to these ties will not prove valuable to the MiLB team.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Minor League Baseball is America's most popular minor league sport with more than 42.5 million fans attending games in 2015 (Minor League Baseball, 2015). Despite the large number of fans who attended games in MiLB stadia, the sport's 2015 national television contract consisted of just 10 games on cable television's CBS Sports (CBS Sports Network, 2015). In contrast, America's National Basketball Association (NBA), National Football League (NFL), Major League Baseball (MLB), and National Hockey League (NHL) all have national television contracts including one or more of the national broadcasting networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, and FOX) in addition to extensive major sport cable coverage on ESPN. Similarly, college football and basketball games appear on national broadcasting networks in addition to ESPN.

The amount of broadcast time dedicated to major professional and college sport, minor league sport including MiLB, and other sport leagues shows the cluttered and competitive sport marketplace in which Minor League Baseball attempts to excel. There is a clear need for Minor League teams to separate themselves through effective branding to remove themselves from this clutter.

This Minor League Baseball media deficit may further be reflected in a social image deficit when compared with major professional and college sport. Social image has been defined as "the consumer's perception of the esteem in which the consumer's social group holds the brand. It includes the attributions a consumer makes and a

consumer thinks that others make to the typical user of the brand” (Lassar et al., 1995, p. 13). Lassar, et al. (1995) showed social image predicted brand equity in studies tied to watches and televisions. Researchers have stated people may use products and company brands to construct parts of their identity (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Elliott & Wattanasuwan, 2003). Therefore, if consumers perceive Minor League Baseball teams as less popular or inferior in terms of their social image, then this could have a negative impact on consumer acceptance of these brands. Minor League Baseball professionals would benefit from enhanced knowledge of their brands and brand equity.

Brand equity and social identity play a vital role in business success. Brand equity—the value a logo or brand name adds to a product (Keller, 1993)—has been considered to be of critical importance to both academia and practice (Lassar, Mittal, & Sharma, 1995). Because brand equity benefits include powerful business assets such as price elasticity, brand loyalty, and brand strength in a competitive environment (Keller, 2001), it is important to understand what predicts brand equity in sport business contexts. Social identity—a person’s knowledge of his identity with a social group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979)—has predicted brand equity in both major professional and college sport contexts (Boyle & Magnusson, 2007; Watkins, 2014). Similarly, social image—the esteem a customer and the customer’s group holds for a brand (Lassar, et al., 1995)—has been found to predict brand equity in non-sport contexts. Minor League Baseball professionals would benefit from an understanding of whether social identity and social image predict brand equity.

Strong brand equity would enhance ticket sales which would help increase the resources available to Minor League Baseball teams. Brand loyalty and price elasticity

are two of the benefits of brand equity (Keller, 2001). If Minor League Baseball teams created more loyal fans and had the flexibility to increase their ticket prices, then these increased prices with more repeat business could help them earn more profit and enhance their human and financial resources.

Statement of the Problem

Keller (2001) noted brand equity benefits include brand loyalty and price elasticity. Therefore, if Minor League Baseball teams could identify single-game ticket holders with high fan identification, then they might capitalize on their brand loyalty by moving them to multi-game ticket packages. Similarly, identifying season ticket holders with low identification would provide valuable insight into more at-risk ticket renewals. This would allow Minor League Baseball teams to focus their limited human and financial resources in the proper areas. The purpose of this study is to consider the relationships between social identity and brand equity as well as social image and brand equity in a Minor League Baseball context. In addition, the study will compare differences between social image and brand equity for MiLB, major professional sport, and major college sport.

Analysts have assigned Minor League Baseball teams much lower financial values than their major professional sport team peers. Forbes stated MiLB's top 20 franchises were worth an average \$28 million in 2013 (Smith, 2013). This differs dramatically from the valuations attached to major professional sport teams. Badenhausen (2015) reported the top valued major professional franchises in *Forbes*. *Forbes* valued both the NFL's Dallas Cowboys and MLB's New York Yankees at \$3.2 billion—tied for the top value for an American professional sport team and the second

highest valuation among sport teams worldwide. The top 20 American professional sport teams were worth an average \$2.1 billion dollars. *Forbes* also produces annual valuations of the top major intercollegiate football and basketball programs. *Forbes'* top 20 college football teams ranged from the \$152 million Texas Longhorns to the \$66 million USC Trojans. The top 20 major college football programs had an average value of \$109 million (Smith, 2015a). This meant the top 20 major college football programs were worth more than three times as much as the average Minor League Baseball team. *Forbes* top 20 college basketball programs were worth an average \$25.2 million with the University of Louisville ranked first at \$39.5 million (Smith, 2015b). This means the top 20 Minor League Baseball teams carried a higher value than the top 20 college basketball programs. So while niche sport teams, including MiLB teams, are not generally expected to carry the same valuation as major professional sport teams and major college sport teams, MiLB teams do compete well in terms of valuation with major college basketball teams.

The academic literature provides glimpses into competitive advantages major college sport teams enjoy when compared with minor league sport teams. Fraser (2007) recommended minor league hockey teams avoid markets occupied by NCAA Division I intercollegiate athletics programs. Wann and Branscombe (1993) stated college sport fans are more highly identified with their teams than fans of professional sport teams. Fan identification has been found to predict brand equity (Boyle & Magnusson, 2007; Watkins, 2014), which the advantage college sport enjoys in terms of fan identification is likely carried over to an advantage in terms of brand equity. Minor League Baseball's lack of media coverage makes it more dependent on ticket revenue. Therefore, the best

possible understanding of those ticket buyers is essential. In addition, minor league sport faces possible disadvantages in terms of lower fan identification (Wann & Branscombe, 1993) and its in-market competitiveness with college sport brands (Fraser, 2007). The sections that follow will take a closer look at social identity, brand equity, and social image for an additional understanding of these concepts and their impact on MiLB.

Social Identity

Because social identity has been found to predict brand equity in major college sport contexts (Boyle & Magnusson, 2007) and major professional sport settings (Watkins, 2014), social identity could provide valuable information to Minor League Baseball professionals. Therefore, the first relationship evaluated in this study is the connection between Minor League Baseball sport social identity and Minor League Baseball brand equity. Specifically, this study examines social identity and tests its ability to predict brand equity in Minor League Baseball settings.

Tajfel (1981, p. 255) defined social identity as “that part of the individuals’ self-concept which derives from their knowledge of their membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance of that membership.” Fan identification is a sport specific term for social identification with a sport team, player, league, or domain. Team identification is the term often used for a fan’s social identification with a specific team. In the context of this study, fan identification refers to a fan’s social identification with a team.

Differences in social identification provide information about consumers. Highly identified consumers are more likely to purchase a company’s products (Ahearne, Bhattacharya, & Gruen, 2005), promote a company brand (Ahearne et al., 2005), dismiss

negative information about the company (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003), remain loyal to an unsuccessful team (Wann & Branscombe, 1990), and show greater dislike for outside groups or opposing teams than fans with low social identification (Branscombe & Wann, 1992). The previously noted relationship between social identification and brand equity (Boyle & Magnusson, 2007; Watkins, 2014) in sport settings forms the crux of this study. Minor League Baseball teams could benefit from a better understanding of social identity—gaining valuable information about their consumers based on their level of identification with the team.

Brand Equity

Minor League Baseball practitioners stand to benefit from a better understanding of the predictive ability social identity has on brand equity and the possible revenue implications that this understanding could have on their organization. Similarly, practitioners and researchers may presume social image and team affiliations—such as the relationship between a college team and its conference or a Minor League Baseball team and its league—contribute to brand equity differences between Minor League Baseball, major professional, and major college sport teams. It would be valuable to assess these presumptions with supporting research. Therefore, this study examines these issues.

Keller (1993, p. 2) defined customer-based brand equity as “the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand.” It is brand equity that differentiates a product or service from a generic product. This makes brands and brand equity of critical importance in a competitive sport marketplace. Brand knowledge is comprised of two components—brand awareness and brand image (Keller,

1993). In the absence of brand awareness the consumer will have no brand response—leaving the product or service in a generic state.

Consumers derive additional differential effects through brand image which is comprised of the brand associations a consumer makes with the brand (Keller, 1993). Keller (1993) said a consumer's perception of the brand association's favorability, strength, and uniqueness will determine the differential effect brand knowledge yields for that consumer. More strong, favorable, and unique brand associations strengthen brand equity. Strong brand equity creates seven benefits: (a) Brand loyalty, (b) Less vulnerability to competition, (c) Larger margins, (d) Price elasticity, (e) More trade support, (f) More marketing effectiveness, and (g) Licensing/brand extension opportunities (Keller, 2001). Minor League Baseball teams should maximize brand equity to reap the most of these benefits in a competitive sport marketplace.

Social Image

Sport fans use sport to construct part of their social image. Social image is reflected in a person's pride for a product or service, the manner in which they feel it fits their personality, and the way others perceive this fit. For example, people identify themselves with their favorite team's success by using terms like "we" and wearing team logoed gear (Cialdini, Borden, Thorne, Walker, Freeman, & Sloan, 1976). In addition, social image, like social identity, has been found to predict brand equity (Lassar, et al., 1995). If there are gaps between the brand equity of Minor League Baseball, major professional sport, and major college sport teams, then it is worth examining differences in the relationship between social image and brand equity by these three sport levels.

In the business literature, researchers indicated people use products and company brands to construct parts of their self-identity (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Elliott & Wattanasuwan, 2003). Researchers found social image has a halo effect in its predictive ability of consumer-based brand equity (Lassar et al., 1995). Therefore, differences in social image related to products and brands and the use of those brands in constructing a person's self-identity may be important factors in understanding differences in sport products and services. These social image differences and their impact on brand equity need to be examined in Minor League Baseball sport, major professional sport, and major college sport contexts.

Purpose

This study has two main purposes. The first purpose is to determine how social identity predicts brand equity for Minor League Baseball organizations and, if so, aid Minor League Baseball organizations in focusing their limited resources and maximize revenue. The second purpose is to examine how differences in social image and team affiliations—such as the relationship between a Minor League Baseball team and its Major League Baseball parent organization or a major college team and its university—may contribute to differences in brand equity between Minor League Baseball teams, major professional sport teams, and major college sport teams.

Research Questions

The study will be informed by the following research questions:

RQ1: How does social identity predict brand equity in Minor League Baseball?

RQ2: How does social image differ between Minor League Baseball, major professional sport, and major college sport?

RQ3: What are the differences in the relationship between social image and brand equity for Minor League Baseball, major professional sport, and major college sport?

RQ4: How do league/conference affiliation and major professional team/university affiliation predict brand equity for Minor League Baseball and major college sport?

Study Significance

The fact that Minor League Baseball teams lack the human and financial resources of major college and major professional sport teams does not make them unimportant. As previously noted, the top 20 MiLB teams (Smith, 2013) carry franchise valuations that exceed those of the top 20 college basketball programs (Smith, 2015b). In addition, the value of the top 20 MiLB teams increased from \$22 million to \$28 million in one year, a 27 percent increase (Smith, 2013). 42.5 million people attended MiLB games in 2015 (Minor League Baseball, 2015). In that same year, only MLB's attendance total of 74 million (Brown, 2013) surpassed that of MiLB among America's four major professional sports. The NBA drew more than 21 million fans in 2013 (ESPN, 2013a). The NFL attracted more than 17 million fans (ESPN, 2013b). The NHL attracted fewer than 13 million fans in a shortened 2012-13 season, and more than 21 million in a full-length 2013-14 season (ESPN 2013c, 2014). MiLB annually attracts more than twice as many fans as the NFL and nearly twice as many as the NBA and the NHL. Therefore, MiLB franchises are valuable, growing in value, and culturally significant.

In addition, MiLB teams are an asset to their communities. They provide a quality form of entertainment for families with children as well as adults. MiLB teams traditionally offer fireworks, entertaining promotions, and pair themselves with other community groups to help unite their community. Therefore, the value of MiLB teams can be assessed both in terms of their financial and cultural impact.

This study will have considerable value to Minor League Baseball practitioners. There is tremendous value to any sport marketer or administrator who understands social identity's ability to predict brand equity. High or low social identity can be captured in just a few questions. Minor League Baseball customers with high social identity will also place high brand equity in the brand. Strong brand equity creates brand loyalty, larger margins, and price elasticity among other benefits (Keller, 2001). Therefore, a single-game ticket buyer who is found to display high social identity (or fan identification) with the team is a good target for a multiple-game ticket package or a season ticket—which would increase revenue and attendance. A low identification single-game ticket buyer is not a good target for this type of marketing or selling. A season ticket buyer with high identification is likely to remain a loyal season ticket buyer. A MiLB season ticket holder or multiple-game ticket buyer who is found to have low fan identification is more of a risk to discontinue or decrease his or her investment in the team. Gifis and Sommers (2006) and Gitter and Rhoads (2010) found MiLB fans have an interest in baseball's roots which helps with attendance. MiLB attendance often surges when fireworks and other promotions are added (Paul & Weinbach, 2013). MiLB marketing professionals who utilize social identity data could further enhance attendance beyond these MiLB norms. Therefore, it would be important for the marketing or sales team to begin

implementing a plan to increase the consumer's identification with the team so that revenue is retained.

This study contributes to the literature as well. While scholars may believe social image and team affiliation share a relationship with brand equity, these beliefs have not been shown in a sport context. Similarly, social identity has been found to predict brand equity in major professional sport (Watkins, 2014) and major college sport (Boyle & Magnusson, 2007) contexts, but it has not been evaluated in a minor league sport context. Therefore, it is important to provide evidence of this predictive relationship of social identity with brand equity as well as social image with brand equity in MiLB contexts.

Delimitations

The following delimitations may risk the ability to generalize the results of this study to other contexts:

a. Because Minor League Baseball is the most successful American minor league sport, that sport was specified as the minor league sport used in the sample. Additionally, because there is little television (Fraser, 2007) or mass media coverage of minor league sport, the sample was limited to participants within 20 miles of a MiLB team so they could reasonably be believed to have knowledge about the team. MiLB consumers have been surveyed in the venue. However, that choice would have skewed the sample's fan identification. This could cause researchers to wonder if the results could be applied to non-attendees. However, fans were allowed to select their favorite major professional and major college teams because television and mass media would allow them to remain connected with distant teams. Minor league teams are advised to avoid markets with major college sport programs (Fraser, 2007) and they may similarly avoid major

professional sport team markets. However, some may consider these results less generalizable than those from a study that was tied to teams that shared the same local market.

b. This study is a snapshot. It is a study of people in 2016 with the economic conditions and fan interests that are in place in the American society at this particular point in time. A dramatic economic downturn or change in fan interests could impact the generalizability of this study in future years. A longitudinal approach would allow researchers to assess if social image perceptions or social identity findings change over time as well as whether the relationship between these variables and brand equity change.

c. There are professional sport leagues beyond the “big four” sports. A number of “niche” sports exist that could also be compared against minor league sport. Similarly, there are college sport teams beyond the major power five conferences. However, the decision was made to focus on comparing major professional sport teams and major college sport teams with Minor League Baseball to assess and compare the best version of each level of sport.

Limitations

The following limitations may have impacted this study:

a. Several variables have been examined for their ability to predict brand equity (social identity) or for their relationship with brand equity (social image, team affiliation). However, it is unlikely that these are the only variables that have these relationships.

b. Several variables have been examined for their ability to predict social identity (venue, history, community group experience). However, the literature indicates self-categorization, prototypes, and outgroups may be variables worthy of consideration.

These variables do not appear in the psychology, business, or sport management literature related to social identity and brand equity. However, their effectiveness in measuring social identity and fan identification could be examined in future studies.

c. Social image was found to have a halo effect over other brand equity predictors in a study of watches and televisions (Lassar et al., 1995). However, this halo effect could not be tested in this study due to differences between that study and this one. In a future study of a single minor league team in a single market, the other predictors in the Lassar et al. (1995) study could be included and this halo effect could be assessed in a sport context.

d. The sample includes people who may or may not have attended minor league sport, major professional sport, and major college sport games. The Watkins (2014) study involving the Social Identity-Brand Equity (SIBE) model utilized a sample of social media users of various NBA teams. However, the inclusion of people who have not necessarily attended games may cause some researchers to be concerned the results are not as generalizable as results that include only game attendees.

e. Some may challenge the generalizability of results gathered from an online source like Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). However, the Watkins (2014) study was conducted online with a sample that was identified through social media sources. Less diverse convenience samples featuring college students are commonly used in sport social identity research (Branscombe & Wann, 1994; Wann & Branscombe, 1993; Wann et al., 2008). MTurk samples have been found to be more representative than sampling college students (Berinsky, Huber, & Lenz, 2012; Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). They have also been deemed more cost and time effective than other sampling methods

(Berinsky et al., 2012). MTurk samples have also been found to be more diverse than alternate internet samples (Buhrmester, et. al, 2011).

f. The items measuring team affiliation are new and designed specifically for this study because team affiliations have not previously been assessed in this manner. Therefore, it is possible future studies will find these items do not translate as well to studies designed in another manner or serving another purpose.

Definitions of Terms

Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk)—More than 500,000 workers form the pool of MTurk workers that are often called upon to form academic study samples due to its representativeness, inexpensiveness, and timeliness.

Brand associations—attributes, benefits, and attitudes a consumer associates with a brand that differ in favorability, strength, and uniqueness. These brand associations contribute to brand image and brand equity (Keller, 1993).

Brand awareness—a consumer’s ability to identify a brand under a variety of conditions (Keller, 1993).

Brand knowledge—the combination of brand awareness and brand image that determine brand equity (Keller, 1993).

Brand equity—“the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand” (Keller, 1993, p. 2).

Brand image—brand perceptions reflected by brand associations held in a consumer’s memory (Keller, 1993).

Community group experience—the perceived association between a team and its community (Watkins, 2014, p. 474).

Fan identification— a fan's social identification with a team

History—the players, games, results, stories, and other details that comprise a team's past.

Ingroup—a social group to which a person perceives he or she belongs.

Major college sport—NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision football programs and NCAA Division I basketball programs.

Major professional sport—the top level of North American professional including MLB, NFL, NBA, and NHL teams.

Minor league sport—teams that have a subordinate relationship to major professional sport organizations.

Outgroup—a social group outside the group to which a person belongs that poses potential threats to the ingroup.

Social image—“the consumer's perception of the esteem in which the consumer's social group holds the brand. It includes the attributions a consumer makes and a consumer thinks that others make to the typical user of the brand” (Lassar, et al., 1995, p. 13).

Social identity—“that part of the individuals' self-concept which derives from their knowledge of their membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance of that membership” (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 40).

Team affiliation—a team's connection with other parental organizations such as a school, league, or conference with which it shares a political or governmental bond.

Venue—the facility or place in which a team hosts its home games.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Minor League Baseball organizations have limited human and financial resources when compared against major league sport organizations. Therefore, Minor League Baseball organizations must utilize these limited resources in a wise manner. Similarly, Minor League Baseball teams lack the same revenue earning potential major league sport organizations enjoy. Therefore, it is critical for Minor League Baseball organizations to insure they maximize their revenue-generating potential within the confines of their limited resources. This study will help assess the social identity and brand equity literature to discover how these concepts can contribute to both an explanation of perceptual differences between major professional and Minor League Baseball organizations as well as possible opportunities for MiLB organizations to maximize revenue potential with minimal resource expenditures.

Social Identity

Social identity theory describes the psychology involved in how groups are formed, the dynamics within groups, the forces at work between groups, as well as the way groups impact individual members (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995; Hogg & Terry, 2000; Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Tajfel and Turner (1979, p. 40) defined social identity as consisting of “aspects of an individual’s self-image that derive from the social categories to which he perceives himself belonging.” Tajfel (1981, p. 255) defined social identity as “that part of the individuals’ self-concept which derives from their

knowledge of their membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance of that membership.” Social identity theory is closely related to identity theory which is also explained within this literature review for comparative purposes (Hogg et al., 1995; Stets & Burke, 2000).

Social identity was considered in three different ways for purposes of this literature review. First, works penned by the major social identity theorists from psychology and business were examined to identify major themes. Second, the social identity work of sport researchers was examined to identify major themes. Third, business and sport specific identification scales were examined. This combination of literature provides a valuable picture of social identity as well as its related and spinoff topics that will inform this study.

Major Theorists

An examination of social identity theory begins with consideration of the work developed by seminal writers Tajfel and Turner. Tajfel and Turner (1979) identified three assumptions and related principles that form the basis of social identification. First, members must wish to build their self-esteem and desire an improved self-concept. Second, values must be assigned to social groups that lead people to evaluate the positive or negative value of another person’s social identity based on the assessor’s own social identity. People wish to see their ingroup positively differentiated from outgroups. Much of social identity theory is based on the manner in which people perceive their group (the ingroup) and how those in another group (the outgroup). An ingroup is the group with whom a person associates and from which they derive identity. An outgroup is a group that resides outside the ingroup and is directly comparable with the ingroup.

Third, people assess the value of their own social group on a comparative basis with other social groups. People assess their social group's prestige as high or low depending on the positive or negative result of their social group evaluation. When an ingroup is rated as underperforming against an outgroup, people may work to improve the ingroup or depart to establish ties to a more favorable social group.

Tajfel (1982) said identification is comprised of two components: (a) a cognitive component and (b) an evaluative component. The cognitive component involves a person having the knowledge that they are a group member. The evaluative component involves the knowledge that certain values are related with this group membership. Tajfel indicated a third, non-essential component is closely associated with the two essential components. This third component is emotional investment. Tajfel stated people may emotionally invest in their group membership awareness and evaluations.

For social group identification to occur, Tajfel (1982) posits groups must be present and identification with a group must occur. This places the person within the group with which it identifies. Therefore, group identification is a necessary component in assessments of ingroups and outgroups. If someone identifies that he or she is a fan of the New York Yankees, then that person has fulfilled the cognitive component of New York Yankees group identification. If that person realizes the Yankees share a rivalry with an outgroup known as the Boston Red Sox, then that person is fulfilling the evaluative component of identification. If the fan becomes emotional about being a Yankees fan and/or in their dislike for outgroup Boston Red Sox fans, then the third associated component of group involvement has been fulfilled. The ingroup must continue to perform in a manner that matches group member expectations and/or be

defendable by the group, or a person may decide to leave the group although these group changes are often challenging (Tajfel 1982).

This brief introduction provides a base of understanding that is important in considering the subtopics that follow. These subtopics provide a more in-depth examination of the various themes that emerge from social identity theory literature. A comparison and contrast with identity theory, with which social identity shares a great deal of similarity as well as important distinctions, begins this more in-depth topical analysis.

Social identity theory and identity theory. Hogg et al. (1995) compared and contrasted social identity theory with identity theory. They defined identity theory as theory that explains a person's role-related behavior. According to identity theory, one's social self is a derivation of the roles the person holds. Someone may be a father, a banker, and a Yankees fan. These would be just three of the role identities this person holds. These distinct components of the self are role identities. The social self is the product of the combination of these role identities. Roles can vary greatly in terms of their salience as defined by the person who holds them. For example, a person may identify more strongly as a father and emphasize that role more than he emphasizes his role as a Yankees fan. Hogg et al. posited the successful performance of a role identity validates a person's ability to hold that role. Success in a role can build self-esteem. Therefore, a Yankees fan can build self-esteem by successfully performing the role of fan. However, while an individual must assume his or her role identity, others can cause the role performer to question his or her self-worth with feedback concerning unsatisfactory role performance. A bandwagon fan, for example, may have his or her

fanship questioned for becoming a fan when it is convenient due to recent team success. Long-time fans may, as a result, question the sincerity of this newfound role assumption. While role identity in the work place should lead a person to fulfill a certain work role, there are occasions that may lead someone to depart from his or her role identity. If a parent receives a call from a child, then the mother or father role may be assumed even though that is not the role congruent with an individual's presence in the office. Similarly, a Yankees fan may turn off the game to tend to a child. Therefore, situational circumstances can override the standard identity salience and lead to a temporary departure from traditional roles.

Hogg et al. (1995) emphasized the fact that identity theory deals with individual roles while social identity theory deals with intergroup relations, group processes, and the social self. Hogg et al. (1995) made suggestions that identity roles could be inserted into social identity theory. The researchers suggested distinct identities within the group (subgroup leader, subgroup member) could satisfy possible desires for personal identity or intragroup differentiation. Hogg and Terry (2000) stated people have multiple identities they deal with simultaneously. These identities can include identity based on their gender, age, or nationality. However, Hogg and Terry indicate a person's professional or organizational identity can be stronger than those more natural identities. These varied roles can come into conflict.

In accordance with social identity theory, a fan could identify the differences between the Yankees and Red Sox, identify more closely with Yankees fans, and behave in accordance with Yankees fan group processes. Social identity theory involves a person belonging to a social category that provides definition to members in terms of

defining characteristics of the category. That self-definition by group and its associated characteristics becomes part of a person's self-concept. Both social identity theory and identity theory work to explain how socially constructed individuals mediate the relationship between their behavior and the structure they encounter in society. Both theories involve a type of self-definition. In social identity theory, the terms self-identification and self-categorization are given to this process. In identity theory, the terms labeling or naming are applied (Hogg et al., 1995).

Stets and Burke (2000) also compared social identity theory with identity theory. They stated the differences between the two theories rested more in the emphasis of particular theory elements than in content. They indicated social identity theory and identity theory are linked in three ways. First, there are points of similarity and commonality in terms of conceptualization. Categories or groups are central to social identity theory. Roles are central to identity theory. In both theories, the self becomes an object that is classified, named, and categorized with social categories. The second link appears in the form of identity activation and the concept of salience, which is seen in both theories. The third link appears in the form of core processes resulting from identity activation. These appear in the form of cognitive depersonalization and motivational self-esteem processes in social identity theory. Depersonalization is detailed in an upcoming section that examines identity elements focused on the self.

Stets and Burke (2000) also expounded on the manner in which social identity and role identity (identity theory) can interact. They use the example of a wife, who holds the identity role of wife and social identity role as part of a family. Likewise, a teacher holds a specific professional role in identity theory as well as a social identity as a

member of the larger school membership. Stets and Burke (2000) indicated it can become challenging to untangle some of these role identities without simultaneously eliminating the social identity with which the identity relates. They finished by calling for a merger of the two theories, which mimics the statement by Hogg et al. (1995) that identity theory could be rolled into social identity theory.

Social identity theory and identity theory share a great deal of similarity. Therefore, a thorough examination of identification literature should include consideration of social identity theory with an acknowledgement of identity theory concepts. The fact that major theorists have called for a merger of the two theories indicates the degree to which they reflect similar notions.

The self, the group, and group behaviors. As previously noted, Tajfel and Turner (1979) identified a set of three sets of assumptions that form the basis of social identification. These three assumptions will serve as the general basis for organizing the social identity literature. First, identification elements focused on the self will be examined. Second, identification elements related to the group will be examined. Third, intergroup and intragroup behavior will be examined. These topics are complex and, often, interrelated.

Identity elements focused on the self. The elements of identity based on the self consider those elements people utilize to determine their social self as well as their response to the social environment. Tajfel (1982) said people make judgments based on categorization. Tajfel and Turner (1979) defined social categorizations as cognitive tools that facilitate an individual's social action by dividing, defining, and ordering the social environment. This social categorization, according to Tajfel and Turner (1979),

establishes a person's point of societal self-reference as it establishes a person's place in society. Tajfel (1982) cited studies that indicate people assume they will share similarities with their ingroup members and have differences with outgroup members or people who are not associated with a group. Over time, people categorized within a group minimize ingroup differences and the differences that exist between groups tends to intensify.

Tajfel and Turner (1979) indicated the resulting social identification allows a group member to comparatively reference himself or herself as better, or worse, than members of other groups. Self-categorization and self-esteem are two of the reoccurring themes that appear in the literature tied to the individual component of identification theories.

Tajfel and Turner (1979) indicated there are no visitation or participation requirements in place that qualify an individual as a group member. The critical issue involved in group qualification is people believe they belong to the group and are identified by others as group members. In addition to the belief, they share a common social category; group members share emotional ties related to this commonality and share similarities in their assessment of the group and their role in it.

Based on Tajfel's (1978) definition of self-identity, Ellemers, Kortekaas, and Ouwerkerk (1999) found self-identity was comprised of three components: (a) a cognitive component, (b) an evaluative component, and (c) an emotional component. Ellemers et al. (1999) identified self-categorization as the cognitive component. They defined self-categorization as a person's awareness of their group membership. Ellemers et al. (1999) identified group self-esteem as the evaluative component. The researchers defined group self-esteem as the valuation, positive or negative, an individual places on his or her membership. They identified affective commitment as the emotional

component. Affective commitment was defined as an individual's emotional association with the group. Despite this assertion that self-identity is comprised of three components, the researchers note self-identity is predominantly measured as a unidimensional construct (Ellemers et al., 1999).

Ellemers et al. (1999) were able to empirically show self-categorization, self-esteem, and affective commitment were distinct constructs of social identification. The researchers also demonstrated relative ingroup size, relative ingroup status, and group formation criterion (assigned versus achieved) each affected social identification. They then felt it was important to illustrate the relationship between the three social identification constructs and ingroup favoritism. The researchers manipulated ingroup size and group formation criterion to find only a group's size affected self-categorization. Group status was the only variable that affected group self-esteem. Affective commitment was influenced by both group formation criterion and group status. This shows identity and ingroup favoritism is influenced by more than one construct. It also provides guidance on constructs that affect self-categorization, self-esteem, and affective commitment. Ellemers and Hogg are among the researchers that advanced social identity theory in this manner.

Hogg et al. (1995) noted two sociocognitive processes tied to social identity theory. First, categorization creates distinctions between groups that help people's group alignments. The University of Michigan football program may distinguished as a national power with a winning history and major conference affiliation whereas Western Michigan University may be seen as a "mid major" football program that wins less often than Michigan and does not enjoy the same national reputation. Second, self-

enhancement leads members to favor the ingroup. This is because people want to see themselves and the group with which they associate as positive. Michigan fans may rally around this tradition of winning, the national status, and the major conference affiliation to feel good about themselves.

Hogg and Terry (2000) indicated social psychologists have moved past an emphasis on examining small groups, the structure of these groups, and the interaction within these groups. More recently, social psychologists have focused on issues related to self-concept. Hogg and Terry explained this self-concept emerges from the manner in which people define themselves in reference to their group membership as well as how group socialization leads to group behavior. They cited development in social identity theory and self-categorization theory as major contributors to these changes.

Hogg (2001) stated the human need for self-esteem plays a major role in how people evaluate their social identity and the distinctiveness of groups. Hogg (2001) asserted social identification and group behavior are motivated by self-esteem. In turn, Hogg stated, the need for self-esteem is satisfied by social identification. Because depersonalization and assimilation to the group plays a major role in social identity, depersonalization and a person's emphasis on belonging to the group must be examined.

Depersonalization and a membership emphasis in one's consideration of social identity aligns well with the Ellemers et al. (1999) view of social identity. Bergami and Bagozzi (2000) define organizational identity as a form of social identity in which people view themselves as part of an organization. They explain people become depersonalized the more they identify with the organization. However, they criticize research (Simon, 1947; Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994) that integrates the state of self-categorization

with an organization with the process of personal assimilating with organizational attributes. In other words, Bergami and Bagozzi (2000) asserted a person can identify and categorize an organization's attributes without needing to fully assimilate those attributes. They considered the ability to categorize an organization's attributes a distinct concept from one's willingness to assimilate with those attributes. They asserted a person's willingness to assimilate organizational attributes with their personal attributes helps determine one's desire to self-categorize with an organization. In other words, when a person begins wearing a New York Yankees cap and jersey that is most likely a sign someone desires to be known as a Yankees fan.

Stets and Burke (2000) defined depersonalization as seeing oneself not as an individual with unique qualities, but rather as an ingroup prototype. The researchers indicate depersonalization has two aspects. First, a person identifies with a category. Second, a person identifies with a set of behaviors tied to the category. Similar concepts appear in the form of cognitive self-verification and motivational self-efficacy processes in identity theory. Self-verification is the process of seeing oneself as an idealized representation of the role norm. Excellent performance in a role leads to enhanced feelings of self-efficacy. Stets and Burke (2000) concede this distinction between social identity theory, which leads people to become less individualized and more at one with the group, and identity theory, which presses individuals to assume a specific role within a group, is important.

Stets and Burke (2000) stated identity commitment, rooted in identity theory, has two aspects. The first identity commitment aspect is quantitative. The quantitative aspect manifests itself in terms of the number of people with whom one is linked based

on identity. The second identity theory aspect is qualitative. The qualitative aspect manifests itself in the form of the strength and depth of identity ties. This means identity commitment is based on the number of people their role connects them with and the strength of those connections. A person activates their role identity when the right people are around and the strength of the connection merits activation. As we will see, people not only identify with groups and roles, but also with businesses.

The business-related social identification literature indicates business plays a role in how people construct their social identity. Elliott and Wattanasuwan (2003) and Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) indicated people use products and company brands to help construct their social identity. Elliott and Wattanasuwan (2003) asserted people use symbolic materials to construct the story of who they are. People make purchase decisions based on product utility and symbolic meaning. The symbolic meaning of purchases helps create a narrative about a person. The researchers assert you are what you own. They stated people may make purchases either to say something about who they are or to say something about those with whom they would wish to associate. People may purchase the same item with differing intentions tied to the symbolic meanings they wish to send. The researchers indicate many of these meanings are created through advertising. They indicated culture informs advertising, which informs culture. Therefore, they posited, self-identity must be validated through a person's social interaction. The researchers indicated products, services, and media consumption all contribute to a person's self-identification.

Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) indicated consumers identify with companies that satisfy one or more needs that fit their self-identity. Consumer-company identification

can generate positive company-related behaviors. However, consumer-company identification can also generate negative company-related behaviors. Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) proposed a company's core values and demographic characteristics are critical to generating consumer-company identification. Demographic characteristics include industry, size, age, market position, country of origin, location, and leadership profile. Consumers are attracted to companies that hold a place of prestige and share a similar identity and similar traits of distinctiveness with the consumers.

Identity elements related to the group. The identification elements related to the group comprise a major section of any review of the social identity theory. There are a variety of topics that must be considered within this section. First, group members make comparisons between groups to determine which groups will be a part of their overall social identity (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Stets & Burke, 2000). A deeper examination of ingroups and outgroups will continue in the next major section focused on intergroup and intragroup behavior. However, the concept is introduced here to begin a basic understanding of group concepts. Second, prototypes and leadership elements are an important group theme in social identity literature (Hogg & Terry, 2000; Hogg, 2001; Stets & Burke, 2000). Positive dispositions and attractiveness is a third reoccurring group theme in the social identity literature (Ellemers et al., 1999; Ahearne, Bhattacharya, & Gruen, 2005; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). Finally, groups can face a number of challenges. These group challenges form a theme that reoccurs in the social identity literature (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Hogg & Terry, 2000; Stets & Burke, 2000; Ellemers et al., 1999).

Tajfel (1982) reviewed a number of ingroup and outgroup behavior studies related to ethnocentrism. Tajfel and Turner (1979) indicate the most basic and reliable finding in studies is ingroup favoritism and outgroup discrimination. Tajfel (1982) indicates, even when there is no real cause for competition between groups, group members will tend to demonstrate ingroup favoritism. He found people have a need to make their group distinct. This further leads people to build a positive social identity for the group. The quality of this positive social identity is then assessed when the ingroup is compared with outgroups.

Ellemers et al. (1999) indicated a person's disposition toward social group membership behavior is a result of the strength of a person's social identification with the group. Therefore, Ellemers et al. (1999) identified the value of the emotional affective commitment component of social identity as a research tool. They cited several examples of researchers observing differences in responses from the same social group based on an individual's degree of social identification, including sport psychology researchers Branscombe and Wann (1994) among their examples. The Branscombe and Wann (1994) example involved a threat to Americans' social identity provoked by viewing film clips showing an American boxer fighting a Russian boxer. Highly identified Americans were more apt to engage in derogation than those with lower identification.

In organizational contexts, one of the positives Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) noted concerning consumers who highly identify with a company is their tolerance of negative information. Highly identified consumers are more likely to brush away negative information. However, the researchers noted that should that negative information cross tolerable levels, highly identified consumers are more likely to recall

this bad experience with the company. Therefore, the high identification of the consumer can work against the company as the customer retains a longer memory of the negative outcome.

Ahearne et al. (2005) stated three factors determine customer-company identification: (a) company attractiveness, (b) what relevant influencers think about the organization, and (c) company interaction from salespeople and other external actors. However, the authors stressed the importance of the following variables on customer-company identification: the importance of the product or service; the ability to make clear comparisons; frequent interaction between the company and the consumer, and frequent use of the product or service by the consumer. Highly identified customers show strong support for the company in terms of both their purchases as well as their ability to take on addition roles that promote the company.

Ellemers et al. (1999), Bhattacharya and Sen (2003), and Ahearne et al. (2005) tell the same story. There are differences between people who highly identify with a product or a company and those who fall into the low identification category. Those who are more highly identified and feel better about the product or company are more likely to retain information, more quickly forgive negative news, repeat purchases, promote the company, and behave in other ways that support the product or company.

The researchers indicate groups both cause and face special challenges. For example, Tajfel and Turner (1979) assert it can be challenging for people to move from one group to another. This can even be the case when someone desperately wants to make such a move. One example they cited is of people within an underprivileged or stigmatized group attempting to move from one part of society to another. On many

occasions, subordinate groups accept the social evaluation of themselves as inferior. The people in these groups are capable of self-derogation. Tajfel and Turner (1979) noted one challenge people face in leaving their current group is a feeling of betrayal attached to exiting the current group in favor of another one. They say people are often attacked when they decide to make such moves. They may be considered traitors.

There are more examples of group challenges. Ellemers et al. (1999) implied group experiments related to social identity can yield artificial and, perhaps, invalid results. The researchers said dividing people into groups within the confines of a limited experimental setting may leave their new group reference as one of the sole points of reference they have. Therefore, this could inflate the meaning or value individuals assign to this group. In a more natural human environment with the group more dispersed, people may not feel the same relationship with the group. Therefore, the experimental setting may record a type of individual behavior tied to a group that may not occur in more natural environmental settings.

Hogg and Terry (2000) stated the farther someone within the group differs from the group prototype, the more they take on the role of a deviant. This can lead to the person being rejected by the ingroup. Deviants who are allowed to remain within the ingroup, possibly exemplifying certain outgroup attributes, introduce uncertainty. As previously stated, one of the reasons people join a group is to reduce their social uncertainty. Overachievers can be deemed as unwanted deviants from the group norms. They stated the overachiever may actually be doing an incredibly good job of exemplifying the attributes the group claims to seek from the prototype. However, the strength of the overachiever's accomplishments may vary enough from group norms that

they cause problems by straining group solidarity. The researchers indicated overachievers who suffer a setback in their accomplishments may be treated harshly by group members. Overachievers who manage to associate their accomplishments with the group rather than themselves or who overachieve in moderation may continue to enjoy favorable status in the group, according to Hogg and Terry (2000).

Stets and Burke (2000) stated negotiation becomes important in identity theory as people perform their roles in settings where interests sometimes compete. In social identity theory, strong forms of social identification lead to groupthink in which everyone thinks in the same way. The groupthink concept stands in contrast with the identity theory and its distinct roles, negotiations, and competing elements. Rather than emphasizing similarity of the social group as social identity theory does, identity theory emphasizes individuality and interrelatedness within the social structure.

As outlined above, a number of group challenges were identified. Tajfel and Turner (1979) noted it can be challenging to leave a group. Ellemers et al. (1999) indicated fabricated groups may not behave in ways that keep with social identity theory. Hogg and Terry (2000) posited deviants can be problematic. Stets and Burke (2000) explained groupthink can become a problem in strong groups. Therefore, researchers should be aware of these potential problems when assessing groups and group members.

Intergroup and intragroup behavior. With the role of the self and the role of the group understood, it is important to more deeply consider the dynamics that occur when individuals compare the ingroup with outgroups. It is also important to consider how groups interact with one another and the interaction within the group itself. These intergroup behaviors between the ingroup and outgroup, as well as intragroup behaviors,

have received a great deal of attention in the literature (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Ellemers et al., 1999; Hogg & Terry, 2000; Stets & Burke, 2000; Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Tajfel and Turner (1979) defined intergroup behavior as actions directed at one or more people who belong to one social group conducted by one or multiple participants who identify themselves with a different social group. Researchers (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Tajfel, 1982) explained intergroup conflict is often driven by groups competing over prized resources. Tajfel (1982) specifically referenced groups competing to win a contest, something that clearly has direct application to sport. Competition for higher rank, greater prestige, and improved status can generate intergroup conflict. Tajfel and Turner (1979) stated this conflict can also incite antagonism. More intense intergroup conflicts lead people to act in a manner that represents group characteristics rather than their own personal characteristics. Competitive behavior between groups is very easy to ignite. Social group differentiation is intended to help the ingroup identify dimensions of superiority over an outgroup.

Tajfel and Turner (1979) cited three variable classes that influence intergroup discrimination: (a) An individual's self-concept must partially be defined by the internalization of his or her group membership. (b) An individual must have the opportunity to make intergroup comparisons based on relevant group attributes within the context of a social situation. (c) An individual compares the ingroup with only some outgroups. They noted the purpose for noting these differences is to maintain the superiority of the ingroup.

Tajfel (1982) noted a pair of key characteristics of intergroup behavior. First, a group can be assessed in terms of the uniformity of its behavior and attitudes regarding an outgroup. Second, groups can be assessed in terms of their depersonalization of outgroup members, uniting them as a stereotype. Tajfel (1982) noted four antecedents for these characteristics. First, a perception of illegitimacy and instability exists regarding the social differentials in status, power, and access to resources. Status refers to rank and power refers to influence. Second, there are intergroup conflicts that are unrelated to the previous differences in status between the two groups. Third, social group change movements are not always related to “impermeable boundaries” between the two groups. Fourth, patterns of prejudice exist.

Tajfel (1982) provided evidence that social groups compete harder than individuals in defending their interests. The strength in numbers lends itself to increased willingness to engage in acts of aggression or retaliation. Tajfel explained there is correlation between ingroup peace and outgroup hostility. However, studies differ. In one African study, group members indicated favorable feelings about their ingroups without holding negative views of the outgroup (Tajfel, 1982). In an Indonesian study, ingroup favoritism was accompanied by outgroup discrimination (Tajfel, 1982). The United States and New Zealand have battled issues tied to minority groups struggling with ingroup devaluation (Tajfel, 1982). These are all examples of individuals identifying with a group, placing value on the group identity, and reacting to the social identification they have as a result of their group membership.

Ellemers et al. (1999) also considered intergroup and intragroup behavior. They presented insight that minority groups were often assessed against majority groups based

on a combination of status and size. However, when the size component was isolated, minority groups often compared favorably against majority groups. The researchers asserted this is due to the value social group members place on the distinctiveness of minority group membership. Bergami and Bagozzi (2000) found ingroup member treatment is a result of how group members feel about self-categorization with the group and how they evaluate that self-categorization. The authors emphasized people more strongly identify with organizations that are both powerful and caring.

Stets and Burke (2000) provided an identity theory perspective on group behavior. They indicated that in identity theory, the activation of one's role provides self-verification that the individual has assumed his or her position as the depersonalized occupant of the role. In social identity, people attempt to find similarity with the ingroup and also recognize points of difference between the ingroup and the outgroup opposition. They attempt to identify points of similarity within the outgroup that form these distinctions. This can manifest itself in terms of stereotyping, ethnocentrism, collective action, and other forms.

Hogg and Terry (2000) indicated subgroups often resisted efforts to dissolve the subgroup for the betterment of melding into the larger group. Subgroup members see these assimilation efforts as attacks on their identity. Thus, the larger group behavior is now a threat to their subgroup identity. Some people wish to identify with the large group, but also feel distinct within that group by participating in subgroup membership. They would, therefore, prefer not to have to choose one at the expense of the other. An example is a group of employees within a department who feel solidarity both to the department and to the organization as a whole. In these situations, Hogg and Terry

(2000) recommended group leaders recognize both the importance of the group and the subgroup rather than forcing members to choose between them.

Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) asserted more highly identified consumers have greater company loyalty. Company loyalty increases ingroup conflict with outgroups (in this case, other companies offering similar products or services). This leads to outgroup derogation. The researchers also project highly identified consumers will be more likely to both promote the company and recruit new customers to the company.

Measuring organizational and consumer-company identification. An examination of scales utilized in research can provide valuable insights regarding the variables researchers deem important. In addition, it can show important connections between these variables. Therefore, a pair of scales related to business social identity were examined.

Bergami and Bagozzi (2000) developed a scale to measure organizational identification. The model built on the research of Ellemers et al. (1999), utilizing organizational identification (based on Ellemers et al.'s self-categorization), affective commitment, and organization-based self-esteem as three dimensions of social identity. The model features three antecedents that lead to social identity. Those antecedents are organization prestige, organization stereotypes (powerful), and organization stereotypes (caring/participative). These three antecedents predict the cognitive organizational identification which, in turn, predicts affective commitment (joy), affective commitment (love) and organization-based self-esteem. Affective commitment (joy), affective commitment (love) and organization-based self-esteem then predict several citizenship behaviors. Affective commitment (joy) predicts altruism and civic virtue. Affective

commitment (love) predicts sportsmanship. Organization-based self-esteem predicts conscientiousness and courtesy. All paths proved statistically significant.

Another important framework was more consumer-based rather than organizational based. Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) worked to create a consumer-company identification framework. The researchers drew from social identity and organizational identification theory to build the model. The researchers stated their goals were to illustrate the conditions that would lead consumers to identify with a company as well as to understand the bases and consequences of consumer-company identification. Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) clarified consumer-company identification is not the same as brand identification. Corporate image, corporate reputation, and corporate associations are components of corporate identification. In contrast, one company or corporation can produce many brands—each with its own image, reputation, and image.

The Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) conceptual framework for consumer-company identification begins with company identity which is moderated by identity knowledge and identity coherence. Company identity then predicts identity similarity (with the consumer), identity distinctiveness (in terms of traits consumers value), and identity prestige. Identity similarity, identity distinctiveness, and identity prestige are interconnected identity related judgments with one another in all directions and looped. One path emerges from the combination of these three mediators which is moderated by identity trustworthiness in its route to identity attractiveness. The path between identity attractiveness serving as a predictor of consumer-company identification is moderated by both identity salience and embeddedness (which moderates both the path and identity salience). Consumer-company identification then predicts company loyalty, company

promotion, customer recruitment, resilience to negative information, and a stronger claim to the company. This study was important because consumer-company identification is similar to fan identification with a sport company. The fact that consumer-company identification predicts loyalty, word of mouth and recruitment, and resilience to negative information sounds a lot like identification predicts the consequences as brand equity as we will see later herein. The next section examines a pair of instruments sport researchers have created to examine identification.

This section shows a common theme. Once people have identified with a group in strong numbers and depersonalized, they assess the ingroup against other groups and will act to build and protect the image of the group. This can take a negative shape in the form of stereotyping, derogation, and other behaviors. However, minority groups can also have appeal if they are seen as both powerful and caring (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000).

Social Identity in Sport Contexts

Wann and Branscombe have separated themselves as the seminal writers on the topic of sport and social identity. Whether working in combination (Wann & Branscombe, 1990, 1993) or separately, Wann (Branscombe & Wann, 1991, 1992; Wann & Grieve, 2005; Wann & Pierce, 2005; Wann & Weaver, 2009; Wann, Hamlet, Wilson, & Hodges, 1995; Wann, Royalty, & Roberts, 2000) and Branscombe (Reyson & Branscombe, 2010; Reyson, Snider, & Branscombe, 2012) are prolific and well cited on this topic. Therefore, their work serves as the base upon which the examination of sport and social identity is built. The topics in this area have different names (e.g., social identification, team identification, fan identification), but they all refer to the same

topic—the influence identification has on sport consumer decisions. This section examines the literature combining sport with these various forms of identification.

Branscombe and Wann (1991) used the term team identification in reference to a person's connection with a sport team. However, they indicated this connection with the sport team also provides a person a connection with the larger social structure. In addition, they stated a person's identification with a sport team creates a sense of societal belongingness. They specifically indicated sport serves an important role by integrating detached people into society. Therefore, team identification is a specific form of social identification. Wann and Pierce (2005) defined sport team identification as the degree of psychological connection a fan feels with a team or a player. Two of the more popular psychological sport findings related to social identity are BIRGing and CORFing.

BIRGing and CORFing. In a seminal study, Cialdini, Borden, Thorne, Walker, Freeman, and Sloan (1976) asked professors at seven universities to monitor student behavior following football games to assess the attire college students wore after football games. Their belief was students would demonstrate their social identification with the football program following football team victories by showing their team identification by wearing university or team branded attire. Cialdini et al. (1976) termed this and similar behaviors associated with demonstrating team identification following a victory as “Basking in Reflected Glory” or “BIRGing.” The researchers made several important observations related to student behavior following football team victories. First, the college students did wear university and team branded merchandise following football wins as the researchers had anticipated. Second, college students referred to fans of the team, or ingroup members, as “we” more after wins than after losses. Third, the college

students tended to refer to the football team as “they” following losses. In future studies, this behavior would earn the name “Cutting Off Reflected Failure” or “CORFing” from Snyder (Snyder, Higgins & Stucky, 1983; Snyder, Lassegard, & Ford, 1986). CORFing (Snyder et al., 1986) refers to a fan’s desire to create separation between himself or herself and his/her favorite team. When a team loses, a fan engages in CORFing by indicating “they” lost. The fan may discontinue wearing team attire for a period of time. Finally, college students tended to use “we” more often when their team identification was threatened in some manner. The researchers also indicated a person transmitting information someone favors is better liked than one transmitting negative information. The studies of BIRGing and CORFing would continue with the work of Wann and Branscombe.

Wann and Branscombe (1990) echoed the Snyder et al. (1986) view that BIRGing and CORFing serve as forms of self-identity maintenance. CORFing, Wann and Branscombe (1990) asserted, allows people to ward off potential threats in the form of removing lower level associations they share with less successful groups. Because group membership makes up a part of a person’s identification, cutting ties with groups that threaten a person’s identity can improve that person’s self-esteem. Therefore, the lack of success by a team can threaten the group cohesion associated with that group as some lower identified members either leave the group or consider departure. Wann and Branscombe (1990) tested the impact fan identification has on BIRGing and CORFING. Because a fan’s high identification with a team shows a strong bond with the team, Wann and Branscombe (1990) believed a fan would be more likely to engage in BIRGing and less likely to engage in CORFing if he/she shared high identification with the team. They

cited the example of the many loyal fans of the Chicago Cubs who continue to back the team despite decades without a World Series championship. This likelihood of highly identified fans to remain loyal to the team despite a lack of success (and maintain a high reluctance to engage in CORFing behavior) proved to be correct in the study. In contrast, fans who showed low or moderate identification with a team proved more willing to engage in CORFing and less apt to participate in acts of BIRGing such as wearing team-related apparel after a win. This study would be criticized in a study by Wann et al. (1995).

Wann et al. (1995) asserted the Wann and Branscombe (1990) study asked subjects to report their enjoyment following a loss. However, the Wann et al. (1995) study sought to incorporate a behavioral group association measure in an effort to separate highly identified group members as those who would be reluctant to engage in CORFing following team failure. The researchers presumed those who shared lower identification with the team would be more likely to engage in CORFing behavior following failure. Wann et al. (1995) also showed evidence of a phenomenon they dubbed COFFing. COFFing, or cutting off future failure, occurs when a group is successful but opts not to reveal its superior group status in the event the group fails to repeat that success in future competitions.

These studies extend the literature in important ways. First, the Cialdini et al. (1976) study was among the first important studies that showed sport has elements that require study such as the unique qualities of fan identification. Second, these important behaviors were identified, defined, and named. Third, the breakdown of BIRGing and CORFing behavior between highly identified and lower identified fans provided an early

example of the value derived from dividing fans by their degree of dedication to a group. That concept of dividing fan identification between high and low identified fans emerged from the work of Wann and Branscombe (1993) described in the next section.

Sport identity findings. Branscombe and Wann (1991) posited team identification was replacing more traditional parts of our social structure. They indicated American attachments to family and community were weakening. A sport consumer's team identification was filling that void in the American social structure. They reported 70% of Americans watch or read about sports each day. Accordingly, Branscombe and Wann studied several effects of team identification. They examined whether team identification could buffer the negative human feelings of depression and alienation. In addition, they examined whether team identification could enhance positive human feelings of belongingness and self-worth. They found team identification shared a statistically significant and positive relationship with self-esteem and positive feelings. Team identification also shared a statistically significant inverse relationship with negative feelings, perceived alienation, and depression. However, team identification did not share a statistically significant relationship with anxiety or social desirability. Finally, Branscombe and Wann (1991) found team record over a five-year period was largely unrelated with team identification. The study is important because it provides an example of researchers taking the new concept of team identification and seeking to explore how many things that concept can explain. Wann and Branscombe didn't stop there.

In their most cited article regarding sport and identification, Wann and Branscombe (1993) examined four categories of consumer response: (a) team

involvement, (b) team accomplishment attributions, (c) time and money invested in team activities, and (d) degree of specialness and bonding felt among fans. They posited highly identified fans would pay more for products and services and wait in longer lines for tickets. They also stated college fans are the most highly identified sport fans.

Wann and Branscombe (1993) performed a factor analysis to create an instrument that measures team identification, and all items loaded on a single factor. The team identification instrument obtained a very respectable Cronbach's alpha of .91. It accounted for 66.3% of the variability. They then divided fans into high, medium, and low identification groups. They assessed four components of fan commitment based on team identification levels: (a) length and extent of team involvement, (b) feelings about the team's outlook, (c) money and time dedicated to the team, and (d) extent to which fans perceive other fans as special. These levels of commitment differed in a statistically significant manner based on level of team identification.

Fisher and Wakefield (1998) assessed possible differences in team identification that exist between fans of winning teams and fans of losing minor league hockey teams. They found fans of successful teams considered the performance of the team to be the most important factor in their team identification. Fans of unsuccessful teams did not indicate a statistically significant relationship between their team identification and team performance. Fans who identified with unsuccessful teams considered their team identification was most directly related to their identity to the domain or sport. The authors reported highly identified fans of both successful and unsuccessful teams consumed more of their team's offerings. Fans identifying with successful teams and unsuccessful teams showed similar interest in demonstrating team support through a

variety of behaviors. Those behaviors included cheering or bringing signs to games, purchasing licensed merchandise, and attending games. While some of these findings merely supported the findings in the Wann and Branscombe (1993), others such as the fan behavioral aspects extended the research. The study utilized structural equation modeling to determine whether group identification specifically predicted attendance, purchases of licensed goods, and game behaviors. It did not attempt to predict brand equity.

Wann et al. (2000) took a different approach to examining team identification. The researchers investigated the effects of self-esteem on a person's willingness to reveal his or her team identification as well as the speed with which he or she made this revelation. Low self-esteem individuals were more reluctant to share their team identification with fans of rival teams. The researchers believed this choice was made by low self-esteem individuals so they could avoid ridicule. Low identification fans consider their status as a team supporter to be a peripheral component of their overall self-concept. However, highly identified fans consider their team identification to be a more important part of their self-concept. The study found highly identified fans were much more likely to reveal their association with a team to a rival fan than high self-esteem fans. This study is important because it makes distinctions between the behavior of fans based on identification as opposed to self-esteem.

Location-related sport topics. Location is another factor that has been found to influence social behavior in sport. Fisher (1998) examined consumption based on team identification. He found that a shared geography is important to team identification. People are more likely to support players from their home because they feel they are

connected through the community. Fisher (1998) stated it is critical for marketing professionals to emphasize the similarities between fans and the team.

Wann and Grieve (2005) found ingroup bias was greater for home games than road games. The highest level of bias was found in highly identified fans attending home wins. This seems to demonstrate pride in place and defense of the home turf. The researchers were surprised to learn fans felt more ingroup bias after a victory than after a defeat. They had believed the amount of outgroup bias would increase after a loss, also fueling greater affinity with the ingroup.

Location can influence whether identification with a sport team can impact social well-being. Wann and Pierce (2005) tested Wann's (2006) Team-Identification—Social Psychological Health Model. Wann and Pierce (2005) found high team identification with a local sport team was positively related with social well-being. High team identification with a team a great distance from a fan did not enhance the individual's social well-being. Sport fandom alone did not relate to social well-being. This is another example of how Wann's work managed to link the importance of place with team identification.

Wann and Weaver (2009) extended prior examinations of Wann's (2006) Team-Identification—Social Psychological Health Model. Like Wann and Pierce (2005), Wann and Weaver (2009) examined issues of distance on social well-being. Like Wann and Pierce, they found team identification with a local team shared a statistically significant relationship with social well-being. In the study Wann and Weaver (2009) took the examination to another level by evaluating how identification with a local team and gender relate with specific elements of social well-being. They examined participant

college basketball fandom dividing team identification between local and distant teams and gender. They found a statistically significant difference for college basketball fandom based on gender. They then assessed participants in terms of social integration, social acceptance, social contribution, social actualization, social coherence, and total social well-being in terms of the predictor variables gender, college basketball fandom, identification with the distant team, and identification with the local team. They defined social coherence as a person's ability to grasp meaning and understanding of the social world. Social integration is a sense of belonging with the social world. Social acceptance is the perception the social world is kind and inclusive. Social actualization is the belief the social world is achieving its potential. Social contribution is the value someone assigns themselves in the social world. They found team identification with a local team shared a statistically significant relationship with social coherence and social integration. However, team identification with a local team did not share a statistically significant relationship with social acceptance, social actualization, or social contribution. These findings are another important extension of sport research as they show more complex psychological constructs can be assessed in terms of their relationship with team identification status, team location, and gender.

Sport social group comparisons. Sport researchers have added important insights on social group comparisons. Branscombe and Wann (1992) found highly identified American nationalists experienced blood pressure increases when exposed to a boxing match featuring an American boxer facing a Russian opponent. Low identified Americans did not experience similar increases in blood pressure. Highly identified Americans disliked the Russian boxer at a statistically significant higher rate than lower

identified Americans. The highly identified American nationalists believed external factors including the referee and the location of one of the boxing matches in Russia played a role in the outcome of the boxing match. These external factors were not found to be as important when the American boxer was victorious. This shows strong evidence of ingroup and outgroup behavior as well as derogation of both the outgroup boxer and his outgroup nationality.

Heere and James (2007) examined the manner in which external group identities can affect team identity, theorizing demographic external group identities can influence team identification when the external group identities align with the team identification. Geographic, ethnic/racial, gender-based, sexuality-based, and social class-based identities were presented as examples of possible demographic external group identities that could influence team identification. Membership organizations were also presented as external groups that can influence team identification. Universities, corporations, religious organizations, and political organizations were offered as examples of membership organizations that could influence team identification. Heere and James then theorized team identification will predict team loyalty.

Heere et al. (2011) conducted a study to show the relationship between city identity, state identity, and university identity on team identity. State and city were each found to share a statistically significant relationship with the university. The university was found to have a statistically significant relationship with team identity. State identity, city identity, university identity, and team identity all enjoyed their own statistically significant relationships with public evaluation, private evaluation, sense of interdependence, interconnection with the group, behavioral involvement, and cognitive

awareness. Public evaluation items measured the participant's feelings about the public's perception of the group. Private evaluation items measured the participant's feelings about being a group member. Interconnection with the group measures assessed how the group relates to the participant's image or feelings. Sense of interdependence measures assessed how what happens to the group impacts the life of the participant. Behavioral involvement measures assessed how involved the participant is in group activities. Cognitive awareness measures evaluated the participant's knowledge of the group and its history. This study advances the literature by showing different types of identification may all be acting to enhance team identification.

Reyson et al. (2012) indicated a loss of distinctiveness is important in terms of team identification because it removes a source of ingroup difference with outgroups. They stated the more the ingroup and outgroup become similar, the more group distinctiveness is threatened. This causes angst because the outgroup is generally perceived to be less than the ingroup. Increased similarities between the groups imply the ingroup and the individual are losing part of their differentiated identity. Reyson et al. (2012) found placing a corporate name in a stadium is found more threatening to a fan's team identification than placing the name of an individual on a stadium. Fans feel the corporate name causes a team to lose part of its distinctiveness. They also found threats to distinctiveness can lead to anger. The researchers reported the media and fans do not always accept this effort to change part of a team's distinctiveness. They indicated about 70% of the media used new corporate stadium names, and 90% of fans used new corporate stadium names. This study shows that team identification stretches beyond the team itself to the facilities and brand elements related to the team.

Sport researcher perspectives on social identity provide important insights specific to the world of sport. BIRGing and CORFing illustrate how a fan's identification with a team can lead to different behaviors unique to sport fandom. This shows that there is merit in a specific focus on sport social identity literature because it generates behaviors unique to sport. In addition, BIRGing and CORFing and pride in place based on location (Wann and Grieve, 2005) show that pride and image factors play an important role in sport social identity. Branscombe and Wann (1991) posited identification with sport teams acts as a unifying force, replacing other aspects of the American societal structure as we move farther apart from one another. Therefore, sport social identity literature is both culturally important and uniquely insightful.

Measuring Fan Identification

One important contribution to sport identification research was an economical method of measuring team identification. The three-item Team Identification Index (TII) was developed by Trail and James (2001) for use in the development of the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC). The items include: (a) I consider myself to be a 'real' fan of the team; (b) I would experience a loss if I had to stop being a fan of the team; and (c) Being a fan of the team is very important to me (Trail, Fink & Anderson, 2003). These three items from the scale have become a popular short instrument for measuring team identification, sometimes used to replace the Wann and Branscombe (1993) instrument.

The Wann and Branscombe (1993) instrument assessed fan identification with the Kansas University men's basketball program. The instrument included seven questions. Those items were included in two studies. In study one, the factor loadings ranged from

.583 to .905 with percent of variance explained at 66.3%. In the second study, factor loadings ranged from .634 to .913 with percent of variance explained at 66.9%. In both studies, six of the seven items were above .70. The low item in both studies asked whether the participant disliked KU basketball's greatest rivals—a measure of outgroup derogation rather than fan identification with the home team.

Reyson and Branscombe (2010) worked to create a more generalizable Fanship Scale that could be applied to sport, music, media (movies, television, books), and hobby. While the results showed an acceptable Cronbach's alpha (.86), it explained a low amount of the total variance in fanship (43%). In addition, when compared with the Wann and Branscombe (1993) sport-focused team identification scale (the Sport Spectator Identification Scale), it shared a significantly positive correlation ($r = .36, p = .01$). Reyson and Branscombe (2010) concluded there was evidence sport fans are not dissimilar from fans of other forms of entertainment. Therefore, they asserted sport identification findings may be generalizable to other forms of entertainment. This study uniquely tried to equate sport with other forms of entertainment.

Social Identity Summary

The social identity section examined the work of the major social identity theorists, sport researchers, and business researchers. Social identity was considered from the perspectives of the self. This examination included self-categorization with a group, self-esteem related to social identity, and commitment to the group (Ellemers et al, 1999). Once self-categorization with the group occurs, a person may begin to strongly identify with the group. Depersonalization and an emphasis on group membership follow as identification deepens (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000). The literature also indicated

people may use products and company brands to help construct their self-identity (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Elliott & Wattanasuwan, 2003).

Social identity topics related to the group were considered. These topics included the concept of ingroup favoritism and positive group disposition. Group members tend to cast their group in a favorable manner (Tajfel, 1982). Identification with group prototypes, which may be either real or an idealized concept, reduces a person's natural uncertainty. This uncertainty reduction fulfills a core human motivation (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Group challenges such as difficulties in leaving the group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and the concept of deviants who may cause stress within a group (Hogg & Terry, 2000) were also considered.

Finally, social identity intergroup and intragroup topics including ingroup and outgroup dynamics were examined. Groups compete for rank and prestige leading to tension and discrimination (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This tension also leads to depersonalization and the creation of stereotypes (Tajfel, 1982). The business literature indicated highly identified consumers would promote a company and recruit more customers (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). Sport topics included BIRGing and CORFing (Cialdini et al., 1976) as well as pride in location (Wann & Grieve, 2005) reflecting a connection between the social aspects of sport and pride. Fisher and Wakefield (1998) found sport fans identify with the domain or sport when their team is unsuccessful. Important sport and business identification scales and frameworks were examined. This sets up an examination of how social identity interacts with brand equity.

Brand Equity

Successful brands utilize their brand equity to gain competitive advantage leading to many potential benefits (Keller, 2001). Brand equity, as defined by Keller (1993), is the value a brand name has on marketing outcomes related to a product or service. When an established and respected company's logo is added to a generic product or service, the perceived value of that product rises. This is because customers have established trust and expectations in that logo. Thus, the generic product or service is now the beneficiary of brand equity. Therefore, brand equity is a topic of critical importance both in academia and in practice (Lassar, Mittal, & Sharma, 1995). Any product or service would benefit from enhancements to the value of its brand equity, or the value of its logo, which translates to a more powerful overall brand. Keller (2001) included increased price elasticity, increased brand loyalty, and the ability to remain strong in a competitive environment as brand equity benefits. Price elasticity allows a company the flexibility to raise prices a reasonable amount without losing consumer support. Therefore, brand equity has a major impact on a company's bottom line. Because of the unique nature of sport, sport-specific brand equity literature must also be considered. Finally, the brand equity component of the Social Identity-Brand Equity (SIBE) model must be evaluated as the model suggests social identity predicts brand equity (Underwood, Bond, & Baer, 2001). The SIBE provides an excellent example of how the social identity and brand equity literature can be connected.

Brand Equity from a Business Perspective

The academic roots of brand equity are found in the business literature. Aaker (1996) and Keller (1993, 2001) are the most cited researchers on the topic of brand

equity. Therefore, their work provides a key focal point in any well-conceived analysis of brand equity.

Keller (1993, p. 2) defined customer-based brand equity as “the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand.” Keller (1993) asserted brand equity is derived from brand knowledge and its component two parts, brand awareness and brand image. Keller (1993) defined brand awareness as a consumer’s ability to identify a brand under a variety of conditions and brand image as brand perceptions reflected by brand associations held in a consumer’s memory. Therefore, brand image is solely comprised of brand associations. Aaker (1996), like Keller (1993), saw tremendous value in brand associations when he defined brand equity. Aaker named four dimensions of brand equity, which include associations, awareness, loyalty, and perceived quality. Keller (2001) indicated the power of a brand lies in what consumers have learned, felt, seen, and heard about a brand over time. The author specified it is marketing mix elements that consumers will evaluate in association with a brand to generate customer-based brand equity, so the marketing mix is briefly considered before a more thorough examination of brand equity.

Brand equity, brand knowledge, and brand awareness. Aaker (1992) considered brand equity to be a set of brand assets and liabilities that are linked to a brand’s name and symbol. Aaker indicated brand equity can either aid or damage a product or service. The researcher stated five brand equity assets then create value: (a) brand loyalty, (b) brand name awareness, (c) perceived brand quality, (d) brand associations, and (e) other proprietary brand assets. Aaker said it is challenging for companies to invest in building and maintaining brand strength because they often

maintain a short-term focus. Underwood et al. (2001) would echo this point when conceptualizing the SIBE Model.

Keller (1993) stated brand equity relates to a difference in value established by including a brand mark, or logo, to a marketing mix element. These differences in value are only revealed when consumers compare their knowledge of competing brands. Keller (1993) presented his dimensions of brand knowledge to illustrate this reality—that it is the knowledge consumers have of a brand and how the brand is differentiated from others in order to create brand equity. Keller's two dimensions that lead to brand knowledge are brand awareness and brand image. Brand awareness relates to a consumer's ability to remember and identify a brand as well as the strength of that awareness. Brand image relates to the associations consumers have connected with a brand.

Aaker's (1996) four consumer dimensions of brand equity, along with a dimension based on market information, are measured by what he refers to as the Brand Equity Ten. Aaker asserted the 10 constructs that comprise The Brand Equity Ten were selected for four reasons: (a) They reflect brand equity; (b) They are associated with future sales and profit—two motives for driving the market; (c) The measures must be able to reflect change in brand equity; (d) All brands, product types, and markets should be measurable utilizing The Brand Equity Ten.

The Brand Equity Ten are: (a) price premium, (b) satisfaction/loyalty, (c) perceived quality, (d) leadership, (e) perceived value, (f) brand personality, (g) organizational associations, (h) brand awareness, (i) market share, and (j) price and distribution indices. Eight of The Brand Equity Ten are consumer based constructs (Aaker, 1996). Price premium and satisfaction/loyalty are considered measures of

loyalty. Price premium is the expected difference in price a consumer expects between brands, and can be positive or negative. Aaker used examples in which customers may be willing to pay 15% more to buy Coke than Pepsi or expect to pay 20% less at Kmart than Macy's. Satisfaction is a direct measure of whether consumers were pleased with a purchase. Loyalty is a measure of whether they intend to buy again. Perceived quality is a consumer's perception of a product or service's excellence.

Aaker indicated leadership is determined by three factors. Holding a position of sales leader shows leadership. Leadership can also refer to technological innovation. Leadership is also reflected in acceptance and the unwillingness of consumers to go against the trend. Aaker stated perceived quality can be measured by quality comparisons between brands as well as consistency of quality. Association and differentiation measures include perceived value, brand personality, and organizational associations. Aaker noted value can be assessed in terms of whether a product is worth the money or a good purchase compared with other brands. Brand personality would be assessed by criteria such as whether consumers can envision who might use the brand. Organizational associations refer to how the organization behind a brand influences brand perceptions of the consumer. Brand awareness is the lone awareness measure. This refers to whether the brand is recalled or recognized and the position it holds in recall. The two market behavior measures do not emanate directly from the consumer. These market behavior measures are market share and the indices of price and distribution.

Keller (2001) indicated strong brand equity yields seven benefits: a) Brand loyalty, b) Less vulnerable to competition, c) Larger margins, d) Price elasticity, e) More trade support, f) More marketing effectiveness, g) Licensing/brand extension

opportunities. Each of these brand equity benefits is important. These benefits affect both a business's immediate revenue earning capabilities as well as the long-term potential of the company. Taken together, these works establish the base for brand equity theory. However, sport is an industry that includes both products in the form of shoes, fashion, and merchandise as well as the service component featuring the events. Therefore, a look at service brand equity research is important.

Service perspective. Service companies and manufactured goods companies have an important distinction, according to Berry (2000). Service companies, Berry posited, are more dependent on the power of their brand because of the intangible nature of their offerings. Berry called branding "a cornerstone of services marketing for the twenty-first century" Berry (2000, p. 128). The importance of this statement to this study is amplified by the fact it is referenced in the first line of Underwood et al.'s (2001) conceptual article outlining the Social Identity-Brand Equity Model (SIBE). Manufactured goods, in contrast, provide customers with tangible information that aids in their decision making.

Berry (2000) identified four primary brand equity cultivation strategies common to outstanding service companies. Those strategies include: dare to be different, determine your own fame, make an emotional connection, and internalize the brand. He expounded on the importance and method of executing each strategy. Berry (2000) indicated successful service companies show a clear desire to create their own unique brand personality by distinguishing themselves from competitors. Berry stated excellent service companies connect with the core values held by their consumers. He indicated service companies cannot earn this emotional connection based on a façade or false information, as a service company's true core values will reveal themselves over time.

Essentially, Berry indicated a company must both create and live its brand—reinforcing what it stands for every day to breathe the brand into reality. Berry based his research on an examination of 14 companies (including the three sport organizations) that have achieved success in the service industry. Interestingly, Berry chose two sport examples to help illustrate excellence in reinforcing customer experiences. A minor league baseball team, the St. Paul Saints, and a National Football League team, the New Orleans Saints, were heralded for their excellent use of this strategy. In addition, the Harlem Globetrotters were hailed for making strong positive emotional connections with consumers.

Berry (2000) created a service-branding model to illustrate the way companies can generate service brand equity. Berry's model includes three initial constructs which relate with brand awareness and brand meaning in different ways. The company's presented brand is a direct predictor of brand awareness and an indirect predictor of brand meaning. External brand communications indirectly predicts both brand awareness and brand meaning, while customer experience with the company is a direct predictor of brand meaning and an indirect predictor of brand awareness. Brand meaning is considered a direct predictor of brand equity, and brand awareness is considered an indirect predictor of brand equity. These concepts are slightly different than those of Aaker (1996) and Keller (2001), as they should be, because Berry (2000) was specifically interested in the service industry.

Additional brand equity perspectives. There are other brand equity perspectives worth of consideration. For example, Farquhar (1989) identified three stages of brand equity management: (a) introduction, (b) elaboration, and (c) fortification. Elaboration

requires repeated exposure to the brand through direct exposure as well as messaging that drives consumer attitudes. Fortification involves brand extensions that in closely related areas through licensing and other methods help solidify the brand and potentially reach a new audience. Farquhar specifically indicated it is a consumer's attitude strength tied to a product that determines brand equity. He indicated these attitudes can be influenced by giving the consumer an idea about how it feels to use a product, making multiple evaluative declarations in advertisements, and getting customers to evaluate their purchase as they make it with statements that reconfirm the wisdom of their decisions via packaging or in-store displays. Farquhar (1989) stated positive brand evaluations, accessible brand attitudes, and stable brand image are the three elements required for a strong brand. This predates the Aaker (1996) and Keller (1993, 2001) research that forms the base of brand equity research. These three stages of brand equity did not carry forward into their work.

A more industrial based brand equity approach was offered by other researchers. Martin and Brown (1991, p. 431) proposed "the brand equity construct." The construct featured two facets: (a) a perceptual facet and (b) a behavioral facet. The sole dimension tied to the perceptual fact was brand impression. The behavioral facet included three parts: (a) the customer (with purchase as the lone dimension), (b) channel member, and (c) owner/firm. The behavioral facet takes a more corporate and financial approach. This is quite different from the work of Aaker (1996) and Keller (1993, 2001). Aaker (1996), Keller (1993, 2001), and most sport researchers tend to ignore the financial-based brand equity components in favor of a sharp focus on customer-based brand equity. The Martin and Brown (1991) brand impression element, however, is more akin to the work

of Aaker (1996). It includes five dimensions: (a) perceived quality, (b) image, (c) perceived value, (d) trustworthiness, and (e) commitment. Some of these terms are commonly shared with Aaker's (1996) Brand Equity Ten.

Lassar et al. (1995) conducted a study of products that differed in terms of price and the social image of the quality of the items. They examined variables including performance, value, social image, trustworthiness, and attachment. They observed something they described as a "halo" effect (p. 17). When the social image score was rated low, it tended to correlate with feelings of lower performance, value, trustworthiness, and attachment. However, a higher social image score correlated with higher scores across the board. Therefore, the social perception of quality tended to manifest itself in higher scores for performance, value, social image, and commitment. The study, therefore, provides an example of brand equity adding strength and value to the brand as the researchers had anticipated.

Keller (2005) described a number of ways in which indirect, or secondary, brand associations can impact brand equity. Keller indicated brands can associate themselves with a nation, representative characters (Tony the Tiger for Kellogg's is an example), other brands (via co-branding), spokespeople, and sporting events (via sponsorship) to create secondary associations in an effort to strengthen brand equity. Keller stated the customer's knowledge of the entity as well as meaningful and transferable customer knowledge of the entity predict the leverage of secondary brand associations. These associations occur with sport brands on a regular basis.

Ross et al. (2006) stated a company's assessment of its brand is often as good as the managers handling the assessment. The researchers asserted opportunities for brand

extensions and brand alliances can be missed when managers are incapable of identifying brand associations that create those possibilities. Likewise, if consumers begin to associate problems with the brand and managers prove incapable of assessing the weakness, then a brand's position can be jeopardized.

These studies are important because they provide different perspectives of brand equity. While the Aaker (1996) and Keller (1993, 2001) research serves as the most cited base for brand equity research, the studies that pre-date their work (Farquhar, 1989; Martin & Brown, 1991) are worthy of examination. Similarly, consideration of the influence of personal brands, the halo effect, indirect brand associations, and the role of managers on brand equity provides important perspective. While indirect brand associations were examined in this section, more traditional brand associations require more in-depth consideration.

Brand associations. Brand image is comprised of four different dimensions of brand associations distinguished by Keller (1993)—brand association type, brand association favorability, brand association strength, and brand association uniqueness. There are three elements that contribute to brand association dimension: attributes, benefits, and attitudes. The other three brand association dimensions—favorability, strength, and uniqueness—contributing to brand image are stand-alone dimensions. The customer must have memories of brand associations with the brand that distinguish it from other brands. As the positivity and uniqueness of these associations intensify, greater brand equity will be associated with the brand. Thus, brand associations are a critical element in assessing brand knowledge and, in turn, brand equity.

According to Keller (1993), there are two ways to measure customer-based brand equity. First, the characteristics of brand associations can be compared against one another. Second, consumers can be asked about three aspects of brand associations: (a) congruence, (b) competitive overlap, and (c) leverage. Congruence is an examination of the degree to which brand associations are common. Competitive overlap includes identification, which is a consumer's ability to recall the brand when thinking about a product category or perhaps a need fulfilled by the brand, and uniqueness, which is how consumers might compare the brand associations of a powerful brand with those of its competitors. Leverage is the degree to which secondary brand associations become linked to the brand through existing brand associations. These associations can be evaluated in terms of their favorability, strength, and uniqueness.

Brand extensions. When a successful brand utilizes its brand equity to introduce a new product, this new use of the brand is called a brand extension (Aaker, 1991; Keller & Aaker, 1998). The overall brand is now comprised of the parent brand as well as the subordinate brand extension with which it is associated. For example, when the Detroit Red Wings created a restaurant called Hockeytown Cafe, then this new business utilizing the Red Wings brand became a brand extension—extending the Red Wings brand from the hockey business to the restaurant business. Keller and Aaker (1998) investigated whether corporate brand associations become identified with brand extensions when these new subordinate brands are established. They found corporate marketing can improve the manner in which brand extensions are evaluated.

Sood and Keller (2012) examined brand extensions and the possible dilution of the parent brand. They found there were differences in how extensions were perceived.

The authors found dilution occurred when a brand extension was included in the brand family—meaning the brand name was included in the name. In sport terms, this could occur if the Gwinnett Braves minor league team had poor brand equity, which then affected their parent brand, the Atlanta Braves (who share the “Braves” name) as noted by Cianfrone, McGehee, and Bison (2013). The Cianfrone et al. (2013) case study indicated the Gwinnett franchise experienced a number of challenges as a minor league affiliate of the Braves including attendance and merchandise revenue issues. Sood and Keller (2012) also noted this type of family branding allows consumers to easily recognize the association shared by the parent brand and the brand extension.

Subbranded extensions are those found when a brand package or advertisement notes the parent brand created the brand extension, but the parent brand name does not appear in the product (or service) name of the brand extension. Sood and Keller (2012) indicated subbranded extensions are less quickly identifiable by the consumer. However, they indicated subbranded extensions do cause the consumer to more deeply consider the association between the parent brand and the brand extension. Both subbranded and family branded extensions, therefore, offer benefits that marketing profession may consider. The subbranded extensions are the safer option in terms of less risk to the parent brand but less clearly associated option of the two.

Brand Equity from a Sport Perspective

Because of the unique nature of sport as a business and the existence of an academic field dedicated specifically to sport management, it was essential to examine the sport brand equity literature. Unlike many other businesses, sport provides consumers with an emotional and unpredictable return on their investment (Gladden &

Funk, 2002). Given the nature of the study, it made sense to examine the sport literature in general brand equity terms, but also specifically consider both the minor league sport and college sport brand equity literature.

Gladden et al. (2001) tried to project how North American major professional sport teams would endeavor to enhance their brand equity. The authors generated a list of four strategies teams would execute to enhance their fan relationships: (a) work to gain greater knowledge about the fans; (b) increase fan interaction with the brand; (c) find ways to enhance loyalty to the team brand; (d) reinforce brand associations through sophisticated marketing communication techniques.

Gladden and Funk (2002) stressed the importance of customers retaining positive brand association memories, arguing these memories are particularly important because the benefits of sport are often intangible rather than tangible. While many companies produce goods that consumers can keep and enjoy for the life of the product, sport events occur then live on solely as memories or in video format. Gladden and Funk (2002) asserted that sport is unpredictable and emotional, and this also distinguishes sport from other industries. Many businesses in other industries take great care to make sure their product is consistent and dependable, while sport can present surprising results. Sport consumers can then become passionate and expressive in response to these results, the atmosphere, or a moment.

A significant finding in the Gladden and Funk (2002) study was the predictive nature fan identification had on the benefit dimension of brand association. The researchers also found sport fulfills higher order needs. They suggested nostalgia and pride in place provide self-expression and personal fulfillment rather than basic human

needs like safety and security (Gladden & Funk, 2002, p. 74). Interestingly, pride in place is also noted in the social identity literature (Wann & Grieve, 2005). The authors stated this showed practitioners should work to create as many points of identification between the team and its fans, as well as between the fans themselves as possible.

Ross (2006) asserted most of the brand equity literature was intended to address goods. Therefore, the concepts and models may not apply quite as well in a service setting. This lines up well with the views of Berry (2000). Because sport is a service, Ross (2006) indicated this could prove problematic in sport research, and stated sport researchers had proven slow to acknowledge this reality. Ross indicated service marketing is unique, because it includes simultaneous production and consumption, heterogeneity, intangibility, and perishability. Simultaneous production and consumption, Ross stated, includes not only the fact the event is consumed as it is produced, but also the characteristics of the service encounter (such as wait times, noise and other distractions). Heterogeneity relates to the challenge a service company faces in trying to provide stable levels of quality. Intangibility, Ross asserted, is problematic because it challenges consumers to assess quality before they make a purchase. Perishability refers to the fact that services are created when needed and cannot be maintained in inventory. Ross rightfully stated the fragile nature of service delivery creates a unique and rigid challenge for managers. These are important concepts specific to sport as a service, which must be considered in evaluating sport brand equity.

Walsh and Ross (2010) examined brand extensions. The Walsh and Ross study provided empirical evidence that team identification was strongly associated with brand extensions. They also showed what they described as minimal evidence of team brand

association dilution that resulted from brand extensions. The tie between team identification and brand extensions, which is made possible when a brand achieves strong brand equity, reflects some of the concepts found in the Social Identity-Brand Equity (SIBE) Model.

College sport brand equity literature. One college sport brand equity example considered the impact a coach can have on brand equity. Robinson and Miller (2003) evaluated the effect the addition of a major coach has on the brand equity of a major basketball program. Their study focused on Bobby Knight's effect on Texas Tech University. They used the Gladden et al. (1998) sports brand equity framework. They found Texas Tech had a losing program with a history of NCAA violations before Knight arrived. Knight's arrival alone led to an 81% increase in season ticket sales. Texas Tech enjoyed more sellouts and more than \$1 million in additional annual ticket revenue. The authors estimated \$500,000 in new development dollars were tied to Knight's arrival. They found his influence to be significant. Therefore, a personal brand can impact an intercollegiate athletics team and intercollegiate athletics program brand. This assessment of personal impact on sport brand equity is fairly unique.

Bruening and Lee (2007) reported a 40% increase in minority applications to the University of Notre Dame in 2002-03 in association with Tyrone Willingham joining the university as its first African American football coach. The authors showed Willingham brought numerous positive attributes to the football program and the University, including reducing the number of discipline issues related to football student-athletes, but they also asserted he was terminated after only three seasons due to revenue-related concerns.

Judson and Carpenter (2005) surveyed 258 members of the university community (students, faculty, and staff) to understand their identification with the intercollegiate athletics program. The authors found fan identification was driven by social, physical, drama, achievement, and knowledge-based factors, and asserted increases in fan identity should lead to greater brand equity and more revenue. They also cited the example of the University of South Florida trying to build its university brand by investing in its football program. The use of a football program to build a university brand, as described by the authors, is an interesting form of brand extension. Typically a parent brand (the university) builds its brand equity strength to the point it can leverage that brand equity to create a brand extension (Keller, 2001). The brand extension would be a smaller, subordinate brand to the parent brand. However, in this case, the brand extension is being asked to build the parent brand. This speaks to the power of sport as the brand extension is being asked to propel the main brand.

Minor league sport brand equity literature. Hill and Green (2000) indicated differences exist in the manner consumers approach major league sport teams and minor league sport teams. Consumers evaluate major league sport teams based on winning. However, this approach to winning shifts to an affinity for the sport in general when the team underperforms. This is something akin to CORFing (Cialdini et al., 1976; Snyder et al., 1986) combined with a desire to retain team identification. Hill and Green (2000) indicated minor league rugby teams—often brand extensions of parent brand major league teams—are considered primarily based on affinity for the sport rather than winning. They also found loyalty to the team and psychological involvement with the

league predicted future attendance for all groups. Loyalty is one of the benefits of brand equity (Keller, 2001).

Apostolopoulou (2005) examined the vertical extension of the National Basketball Association (NBA) with the creation of the National Basketball Development League (NBDL). The NBDL was described as a lower quality, lower priced feeder system to the NBA. The NBA used common logos and graphics to attempt to give the extension brands, both in the form of the league and its new teams, a lift from the strong brand equity established by the NBA. The researchers indicated the NBA allowed NBDL teams to create more unique identities for their brand extensions, citing the need to localize the brands and integrate them into the area communities. The NBDL was also given its own separate league office, removing its leadership's physical location from NBA headquarters in New York.

Minor league hockey teams maintain similar brand extension relationships with their parent organizations in the National Hockey League. Fraser (2007) indicated minor league hockey leagues lack the brand equity to achieve substantial television revenue. They also lack the ability to influence facility enhancement decisions. Fraser provided empirical evidence that minor league hockey teams would do well to avoid locations already occupied by universities with NCAA Division I athletics programs. This coincides with the Wann and Branscombe (1993) statement that college sport fans are more highly identified with their teams than professional sport fans.

Gladden et al.'s (1998) college athletics brand equity framework. Gladden et al. (1998) conceptualized a framework for assessing NCAA Division I intercollegiate athletics brand equity. The framework features a number of antecedents that influence

brand equity. In turn, brand equity leads to a variety of consequences identified by the researchers. The marketplace then interprets these consequences, with marketplaces beliefs fueling the antecedents at the back of the framework, creating a cyclical effect.

The antecedents conceptualized by Gladden et al. (1998) fall into three categories: team-related antecedents, organization-related antecedents, and market-related antecedents. The three dimensions of team-related antecedents include success, head coach, and star player. The three dimensions of organization-related antecedents include reputation and tradition, conference/schedule, and entertainment package/product delivery. The four dimensions of market-related antecedents are local/regional media coverage, geographic location, competitive forces, and support. These antecedents contribute to four dimensions of brand equity: perceived quality, brand awareness, brand associations, and brand loyalty. The six consequences of brand equity are defined as national media exposure, merchandise sales, individual donations, corporate support, atmosphere, and ticket sales. As previously stated, the consequences are absorbed by the marketplace, which then influences the antecedents in a cyclical pattern.

It is worth noting the definition of some of these terms, as they can be open to various types of interpretation if one does not have access to the researchers' intended meaning. For example, Gladden et al. (1998) deem reputation and tradition to reference three components: university commitment to intercollegiate athletics, academic perception of the university, and intercollegiate athletics integrity. Conference/schedule is described by the authors in terms of opponent quality and the ability to influence college television placement. It is also described in terms of its ability to specifically impact conference game ticket sales and conference game atmosphere. The researchers

list tough schedule as a perceived quality conference/schedule benefit, and quality of competition as a conference/schedule brand association. The conference relationship is described, in essence, as a tool that gains an intercollegiate athletics program access to very specific benefits. This definition is akin to the “rivalry” brand association used by Ross (2006) which will be evaluated next.

Ross’ (2006) Spectator-Based Brand Equity (SBBE) framework. Ross (2006) created a conceptual framework for spectator-based brand equity (SBBE). As opposed to the Gladden et al. (1998) brand equity framework that was intended specifically to assess intercollegiate athletics, Ross (2006) intended this framework to cover all sports. The Ross (2006) proposed SBBE framework begins with three types of antecedents. The marketing mix (Ross refers to the seven P’s version) is the lone organization induced antecedent. Market induced antecedents include publicity and word-of-mouth. The sole experience induced antecedent is the customer’s experience. According to Ross (2006), these antecedents interact with the two components of spectator-based brand equity. Those components are brand awareness and brand association. Brand awareness is specifically designated as a predictor of brand association. Spectator-based brand equity then serves as a predictor of five types of consequences. Those consequences include: (a) team loyalty, (b) media exposure, (c) merchandise sales, (d) ticket sales, and (e) revenue solicitation. The consequences then complete the circuit by serving as predictors of the antecedents. Consequences can either be positive or negative predictors.

Ross et al.’s (2008) Spectator-Based Brand Equity (SBBE) model. Ross et al. (2008) followed up on the conceptual spectator-based brand equity framework by empirically testing the SBBE model. They created a 13-construct model to measure

spectator-based brand equity. The constructs included the 11 original dimensions of the Team Brand Association Scale. Those constructs are commitment, concessions, history, logo, organization attributes, rivalry, nonplayer personnel, stadium, socialization, success, and team characteristics. These 11 constructs were tested for their relationship with brand associations. Brand awareness was tested for relationships with the two remaining constructs: identification and internalization. Ross et al. found success and team characteristics to be very strong predictors of brand associations. Socialization and concessions, conversely, were not considered strong predictors of brand associations. Both identification and internalization were found to be strong predictors of brand awareness.

Gladden and Funk's (2002) Team Association Model (TAM). Gladden and Funk (2002) worked to develop a scale related to sport team brand associations. They began with a Team Association Model (TAM), which was then used to create a scale. The scale was named the Team Association scale. The authors relied on the business brand equity and sport literature to identify 16 types of brand association to include in their scale. Gladden and Funk (2002) cited Keller's (1993) customer-based brand equity research as the inspiration for their study. Gladden and Funk split the 16 dimensions of the model according to Keller's (1993) three categories of brand association: attribute, benefit, and attitude.

The 16 brand association constructs utilized by Gladden and Funk (2002) were presented by the Keller (1993) categorization. The attribute constructs are success, star player, head coach, management, logo design, stadium, product delivery, and tradition. Escape, fan identification, peer group acceptance, nostalgia, pride in place comprise the

benefit constructs. Importance, knowledge, and affect are attitude constructs. Of the 16 brand association dimensions assessed in the TAM, peer group acceptance was the only one that did not achieve a mean score above four on a seven-point Likert scale. Two dimensions that were not mentioned in the literature review performed by Gladden and Funk (2002), perceptions of team management and the logo, were added. The entertainment elements related to a sport event, which the authors named “product delivery,” also rated quite high. Importance and knowledge both rated as high predictors of attitude. An assessment of the items in importance revealed something akin to team identification. The items asked if the team was important to the consumer, if being a fan of the team was important to the consumer, and whether the consumer’s favorite team was more important than competing teams (Gladden & Funk, 2002).

Ross et al. (2006) were quite critical of Gladden and Funk (2002). First, Ross et al. (2006) criticized the TAM and its associated scale because they relied on academic literature for scale development. Ross et al. asserted a customer-based brand equity scale must be based on consumer input. Therefore, they questioned the scale’s foundation. Ross et al. (2006) also criticized some of the items used by Gladden and Funk (2002). Ross et al. believed some of the TAM scale items did not measure brand equity; instead, the researchers asserted some items measured attendance or consumer motives. Ross et al. stated Gladden and Funk (2002) used an open-ended feedback approach that called on participants to provide input on brand strength and fan connections. Again, Ross et al. differentiated these elements from brand equity.

Ross et al.’s (2006) Team Brand Association Scale (TBAS). To address these identified criticisms, Ross et al. (2006) created the Team Brand Association Scale

(TBAS). The scale was developed to assess professional sport brand associations. The researchers cited customer-based brand equity as the proper forum in which brand associations are evaluated. Therefore, they firmly believed it was necessary that their scale items needed to be derived from consumer input. This input allowed the authors to identify 11 dimensions of professional sport brand associations: nonplayer personnel, team success, team history, stadium community, team play characteristics, brand mark, commitment, organizational attributes, concessions, social interaction, and rivalry. After rigorous testing, the eight dimensions the researchers believed showed acceptable reliability were: team play characteristics, team success, stadium community, nonplayer personnel, organizational attributes, team history, and brand mark.

Despite criticizing Gladden and Funk's (2002) TAM, Ross et al. (2006) decided to assess construct validity of the TBAS against the TAM. Ross et al. (2006) indicated eight of the TAM categories showed similarity with seven of the TBAS dimensions. Because some TBAS factors like concessions and rivalry did not share conceptual similarity with the TAM, Ross et al. (2006) decided to exclude those factors from the construct validity assessment. All seven of the TBAS factors shared statistically significant correlations with at least five of the TAM factors, which Ross et al. (2006) considered strong concurrent validity.

Ross et al. (2006) discussed possible issues with their TBAS findings. They assessed an item in the team play factor associated with excellent offensive performance that they felt could conceptually overlap with the team success factor. The researchers also felt commitment items may share conceptual overlap with the history factor. This is similar to a conceptual overlap between history and ritual identified by Boyle and

Magnusson (2007) in the SIBE Model. The researchers noted team success often leads to stronger commitment, again generating risk of conceptual overlap.

The brand equity section introduced the Keller (1993) concept that brand equity relates to a person's brand knowledge. That brand knowledge is comprised of brand awareness and brand associations (which combine to form brand image). Brand equity adds to (or in a bad scenario adversely effects) the value of a product or service. Brand equity benefits include brand loyalty, strength against competitors, price elasticity, and the ability to generate brand extensions (Keller, 2001). Service brand equity, brand associations, and brand extensions were considered. Specific sport brand equity and models were examined.

The sport brand equity literature provides both college sport and minor league sport brand equity studies. This sets the stage for consideration of a model that demonstrates how social identity can serve as a predictor of brand equity—the Social Identity-Brand Equity (SIBE) Model.

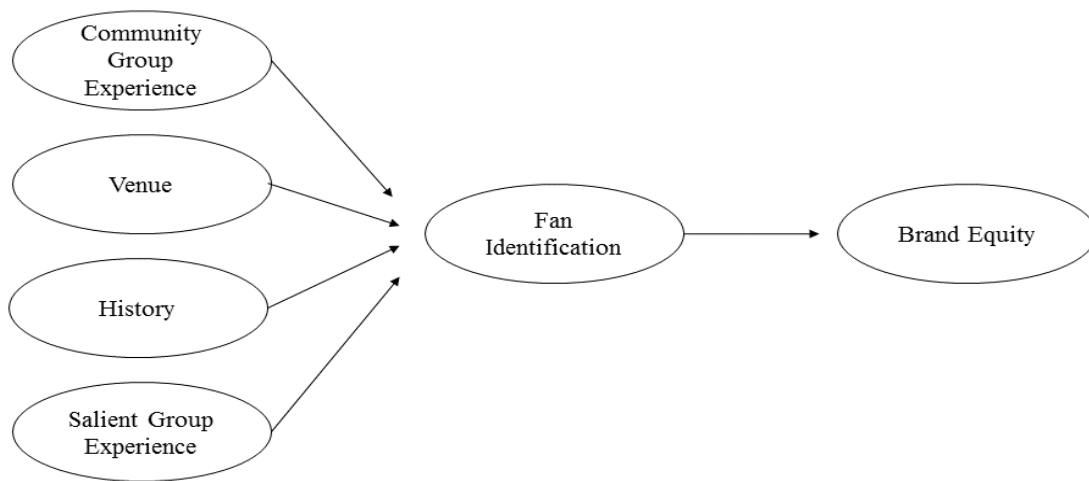
Social Identity-Brand Equity Model

The conceptual Social Identity-Brand Equity Model (SIBE) was developed by Underwood et al. (2001), who asserted social identity creates an emotional connection between consumers and service brands. Their model asserts social identity predicts brand equity. Therefore, this is an important model to examine in depth given the nature of this study.

According to the model, social identification is the result of several characteristics of the services marketplace. These characteristics are group experience, history and tradition, physical facility, and rituals. Social identification then serves as a predictor of

customer-based brand equity. Consumer-based brand equity then helps to predict a person's social identification. Underwood et al. (2001) suggested quality experiences with brands enhance brand loyalty. This makes identification with the brand a positive aspect of an individual's self-concept. The authors also indicated people who highly identify with service providers will place more value in information tied to a brand. Highly identified consumers will be more apt to find brand information relevant and meaningful. They will relate this information to everything they already know about the brand and strengthen brand associations that they have previously conceived.

Figure 1: Original SIBE Model (Underwood et al., 2001)



Products and services, Underwood et al. (2001) posited, play a key role in a consumer's identity. By consuming products and services, a definition of self is created and communicated to society which helps in the formation of one's social identity. More importantly, the researchers proposed sport business practitioners place an emphasis on

short-term goals. These goals generally have a revenue-based focus. Underwood et al. (2001) argued long-term objectives including brand associations, which are part of brand equity, as well as the facilitation of fan identification should be emphasized. They proposed increases in social identity will generate increases in customer-based brand equity. Underwood et al. (2001) offered a description of customer-based brand equity citing the Keller (1993) model. Keller's model of customer-based brand equity showed customer brand knowledge being informed by brand awareness and brand image. Brand image is solely comprised of four dimensions of brand associations (type, favorability, strength, and uniqueness), meaning brand knowledge could just as easily be defined by brand awareness and brand associations.

Underwood et al. (2001) sought antecedents for strong social identity tied to sports teams. They visited internet chat rooms associated with 11 professional and college teams that are well known for their loyalty and support to ask their fanbases why they support their team. Examples cited by Underwood et al. (2001) include the Chicago Cubs, Green Bay Packers, and University of Alabama football team. The researchers identified the emerging themes of group experience, history and tradition, physical facility, and ritual.

Underwood et al. (2001) asserted group camaraderie contributes to a person's sense of self. Team identification allows people to find opportunities to associate with one another. Groups also provide people with a sense of belonging. These are all benefits of the group experience. Underwood et al. indicated the keeping and comparison of sport records are examples of the history and tradition of sport. Shared memories of specific sport events, they asserted, inform a sense of self and an identification with the

team. This history differentiates the team brand from other team brands—creating the ingroup and outgroup dynamic that forms the heart of social identity. The researchers described three key aspects of rituals, which they indicated are distinct activities from other ordinary life events. Rituals are repeated events. They depend on continuity for success, and they speak to past game experiences. They also distinguish teams, which helps form ingroup and outgroup distinctions that assist with identification.

Underwood et al. (2001) also indicated the stadium serves as the home of the sport group experience. Westerbeek and Shilbury (1999) asserted place is the most important element in the marketing mix because sport needs the facility to exist so services can be provided. As a result, the stadium is home to a sense of sport community and social identification.

Boyle and Magnusson (2007) provided the first empirical test of the SIBE. This test occurred in a college sport setting. They tested the effect a person's social identification with an intercollegiate athletics team (team identification) would have on brand equity of the athletic department. They found a statistically significant result for social identity's effect on brand equity. They made this assessment comparing three fan groups—students, alumni, and members of the general public.

Boyle and Magnusson (2007) asserted some fans may simply wish to socialize and know they are in attendance at a significant event. Others may be at the event for business reasons rather than due to their interest in the game itself. They abbreviated the name of the “history and tradition” variable to “history.” The concept of history was unchanged from the original SIBE theory. Watkins (2014) returned the Boyle and Magnusson (2007) “history” variable name to the original Underwood et al. (2001)

variable name “history and tradition.” Like Boyle and Magnusson (2007), Watkins (2014) excluded the rituals variable. Lee et al. (2012) indicated tradition and nostalgia associated with a sport team is a point of attraction that may lead to sport consumption.

Watkins (2014) utilized the SIBE model to provide the first empirical assessment of the instrument in a professional sport setting. Watkins examined major professional sport in the form of National Basketball Association fans. Watkins (2014) selected six National Basketball Association teams whose fans she wished to survey: the Dallas Mavericks, Memphis Grizzlies, Miami Heat, New York Knicks, Oklahoma City Thunder, and San Antonio Spurs. The teams were chosen to incorporate large and small market team of varied recent success. She selected fans who followed each of those teams’ Twitter and Facebook accounts. She found group experience and venue have a statistically significant relationship with social identification which then predicts brand equity.

The Social Identity-Brand Equity Model provides an excellent example of the way social identity can be used to predict brand equity. The model demonstrates the importance of location, which is noted in both the social identity and brand equity research. In addition, it places strong importance on the group, which is a major point of emphasis in social identity research.

Research Questions

This study has two main purposes. The first purpose is to determine whether social identity predicts brand equity for MiLB organizations and, if so, to provide a tool that can help MiLB organizations focus their limited resources and maximize revenue. The second purpose is to examine how differences in social image and team affiliations

may contribute to differences in brand equity between minor league sport teams, major professional sport teams, and major college sport teams.

The literature showed minor league sport organizations face several problems that are not experienced by major professional sport and major college sport organizations. Fraser (2007) indicated minor league sport league and sport teams lack the brand equity to attract the types of television agreements major sport leagues and sport teams acquire. While minor league teams do not generally consider their television agreements a major source of revenue, there are intercollegiate athletics conferences including the Big Ten Conference and Southeastern Conference (SEC) have now created their own national networks that produce massive revenue. This is in addition to the substantial media income major professional sport leagues and major college sport conferences previously had in place. Fraser (2007) also stated minor league teams should avoid markets occupied by NCAA Division I intercollegiate athletics programs. This reinforces Fraser's assertion that minor league sport teams lack the brand equity to succeed in markets occupied by major college sport programs—that have stronger brand equity. Wann and Branscombe (1993) stated college sport fans are more highly identified with their teams than other sport fans—obviously this includes minor league sport teams.

Minor league sport teams face deficiencies in terms of human resources, financial resources, and brand equity in comparison with major professional and college sport teams. Given these human and financial resource limitations and brand equity disadvantages, it is critical for minor league sport teams to both understand the relationship between social identity and brand equity and utilize the insights provided by

an understanding of the predictive relationship social identity has on brand equity (Underwood, et al., 2001). This leads to the first research question:

RQ1: How does social identity predict brand equity in Minor League Baseball?

National television is a powerful social connection point. Because minor league sport leagues do not enjoy this social connection point (Fraser, 2007), this may impact the social image of minor league sport leagues when compared with their major league sport and college sport leagues that enjoy these social image benefits. Lassar et al. (1995) found social image has a halo effect over other factors that predict brand equity. Therefore, the lack of national programming and other social image factors may predict a social image gap between minor league sport and its competitors from major league sport and major college sport. These differences may help us understand differences in brand equity. This leads to the following research questions:

RQ2: How does social image differ between Minor League Baseball, major professional sport, and major college sport?

RQ3: What are the differences in the relationship between social image and brand equity for Minor League Baseball, major professional sport, and major college sport?

As previously noted, minor league sport teams lack the television exposure that major college sport teams enjoy (Fraser, 2007). This creates differences in revenue between minor league and major college sport teams. However, it may also contribute to differences in a fan's understanding of team affiliations—a particular type of brand association that reflects strategic partnerships the team shares with other organizations. For minor league teams, these team affiliations include the team's alignment with its

league or its major league parent team. For college sport teams, these team affiliations include the team's alignment with its conference or its parent university. Differences in television exposure may mean Minor League Baseball fans are not very familiar with their favorite team's brand association with the Pacific Coast League or the International League. In contrast, major college sport fans may be more familiar with their team's Big Ten Conference or Southeastern Conference brand associations due to the reinforcement of these associations in television broadcasts. A fan of a minor league sport team may not know the name of the major league parental team with which it is affiliated—furthermore, they may prefer a major league team that differs from the minor league team's affiliation due to geographical (Wann & Grieve, 2005) or historical (Underwood et al., 2001) factors. In contrast, it is unlikely someone would be a fan of a college sport team but fail to identify the university with which it shares a brand association—particularly because the team name is shared with the university and because this association is reinforced in television broadcasts. Keller (1993) stated brand equity is the result of brand awareness and brand associations. Therefore, stronger brand associations in the form of a team's affiliations with a league/conference or parent organization (major league franchise/university) may also explain differences in brand equity. This leads to the following research questions:

RQ4: How do league/conference affiliation and major professional team/university affiliation predict brand equity for Minor League Baseball and major college sport?

CHAPTER III

METHOD

This study had two main purposes. The first purpose was to determine whether social identity predicted brand equity for Minor League Baseball organizations and, if so, to help Minor League Baseball organizations to optimize their limited resources and maximize revenue. The second purpose was to examine how differences in social image and team affiliations may contribute to differences in brand equity between Minor League Baseball teams, major professional sport teams, and major college sport teams.

Research Questions

The study was informed by the following research questions:

RQ1: How does social identity predict brand equity in Minor League Baseball?

RQ2: How does social image differ between Minor League Baseball, major professional sport, and major college sport?

RQ3: What are the differences in the relationship between social image and brand equity for Minor League Baseball, major professional sport, and major college sport?

RQ4: How do league/conference affiliation and major professional team/university affiliation predict brand equity for Minor League Baseball and major college sport?

Research Design

This study was intended to examine data at one point in time rather than taking a longitudinal approach. Therefore, a cross-sectional survey method was an appropriate

research design (Creswell, 2014). Cross-sectional studies allow a large quantity of data to be collected. Cross-sectional studies allow large numbers of people to be questioned using structured questions. These studies allow researchers to analyze relationships between important variables. These surveys are only appropriate when there is sufficient pre-existing knowledge to inform the structured questions (Jesson, 2001). Survey techniques are commonly used in both sport brand studies (Gladden & Funk, 2002; Ross et al., 2008) as well as sport social identification studies (Branscombe & Wann, 1991; Wann & Branscombe, 1990; Wann et al., 1995).

Target, Sample, and Procedure

This section begins with an examination of the target population. Once this target population was examined, then the sample selected to represent the target population was considered. Finally, the procedure utilized to generate the sample was expressed.

Population

The target population for this study was sport fans who live within 20 miles of a Minor League Baseball team. As previously mentioned, more than 42.5 million people attended MiLB games in 2015 (Minor League Baseball, 2015). This figure would have ranked second among the four major American professional sports including the MLB, NBA, NFL, and NHL fan bases. While minor league sport leagues do not enjoy the media attention of major professional sport leagues (Fraser, 2007), Minor League Baseball is an important part of the sport marketplace as evidenced by its strong annual attendance figures.

Minor League Baseball teams face at least three challenges that make this population important to study. First, Minor League Baseball teams have tighter budgets

than major professional sport teams and major college teams. Therefore, Minor League Baseball teams do not have the luxury of absorbing misallocated time or resources. Major league professional and major college sport teams, with greater resources, allow for a great margin of error to cover marketing miscues. Second, Minor League Baseball teams lack the television and sponsorship dollars that major professional and major college teams enjoy. Third, this lack of media revenue leaves Minor League Baseball teams dependent on revenue generated via game attendees, placing added pressure on Minor League Baseball teams to maximize the dollars generated through ticket sales revenue. Therefore, Minor League Baseball teams must know as much as possible about their game attendees to maximize this critical revenue source. Understanding this population—as well as how it may differ from major professional and major college sport fans—is critical to Minor League Baseball owners and professionals. Minor League Baseball, like any business, stands to benefit when it maximizes its knowledge of its brand equity.

Accessing the Sample

The Amazon MTurk system was utilized to access this population. A national sample was chosen rather than sampling at a local game to remove bias from a single team and its specific set of business practices and outside influences. More than 500,000 workers form the pool of MTurk workers. The MTurk method of data collection was used to reach a large, diverse sample of sport fans. Prior to the growth in popularity of MTurk, sport brand equity studies that sought to include a large, diverse sample utilized mail surveys (Gladden & Funk, 2002; Ross et al., 2008). Less diverse convenience samples, often involving college students, were also utilized in sport social identity

research (Branscombe & Wann, 1994; Wann & Branscombe, 1993; Wann et al., 2008). However, changes in technology now allow for a faster, larger, more economical, and diverse sampling method. Researchers found MTurk samples to be more representative than sampling college students and more cost and time effective than other sampling methods (Berinsky, et al., 2012).

Berinsky et al. (2012) found the MTurk samples were both more generalizable to the larger population as well as less expensive than similar options. Buhrmester et al. (2011) found MTurk samples more diverse than both alternate internet samples as well as college student convenience samples. Gosling, Vazire, Srivastava, and John (2004) found internet samples to be diverse, generalizable, and unaffected by repeat and nonserious responses. Still, Paolacci and Chandler (2014) indicated the controls offered by MTurk can allow researchers to influence the sample composition. In accordance with the suggestion of Paolacci and Chandler, the researcher has specified possible influences on MTurk sample composition herein so those decisions can be evaluated.

Similar to other research techniques, the use of MTurk does have limitations. MTurk workers are younger than the average citizen (32.3 years of age). They also earn less than the face-to-face samples. This group shows less racial and religious diversity than face-to-face samples. In addition, this group tends to be unmarried more than face-to-face samples (Berinsky et al., 2012). Workers are also less extraverted and more socially anxious than the average citizen (Paolacci & Chandler, 2014).

MTurk benefits include direct access to a pool of potential study participants as well as timeliness and affordability. Those who seek job assistance (including survey participants) via MTurk are referred to as “requesters” while those who fulfill requester

tasks are called “workers.” Workers receive a small fee for their services as determined by the requester (Paolacci & Chandler, 2014). Researchers have the option to implement protections and conditions such as the selection of highly rated workers. Workers are rated based on their performances on past jobs. In addition, researchers can utilize targeted terms and filters and remove duplicate responses by allowing just one response for each IP address (Kang, 2015). MTurk will be further examined in the sample section that follows.

Sample

A cross-sectional survey requires a representative sample. Samples that are not representative may limit the generalizability of study results (Jesson, 2001). The nature of this study required a large sample of sport fans that have knowledge of a major professional team, Minor League Baseball team, and a major college sport team. This was accomplished using the MTurk system.

Many sport management studies of this nature include the potential for a strong fan identification bias. This is because the surveys are often conducted in the venue—with the fan having already demonstrated a certain degree of identity with the team as a result of game attendance. When the survey is conducted in the venue, participants are also biased by the ingroup, the messaging they see in the venue, the excitement of the entertainment that is delivered, and many more factors.

The sample for the study needed to have a favorite major college football or basketball team. They also needed to have a favorite major American professional sport team (NFL, MLB, NBA, NHL). Knowledge of these MiLB, major college sport, and

major professional sport was important for comparative purposes. This sample would accommodate that purpose.

By utilizing MTurk, many of these biases were removed. First, the biases were removed because the minor league team needed to be within a specific radius of the participant. This did not mean the person had attended a minor league game. It simply placed the participant in close enough proximity to the stadium to have an educated understanding of the product and those who support it—as reflected to a large extent in brand equity and social identity. Therefore, the fan identification bias was likely to be lessened when compared with in-venue studies. Second, while the sport fans within this 20-mile radius would be more likely to have some knowledge of the team, the major sport messages they received would still emanate from major professional and major college sport which have far greater control of broadcast time (Fraser, 2007). Therefore, physical proximity to the stadium was intended to account for knowledge of a product that was still dominated by competitors who were located well beyond this 20-mile physical radius.

The fact that participants were asked to have a favorite major college team and favorite major professional sport team—based on favoritism—differed from the minor league team selection based on a 20-mile radius—based on geography. But this was done for a reason. As noted on several occasions, minor league sport does not receive the broadcast (Fraser, 2007) or media attention of major college and major professional sport. Therefore, it was necessary to insure participants had access to information about all three sport levels. This was accomplished by ensuring they knew about a local Minor League Baseball team in addition to major professional and major college teams.

Major college and major professional sport teams are susceptible to bias due to rivalry. Researchers that have examined rivalries have focused on major American and international professional sport, college sport, and even high school sport rivalries without mentioning minor league rivalries (Tyler & Cobbs, 2015). Therefore, the potential for outgroup bias against a rival local major professional or major college team was removed by asking participants to reference their favorite teams. In addition, fans of major professional sport may follow whatever team their favorite player joins rather than the area team. Player identification has been found to predict team identification in major professional sport (Wu, Tsai, & Hung, 2012). Therefore, the fan may well have a bias against the closest physical team due to rivalry with their favorite player's distant team. In contrast, players are not considered an important factor in minor league sport. For example, researchers found only the top five rated Minor League Baseball players had an impact on attendance and that impact was considered "small" (Gitter & Rhoads, 2011). Therefore, this negative local team bias based on player identification was not likely for Minor League Baseball fans. Because the major portion of this study focuses on Minor League Baseball fans, this balance between Minor League Baseball geographical proximity—which allowed for general knowledge of the local minor league team—combined with protection against possible rivalry biases against local college and major professional teams was the best option to account for the many factors being considered.

These selections were made for several reasons. First, should the study indicate social identity predicts brand equity in a Minor League Baseball context, the researcher intended to provide minor league sport organizations with tools that could help increase ticket sales. Second, the researcher was attempting to ensure the sample was

knowledgeable enough about sport to provide reliable and generalizable feedback to sport settings. Therefore, the fact that people with some product knowledge would be targeted did not compromise the study results but rather informed them. Finally, the researcher sought participants that have demonstrated through their work ratings that they take their work seriously.

Sampling Procedure

Information regarding the survey was posted on Amazon's MTurk jobs area. This information included a hyperlink to the survey, which was be posted on Qualtrics.com. Amazon MTurk workers who decided to attempt work on the survey were asked to respond to several prequalifying questions based on the sample description previously noted. The inclusion of Minor League Baseball and major college sport allowed for an analysis of team affiliation brand associations.

Participants were also asked if they were a United States resident, at least 18 years of age, and a sports fan. Those participants who met these criteria advanced to the survey instrument, which is described in detail later. Participants who completed the survey received a code. The researcher was then able to check MTurk to verify the authenticity of codes and pay those workers who completed the survey. The Qualtrics.com and MTurk sites was checked at least once every 24 hours until the sample size surpassed the goal of at least 500 people starting the survey and at least 400 people completing the survey. It took four days to achieve this sample size.

Amazon MTurk workers who participated in the survey sample were be paid a small fee. Researchers have found this compensation had no adverse effect on data quality (Buhrmester et al., 2011). They also found the time dedicated to the work did not

negatively impact the quality of the results (Buhrmester et al., 2011). Therefore, a 60-cent fee was paid to each MTurk worker. In one study, researchers offered a 50-cent survey payment. They collected 482 usable surveys in less than three days (Ha, Kim, Kang, & Park, 2014). Kang (2015) offered a 30-cent MTurk worker payment and received 372 responses. Amazon required an additional 40 percent commission per worker per job that was not required at that time (Bensinger, 2015).

The researcher and the participants followed Institutional Review Board (IRB) research requirements. MTurk worker survey participation was voluntary. Participants had the opportunity to withdraw from the survey at any time. All information was stored on a password-protected computer.

Instrument

The researcher must determine which variables must be analyzed so the results are meaningful. The variables must be assessed with the proper questions. In this study, seven variables were measured. These variables were: (a) venue; (b) history, (c) community group experience, (d) fan identification, (e) brand equity, (f) social image, and (g) team affiliation. An explanation of the selected variables and the appropriate questions to measure these variables follows.

Venue

Venue has been found to be a predictor of fan identification (Boyle & Magnusson, 2007; Watkins, 2014). The venue is important because it is the place where the social group meets. Venue items showed acceptable Cronbach's alphas above .70 (Nunnally, 1978) in both the Boyle and Magnusson (2007) and Watkins (2014) studies with scores of .80 and .82, respectively. The Watkins study included three items, two of which were

applicable. “I think the team’s venue is a unique place” and “I would be upset if the team’s venue was torn down tomorrow” are usable in this study. However, Watkins (2014) asked social media followers of the team if they had a lot of great memories at the team venue. While they may legitimately have an opinion of the arena without attending a game, they are unable to answer questions about their memories in a venue they have never entered. Therefore, that item was eliminated from this study, which may include non-attendees. These items were measured using a 7-point Likert scale (1-do not agree, 7-completely agree).

History

Studies have found history to be a predictor of fan identification (Boyle & Magnusson, 2007; Watkins, 2014). History items resulted in Cronbach’s alphas of .82 in both the Boyle and Magnusson (2007) and Watkins (2014) studies—both exceeding the .70 standard (Nunnally, 1978). The Watkins (2014) study included three items. Two items remain unchanged: “Its long and storied tradition makes the team of today something special” and “The rich tradition of the team is something you don’t find other places.” The item “The team has a unique place in the history of the NBA” was rephrased “The team has a unique place in the history of its sport.” These items were measured using a 7-point Likert scale (1-do not agree, 7-completely agree).

Community Group Experience

Studies by Boyle and Magnusson (2007) and Watkins (2014) showed community group experience was a predictor of fan identification. The Cronbach’s alpha exceeded the .70 standard (Nunnally, 1978) in both studies (.93 and .83, respectively). The Watkins (2014) items were retained without change. Watkins’ community group

experience items were: “It’s hard to think about the team city without thinking about the team,” “The team is a big part of the culture of the city,” and “The team city would be a very different place without the team.” These items were measured using a 7-point Likert scale (1-do not agree, 7-completely agree).

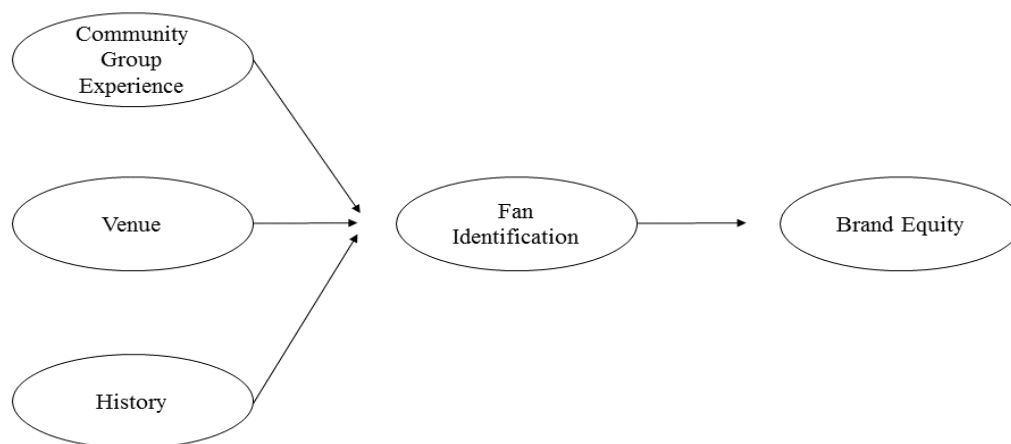
Salient Group Experience

Salient group experience was removed as a predictor variable for minor league sport in this study even though it was used in the Boyle and Magnusson (2007) and Watkins (2014) studies. There were several reasons for this choice. First, this study did not assess fans that specifically attended minor league games. This is in line with the Watkins (2014) study, which assessed social media users who followed specific NBA teams. Two of the items she included “Participating in team rituals helps me feel connected to the team” and “Participating in team rituals allow me to show I’m a fan of the team” could be answered in a way that applied to any attendance circumstance. The item “I have a lot of fun at team games just being a part of the crowd” had the lowest factor loading (.52) among all items, which may be related to the point made earlier herein that these social media participants may not have attended games. Because the MTurk workers may not have attended games, they were unqualified to assess the salient group experience. Secondly, the salient group experience variable failed to achieve the .70 Cronbach’s alpha standard (Nunnally, 1978) in the Boyle and Magnusson (2007) study—it fell short at .54. Third, Underwood et al. (2001) called for one group experience variable when they designed the SIBE Model—not two. For these three reasons, salient group experience was not included in this model.

Fan Identification (Social Identification)

This study sought to show a relationship in which fan identification (social identification with a team) predicts brand equity. Fan identification had a Cronbach's alpha well above the .70 standard (Nunnally, 1978) in both the Boyle and Magnusson (2007) and Watkins (2014) studies (.85 and .92, respectively). The Watkins study included four items that remained: "I see myself as a fan of the team," "My friends would say I am a fan of the team," "Being a fan of the team is very important to me," and "I fit in with other fans of the team." The item "I often display the team logo at home or at work" seemed to be an item meant to represent BIRGing behavior. However, it was too specific a question and not a requirement for someone to identify as a fan. One can be a highly identified fan of a team without displaying the team logo at home or at work. Therefore, this item was removed. These items were used in relation to the local Minor League Baseball as well as the major professional and major college context. These items will be measured using a 7-point Likert scale (1-do not agree, 7-completely agree).

Figure 2: Adapted SIBE Model



Brand Equity

Brand equity is the variable that should be predicted by fan identification in the study. Brand equity had a Cronbach's alpha of .82 in the Boyle and Magnusson (2007) study and .89 in the Watkins (2014) study. The item "I consider myself to be loyal to the team" was removed because it is considered a consequence of brand equity (Keller, 2001) rather than a component part of the variable. The item "Attending a team game is worth the time and money to do so" was deleted because participants may not have attended a game or know the price. The remaining six items were retained. The items "The team is competitive with other teams in the NBA" and "I can recognize the team among other teams in the NBA," were reworded to "The team is competitive with other teams in the sport" and "I can recognize the team among other teams in the sport." The remaining items remain unchanged. These include: "The team would be my first choice," "I believe that overall the team is a high quality organization," "I can recall the logo quickly," and "Some characteristics of the team come to mind quickly." These items were used to assess the local Minor League Baseball team as well as the participant's favorite major professional and major college sport teams so relationships between social image and brand equity at each level could be assessed. These items were measured using a 7-point Likert scale (1-do not agree, 7-completely agree).

Social Image

The social image variable allowed for an examination of social image differences that may exist between minor league, major professional, and major college sport teams. While all four items from the Lassar et al. (1995) study were retained, they were rephrased due to their prior use in assessing television and watch brands. The item "This brand of television fits my personality" was changed to "This team fits my image." The

item “I would be proud to own a television of this brand” was changed to “I would be proud to own season tickets to watch this team.” The item “This brand of television will be well regarded by my friends” was changed to “This team is well regarded by my friends.” The item “In its status and style this brand matches my personality” was changed to “This team’s status and style matches my personality.” These items were measured using a 7-point Likert scale (1-do not agree, 7-completely agree).

Team Affiliation

Team affiliation is a type of brand association that was measured in this study. Gladden and Funk (2002) utilized a specific method for assessing sport brand associations. They identified 16 sport brand associations, or variables, that contribute to sport brand equity. Once they identified the brand association variables they considered important, they created items and then tested them in a pilot study. In this study two variables were created to assess a team affiliation’s contribution to sport brand equity. These variables are league affiliation—which measures the affiliation a team shares with its league or conference—and organizational affiliation—which measures the affiliation a team shares with its parent organization (such as a university or MLB team). The MiLB organizational affiliation items were “I can name the Major League Baseball team that serves as the parent team to my local minor league team,” “When I think about my local minor league team, I often think about the Major League Baseball team that serves as its parent organization,” and “I have a favorable opinion of the Major League Baseball team with which my local minor league team is affiliated.” The MiLB league affiliation items were “I can name the league my local minor league team competes in,” “When I think about my local minor league team, I often think about the league in which it competes,”

and “I have a favorable opinion of the league with which my local minor league team is affiliated.” The major college sport organizational affiliation items were “I can name the college/university that serves as the parent organization for my favorite college team,” “When I think about my favorite college team, I often think about the university/college that serves as its parent organization,” and “I have a favorable opinion of the university with which my favorite college team is affiliated.” The major college league affiliation items were “I can name the conference my favorite college team competes in,” “When I think about my favorite college team, I often think about the conference in which it competes,” and “I have a favorable opinion of the conference with which my favorite college team is affiliated.” These items were measured using a 7-point Likert scale (1-do not agree, 7-completely agree).

Media Exposure

It was important to collect data that described participant exposure to the three levels of sport. This allowed for an understanding of differences that exist in consumer exposure to the three levels of sport. Participants were asked the same questions for their area Minor League Baseball team, favorite major professional sport team, and favorite major college sport team. These items were: “This team has many of its games broadcast on national television,” “I follow this team on a regular basis through the internet and/or newspaper,” and “I find myself communicating about this team or seeking information about this team through social media.”

Demographic Information

It was important to collect data that described the study's participants. This allows readers to make judgments about the sample quality. Participants were asked questions related to their age, gender, race, education, income, and geographical location.

Instrument Validation

Researchers recommend questionnaires should be shared with people who have specialized information about some aspects of questionnaire quality in order to obtain value feedback that can enhance the questionnaire's quality (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009). This was achieved by sharing the instrument with professors familiar with social identity and brand equity literature. It was at this point that a true first draft of the survey was considered to be in place.

Next, doctoral students took the survey to ensure the proper items were incorporated, the wording was proper, and the formatting of the Qualtrics survey was proper. Several changes were made at this point. First, format changes in Qualtrics were made to eliminate spacing issues. Second, the initial screening questions were combined to a single page for purposes of look and feel as well as creating the feel of a faster survey process. Third, the survey items were divided into pages throughout for the purpose of breaking up the survey and allowing the participants to feel like progress was made. A total of 10 page breaks were created for the 51 questions (including the screening questions) for an average of just more than five questions per page. Finally, a completion meter was added to each page, ranging from 0% to 100% so participants were encouraged to see their survey completion progress.

Dillman et al. (2009, p. 229) stated, "Not doing a pilot study can be disastrous for web surveys in particular." Therefore, a pilot test was issued to sport management

college students who attend a Midwest university using Qualtrics. 46 of 61 (75%) students across two classes participated in the pilot study. A number of the students inquired about the purpose of the Amazon MTurk worker code, which indicated it was working properly. Feedback from the pilot study was analyzed to assess whether the Cronbach's alphas were appropriate. Venue's Cronbach's alpha (.662) was below the Nunnally (1978) standard (see Table 1). This resulted in two items being added to the venue variable after consultation with a fellow researcher. The new items, based on the literature, were: "I have a lot of great memories of the team's venue," which was a slight variant of a Watkins (2014) item, and "The team's venue is an important part of the team's organization."

Table 1: Pilot Study Dimension Reduction Cronbach's Alphas

Variables	Pilot Study	Watkins, 2014
Venue	0.662	0.82
History	0.930	0.82
Community Group Experience	0.902	0.83
Fan Identification	0.947	0.92
Brand Equity	0.896	0.89

Data Analysis

Several statistical procedures were utilized to evaluate the results. These included confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), structural equation modeling (SEM), *t*-tests, linear correlation coefficients, and linear regression. The study's data were analyzed using IBM

SPSS (Version 22) and SPSS AMOS (Version 22). The variables were assessed using descriptive statistics that assess central tendency and variability.

Following the example established by Watkins (2014), CFA was utilized to assess measurement model appropriateness. This assessment was conducted using IBM SPSS (Version 22) and SPSS AMOS (Version 22). CFA is appropriate when a strong theoretical or empirical base exists, the number of factors can be fixed *a priori*, and variables are fixed to load on a specific factor or factors. The researcher may cite previous empirical research, current information from the field, or his or her own hypothesis as the basis of the theoretical basis for variable selection. The sample should ideally either include a minimum of 250 participants with communalities greater than .70 and mean communality of .60 or greater (assuming less than 30 variables) or include a minimum of 200 participants with a scree test. However, because the CFA related to research question one will also be used in conjunction with SEM, a sample size of 400 provides a good chance of recovering a known population model (Stevens, 2009). Therefore, a minimum participant sample of 400 was established. This sample size also accounted for the Stevens (2009) assertion that components with only a few loadings should not be considered unless the sample includes 300 or more participants. Maximum likelihood discrepancy, the most commonly utilized method for estimating CFA models (Curran, West, & Finch, 1996) was utilized.

In this study, CFA was used to assess whether the items allocated to measure the variables community group experience, venue, history, social identity, and brand equity demonstrated internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha scores of .70 have been deemed

acceptable (Nunnally, 1978). The results of this analysis are seen in Table 2, with the Watkins (2014) results included for comparative purposes.

Suhr (2006) indicated CFA has several considerations that researchers must address. There must be a hypothesis to be tested. This study seeks to identify whether social identity predicts brand equity in a Minor League Baseball context. There must be a sufficient sample size (at least five subjects per model parameter). Missing data must be addressed. Outliers must be removed to insure multivariate normality. Model fit indexes must be interpreted. In this study, missing data was addressed by removing partially completed surveys as recommended by Tabachnick and Fidell (2001). Multivariate outliers were removed by performing a Mahalanobis distance test and removing all cases below .001 (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001). Hu and Bentler (1998) said it is difficult to specify cutoff values for fit indexes because sample sizes and other factors differ across studies. However, they stated values close to .95 for TLI and CFI indicate a good model fit a good fit. Bentler (1992) stated values above .9 for NFI indicate a good model fit. Values below .8 for RMSEA have been determined to be a fair (Browne & Cudeck, 1993) or adequate (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004) fit. The values for χ^2 have been found to be sensitive to a number of conditions including both large and small sample sizes (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008). Therefore, the Wheaton, Muthen, and Alwin (1977) relative/normed chi-square will be calculated to minimize the influence of sample size. The Wheaton et al. (1977) standard of a value under 5 has been considered acceptable for this normed chi-square.

Research Question 1

SEM was used to assess how community group experience, venue, and history predicted fan identification as well as how fan identification predicted brand equity. Blunch (2013) stated SEM provides tools to analyze connections between concepts where these explanations either expand our general knowledge or solve a problem. Blunch (2013) explained SEM is a confirmatory tool that builds on *a priori* theory with the possibility of verifying the merit of this theory. SEM yields both a structural model and a measurement model. The structure is depicted in the form of the circles/ellipses, squares/rectangles, and arrows. The measurement comes in the form of standardized regression weights that appear in the SPSS output near the arrows along with other important data (regression weights, covariances) that appear in the output (Blunch, 2013). The SPSS AMOS output provides the values of all specified correlations and covariances as well as indicating which relationships indicate statistical significance.

It was important to evaluate the fit of the structural equation model. This was done assessing information generated by SPSS AMOS. The fit index standards were noted in the previous section.

Research Question 2

Research question two assessed differences in social image among Minor League Baseball, major professional sport, and major college sport. This assessment was similar to the Lassar et al. (1995) study which measured differences in social image among three types of related products or services. This required three independent *t*-tests. The first independent *t*-test evaluated whether there was a significant difference between means for Minor League Baseball social image and major professional sport social image. The second independent *t*-test evaluated whether there was a significant difference between

means for Minor League Baseball social image and major college sport social image. The third independent *t*-test evaluate whether there was a significant difference between means for major college social image and major professional sport social image. The assumptions of normality, independence, and homogeneity of variance were tested (Cohen, 2008). Levene's Test was used to test the homogeneity of variance assumption. The Shapiro-Wilk test was utilized for the normality assumption.

Research Questions 3 and 4

Research questions three and four utilized linear correlation coefficients. In research question three, relationships between social image and brand equity were examined. Specifically, the relationship between Minor League Baseball social image and Minor League Baseball brand equity were assessed. Similarly, the relationship between major professional sport social image and major professional sport brand equity was calculated. Finally, the relationship between major college sport social image and major college sport brand equity was assessed. The strength of the resulting correlation coefficients was assessed, with scores closer to 1 showing the greater strength. A resulting *r* of .10 to .29 is considered to be small, .30 to .49 to be medium, and .50 to 1 to be strong (Cohen, 1988). The positive or negative direction of the relationship was assessed and reported. The coefficient of determination was acquired by squaring each resulting coefficient of correlation. This revealed the proportion of variance explained shared between the two variables (Cohen, 2008). The results were compared by sport level—major professional, major college, and Minor League Baseball.

In research question four, relationships between team affiliation and brand equity were examined. Linear regression equations assessed whether league affiliation and

organizational affiliation were predictive of brand equity. Major professional sport was not assessed as it does not feature similar parent team affiliations.

Prior to each of these analyses, the z score for each combined variable was calculated as called for by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007). For each combined variable, z scores that were greater than 3.29 or less than -3.29 were considered outliers (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). All outliers were removed from the data before conducting the analyses as called for by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007).

Method Summary

This section presents the method that was used in this study. The method was used to identify whether social identity predicts brand equity in a Minor League Baseball context and to provide a tool that can help minor league sport organizations to focus their limited resources and maximize revenue. Differences in social image and team affiliation between Minor League Baseball, major professional sport, and major college sport were assessed. Instruments or items created to assess the relationship between sport social identity and brand equity relationships (Boyle & Magnusson, 2007; Watkins, 2014), customer-based brand equity including the relationship between social image and brand equity (Lassar et al., 1995), as well as the brand association measurement techniques of Ross et al. (2006) were utilized. The survey was posted to Qualtrics. The sample included more than 400 participants using Amazon MTurk workers who have proven to be more diverse than both alternate internet samples as well as college student convenience samples (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). SEM, CFA, t -tests, and

linear correlation coefficient statistical techniques were utilized to analyze the data. The results are communicated in the section that follows.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This section of the study includes a report of the study results. These results include a description of the sample, reporting of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Model (SEM) result for Research Question 1, reporting of the *t*-tests for Research Question 2, and reporting of the result of Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient Coefficients analyses for Research Question 3 and Research Question 4, and also reporting regression results for Research Question 4. Results were analyzed against existing standards as required.

Sample Description

Of the 600 questionnaires that participants started, a total of 458 were completed. Questionnaires were eliminated if the participant failed to advance beyond the qualifying questions (e.g. needed to be a sport fan, live within 20 miles of a MiLB team) or if they failed to complete the questionnaire in full. The reason for the latter criteria is based on the SEM requirements, which demand the removal of partial data so the analysis may proceed to conclusion (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). An additional 26 participants were removed due to providing answers of all ones or sevens. This left 432 valid surveys to be analyzed among the original 600 (72%). The sample description is reported in Table 2.

The sample was primarily male with 288 (66.7%) in the category along with 143 (33.1%) females and one other (<0.1%). This percentage falls between the percentages of males of 78.6% (Boyle & Magnusson, 2007) and 51.8% (Watkins, 2014) found in

prior SIBE studies that examined social identity and brand equity in a sport context. A 2015 Gallup poll found 70% of working men and 59% of working women were sport fans while 60% of nonworking men and 45% of nonworking women were sport fans (Jones, 2015). The gender makeup of the 2015 MiLB fan base was 59.4% male and 40.6% female (SBRnet, 2016). Based on the MiLB info and prior studies as well as Gallup polling data, a sample that is skewed toward male participants is not surprising. For comparative purposes, 50.8% of the US population is female and 49.2% is male (U.S. Census, 2014).

The sample's racial diversity was similar to that of the Watkins (2014) study. The sample included 349 Whites/Caucasians (80.8%), 30 African Americans (6.9%), 25 Hispanics (5.8%), 17 Asians/Pacific Islanders (3.9%), 4 Native Americans (0.9%), and 7 who identified as Other (1.6%). The percentage of Caucasians falls between the percentages of 94.1% (Boyle & Magnusson, 2007) and 76.3% (Watkins, 2014) found in prior SIBE studies. For comparative purposes, the 2014 U.S. Census provides the following racial composition for the U.S. population: 72.4% White, 13.2% African American, 17.4% Hispanic, 5.4% Asian, 1.2% American Indian or Alaska Native, 5.4% Asian, 0.2% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 2.5% Two or More Races (U.S. Census, 2014).

Combined household incomes were evaluated in groups of \$10,000 besides the starting group (below \$20,000) and the top group (\$150,000 or more). The top three income levels in the study featured participants with combined household incomes of \$30,000-\$39,999 which included 59 people (13.7%), the \$50,000-\$59,999 group which included 54 people (12.5%) and the \$40,000-\$49,999 group which included 47 people

(10.9%). The \$50,000-\$59,999 group ranked first in the current study. This aligns well with U.S. Census Bureau data, which reported 2014 average combined household income as \$53,657 (DeNavas-Walt & Proctor, 2015). The household income ranges used by the U.S. Census do not align with those utilized in this study, but they are: 12.6% Under \$15,000, 11% from \$15,000-24,999, 10.1% from \$25,000-34,999, 13.1% from \$35,000-\$49,999, 17% from \$50,000-\$74,999, 11.5% from \$75,000-\$99,999, 13.4% from \$100,000-\$149,999, 5.7% from \$150,000-\$199,999 and 5.6% at \$200,000 and over (DeNavas-Walt & Proctor, 2015). Similarly, 2015 MiLB household income ranges do not align with either those in the current study or the U.S. Census, but they are: 14% under \$25,000, 20.1% from \$25,000-\$49,999, 34.5% from \$50,000 to \$99,999, and 31.3% at \$100,000 or above (SBRnet, 2016).

The top ranked educational level was four-year college degree, which included 189 participants (43.8%). Only 32.5% of the 2015 U.S. population had a bachelor's degree or more (Ryan & Bauman, 2016). The top three educational level groups also included "some college" with 86 participants (19.9%) and master's degree with 66 participants (15.3%). The lowest ranking educational levels were technical degree with 2 participants (0.5%), professional degree with 6 participants (1.4%), and doctoral degree with 10 participants (2.3%). Those with advanced degrees comprised 12% of the 2015 U.S. population (Ryan & Bauman, 2016), while 76 participants (17.6%) had master's and/or doctoral degrees in the current study. No participants reported having less than a high school degree, which differed from the 2015 U.S. population in which 11.6% of the population had less than a college degree (Ryan & Bauman, 2016). Therefore, the

participants in this study were more highly educated than the U.S. population in several areas. These participants provided answers that informed the research questions.

Table 2: Sample Description

Demographics	Current SIBE Study		Census, 2014	Watkins, 2014	
Questionnaires Issued	600	100.0%	NR	384	100.0%
Questionnaires Analyzed	432	72.0%	NR	384	100.0%
Male	289	66.9%	49.2%	199	51.8%
Female	144	33.3%	50.8%	185	48.2%
White/Caucasian	349	80.8%	72.4%*	293	76.3%
African American	30	6.9%	12.6%	45	11.7%
Hispanic	25	5.8%	17.4%	18	4.7%
Asian/Pacific Islander	17	3.9%	DR	17	4.4%
Asian	NR	NR	4.8%	DR	DR
Native Hawaii. & Pac. Island.	DR	DR	0.2%	DR	DR
Native American	4	0.9%	DR	3	0.8%
American Indian/Alaskan Nat.	DR	DR	0.9%	DR	DR
Two or More Races	DR	DR	2.9%	DR	DR
Other	7	1.6%	DR	8	2.1%
Age Mean	34	n/a	37	23	n/a
Age Range	18-75	n/a	n/a	19-63	n/a
Less Than High School Degree	0	0%	11.6%	NR	NR
Bachelors Degree or More	265	61.3%	32.5%	NR	NR
Advanced Degree	76	26.2%	12.0%	NR	NR

DR indicates dissimilar ranges were used. NR indicates not reported. n/a indicates not applicable.

*U.S. Census White Alone category includes some Hispanic and Latino responses

Pre-Research Question Checks and Outlier Considerations

CFA factors were tested in order to assess whether an improvement to a Cronbach's alpha above the .70 level of acceptability (Nunnally, 1978) resulted from adding items to the venue analysis. As previously noted, these new items were "I have a lot of great memories of the team's venue" and "The team's venue is an important part of the team's organization." These additions did prove successful. With two items added to venue, the Cronbach's alpha improved from .662 in the pilot study to .811, exceeding the .70 level of acceptability recommended by Nunnally (1978). The Cronbach's alphas for history (.904), community group experience (.907), fan identification (.937), and brand equity (.892) also exceeded the Nunnally .70 level for acceptability. These results are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3: Item Measures and Descriptive Information

Item	<i>ITC</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Venue ($\alpha = .811$)		4.73	1.53
I think the team's venue is a unique place	0.54	5.00	1.54
I have a lot of great memories of the team's venue	0.71	4.56	2.13
I would be upset if the team's venue was torn down tomorrow	0.66	4.35	2.05
The team's venue is an important part of the team's organization	0.63	5.00	1.78
History ($\alpha = .904$)		4.01	1.81
Its long and storied tradition makes the team of today something special	0.81	4.20	1.97
The rich tradition of the team is something you don't find other places	0.81	4.01	1.91
The team has a unique place in the history of its sport	0.81	3.84	1.97
Community Group Experience ($\alpha = .907$)		3.95	1.87
It's hard to think about the team city without thinking about the team	0.80	3.77	2.15
The team is a big part of the culture of the city	0.83	4.09	1.92
The team city would be a very different place without the team	0.81	4.00	1.99
Fan Identification ($\alpha = .937$)		4.25	1.95
I see myself as a fan of the team	0.88	4.50	2.04
My friends would say I am a fan of the team	0.89	4.11	2.23
Being a fan of the team is very important to me	0.88	3.84	2.16
I fit in with other fans of the team	0.76	4.57	1.99
Brand Equity ($\alpha = .892$)		4.95	1.53
The team is competitive with other teams in the sport	0.66	5.00	1.62
I can recognize the team among other teams in the sport	0.75	5.05	1.85
The team would be my first choice	0.72	4.42	2.16
I believe that overall the team is a high quality organization	0.72	5.09	1.57
I can recall the logo quickly	0.72	5.36	1.95
Some characteristics of the team come to mind quickly	0.73	4.80	2.01

ITC indicates corrected item-total correlations. *M* indicates mean. *SD* indicates standard deviation.

In preparation for research question two, social image data normality was tested. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests resulted in significant values at the $p < .001$ level. However, MiLB social image, major professional sport social image, and major college social image all fell well within the acceptable range for skewness and kurtosis of ± 2 (George & Mallory, 2010). Therefore, the data were considered normal.

Table 4: Social Image Data Normality Assumption Check

Variable	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
MiLB Social Image	4.5	1.62	-0.259	-0.752
Major Pro Social Image	5.77	1.13	-0.993	-0.596
Major College Social Image	5.75	1.13	-0.825	0.123

Similar normality checks were undertaken for brand equity, social image, and team affiliation. Again, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests resulted in significant values at the $p < .001$ level. However, skewness and kurtosis examination showed the data to be well within the acceptable range of ± 2 (George & Mallory, 2010) as seen in Table 4, Table 5, and Table 6.

Table 5: Brand Equity Data Normality Assumption Check

Variable	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
MiLB Brand Equity	4.86	1.49	-0.403	-0.741
Major College Brand Equity	6.27	.90	-1.482	1.774
Major College Brand Equity	6.20	.87	-1.130	0.402

Table 6: Team Affiliation Data Normality Assumption Check

Variable	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
MiLB Organizational Affiliation	3.94	1.92	-0.030	-1.172
MiLB League Affiliation	3.10	1.85	0.503	0.234
Major College Organizational Affiliation	5.84	1.27	-0.991	0.076

Major College League Affiliation	4.64	1.57	-0.512	-0.368
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It was necessary to compute Cronbach's alphas for social image in MiLB, major professional sport, and major college sport contexts for purposes of research question three. That question also required the calculation of the Cronbach's alpha for brand equity in major professional sport and major college sport contexts. MiLB and major college sport team affiliation Cronbach's alphas were also calculated for purposes of question four. All Cronbach's alphas exceeded the .70 level for acceptability (Nunnally, 1978).

Table 7: Cronbach's Alphas for Social Image

Item	<i>ITC</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
MiLB Social Image ($\alpha = .904$)		4.50	1.62
This team fits my image	0.83	4.19	1.87
I would be proud to own season tickets to watch this team	0.74	5.02	1.78
This team is well regarded by my friends	0.75	4.41	1.9
This team's status and style matches my personality	0.83	4.37	1.8
Major Pro Social Image ($\alpha = .824$)		5.77	1.13
This team fits my image	0.68	5.66	1.43
I would be proud to own season tickets to watch this team	0.68	6.16	1.22
This team is well regarded by my friends	0.51	5.62	1.46
This team's status and style matches my personality	0.75	5.65	1.48
Major College Social Image ($\alpha = .818$)		5.75	1.13
This team fits my image	0.69	5.64	1.44
I would be proud to own season tickets to watch this team	0.67	6.13	1.23
This team is well regarded by my friends	0.5	5.65	1.44
This team's status and style matches my personality	0.72	5.56	1.50

ITC indicates corrected item-total correlations. *M* indicates mean. *SD* indicates standard deviation.

Table 8: Cronbach's Alphas for Major College and Major Professional Sport Brand Equity

Item	<i>ITC</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Major Pro Brand Equity ($\alpha = .857$)		6.27	0.90
The team is competitive with other teams in the sport	0.75	5.90	1.40
I can recognize the team among other teams in the sport	0.83	6.45	0.97
The team would be my first choice	0.75	6.28	1.26
I believe that overall the team is a high quality organization	0.83	6.06	1.24
I can recall the logo quickly	0.83	6.57	1.01
Some characteristics of the team come to mind quickly	0.68	6.34	1.10
Major College Brand Equity ($\alpha = .852$)		6.20	0.87
The team is competitive with other teams in the sport	0.83	5.95	1.23
I can recognize the team among other teams in the sport	0.74	6.33	1.09
The team would be my first choice	0.75	6.07	1.34
I believe that overall the team is a high quality organization	0.83	6.04	1.13
I can recall the logo quickly	0.83	6.57	0.95
Some characteristics of the team come to mind quickly	0.68	6.25	1.14

ITC indicates corrected item-total correlations. *M* indicates mean. *SD* indicates standard deviation.

Table 9: Cronbach's Alphas for Team Affiliation

Item	<i>ITC</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Major College Organizational affiliation ($\alpha = .860$)		5.84	1.27
When I think about my favorite college team, I often think about the University with which it is affiliated	0.67	6.12	1.25
The University my favorite college team is affiliated with is important to me	0.81	5.78	1.47
The University with which my favorite college team is affiliated impacts my support of my favorite college team	0.75	5.64	1.57
Major College League affiliation ($\alpha = .833$)		4.64	1.57
When I think about my favorite college team, I often think about the conference with which it is affiliated	0.71	5.14	1.69
The conference my favorite college team is affiliated with is important to me	0.78	4.69	1.78
The conference in which my favorite college team competes impacts my support of my favorite college team	0.61	4.09	1.94
MiLB League affiliation ($\alpha = .937$)		3.10	1.85
When I think about my local Minor League Baseball team, I often think about the league in which it is affiliated	0.83	3.24	1.96
The league my local Minor League Baseball team is affiliated with is important to me	0.92	3.00	1.93
The league in which my local Minor League Baseball team competes impacts my support of the Minor League Baseball team	0.88	3.05	2.02
MiLB Organizational affiliation ($\alpha = .940$)		3.94	1.92
When I think about my local Minor League team, I often think about the Major League Baseball team with which it is affiliated	0.85	4.09	1.96
The Major League Baseball team my favorite Minor League team is affiliated is important to me	0.89	3.91	2.06
The Major League Baseball Team with which my favorite college team is affiliated impacts my support of the Minor League team	0.87	3.82	2.06

ITC indicates corrected item-total correlations. *M* indicates mean. *SD* indicates standard deviation.

Research Question 1

Research question one asked: How does social identity predict brand equity in Minor League Baseball? It incorporated the following hypotheses:

H1: Community group experience has a direct positive influence on fan identification.

H2: Venue has a direct positive influence on fan identification.

H3: History has a direct positive influence on fan identification.

H4: Fan identification has a direct positive influence on brand equity.

Suhr (2006) suggested CFA assumptions must be met. These include a hypothesis to test, sample size of five subjects per parameter, removal of missing data, removal of multivariate outliers, and a check for model fit (Suhr, 2006). There was a hypothesis to test, which was that MiLB social identity predicts MiLB brand equity. A sufficient sample size of 458 participants was in place (8.8 participants per parameter). The model included 52 parameters measuring variances, covariances, and regression coefficients meaning at least 260 participants were required to meet the Suhr minimum. Missing data was addressed by removing the 142 incomplete surveys from the original 600. This technique for addressing missing data was recommended by Tabachnick and Fidell (2001). Surveys providing all ones or all sevens were removed to eliminate non-serious responses. Suhr (2006) also indicated outliers must be removed to ensure multivariate normality. Therefore, a Mahalanobis distance test was conducted to remove

all multivariate outliers in accordance with at the Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) standard of values below .001. This removed 20 multivariate outliers from the sample, leaving 418 participants—still well in excess of the Suhr (2006) minimum of 260 for this 52-parameter study. The CFA was then run with 418 participants—excluding the 20 multivariate outliers.

Measurement Model

In addition to CFA assumptions, Suhr (2006) indicated model fit indexes must be checked. Hu and Bentler (1998) suggested a minimum of two fit indexes should be utilized in order to assess the model fit. In this study, four fit indexes were utilized—TLI, CFI, NFI, and RMSEA—as well as chi-square analysis. The results of the fit analyses are displayed in Table 10. The model's TLI value of .944 and the .952 CFI value qualify as a good fit according to the Hu and Bentler (1998) standard of being close to .95 (Hu & Bentler, 1998). The .933 NFI value exceeded the standard of .9 (Bentler, 1992) established for model fit. The RMSEA value of .073 was below the standard of less than .8 described as an adequate (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004) or a fair (Browne & Cudeck, 1993) fit. Chi-square (X^2) values are sensitive to both large and small sample sizes (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008). The Wheaton, Muthen, and Alwin (1977) relative/normed chi-square has been found to minimize the influence of sample size on chi-square. Therefore, the Wheaton et al. (1977) procedure was utilized, dividing chi-square (511.585) by the degrees of freedom (160) with a value under 5 considered acceptable. The relative/normed chi-square for this model was an acceptable 3.197. These model fit index values, seen in Table 4, indicated an acceptable fit. The acceptability of the model fit is necessary in order to find meaning in the measures for the

antecedents of fan identification (social identity) and to evaluate fan identification as a predictor of brand equity.

Table 10: Model Fit Summary

Model Fit Measure	Current Study	Standard
NFI	0.933*	>0.9
TLI	0.944*	Close to 0.95
CFI	0.952*	Close to 0.95
RMSEA	0.073*	<0.08
Relative/normed chi-square	3.197*	<5

*Indicates the model fit standard was met

Having established model fit, the measurement was examined to assess correlation between the five factors. All observed values shared statistically significant correlation coefficients at the .01 level. These correlation coefficients indicate the strength of the relationship between variables. Cohen (1988) indicated correlation coefficients of $\pm .1$ and $\pm .29$ are considered of small strength, those between $\pm .3$ and $\pm .49$ are considered medium strength and those between $\pm .5$ to ± 1 are considered large strength. The results of these tests are shared in Table 5, indicating large strength exists between all variables.

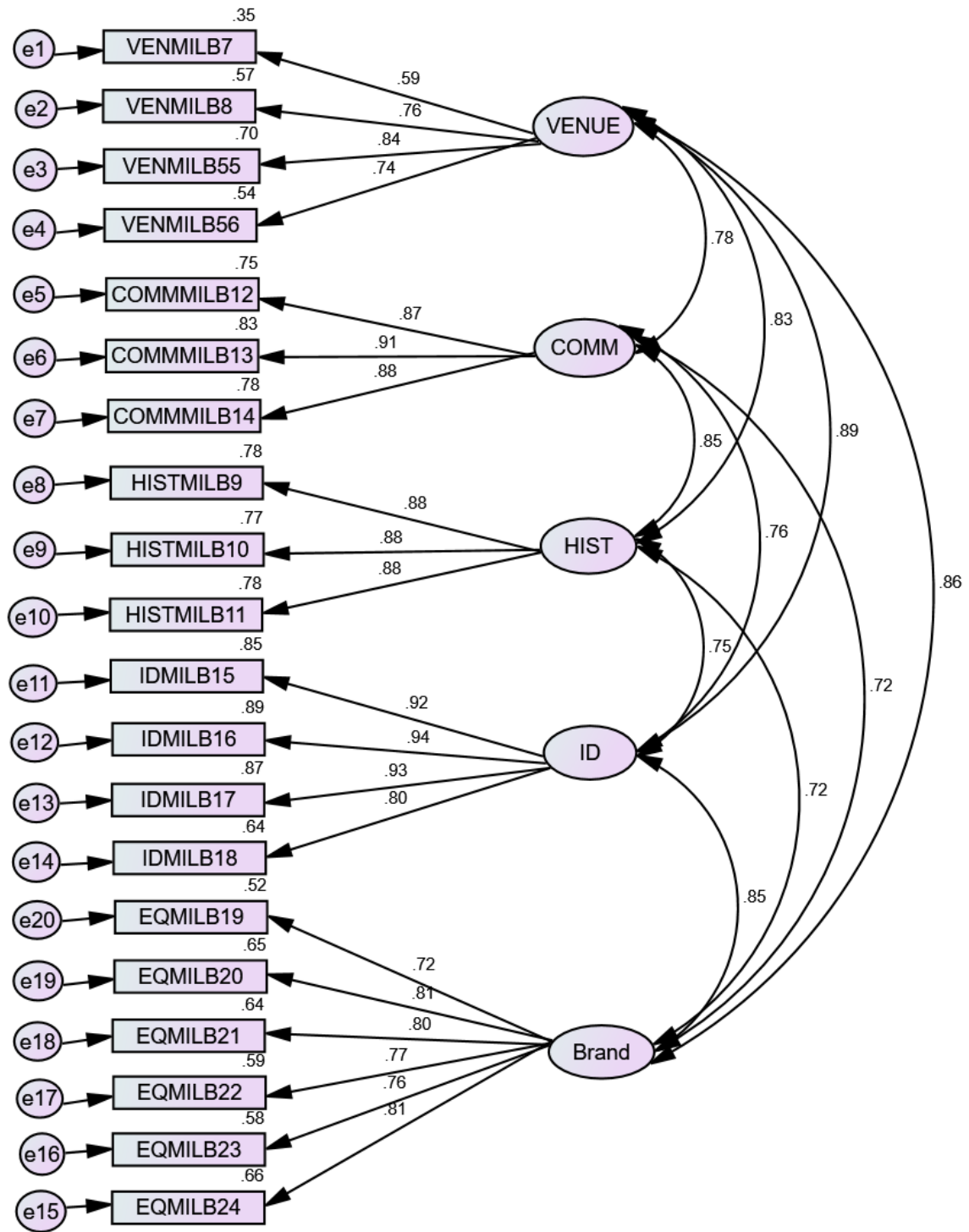
Factor loadings may be deemed acceptable when they meet the cutoff criteria of .40 (Stevens, 2009). The factor loadings in this study ranged from a low of .59 (VEMILB7) to a high of .94 (IDMILB16) as evidenced in Figure 3. Therefore, all factor loadings achieved acceptability according to the Stevens (2009) criteria.

Table 11: Correlation Coefficients for Observed Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4
1 Community Group Exp.				
2 History	0.849*			
3 Venue	0.779*	0.832*		
4 Fan Identification	0.756*	0.751*	0.894*	
5 Brand Equity	0.722*	0.723*	0.860*	0.849*

*Indicates the correlation is significant at the .01 level (two-tailed)

Figure 3: Detailed Measurement Model: People Within 20 Miles of MiLB Teams



COMM and COMMILB are Community Group Experience. VENMILB is Venue. HIST is history. IDMILB and ID are Fan Identification. EQMILB and Brand are Brand Equity.

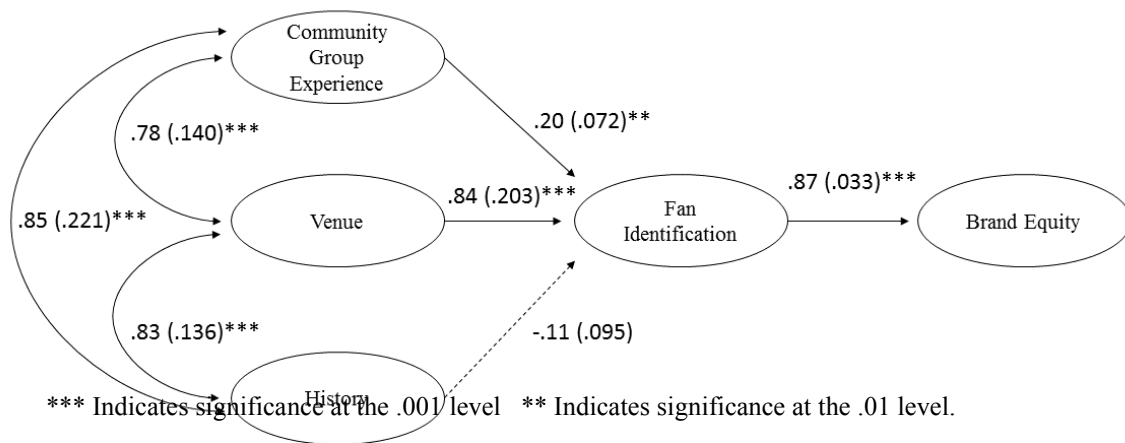
*** Indicates significance at the .001 level ** Indicates significance at the .01 level.

na indicates the significance was not tested due to assigned estimate of 1.

Structural Model

The results of the structural equation model indicate fan identification (social identity) is a statistically significant predictor of brand equity with $\beta=.87, p<.001$. Venue and community group experience were statistically significant predictors of fan identification, with $\beta=.84, p<.001$ and $\beta=.2, p<.01$ respectively. History did not prove to be a statistically significant predictor of fan identification with $\beta=-.11$. The SEM results, including covariances and standard errors for both covariances and correlations, are presented in Figure 3. A more detailed model appears in Figure 4. The measurement model is reported in Figure 5.

Figure 4: Structural Equation Model: People Within 20 Miles of MiLB Teams



Therefore, H1, H2, and H4 were confirmed. H3 was rejected. These findings align well with those found in the Watkins (2014) study. Watkins too found history was not a statistically significant predictor of fan identification (social identity) while confirming the other three hypotheses. The findings also align with many found in the three-pronged Boyle and Magnusson (2007) models as explained in greater detail in the discussion.

Table 12: Standardized and Unstandardized Parameter Estimates for Figure 3

Parameter			Estimates
Venue	→	Fan Identification	1.728 (.837) ***
Community Group Experience	→	Fan Identification	0.208 (.203) **
History	→	Fan Identification	-0.116 (-.106)
Fan Identification	→	Brand	0.522 (.865) ***

*** Indicates significance at the .001 level ** Indicates significance at the .01 level.
Standardized estimates in parentheses.

Research Question 2

The second research question was: How does social image differ between Minor League Baseball, major professional sport, and major college sport? This question required the utilization of the combined variable social image, which included four items. Before conducting these independent *t*-tests, it was important to evaluate the assumptions that must be met for these tests.

As previously noted, social image data normality tests (Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk) resulted in significant values at the $p < .001$ level. However, social image for all three levels—MiLB, major professional, and major college—fell well within the acceptable range for skewness and kurtosis of ± 2 (George & Mallory, 2010). The data were, therefore, considered normal.

The assumption of homogeneity of variance was tested in all three cases utilizing Levene's Test of Equality of Variances. Levene's test was not significant ($F=.317$, $p=.574$) in the comparison of means for major professional sport social image and major college sport social image. This indicates the assumption of equal variances was not violated. However, violations of equal variances existed for both the comparison of means for MiLB and major pro sport ($F=67.48$, $p<.001$) as well as the comparison of

means for MiLB and major college sport ($F=63.02, p<.001$). These violations of equal variances may be overcome utilizing Welch's t -test (Gastwirth, Gel, & Miao, 2009).

Therefore, Welch's t -test was utilized for the latter two comparisons.

The results of the independent t -tests were statistically significant in two cases, but not in the third. There is a statistically significant difference between the means for MiLB social image ($M=4.5, SD=1.62$) and major professional sport social image ($M=5.77, SD=1.13$), $t(771.8)=-13.4, p<.001$. There is also a statistically significant difference between the means for MiLB social image ($M=4.5, SD=1.62$) and major college sport social image ($M=5.75, SD=1.13$), $t(769.68)=-13.14, p<.001$. However, there is not a statistically significant difference between the means for major professional sport social image ($M=5.77, SD=1.13$) and major college sport social image ($M=5.75, SD=1.13$), $t(862)=.338, p=.735$.

Therefore, the results indicate major college sport and major professional sport were associated with a significantly higher social image than Minor League Baseball. The means for major college sport and major professional sport social image were not significantly different. The discussion will include an assessment of the meaning of these results.

Research Questions 3 and 4

Research questions three and four considered relationships that Minor League Baseball brand equity and college brand equity shared with social image and team affiliation. Research question three asked: What are the differences in the relationship between social image and brand equity for Minor League Baseball, major professional sport, and major college sport? Research question four asked: What are the differences

in the relationship between team affiliation brand associations (league/conference, major professional team/university) and brand equity for Minor League Baseball and major college sport? Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient provides a method for assessing relationships of this nature.

Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient requires normal data. In the analysis of research question two results, both MiLB and major college social image data were found to be acceptably normal as previously reported. Just as MiLB and major college sport social image violated both the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests for normality at the $p < .001$ level, so too did MiLB, major professional sport, and major college sport brand equity as well as MiLB and major college sport team affiliation. However, these variables were well within the acceptable range for skewness and kurtosis of ± 2 (George & Mallory, 2010) as previously reported in Table 4, Table 5, and Table 6. For this reason, these variables were considered normal.

All variables were also assessed in terms of their Cronbach's alphas. These results were previously reported in Table 10. All variables showed acceptable Cronbach's alphas above .70 (Nunnally, 1978). This allowed them to be used in the correlation computations.

With variable normality and acceptability of each variable established, multicollinearity was assessed for each comparison using scatterplots in SPSS. There were no issues with multicollinearity as indicated by issues such as curvature. Linear regression analysis was performed in SPSS to check for heteroscedasticity in the relationships between brand equity and social image as well as team affiliation for both MiLB and major college sport. The plot did not show great divergence in the data.

Therefore, none of the relationships showed evidence of heteroscedasticity. With the assumptions for Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient assumptions met, the results were analyzed.

Cohen (1988) indicated correlation coefficients of $\pm .1$ and $\pm .29$ are considered small. Results for Pearson's r between $\pm .3$ and $\pm .49$ are considered medium.

Correlation coefficients of $\pm .5$ to ± 1 are considered large. Questions three and four utilize the Cohen (1988) measures of correlation coefficient strength to assess the relationship between the specified variables.

Research Question 3 Results

Research question three investigated the strength of the relationships between social image and brand equity for MiLB, major professional sport, and major college sport. The relationships were strong for MiLB social image and brand equity ($r^2=.65$, $n=432$, $p<.001$), major professional social image and brand equity ($r^2=.42$, $n=432$, $p<.001$), and major college social image and brand equity ($r^2=.42$, $n=432$, $p<.001$).

Therefore, the finding for research question three is MiLB, major professional sport, and major college sport show statistically significant strong relationships between social image and brand equity. MiLB social image determines a greater proportion of the variance in MiLB brand equity than major professional sport social image determines in major professional sport brand equity. MiLB social image also determines a greater proportion of the variance in MiLB brand equity than major college sport social image determines in major college sport brand equity.

Table 13: Proportion of Brand Equity Determined by Social Image

Sport Level	<i>r</i>	<i>r</i> ²	<i>n</i>	<i>p</i>
MiLB	0.81	0.65	432	<0.001
Major Professional	0.65	0.42	432	<0.001
Major College	0.65	0.42	432	<0.001

Research Question 4 Results

Research question four assessed the strength of the relationships between MiLB team affiliation and MiLB brand equity as well as major college sport team affiliation and major college sport brand equity. MiLB organizational affiliation (the team's relationship with a MLB team) and MiLB league affiliation (e.g. International League, Pacific Coast League) each shared statistically significant medium strength relationships with MiLB brand equity ($r^2=.14$, $n=432$, $p<.001$ and $r^2=.2$, $n=432$, $p<.001$ respectively). Major college organizational affiliation (the team's relationship with its university) shared a statistically significant strong relationship with college sport brand equity ($r^2=.29$, $n=432$, $p<.001$). Major college league affiliation (e.g. Big Ten Conference, Southeastern Conference) shared a statistically significant medium strength relationship with major college sport brand equity ($r^2=.09$, $n=432$, $p<.001$).

Table 14: Proportion of Brand Equity Determined by Team Affiliation

Team Affiliation	<i>r</i>	<i>r</i> ²	<i>n</i>	<i>p</i>
MiLB Organizational Affiliation	0.38	0.14	432	<.001
MiLB League Affiliation	0.45	0.2	432	<.001
Major College Organizational Affiliation	0.54	0.29	432	<.001
Major College League Affiliation	0.31	0.09	432	<.001

In addition, linear regression equations were generated to assess the relationship between the dependent variable brand equity and the independent variables organizational affiliation and league affiliation in both MiLB and major college sport contexts. Brand equity for each level of sport was regressed on each level's respective organizational affiliation and league affiliation. A statistically significant regression equation was found for MiLB brand equity, $F(2,429)=60.846$, $p<.001$, adjusted $r^2 = .217$. Both MiLB league affiliation ($\beta=.339$) and MiLB organizational affiliation ($\beta=.185$) were significant predictors of major college brand equity at the $p<.001$ level. A statistically significant regression equation was found for major college brand equity, $F(2,429)=91.296$, $p<.001$, adjusted $r^2=.295$. Both major college league affiliation ($\beta=.118$) and major college organizational affiliation ($\beta=.490$) were significant predictors of major college brand equity at the $p<.01$ level. In both MiLB and major college sport contexts, when participants felt league affiliation and organizational affiliation were strong, then this contributed to stronger brand equity for the respective sport level. When participants felt league affiliation and organizational affiliation were not strong, then this contributed to weaker brand equity.

The finding for research question four is MiLB organizational affiliation and MiLB league affiliation each showed statistically significant medium strength relationships with MiLB brand equity. However, major college sport team affiliation component parts differed in their strength with ties to the university demonstrating a statistically significant strong relationship with major college sport brand equity, while team affiliation with the conference showed a statistically significant medium strength relationship with major college sport brand equity. In addition, linear regression

equations showed organizational affiliation and league affiliation were predictive of brand equity at the $p < .001$ level in both MiLB and major college sport contexts. Both organizational and league affiliation were statistically significant predictors of brand equity in MiLB ($p < .001$) and major college ($p < .01$) contexts.

Summary

Structural equation modeling, t -tests, Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient tests, and a linear regression equation were utilized to assess four research questions. The results of those tests were reported in this section. Fan identification (social identity) was found to be a statistically significant predictor of brand equity in a MiLB context. Community group experience and venue were found to be statistically significant antecedents to fan identification. However, history was not found to be a statistically significant antecedent to fan identification.

Major college sport and major professional sport demonstrated a significantly higher social image than Minor League Baseball. However, there was no significant difference in social image between major college sport and major professional sport. MiLB, major professional sport, and major college sport all showed statistically significant strong relationships between social image and brand equity. MiLB and major college sport both showed medium strength relationships between team affiliation and brand equity. Major college sport organizational affiliation (the team's relationship with the university) demonstrated a strong relationship with brand equity. However, major college sport league affiliation (the team's relationship with the conference) demonstrated a medium relationship with brand equity. Both MiLB organizational affiliation and

MiLB league affiliation showed media relationships with MiLB brand equity. The meaning of these results were considered in the discussion.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This study intended to explore relationships between social identity and brand equity in a Minor League Baseball context. In addition, the study strived to gain a better understanding of Minor League Baseball by assessing differences in social image that may exist between Minor League Baseball, major college sport, and major professional sport. The study also tried to enhance the understanding of Minor League Baseball by comparing the strength of team affiliations that impact Minor League Baseball and major college sport teams. The implications of these findings will now be considered in terms of prior study corroboration. Academic and practitioner implications will be discussed. Future research will be considered and the limitations tied to this study will be shared.

Research Question 1

The first research question examined how social identity predicts brand equity in a Minor League Baseball context. The results indicated MiLB fan identification (social identity) was a statistically significant predictor of MiLB brand equity. In addition, it showed community group experience and venue were statistically significant antecedents for social identification. History did not prove to be a statistically significant antecedent for fan identification (social identity).

Community group experience is a statistically significant antecedent to MiLB fan identification. This finding is consistent with the SIBE studies of Boyle and Magnusson (2007) and Watkins (2014). This means the role a MiLB team plays in connecting the

community is important to consumers choosing to identify as fans. MiLB teams should also emphasize their role in community service projects, parades, and other community events. They should also emphasize the entertainment they provide the community at prices that are family friendly.

MiLB venue is a statistically significant antecedent to MiLB fan identification. This finding aligns with the SIBE study results from Boyle and Magnusson (2007) and Watkins (2014). This indicates that when MiLB fans connect with the MiLB venue, then they will also feel identified with the team. Therefore, the team venue plays an important role in generating the connection between the MiLB and the fans. MiLB teams should invest in their venues. Before building new venues, they should ensure they match well with fan interests by conducting surveys with current customers (if applicable) as well as the community at large (with the intention of growing the fan base). In addition, they should ensure existing facilities fit the needs and expectations of current and potential customers. Again, surveys will provide valuable insights into how the venue is perceived, which aspects are valued, and what additions or changes may enhance the venue's ability to grow fan identification. Because the venue is important to a consumer's decision to identify as a fan of the team, well-conceived venues should be emphasized in MiLB marketing content.

Major League Baseball fans often know important historical statistics, the names of Hall of Famers, and other historical facts. However, history does not appear to be a statistically significant antecedent to fan identification in a MiLB context. Watkins (2014) had a similar finding. The finding also aligns with portions of the Boyle and Magnusson (2007) study. This is based on an assessment of MiLB history rather than an

assessment of the importance of history of the domain—the sport of baseball. The findings do not suggest history is not important to baseball. They also do not suggest the history of the domain—baseball—is not a statistically significant antecedent to fan identification. MiLB fans have been found to have an interest in the roots of baseball (Gifis & Sommers, 2006; Gitter & Rhoads, 2010). However, their interest in the history of baseball—the domain—does not necessitate an interest in history tied to MiLB—a specific level of baseball. Therefore, MiLB teams should not emphasize their own history if the end goal is stronger brand equity.

Fan identification, with venue and history serving as antecedents in this study, is a predictor of brand equity. This result is in line with the findings of Boyle and Magnusson (2007) and Watkins (2014). This means people with high fan identification are likely to assign a high level of brand equity to the team. According to Keller (2001), brand equity generates brand loyalty, competitive strength, and price elasticity among other benefits. Therefore, a highly identified fan is more likely to remain loyal to the team and accept more flexible pricing.

The team would do better to maximize loyal attendance and revenue from its consumers that demonstrate high identification. By providing these fans a great venue and emphasizing the community, the team is more likely to see these more highly identified consumers return to the ballpark to spend more money which will increase team revenue. Ideally, keeping these fans happy and loyal will lead to word of mouth benefits that help to grow interest in the team—including the team's social image which was tested in the next research question.

If a MiLB team was to insist on pursuing consumers who are found to demonstrate low identification with the team, then the MiLB team should realize this fan is not as loyal and also more sensitive to price (less price elasticity). Therefore, a low “entry level” price would be needed. The likelihood of this less loyal fan returning to future games would be aided if the strengths of the venue and community ties are seen and valued by these new attendees. This could be done by staying in contact with these fans via email messages including videos that showcase the venue and community ties and perhaps a second “entry level” priced ticket to advance these fans along the marketing escalator (Mullin, Hardy, & Sutton, 2007). It is also worth noting that MiLB teams are typically positioned as a family entertainment value. Therefore, even high ID MiLB fans may be less willing to endure higher prices that normally accompany strong brand equity.

Research Question 2

The second research question assessed how social image differs between Minor League Baseball, major professional sport, and major college sport. The results indicated there is no statistically significant difference in social image between major professional sport and major college sport. However, MiLB social image differs from both major professional sport social image and major college sport social image in a statistically significant manner. Specifically, the means for both major professional sport social image ($M=5.77$, $SD=1.13$) and major college sport social image ($M=5.75$, $SD=1.13$) were greater than that of MiLB social image ($M=4.5$, $SD=1.62$).

These results indicate MiLB suffers from a disadvantage or deficit in terms of its social image versus major professional sport and major college sport. This indicates

there is less pride, personality, and status assigned to MiLB than major professional sport and major college sport. The fact that there are comparatively fewer national television broadcasts of MiLB games, less coverage of MiLB in our newspapers, and less coverage of MiLB on major sport websites (e.g., espn.com, cbssports.com) compounds these perceptions. Therefore, MiLB must fight through these disadvantages in a competitive marketplace in order to succeed with its business model. Emphasizing strength in the MiLB team's venue and community ties, which were statistically significant antecedents to fan identification in this study, provide the best options for fighting these disadvantages. One specific aspect of building up community ties should include building the best possible relationship with local media and online assets.

New MiLB teams should avoid competitive sport marketplaces due to this social image competitive disadvantage. In the absence of competition, MiLB is the only sport offering in its marketplace. This concept allows new MiLB teams, or those that consider relocation, to avoid negative comparisons based on social image with major professional and major college sport teams.

Research Question 3

The third research question investigated the strength in the relationships between social image and brand equity for MiLB, major professional sport, and major college sport. The relationship was found to be strong in all three cases. This is problematic for MiLB.

While it may seem positive that the relationship between social image and brand equity is strong, it is important to remember the findings from the second research question. MiLB social image differs from both major professional sport social image and

major college sport social image in a statistically significant manner—and with lower means. Therefore, the strong relationship of MiLB social image is reflected in its strong relationship with MiLB brand equity. On the other hand, both major professional sport and major college sport enjoyed similar and stronger forms of social image in comparison to MiLB—and the relationship between social image and brand equity was strong for major professional sport and major college sport. MiLB must fight against this disadvantage in a competitive sport marketplace.

This MiLB competitive disadvantage means that if a minor league team shares a market with a major college sport team and/or a major professional sport team, then the MiLB team should focus on elements other than its fit with a fan's image, the way a fan regards the MiLB team, and the status of the MiLB team. The pride of buying a ticket to the MiLB game is a better option, as fans showed stronger agreement with that item.

Participants indicated high levels of agreement with the items that comprised major college sport and major professional sport social image. Social image for both levels of sport shared a strong relationship with brand equity. This means major college sport and major professional sport marketers would benefit from including social image concepts in their marketing campaigns. Major professional sport and major college sport teams can emphasize social image even in marketplaces they share with MiLB teams because they have superior social image to MiLB.

Research Question 4

The fourth research question investigated the strength in the relationships between team affiliation and brand equity in MiLB and major college sport contexts. Medium

strength relationships existed between MiLB league affiliation and MiLB brand equity as well as MiLB organizational affiliation and MiLB brand equity. A medium strength relationship also existed between major college sport league affiliation and major college brand equity. A strong relationship was found between major college organizational affiliation and major college brand equity.

On a 7-point Likert scale, MiLB league affiliation rated below the midpoint of 4. Participants did not agree with any items related to MiLB league affiliation ($M=3.1$). Participants showed disagreement with the concept that they think about the league (e.g., International League, Pacific Coast League) associated with the MiLB team. This indicated participants did not find the team's relationship with the league to be important. Participants did not agree with the concept the league impacts their support of the team. Therefore, MiLB teams should not emphasize their relationship with the league.

Participants indicated they neither agreed nor disagreed with the items that informed MiLB organizational affiliation ($M=3.94$). The average participant did not have strong feelings about the MLB organizational affiliation of the MiLB team. The average participant also did not feel the MLB affiliation impacted his or her support of the team. These findings indicated that, in most markets, the MiLB team's MLB organizational affiliation is not a difference maker for the MiLB team. Therefore, this organizational affiliation should not be emphasized by the MiLB team.

In contrast, major college sport organizational affiliation ($M=5.84$) rated well above the midpoint of 4. The results indicated participants agreed that they often think about the university when they think about the college team. The results also showed

participants deemed university important to them. The participants indicated the university impacts their support of the team.

Participants showed more agreement than non-agreement with major college sport league affiliation items. Participants neither agreed nor disagreed with the idea that the team's conference impacted their support of the team. Above averages means for the other two major college sport league affiliation items indicate the conference is important to the fan and that the fan thinks about the conference often. This means team movement among conferences does not hurt a fan's support of the major college sport team. However, major college sport fans are more familiar with the league and deem it more important than MiLB fans.

While the tie to the university seems to benefit the major college sport team, it may also mean that a strong downturn in the university may negatively impact the major college team. On the other hand, because it is not as closely tied to the MLB team, the MiLB team may enjoy more freedom from negative impacts that could accompany downturns in affiliated MLB team performance. Similarly, if a MiLB league does something that is not good, then the MiLB team may be isolated from the negatives associated with the bad behavior. However, major college sport fans are more likely to know about and care about the major college sport team's affiliation with a conference that behaves badly.

Theoretical Implications

Social identity (fan identification) has been established as a predictor of brand equity in a major college (Boyle and Magnusson, 2007) and major professional sport (Watkins, 2014) context in prior studies as well as in a Minor League Baseball context in

the current study. The fact that social identity continues to be shown as a predictor of brand equity in sport contexts should lead to additional studies that confirm these findings and refine the predictive model. While social identity has consistently been found to predict brand equity, there have been differences in determining statistically significant antecedents of social identity in SIBE models.

For example, Underwood et al. (2001) theorized that history was an antecedent to social identity in the SIBE model. Conversely, this current study corroborated the Watkins (2014) study and the student participant finding in the Boyle and Magnusson (2007) study which both found history was not a statistically significant predictor of brand equity. The finding in this study is interesting because history is often associated with major professional baseball in terms of factors such as its records, statistics, and Hall of Fame members. However, Minor League Baseball is a specific type of baseball. While Gifis and Sommers (2006) and Gitter and Rhoads (2010) found MiLB fans have an interest in the roots of baseball, this may not translate to an interest in the history of the MiLB team.

While history was not found to be a statistically significant antecedent to social identity in this study or the Watkins (2014) study, history was a significant predictor in the Boyle and Magnusson (2007) alumni and public participant models. In addition, Boyle and Magnusson (2007) conducted their study using in-person and postal mail techniques while Watkins (2014) identified participants via social media and this study included Amazon MTurk participants. The fact the Boyle and Magnusson (2007) student participant sample did not show a statistically significant predictive relationship for history on social identity combined with the years between that study and the two more

recent studies may indicate that younger audiences are less interested in sport history in general.

Community group was found to be a predictor of social identity in both the Boyle and Magnusson (2007) student participant findings as well as the Watkins (2014) findings. This study supports those findings in a Minor League Baseball context. Therefore, community group seems to be a consistent predictor of social identity across major college basketball, major professional basketball, and MiLB contexts. The team's connection with the community is important across all levels of sport in these studies. Therefore, it is important for community group experience to be utilized in assessment of a team's fan identification in future sport studies across all levels of sport. Similarly, venue was found to be a predictor of social identity in both the Boyle and Magnusson (2007) public participant findings as well as the Watkins (2014) study. Therefore, venue has been a consistent predictor of social identity in major college basketball, major professional basketball, and MiLB contexts. These variables should be retained in future models of this nature—assessing the contribution venue makes to fan identification in sport contexts.

The social image data from this study provides a number of theoretical implications. First, the finding that the relationship between social image and brand equity was found to be statistically significant in MiLB, major professional sport, and major college sport contexts was important. This provides evidence that the Lassar et al. (1995) study that found social image was a predictor of brand equity for products such as watches and televisions can be applied to a service such as sport.

The use of the Lassar et al. (1995) social image theory in a MiLB context opens a new line of sport research. Sport researchers can assess social image and brand equity in a variety of sport contexts. It also allows researchers to consider whether the items in this study are the best items to explain social image. Specifically, social image was assessed in this study using four items. This study assessed participant pride in the act of buying tickets to see a specific team, whether the team's status fit with participant personality, whether the team matched participant's image, and whether the participant's friends regarded the team well. The Cronbach's alphas for MiLB, major professional sport, and major college sport social image were all above the acceptable level of .70 (Nunnally, 1978). This showed these items were acceptable for use in this study. However, refinements could be made to fit particular sport contexts or specific teams that deal with unique social image contexts.

Sport social image items may be particularly valuable in assessing sport product manufacturers. These sport studies would use social image items more similar to those found in the Lassar et al. (1995) model with its product focus. It may be valuable to test the social image and its predictive ability for the brand equity of companies like Nike, Ping, Spalding, Under Armour, and other sport gear manufacturers. The current study, which brought social image to a sport context, has laid the groundwork for these possibilities.

Third, because the Cronbach's alphas for MiLB, major professional sport, and major college sport social image exceeded the acceptable level of .70 (Nunnally, 1978), this provides an opportunity to assess the role social image plays in predicting brand equity in a structural equation model. So, in addition to studying the relationship

between social image and brand equity in general, SEM can specifically be utilized to assess this relationship. Ideally, SEM would provide statistically significant relationships between social image and brand equity across all levels of sport in studies of this nature. If it did so, then it would still be important to consider the means for these variables. For example, this study showed statistically significant differences between MiLB social image and social image in major professional and major college sport contexts. Specifically, MiLB social image was not as strong. Therefore, social image SEM testing may be used to fully determine whether the halo effect found in the full Lassar et al. (1995) model holds true in various sport settings. However, the means must be considered to find a deeper interpretation of the meaning of such findings should all three models prove statistically significant.

This study included an assessment of the relationship between team affiliation and brand equity in MiLB and college sport contexts. The, at a minimum, medium strength relationships provide evidence that the organizations and leagues with which MiLB and major college teams are affiliated affect their brand equity. The Cronbach's alphas for team affiliation were above the standard of .70 deemed acceptable by Nunnally (1978). Therefore, team affiliation may be utilized in predicting sport team brand equity in a structural equation model.

Practical Implications

There are several important practical implications that emerge from the results in this study. Minor League Baseball professionals stand to benefit from these findings. Many of these findings are tied to the examination of social identity and brand equity in the revised SIBE model.

Area consumers have the potential to choose to socially identify with the team and they have the ability to spend money in support of that identification. This study demonstrated that the MiLB venue and MiLB community group experience serve as statistically significant antecedents to MiLB social identity. MiLB history was not found to be a statistically significant antecedent to social identity. The study also demonstrated MiLB social identity is a statistically significant predictor of brand equity. Because brand loyalty, price elasticity, and strength in a competitive environment are benefits of brand equity (Keller, 2001), then knowing whether someone identifies as a fan of the team, the strength of that identification, and how that identification impacts the brand are key pieces of information. Therefore, an important takeaway from this study is MiLB professionals should build social identity with the team (fan identification) to build the team's brand equity. MiLB social identity is improved by maximizing the impact of the venue as well as the team's ties to the community.

This data provides insights that can be employed by Minor League Baseball professionals. First, it seems that highlighting information about the team's history may not be a good promotional strategy. Instead, highlighting the venue and the links between the city (and/or area) and the team would be more likely to lead consumers to identify with the team. The team should make sure it features tremendous service, amenities, branding elements, and promotions in the stadium to make the venue a memorable place. This can be done by providing questionnaires to fans in order to assess the MiLB team's performance in these areas. If the team is underperforming in these areas, then it may seek examples of best practice from other MiLB teams that can provide models for improvement. For example, Minor League Baseball promoted its 10 most

creative venue concessions items for 2016 on its web site—a place that made these ideas accessible to all MiLB teams hoping to learn best practices concepts. These top 10 concessions creations included The Squealer from the New Hampshire Fishers, which featured a stack of bacon, ham, Italian sausage, pepperoni, pulled pork, cheddar cheese, and BBQ sauce between two buns. The list also included the Charlotte Knights' Chicken and Waffle Cone which featured a waffle cone filled with macaroni and cheese, fried chicken tenders, cole slaw, and BBQ sauce (Minor League Baseball, 2016a). Once the team is delivering an excellent venue, including both product and service elements, these features should then serve as focal points in advertising related to the team.

Likewise, the team's efforts in community relations should play a role in marketing the team. The team should have a presence at major community events and the ownership and general manager should maintain an active role with key community influencers including the media. For example, the Vermont Lake Monsters are the state's only professional sport team. Since 2009, the Vermont Lake Monsters have invited kids from schools and community organizations throughout the state to attend games through reading programs, scout sleepovers, outstanding student games, and military appreciation promotions. The Lake Monsters have also integrated themselves into the community by sending their mascot to Make-A-Wish Foundation events, American Cancer Society events, and other high profile events (Minor League Baseball, 2016b).

While these venue concepts and community events may be fairly common, all teams may not be utilizing these techniques. More importantly, in-stadium messaging, internet and social media messages, as well as email messages to consumers may not be maximizing consumer awareness of the team's community ties. Therefore, it is important

to make sure MiLB team managers in community relations, marketing, sales, and at the top of the organization understand the benefits of venue and community related messages and create a strategic plan to maximize consumer awareness of the team's efforts in these areas. This will help to build fan identification which will lead to stronger brand equity.

The social image data from this study provides an important practical implication. MiLB social image demonstrated a statistically significant difference with both major professional sport social image and major college social image. However, major professional sport social image did not demonstrate a statistically significant difference with major college sport. MiLB teams must realize that they do not have the pride, personality, and status of major professional sport and major college sport teams. Therefore, MiLB marketing staffs should avoid messages tied to these attributes that do not align well with MiLB in a competitive sport environment. Venue and community group experience messages will be better received.

The findings demonstrated medium strength relationships between MiLB league (Pacific Coast League, International League) affiliation and organizational (MLB parent) affiliation and brand equity. Below average means were assigned to the importance of these league and organizational affiliations. This is not surprising given the differences in some functions between major college conferences, which often generate massive television deals that brand both the conference and the teams, and MiLB leagues which do not have the same clout. Therefore, emphasizing the team's affiliation with its league or MLB parent in marketing materials is not a good marketing strategy. This is especially true considering the fact that MiLB teams can be aligned with different MLB

teams with the passing of time. Again, a marketing emphasis on the team's venue and community group experience is a better option based on these findings.

Future Research

This study presents several opportunities for future research. Several of these future research opportunities are related to potential SEM studies. First, the role of history as an antecedent to social identity requires additional testing. The varied results with regard to history's predictive role between the Boyle and Magnusson (2007) study, and the Watkins (2014), and the current study indicate this requires more research. In addition, consideration should be given to history tied to the domain rather than to the team as a social identity antecedent. This suggestion to consider history tied to the domain as an antecedent aligns with Gifis and Sommers (2006) and Gitter and Rhoads (2010) who found MiLB fans have an interest in the roots of baseball—a domain-based interest in history. In addition, elements of history may be associated with the MiLB team's community ties and/or venue. Therefore, future MiLB, major professional sport, and major college sport research projects could break down history into a variety of components such as domain, team, venue, community, and more to determine which history elements are valued by the consumer.

Second, there is an opportunity to test the role of team affiliation in future major college and MiLB studies. The Cronbach's alpha was acceptable in this study and a medium strength correlation was found for team affiliation with brand equity in both MiLB and college contexts. This would help to provide a more complete model that better explains brand equity in MiLB and major college contexts. Third, similar studies of other minor league sports could be undertaken to determine whether the SIBE model

applies to minor league sports other than MiLB. We cannot assume this model explains the relationship between fan identification and social identity in other minor league sports. Professionals in other minor league sports could benefit from the practitioner implications proposed in this study if they similar findings existed across minor league sports.

There are also social image studies that can be conducted. The full Lassar et al. (1995) study could be applied in a sport context. This study, which evaluated televisions and watches, would need refinement similar to the refinements that were made to consider social image in a sport context in this study. However, this could certainly be done. By examining the full Lassar et al. (1995) study in a sport context, researchers could determine whether social image has a halo effect over performance, value, trustworthiness, and attachment. This may prove valuable for studies involving team merchandise and other team products in addition to assessments of the team itself.

Limitations

The specific nature of this study may provide some limits to its generalizability. This study focused on Minor League Baseball. Therefore, its findings may not be generalizable to other minor league sports. Studies of other minor league contexts are required.

In addition, this is a MiLB study. Therefore, the results are not generalizable to other forms of baseball. These findings do not apply to Major League Baseball or college baseball. Separate studies would be required to assess the similarities and difference between these findings and results tied to other levels within the domain of baseball.

This study focused on non-attendees. Therefore, it differs from past studies which included salient group assessment—a variable which doesn't apply well to consumers who have not been in attendance at a game. More non-attendee studies are necessary for this reason.

In the interest of creating an instrument of reasonable length, the Lassar et al. (1995) study was not able to be tested in full in a sport context. However, the halo effect that social image had over the other predictive variables in that study is promising. Social image demonstrated a halo effect over performance, value, trustworthiness, and attachment. Therefore, future research related to the full Lassar et al. (1995) model adapted to a sport context is required.

This study included participants across various MiLB markets. Therefore, the results in one market may differ. In some markets, the MiLB and MLB team may do a very good job of promoting their bond which may contribute to greater brand equity. So while the inclusion of more generalized participants may speak well to generalizable MiLB results, this may actually conflict with specific markets

Summary

The discussion section explained how the finding that fan identification predicts brand equity can be applied by MiLB practitioners. Venue and community group experience are consistent antecedents to fan identification. History is a far less consistent contributor to fan identification. Consideration should be given to assessing history of the domain as an antecedent to MiLB fan identification rather than history of MiLB. MiLB marketing professionals should generally avoid messages tied to social image, league affiliation, and organizational which provide to have below average means and at

least medium strength relationships on brand equity. These variables may act as a drag on the team's brand equity.

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APPENDIX A

1. In which state do you currently reside? (_____)
2. Are you a sports fan?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
3. Do you live within 20 miles of a Minor League Baseball team?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
4. Do you have a favorite major professional sport team (NFL, NBA, NHL, or MLB)?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
5. Do you have a favorite major college sport team (Division I football or men's basketball)?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
6. Are you age 18 or older?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No

Please answer this question about all of the following team types. This same format will be utilized for the questions that follow. For all questions and for each team type, please score your answers from 1 to 7 with 1 indicating your lowest level of agreement (“Completely disagree”) and 7 indicating your highest level of agreement (“Completely agree”):

7. I think the team’s venue is a unique place

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minor League Baseball team within 20 miles of you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major Pro Team (NFL, NBA, NHL, or MLB)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major College Team (Division I football or basketball)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. I would be upset if the team’s venue was torn down tomorrow

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minor League Baseball team within 20 miles of you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major Pro Team (NFL, NBA, NHL, or MLB)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major College Team (Division I football or basketball)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

55. I have a lot of great memories of the team's venue

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minor League Baseball team within 20 miles of you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major Pro Team (NFL, NBA, NHL, or MLB)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major College Team (Division I football or basketball)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

56. The team's venue is an important part of the team's organization

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minor League Baseball team within 20 miles of you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major Pro Team (NFL, NBA, NHL, or MLB)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major College Team (Division I football or basketball)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. Its long, storied tradition makes the team of today something special

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minor League Baseball team within 20 miles of you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major Pro Team (NFL, NBA, NHL, or MLB)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major College Team (Division I football or basketball)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. The rich tradition of the team is something you don't find other places

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minor League Baseball team within 20 miles of you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major Pro Team (NFL, NBA, NHL, or MLB)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major College Team (Division I football or basketball)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. The team has a unique place in the history of its sport

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minor League Baseball team within 20 miles of you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major Pro Team (NFL, NBA, NHL, or MLB)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major College Team (Division I football or basketball)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. It's hard to think about the team city without thinking about the team

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minor League Baseball team within 20 miles of you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major Pro Team (NFL, NBA, NHL, or MLB)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major College Team (Division I football or basketball)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. The team is a big part of the culture of the city

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minor League Baseball team within 20 miles of you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major Pro Team (NFL, NBA, NHL, or MLB)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major College Team (Division I football or basketball)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. The team city would be a very different place without the team

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minor League Baseball team within 20 miles of you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major Pro Team (NFL, NBA, NHL, or MLB)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major College Team (Division I football or basketball)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. I see myself as a fan of the team

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minor League Baseball team within 20 miles of you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major Pro Team (NFL, NBA, NHL, or MLB)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major College Team (Division I football or basketball)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. My friends would say I am a fan of the team

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minor League Baseball team within 20 miles of you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major Pro Team (NFL, NBA, NHL, or MLB)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major College Team (Division I football or basketball)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. Being a fan of the team is very important to me

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minor League Baseball team within 20 miles of you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major Pro Team (NFL, NBA, NHL, or MLB)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major College Team (Division I football or basketball)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. I fit in with other fans of the team

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minor League Baseball team within 20 miles of you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major Pro Team (NFL, NBA, NHL, or MLB)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major College Team (Division I football or basketball)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

19. The team is competitive with other teams in the sport

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minor League Baseball team within 20 miles of you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major Pro Team (NFL, NBA, NHL, or MLB)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major College Team (Division I football or basketball)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

20. I can recognize the team among other teams in the sport

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minor League Baseball team within 20 miles of you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major Pro Team (NFL, NBA, NHL, or MLB)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major College Team (Division I football or basketball)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

21. The team would be my first choice

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minor League Baseball team within 20 miles of you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major Pro Team (NFL, NBA, NHL, or MLB)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major College Team (Division I football or basketball)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

22. I believe that overall the team is a high quality organization

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minor League Baseball team within 20 miles of you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major Pro Team (NFL, NBA, NHL, or MLB)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major College Team (Division I football or basketball)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

23. I can recall the logo quickly

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minor League Baseball team within 20 miles of you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major Pro Team (NFL, NBA, NHL, or MLB)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major College Team (Division I football or basketball)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

24. Some characteristics of the team come to mind quickly

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minor League Baseball team within 20 miles of you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major Pro Team (NFL, NBA, NHL, or MLB)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major College Team (Division I football or basketball)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

25. This team fits my image

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minor League Baseball team within 20 miles of you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major Pro Team (NFL, NBA, NHL, or MLB)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major College Team (Division I football or basketball)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

26. I would be proud to buy tickets to this team's games

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minor League Baseball team within 20 miles of you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major Pro Team (NFL, NBA, NHL, or MLB)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major College Team (Division I football or basketball)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

27. This team is well regarded by my friends

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minor League Baseball team within 20 miles of you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major Pro Team (NFL, NBA, NHL, or MLB)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major College Team (Division I football or basketball)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

28. This team's status and style matches my personality

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minor League Baseball team within 20 miles of you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major Pro Team (NFL, NBA, NHL, or MLB)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major College Team (Division I football or basketball)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

29. This team has many of its games broadcast on national television

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minor League Baseball team within 20 miles of you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major Pro Team (NFL, NBA, NHL, or MLB)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major College Team (Division I football or basketball)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

30. I follow this team on a regular basis through television

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minor League Baseball team within 20 miles of you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major Pro Team (NFL, NBA, NHL, or MLB)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major College Team (Division I football or basketball)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

31. I follow this team on a regular basis through the newspaper

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minor League Baseball team within 20 miles of you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major Pro Team (NFL, NBA, NHL, or MLB)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major College Team (Division I football or basketball)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

32. I follow this team on a regular basis through the internet

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minor League Baseball team within 20 miles of you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major Pro Team (NFL, NBA, NHL, or MLB)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major College Team (Division I football or basketball)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

33. I find myself communicating about this team or seeking information about this team through social media

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Minor League Baseball team within 20 miles of you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major Pro Team (NFL, NBA, NHL, or MLB)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Favorite Major College Team (Division I football or basketball)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please score your answers to the following questions from 1 to 7 with 1 indicating your lowest level of agreement (“Do not agree”) and 7 indicating your highest level of agreement (“Completely agree”):

34. When I think about my favorite major college team, I often think about the conference with which it is affiliated

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

35. The conference my favorite major college team is affiliated with is important to me

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

36. The conference in which my favorite major college team competes impacts my support of my favorite major college team

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

37. When I think about my local Minor League Baseball team, I often think about the league in which it is affiliated

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

38. The league with which my local Minor League Baseball team is affiliated with is important to me

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

39. The league in which my local Minor League Baseball team competes impacts my support of the Minor League Baseball team

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

40. When I think about my favorite major college team, I often think about the University with which it is affiliated

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

41. The University my favorite major college team is affiliated with is important to me

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

42. The University with which my favorite major college team is affiliated impacts my support of my favorite college team

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

43. When I think about my local Minor League Baseball Team, I often think about the Major League Baseball team with which it is affiliated

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

44. The Major League Baseball team with which my local Minor League Baseball Team is affiliated is important to me

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

45. The Major League Baseball team with which my local Minor League Baseball Team is affiliated impacts my support of the Minor League Baseball Team

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

46. What level of Minor League Baseball does the minor league team within 20 miles of you compete in?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

47. What is your current age? (_____)

48. What is your gender? Male Female

49. What is your race?

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| White/Caucasian | African American | Hispanic | Asian/Pacific Islander |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Native American | Arab American | Alaskan Native | Other |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

50. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Less than High School | High School / GED | Some College | 2-year College Degree | 4-year College Degree |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Masters Degree | Doctoral Degree | Professional Degree (JD, MD) | Technical Degree | |
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | |

51. What is your combined annual household income? (_____)

CURRICULUM VITAE

Christan (Chris) D. Hanna

CONTACT

Home Address: 9003 Crowne Springs Cir. #303; Louisville, KY 40241

Email: dochanna@hotmail.com or cdhann04@cardmail.louisville.edu

Phone 269-967-0764

EDUCATION

University of Louisville

Ph.D. Sport Administration: classes complete; comprehensive exams passed 8/11/15;

GPA: 3.98; Dissertation in progress—dissertation defense March/April 2016.

Research Interests: College sport marketing, college sport ethics, sport law & policy.

Western Michigan University – Haworth College of Business

M.B.A. Marketing: 1994

Nazareth College

B.B.A. Management: 1991

EXPERIENCE

2013-Present University of Louisville

University Fellow

One of only 25 University Fellows across all majors on campus

Maintained a GPA of 3.98

2006-2011 University of Illinois

Assistant Athletic Director for Sales & Marketing

Doubled annual football revenue and season ticket sales in just two years

Sold out four football games in consecutive seasons (1st time in 20 years)

Led Big Ten Conference in NACMA Awards 4 times in 5 years

2005 Palace Sports & Entertainment

Director of Sales – Detroit Shock

Managed the Detroit Shock sales staff

Led Pistons and Shock sales staffs (more than 30) in Shock group sales

2002-2005 Arkansas State University

Associate Athletic Director/Assistant Athletic Director

Member of ASU senior staff; member of NCAA Certification Committee

Attracted largest football crowd in ASU history

Records for football revenue & attendance, corporate revenue & licensing

EXPERIENCE (continued)

2001-2002 Oklahoma State University**Director of Sports Marketing**

Member of OSU senior staff

Increased both football season ticket sales and single-game ticket sales

Sold out men's basketball with season tickets; created first OSU wait list

1995-2001 Western Michigan University**Director of Sports Marketing**

Set the MAC football attendance record four times in three years

Sold out three games in a single season for the only time in WMU history

Football average attendance increased from 16,000/game to 26,000/game

1994-95 Western Herald**News Editor and Sport Editor**

Editor of the Year (Richard Rozga Award winner)

Winner of two Detroit Press Foundation Awards (news and opinion)

Invited to First College Media Day at the White House

1993-94 WIDR-FM

News, Sports, and Public Affairs Director

GRANTS/FELLOWSHIPS/AWARDS

University of Louisville University Fellowship (2013-15); Teaching G.A. (2015-16)

Full tuition, fees, and \$18,000 annual stipend

TEACHING AND INSTRUCTING EXPERIENCE – University of Louisville

SPAD 390 Sport Governance (Fall 2015, Spring 2016)

Instructor of record. All class preparation including Blackboard setup, syllabus writing, locating articles, videos, and other content, etc. Responsible for all lectures.

HSS 114 Fitness Walking (Fall 2015)

Instructor of record. All class preparation including Blackboard setup, syllabus writing, grading papers, and other content, etc. Responsible for management of all classes.

SPAD 404 Financial Principles in Sport (Spring 2016)

Instructor of record. All class preparation including Blackboard setup, syllabus writing, grading papers, and other content, etc. Responsible for management of all classes.

SPAD 281 Principles of Sport Administration (Fall 2015)

Teaching Assistant. All class preparation including Blackboard setup, syllabus writing, locating articles, videos, and other content, etc. Responsible for half of the lectures.

TEACHING AND INSTRUCTING EXPERIENCE – University of Louisville (cont'd)

INVITED GUEST LECTURES:

SPAD 683 Sport Marketing (Greenwell) – Fall 2015
 SPAD 383 Sport Marketing (Greenwell) – Fall 2015 (two sessions)
 SPAD 604 Financial Principles in Sport (Hambrick) – Spring 2015
 SPAD 404 Financial Principles in Sport (Cintron) – Spring 2015
 SPAD 404 Financial Principles in Sport (Kang) – Fall 2014
 SPAD 509 International Sport (Hums) – Spring 2014
 SPAD 404 Financial Principles in Sport (Hambrick) – Fall 2013

SERVICE (AS A WORKING PROFESSIONAL)

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEES

University of Louisville

Doctoral Student/Faculty Monthly Meetings	2013-2015
Dean of College of Education and Human Development Search	2014
Department of Health & Sport Sciences Chair Search I	2014
Department of Health & Sport Sciences Chair Search II	2015

University of Illinois

Chancellor's Committee to Support Homecoming	2006-2011
University Football Scheduling Committee	2006-2011
University External Relations Committee	2006-2011
Athletic Board Presenter	2006-2011

Arkansas State University

NCAA Certification Steering Committee	2003-2004
NCAA Certification Equity, Welfare, and Sportsmanship Subcommittee	2003-2004

Western Michigan University

NCAA Certification Participant	1997-1998
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SERVICE (at University of Louisville)

UNIVERSITY STUDENT GOVERNMENT

University of Louisville

President	2015-present
College of Education and Human Development Graduate Student Assoc.	

MEMBERSHIPS (Professional and Academic)

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

National Association of Collegiate Marketing Administrators

Member	1995-present
Big Ten Conference Representative for NACMA	2010

North American Society for Sport Management

Member	2013-present
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American Marketing Association

Member	2014-present
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AMA Doctoral Special Interest Group	2014-present
AMA Marketing & Society Special Interest Group	2014-present
AMA Sports & Special Events Marketing Special Interest Group	2014-present

HONORS (Professional and Academic)

University of Louisville

2013-2016 University Fellow (one of only 25 across all majors on campus)

University of Illinois

Led the Big Ten Conference in NACMA Awards Four Times in Five Years

- 2010 NACMA Gold: Video Board Segment
- 2009 NACMA Gold: Single-Day Attendance Promotion
- 2008 NACMA Best of the Best (NACMA's top honor across all categories)
Midnight Madness Promotion
- 2008 NACMA Gold: Single-Day Attendance Promotion—Men's Basketball
- 2008 NACMA Gold: Ticket Sales Piece
- 2007 NACMA Gold: Single-Day Attendance Promotion—Football
- 2007 NACMA Silver: Single-Day Attendance Promotion—Men's Basketball
- 2007 NACMA Silver: Single-Day Attendance Promotion—Olympic Sports
- 2007 NACMA Silver: Non-Revenue Generating Idea

Western Herald

- 1993 Richard Rozga Award (editor of the year)
- 1994 Detroit Press Foundation Award: News Writing
- 1994 Detroit Press Foundation Award: Opinion Writing

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

ACADEMIC

Hanna, C. & Levine, J. F. (2016, Feb.). Defamation 2.0: How does the law of defamation work in a digital age. Sport and Recreation Law Association, New Orleans, LA.

Schmidt, S. S., Levine, J. F., & **Hanna, C.** (2016, Feb.). Exploring a new world: An introduction and review of the legal concerns of eSport. Sport and Recreation Law Association, New Orleans, LA.

Hanna, C. (2015, Aug.). Comparing broadcast social media brand association utilization in various sport broadcasts. American Marketing Association, Chicago, IL.

Kang, S., & **Hanna, C.** (2015, June). Exploring smartphone usage: What are fans doing with their smartphones. North American Society for Sport Management, Ottawa, ON.

Huml, M. R., Hums, M. A., & **Hanna, C.** (2015, April). Credit for participation: Academic valuation of the NCAA athlete experience. College Sport Research Initiative, Columbia, SC.

Levine, J. F., & **Hanna, C.** (2015, March). Defamation 2.0: Does the law of defamation work in a digital age. Spring Research Conference, Louisville, KY.

Levine, J. F., & **Hanna**, C. (2015, March). The whistleblower dilemma for athletic departments and university employees. Sport and Recreation Law Association, Charlotte, NC.

Levine, J. F., Cintron, A., & **Hanna**, C. (2015, Feb.). Calling your bluff: A case against NHL expansion into Las Vegas. Southern Sport Management Conference, Baton Rouge, LA.

Hanna, C. (2014, April). The sport management brand: How sport researchers view their field and how students and university decision-makers respond to these academic perspectives. Spring Research Conference, Cincinnati, OH.

Hanna, C. (2014, March). Student-athlete involvement in intercollegiate athletics public service announcement programs: Great reward and great risk. 2nd Annual Muhammad Ali Center Athletes and Social Change Forum, Louisville, KY.

ORAL PRESENTATIONS (cont'd)

PROFESSIONAL

National Association of Collegiate Marketing Administrators

Hanna, C. (2010, June). Public Service Announcement Campaigns. Presented at the National Association of Collegiate Marketing Administrators Convention, Anaheim, CA.

Hanna, C. (2008, June). Best of the Best Award Presentation: Midnight Madness. Presented at the National Association of Collegiate Marketing Administrators Convention, Dallas, TX.

Hanna, C., & Hoesly, H. (2008, June). Revenue Generating Strategies. Presented at the National Association of Collegiate Marketing Administrators Convention, Dallas, TX.

ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

IN PROGRESS

Hanna, C., Levine, J. F., & Moorman, A. M. (2016). College Athletics Whistle-blower Protection. Targeted for *Journal of Legal Aspects of Sport*.

Hanna, C., & Levine, J. F. (2016). Whistle-blower Attitudes in NCAA Athletics. Targeted for *Journal of Business Ethics*.

ACADEMIC OUTSIDE CONSULTING DOCUMENTS

Greenwell, T. C., Shreffler, M. B., & Hanna, C. (2015). *Louisville City FC Customer Survey*. Prepared for the Louisville City FC professional soccer team, Louisville, Kentucky.