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Sport Brand Community

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SPORT BRAND COMMUNITY

By

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This dissertation is dedicated to my family.

I am grateful for your love, support and understanding throughout this journey.

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ABSTRACT

The importance of sports and brands (e.g., New York Yankees, Harley-Davidson, Apple) in today's society is well-documented. The co-consumption of sports and brands often brings people together (Bale, 2003; Bouet, 1966; Brown, Kozinets, & Sherry, 2003), and consumers of the same sport or brand often form a community. In the business literature, these communities are called "brand communities" (McAlexander, Schouten, & Koenig, 2002; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). While brand communities are a popular research topic in the business literature, the sport field is only in the beginning stages of applying this idea. As such, the impact of such communities with sport brands is not well understood. In order to investigate the outcomes of brand communities, we must better understand the process of introducing and developing sport brand communities.

The purpose of this research is to identify and better understand the relationships among the antecedents (e.g. causes) and consequences (e.g., outcomes) of consumer participation in a sport brand community. A hypothesized model of the relationships among five antecedents (brand knowledge, brand satisfaction, brand identification, membership in sport brand community, and geographic sense of community), two mediators (brand loyalty and brand image), and three consequences (attendance intentions, purchase intentions, and word of mouth intentions) of a sport brand community is proposed.

Using Churchill's (1979) guidelines for creating better marketing measures, ten constructs for testing the model of consumer participation in a sport brand community were identified. One hundred twenty-four items in total were utilized to measure the ten constructs, and a three-step ad hoc content analysis was conducted by two marketing academics, two expert methodologists, and the author of this research. Fifty-eight items were judged to have content validity. The fifty-eight items were tested in a pilot study with a convenience sample (n = 113). An examination of the results of the pilot study revealed that the fifty-eight items measuring the ten constructs showed evidence of reliability. One issue was noted with the construct of brand identification. As a result, four items were added to measure this construct.

The main study included the sixty-two items which were tested on a convenience sample (n = 627). In order to conduct CFA and SEM procedures, the sample was split into two subsamples (n_1 = 314 and n_2 = 313). The reliabilities of the sixty-two items were examined using subsample 1. It was concluded from the results that twenty-five items were problematic and

therefore removed. The validity of the thirty-seven items were assessed using subsample 1. The items showed evidence of both convergent and discriminant validity. Finally, thirty-one hypothesized relationships were tested using SEM procedures on the data from subsample 2. The SEM results led the researcher to conclude there was empirical support for ten of the thirty-one hypothesized relationships. Due to the existence of four fully-mediated relationships, nine total effects were identified. In addition, the fit indices for the structural model suggested good fit to the data, and the model explained between 46.4% and 78.4% of the variance in the five endogenous constructs (e.g., brand loyalty, brand image, attendance intentions, purchase intentions, and word of mouth intentions).

Sports are used to bridge and bond individuals together. Based on the connections and relationships that develop around a sport brand, organization or team, the co-consumption or co-creation of a sporting event affects consumers' affiliations, attitudes, behaviors, and lives. As a result, a sport organization has the opportunity to facilitate and expand the development of such relationships. Moreover, the development of these relationships can be used to increase the resources consumers allocate toward a sport organization, brand, and goods and services (e.g., the game). While many sport management and marketing practitioners and academics debate how to best satisfy the wants and needs of consumers, the establishment, development, and maintenance of successful relationships between consumers and the sport organization, brand, and team is accomplished through creation and utilization of sport brand communities. In order to better understand how to successfully create and utilize sport brand communities, more research needs to be conducted and more understanding needs to be gained about how sport brand communities develop, improve, and extend relationships with consumers. This research provides an initial framework and model that provides suggestions and evidence that can be used to improve the effectiveness of sport brand communities.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Introduction of the Research

Sports bring people together (Bouet, 1966). People participate in a variety of sport-based activities including playing, competing, spectating, and being a fan of sports. Sports act as "sociological superglue" which bonds people together through a sense of identification, pride, common purpose, and commitment to place (Bale, 2003; Bouet, 1966; Putnam, 2000). The bonds that sports create also result in an increased sense of self and sense of group membership. Moreover, the relationship between individuals and sports results in the forging of personal identity and social identity which manifests through bringing people together (Krouwel, Boonstra, Duyvendak, & Veldboer, 2006; McPherson, Curtis, & Loy, 1989). Sports also create and foster fan identification and affiliation which includes personal commitment and emotional involvement with sport organizations (Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Sutton, McDonald, Milne, & Cimperman, 1997). These examples elucidate the power and potential of sports to affect individuals' affiliations, attitudes, behaviors, and lives.

Brands also bring people together (Brown, Kozinets, & Sherry, 2003). A brand is defined as "a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or combination of them which is intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors" (Kotler, 1991, p. 442). In the minds of consumers, brands and the process of branding creates a strong identity (e.g., brand equity) for goods and services which facilitate differentiation from competitors' goods and services (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1993). As a result, consumers who value specific attributes of a good or service (e.g., high quality, high performance) often consume the same branded goods or services. Thus, brands also create relationships with consumers. The relationship between an individual and a brand often resembles interpersonal relationships between individuals (Fournier, 1998). For the development and maintenance of such interpersonal relationships, Drigotas and Rusbutt (1992) posit that feelings such as attraction, understanding, enjoyment, attachment, security, comfort, stability, and self-worth are important in the development and maintenance of interpersonal relationships (Fajer & Schouten, 1995). Additionally, Lund (1985) posits that characteristics such as investment, commitment, dependence, and integration in social networks are important to

maintaining durable interpersonal relationships over time (Fajer & Schouten, 1995). As a result, these characteristics may also create exit barriers to relationships between individuals and brands, that is, inhibiting termination of brand affiliation (Fajer & Schouten, 1995). As such, the marketing of brands is used to establish, develop, and maintain successful relationships between individuals and brands through the establishment of trust and commitment (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). The sharing of brand knowledge between individuals may also create or improve the relationship between individuals and brands (Richards, Foster, & Morgan, 1998). Knowledge is the essence of what a brand represents, hence an individual's understanding of a brand is constructed based on one's knowledge of the brand's characteristics (Richards et al., 1998). Knowledge of a brand arises from an individual's experience with the brand and/or knowledge provided by other consumers. These examples elucidate the power and potential of brands to affect individual's attitudes, behaviors and lives.

A type of community that forms around a brand (hereafter referred to as a "brand community") also brings people together (McAlexander et al., 2002; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). The gathering of brand consumers (e.g., "brandfests") offers the opportunity for close interpersonal interactions between consumers (McAlexander et al., 2002). In other words, consumers of brands come together to participate in brand-based activities such as celebrations (e.g., events, jamborees, rallies) of the brand. The brand is also used to link consumers together (Cova, 1997; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). For example, brand communities are frequently composed of diverse individuals with little in common. The consumer's experiences with the brand are communicated and shared between members. As a result, multiple relationships are formed, such as consumers' relationships with the brand, other consumers, the good or service, and the brand's marketers (McAlexander et al., 2002). Brand community members value the various relationships that compose the consumption experiences of the brand, and consumers also value their participation and perceived membership in the brand community (McAlexander et al., 2002; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001).

Brands and communities are also applicable to sports as they can affect individual's attitudes, intentions, and behaviors, however, the effect of combining sports, brands, and communities is not well understood. In order to investigate the outcomes of sport brand communities, the introduction of individuals to this type of community is examined. Specifically, sport brand-building activities occur and a sense of community is created among consumers who

participate in sport brand communities. As a result of these activities, consumer attitudes, intentions, and behaviors toward the sport brand are affected.

Statement of the Problem

Sport consumer research primarily focuses on understanding current consumers (as opposed to new consumers) as the intended target for marketing, advertising, and promotional efforts (Mullin, Hardy, & Sutton, 2007). In addition, sport consumer research tends to examine individual consumers rather than groups of individuals who co-consume sporting events (Madrigal, 2000). Sport consumers tend to consume sporting events in groups, while traditional goods and services are consumed by individual consumers. In this research, the principal argument is that sport organizations should expand their focus and increase their resource allocations toward creating sport brand communities. As a result of the creation of sport brand communities, consumers participate (e.g., co-consume the sport brand's goods and services) in sport brand-related activities with other consumers. Moreover, sport organizations should invest resources in introducing, developing and utilizing sport brand communities. As a result, the sport organization can focus its efforts and resource allocations toward moving the entire community of sport fans from casual users to heavy users (e.g., "avid" or devoted fans) rather than focusing on one individual consumer at a time.

Research on the consumption practices of sport consumers is growing (see Funk, Mahony, & Ridinger, 2002; Holt, 1995; James & Ridinger, 2002; James & Ross, 2004; Stewart, Smith, & Nicholson, 2003; Trail, Fink, & Anderson, 2003; Trail & James, 2001). On the other hand, only a small body of research examines the brand community consumption behaviors of sport fans (see Devasagayam & Buff, 2008; Dionisio, Leal, & Moutinho, 2008; Heere, Walker, Yoshida, Ko, Jordan, & James, 2011; Holt, 1995; Richardson & Turley, 2008). Further, none of the sport-based brand community research examines both the antecedents and consequences of sport brand communities. Therefore, gaining a better and more complete understanding of the entire process of introducing, developing, and utilizing sport brand communities is warranted.

Another problem that exists for companies and organizations is the debate over whether their brand is appropriate for the creation and development of a brand community, and if so, how resources should be allocated. Over the last decade, companies and organizations invested increasing amounts of financial and logistic resources creating brand communities based on research showing such communities develop, improve, and extend relationships with consumers

(McAlexander et al., 2002; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). Qualitative research identifies a multitude of practices that are common among various types of brand communities (see Schau, Muniz, & Arnould, 2009 for a review). Empirical research identifies theoretical constructs based on the practices and types of brand communities and subsequently measures and tests these constructs. Therefore in select brand community settings, relationships between constructs are measured and tested. Yet, the overall scope of the constructs that are measured and tested in the empirical brand community research varies substantially. There is little parsimony between constructs that are measured and tested in brand community research. Perhaps due to the perceived and potentially inherent differences among specific brand communities, no research replicates previous research. In other words, as of yet, there is no "unified" theory of brand community. Companies and organizations that create brand communities do not have a model or theory that yields specific instructions about how to go about creating a successful brand community, although the literature is replete with suggestions. Therefore, companies and organizations that desire to create a brand community may invest resources blindly in different brand community practices that they hope result in desired outcomes.

Another issue that arises in brand community research is the definition and conceptualization of membership. One of the central tenets of existing research is a focus on the qualities and characteristics of individuals who are considered to be members of the brand community. Nonetheless, the characteristics and practices that define membership are not the same across brand communities. It is important to understand the nature of membership in a brand community, because communities are often composed of individuals who may or may not meet face-to-face or have any direct interaction with one another (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). Sometimes, communities are "imagined," meaning despite never having met, members feel a strong connection or bond with other members of the community (Anderson, 1983). Anderson further posits that "members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (p. 6). Due to the possibility that the community or membership in the community could be "imagined" and may only exist in an individual's mind, a better understanding of membership is needed. The focal community of sport consumers (e.g., spectators and fans) in this research includes individuals who participate in sport brand-related activities through their consumption of the sport brand's goods and/or services. As such, individuals who participate in

activities that involve the co-consumption of the sport brand with other consumers are considered in this research as members of the sport brand community.

There are many conceptualizations of membership in a brand community in the existing literature. The tendency of previous brand community researchers is to center around the original "markers" or indicators that define membership in a brand community. Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) argue that members of a brand community share three particularities including consciousness of kind, knowledge and understanding of rituals and traditions, and a sense of moral responsibility. The use of these three indicators, however, allows a substantial amount of leeway for researchers because the indicators are inherently and perhaps intentionally vague. This leeway is evidenced by the fact that no previous research empirically measures the existence of a brand community based on these three indicators or any standardized measures. As a result, researchers providing qualitative and anecdotal evidence of the existence of and membership in a brand community are rarely challenged, and as a result, multiple conceptualizations of membership exist in previous research.

The conceptualization and operationalization of membership in a brand community is a significant challenge. Part of the challenge is that multiple conceptualizations of membership are used within the brand community literature. At least seven conceptualizations are noted. The terms affiliation, kinship, involvement, commitment, attachment, sense of community, and participation are often used to describe membership, and each tends to indicate a similar yet not mutually exclusive type of relationship, association, or partnership between consumers (Dionisio et al., 2008; Füller, Matzler, & Hoppe, 2008; Lee, Vogel, & Limayem, 2003; McAlexander et al., 2002; McAlexander, Koenig, & Schouten, 2006; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001; Shoham, 2004).

In an effort to bring parsimony to existing brand community research, the phrase sense of sport brand community is used in this research to encompass several distinct aspects of membership. The sense of sport brand community represents an individual's perceived membership and relationships with other members of the sport brand community. It is argued that sport brand communities develop and affect individuals' attitudes, intentions, and behaviors. As a result, the brand around which the community is developed garners benefits from the existence and operations of the brand community.

Taken as a whole, existing empirical brand community research shows little parsimony between both the models that are tested and the constructs that are used. Further, only two

research studies examine both the antecedents and consequences of a brand community (see Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2006; Woisetschlager, Hartleb, & Blut, 2008), and both of these studies examine virtual (electronic) communities where members rarely or never meet face-to-face. Therefore, this research is positioned to bring some parsimony to existing empirical brand community research based on the fact that all of the constructs are examined in previous research, though no research examines all of these constructs in the same study. In addition, the process of brand community building, development, and outcomes are examined. Finally, the setting for this research is unique because empirical models of sport brand communities are not examined in prior research.

Significance of the Research

The significance of the current research lies in the focus on brand communities in the sport setting as opposed to a business setting. One of the major problems identified above suggests that sport organizations invest resources in moving consumers en masse in sport fan communities from casual users to heavy users rather than focusing on one individual consumer at a time. The development of sport brand communities is critical for the advancement of sport consumer and marketing research, as the movement of consumers occurs due to the effect of fan community norms and pressures rather than a sport organization's norms and pressures. The fans in a sport brand community can become the evangelists and promoters of a sport organization, rather than the sport organization itself. This type of change in sport marketing is a major paradigm shift from marketing to individuals in a particular consumer segment to creating consumer communities, marketing to opinion leaders and members of the community, and allowing the opinion leaders and members of the consumer community themselves to act as marketers rather than the organization. Such a transformation would be a major evolutionary step for sport organization management and marketing.

The results from the research are expected to provide insight into the antecedents and consequences of consumer participation in sport brand communities. It is important to note that the proposed research is the first attempt to model sport brand-based antecedents and consequences of consumer participation in a sport brand community. Furthermore, existing brand community research generally tends to examine the antecedents and consequences with little consideration for the relationships that may exist among the antecedents and the

consequences. The proposed research examines theoretically-based relationships among the constructs.

The proposed research builds from the knowledge and research in community studies, and advances the understanding of the meaning and importance of consumer communities. The proposed research also makes a significant contribution to the brand community literature by testing a hypothesized model based on relevant theories. The community antecedent of sense of sport brand community is conceptualized based on the notion of sense of community (SOC) (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). SOC is utilized to a limited extent in previous brand community research (Carlson et al., 2008). Some researchers, however, use SOC to provide anecdotal evidence in their argument for why consumers join, participate, and maintain membership in a brand community (Rosenbaum, Ostrom, & Kuntze, 2005). The antecedents that represent consumers' personal experiences with the brand are modeled based on the Psychological Continuum Model (PCM) (Funk & James, 2001, 2006). The existing research on sport brand communities is extremely limited. As a result, this research represents the first attempt to apply the PCM to brand communities. The relationships among the consequences are modeled based on the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The TRA and its subsequent revision, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991), are used in a limited capacity in existing brand community research (Zhou, 2011).

The frameworks that guide existing brand community research often use social identity theory and relationship marketing as the basis for understanding the role of consumers and the relationships between consumers and the brand. This research uses social identity theory and the principles of relationship marketing in addition to SOC, the PCM and the TRA. The addition of SOC, the PCM, and the TRA provides previously validated models and theories that assist in understanding the relationships between the antecedents and the consequences, while also providing a theoretical framework for future research on the process that underlies how and why consumers participate in a brand community.

The proposed research provides an opportunity to increase our understanding of sport fan communities. Existing consumer research identifies several other types of consumer communities beyond brand communities including subcultures of consumption (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995), consumer tribes (Cova & Cova, 2002; Maffesoli, 1996), and brand cults (Belk & Tumbat, 2005). These various consumer communities share features with brand

communities including communal consumption behaviors and a shared understanding of rituals, beliefs, and symbolism (Moutinho, Dionisio, & Leal, 2007). At the same time, existing research on sport-based consumer communities tends to focus on the application of the principles of consumer tribes and "tribal" behaviors (see Dionisio et al., 2008; Moutinho et al., 2007). The examination of sport organizations' fan communities as brand communities represents a new thrust for understanding the true nature of sport fan communities, why fans join and participate in sport fan communities, and the outcomes of sport fan communities.

Finally, this research advances our understanding of how sport brand communities can be introduced, developed, and utilized by sport organizations. Existing sport research identifies various typologies of sport fans and consumers (Hunt, Bristol, & Bashaw, 1999; Stewart et al., 2003) which results in a greater understanding the types of fan groups. The conclusion that is often reached is that consumers can and should be segmented based on their "location" in the consumer typology (Hunt et al., 1999). Mullin et al. (2007) propose the "escalator concept" as a graphical representation of various levels of consumers based on their consumption of sport goods and services with non-consumers at the bottom of the escalator and heavy users at the top of the escalator. One use of the escalator concept is to suggest that sport organizations invest resources in "moving" sport fans up the escalator to higher levels of consumption of sport goods and services. The introduction, development and utilization of sport brand communities by sport organizations result in a multitude of beneficial consequences like increased brand loyalty, positive brand image, increased behavioral intentions, and increased consumer behaviors. These consequences are seen in consumers who move "up" the escalator to higher levels of consumption of sport goods and services.

Several authors argue that the creation and development of brand communities leads to developing competitive advantage (McAlexander et al., 2002; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). Porter (1985) posits that organizations achieve competitive advantage either through the strategic focus of the firm, cost leadership strategies, or differentiation strategies. The development of a brand community is a differentiation strategy because participants in brand communities are unique to each organization which sets them apart from other competing organizations (Schau et al., 2009). Marketing professionals search for marketing practices and tactics that result in competitive advantage. The proposed research provides further evidence and support for organizational resources to be allocated to introducing, developing, and utilizing brand communities as a source

of differentiation and competitive advantage over rival organizations that do not employ brand communities.

Sport organizations traditionally do not spend substantial amounts of resources on the development of their brand (Devasagayam & Buff, 2008), as player salaries and facility upgrades are traditionally the primary focus of resource allocations (Rascher, 2008). Due to the increasingly saturated marketplace, sport organizations must endeavor to gain a competitive advantage over competitors. Sport brand communities offer a wide-range of beneficial consequences. Alternatively, if a sport organization does not provide the opportunity for consumers to join and participate in a sport brand community, the sport organization misses the opportunity to garner the potential benefits. Sport organizations on the forefront of brand community development have opportunities for relationships and benefits that their rivals do not. The sport organization that develops a sport brand community earns greater profits and return on investment through the competitive advantage gained through the introduction, development, and utilization of a sport brand community.

Purposes of the Research

The purpose of the proposed research is threefold. The first is to generate a conceptual model that identifies the antecedents and consequences of consumer participation a sport brand community. The second purpose is to develop a measurement instrument based in part on previously validated instruments that include both brand and community constructs and items that are relevant to sports. Previous research utilizes qualitative techniques to examine "potential" brand communities and identify the essential brand community attributes (Schau et al., 2009). When quantitative techniques are used, the constructs in each research study vary substantially. Thus, a new instrument for measuring sport brand communities is developed. The third purpose is to develop and empirically test a hypothesized model of the antecedents and consequences of consumer participation in a sport brand community.

Research Questions

Five research questions are generated based on the literature review (see Chapter 2). These research questions are used to identify the variables of interest, formulate the conceptual and hypothesized models, specify the relationships among variables, and provide direction for

the testing of the variables and their relationships within the model. The five research questions are:

RQ_1: What are the antecedents of consumer participation in a sport brand community?

RQ_2: What are the relationships among the antecedents of consumer participation in a sport brand community?

RQ_3: What are the consequences of consumer participation in a sport brand community?

RQ_4: What are the relationships among the consequences of consumer participation in a sport brand community?

RQ_5: What are the relationships among the antecedents and consequences of consumer participation in a sport brand community?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is presented in Figure 1.1. The rationale for the development of the framework is presented later in this chapter. The framework contains the antecedents and consequences of consumer participation in a sport brand community. Two types of antecedents drive consumer participation in a sport brand community including the personal experiences of consumers with the brand (brand knowledge, brand satisfaction, and brand identification) and consumers' experiences with the community of brand consumers (sense of sport brand community). Consistent with the TRA, the consequences include two attitudes (brand loyalty and brand image), behavioral intentions, and consumer behaviors.

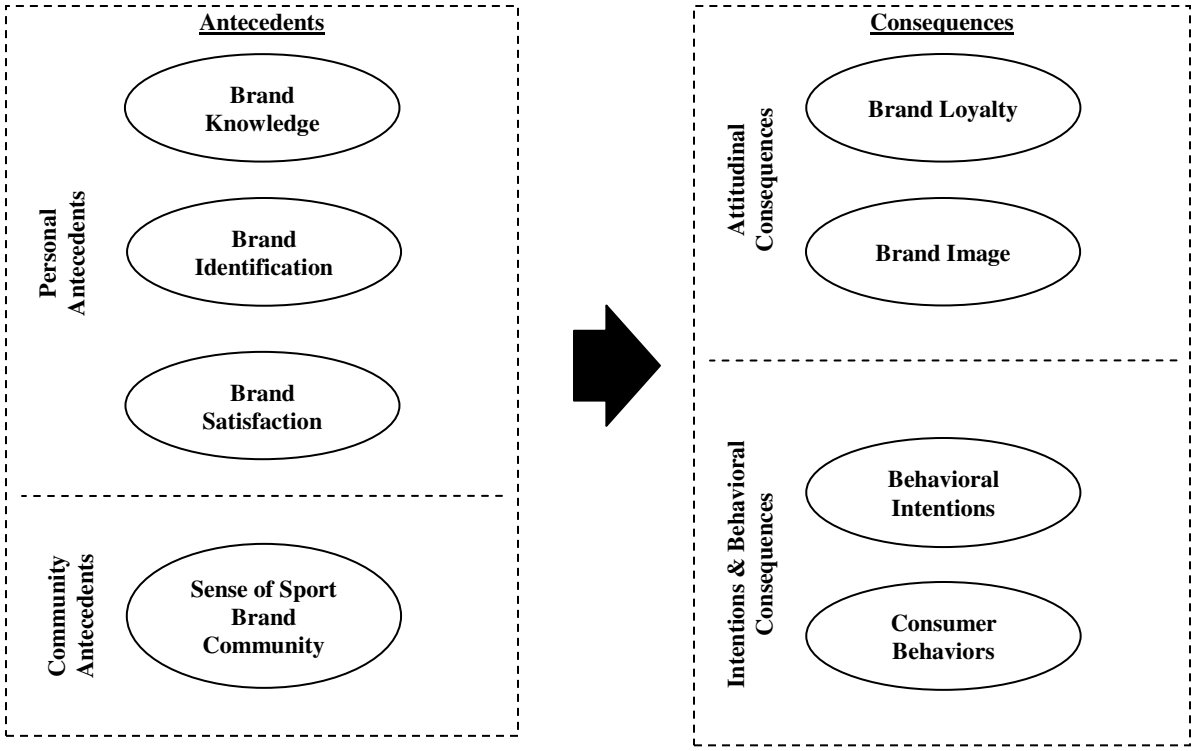


Figure 1.1
The Conceptual Framework of the Antecedents and Consequences of Consumer Participation in a Sport Brand Community

The Antecedents of Consumer Participation in a Sport Brand Community

A brand community is defined as "a specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand" (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001, p. 412). McAlexander et al. (2002) identify four relationships that develop as a result of the formation and development of a brand community. These relationships include consumer-brand, consumer-product, consumer-marketer, and consumer-consumer. In a meta-analysis of the relationships that develop based on the formation and development of a brand community, Schau et al. (2009) identify personal and community antecedents underlying brand community practices. In this research, a consumer's personal experiences with brand are considered as antecedents. These antecedents include brand knowledge, brand satisfaction, and brand identification. In addition, consumers' relationships with the community (e.g., other brand consumers) are considered. Drawing from the field of community studies, sense of community,

labeled as sense of sport brand community, is used to identify how the community and relationships with the community cause consumers to participate in a sport brand community. These constructs are now briefly introduced. In Chapter 2, a more expansive examination of each of the constructs is undertaken.

Brand Knowledge

Brand knowledge is the personal meaning about a brand that is stored in the memory of a consumer (Keller, 2003). Algesheimer, Dholakia, and Herrmann (2005) posit that consumer brand knowledge is important because it "captures both the aspects of interest in the brand and the consumer's previous experience level with it, suggesting that knowledgeable consumers are more engaged with the brand and the community" (p. 24). The specific knowledge that consumers possess includes information about the brand community as well as practices (e.g., rituals and traditions), procedures (e.g., explicit rules, principles, precepts, and instructions), understanding (e.g., knowledge of what to say and do, skills and projects, or know-how), and engagements (e.g., ends and purposes that are emotionally charged insofar as people are committed to them) (Schau et al., 2009). Over time, consumers enhance their knowledge and experience with the brand. The knowledge and experience that is gained by brand community members results in the development of meaningful connections among members of the brand community and an overall feeling of connection and association with the brand community (McAlexander, Kim, & Roberts, 2003). Another result of gaining brand knowledge is that consumers with high levels of knowledge and information about a brand are more likely to take on leadership roles within the community that result in these consumers sharing their knowledge (e.g., evangelism) with novice or non-members of the brand community (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995).

Brand Satisfaction

Brand satisfaction is defined as a consumer's judgment that a brand provides a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment (Oliver, 1997). Cronin and Taylor (1994) identify two types of satisfaction: transaction-specific and overall satisfaction. Previous research often focuses on overall satisfaction because it is argued to be a better predictor of past, present, and future brand performance (Anderson & Fornell, 1994; Fornell, 1992). Prior to becoming a repeat brand user, however, consumers need to feel satisfied about the performance of and their

experience with the brand (Bendapudi & Berry, 1997; Oliver, 1980). A similar process can be applied to brand communities. Consumers first need to feel satisfied about the performance of and their experience with a brand before moving from being a brand user to becoming a member of the brand community. In other words, satisfaction with a brand must precede any movement of the consumer from a novice user to a more active and involved user or member. A similar evaluation affects a consumer's propensity to affiliate with a brand community. When consumers are satisfied with the goods and services associated with a brand, they feel kinship and camaraderie with others who also share the same type of satisfaction and identification with the brand. Brand satisfaction of the individual consumer and members of brand community leads to participation in the brand community because many of the consumers in the community feel some level of satisfaction toward the brand's goods and services.

Brand Identification

Previous consumer research identifies at least two distinct notions of brand identification: consumer identification with the brand itself and consumer identification with other brand users (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Bristow & Sebastian, 2001; Carlson et al., 2008). In this research, brand identification is defined as the degree to which an individual defines him or herself by the same attributes that he or she believes define the brand (Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994). Moreover, brand identification refers to a consumer's association and affinity with the brand itself. As is discussed in a subsequent section, consumer identification with other brand users is subsumed within the construct of sense of sport brand community.

Brands play an important role in the life of consumers in that a consumer's sense of self is often malleable, and various identities or selves can be activated by a brand (Aaker, 1999; Markus & Kunda, 1986). Fournier (1998) posits that brands are relationship partners for consumers, and she further states that brands are "animated, humanized, and somehow personalized" (p. 344) by consumers. As such, when a brand epitomizes a characteristic that is desired by a consumer, he/she utilizes the brand through a process of brand identification (see Belk, 1988; Holt, 1995). In other words, a consumer's perception or perceived image of the brand can "rub off" on consumers and result in higher levels of affiliation with, purchase of, and use of the brand. As groups of consumers begin to engage in this process with the same brand, brand communities are formed and members participate in brand-related activities.

Sense of Sport Brand Community

The sense of community is an individual's psychological or perceived sense of belonging in or to the brand community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). McMillan and Chavis (1986) posit that sense of community includes membership (later referred to as "spirit" (see McMillan, 1996)), influence (later referred to as "trust" (see McMillan, 1996)), integration and fulfillment of needs (later referred to as "trade" (see McMillan, 1996)), and shared emotional connection (later referred to as "art" (see McMillan, 1996)). Membership is the feeling of belonging or of sharing a sense of personal relatedness (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Influence is a sense of making a difference to a group and of the group making a difference for its members (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Integration and fulfillment of needs are referred to as reinforcement, which means that members' needs are met by the resources received through their membership in the group (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Shared emotional connection is the commitment and belief that members share a common history, place, time, and experiences together (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Sense of community, then, is a feeling that members have of belonging, that members matter to one another and to the group at-large, that members are accepted as part of the community, that the group takes care of its members, and that members have similar experiences in the group.

In addition to the four dimensions of sense of community, a fifth dimension is also considered. The fifth dimension is termed geographic sense of community and is defined as the sense of belonging to a physical location that has territorial boundaries (Gusfield, 1975). Geographic sense of community is examined to a large extent in previous research, although it is alternatively termed as sense of place (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001), place attachment (Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001), or community attachment (Brehm, Eisenhauer, & Krannich, 2004; Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974). In short, all of these concepts share the same basic notion that individuals are attached to a physical (e.g., geographic) location based on a psychological relationship that they develop with the geographic area. The physical location plays a meaningful role in the life of the individual who is attached to the particular area, because the area often "represents" the individual and vice-versa.

In sport, this relationship is particularly important when one considers the geographic associations that are indicated by the name of almost any sport team. The name of a sport team almost always includes the name of the city or region (e.g., San Francisco) and/or a

geographic/local association (e.g., 49ers). Based on a common understanding of the geographic associations, residents who live in the geographic area are likely feel an attachment to the team that represents their area. As a result, these five dimensions of sense of community are identified in this research. The decision, however, about the inclusion of all five dimensions is examined and discussed in Chapter 2.

The Consequences of Consumer Participation in a Sport Brand Community

As a result of the antecedents of consumer participation in a sport brand community, a number of consequences or outcomes occur. In the brand community literature, four consequences are frequently examined, including brand loyalty, brand image, behavioral intentions, and consumer behaviors. As is discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, due to the necessity to collect longitudinal data in order to appropriately measure both behavioral intentions and consumer behaviors, consumer behaviors are discussed in this proposal, yet they are not explicitly measured. Each of the three remaining consequences for the sport brand community is hypothesized in this proposal to have a positive relationship.

Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is defined as the overall attachment or deep commitment to a brand (Oliver, 1999). Loyalty is used synonymously with terms such as devotion (Holt, 1995; Wann, Melnick, Russell, & Pease, 2001), commitment (Madrigal, 2001), and attachment (McAlexander et al., 2002). Ehrenberg (1988) and Jacoby and Chestnut (1978) posit that brand loyalty conveys an emotional and behavioral attachment to a brand (McAlexander et al., 2002). Sheth and Park (1974) state that brand loyalty is "a positively based emotive, evaluative and/or behavioral response tendency towards a branded, labeled, or graded alternative or choice" (Arora, 2009, p. 10). The nature of loyalty as an attitude, behavior, or both is debated in the literature (Minton, 1992; Withey & Cooper, 1992). Withey and Cooper (1992) propose that loyalty is both an attitude and a behavior and the difference depends on how researchers desire to conceptualize loyalty. This sentiment is echoed and expanded in research that indicates that having attitudinal loyalty leads to behavioral loyalty (Dick & Basu, 1994). In this proposal, loyalty is conceptualized as an attitude.

In the sport context, the loyalty of sport fans receives considerable attention (Adler & Adler, 1988; Funk & James, 2006; Funk & Pastore, 2000; Gladden & Funk, 2001; Mahony,

Madrigal, & Howard, 2000; Trail, Anderson, & Fink, 2005). Moreover, highly loyal and devoted fans are the focus of "tribal" consumption research (Dionisio et al., 2008; Holt, 1995; Richardson & Turley, 2008) and "brand cult" research (Belk & Tumbat, 2005). Sport researchers suggest that sport teams "have loyal followers who can be counted on to buy tickets and a variety of related merchandise" (Belk & Tumbat, 2005, p. 206).

Brand Image

Brand image encompasses the perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in the memory of a consumer (Keller, 1993). Participation in a brand community results in positive attitudes and emotions toward the brand (Woisetschlager et al., 2008). Patterson and O'Malley (2006) examine factors that lead to positive brand image and conclude that "every brand is a story in and of itself, and these stories are the culmination of interactions between the organization and consumers" (p. 16). Brand community members are an ideal audience for stories of the successful imagery of the organization (Muniz & Schau, 2005; Patterson & O'Malley, 2006).

Brand image is posited to be composed of at least five components or inputs, including perceived quality of the brand, brand attitudes, perceived value of the brand, feelings toward the brand, and brand associations (Kirmani & Zeithaml, 1993). While brand knowledge and brand image are related, brand knowledge indicates what information consumers have about a brand, while brand image is related to how consumers feel about a brand (Keller, 2003). In this research, brand knowledge refers to the information that consumers have about a brand prior to their experience with the brand, and brand image represents the attitudes, feelings and perceived quality and value of the brand that result from the consumers' experience with the brand through their participation in the brand community.

Behavioral Intentions

Behavioral intentions are defined as a person's subjective probability that s/he will perform some behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). In this proposal, three behavioral intentions are identified including intentions to attend sporting events, purchase goods and services (e.g., merchandise), and engage in positive word of mouth behaviors. These three consumer intentions represent the outcomes or dependent variables. In the sport context, attendance intentions research focuses on consumers' intentions to attend games (Madrigal, 2000; Wakefield, 1995).

Purchase intentions are conceptualized in the literature as future plans to buy brand-associated merchandise (Algesheimer et al., 2005; Hassay & Peloza, 2009; McAlexander et al., 2002; Seo, Green, Ko, Lee, & Schenewark, 2007). In this research, despite the fact that attendance intentions often contain a purchase element (e.g., consumers generally must purchase tickets in order to attend a sporting competition), both of these intentions are examined separately as distinct components of consumers' overall behavioral intentions.

Positive word of mouth intentions include the potential informal communications directed at other consumers about the ownership, usage, or characteristics of particular goods and services and/or their sellers (Westbrook, 1987). Thompson and Sinha (2008) state that research "has shown that information and word of mouth plays a critical role in the adoption and diffusion of new products" (p. 66). Word of mouth behavior includes sharing information about goods or services (Luedicke, 2006; Thompson & Sinha, 2008; Woisetschlager et al., 2008) and giving recommendations regarding product choices (Algesheimer et al., 2005; Arora, 2009; Jang, Olfman, Ko, Koh, & Kim, 2008). For example, if an individual is asked to provide their personal knowledge or information about their experiences with an organization's goods or services, this communication can be defined as word of mouth behavior. Jang et al. (2008) posit that

> as soon as the brand satisfies a customer's need … [the customer] becomes an advocate of the brand. He not only continues with the brand, but also initiates positive word-of-mouth to help the company in its promotional activities. A brand community is a group of brand loyal customers, which actively instigates positive word-of-mouth (p. 62).

In addition, through engagement in word of mouth behaviors, members of the brand community act as brand evangelists and promote the brand (Ahonen & Moore, 2005; Arora, 2009). Sport research shows that participation and membership in a community results in positive word of mouth behavior (Holt, 1995). Consumers who are members of a sport brand community are likely to have a positive attitude toward the sport organization and/or brand, and therefore these brand community members are more likely to give information about or recommend the sport organization's goods or services to other potential consumers (Algesheimer et al., 2005). In summary, in this research, behavioral intentions include intentions to attend or watch games, purchase intentions of sport-brand related merchandise, and positive word of mouth intentions.

Consumer Behaviors

Consumer behaviors, consistent with the behavioral intentions, include the actual behaviors of attending sporting events, purchasing goods and services (e.g., merchandise), and engaging in positive word of mouth behaviors. As a result of participation in the sport brand community, individuals develop brand loyalty, a positive brand image, have particular behavioral intentions, and engage in behaviors. While it is often hypothesized that intentions to do some behavior leads to actual behaviors, a longitudinal data collection is necessary to examine the relationship between intentions to do some behavior and the actual behavior. Therefore in this research, while eventual consumer behaviors are important, behavioral intentions will be used as a proxy for actual behaviors until future research can be conducted using a longitudinal data collection process. In the next section, the theoretical framework for the relationships among variables is proposed. In addition, the theories that underpin the research undertaken in this proposal are discussed.

Theoretical Framework

The proposed theoretical model is shown in Figure 1.2. Later in this chapter, the theoretical relationships among the constructs are explained.

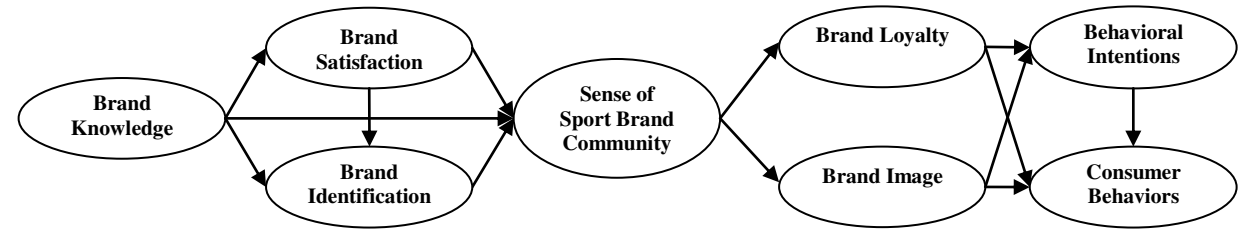


Figure 1.2
The Theoretical Model

The proposed theoretical model guiding this research is the combination of four theories adapted for use in a sport brand community setting, including relationship marketing, social identity theory, the psychological continuum model, and the theory of reasoned action. Each of these has

received extensive attention in existing research so only a summary description of each theory is provided.

Relationship Marketing

Relationship marketing (RM) focuses on attracting, maintaining, and enhancing long-term customer relationships instead of focusing on individual transactions (Berry, 1995). Brand communities are used to create and enhance relationships among consumers, the organization and its brand, and other consumers. Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) state that "developing a strong brand community could be a critical step in truly actualizing the concept of relationship marketing" (p. 427). Similarly, McAlexander et al. (2002) state that "many recent quests for the loyalty grail have ventured into the area of relationship marketing" (p. 38). When consumers and organizations develop brand communities, these brand communities create loyal and long-term customers and thereby strengthen brand loyalty (McAlexander et al., 2003; Rosenbaum et al., 2005).

Within brand communities, individuals are often found who are highly knowledgeable and active in using the organization's goods or services. Such individuals are connected to others through the interpersonal relationships that develop within a brand community and enhance brand loyalty (Ahonen & Moore, 2005). As a result, an individual's knowledge of the brand as well as relationships with other brand users lead to individuals becoming brand evangelists (e.g., individuals who promote the brand directly to other customers without influence or directives from the organization) (Ahonen & Moore, 2005; Belk & Tumbat, 2005; Füller et al., 2008). Brand communities offer the opportunity to create a network of relationships between the organization, brand and customers while utilizing member's brand knowledge and their "proselytizing" efforts (McAlexander et al., 2002).

RM is also useful when explaining how customers and a brand are connected and why organizations want to engage in building brand communities. As stated above, relationships among customers are forged through brand communities. McAlexander et al. (2002) posit that "the more each relationship is internalized as part of the customer's life experience, the more the customer is integrated into the brand community and the more loyal the customer is in consuming the brand" (p. 48). RM offers a framework for understanding the importance of relationships between the organization and customers, customers and other customers, customers and the community, and positive outcomes such as brand loyalty, brand image, behavioral

intentions, and consumer behaviors (Woisetschlager et al., 2008). For sport organizations, the relationships within a brand community create loyal fans who have a positive image of the sport organization, and who also form intentions and eventually buy the sport organization's goods and services, attend competitions and events, and engage in positive word of mouth behaviors.

The relationships that develop between brand consumers cut across demographic lines, because of the focus on the brand and consumers' relationships (e.g., the "Brand-Centric Model" discussed by Muniz and O'Guinn (2001)). Most importantly, relationships occur based on the consumer. The theory that best explains consumers' need for relationships and membership in a community is social identity theory.

Social Identity Theory

The starting point for many examinations of communities begins with the identities of its members (Wiesenfeld, 1996). Identity is defined as "people's concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others" (Hogg & Abrams, 1988, p. 2). Communities are built through relationships with others, resource exchanges with others, and "psychological issues (e.g. affection, empowerment, consciousness-raising, a sense of identity or belonging to the community), as well as social issues (e.g. participation, solidarity, commitment)" (Wiesenfeld, 1996, p. 339). Social identity is built through the social relations that individuals and communities have with other individuals and communities (Jenkins, 1996). The community is a totality which combines individual aspects of its members (e.g., identities) with common features that connect members (Wiesenfeld, 1996). Individuals perceive belonging or oneness with an organization, its brand, and potentially its brand community. As a result, individuals define themselves based on their perceived similarities (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). The theoretical proposition that is most closely associated with how individuals perceive themselves referent to an organization, its brand, and its brand community is social identity theory.

Social identity theory (SIT) is based on the personal and social identities of individuals (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Personal identity refers to various individual characteristics related to how one views one's self and consists of features such as an individual's unique talents, interests, and self-perception (Bartel, 2001). In contrast, social identity "is the perception of belonging to a group with the result that a person identifies with that group (e.g., I am a member)" (Bhattacharya, Rao, & Glynn, 1995, p. 47). SIT is a useful perspective from which to examine a brand community due to the fact that an individual's identity and community

membership may be strongly derived from their sense of community (SOC), which is strongly related to their social identity (Gusfield, 1975; Riger & Lavrakas, 1981; Sarason, 1974).

Through their participation and membership in a community, individuals derive "a sense of identity from their connections to social groups" (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p. 25). Stronger identification with the social group (e.g., the brand community) leads individuals to attribute desirable characteristics of the social group to the self, and individuals perceive a greater similarity with other group members (Dionisio et al., 2008). Thompson and Sinha (2008) state that

> research on social identification has found that participation with the related social group enhances the strength of the identification through various mechanisms. This literature has found that social identities, even weak ones, give rise to in-group bias and more favorable assessments of members' own group and its products (p. 67).

Participation in a brand community increases an individual's preferences for a brand's goods and services, while participation increases bias against out-groups and non-members of the brand community. Potentially, if the individual perceives themselves as an in-group member, this may result in the increased adoption of new goods and services from the brand (Thompson & Sinha, 2008). In the brand community literature, a similar concept is termed "oppositional loyalty" (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001).

SIT also provides the theoretical underpinning for research on identification. Tajfel and Turner (1979) posit that individuals make sense of the world by categorizing themselves and others by group membership (i.e. in-group or out-group). As an individual's identification with the brand increases, his/her sense of community with other brand users increases. The brand becomes the central object with which consumers identify, attach, and ultimately bond. When an individual perceives similarities between their identity and the identity of the brand, a greater felt sense of identification results (Carlson et al., 2008). The next two sections detail models and theories that provide justifications for the relationships between constructs as proposed in the theoretical model.

Psychological Continuum Model

The sport brand antecedents (e.g., knowledge, satisfaction, identification, and sense of sport brand community) in the theoretical model are argued to have relationships that lead to consumer participation in the sport brand community. In the theoretical model, brand knowledge

results in satisfaction, identification, and a sense of sport brand community. In addition, satisfaction results in identification with the brand. Satisfaction and identification also result in a sense of sport brand community. Funk and James (2001, 2006) created the Psychological Continuum Model (PCM) as a framework for understanding an individual's psychological connection to sport. In this proposal, the PCM is used as a framework for conceptualizing the relationships among the sport brand antecedents in the theoretical model (see Figure 1.3).

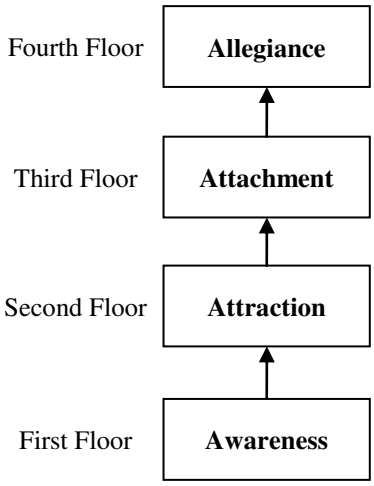


Figure 1.3
The Psychological Continuum Model

The PCM is used to understand how sport spectators and fans relate to a sport object (e.g., a sport organization, brand, team, or player) (Funk & James, 2001). As the name suggests, the PCM works on a vertical continuum with four levels or stages (also known as "floors") (see Figure 1.3) that describe the "motives relating to the sport object and the evaluative processes by which a person internalizes features of the social situation" (Funk & James, 2001, p. 121). The first floor denotes awareness of the sport object. According to Funk and James (2001), the awareness of a sport object often occurs through the process of socialization, which includes becoming cognizant of and acquiring knowledge of the sport object (Greendorfer & Bruce, 1991). Funk and James (2001) posit that "knowing that sports and teams exist, but having no

interest in sports signals that a person has achieved a level of awareness, but not attraction" (p. 127). The construct of awareness in the PCM mirrors the construct of knowledge in the theoretical model, and the construct of brand knowledge is the starting point of the theoretical model.

The second floor of the PCM denotes attraction. According to Funk and James (2001), attraction is based on a comparison and evaluation of different sport objects. In comparison to the existing business literature, satisfaction is conceptualized as the overall evaluation of performance based on prior experiences (Anderson & Fornell, 1994). Thus, attraction and satisfaction appear to share the common features of comparative evaluations. Further, Funk and James (2001) posit that attraction to a sport object is often based on hedonic motives that influence consumer behavior. A more detailed definition indicates that "satisfaction is the consumer's fulfillment response. It is a judgment that a good/service feature, or the good or service itself, provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment, including levels of under- or overfulfillment" (Oliver, 2010, p. 8). Therefore, attraction and satisfaction also share hedonic or pleasure-seeking characteristics. Similar to the fact that attraction is the second floor and awareness is the first floor of the PCM, the construct of brand satisfaction in the theoretical model is the second construct, and it also results from the first construct, brand knowledge.

Attachment refers to "the degree to which physical and psychological features (i.e., attributes and benefits associated with a team such as success, star player, stadium, identification, community pride) take on internal psychological meaning" (Funk & James, 2001, p. 132). The third construct in the theoretical model is brand identification. According to Funk and James (2001), attachment represents a stable psychological connection to the sport object. Similarly, identification is defined as the degree to which an individual defines him or herself by the same attributes that he or she believes define the brand (Dutton et al., 1994). If the sport property that is the object of attachment is a sport brand community, then attachment and identification are closely related. Moreover, attachment develops when a link is created between the individual and the sport object. As a result, the sport object takes on importance and meaning to the individual. When the sport object is a team, "importance serves to strengthen emotional links between the team and an individual's self-interest, values and social identification (Boninger, Krosnick, & Berent, 1995), resulting in a strong psychological connection between the individual and the

team" (Funk & James, 2001, p. 134). Overall, the third floor of the PCM denotes attachment, while the third construct in the theoretical model is identification.

The fourth floor of the PCM denotes allegiance. Funk and James (2001) equate allegiance to loyalty. The authors examine attitudinal and behavioral loyalty (see Dick & Basu, 1994). Based on attitude theory, the authors note that "allegiant fans possess highly formed attitudes towards a specific team – attitudes that strengthen the psychological connection" (Funk & James, 2001, p. 135). An allegiant fan likely has relationships with the sport team and other fans who support the team. The strength of these relationships results in a sense of community with other fans. As such, a sense of sport brand community is one indicator of a strong, stable, and continuous relationship between consumers in a sport brand community. The consequences of participation in a sport brand community are also indicators of allegiance. The theory of reasoned action is used to provide theoretical support for the relationships among the consequences in the theoretical model.

Theory of Reasoned Action

The theory of reasoned action (TRA) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) is frequently used to predict and understand how an individual's motivations influence their behaviors (Madden, Ellen, & Ajzen, 1992). Existing TRA research is summarized in several meta-analyses (Albarracin, Johnson, Fishbein, & Muellerleile, 2001; Sheeran & Taylor, 1999; Sheppard, Hartwick, & Warshaw, 1988). In simple terms, the TRA is used to understand the relationships between attitudes, intentions, and behaviors. The TRA indicates that attitude(s) toward a behavior and perceptions of social norms predict (or result in) behavioral intentions toward a behavior. Subsequently, behavioral intentions predict (or result in) actual behavior. Figure 1.4 shows the original TRA model.

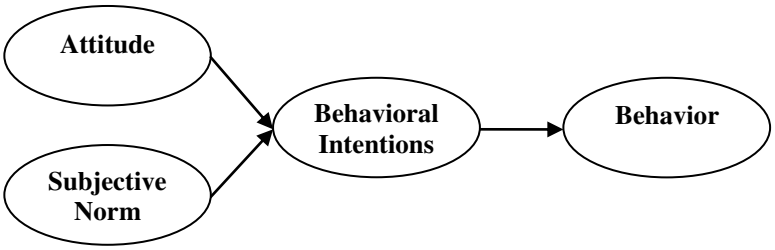


Figure 1.4
The Model of the Theory of Reasoned Action

The TRA is frequently applied to research related to participating in exercise and physical activity (see Hagger, Chatzisarantis, & Biddle, 2002; Hausenblas, Carron, & Mack, 1997 for a review). The existing sport research generally supports the validity of the TRA, and the measured effect size between attitudes-intentions and intentions-behaviors are respectively large (Hagger et al., 2002; Hausenblas et al., 1997). Interestingly, the effect sizes for subjective norms-intentions are only medium (Hausenblas et al., 1997) to low (Hagger et al., 2002). Therefore, it is concluded that the TRA measures attitudes, intentions and behaviors in a sport setting well, while subjective norms need to be considered carefully.

As for the subjective norms, existing brand community research often incorporates norms into the model. In a model of the social influence of car clubs, Algesheimer et al. (2005) include normative community pressure in their model. Algesheimer et al. (2005) posit that when individuals belong to a community, normative community pressure places demands on individuals to conform to the community's norms, rituals and objectives. In community research, McMillan and Chavis (1986) argue that normative pressure effectively regulates members' actions. In brand relationship research, distinct norms exist for both communal relationships (e.g., relationships based on caring and consideration (church)) and exchange relationships (e.g., relationships based on fairness and reciprocity (business)) which include the norms of giving benefits to the partner or group (Aggarwal, 2004; Clark & Mills, 1993; Cunningham & Barbee, 2000). Brand community norms are often created by members, and the norms often function as implicit rules that guide behaviors and actions (Kates, 2004). Norms of behavior are used to delineate between members and non-members (in- and out-groups). Therefore, norms of

behavior already exist within the brand community, and individuals who do not follow the norms are unlikely to become and/or continue to be "true" members who participate in sport brand community activities. Therefore in this research, subjective norms are not measured.

In summary, according to a meta-analysis of existing TRA research, "attitudes and subjective norms were expected and found to provide a very good prediction of individuals' intentions to perform both goals and behaviors … For behaviors, an intention measure performed well in the prediction of behavior and goal attainment" (Sheppard et al., 1988, pp. 338, 340). Yet Ajzen (1985) argues that the TRA is insufficient when individuals do not have complete control over the behavioral goal, and as a result, the theory of planned behavior (TPB) is more appropriate. In the context of this research, however, individuals have complete control over whether or not they become a member of a sport brand community. Therefore, the TRA is sufficient to specify the relationships between the consequences of membership in a sport brand community.

In this research, brand loyalty and brand image are considered to be attitudes. Behavioral intentions, which include sporting event attendance intentions, purchase intentions of goods and services, and intentions to engage in word of mouth behaviors are considered and measured. Finally, consumer behaviors such as attending sporting events, purchasing sport-related merchandise, and engaging in positive word of mouth are considered to be behaviors. The TRA provides theoretical support for the relationships in the theoretical model. These relationships will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

Limitations of the Research

Several limitations may influence the results of this research. The subjects in this research are one area where several limitations exist. For example, the researcher does not have access to the entire sample population of fans, spectators, and individuals who potentially participate in the brand community selected for study. In addition, some of the sample population is students, and students sometimes show bias in how they respond to items on questionnaires. In addition, potential members of the sport brand community under study in this research are spread throughout the entire country and world. Efforts are made to ensure that a wide spectrum of potential brand community members from a variety of geographic regions is sampled. Also as indicated earlier, a data collection limitation exists whereas if a researcher wishes to measure consumer's behavioral intentions and actual behaviors, the data collection required is a

longitudinal data collection method. While it is hoped that future research is undertaken to examine behavioral intentions and consumer behaviors using a longitudinal data collection method, based on the fact that this is the first foray into sport brand communities, only the first relationships (e.g., attitudes and behavioral intentions) are tested. Finally, the sport brand has multiple referent levels including the sport brand, the sport organization, sport teams, coaches, and athletes. With so many referent brand levels, it is difficult to ensure that the entire sample population has a "relationship" with the specified referent level used in this research. In the case of this research, the most popular and prestigious sport team within the sport organization is used as the focal referent "brand".

Definition of Terms

Table 1.1 lists the definitions of the most important terms and phrases that are used in this research.

Table 1.1
Definition of Terms

Concept/Construct	Definition
Brand Community	A specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001)
Brand Knowledge	The personal meaning about a brand that is stored in a consumer's memory (Keller, 2003)
Brand Identification	The degree to which an individual defines him- or herself by the same attributes that he or she believes define the brand (Dutton et al., 1994)
Brand Satisfaction	The consumer's judgment that a brand provides a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment (Oliver, 1997)
Sense of Community	The feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together (McMillan & Chavis, 1986)
Psychological (Relational) Sense of Community	The perception of similarity with others, an acknowledged interdependence with others, a willingness to maintain this interdependence by giving to or doing for others what one expects from them, the feeling that one is part of a larger dependable and stable structure (Sarason, 1974)
Geographic (Territorial) Sense of Community	The sense of belonging to a physical location that has territorial boundaries (Gusfield, 1975)
Psychological Sense of Brand Community	The degree to which an individual perceives relational bonds with other brand users (Carlson et al., 2008)
Brand Loyalty	The overall attachment or deep commitment to a brand (Oliver, 1999)
Brand Image	The perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory (Keller, 1993)
Behavioral Intentions	A person's subjective probability that he will perform some behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975)
Word of Mouth	The informal communications directed at other consumers about the ownership, usage, or characteristics of particular goods and services and/or their sellers (Westbrook, 1987)

Overview of Chapters

The content in this dissertation is organized as follows: In Chapter 2, the conceptual background on sports, brands, and communities are presented based on a review of literature pertaining to brand communities. Research on the constructs in the theoretical model, the hypothesized model, and the hypothesized relationships between constructs are also reviewed in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3, the methods, including information about the sample population, data

collection and measurement tool are presented. In Chapter 4, the results of the pilot study (e.g., reliability and internal consistency of the items) are reported. In Chapter 5, the results of the main study (CFA and SEM) are reported. Finally in Chapter 6, the key research and managerial implications are discussed.

CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The evolution of the study of consumer behavior from the 1960s to the early 1980s moved from an emphasis on rational choice (e.g., microeconomics and classical decision theory), to examinations of irrational consumption (e.g., bounded rationality), and then to the creation of information processing models (Bettman, 1979; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Howard & Sheth, 1969). By the end of the 1970s and in the early 1980s, consumer behavior researchers began to realize that they had neglected several important consumption phenomena including "playful leisure activities, sensory pleasures, daydreams, esthetic enjoyment, and emotional responses" (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982, p. 132). The resulting "experiential view" regarded consumption as a "subjective state of consciousness with a variety of symbolic meanings, hedonic responses, and esthetic criteria" (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982, p. 132). Just over ten years later, two articles were simultaneously published in the June 1993 issue of the *Journal of Consumer Research* that examined experiential community consumption based around skydiving and river rafting activities. Celsi, Rose, and Leigh (1993) termed the skydiving community as a "subculture", while Arnould and Price (1993) discussed the creation and evolution of a community over the course of river rafting expeditions. Two years later in the June 1995 issue of the *Journal of Consumer Research*, two additional articles were simultaneously published about a subculture of consumption based around Harley-Davidson motorcycle owners groups (HOGs) (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995) and the four ways baseball spectators in Chicago's Wrigley Field bleachers consume (e.g., consuming as experience, integration, classification, and play) (Holt, 1995). The research that began in the 1960s dealing with why consumers buy goods and services shifted to how and why communities of consumers consume in the 1990s. As a result of this progression, brand community research emerged.

Based on a review of the above-mentioned four seminal articles that facilitated and provided the underpinning for subsequent brand community research, it is striking today that the original impetus for research on community consumption was based on leisure and experiential consumption activities. Even more interesting is the fact that three of the four articles examine leisure activities that most individuals consider sports. Yet, when the first brand community articles were published in 2001 and 2002, the sport, leisure, and entertainment aspects of the

original consumption communities were cast aside. In their place, corporate brands became the focal point of the consumption community research. This chapter first synthesizes the brand community consumption research. Next, the role of sports and communities are examined and discussed in the context of brand communities. Then, the literature on all of the constructs that are contained in the theoretical model are reviewed. Finally, the hypothesized model and hypothesized relationships between constructs are identified.

Brand Community

Consumers are increasingly connected through technology and related advancements. Therefore, academics and marketers are increasingly focused on the consumption of goods and services by groups of individuals (Ahonen & Moore, 2005). As academics note similar patterns of "community consumption," various common phrases permeate the literature. Several unique, yet not mutually exclusive phrases, are used to label these communities, including consumption communities (Boorstin, 1973), cultures of consumption (Kozinets, 2001), subcultures of consumption (Celsi et al., 1993; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995), consumer tribes (Cova & Cova, 2002; Maffesoli, 1996), brand cults (Belk & Tumbat, 2005), and brand communities (McAlexander et al., 2002; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001).

Consumers who identify with one another based on their shared consumption or use of the same branded good or service can be termed as a "community" (Oliver, 1999). Fraering and Minor (2006) argue that

> a community of consumers provides a social support structure in which the users of a branded product can reinforce in each other their commitment to the brand. This support system may block the onset of cognitive dissonance after the purchase of a product. And socialization in the group may facilitate resolution of product or service failure, or even prevent product or service failure from taking place (p. 288).

Based on similar notions of brand users, Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) define a brand community as "a specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand" (p. 412). Further, Muniz and O'Guinn argue that a brand community is imagined (Anderson, 1983) and defined by three characteristics including consciousness of kind, the presence of shared rituals and traditions, and a sense of moral responsibility. The concept of consciousness of kind can be traced back to Franklin Henry Giddings' *The Principles of Sociology* (1896). In this work, Giddings describes consciousness of

kind as “our conduct towards those whom we feel to be most like ourselves is instinctively and rationally different from our conduct towards others whom we believe to be less like ourselves” (Giddings, 1896, p. 18). Muniz and O’Guinn’s definition of consciousness of kind echoes the sentiments of Giddings.

Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) posit that “rituals and traditions perpetuate the community’s shared history, culture, and consciousness” (p. 413). Research on shared consumption rituals shows that “rituals in which participants act jointly may be used to communicate meaning, not only about the self, but also about the relationships among individuals that bind them together into a ‘small world’” (Gainer, 1995, p. 253). Further, the enactment and understanding of rituals assists individuals in recognizing other members of the community and integrating into the community as a “true member” (as opposed to an “outsider”). Rituals are important to brand communities because “the meaning ascribed to products and services is often related to societal occasions and to social links, and rituals are one of the best collective opportunities to affirm, evoke, assign or revise these meanings” (Cova, 1997, p. 312). Therefore, rituals can be used to identify others and oneself relative to the community as an in-group or out-group member.

Traditions are also important when identifying members of a community. The understanding and practices of traditions can create connections between an individual and other members of the community. Krygier (1986) posits that every tradition has three characteristics, including “pastness”, authoritative presence, and being passed down over time. “Pastness” indicates that the tradition is understood by individuals to have originated in the past. Authoritative presence indicates that there are reasons why the tradition(s) are still practiced today. Finally, traditions must have been passed down over time through a social mechanism or interaction. When comparing traditions to related concepts such as customs or habits, Krygier (1986) argues that “habits, even customs, can be born, live and die solely in the behaviour of one individual. Traditions, as a simple matter of definition cannot” (p. 240). Moreover, traditions can be used to represent and link the past, present and future. Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) further argue that the role of traditions in brand communities is to celebrate the history of the brand and instill community norms and values into its members. Therefore, traditions and rituals are used to standardize and normalize the behavior and values of community members, while at the same time, identifying who is or is not a member of the community based on who knows the rituals and traditions.

The third characteristic of a brand community is a sense of moral responsibility. Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) define sense of moral responsibility as "a felt sense of duty or obligation to the community as a whole, and to its individual members. This sense of moral responsibility is what produces, in times of threat to the community, collective action" (p. 413). A sense of moral responsibility also indicates that an individual makes choices based on his/her values and perceived norms, and as a result, individuals are accountable to others (e.g., the community) for the choices they make. In addition, individuals can judge themselves and hold themselves accountable. It is the accountability of an individual both to themselves and to others that indicates that a sense of moral responsibility can be a shared virtue among members of the community. In examining the necessity of individuals' senses of moral responsibility and resulting importance to the community, Gauthier (2000) argues that "it is necessary for the social practice of assigning moral responsibility to rational agents for their choices and actions. Moreover, this social practice is part of an important method of social control through which the community's interests and goals are furthered" (p. 342). As a result, an individual's sense of moral responsibility to themselves, to others, and to the community as a whole is an important characteristic of members of a brand community.

On the whole, few researchers question the three characteristics of brand community members. In fact, recent research identifies new characteristics and practices of a variety of unique brand communities (see Schau et al., 2009 for a review). However to reach a point where theory is created and meta-analysis research is undertaken, research on brands and the communities that form around brands has to grow in size and scope. Cova (1997) argues that consumer communities are a mechanism that can be used to facilitate social interaction because "the link is more important than the thing" (p. 307). Thus, researchers can examine a variety of relationships that exist within brand communities.

In the early stages of brand community research, Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) create their "Brand Community Triad" (see Figure 2.1) that shows the relationships between customers, the brand, and other customers. This model is the "Brand-Centric Model". In the Brand-Centric Model, Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) argue that

> members feel an important connection to the brand, but more importantly, they feel a stronger connection toward one another. Members feel that they "sort of know each

other" at some level, even if they have never met. This triangular, rather than dyadic, social constellation is a central facet of brand community (p. 418).

McAlexander et al. (2002) generate their "Customer-Centric Model" (Figure 1) that shows the focal or central customer as having relationships with the brand, other customers, the product, and marketers. In the Customer-Centric Model, the customer's relationships are more extensive than in the Brand-Centric Model.

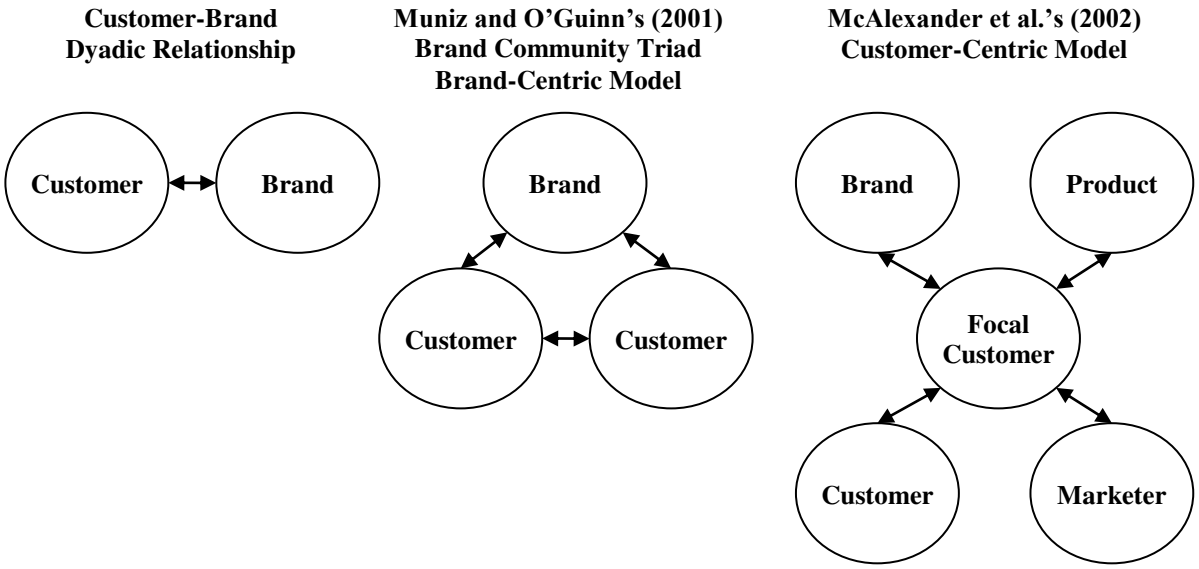


Figure 2.1
Comparison of Three Customer-Brand Relationship Models

The benefits of brand community are explored by many researchers (Ahonen & Moore, 2005; Arora, 2009; Füller et al., 2008; McAlexander et al., 2002; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001; Ouwersloot & Odekerken-Schroder, 2008; Thompson & Sinha, 2008). One explanation of the benefits of brand community is competitive advantage. According to Porter (1985), based on the fundamentals of competitive strategy and competitive advantage, organizations that desire to gain competitive advantage over their rivals must follow one of the three generic strategies of cost leadership, differentiation, or focus. The overall process of the introduction, development,

and utilization of brand communities is a differentiation strategy (Arora, 2009). McAlexander et al. (2002) state that

> in today's marketing environment, sustaining a competitive advantage on the basis of product differentiation often is an exhausting race to a constantly shifting finish line. Any lead in the race is eroded quickly by imitation or even by superior technology from competitors. One way to sidestep this treadmill is to redefine the terms of competitive advantage. Part of the success of brands like Jeep lies in their focus not merely on the product or its positioning but also on the experience of ownership and consumption. Differentiating on the basis of ownership experience can be achieved through programs strategically designed to enhance customer-centered relationships (p. 51).

Brand communities are one strategy that create customer-centered relationships and integrate customers into a social consumer collective (McAlexander et al., 2002). In the sport setting, little research has been conducted about brand communities. Tribal consumption by sport fans is one of the only areas where research exists (Dionisio et al., 2008; Holt, 1995; Richardson & Turley, 2008). Table 2.1 lists the context, focus, and authorship information for existing brand community research.

Table 2.1
The Context, Focus and Authorship of Previous Brand Community Research

Context	Focus	Author(s), Year
Branded Products	Harley-Davidson motorcycles	Bagozzi and Dholakia (2006)
		McAlexander et al. (2002)
		Schau and Muniz (2002)
		Schouten and McAlexander (1995)
	Jeep vehicles	McAlexander et al. (2002)
	Saab automobiles	Muniz and O'Guinn (2001)
		Schau and Muniz (2002)
	Hummer sport utility vehicles	Luedicke (2006)
	Ford Bronco sport utility vehicles	Muniz and O'Guinn (2001)
	Nutella hazelnut spread	Cova and Pace (2006)
	Apple (Macintosh) computers and technology	Belk and Tumbat (2005)
		Muniz and O'Guinn (2001)
		Schau and Muniz (2002)
		Schau and Muniz (2006)
Branded Entertainment	Star Trek	Kozinets (2001)
	Xena: Warrior Princess	Schau and Muniz (2002)
	Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers	Schau and Muniz (2002)
	Warhammer	Cova, Pace, and Park (2007)
Organizational/ Membership-based Communities	Car clubs	Algesheimer et al. (2005)
	The gay men's community	Kates (2004)
	Charities	Hassay and Peloza (2009)
	Magazine readers	Davidson, McNeill, and Ferguson (2007)
	Tourist and visitor groups	Levy and Hassay (2005)
	Universities	McAlexander, Koenig, and Schouten (2004)
		McAlexander et al. (2006)
Sport-based Communities	Sport organizations	Devasagayam and Buff (2008)
		Dionisio et al. (2008)
		Heere et al. (2011)
		Holt (1995)
		Richardson and Turley (2008)

Sport

The examination of sport brand communities begins with a focus on two interconnected areas: sport consumers and sport organizations. Sport consumers are examined based on the differences (described as classifications, tiers, hierarchies, and typologies) between sport spectators and sport fans. Sport brand communities are composed of various types of sport consumers that differ in how they are classified. In addition, sport organizations are discussed in

terms of what characteristics make sport unique, how these unique characteristics influence both sport consumers, and the process of the introduction, development, and utilization of sport brand communities.

Sport Consumers

Sport consumers are defined and classified in several ways. First, sport consumers are differentiated based on being sport spectators, sport fans, or somewhere in between (Wann, 1995; Wann, 1997; Wann et al., 2001). Sport spectators are defined as "individuals who actively witness a sporting event in person or through some form of media", while sport fans are defined as "individuals who are interested in and follow a sport, team, and/or athlete" (Wann et al., 2001, p. 2). It is important to note that sport spectators and sport fans are not mutually exclusive terms because sport spectators tend to have limited interest in the sporting event itself. Instead, sport spectators may attend the event because they were given a free ticket or simply want to be with friends who are attending the event (Wann et al., 2001). Such fans have also been termed as temporary or local fans (Hunt et al., 1999).

On the other hand, sport fans can be highly identified (e.g., immersed in the sporting event, dressed in their team's colors, and actively cheering on their team) (Wann et al. 2001), highly committed (e.g., attend sporting events regularly) (Mullin et al., 2007; Stewart et al., 2003), highly involved (e.g., seek close attachment and identification with their team, construct strong tribal relationships with their team) (Kahle, Kambra, & Rose, 1996), strongly vested (e.g., strong sense of ownership of their team, high levels of emotional investment in their team, a tendency to define themselves through their team or club) (Sutton et al., 1997), strongly attached (e.g., the sport team is central their concept of self identity) (Hunt et al., 1999), and highly devoted and fanatical (e.g., highly loyal, engaging in a degree of behavior that is considered by many to be "over-the-top" yet is still considered to be supportive of their team) (Hunt et al., 1999; Kahle et al., 1996; Stewart et al., 2003). Sport fans can be classified and demarcated along a continuum that represents sport spectators at one end and completely devoted and/or fanatical sport fans at the opposite end. Similarly, while members of a sport brand community also exist in many places along the same sport spectator/sport fan continuum, they are most likely to be highly identified, highly committed, highly involved, strongly vested, strongly attached, completely devoted, and fanatical because the sport fans have a strong relationship with team. Moreover, the introduction, development, and utilization of sport brand communities can be used

to increase the strength and significance of the relationship between the sport team or organization and its consumers.

Sport Organizations

Sport organizations face a saturated marketplace and increasing competition for consumer resources (Ross, 2007). The existing sport literature includes work from researchers who have explored a wide range of solutions that sport organizations can implement to increase profitability by attracting new consumers and retaining existing ones through increased satisfaction and identification (Trail et al., 2005), entertainment (James & Ross, 2004), service quality (Theodorakis, Kambitsis, & Laios, 2001), the physical sport facility (Greenwell, Fink, & Pastore, 2002), and innovation (Lüthje, 2004). Yet sport organizations receive little attention in the brand community literature. While several possible reasons exist for this lack of attention, the most likely rationale is the degree to which the sport organization's brand, goods, and services are intertwined. Multiple brands exist within a sport organization including the overall organizational brand, the sport brand, the team brand, coaches and athletes' brands, and more. Consumers may like the team brand (e.g., the Miami Heat), while at the same time they might dislike a player's brand (e.g., LeBron James). Therefore, the unique, multifaceted, and overlapping brands within sports may cause difficulties in the conceptualization and measurement of a sport brand community.

Sports are unique compared to other goods and services. The most commonly accepted characteristics that are used to define and differentiate goods and services are intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability, and perishability (Zeithaml, Parasuraman, & Berry, 1985). While these characteristics are also used to differentiate between goods and services, sports encompass both characteristics (e.g., sports are both goods and services – often simultaneously). First, sports are tangible and intangible (Jones, Bee, Burton, & Kahle, 2004). For example, sporting events are experienced by spectators and fans (e.g., intangible). In addition, sport competitors, fans and spectators all experience winning and losing and the feelings associated with each. The experiences and feelings of winning and losing are also intangible. Yet, consumers can touch and purchase tangible sport merchandise. Consumers can also touch the sporting event facility and other fans and spectators at the sporting event.

Second, sports are both homogeneous (Sloane, 2002) and heterogeneous (Rein, Kotler, & Shields, 2006). Individual sports are generally played with the same or similar rules around the

world. The rules for soccer in England are basically the same as the rules for soccer in the United States, however, the experiences and interpretations of a sporting event differ among spectators. For example, two spectators watching the same competition can experience and interpret the outcome of the competition differently. Each spectator can differ in his/her interpretation of who is the better competitor and who should be the winner.

Third, sports are inconsistent (Gladden & Milne, 2004). The factors that influence the outcome of a sporting event vary from place to place, team to team, and athlete to athlete. Differences in weather can cause different event outcomes (Milne & McDonald, 1999). Factors such as whether a sport team is playing at home or away can also influence the event outcome (Courneya & Carron, 1992). The back-and-forth nature of a sporting event (e.g., momentum) can shift from one team to the other over the course of a competition (Blann & Armstrong, 2007). While these factors influence the result of the event, the uncertainty of the outcome adds appeal and excitement to a sporting event.

Fourth, sports are both perishable (Blann & Armstrong, 2007) and non-perishable (Gladden & Funk, 2001). Sporting events are simultaneously produced and consumed by the viewing audience (Blann & Armstrong, 2007). Nevertheless, technology allows the sporting event to be captured and replayed. While the largest audience for a sporting event typically occurs in real time, many important sporting events are replayed long after the event concludes. Championship videos of teams are popular memorabilia for many consumers and fans.

Overall, sports are both goods and services. Sports, sport organizations, teams, and players can all be brands (Mason, 1999), and communities can form around all of these entities. Therefore, sport is an area of research that offers many unique characteristics that do not exist in traditional goods or services industries. The current research provides an opportunity to explore and extend our understanding of the process of introducing, developing, and utilizing brand communities in the area of sports.

Sports provide a unique context in which to examine communities. Although people in the United States are not joining and participating in social and community organizations to the same extent as they did in the past due to changing lifestyles, societal interests, and technological innovations (Putnam, 2000), the same effect is not true for spectator sports (Sutton et al., 1997). Sports promote communication between people, promote a collective identity within a group of like-minded sport fans, provide common symbols that fans identify, and offer a reason for

solidarity among sport fans (Lever, 1983; Sutton et al., 1997). In addition, sports teams provide opportunities for local unity, fan loyalty, and civic pride (Johnson, Groothuis, & Whitehead, 2001). As a result, sport provides a context where both brands and the community can be examined.

Community

With the publication of *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (translated as "Community and Society") in 1887, Ferdinand Tonnies became the "father" of community research (Bell & Newby, 1972). Community is often characterized by "relations between people that are governed by natural ties of kinship and friendship, by familiarity, by traditional beliefs handed-down from one generation to the next, by age-old habits, and by customary ways of doing things" (Wright, 2004, p. 7), while society is characterized by "relations between people that are governed by discussion, deliberation, and rational evaluation of means and ends" (Wright, 2004, p. 7). In the seventy years that followed the publishing of *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, community studies became a popular research area, however, researchers continued to struggle to agree on a common definition of community. This lack of agreement is highlighted by the fact that Hillery (1955) identifies more than ninety different definitions and uses of the term "community" (Lukkarinen, 2008).

In 1974, Seymour Sarason wrote the seminal book *The psychological sense of community: Prospects for a community psychology*. In this book, Sarason (1974) argues that

> a community is more than a political or geographical area. It contains a variety of institutions which may be formally or informally related to each other – or not related at all. It is made up of myriads of groups, transient or permanent, which may have similar or different purposes and vary in size, power, and composition. It possesses resources and vehicles for their disbursement. Its groups and institutions vary considerably in size, purposes, and the power they possess or seek (p. 131).

Community researchers began to examine both psychologically- and geographically-based communities. Gusfield (1975) identifies the two types of communities: territorial and relational. Territorial communities refer to neighborhoods, towns, cities, and regions, while relational communities refer to the quality and nature of human interactions without specifying any specific geographic locale (McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Obst, Smith, & Zinkiewicz, 2002). Relational communities also include communities of interest (e.g., religious groups, sport groups,

hobby groups) (Riger & Lavrakas, 1981). It is important to note that territorial and relational communities are not mutually exclusive, as relational communities may but do not have to be based in a certain geographic area (e.g. sport team fans of a local "home" team). Taken as a whole, territorial and geographically-based communities describe the same type of community, while relational and psychologically-based communities are also quite similar. As is noted later in this chapter, some researchers merge territorial/geographic and relational/psychological communities under the common "umbrella" phrase "sense of community".

Sense of Community

Across the disciplines of psychology and sociology, there is widespread agreement that having a sense of community is important to individuals because it is meaningful in the process that brings "order" to the lives of human beings (Puddifoot, 1996). In addition, Chavis and Newbrough (1986) posit that "a healthy community system is one which can resist social, psychological, and physiological problems, in addition to enabling individuals and their collectivity to grow to their maximum potential" (p. 338). The literature is replete with multiple benefits of having a sense of community. In their literature review, Chavis and Newbrough (1986) identify multiple benefits of having a strong sense of community including the physical improvement of the neighborhood, an increase in socially-based crime prevention activities, the adoption of community-based problem-oriented coping strategies, and benefits to the physical health (e.g., improved resistance to diseases) and mental health (e.g., the prevention of mental illness or suicide) of individuals. Therefore developing and utilizing strong communities is beneficial for individuals in the community and the community as a whole.

McMillan (1976) defines sense of community as "a feeling that members have of belonging and being important to each other, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met by the commitment to be together" (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 9). Later, McMillan and Chavis (1986) posit that sense of community contains four dimensions: membership, influence, reinforcement of needs, and shared emotional connection. McMillan and Chavis (1986) argue that these four dimensions encapsulate SOC. To date, these four dimensions of SOC are the most widely used measures for SOC. Ten years later, McMillan (1996) revisited the four dimensions of SOC, changed some of the vocabulary, and expanded on the attributes of each dimension. Table 2.2 compares the original four dimensions to the updated dimensions that were produced ten years later.

Table 2.2
A Comparison of the Elements and Attributes of Sense of Community (McMillan, 1996; McMillan & Chavis, 1986)

Elements (1986)	Attributes (1986)	Elements (1996)	Attributes (1996)
Membership	1. Boundaries 2. Emotional safety 3. A sense of belonging and identification 4. Personal investment 5. A common symbol system	Spirit	1. Boundaries 2. Friendship and connection with others 3. Emotional safety 4. Intimacy 5. Faith in belonging 6. Acceptance 7. Paying dues
Influence	1. Influence over what the group does 2. Cohesiveness within the group 3. Pressure to conform or have uniformity 4. Consensual validation	Trust	1. Understanding and knowledge of the expectations and norms for members 2. Authority (processing information and making decisions) based on principle rather than person 3. Cohesiveness and cooperation 4. Power exchange 5. Order 6. Trust evolves into justice

Table 2.2 (continued)
A Comparison of the Elements and Attributes of Sense of Community (McMillan, 1996; McMillan & Chavis, 1986)

Elements (1986)	Attributes (1986)	Elements (1996)	Attributes (1996)
Integration and fulfillment of needs (Reinforcement)	1. Status 2. Competence 3. The giving of rewards 4. Shared values 5. The meeting of needs (others and oneself)	Trade	1. Benefits for everyone 2. Reinforcements that bind individuals together 3. Rewards 4. Protection from shame 5. Search for similarities and shared traits 6. Consensual validation ("group think") 7. Homogeneity facilitates interaction 8. Trade of the resource inventory 9. Appreciation of differences 10. Integration of resources 11. Sharing 12. Fair trade of resources 13. Generosity (giving for the sake of giving) 14. Faith in one another
Shared emotional connection	1. Contact hypothesis 2. Quality of interaction. 3. Closure to events 4. Shared valent event hypothesis 5. Investment 6. Effect of honor and humiliation 7. Spiritual bond	Art	1. Traditions 2. Common experiences 3. Quality and quantity of contact with other individuals 4. Shared dramatic moments 5. Creation of a collective heritage 6. Symbolic expressions and common stories, symbols, myths, rituals, rites, ceremonies, and holidays

McMillian and Chavis' (1986) four dimensions are the central tenets of the Sense of Community Index (SCI) (Chavis, Hogge, McMillan, & Wandersman, 1986). The SCI is the most often used scale for measuring individual's sense of community, but several issues should be noted. First, as

discussed previously, the SCI is purported by its creators to measure both PSOC and GSOC (Chavis et al., 1986; McMillan & Chavis, 1986). None of the dimensions, however, explicitly examine purely geographic or territorial constructs. Second, while McMillan (1996) revised and updated the four dimensions of SOC, most authors discuss and use the original four dimensions, not the revised ones. The reason for the reliance on the original four dimensions may be that these dimensions are the "original" dimensions and the basis for the starting point for a considerable amount of community research. In addition, the naming of the original dimensions is more explicit and understandable than the revised names for the four dimensions. Despite arguments that sense of community and its most frequently used measurement instrument (Sense of Community Index (SCI)) include and measure territorial/geographic communities, many researchers argue that the SCI does not adequately or sufficiently measure individual's territorial/geographic sense of community (see Bishop, Chertok, & Jason, 1997; Buckner, 1988; Chavis & Pretty, 1999; McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Obst et al., 2002; Prezza, Pacilli, Barbaranelli, & Zampatti, 2009). In this research, the phrase "sense of community" (SOC) is used to encompass both the psychological sense of community (PSOC) and geographic sense of community (GSOC). In other words, PSOC and GSOC are both measurable components of SOC.

Similar to the process used by McMillan and Chavis (1986), Friedman, Abeele, and De Vos (1993) use qualitative analysis to identify the characteristics of individuals with strong PSOC. They report eight categories labeled as (1) sense of belonging to the community, (2) sense of active involvement with the community, (3) sense of togetherness or kinship with the community, (4) sense of common values and beliefs with the community, (5) feeling of comfort with acceptance by the community, (6) feeling of respect for or pride in the community, (7) feeling of influencing and being influenced by the community, and (8) sense of identification with the community. Based on the comparison between the original four elements and attributes of the sense of community (McMillan, 1996; McMillan & Chavis, 1986) and eight dimensions, the four original dimensions appear to encompass all of the (later found) eight dimensions. With a strong historical tradition of using the four original dimensions as the basis and starting point for examinations of both PSOC and GSOC, the four dimensions and their potential relationships to sport brand communities are examined and discussed in more detail.

Membership

McMillan and Chavis (1986) define membership as "the feeling of belonging or of sharing a sense of personal relatedness" (p. 9) and discuss several examples of membership such as how boundaries identify in-group and out-group members. In contrast to the GSOC boundaries, however, this meaning of boundaries is based on psychology. For example feelings of trust, security, sense of belonging, and identification all indicate psychological characteristics that define the boundary or difference between an in-group and out-group member. In addition, individuals who feel that they invest in or contribute to the community may consider themselves to be members. If individuals expend resources to attend a sporting competition, they feel like a "true" member of a fan community. Also, members tend to recognize common symbols. Members of a sport organization's fan community often recognize coaches and players, mascots, rituals (e.g., cheers and chants), and other representations of the team. Knowledge of these symbols provides individuals with "cultural capital" that is used to exemplify membership in the community (Holt, 1998, Schouten & McAlexander, 1995).

Overall, feelings of belonging, connection, and identification with others epitomize the meaning of membership in the community. Based on perceived membership, consumers desire to participate in brand community activities with other consumers. The experiences of co-consumption of the brand with other consumers are essential to strengthening the relationships between consumers (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). If consumers believe that they are a member of the community, then as a result, they will participate in brand-based activities with other consumers in the community. In a sport brand community setting, feelings of membership in the community are important for relationships among individuals to develop. As such, membership is considered and measured in this research.

Influence

McMillan and Chavis (1986) define influence as "a sense of mattering, of making a difference to a group and of the group mattering to its members" (p. 9). Based on this definition, influence is a bidirectional relationship. In brand community research, opinion leaders (e.g., brand evangelists/missionaries) are touted as examples of those who can make a difference or influence a community. In contrast, due to the fact that community members may be knowledgeable about the common symbols and rituals associated with a community or team, individuals may exert pressure on others to conform. For example, if fans of the Florida State

University Football team engage in the "Warchant" ("Warchant" is the "war song" of the Seminole Indian Tribe that represents what Seminole warriors did prior to going into battle. The "Warchant" consists of a song with no words that is sung while bending and swinging one's arm in a top down motion that simulates a chopping motion) while attending a game, some individuals who also support the team may feel pressure to conform and engage in a similar behavior in order to conform to the expectations of other fans. In some cases, individuals influence the community, in other cases, the community influences individuals, and yet these forces also act concurrently (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

Ten years later, McMillan (1996) updated the conceptualization of influence and relabeled the construct as trust. Applied to brands, brand trust is defined as "the confidence a consumer develops in the brand's reliability and integrity" (Chatterjee & Chaudhuri, 2005, p. 2). A comparison of the definitions of influence and trust indicates that they are conceptually distinct and share only a bidirectional relationship. In an application of relationship marketing to sport consumers, Bee and Kahle (2006) note that trust affects sport consumers' attitudes and behaviors toward relationship formation. Specifically, based on consumers' expectations for the sport organization, team, and players, a relationship based on trust develops if consumers' expectations are met. In a sport brand community, trust also develops between community participants if their expectations of the attitudes and behaviors of other participants match their expectations. As such, trust among participants in a sport brand community is important for the formation and maintenance of relationships. Trust, however, is strongly related to participants' relationships and their level of identification with the brand and the community. Therefore, influence as it is originally conceptualized may not discriminate as a measured construct in comparison with brand identification or other sense of sport brand community constructs. As a result, in a sport brand community setting, it is not known whether this bidirectional concept of influence is appropriate, or whether a concept such as trust is more appropriate. Future research should use qualitative techniques to determine whether this concept is present and salient for participants in a sport-setting, however, there is no current empirical or theoretical basis for including the construct of influence. Consequently, influence is not measured in this research.

Integration and Fulfillment of Needs

McMillan and Chavis (1986) define integration and fulfillment of needs (also termed as reinforcement of needs) as "the feeling that members' needs will be met by the resources

received through their membership in the group" (p. 9). McMillan and Chavis (1986) identify several "reinforcers" that motivate individuals to join a community. For example, the membership status of individuals and subsequent community success brings community members together. Applying the concept of basking in reflected glory (BIRGing), the members of a team's fan community feel as though they (we) have won when their team wins (Cialdini, Borden, Thorne, Walker, Freeman, & Sloan, 1976). Another example is the interpersonal attraction toward competent individuals. McMillan and Chavis (1986) argue that individuals are attracted to other individuals or communities that can benefit or reward them. If individuals attend sporting events, one potential outcome is that the individual feels rewards from their attendance. As previously discussed, the "home advantage" and participation of fans supporting the "home" team fosters community relationships around the team. Everyone who supports the "home" team feels the benefits and rewards of being a member of the community. If the "home" team wins, benefits and rewards are reinforced.

In McMillan's (1996) revision, integration and fulfillment of needs is redefined as trade. In order for evenhanded trading of resources to occur, a commitment to fairness is essential. Similarly, feelings of commitment with other members are also important for appropriate functioning and operation of the community and its activities. As such, the principles of relationship marketing also apply to integration and fulfillment of needs. Bee and Kahle (2006) suggest that the commitment of consumers who are involved with the sport brand is fulfilled by participating in activities. In other words, consumers display their commitment to the sport brand by developing and maintaining relationships with other members. Yet, when consumers are committed to their relationships with other brand consumers, their commitment can also indicate identification with the brand. Therefore, integration and fulfillment of needs may not discriminate as a measured construct in comparison with brand identification or other sense of sport brand community constructs. In a sport brand community setting, relationships with other members in the community are important, however, the needs of consumers are likely to vary. Some consumers may first and foremost need a fulfilling relationship with the brand, while others need a relationship with members of the communities. The reinforcement and/or integration and fulfillment of needs may not be an important and salient concern for members in a sport brand community setting. Similar to the construct of influence, qualitative research

should be undertaken to determine the composition of sense of community in a sport-setting. As a result, integration and fulfillment of needs is not considered in this research.

Shared Emotional Connection

McMillan and Chavis (1986) define shared emotional connection as "the commitment and belief that members have shared and will share history, common places, time together, and similar experiences" (p. 9). Further, McMillan and Chavis (1986) posit that interaction quality, interaction quantity, the closeness of interaction, investment, and community spirit all may be features of shared emotional connection. For example, the more individuals interact, the more individuals are likely to form or join a community. In addition, if the interaction is strongly positive (e.g., events occur which foster a stronger relationship or bond), then individuals are more likely to form or join a community. If a team wins a championship game, then the fans develop stronger relationships. Based on the shared experience of their team winning a championship, the community also benefits from this accomplishment and is endowed with "community spirit". The experience of winning takes on a symbolic function (e.g., perseverance, dedication, excellence). The experience of winning also provides a shared history for community members. The shared history of winning provides community members with a sense of having a shared past that only "true" members experience.

McMillan (1996) redefines shared emotional connection as art. The concept of art is used to communicate the common experiences that individuals have when they are involved in or experience symbolic expressions (e.g., traditions, symbols, myths, rituals, rites, and ceremonies). Bee and Kahle (2006) posit that in the framework of relationship marketing, consumers are involved with the sport brand, and they share similar values with other members of the brand community. Based on consumers' involvement with the brand, however, they also are likely identified with the brand based on their involvement and commitment to the brand and the community. As such, shared emotional connection may not discriminate as a measured construct in comparison with brand identification or other sense of sport brand community constructs. In addition, shared emotional connections in a sport-setting are based on the experiences that individuals have with the sport goods and/or services and other sport consumers. Experiences with sport goods and/or services are better conceptualized based on the involvement that consumers have, rather than their shared connections. Similar to the constructs of influence and integration and fulfillment of needs, qualitative research should be undertaken to ascertain the

most important and salient components of individuals in a sport brand community setting. As a result, shared emotional connection is not measured in this research.

Psychological Sense of Community

Durkheim (1965) observes that modern society develops communities based on interests rather than locality (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Further research shows that as industrialization increases, technology improves, and individuals and families migrate, the sense of connection and belonging that bonds individuals to a particular place is disappearing (Block, 2009). As a result, the psychological orientation of community studies research is growing, and research is beginning to examine individuals' sense of community. The behavior of individuals and their relationships to various communities is explored through an examination of the psychological factors (e.g., motivations, attitudes, and personality) that influence how and why individuals want and think about membership in a community (Sarason, 1974). Sarason (1974) posits that "if one looks at a community in terms of people, there is a good deal one can learn about it: the groups that comprise it, their interrelationships, how and at what they work, their recreational activities, their modes of transportation, and so on" (p. 148).

Based on the relationships that typify a community such as feelings of perceived belonging, connectedness, and membership, Putnam (2000) argues that these types of relationships are

> important for the rules of conduct that they sustain. Networks involve (almost by definition) mutual obligations; they are not interested in mere 'contacts.' Networks of community engagement foster sturdy norms of reciprocity … reciprocity is more efficient than a distrustful society, for the same reason that money is more efficient than barter. If we don't have to balance every exchange instantly, we can get a lot more accomplished. Trustworthiness lubricates social life. Frequent interaction among a diverse set of people tends to produce a norm of generalized reciprocity (pp. 20-21).

Yet, these networks of relationships including their norms, rules of conduct, and feelings of reciprocity exist within individuals' minds. They are conceived and perceived in the psychological orientation of individuals. As such, individuals do not have tangible or physical objects that denote relationships or membership. For example, individuals do not have to wear a specific brand of clothing, drive a specific brand of car, or tattoo a sport team's logo on their body in order to like or feel a connection to other individuals who like or admire the same brand

or sport team. The relationship between individuals may be based on a tangible product, but the connection between individuals is based on the psychological feelings of togetherness and group orientation that eventually leads to a mutual sense of community.

Sarason (1974) defines psychological sense of community (PSOC) as "the perception of similarity with others, an acknowledged interdependence with others, a willingness to maintain this interdependence by giving to or doing for others what one expects from them, the feeling that one is part of a larger dependable and stable structure" (p. 157). Sarason further states that

> individuals were part of a readily available, mutually supportive network of relationships upon which one could depend and as a result of which, one did not experience sustained feelings of loneliness that impel one to actions or to adopting a style of living masking anxiety and setting the stage for later and more destructive anguish (p. 1).

Anderson (1983) examines socially constructed notions of community that are "imagined" by individuals who perceive that they belong to a community. Similar to a relational community or community of interest, members of imagined communities may never meet face-to-face, yet they identify themselves as members of the same community. The identification of oneself as a member of a community and as having close associations with other members of the same community are the key tenets of Anderson's notion of imagined communities. Imagined communities are essentially based in individuals' minds and examined through the psychological orientation of community studies. Thus, imagined communities are based on individuals' PSOC, because no direct contact or geographical associations are necessary for the existence of an imagined community.

Individuals who feel that they invest in or contribute to the community often consider themselves as members of a community. If individuals frequently expend resources to attend sporting competitions, they feel like "true" members of the community. In sports, members of the fan/brand community also travel to an "away" location of a game/competition and feel a sense of camaraderie and psychological connection to other members of the community they encounter (Dionisio et al., 2008). Members of a community also recognize common rituals and traditions, which Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) discuss as the brand community tenet of consciousness of kind. In addition, members of a sport brand community recognize coaches, players, mascots, symbols (e.g., logos), and other representations of the team (e.g., chants, cheers, team colors, and gestures). Knowledge of these behaviors and representations indicates

membership to other participants and members of the sport brand community. This knowledge also reinforces one's own PSOC.

Sports build communities in which relationships are encouraged to develop among the sport organization, team, coaches, players, and individuals (e.g., spectators and fans). As a result, individuals develop feelings of PSOC toward a sport organization (e.g., a sport brand) and the extension(s) of the organization (e.g., brand extensions such as the team and its coaches and players) (Anderson & Stone, 1981). Research examines how fans perceive that their support contributes to the success of the team (Duncan, 1983). The collective involvement of fans at sporting competitions and the needs of these fans to socialize and develop relationships with like-minded fans are also important to the development of sport brand communities (Melnick, 1993). These examples demonstrate how fans' PSOC helps to create sport brand communities of like-minded fans, thus supporting the inclusion of PSOC variables in this research.

PSOC is also employed to some degree in the existing literature on online communities and brand communities (Carlson, Suter, & Brown, 2008; Woisetschlager et al., 2008). Woisetschlager et al. (2008) posit that PSOC is comprised of elements such as

> the building of a corporate feeling, friendship, trust, support, and the satisfaction of needs. In this context, a brand can thus be seen as linking consumers with similar passions. Communities distinguish themselves from other communities by their passion for a particular brand (p. 241).

In related research, Carlson et al. (2008) argue that a psychological sense of brand community (PSBC) exists in the absence of social interaction among brand community members. PSBC is defined as "the degree to which an individual perceives relational bonds with other brand users … [and] is not dependent on social intercourse" (Carlson et al., 2008, p. 286). As a result, there is little distinguishable difference between PSOC and PSBC. In both cases, consumers perceive relationships between the focal object around which the community forms and other consumers of the brand.

Geographic Sense of Community

Geographic sense of community (GSOC) refers to the geographic or territorial area with which an individual feels a connection and/or sense of belonging (Gusfield, 1975). Most research on territorial/geographic communities uses locale or geographic associations to describe a physical area in which individuals reside together (Gusfield, 1975; Riger & Lavrakas, 1981).

Riger and Lavrakas' (1981) analysis of urban neighborhoods shows two distinct components: physical rootedness and social bonding that are very similar to Gusfield's (1975) territorial and relational dimensions (Wright, 2004). GSOC, then, is characterized by a defined geographic area (defined by political or administrative demarcations) in which individuals spend a portion of their life interacting and collaborating with other individuals who reside in the same area. Over time, a community based on geographic proximity forms, and a common sense of history, rituals, myths, values, and norms of behavior form within this area (Ulrich, 1984). Commonalities based in a geographic area form the basis of GSOC.

Existing research identifies various types of GSOC including sense of place, place attachment, and community attachment. Place is defined as a physical location (e.g., a neighborhood, city, region, or country) which humans identify and separate from undefined surrounding space often through giving the place a name (Tuan, 1977). As a result, sense of place indicates the meaning attached to the area, place, and/or space by a person or group (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001). Place attachment refers to "a positive affective bond between an individual and a specific place, the main characteristic of which is the tendency of the individual to maintain closeness to such a place" (Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001, p. 274). Community attachment encompasses residents' emotional and sentimental connections and attachments to their community (Brehm et al., 2004; Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974). Overall, the GSOC-related research examines feelings of belonging, identification, connection and attachment toward a specific place or location. As such, the place holds meaning for individuals based on the meaningfulness attached to that geographic location (Brandenburg & Carroll, 1995).

Research findings indicate that geographic places are given meaning by the residents of a community. The resident community then transmits the meaning of the geographic place over time to current and future residents. As a result, the geographic place has meaning (e.g., symbols, emotions, and values) associated with it that result in GSOC (Kaltenborn, 1997). For example, despite the debate over where the sport of baseball was invented and by whom, Cooperstown, New York is dubbed by its residents as "America's favorite hometown" (Cooperstown/Otsego County Tourism Organization, 2011). The city of Cooperstown is synonymous with baseball (National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, 2011) based on the meaning and importance of baseball to its fans, and because Cooperstown is home to the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum and Doubleday (Baseball) Field. As a result, tens of thousands of baseball fans make

the pilgrimage to Cooperstown every year where they can visit the "shrines" and view the "relics" of baseball (Seymour, 1989). In many ways, Cooperstown is the city that most strongly represents and symbolizes the sport of baseball. For geographic locations similar to Cooperstown, the GSOC can be sustained over time and passed on to future generations who perpetuate the building process of GSOC. In general, individuals who live in a community or are strongly attached to the community and are endowed with knowledge of the meaning of the geographical place. These individuals are likely to consider themselves as members of the community due to their understanding of the unique and meaningful characteristics of the geographical place.

In sports, teams are often given names that indicate geographic associations (e.g., Colorado Rockies) or local associations (e.g., Dallas Cowboys, Green Bay Packers). Universities and their athletic departments adopt or are often given names that combine geographic and local associations (e.g., the Florida State University Seminoles). Many people associate the university with a geographic region. Sport contests between Florida State University (Tallahassee) and the University of Florida (Gainesville), despite the cities being separated by less than 100 miles, draw geographical boundaries which separate or even segregate fans. As discussed previously, fans that are caught on the "wrong" side of the boundary feel out-group bias. Based on the strength of the GSOC of the fan toward the team, a fan is inclined to express his/her support of the team through joining the brand community for the sport team he/she supports.

In summary, sense of community (PSOC and GSOC) is an antecedent of consumer participation in a sport brand community. Sport brand community members have a strong interest in the brand and brand extensions (e.g., the sport team and its players) (Füller et al., 2008). Further, brands can achieve success when consumers express their personal and social identities through the brand due to their membership and relationships within a brand community (Jang et al., 2008). Members of a sport brand community derive value from participation with other members through the activities and opportunities for interactions that are fostered by the sport brand community (McAlexander et al., 2006; Schau et al., 2009). Based on the literature review and the theoretical applicability of five potential components of SOC, only two components (membership – a type of PSOC, and GSOC) are considered and measured in this research.

As a result of the antecedents of consumer participation in a sport brand community, a number of positive consequences occur. All of the proposed antecedents and consequences (e.g., constructs) are now examined in detail.

The Constructs in the Theoretical Model

This proposal includes an examination of four antecedents and four consequences of consumer participation in a sport brand community. Table 2.3 lists the authors who examine each of the eight constructs.

Table 2.3
Previous Brand Community Construct Research

Section	Construct	Authors
Antecedents	Brand Knowledge	Algesheimer et al. (2005)
		Dholakia, Bagozzi, and Pearo (2004)
		Dionisio et al. (2008)
		Füller et al. (2008)
		Hassay and Peloza (2009)
		Keller (2003)
		Muniz and O'Guinn (2001)
		Schau et al. (2009)
	Brand Satisfaction	Algesheimer et al. (2005)
		McAlexander et al. (2003)
		Ouwersloot and Odekerken-Schroder (2008)
		Woisetschlager et al. (2008)
	Brand Identification	Algesheimer et al. (2005)
		Bagozzi and Dholakia (2006)
		Bhattacharya and Sen (2003)
		Bristow and Sebastian (2001)
		Carlson et al. (2008)
		Dionisio et al. (2008)
		Fournier (1998)
		Füller et al. (2008)
		Hassay and Peloza (2009)
		Muniz and O'Guinn (2001)
		Seo et al. (2007)
		Woisetschlager et al. (2008)
	Sense of Community	Algesheimer et al. (2005)
		Carlson et al. (2008)
		Cova and Pace (2006)
		Keller (2001)
		Keller (2003)
		McAlexander et al. (2002)
		Muniz and O'Guinn (2001)

Table 2.3 (continued)
Previous Brand Community Construct Research

Section	Construct	Authors
Consequences	Brand Loyalty	Algesheimer et al. (2005)
		Cova and Pace (2006)
		Jang et al. (2008)
		McAlexander et al. (2003)
		Rosenbaum et al. (2005)
		Shang, Chen, and Liao (2006)
		Thompson and Sinha (2008)
	Brand Image	Andersen (2005)
		Bagozzi and Dholakia (2006)
		Ferrand and Pages (1999)
		Thompson, Rindfleisch, and Arsel (2006)
		Woisetschlager et al. (2008)
	Behavioral Intentions	Algesheimer et al. (2005)
		Jang et al. (2008)
		Keh and Xie (2009)
		Ouwersloot and Odekerken-Schroder (2008)
		Thompson and Sinha (2008)
		Woisetschlager et al. (2008)
		Zhou (2011)
	Consumer Behaviors	Algesheimer et al. (2005)
		Andersen (2005)
		Carlson et al. (2008)
		Carroll and Ahuvia (2006)
		Dwyer (2007)
		Ferrand and Pages (1999)
		Jang et al. (2008)
		Keller (2001)
		Woisetschlager et al. (2008)

The Antecedents of Consumer Participation in Sport Brand Community

Brand Knowledge

Consumer knowledge is conceptualized in the literature as both a uni- and multi-dimensional construct (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987). While brand knowledge indicates the personal meaning about a brand that is stored in consumer memory (Keller, 2003), consumer knowledge has two major components: familiarity and expertise (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987; Jacoby, Troutman, Kuss, & Mazursky, 1986). Adapted to brand knowledge, brand familiarity is defined as the number of brand-related experiences accumulated by a consumer, while brand

expertise is defined as the ability of a consumer to perform brand-related tasks successfully (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987). In a brand community, members should have at least a basic level of familiarity with the brand, otherwise they are not considered by referent members as "true members". In contrast, brand community members have a wide range of expertise with the brand. Some members may be novices who hope to learn more about a brand or are just starting to develop relationships with a brand and other community members, while other members are experts who want to share their liking and admiration for the brand with others (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). In addition, experts are also likely to be highly engaged with the brand, community, and its members (Algesheimer et al., 2005). Moreover, brand communities are a bastion of collective consumer knowledge about a brand, and members of the community and the brand/organization use this knowledge toward mutual advantage.

In an examination of the tribal behaviors of sport fans, Dionisio et al. (2008) posit that these fans' knowledge of rituals, symbols, locales, and beliefs associated with sport teams link fans together, resulting in the formation of organized fan communities. Brand consumers also share knowledge of the brand with other consumers. Füller et al. (2008) note that

> research in knowledge management found that if members of a community believe that their knowledge is valuable and useful they are more willing to share it with others … Therefore, it can be expected that brand community members are more likely to engage [in brand community activities] if they rate their brand knowledge as high (p. 611).

Therefore, one motivation for consumers to join brand communities is the opportunity to engage in a knowledge exchange with other consumers (Füller et al., 2008; Schau et al., 2009).

In a meta-analysis of existing brand community research, Schau et al. (2009) identify common value-creating practices among a variety of brand communities, and two of the three major components are knowledge and understanding (general procedural understandings and rules (e.g., explicit, discursive knowledge)) and skills, abilities, and culturally appropriate consumption projects (e.g., tacit, embedded knowledge or how-to). For brand consumers, knowledge garnered from experiences within the community and with other members of a brand community results in an increase in cultural capital (e.g., resources such as knowledge, skills, education, and advantages) and in social capital (e.g., resources such as group membership, relationships, networks of influence, and support). As a result, an individual obtains a higher status within the community (Bourdieu, 1986; Holt, 1998). Knowledge of rituals, traditions, and

behavioral expectations are also garnered from the brand community and its members (Muniz & Schau, 2005). As a result, an individual's standing within the community is improved through an increase in his/her knowledge and cultural and social capital.

Consumers who have brand knowledge and are endowed with cultural and social capital tend to feel more satisfied with their brand choice compared to less knowledgeable (e.g., novice) consumers. In addition, consumers who have brand knowledge and cultural capital achieve in-group and higher social status within a brand community (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). A consumer's feelings of in-group social status then influence and reinforce his/her brand attitudes including brand satisfaction, brand identification, and sense of sport brand community. Thus, brand marketers should invest resources from the beginning of the brand's lifecycle toward marketing initiatives that communicate knowledge (e.g., educate or inform consumers). The resultant knowledge generation by the brand leads to the receipt and sharing of knowledge by brand users that result in brand satisfaction, brand identification, and sense of sport brand community.

Brand Satisfaction

Brand satisfaction is defined as a consumer's judgment that a brand provides a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment (Oliver, 1997). The satisfaction construct plays an important role in marketing research because results suggest that satisfaction is a strong predictor of outcomes such as loyalty, repurchase intentions, and a variety of consumer behaviors (Eggert & Ulaga, 2002; Liljander & Strandvik, 1995; Ravald & Grönroos, 1996). Cronin and Taylor (1994) identify two types of satisfaction: transaction-specific and overall satisfaction. One popular approach for examining and understanding overall customer satisfaction related to a brand's goods and/or services is the confirmation/disconfirmation paradigm (Oliver, 1977; Oliver, 1980; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). In this paradigm, for example, the level of customer satisfaction with a brand's goods and/or services is determined based on the perceived (actual) performance in comparison with the expected performance. If the perceived (actual) performance equals the expected performance, then the customer is satisfied and the expectations are confirmed. If the perceived (actual) performance is higher than the expected performance, then the customer is highly satisfied and positive disconfirmation is the result. Yet if the perceived (actual) performance is lower than the expected performance, then the customer is dissatisfied and negative disconfirmation is the result. This

description typifies the cognitive process that can be used to conceptualize and measure satisfaction.

Several notable research studies lend credibility to the cognitive process of satisfaction. One approach examines customers' feelings of satisfaction based on the attribute performance of the brand's goods and/or services in addition to the confirmation/disconfirmation paradigm (Bolton & Drew, 1991; Oliver, 1993; Oliver & DeSarbo, 1988; Tse & Wilton, 1988). Bolton and Drew (1991) argue that good or bad attribute performance in tandem with confirmation/disconfirmation influence customer satisfaction. Based on various levels of satisfaction with the attribute performance, a second approach, the affective approach to satisfaction, also has become a popular perspective through which satisfaction is understood.

The second notable approach to the examination of overall consumer satisfaction is based on consumers' attitudes toward the performance of a brand (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). Affect is characterized as a type of attitudinal or emotional satisfaction. Two summary affective states of consumption are examined in the satisfaction literature, including positive and negative affect (Westbrook, 1987; Westbrook & Oliver, 1991). Westbrook (1987) provides evidence through factor analysis that positive affect (e.g., joy and interest) is separate from negative affect (e.g., anger, disgust, and contempt). In related post-purchase causal attribution research, Oliver (1989) describes how affect arises based on whether a consumer perceives a purchase outcome as a success or failure. In addition, positive and negative affect are shown to contribute to the satisfaction and judgments of consumers toward their well-being and quality of life (Horley & Little, 1985). Due to the fact that satisfaction can be conceptualized as cognitive and affective, sport consumption and the satisfaction sport consumers experience provides an appropriate context within which to examine satisfaction research because of the unique attributes of sport that are discussed earlier in this chapter.

In sport consumer studies, while much research examines the importance of satisfying sport spectators and fans, relatively little research examines various types of satisfaction (Caro & García, 2007). A number of organizational and environmental factors are identified that impact sport consumers' satisfaction including the relocation of a team, trading of players, player strikes, perceptions of exorbitant player salaries, increasing ticket prices, and commercialization of sport (Van Leeuwen, Quick, & Daniel, 2002). Sport organizations cannot control every aspect of the sport consumer experience with the sport product, because the sport product is inconsistent

(Gladden & Milne, 2004), but sport organizations can mitigate the effects of these types of factors by ensuring that sport consumers are satisfied.

In one of the first sport-based studies of various types of satisfaction, Madrigal (1995) identifies three cognitive antecedents of satisfaction including expectancy disconfirmation, team identification, and quality of opponent and two affective states including enjoyment and basking in reflected glory (BIRGing). Caro and García (2007) also identify disconfirmation evaluations as the cognitive component while arousal and pleasure are identified as the affect components that lead to satisfaction, although pleasure is eventually dropped from the model due to a non-significant path loading. Van Leeuwen et al. (2002) examine and extend the original expectancy disconfirmation model of satisfaction to sport spectators. In their extended model, they add club identification as an antecedent of expectations, perceived performance, disconfirmation, and satisfaction, while winning/losing is an antecedent of perceived performance, disconfirmation, and satisfaction. Using Social Identity Theory (SIT) as the basis for club identification, they provide further evidence of the existence of a cognitive component of satisfaction. In contrast, the winning/losing phenomenon is seen as an example of both cognitive and affective satisfaction. The winning/losing phenomenon engenders a cognitive component as sport consumers evaluate athletes or teams that are competing and their relative performance. Athletes or teams with better records should defeat opponents with poorer records, while athletes or teams that compete at home should defeat visiting teams (Courneya & Carron, 1992). Yet sporting event results are unpredictable, so sport consumers can engender a cognitively-based type of satisfaction when the home team with a better record defeats a visiting team with a poorer record. In contrast when a team wins, sport consumers can also BIRG and feel a vicarious sense of achievement due their team winning (Cialdini et al., 1976). Feelings of BIRGing and vicarious achievement engender an affectively-based type of satisfaction. Therefore in sport, it can be argued that cognitive and affective forms of satisfaction exist, often simultaneously.

Brand Identification

In the business and marketing literatures, brand identification generally has three related meanings. First, brand identification is used to differentiate a brand's goods and services from those of other brands (Porter, 1979). As a source of differentiation, brand identification is one strategy that is utilized to create competitive advantage over competitors (Porter, 1985). The second type of brand identification relates to the perceived meaning and symbolism that a brand

represents and is transferred to a consumer. Brands are legitimized as a partner for consumers through animation, humanization, or personalization of the brand (Fournier, 1998). The identified meaning and symbolism of the brand is imparted onto consumers of the brand. If consumers are satisfied by their experience with the brand and the meaning that is imparted by the brand, consumers feel brand identification. Just as brands are differentiated based on how they are identified, consumers are also identified based on the brands that they consume.

The third type of brand identification is a consumer's identification with other brand consumers and users (e.g., a brand community). Based on Mael and Ashforth's (1992) definition of organizational identification, identification with a brand community is the perception of oneness with or belongingness to a brand community, where the individual defines him or herself in terms of the brand community in which he or she is a member. Based on being differentiated as a member (as compared to a non-member) and the meaning and symbolism of the brand that is consumed, a consumer feels brand identification with the brand, other consumers of the brand, and the brand community as a whole.

In this research, brand identification is defined as the degree to which an individual defines him or herself by the same attributes that he or she believes define the brand (Dutton et al. 1994). As such, the focus of brand identification in this research is the meaning of the brand to the consumer and the relationship between the brand and the consumer. While the identification of brand consumers with other brand consumers is important, this community-based relationship is explained in a later section on the sense of sport brand community. In this section, the focus is on the singular relationship between a brand and a consumer.

It has long been known that consumers buy goods and services not only for what they do but also for what they mean (Levy, 1959). When consumers elect to purchase a brand's goods or services, one motivation for such a purchase is to convey a representation or image of themselves (Fournier, 1998). It is generally accepted among marketing and advertising researchers and practitioners that a brand can have a "personality", and the brand personality can be used by consumers to differentiate between brands (Crask & Laskey, 1990; Porter, 1979). As such, brands and their unique personalities, when purchased by a consumer, imbue an individual consumer with some of the personality and characteristics of the brand. Tuan (1980) argues that "our fragile sense of self needs support, and this we get by having and possessing things because, to a large degree, we are what we have and possess" (p. 472). Based on the process of human

development, Belk (1988) identifies four stages of human existence: (1) infants distinguishing their self from the environment, (2) infants distinguishing their self from others, (3) adolescents and adults using possessions to manage their identities, and (4) possessions helping the old achieve a sense of continuity and preparing for death. In other words, throughout the life of human beings and especially during adolescent and adult periods, possessions help individuals to identify and understand themselves and the world around them.

With the increased level of meaning that is associated with a brand's goods and services, human beings add meaning to their everyday lives through the purchase, possession, use, and display of "their" brands. This process provides identification of oneself within one's own self concept. The self concept is defined as "the relationship between a consumer and a brand on the basis of a connection between a consumer's unique self and what the brand symbolizes for the consumer" (Swaminathan, Page, & Gürhan-Canli, 2007, p. 249). The self concept outwardly projects to others information about who one is based on the personal identity (see social identity theory) of the consumer.

One area of sport research examines fan identification toward sport teams. In this research, the phrases fan identification and team identification are both used to describe this phenomenon. Team identification will be used hereafter to describe fan identification toward sport teams, as it is the most common terminology. Team identification is defined as the level of attachment or concern held by an individual towards a particular sports team (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). Seo et al. (2007) posit that "the strength of the community and members' identification with the community are associated with consumers' consumption of the core product and any product augmentations or brand extensions" (p. 233). Therefore, the sport event/competition can be conceptualized as the core product, and the sport organization, team, and their players are the brand extensions. Consumers can identify with the brand and/or extensions of brand (Underwood, Bond, & Baer, 2001). Overall, the research on team identification indicates that when sport fans feel identification with a team, the team can be a symbolic representation of the individual or the individual can perceive him/herself as an actual or symbolic member of the group (Mael & Ashforth, 1992). Moreover, identification with the team can also have a variety of benefits for the individual (e.g., provide a buffer from feelings of depression and alienation, and foster feelings of belongingness and self worth) (Branscombe & Wann, 1991) and for the sport organization (e.g., fans are more likely to attend games, pay more

for tickets, spend more money on team merchandise, and stay loyal to the team during periods of poor performance) (Fink, Trail, & Anderson, 2002).

Sense of Sport Brand Community

In the context of a brand community, a sense of community is felt and perceived among members of the community. The sense of community exists because members first can identify one another as members, then they can identify with one another, and finally they can identify with the brand community as a whole. Keller (2001) argues that "identification with a brand community may reflect an important social phenomenon whereby customers feel a kinship or affiliation with other people associated with the brand" (p. 19). Based on Social Identity Theory, brand community members have both cognitive and affective types of identification with the community (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Woisetschlager et al., 2008). The cognitive component of brand community identification involves creating and fostering knowledge of the community (Woisetschlager et al., 2008). Members perceive "in-group" status and similarities with other community members, while they also perceive "out-group" status and differences from non-members. The knowledge or awareness of status helps individuals to understand their place in the brand community and who is and is not a member.

The affective component of brand community identification indicates feelings of commitment and emotional involvement with the group (Woisetschlager et al., 2008). If members identify with the group, they desire to maintain their status and relationships within the group. In brand community research, the affective component of brand community identification is described as kinship and affiliation with other people associated with the brand (Keller, 2001; McAlexander et al., 2002). Once brand community members feel a sense of community and identification with other members and the brand community as a whole, they begin to participate in brand community activities and events.

Sense of community is also used to describe membership and participation. Sense of community is defined as an individual's perception of his/her participation in the community, influence within the community, the integration and fulfillment of an individual's needs through his/her membership in the community, and a shared emotional connection among those in the community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Sense of community can be separated into two components, a psychological (relational) sense of community (PSOC) (Sarason, 1974) and a geographical (territorial) sense of community (GSOC) (Gusfield, 1975). Both of these areas of

research are detailed earlier in this chapter. Due to the fact that the focus of this research is a sport brand community, both membership (a type of PSOC) and geographical sense of community (GSOC) are considered and measured.

The Consequences of Consumer Participation in a Sport Brand Community

The consequences of participation and membership in a sport brand community are both positive and negative. Researchers argue that there are numerous positive consequences of participation and membership including increased social capital of members (Mathwick, Wiertz, & de Ruyter, 2007), greater engagement with other members of the brand community (Algesheimer et al., 2005), and commitment toward the brand (Carlson et al., 2008; Jang et al., 2008). In this proposal, four brand-based consequences are theorized including brand loyalty, brand image, behavioral intentions, and consumer behaviors. Before examining the four positive consequences of membership in a brand community, several negative consequences are examined.

Negative consequences of brand communities are discussed to a small degree in the literature. One of the most notable research areas for negative consequences is the doppelgänger brand image. In essence, the doppelgänger brand image encompasses the formation of negative or disparaging images and/or meanings about a brand that form and circulate in the media and popular culture (Thompson et al., 2006). Several brands have had highly publicized battles with doppelgänger images including Snapple (nicknamed “Crapple”) and Starbucks (nicknamed “Evil Empire” and “Frankenbucks Coffee”) (Thompson et al., 2006). The brand extensions of Martha Stewart, McDonald’s, Nike, The Body Shop, and Apple Inc. all encountered doppelgänger-type issues when negative publicity and media reports surfaced about poor business practices (Thompson et al., 2006). Brand community members also form negative attitudes or engage in poor behaviors, including inter-group stereotyping, “trash talking” about rival brands and their users, and developing feelings of pleasure at the misfortune of rival brands and their users (Hickman & Ward, 2007). In sports, negative attitudes and behaviors among fans are well documented in the literature on hooliganism (Dunning, Murphy, & Williams, 1986; King, 1997) and rivalry (Krouwel et al., 2006). Yet, despite some scattered research that reveals the negative consequences of (brand) communities, research on the consequences of brand communities is overwhelmingly positive. The four positive consequences are discussed next.

Brand Loyalty

Debates about the definition, types, roles, and measurement of brand loyalty in the consumer decision-making and purchase process are pervasive over at least the last half century, and there are few signs of firm and parsimonious conclusions. Jacoby and Kyner (1973) offer an explanation for inconclusive brand loyalty findings based on a lack of conceptual definitions and abounding operational definitions. Jacoby and Chestnut (1978) argue that brand loyalty research can be "characterized as that of a construct undergoing substantial revision and redirection in measurement orientation" (p. 31), as evidenced by the fact that they uncover more than fifty definitions of loyalty. In an attempt to bring some parsimony to the brand loyalty literature, Dick and Basu (1994) examine behavioral (e.g., purchase) loyalty and attitudinal loyalty (e.g., internal dispositions) and create a framework for customer loyalty that includes cognitive, affective, and conative antecedents the relationship between attitudinal and behavioral loyalty. Oliver (1999) extends Dick and Basu's research and posits that four stages of loyalty exist (cognitive, affective, conative, and active/behavioral), and consumers pass through each stage.

A discussion of the significant implications and findings of the above-mentioned brand loyalty research follows. A conceptual definition of brand loyalty encompasses six necessary and sufficient conditions: (1) is biased (e.g., a non-random process), (2) includes a behavioral response (e.g., purchase), (3) is expressed over time, (4) occurs because of some decision-making unit, (5) occurs with respect to one or more alternative brands out of a set of such brands, and (6) is a function of a psychological evaluative process (Jacoby & Kyner, 1973). Based on the inherent psychological processes discussed in the six conditions, Jacoby and Chestnut (1978) propose that "if brand loyalty is ever to be managed, not just measured, it will have to be elaborated in a much more detailed description of cognitive activities" (p. 32). As a result, Jacoby and Chestnut explore the cognitive (psychological) meaning of brand loyalty and attempt to differentiate it from purchase behaviors. The customer loyalty framework (Dick & Basu, 1994) separates attitudes and behaviors while also proposing relationships between the antecedents, moderators (social norms and situational influence), and consequences of the loyalty relationship between attitudes and repeat purchase behaviors.

In extending and expanding Dick and Basu's (1994) dualistic conceptualization of loyalty, Oliver (1999) conceptualizes four types of loyalty that are arranged in a causal framework over subsequent phases of time. The first phase is cognitive loyalty. Cognitive loyalty

is based on the information and beliefs that consumers have of a brand and the preference of one brand over another. The second phase is affective loyalty, where attitudes (e.g., satisfaction, pleasure) toward the brand are developed and commitment is "encoded into the consumer's mind as cognition and affect" (Oliver, 1999, p. 35). The next phase is conative loyalty which is based on feelings of positive affect toward the brand. After feeling positive affect, consumers feel committed and motivated to repurchase the brand. Oliver notes that "this desire may be an anticipated but unrealized action" (p. 35). The final phase is action loyalty, also known as behavioral loyalty. Consumers are motivated in the previous phase to repurchase, and in the action phase, consumers act and overcome any obstacles that might inhibit repurchase. Oliver also notes that consumers' variety-seeking behavior and other types of switching incentives weakens consumer loyalty, yet he proposes four loyalty strategies (based on individual fortitude and community/social support) that can be implemented to counteract any weakening in consumer loyalty. Table 2.4 illustrates Oliver's (1999) types of loyalty strategies.

Table 2.4
Oliver's (1999) Four Loyalty Strategies

		Community/Social Support	
		Low	High
Individual Fortitude	Low	Product superiority	Village envelopment
	High	Determined self-isolation	Immersed self-identity

Two of Oliver's (1999) four loyalty strategies are of considerable importance to this research because village envelopment and immersed self-identity exemplify brand communities. Village envelopment mirrors Boorstin's (1973) concept of consumption communities. Village envelopment is defined as

> a social alliance in which the primary motivation to become loyal on the part of each consumer is to be with the group, and the primary motivation of the group overseers is to please their constituency. In this situation, the consumer becomes a (willing) participant because of the attention provided by its members (Oliver, 1999, p. 39).

When individual fortitude ("the degree to which the consumer fights off competitive overtures on the basis of his or her allegiance to the brand and not on the basis of marketer-generated information" (Oliver, 1999, p. 37)) is low, consumers come together based on their desire to receive the rewards offered to the group. Examples of village envelopment include groups based

on membership rewards such as credit card rewards programs (e.g., airline mile credits), retailers that offer discount or point card reward systems, and residential communities that offer appealing amenities on-site.

The immersed self-identity community contains features described in village envelopment, however, this community is typified by the (high) level of identification that consumers have with it based on the strength of the match with both the brand and its environment (Oliver, 1999). Moreover, this type of community is important to the consumer because

> the product/service is embedded inextricably within some portion of the consumer's psyche, as well as his or her lifestyle. The consumable is part and parcel of the consumer's self-identity and his or her social identity. That is, the person cannot conceive of him- or herself as whole without it. At the extreme, the object is present intentionally and extensionally. The consumer would say that the object is "part of me" and that it is an "extension of me" (see Belk, 1988). He or she lives it (Oliver, 1999, p. 40).

In this case because individual fortitude is high, examples include religious groups or cults, political organizations, and fan clubs of a variety of goods and services including musical groups, television shows, automobiles and motorcycles, and sport teams.

Existing research shows that despite feeling satisfied with a brand's goods and/or services, customers sometimes defect to competing brands (Oliver, 1999). As a result, organizational resources are better utilized toward creating loyal customers on which organizations can rely (Fraering & Minor, 2006). Through the introduction, development and utilization of brand communities, loyalty is created and enhanced. In this research, the consequence of loyalty is behavioral intentions. Therefore, loyalty is conceptualized and measured as an attitude.

Brand Image

The concept of brand image was first championed by David Ogilvy (Copley, 2004). Ogilvy, a pioneer in the world of advertising in the mid-twentieth century, proposes a connection between advertisements and brand image in that "every advertisement should be thought of as a contribution to the complex symbol which is the brand image" (Ogilvy, 1971, p. 87). He later expands on the symbolism and importance of brand image when he suggests that advertisers and marketers need to "decide what 'image' you want for your brand. Image means personality.

Products, like people, have personalities, and they can make or break them in the market place" (Ogilvy, 1985, p. 14). It is important to note that brand personalities and brand image are often discussed in terms of brand equity. Keller (1993) defines brand equity as "the marketing effects uniquely attributable to the brand – for example, when certain outcomes result from the marketing of a product or service because of its brand name that would not occur if the same product or service did not have that name" (p. 1). A distinction can be made between brand equity and brand image in that

> brand equity deals with the value, usually defined in economic terms, of a brand beyond the physical assets associated with its manufacture or provision. Whereas brand image is a concept originated and 'owned' by marketers and advertising specialists, the idea that a brand has equity that exceeds its conventional asset value is a notion developed by financial people. Underlying a brand's equity is the concept of a brand's consumer franchise, the loyalty or fans it commands. Brand equity can be considered the additional cash flow achieved by associating a brand with the underlying product or service (Biel, 1993, p. 69).

Therefore, brand image is a distinct concept that marketers must address as they promote and position their brand in relation to their competition (Oxenfeldt & Swann, 1964) and attempt to enhance their brand's market performance (Shocker & Srinivasan, 1979; Wind, 1973).

In the seminal research on brand image, Gardner and Levy (1955) examine and combine two product dimensions: public image (e.g., brand name, character, and personality that convey a "meaning" of the brand) and crucial symbols (e.g., product image, notions, ideas, feelings, and attitudes that convey that the brand is the one "for me"). These dimensions form the basis for subsequent research on brand image for much of the ensuing three decades. In an examination of the product life cycle, product positioning, and strategic brand management, Park, Jaworski, and MacInnis (1986) reexamine brand image and create the Brand Concept Management model. The purpose of the model is to examine the relationship between a brand's concept and consumer perceptions of the brand's image and positioning in the marketplace. Through a three-stage process of introduction, elaboration, and fortification, positioning strategies are implemented through the marketing mix that "enable consumers to understand a brand image (introduction), perceive its steadily increasing value (elaboration), and generalize it to other products produced by the firm (fortification)" (Park et al., 1986, p. 137). As a result of the three-stage process, the

brand image is communicated to consumers that differentiates the brand from its competitors, and "marketers can build on an image in a way that is consistent with the knowledge consumers already have acquired about the brand, create efficiencies in maintaining and controlling the image (cost reductions), and enhance the duration of the brand's life cycle" (Park et al., 1986, p. 139). This assumes, however, that marketers understand what knowledge consumers already have about the brand.

As noted above, brand equity often deals with the financial value of a brand, however, it is argued that brand equity also has a strategic component that seeks to improve the effectiveness of marketing expenditures (Keller, 1993). There are many assets that an organization has at its disposal to improve marketing effectiveness, though none may be of greater importance than the existing knowledge that consumers have about the brand (Keller, 1993). As a result of the two separate conceptualizations of brand equity, the term customer-based brand equity is used to represent this second type of brand equity. Customer-based brand equity is defined as "the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand" (Keller, 1993, p. 2). Brand knowledge is important to understanding brand image because brand image is argued to be one of two components of brand knowledge (the other component is brand awareness). In addition, Keller proposes that brand image is composed several different types of brand associations including product and non-product related attributes; functional, experiential, and symbolic benefits; and brand attitudes. In addition, these brand associations vary according to their favorability, strength, and uniqueness. In summary, all of these proposed components of brand image can be learned and stored in the memory of consumers. When consumers encounter the brand in the process of decision-making and potential purchase, the consumer recalls the knowledge of the brand image, and this process results in eventual purchase. Nonetheless, research on the precise nature of which brand image attributes are recalled by consumers has not been fully elucidated.

One potential answer to the recall question is brand personality. Brands are often given (or earn) a personality (Plummer, 1985), and consumers engage with a brand and its brand's personality through a cognitive process "by which brand image is said to be triggered. (Researchers) concentrate on mental effects by naming any one of 'ideas', 'feelings', 'attitudes', 'mental constructs', 'understandings' or 'expectations' as the cardinal determinant of brand image" (Dobni & Zinkhan, 1990, p. 115). Due to the notion that brands symbolize consumers

and consumers associate with the favorability, strength, and uniqueness of the brand, consumers form strong attitudes toward the brand and its image or personality. Therefore, brand image is conceptualized as an attitude. In this research, brand image is conceptualized and measured as an attitude.

In sport research, sport organizations and teams are strongly rooted in history, symbols and traditions (Holt, 1995). For example, sport facilities often reveal championship banners, retired jerseys, and other signs of past success. The name of the sport facility (e.g., Doak Campbell Stadium and Bobby Bowden Field) represents the history of the sport organization. Common symbols and stories remind fans of the "glory days" and the image of the sport organization is thus associated with the success of the sport organization (Ferrand & Pages, 1999). The common symbols and stories also act as images of the brand (Keller, 1993). Sport brand communities utilize symbols and images to perpetuate and strengthen the relationships among members within the sport brand community. When like-minded consumers within a sport brand community are aware of meaningful symbols and representations of the sport brand, this combination results in a positive brand image of the sport brand and its extensions.

Behavioral Intentions

The research on intentions and behavioral intentions have a long history that dates back to at least the 1930s (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1974). Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) distinguish between intentions and behavioral intentions as follows: "We have defined intention as a person's location on a subjective probability dimension involving a relation between himself and some action. A behavioral intention, therefore, refers to a person's subjective probability that he will perform some behavior" (p. 228). Based on these common definitions and in the interest of parsimony, behavioral intentions is the phrase that is used in this research.

The first modern theory that incorporated behavioral intentions is Dulany's (1961, 1968) theory of propositional control (TPC). TPC researchers investigate the role of awareness in studies of verbal conditioning. In the seminal TPC research, Dulany (1961) argues that "subjects' responses in these studies are under volitional control; barring physical impediments, a person should do what he intends or tried to do" (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, p. 298). Further, Dulany (1961, 1968) examines the relationship between intentions and behaviors. Based on the TPC research and a strong correlation (approximately ρ_{xy} = .85) between intentions and behaviors

(Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), Fishbein (1967) and Ajzen and Fishbein (1973) extend the examination of this relationship in an analysis of social behavior. Fishbein (1967) proposes that

> in a given situation, a person is assumed to hold or to form a specific behavioral intention which influences his subsequent and overt behavior. The intention in the present theory refers to performance of a given action in a given situation; it is the intention to perform the particular overt response that is to be predicted. According to the theory, there are two major factors that determine behavioral intentions: a personal or 'attitudinal' factor and a social or 'normative' factor" (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, p. 301).

As a result of the progression of this research, Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) create the theory of reasoned action (TRA).

The TRA is discussed in Chapter 1, but it is also important to note the importance of behavioral intentions in this section. Based on Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) and their subsequent research (see Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977, 1980), the inclusion and measurement of behavioral intentions "predict the performance of any voluntary act, unless intent changes prior to performance or unless the intention measure does not correspond to the behavioral criterion in terms of action, target, context, time-frame and/or specificity" (Sheppard et al., 1988, p. 325). In the marketing and consumer behavior research areas, behavioral intentions (often labeled as "purchase intentions") are frequently used because of their importance in predicting actual purchase behavior (Morrison, 1979). Kalwani and Silk (1982) posit that purchase intentions are one of the few variables that are frequently used in consumer research studies. Behavioral intentions are also commonly used as a mediating variable between attitudes and brand choice behaviors (Warshaw, 1980), and many examples exist in the brand community setting (Algesheimer et al., 2005; Hassay & Peloza, 2009; McAlexander et al., 2002; Seo et al., 2007).

In the corporate world, Jamieson and Bass (1989) report that 70%-90% of market research firms use measures of purchase intentions on a regular basis. In fact, it is common practice to prepare sales forecasts by using previous purchase rate patterns and purchase intentions data (Morwitz & Schmittlein, 1992). Moreover, "purchase intentions should add predictive value to forecasts, because they allow each respondent to independently incorporate all possible factors that may contribute to a purchase decision" (Morwitz & Schmittlein, 1992, p. 391). Therefore, the inclusion and measurement of various types of behavioral intentions forms an important link between the attitudes of brand loyalty and brand image and word of mouth

behaviors, measuring behavioral intentions such as purchase intentions of sport-brand related merchandise, intentions to attend games, and intentions to engage in positive word of mouth behaviors are a meaningful addition to this proposal.

Consumer Behaviors

In this proposal, consistent with the TRA and the previous discussion on behavioral intentions, three actual behaviors of consumers are hypothesized, including attendance at sporting events, the purchase of goods and services (e.g., merchandise), and the engagement in positive word of mouth behaviors. As previously mentioned, while consumer behaviors are discussed in this research, they are not explicitly measured due to a previously discussed limitation in concurrently measuring behavioral intentions and actual consumer behaviors. Despite this limitation, it is useful to understand that current behavioral intentions are expected to lead to eventual behaviors. As such, a brief discussion of consumer behaviors follows.

Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) discuss researchers' understanding of overt behaviors when they propose that "most investigators have taken behavior as a given, and some (e.g., Deutscher, 1969) have even argued that direct observation of behavior is the 'ultimate evidence of validity'" (p. 352). Research on sport consumer behavior is still in a developmental stage (Stewart, Smith, & Nicholson, 2003), however three of the most frequently examined behaviors for sport consumers are attendance (Bee & Kahle, 2006; Bristow & Sebastian, 2001; Funk & James, 2001; Gladden & Funk, 2002; Holt, 1995; Hunt et al., 1999; Kahle et al., 1996; Kwak & Kang, 2008; Madrigal, 1995; Stewart et al., 2003; Sutton et al., 1997; Wakefield, 1995; Wann & Branscombe, 1993), purchase (Bee & Kahle, 2006; Bristow & Sebastian, 2001; Kwon & Armstrong, 2002; Kwon, Trail, & James, 2007; McDonald & Milne, 1997; Mullin et al., 2007), and word of mouth (Bristow & Sebastian, 2001; Funk & James, 2001; Holt, 1995; Kwak & Kang, 2008; Wann & Branscombe, 1993).

Sport consumer research elaborates on attendance and purchase behaviors in detail (for a review, see Mullin et al., 2007; Shank, 2009). It only needs to be noted that attendance behaviors include consumers' attending games, watching sport competitions (e.g., through the media), and traveling to sport competition locations (Madrigal, 2000; Wakefield, 1995). Purchase behaviors include buying any sport-related merchandise. Both attendance and purchase behaviors represent important sources of revenue for sport organizations. Moreover, attendance and purchase behaviors are well-defined concepts, and their relationship with financial well-being of sport

organizations is well-established in the literature (Funk, 2008). Word of mouth behaviors, however, are not as well-defined, thus a more detailed description follows.

Marketing, advertising, and consumer behavior researchers have long acknowledged that word of mouth (WOM) behaviors have a major influence on what people know, feel, and do (Buttle, 1998). Moreover, there are many arguments for the importance and usefulness of WOM across the literature that stretches back to the 1950s. For example, Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) find that WOM is the single most important source of information about the potential use and purchase of certain household items. Dichter's (1966) research reveals that as many as 80% of customers identify "recommenders" as their reason for what factor motivated them to buy a product or brand. In more recent research, a study of 7,000 consumers shows that 60% of consumers are influenced to buy a new brand by family and friends (Kotler, 2000). In some of the research on online and social networking media, 15% of consumers account for 33% (approximately 1.5 billion brand impressions per day) of WOM behaviors, and 80% of consumers trust information and recommendations from these "Conversation Catalysts", their family, and friends (KellerFay Group, 2006).

WOM behaviors are defined as the informal communications directed at other consumers about the ownership, usage, or characteristics of particular goods and services and/or their sellers (Westbrook, 1987). Based on recent advances in technology, a niche marketing strategy called "word of mouth marketing" is making inroads into mainstream marketing strategies. PQ Media defines word of mouth marketing as "an alternative marketing strategy, supported by research and technology, which encourages consumers to dialogue about products and services" (PQ Media, 2009). WOM behaviors and the marketing strategies that facilitate word of mouth behaviors have a powerful influence on consumer behavior, especially on consumers' information search, evaluation, and subsequent decision-making (Brown, Broderick, & Lee, 2007; Silverman, 2001).

Dichter (1966) argues that there are four motivations that underlie why an individual might engage in WOM behaviors, including (1) product-involvement, (2) self-involvement, (3), other-involvement, and (4) message-involvement. Product-involvement includes the positive (or negative) experience that the consumer has with the product. As a result of the strength of the experience with the product, the consumer desires to share the experience with fellow consumers (Dichter, 1966). An example of product-involvement in a sport setting occurs when a consumer

attends a sporting event, and the experience of attending results in a high level of satisfaction. As a result, the consumer engages in positive WOM behaviors when describing the reasons for their satisfaction. In a similar fashion, self-involvement focuses on a consumer's experience with a product, but the difference lies in the fact that the consumer needs to assure him/herself in front of his/her friends or family that the consumption choice was positively confirmed. Dichter (1966) provides eight examples of self-confirmation, including (1) gaining attention, (2) showing connoisseurship, (3) feeling like a pioneer, (4) having inside information, (5) suggesting status, (6) spreading the gospel, (7) seeking confirmation of one's own judgment, and (8) asserting superiority. An example in a sport setting includes consumer recommendations to friends or family to buy season tickets for a local sport team, and the friends or family follows the recommendation and positively confirms that buying season tickets was an excellent recommendation. As a result, the recommender feels that their own judgment is good, and their confidence in their own purchase decisions is confirmed.

Other-involvement includes "the need and intent to help, to share with the other person enthusiasm in, and benefits of, things enjoyed. Products serve mainly as instruments which help to express sentiments of neighborliness, care, friendship, and love" (Dichter, 1966, p. 151). An example in the sport setting occurs when a new consumer moves to a local area and complains about his/her lack of knowledge of "fun" sporting events in the area. As a result, a recommender provides the new consumer with information and positive evaluations of local sporting events that the new consumer does not know. The sharing and thoughtfulness of the recommender improves the relationship between the two individuals.

The fourth motivation, message-involvement, generally does not require first-hand knowledge of the product. Instead, information is provided based on acquired knowledge through advertising or marketing of the product. An example in a sport setting includes a situation where similar to the other-involvement, a new consumer moves to the local area and despite never having attended a sporting event but having seen, heard, or read about the local sport team, the recommender conveys the advertising or marketing message about the local sport team to the new consumer. Proposed in 1966, these four motivations to engage in WOM behaviors are still pervasive in marketing and advertising research today (Lindberg-Repo & Grönroos, 1999).

WOM behaviors are inextricably tied to brand communities in several ways. First, the research based on the four motivations for consumers to engage in WOM behaviors does not specify that only one recommender exists. In fact, brand communities are filled with individuals who are generally knowledgeable about the goods or services of a brand. The term "Conversation Catalysts", noted above, describes opinion leaders who also can be members of a brand community. Second, Dichter (1966) identifies seven influential groups likely to be the main sources behind successful recommendations and the psychological forces behind their effectiveness. These groups include (1) commercial authorities, (2) celebrities, (3) connoisseurs, (4) sharers of interest, (5) intimates, (6) people of goodwill, and (7) bearers of tangible evidence (Dichter, 1966). Based on the definitions and conceptualizations that are provided earlier in this chapter about the individuals who are members of a brand community, these seven groups bear a strong resemblance to the individuals that compose a brand community.

The final connection between WOM and brand communities is based on relationship marketing and the closeness (e.g., trust and intimacy) of relationships. WOM behaviors are generally enacted by individuals who share a close or personal relationship. In order for WOM behaviors to be effective, the relationship between the recommender and the receiver is usually based on trust and security (Luo, 2002; Selnes, 1998). Similar to the conclusions that are reached by Schau et al. (2009) in their meta-analysis of brand community research, the two final stages in the process of value creation in brand communities include social networking (e.g., welcoming, empathizing, and governing) and impression management (e.g., evangelizing and justifying). Both of these final stages mirror much of the underlying purpose behind WOM behaviors. Specifically,

> interactions are evidenced when evangelizing (impression management practice) yields to welcoming (social networking practice) or when positive word of mouth inspires outsiders to join the brand community … evangelizing creates value by enlarging the brand community and its human resource base while enhancing the brand perception outside the brand community. Empathizing creates value by providing affective resources within a sympathetic social network. This support system acts as a significant switching cost for consumers who come to depend on it (Schau et al., 2009, pp. 37, 40)

Therefore, WOM behaviors are important to brand communities because they provide knowledge to non-members, and thus new members can be created. At the same time, current members have their relationships with the brand community and other members reinforced.

In this research, behavioral intentions are used as a proxy variable for actual consumer behaviors. It is useful to emphasize the importance of this relationship, however, due to limitations in collecting data on current behavioral intentions and future behaviors, the hypothesized model does not include consumer behaviors as the outcome behavior. The hypothesized model and the hypothesized relationships between constructs will now be discussed.

The Hypothesized Model

In this proposed research, five theories provide the framework for the constructs and their relationships, including relationship marketing (RM), social identity theory (SIT), sense of community (SOC), the psychological continuum model (PCM), and the theory of reasoned action (TRA). RM and SIT provide the rationale for why and how brand communities function. The PCM provides the framework for the antecedents of consumer participation in a brand community, SOC provides the multi-dimensional composition of one construct, and the TRA provides the framework for the consequences of consumer participation in a brand community. Based on the PCM, SOC, and the TRA, a hypothesized model (see Figure 3.2) is proposed. The following sections detail the rationale and previous research that supports the inclusion of all of the hypotheses.

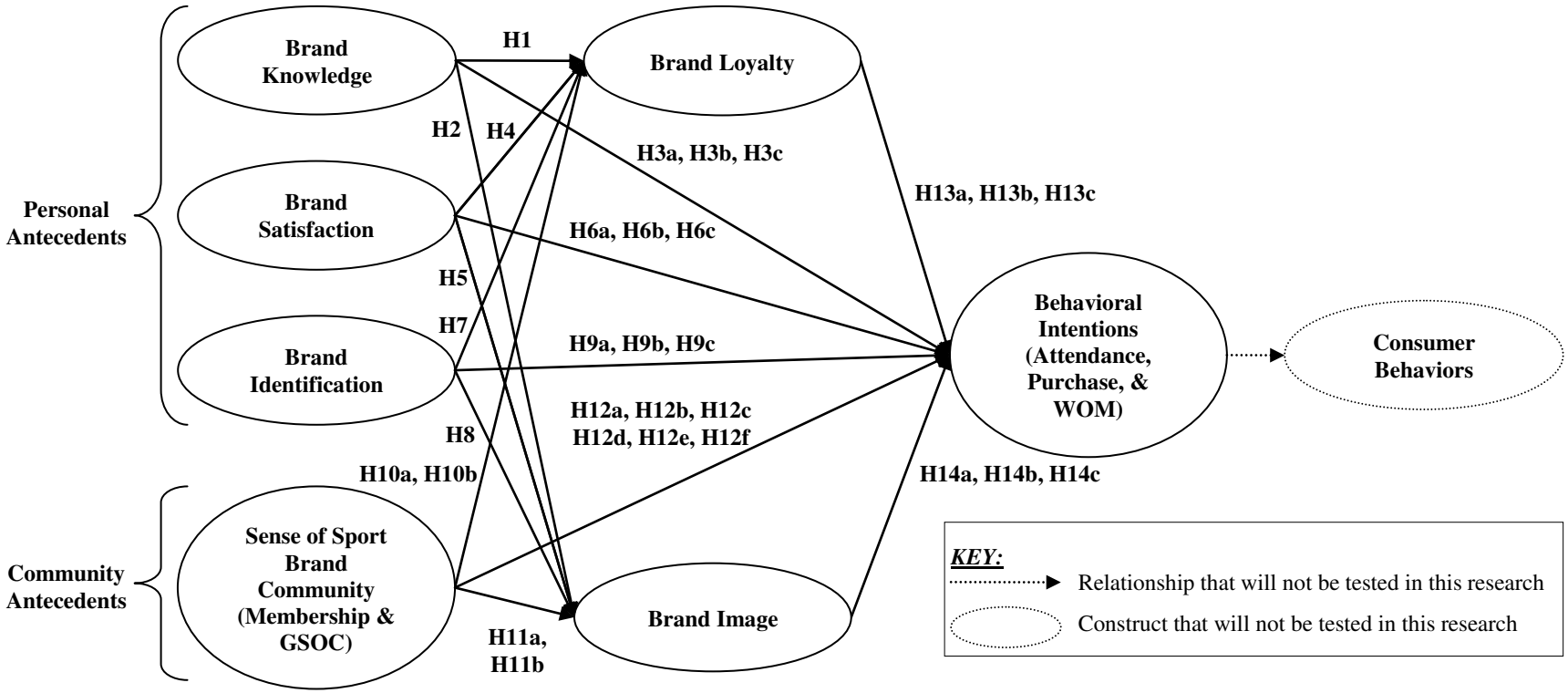


Figure 2.2
The Hypothesized Model

The Brand Knowledge-Brand Loyalty Relationship

In this research, the PCM (awareness, attraction, attachment, and allegiance) is used to provide the theoretical underpinning for the brand knowledge-brand loyalty relationship. The examined link is between awareness and allegiance. The relationship between consumers and brands is formed by consumers' experiences and brand knowledge (Franzen, 1999; Keller, 2001). Brand knowledge is defined as the personal meaning about a brand that is stored in a consumer's memory (Keller, 2003). A consumer's personal meaning about a brand is composed of a multitude of factors, including name awareness, brand associations, and perceived quality (Aaker, 1991). Esch, Langner, Schmitt, and Geus (2006) propose that consumer knowledge of these three factors are determinants of brand loyalty.

Keller (1993) argues that consumer knowledge of aspects of the marketing mix (product, price, place, and promotion) has implications for brand loyalty. Aaker (1996) suggests that brand loyalty is based on a consumer's perception of the brand. A consumer's perception of the brand is driven by the knowledge and information that a consumer knows about a brand based on first- and second-hand experiences with the brand (Aaker, 1996). Similarly, based on the principles of brand equity, when a consumer is aware and knowledgeable about a brand, the consumer can hold favorable, strong and unique brand associations in memory (Keller, 1993). As a result, consumer awareness and knowledge of brand information and brand associations can have an effect on brand loyalty.

In a sport setting, the sport product (e.g., the sporting event, teams, and players) influences consumers' brand loyalty. Ross (2006) proposes that spectator-based brand equity, which consists of brand awareness and brand associations, results in brand loyalty. For example, if fans know that players on their team do not engage in detrimental types of behavior (e.g., being arrested, using banned substances), and these players engage in activities that "give back" to the community, then the fans are more likely to be loyal. As a result,

H_1: Brand knowledge is positively and significantly related to brand loyalty

The Brand Knowledge-Brand Image Relationship

The PCM specifies a relationship between awareness and attraction. This relationship reflects the relationship between brand knowledge and brand image. The attraction and/or liking

that a consumer feels toward a brand are based in-part on the image that the consumer perceives of the brand that is formulated from consumers' knowledge and experiences with the brand.

As discussed earlier in this research, Keller (2003) suggests that brand image is a component of brand knowledge. In this research, brand knowledge and brand image are separated. Brand knowledge is conceptualized as the information consumers know about a brand, while brand image is conceptualized as how consumers feel about a brand. The primary reason for the separation of brand knowledge and brand image is based on previous knowledge and experience with the brand. First-time brand consumers have no first-hand experience with the brand. The only image first-time brand consumers may have of the brand is based on information that is communicated to them by experienced consumers or the media (e.g., marketing of the brand).

Keller (1993) defines customer-based brand equity as "the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand" (p. 8). Consumers gain knowledge of the brand and then assign affective meaning to the brand (Aaker, 1996). The affective meaning that is given to the brand is brand image. The affective meaning forms the basis of the attraction and/or liking of brand.

In a community setting, Hoeffler and Keller (2002) posit that when consumers have knowledge and awareness about the purpose of a community or group, based on their strong, favorable and unique associations, a positive image of the community or group results. In sport consumer community research, Holt (1995) examines baseball spectators in Chicago's Wrigley Field bleachers. Relative to the relationship between brand knowledge and brand image, when consumers attend a baseball game, first, they make sense of situations, roles, actions, and objects in the game through using their knowledge of the sport, game, and players (e.g., accounting of the experience) (Holt, 1995). After applying their knowledge, they begin to interpret and assign meaning to their experiences (e.g., evaluating, constructing value judgments, and appreciating the sport) (Holt, 1995). As consumers assign meaning to their sport experience, their image of the sport experience and any brand extensions (e.g., players, team, sport organization) of the sport experience are formed. These two examples provide evidence that as consumers gain knowledge and experience with an object, an image of the object is formed in the mind of consumers. As a result,

H_2: Brand knowledge is positively and significantly related to brand image

The Brand Knowledge-Behavioral Intentions Relationship

Based on the PCM, awareness leads to allegiance. Allegiance to a good, service, or brand is often represented by the sport consumer's willingness to attend games or events, purchase merchandise, and make positive recommendations. In the hypothesized model, there are indirect effects of brand knowledge on behavioral intentions through brand loyalty and brand image, in addition to the direct effect. The PCM indicates a similar process.

Based on the notion of brand equity described in a previous section, Johnson, Herrmann, and Huber (2006) provide evidence of the relationship between the differential effects of brand knowledge (e.g., brand equity) and behavioral intentions. Simply summarized, as consumers gather different types of information about brands, consumers purchase brands they prefer. Keller (1993) notes a similar process in that when consumers gain brand knowledge, if the knowledge is positive, the probability of consumer brand choice will increase.

In sport research, Ross (2006) proposes the spectator-based brand equity model. In this model, Ross (2006) proposes that spectator-based brand equity (e.g., consumers' brand awareness and associations) results in future merchandise and ticket sales. Ross (2006) argues that in order for a consumer to purchase sport merchandise and/or attend sporting events, the consumer must be aware of the sport product during the purchase decision-making process. In addition, the consumer must also be able to recall the brand and consider the brand associations as the consumer considers purchase decisions. As a result,

H_{3a}: Brand knowledge is positively and significantly related to attendance intentions

H_{3b}: Brand knowledge is positively and significantly related to purchase intentions

H_{3c}: Brand knowledge is positively and significantly related to word of mouth intentions

The Brand Satisfaction-Brand Loyalty Relationship

In the PCM, attraction leads to attachment and allegiance. The link between brand satisfaction and brand loyalty reflects the attraction-allegiance relationship. While the PCM provides a theoretical rationale for the relationship between brand satisfaction and brand loyalty, numerous empirical studies also provide evidence of this relationship (Aaker, 1996; Bloemer & Kasper, 1995; Keller, 2001; Oliver, 1980; Pritchard, Havitz, & Howard, 1999).

As discussed earlier in this research, satisfaction is conceptualized as cognitive (the confirmation/disconfirmation of the expectations of consumption that form the basis of overall satisfaction) and affective (the evaluative feelings that occur following consumption that form

the basis of transaction-specific satisfaction) (Oliver, 1993). Based on the notion of cognitive satisfaction, Keller (2001) argues that in order to create brand loyalty, consumers' experiences with the brand must at least meet or surpass consumers' expectations. In other words, the brand must satisfy consumers' wants and needs in order to create brand loyalty. Based on the notion of affective satisfaction, Bloemer and Kasper (1995) note that if consumers do not have expectations of the brand, then a comparison is not possible. As a result, consumers engage in an implicit evaluation of their brand choice, and if consumers' brand choice results in feelings of satisfaction, then brand loyalty can result (Bloemer & Kasper, 1995). In examining the results of overall satisfaction, Aaker (1996) posits that loyalty is the cumulative result of satisfying experiences. Moreover, researchers suggest that satisfaction is one of the main drivers of loyalty (Mittal & Kamakura, 2001; Szymanski & Henard, 2001).

In a sport setting, several studies examine the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty (Laverie & Arnett, 2000; Madrigal, 1995; Trail et al., 2005). Due to the fact that sports are goods and services, consumer satisfaction with a sport brand can occur on many levels. Consumers can be satisfied by any aspect of the brand (e.g., players, team, management, event, service quality at the event). Based on the assumption that the consumer is satisfied by their decision to attend a sporting event, there is a strong likelihood that the consumer will attend sporting events in the future. For example, if the home team wins, then hometown fans feel satisfied about the result and BIRG. The increase in positive self-esteem for the fan can create feelings of loyalty toward the sport brand, because the fan will connect the sport brand (e.g., the team) and their positive feelings of BIRGing. Overall, if the sport brand and its brand extensions (e.g., the team) satisfy the wants and needs of consumers, then consumers are likely to become loyal to the brand. As a result,

H_4: Brand satisfaction is positively and significantly related to brand loyalty

The Brand Satisfaction-Brand Image Relationship

A comparison of the definitions of brand satisfaction and brand image shows that both concepts are strongly related. Brand satisfaction is defined as the consumer's judgment that a brand provides a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment (Oliver, 1997), and brand image is defined as the perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory (Keller, 1993). Based on the personal judgment of a consumer's level of consumption-related fulfillment by the brand, the result is an image of the brand. For example, if

a consumer feels that they are satisfied by the sport brand, then they will likely have a positive image of the sport brand based on feeling satisfied.

Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh (1987) examine the relationship and exchange process between buyers and sellers. Through the exchange process (a seller selling to the buyer, and the buyer buying from the seller), if the buyer is satisfied with the exchange, a consequence for the seller is that the buyer's perception of the seller is increasingly positive (Dwyer, Schurr, & Oh, 1987). In short, satisfied buyers develop better and stronger impressions of sellers that create and facilitate feelings of satisfaction.

In a sport setting, if a sport team wins, fans of the team may feel satisfied and BIRG. As a result of feeling satisfied with the win and BIRGing, the fan can develop a positive impression or opinion of the team (Branscombe & Wann, 1991; Wann & Branscombe, 1993). In sport consumption community research, when consumers consume for experience, they account for, evaluate, and appreciate the overall sport experience (Holt, 1995). Based on their satisfaction with the consumption experience, consumers construct images of the sport experience, and these images can be applied as frameworks for understanding future experiences (Holt, 1995). As such, a satisfying experience with a sport brand leads to the development of an image of the sport brand. As a result,

H_5: Brand satisfaction is positively and significantly related to brand image

The Brand Satisfaction-Behavioral Intentions Relationship

The PCM specifies that attraction leads to attachment and allegiance. The link between brand satisfaction and behavioral intentions reflects the attraction-allegiance relationship. In the early 1980s, in the context of the consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction research, researchers began to examine consumer satisfaction and its effect on purchase intentions and choice decisions (Bearden & Teel, 1983; LaBarbera & Mazursky, 1983; Oliver, 1980). In more recent research, satisfaction is suggested to be the main driver of purchase and repurchase intentions (Mittal & Kamakura, 2001; Szymanski & Henard, 2001). In addition, research also suggests that consumer satisfaction with the good, service, and/or brand ultimately determines their future intentions and behavior (De Ruyter, Wetzels, & Bloemer, 1997; McDougall & Levesque, 2000; Taylor & Baker, 1994).

In sport research, the results from several studies provide evidence of the relationship between satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Howat, Murray, and Crilley (1999) find that

consumer satisfaction is positively related to consumers' willingness to recommend (e.g., intention to engage in word of mouth behaviors). Murray and Howat (2002) find that satisfaction is the strongest antecedent of the future intentions of consumers to use sport and leisure services.

In summary, when a consumer has a satisfying experience with a brand, intentions and eventual purchase behavior result (Keller, 1993). In theory, consumers who are satisfied with a brand desire to continue to be satisfied. As a result of consumers' desire to continue to be satisfied, consumers will develop intentions to engage in behaviors. Therefore, consumers will intend to repurchase the brand that provided the initial feelings of satisfaction, and consumers will intend to share (e.g., word of mouth) information about the brand that fostered feelings of satisfaction. In a sport context, consumers who are satisfied by a sporting event and/or the team that fostered feelings of satisfaction, will develop intentions to attend (or re-attend) the sporting event or the team's games in the future. As a result,

H_{6a}: Brand satisfaction is positively and significantly related to attendance intentions

H_{6b}: Brand satisfaction is positively and significantly related to purchase intentions

H_{6c}: Brand satisfaction is positively and significantly related to word of mouth intentions

The Brand Identification-Brand Loyalty Relationship

In the PCM, attachment leads to allegiance. The relationship between brand identification and brand loyalty reflects the links between attachment and allegiance in the PCM. Brand identification is defined as the degree to which an individual defines him- or herself by the same attributes that he or she believes define the brand (Dutton et al., 1994). In other words, consumers purchase goods and services that reflect and express their identity (Aaker, 2006). As discussed earlier in this research, based on consumers' knowledge and experiences with the brand, a brand can develop a "personality" in the mind of consumers. The brand personality is based on the brand associations (e.g., brand meaning) that consumers form due to the performance and image of the brand. As such, consumers identify with brands that match their concept of who they are. When consumers feel identification with a brand, they are likely to feel loyal to the brand, because they feel connected to and perceive a relationship with the brand.

Keller (2001) argues that in order to foster brand loyalty, consumers must be attached to the brand. Attachment to the brand is fostered when the meaning of the brand is imbued on the consumer. Further Johnson et al. (2006) suggest that identification with the brand results in brand loyalty based on the creation of a brand-consumer relationship that is derived from the

commonalities that the brand and the consumer share. In addition, previous research also suggests that various types of identification have positive impacts on loyalty (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Mael & Ashforth, 1992). In a community setting, the brand-consumer relationship is often intensified, because multiple individual brand-consumer relationships exist simultaneously (McAlexander et al., 2002). As a result, the brand identification of multiple individual consumers can magnify feelings of brand identification among consumers. The multiple individual relationships can then manifest in feelings of brand loyalty.

In a sport setting, Gladden and Funk (2001) examine the relationship between brand associations and brand loyalty. Gladden and Funk (2001) conclude that based on consumers' brand associations, identification with the team is positively related to brand loyalty. Matsuoka, Chelladurai, and Harada (2003) also suggest that a strong psychological attachment (e.g., identification with a team) and consumption are necessary to form true loyalty toward a team. As a result,

H_7: Brand identification is positively and significantly related to brand loyalty

The Brand Identification-Brand Image Relationship

One of the primary goals of companies and organizations is to gain consumers' attention by creating a distinctive image of their brand. In order to create a distinctive brand image, companies and organizations create a brand personality based on the attributes of the brand that are represented in the marketing of their brand (e.g., Nike's brand personality reflects cutting-edge innovative technology, high performance, and use of their products by the world's best athletes) (Aaker, 1996). Based on the knowledge and experience of consumers with a brand, consumers begin to associate with brands that reflect who the consumer is. The brand attributes and personality can reinforce the self-concept of the consumer (Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003). As such, consumers feel identification with a brand that provides the opportunity to reinforce the perceptions that a consumer has or desires to have of themselves. If the characteristics of the brand (e.g., brand attributes and personality) are transferred to the consumer, then the consumer feels more positively toward the brand. In other words, the consumers' feelings (e.g., gratitude and appreciation) toward the brand are reinforced based on consumers' identification with the brand, and as a result, the image of the brand increases in the minds of consumers.

In a sport setting, consumers identify with sport brands and their brand extensions (e.g., the organization, management, team, players, goods and services). For example, when a sport teams wins, fans BIRG and feel highly identified with the team. Similarly, when sport goods and/or services satisfy consumers, consumers feel identification with the goods/services. As a result, consumers develop a positive image of the goods and services based on the reinforcement of the wants and needs of consumers. As a result,

H_8: Brand identification is positively and significantly related to brand image

The Brand Identification-Behavioral Intentions Relationship

In the PCM, attachment leads to allegiance. The relationship between brand identification and brand loyalty reflects the links between attachment and allegiance in the PCM. A substantial amount of research supports the brand identification-behavioral intentions relationship (Aaker, 2004; Ahearne, Bhattacharya, & Gruen, 2005; Algesheimer et al., 2005; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Johnson et al., 2006; Keller, 2003; Kuenzel & Halliday, 2008).

Johnson et al. (2006) argue that identification and "personal fit" with the brand creates the "differential effect of brand equity on intentions beyond the effects of performance or relationships" (p. 123). Moreover, when a brand "fits" the consumer, identification between the brand and the consumer is fostered. Due to the fact that the brand reinforces the sense of self for the consumer, the consumer is likely to evaluate the brand favorably which leads to intentions to repurchase (Kressmann, Sirgy, Herrmann, Huber, Huber, & Lee, 2006). Kuenzel and Halliday (2008) find evidence in brand relationship research that brand identification results in intentions to repurchase the brand and word of mouth about the brand. In organizational identification research, Ahearne et al. (2005) suggest that when consumers identify with a company, they "tend to purchase more and recommend the company's products more often" (p. 5). In brand community research, Algesheimer et al. (2005) provide evidence that when consumers identify with a brand and the brand community for the brand, consumers make positive recommendations about the brand.

In a sport setting, based on Keller's (2001) notion of brand identification, if a sport consumer is identified with a team (e.g., "my kind of team"), then the consumer is likely to buy team merchandise and paraphernalia, attend future games, and become an evangelist for the team. Moreover, sport consumers (e.g., fans) that are highly identified with the team are more likely to attend future games than lowly identified sport consumers (Matsuoka, Chelladurai, &

Harada, 2003). In addition, Wakefield (1995) finds evidence of a relationship between team identification and intentions to attend future games. As a result,

H_{9a}: Brand identification is positively and significantly related to attendance intentions

H_{9b}: Brand identification is positively and significantly related to purchase intentions

H_{9c}: Brand identification is positively and significantly related to word of mouth intentions

The Sense of Sport Brand Community-Brand Loyalty Relationship

In the case of a sport brand community, a consumer's attitude toward the community is related to the consumer's attitudinal loyalty toward the brand, because the community is fostered by the brand. For example, if a consumer feels positively toward a sport brand community, then this attitude translates into feelings of loyalty toward the sport brand itself. McAlexander et al. (2002) suggest that Jeep consumers who identify with the Jeep brand community feel more loyalty toward the Jeep brand. Previous research also suggests that in a virtual brand community, consumers who identify with and feel committed toward brand community develop emotional ties to the brand (Algesheimer et al., 2005). Koh and Kim (2004) reach a similar conclusion that consumers feel loyalty toward the brand around which the community is formed. In addition, consumers' experiences at brand events (e.g., brandfests) strengthens ties to the community and results in increased feelings of loyalty (Schouten, McAlexander, & Koenig, 2007). Moreover, research on loyalty programs shows that approximately 80% of the variance in loyalty is accounted for by a consumer's sense of community (Rosenbaum et al., 2005).

In a sport setting, sports are often used to and result in the creation and fostering of a sense of community (Clopton, 2007; Warner & Dixon, 2011). Putnam (2000) argues that in modern American society, Americans are less connected than in previous years. In previous years, Americans interacted more frequently and were often dependent on one another, while today, Americans are more individualistic and autonomous (Putnam, 2000). Attendance at sporting events, however, is generally on the rise (Mullin et al., 2007). It is suggested that sport is the modern "sociological superglue" that brings individuals together, and as a result, sport fosters a sense of community (Bale, 2003; Putnam, 2000). As a result of feeling a sense of community, several authors suggest that multiple outcomes are possible including loyalty toward the object (e.g., a brand or team) that creates and fosters a sense of community (Oliver, 1999; Rosenbaum et al., 2005). In one of the seminal sense of community research studies, Glynn

(1981) suggests that the presence of a sense of community among individuals can lead to feelings such as loyalty and commitment. Therefore, the relationship between sense of community and brand loyalty is examined. As a result,

H_{10a}: Sense of membership in the sport brand community is positively and significantly related to brand loyalty

H_{10b}: Geographic sense of sport brand community is positively and significantly related to brand loyalty

The Sense of Sport Brand Community-Brand Image Relationship

Keller (2001) posits that "strong attitudinal attachment and/or sense of community are typically necessary for active engagement with the brand to occur" (p. 19). One of the most prominent examples Keller (2001) notes of engagement is positive brand image. Keller (2003) argues that based on a feeling of sense of community, experiences can be created that enhance brand image among consumers in the community. Previous research suggests that consumers who feel a strong sense of community with other members of corporate societal marketing programs and cause-related brand communities (e.g., brands that sponsor communities for Alzheimer's disease, cancer, and autism) perceive a sponsor brand more positively (Hoeffler & Keller, 2002).

In community research, Pretty, Chipuer and Bramston (2003) propose that when individuals form communities and a sense of community develops, an image of the community develops in the minds of the community members. This image reinforces the purpose and outcomes of the community. For example, in sport, if a community of team fans develops and a sense of community forms, then the image of the community in the minds of its members will reflect the purpose and outcomes of the community (e.g., to support the team). The sense of community among individuals is also focused on the focal object of the community and results in individuals perceiving the focal object in a better or more positive manner. Similarly in event research, Derrett (2003) argues that the development of a sense of community results in members who feel connected, belonging, and support, and as a result, feel more positively toward the object (e.g., a brand) that fosters the development of the sense of community. Therefore, the relationship between sense of community and brand image is examined. As a result,

H_{11a}: Sense of membership in the sport brand community is positively and significantly related to brand image

H_{11b}: Geographic sense of sport brand community is positively and significantly related to brand image

The Sense of Sport Brand Community-Behavioral Intentions Relationship

An individual's sense of community is developed in numerous ways. Once an individual develops a sense of community with other brand community members, intentions to engage in brand-related behaviors are often the result (Carlson et al., 2008; McAlexander et al., 2002). McAlexander et al. (2002) provide qualitative evidence that Jeep owners who attend Jeep-related events develop a sense of community with other Jeep owners. As a result of feelings of a sense of community and camaraderie, the Jeep owners discuss their intentions to attend future Jeep-related events where they develop more positive brand-related experiences and relationships.

Carlson et al. (2008) posit that brand users who feel a sense of community with others who consume the brand exhibit intentions to engage in a variety of brand-related behaviors. In short, brand community members feel a sense of community with other brand community members and brand users. Based on the shared interests and expertise within a community of like-minded consumers, brand community members feel comfortable and secure in their intentions to engage in future brand related behaviors (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001).

In a sport setting, Kahle et al. (1996) find that a sense of camaraderie and community among fans affects future attendance behavior. Similarly, Wakefield (1995) finds that community influences such as norms and expectations of other members of the community also facilitate future attendance behaviors. When community members feel a sense of community and camaraderie with other members of the community, these members can formally or informally pressure other members to conform to the expectations of the community. In the case of a community of sport fans, the expectations of the community are likely to include behaving in ways that are consistent with being a "true fan" such as attending games, buying merchandise, and talking positively about the team. As a result,

H_{12a}: Sense of membership in the sport brand community is positively and significantly related to attendance intentions

H_{12b}: Sense of membership in the sport brand community is positively and significantly related to purchase intentions

H_{12c}: Sense of membership in the sport brand community is positively and significantly related to word of mouth intentions

H_{12d}: Geographic sense of sport brand community is positively and significantly related to attendance intentions

H_{12e}: Geographic sense of sport brand community is positively and significantly related to purchase intentions

H_{12f}: Geographic sense of sport brand community is positively and significantly related to word of mouth intentions

The Brand Loyalty-Behavioral Intentions Relationship

Based on the TRA, attitudes frequently lead to intentions (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The attitudinal approach to conceptualizing brand loyalty is generally based on "stated preferences, commitment, or purchase intentions" (Gounaris & Stathakopoulos, 2004). Oliver (2010) describes a loyalty framework where affective loyalty (e.g., an attitude toward the brand) leads to conative loyalty (e.g., behavioral intentions toward the brand). Moreover, Dick and Basu (1994) suggest that the relationship between attitudinal loyalty and repeat patronage is moderated by situational factors (e.g., discounts and incentives) and social norms (e.g., pressure to comply with others' behaviors) that influence consumers' intentions.

In sport research, numerous studies examine the relationship between loyalty and behavioral intentions (Bristow & Sebastian, 2001; Fink et al. 2002; James & Ridinger, 2002; Madrigal, 1995, 2000; Stewart, 2003; Sutton et al. 1997; Trail et al., 2005; Wakefield, 1995). Simply summarized, loyalty indicates a strong attachment, commitment, or devotion. When a consumer feels loyalty toward a good or service, a strong relationship exists. This relationship is often evidenced by the repurchase of the good or service and word of mouth recommendations. In fact, brand loyalty is often measured with purchase intentions items in brand community research (McAlexander et al., 2003). Therefore, this research examines the relationship between brand loyalty and behavioral intentions. As a result,

H_{13a}: Brand loyalty is positively and significantly related to attendance intentions

H_{13b}: Brand loyalty is positively and significantly related to purchase intentions

H_{13c}: Brand loyalty is positively and significantly related to word of mouth intentions

The Brand Image-Behavioral Intentions Relationship

The TRA specifies that attitudes frequently lead to intentions (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Previous research finds that brand image is important in determining

consumer preferences (Batra & Homer, 2004). In purchase location research, a consumer's image of a store is linked to their intention to purchase a product from that store (Buckley, 1991). Grewal, Krishnan, Baker, and Borin (1998) argue that there is a relationship between consumers' perceived image of a store and their purchase intentions from that store. In service quality research, Grönroos (1984) suggests that based on consumers' positive organizational/brand image, consumers are likely to engage in word of mouth communications that promote and recommend the organization/brand.

In sponsorship research, Madrigal (2001) argues that sponsors hope that a positive image of the sporting event motivates consumers to purchase sponsors' goods and services. Moreover, Gwinner and Eaton (1999) hypothesize that "a sporting event's image will transfer to a sponsoring brand's image when they are linked through sponsorship", and this linkage leads to positive outcomes such as purchase intentions. In more general sport research, Ferrand and Pages (1999) argue that the image of a sport organization can be leveraged to create value. The value that can be created for the sport organization includes enhancing brand equity and changing consumer behaviors such as purchase and attendance behaviors. Therefore, the relationship between brand image and behavioral intentions is examined. As a result,

H_{14a}: Brand image is positively and significantly related to attendance intentions

H_{14b}: Brand image is positively and significantly related to purchase intentions

H_{14c}: Brand image is positively and significantly related to word of mouth intentions

Summary

This chapter details the conceptual and empirical research that is conducted on sports, brands, and communities. The researcher connects these three topics through the use of valid and relevant theories. As a result, a new approach to understanding the antecedents and consequences of consumer participation in sport brand community is proposed. Through the literature review it is apparent that there is a lack of conceptual and empirical evidence regarding how brand communities are introduced, developed, and utilized by sport organizations. A hypothesized model and relationships between constructs are proposed. The review of literature provides an elucidation of how consumers move through the process of being introduced to a sport brand, experiencing the sport brand, developing feelings and attitudes toward the sport brand, and potentially attending sporting events, purchasing sport merchandise, and engaging in positive word of mouth about the sport brand and the sport brand community that exists around the sport

brand. Finally, this research attempts to validate measurement scales to be used to measure sport consumer behavior in a sport brand community. The next chapter details the methods that are used in the research to validate the measurement tool that is used to test the hypothesized model.

CHAPTER 3
METHODS

Introduction

The review of the literature in Chapter 2 provides an introduction to brand communities, sport organizations and consumers, the psychological and geographic senses of community, and the constructs that are identified in the conceptual, theoretical, and hypothesized models. Based on the review of the relevant literature, it is concluded that sport organizations have not received extensive attention in existent brand community research, and sport organizations are a fertile and appropriate area in which to examine brand community principles and practices. As a result of the introduction, development, and utilization of brand communities that are formed around sport brand(s), sport organizations produce numerous benefits. The antecedents and consequences of membership in a sport brand community are the focus of this research, and the methods that are used to examine these relationships are described in this chapter.

As indicated in Chapter 1 and 2, this research examines the relationships among the antecedents and consequences of consumer participation in a sport brand community (see Figure 3.1). The psychological continuum model (PCM) provides the theoretical framework for the antecedents of consumer participation in a brand community (brand knowledge, brand satisfaction, brand identification, and sense of sport brand community), while the theory of reasoned action (TRA) provides the theoretical framework for the consequences of consumer participation in a brand community (brand loyalty, brand image, behavioral intentions, and consumer behaviors).

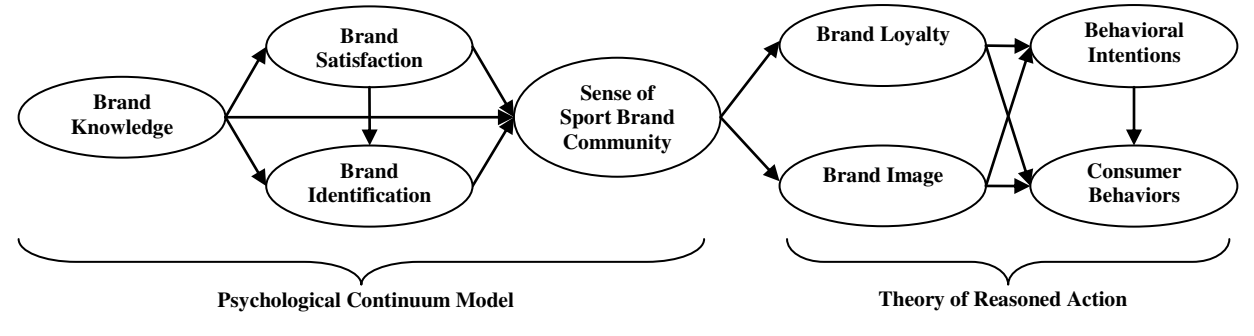


Figure 3.1
The Theoretical Model

Research Procedures

The purposes that guide this research include (1) generating a model based on relevant theories of the antecedents and consequences of consumer participation in a sport brand community, (2) developing a measurement instrument based on previously validated instruments from research on brand communities, but supplemented to include both brand and community constructs and items that are relevant to sports, and (3) empirically testing the model of the antecedents and consequences of consumer participation in a sport brand community. As such, five research questions have been proposed:

RQ_1: What are the antecedents of consumer participation in a sport brand community?

RQ_2: What are the relationships among the antecedents of consumer participation in a sport brand community?

RQ_3: What are the consequences of consumer participation in a sport brand community?

RQ_4: What are the relationships among the consequences of consumer participation in a sport brand community?

RQ_5: What are the relationships among the antecedents and consequences of consumer participation in a sport brand community?

Thus far, a conceptual model is proposed that forms the basis of the theoretical model. Based on relevant theories, relationships between the constructs are proposed and a model that contains hypothesized relationships between constructs are identified.

Research Design

Churchill (1979) proposes an eight-step procedure for developing measures of marketing constructs. In line with the suggested procedures, the research design for this proposal utilizes all eight steps. The justification for using the eight-step procedure lies in its systematic and iterative process for developing "high quality" marketing measures (Churchill, 1979; Smith, 1999). A major limitation in some previous research that does not utilize a systematic process is the garbage-in, garbage-out (GIGO) phenomenon. GIGO refers to the process where researchers use poor measurement tools in their research, and as a result, poor results that are neither reliable nor valid can occur. Jacoby (1978) summarizes the effect of the GIGO phenomenon when he rhetorically postulates "What does it mean if a finding is significant or that the ultimate in statistical analytical techniques have been applied, if the data collection instrument generated invalid data at the outset?" (p. 90). Therefore, the eight-step procedure is utilized to minimize

any potential GIGO phenomena. Figure 3.2 details the eight-step procedure and the specific activities that occur at each step.

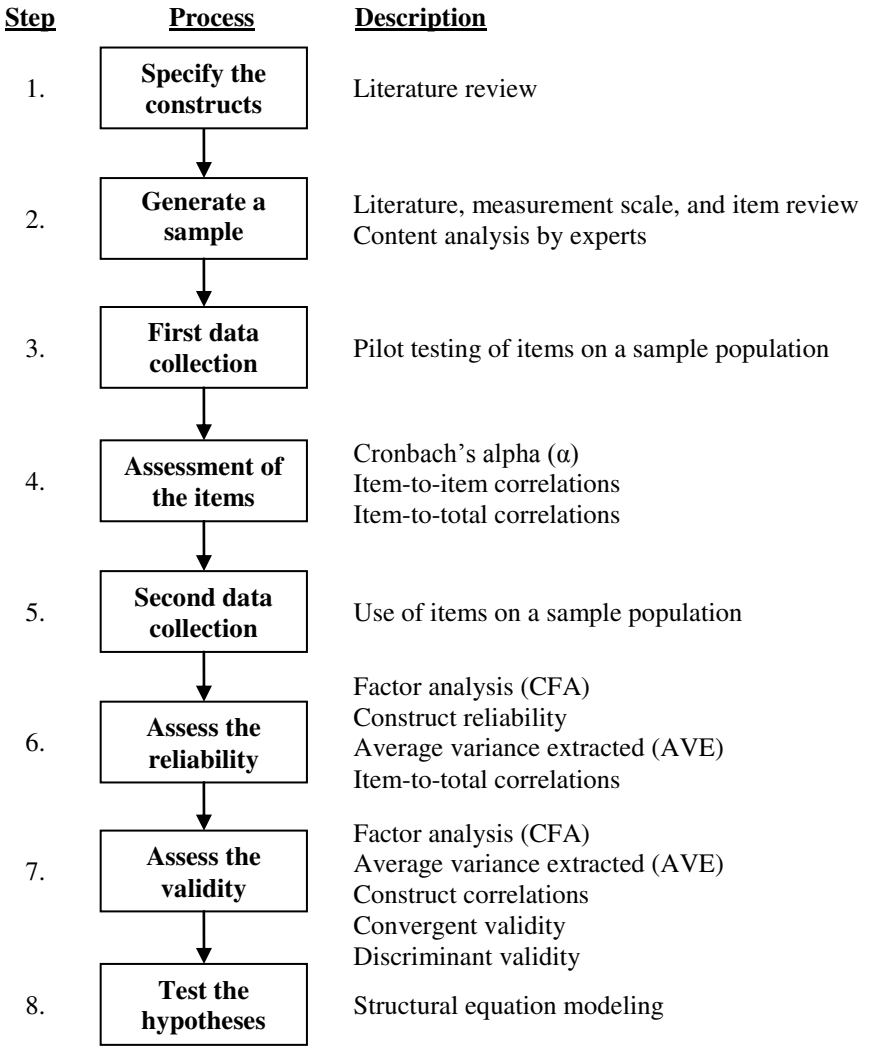


Figure 3.2
Churchill's (1979) Eight-Step Process Applied to this Research

Step 1 – Specify the Constructs

According to Churchill (1979), the first step in the procedure involves specifying the constructs that are included in the research. In Chapters 1 and 2, the constructs that are included in this proposal are detailed. In addition, the theoretical framework is important in specifying the

constructs of interest due to a variety of ways that a construct is conceptualized and eventually operationalized. For example in Chapter 2, brand loyalty is discussed as potentially both an attitudinal and a behavioral construct (see Dick & Basu, 1994). Each conceptualization is operationalized with different measurement items. Therefore, the theory that underpins the relationships between the constructs must be considered when specifying the constructs.

Step 2 – Generate a Sample of Items

After the theory and literature are reviewed and the constructs and relationships specified, the second step is used to generate a sample set of measurement items that capture the domain of each construct (Churchill, 1979). The items are found during a review of previous literature that provide information about whether the construct is unidimensional or multidimensional and what type of response format (e.g., Likert-type, semantic differentials) is commonly used. In addition, a panel of experts (e.g., academics) reviews the items. The panel provides feedback on the content of the measurement items (e.g., content analysis). The feedback from the panel provides evidence of content validity and ensures that the measurement items do in fact measure the specified construct of interest. Later in this chapter, the proposed measurement items that are used are detailed.

Step 3 – First Data Collection (Pilot Testing)

After the measurement items are generated, reviewed, and edited, the third step includes a pilot test of all of the items on a sample population (Churchill, 1979). The pilot test is utilized to diagnose problems with the measurement items and response formats. In addition, utilizing a pilot test at an early phase of research saves the researcher time and effort later. If a pilot test is not done, then there is only one chance to collect data, and the data the researcher collects is the data that the researcher uses. If the data at this point is "garbage," then the researcher does not have a chance to go back and fix any potential problems with the measurement items. Moreover, the use of a pilot test allows a researcher to test the measurement items, further refine the measurement items if necessary, and then use improved measurement items with only a minimal extra expenditure of time and effort.

Step 4 – Assessment of the Items

Once the pilot test is completed (e.g., the first data is collected), the researcher begins the process of examining the measurement items' psychometric properties (Churchill, 1979). The

first step in analyzing the measurement items is to examine Cronbach's alpha (α) coefficient, the item-to-item correlations, and the item-to-total correlations (Churchill, 1979). Cortina (1993) summarizes the five most common descriptions of Cronbach's alpha (α) as:

1. the mean of all split-half reliabilities,
2. the lower-bound or reliability of a test,
3. a measure of first-factor saturation,
4. a value that is equal to reliability in conditions of essential tau-equivalence, and
5. a general version of the Kuder-Richardson coefficient of equivalence.

In summarizing the use of Cronbach's alpha (α), Cortina (1993) posits that Cronbach's alpha (α) is "a function of internal consistency, that is, of interrelatedness of items" (p. 100). As such, Cronbach's alpha (α) coefficient indicates the reliability, internal consistency, and interrelatedness of items. When calculating Cronbach's alpha (α), many software programs also offer alpha-if-deleted calculations. This calculation indicates that if the item is removed, whether the Cronbach's alpha (α) increases or decreases. If the alpha-if-deleted calculation is higher than the calculated Cronbach's alpha (α) coefficient, then the item can be considered for removal.

Item-to-item correlations indicate the relationship between items, and item-to-total correlations indicate the relationship between each item and the latent construct that it measures. Item-to-total correlations are used to determine if a measurement item measures the latent construct well. If the item-to-total correlation is below .50, (see Zaichkowsky, 1985), then the removal of "poor-fitting" items can lead to a higher Cronbach's alpha (α) coefficient value and improved measurement of the latent construct.

Step 5 – Second Data Collection (Main Study)

After the assessment (e.g., purification and refinement) of the measurement items, the next step involves collecting data from the sample population that is used to assess the reliability and validity of the measurement items and their constructs, as well as testing the proposed hypotheses that are shown in the hypothesized model and stated in Chapter 2. In later sections of this chapter, the population, sampling procedures, data collection procedures, and instrumentation are discussed in detail.

Step 6 – Assess the Reliability

Following the completion of the second data collection, the reliability of the items and their constructs are again examined using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Anderson and Gerbing (1988) state that CFA "specifies the relations of the observed measures (e.g., measurement items) to their posited underlying constructs, with the constructs allowed to intercorrelate freely" (p. 411). CFA allows a researcher to determine the estimated loading value of each measurement item on its construct. Based on these estimated loadings, items that have a value of below .707 can be removed. The general cutoff of .707 is derived based on the fact that if the loading is squared, the squared value represents the amount of variance explained by the item holding all other variables constant. The square of .707 ($.707^2$) is approximately .50. Items that explain less than 50% of the variance are generally not desirable and can be removed.

The estimated loadings are also used to determine construct reliability (CR). CR is used to assess the quality of a latent construct that is influenced by several observed variables (Bacon et al., 1995; Hancock & Mueller, 2001). CR is a "measure of reliability and internal consistency of the measured variables representing the latent constructs" (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006, p. 771). According to Hair et al. (2006), CR is calculated as

$$\text{Construct Reliability (CR)} = \frac{(\sum_{i=1}^{n} standardized\ factor\ loadings)^2}{(\sum_{i=1}^{n} standardized\ factor\ loadings)^2 + (\sum_{i=1}^{n} \text{error variance})}$$

In words, the sum of the standardized loadings of the observed measurement items of a construct are squared, and this value is divided by the squared sum of the standardized loadings of the observed measurement items of a construct which are added to the sum of the error variance (e.g., measurement error) for each of the observed measurement items of a construct. The generally accepted threshold value for (the minimum) acceptable CR is .70 (Bacon et al., 1995).

In addition to calculating CR as evidence of the internal consistency of each construct, average variance extracted (AVE) is calculated. AVE reflects the total amount of variance in the measurement items for each latent construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2006). If the measurement items are truly representative of the latent construct, then more variance is extracted. According to Hair et al. (2006), AVE is calculated as

$$\text{Average Variance Extracted (AVE)} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n}(standardized\ loadings^2)}{n}$$

In words, the standardized loadings of the observed measurement items of a construct are squared and then summed, and this value is divided by the total number of observed measurement items of a construct. The generally accepted threshold value for (the minimum) acceptable AVE is .50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2006).

Similar to Step 4, item-to-item correlations and item-to-total correlations are calculated and checked in order to ensure the reliability and internal consistency of the measures.

Step 7 – Assess the Validity

Johnson and Christensen (2008) note that there are three types of validity evidence, including evidence based on content (e.g., content validity), internal structure (e.g., factor analysis), and relationships with other constructs (e.g., convergent and discriminant validity). Moreover, the "Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing" indicate these three types of validity (also termed as content, criterion and construct) "may illuminate different aspects of validity, but they do not represent distinct types of validity. Validity is a unitary concept. It is the degree to which all the accumulated evidence supports the intended interpretation of test scores for the proposed purpose" (American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, & National Council of Measurement in Education, 1999, p. 11). In Step 2, the original sample of items is subjected to content analysis by experts. Therefore, all of the items that remain at this stage of the process should have content validity. In Step 6, the internal structure of the measurement items and their factors is analyzed. Therefore, the most pertinent remaining tests of validity are convergent and discriminant validity (Campbell & Fiske, 1959). Johnson and Christensen (2008) define convergent validity evidence as "the relationship between the focal test scores and other independent measures of the same construct" (p. 156), while discriminant validity evidence "exists when test scores on your focal test are not highly related to scores from other tests that are designed to measure theoretically different constructs" (p. 156). Moreover, convergent validity evidence ensures that items for a construct are related (to what they should be related to), while discriminant validity evidence demonstrates that items that measure one construct do not also measure a separate construct.

Evidence of convergent validity is provided by an examination of the construct's calculated AVE score from Step 6. If a latent construct has an AVE value greater than the threshold of .50, then the variance of the construct is greater than the measurement error for the construct, and evidence of convergent validity is established (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Evidence of discriminant validity is provided by comparing a construct's calculated AVE score from Step 6 and the squared multiple correlation for any constructs. When the construct's calculated AVE score exceeds the squared multiple correlation for any constructs, evidence of discriminant validity is established (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Step 8 – Test the Hypotheses

As detailed in Chapter 2, there are thirty-one hypothesized relationships in the model. In this final step, these relationships are tested through a two-step analysis process that consists of creating and testing a measurement model and a structural model (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). The measurement model, more commonly known as the CFA model (that will also be tested in Steps 6 and 7), specifies and analyzes the latent constructs and their underlying measurement items. The measurement model also allows the latent constructs to intercorrelate freely. Based on the results of the measurement model, the next step involves the creation of a structural model. According to Anderson and Gerbing (1988), a structural model "specifies the causal relations of the constructs to one another, as posited by some theory" (p. 411). In the case of this research, the structural model is the hypothesized causal model, and the hypothesized model is based on the theoretical model. In the next two sections, information about the measurement model and the structural model are provided.

The Measurement Model

The first step that is undertaken in analyzing the measurement model is to test the assumption of multivariate normality in order to determine the estimation method (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). To test the assumption of multivariate normality (e.g., skewness and kurtosis) Mardia's coefficient (see Mardia, 1970) is calculated using PRELIS, which is part of the LISREL software package. If the multivariate normality assumption is met, then the researcher uses maximum likelihood parameter estimates with conventional standard errors and chi-square test statistic (ML). If the assumption is not met, then the researcher should use a more robust estimation method (e.g., maximum liklihood parameter estimates with standard errors and a chi-

square test statistic (MLR), maximum liklihood parameter estimates with standard errors and a mean-adjusted chi-square test statistic (Satorra-Bentler chi-square) (MLM)) (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2009; Satorra & Bentler, 1994). While several correction techniques exist for data that violates the multivariate normality assumption, the Satorra-Bentler (SB) scaled chi-square statistic and correction method outperform alternative test statistics and correction methods (Hu, Bentler, & Kano, 1992; Satorra & Bentler, 1994, 2001)

The second step specifies the measurement model in terms of the dimensionality (e.g., unidimensional or multidimensional) of the latent constructs (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Kline, 2005). Moreover, each construct is measured by items that are specifically related only to each construct. Table 3.1 displays the ten constructs, dimensionality, and number of items used to measure each construct.

Table 3.1
The Dimensionality and Number of Items for the Latent Constructs

Construct	Dimensionality / Items
Brand Knowledge	Unidimensional: 5 items
Brand Satisfaction	Unidimensional: 5 items
Brand Identification	Unidimensional: 6 items
Membership (Sense of Community)	Unidimensional: 5 items
Geographic Sense of Community	Unidimensional: 6 items
Brand Loyalty	Unidimensional: 7 items
Brand Image	Unidimensional: 9 items
Attendance Intentions	Unidimensional: 5 items
Purchase Intentions	Unidimensional: 5 items
Word of Mouth Intentions	Unidimensional: 5 items

The third step examines the identification of the measurement model. According to Kline (2005), the two necessary requirements for the measurement model to be identified are: (1) the number of free parameters is less than or equal to the number of observations, and (2) every latent variable (including measurement errors and latent factors) must have a scale. The number of observations (v) is calculated as

$$\text{Number of Observations} = \left(v \frac{(v+1)}{2}\right)$$

The measurement model is identified if the total number of variances and covariances of the latent factors and measurement errors plus the estimated loadings of measurement items on the latent factors is greater than or equal to the number of parameters (Kline, 2005). The number of parameters is calculated by summing the number of latent factor correlations, factors loadings, measurement error variances, and any covariances (Kline, 2005).

The fourth step tests the measurement model (see Figure 3.3). As discussed in a previous section of this chapter, if an estimated loading of a path between an observed measurement item and its latent factor is below .707 (if less than half of the variance in the path is explained), then the item can be removed. The standardized residuals and the modification indices are also examined for potential issues. If the standardized residuals have an estimated standard error below 1.960, which would indicate statistical insignificance, then the residual and/or its item can be removed. The modification indices (in Mplus) indicate the change in chi-square (χ^2) that can be obtained if the modification suggestions are accepted. The modification indices provide statistical evidence of the relationships among items and constructs. For example, two items from separate constructs may show statistical evidence that they measure the same construct. If two items that measure separate construct in fact measure the same construct, then one or both items can be considered for removal. In addition, the correlations between latent constructs are examined for issues of high correlation. If the correlation between constructs exceeds .850, then latent constructs are combined or perhaps eliminated (Kline, 2005). Moreover, the fit indices of measurement model are examined.

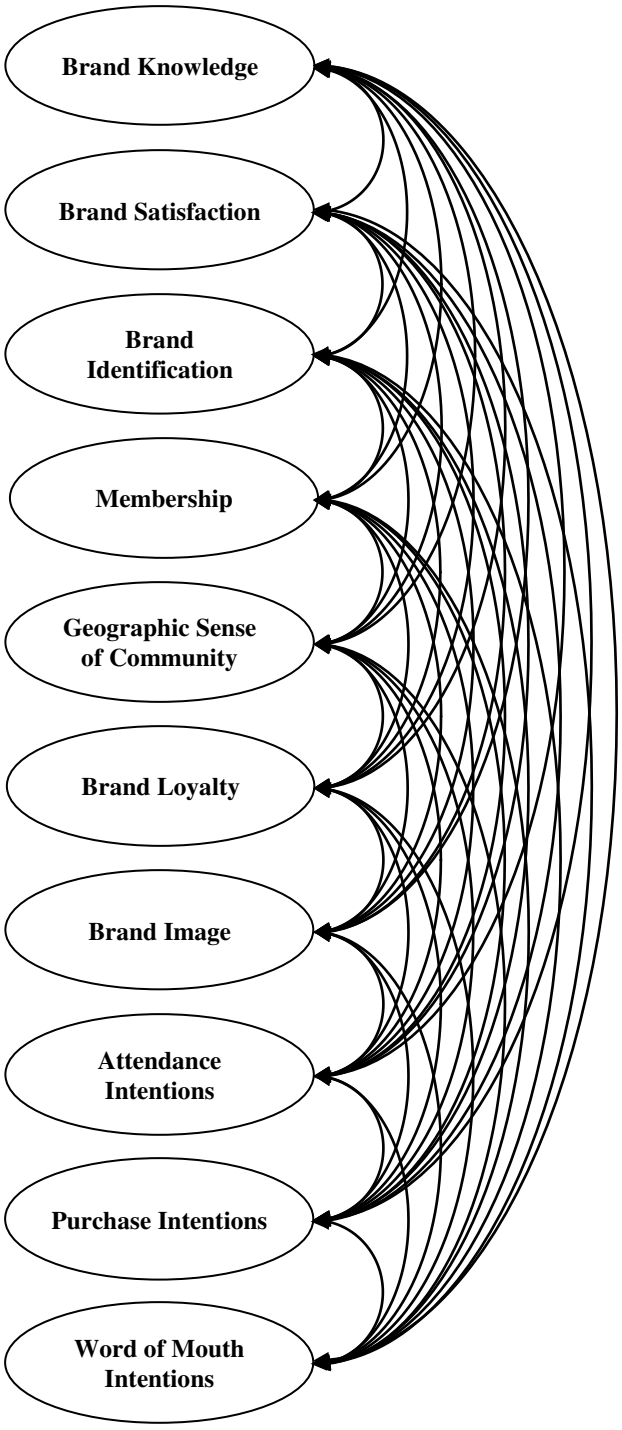


Figure 3.3
The Measurement Model

The final step analyzes the fit of the measurement model. First, it must be noted that numerous versions of computer software exist to test measurement and structural models (e.g., LISREL, EQS, AMOS, RAMONA, and Mplus). Each of these software reports different fit indices. For this research, Mplus is used. Mplus reports the chi-square (χ^2) test of model fit value, the degrees of freedom (*df*) for the model, and the *p*-value for the χ^2 test. The first fit index that is used is the χ^2 to *df* ratio. Mplus reports seven additional model fit indices: comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) which is also known as the non-normed fit index (NNFI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and the 90% confidence interval of RMSEA, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), akaike information criterion (AIC), bayesian information criterion (BIC), and sample-size adjusted bayesian information criterion (ABIC). In this research, AIC, BIC, and ABIC are not needed, because these fit indices are used when a researcher compares two models that are not nested. In this research, all models that are examined are nested. In addition, if the data does not satisfy the assumption of multivariate normality, using the MLM estimation method with the Satorra-Bentler chi-square correction can be used to conduct a chi-square difference test when models are nested (see Satorra & Bentler, 1994). Table 3.2 shows the fit indices and their generally accepted cut-off criteria (see Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Table 3.2
Fit Indices Cut-Off Criteria

Fit Indices	Acceptable Cut-Off Criteria	Good Cut-Off Criteria
Chi-square (χ^2) to *df* ratio	Between 3.000 and 2.001	Less than or equal to 2.000
CFI	Between 0.900 and 0.949 [a]	Greater than or equal to 0.950
TLI (NNFI)	Between 0.900 and 0.949 [a]	Greater than or equal to 0.950
RMSEA	Between 0.080 and 0.061[a]	Less than or equal to 0.060
SRMR	Between 0.100 and 0.081[a]	Less than or equal to 0.080
AIC	The lower the value, the better	N/A
BIC	The lower the value, the better	N/A
ABIC	The lower the value, the better	N/A

[a] The value ranges are based on the combinatorial rules proposed by Hu and Bentler (1999)

The Structural Model

After completing the analysis of the measurement model and verifying the relationships between the latent factors and the observed measurement items, the structural model (e.g., the

hypothesized model) is tested in order to examine the hypothesized relationships among the latent constructs (see Figure 3.4). The process that is used to evaluate the structural model is quite similar to process that is used to evaluate the measurement model. In addition, because the two-step approach (see Anderson & Gerbing, 1988) is used, the measurement model and the structural model are compared. The structural model should fit as well as or better than the measurement model. An additional step that can be considered is to create and test alternative models based on theory and data results. In this proposal, the PCM and the TRA are respectively used to specify the relationships among the antecedents and consequences of consumer participation in a sport brand community. In the next section, information about the sampling, data collection procedures, and instrumentation is discussed.

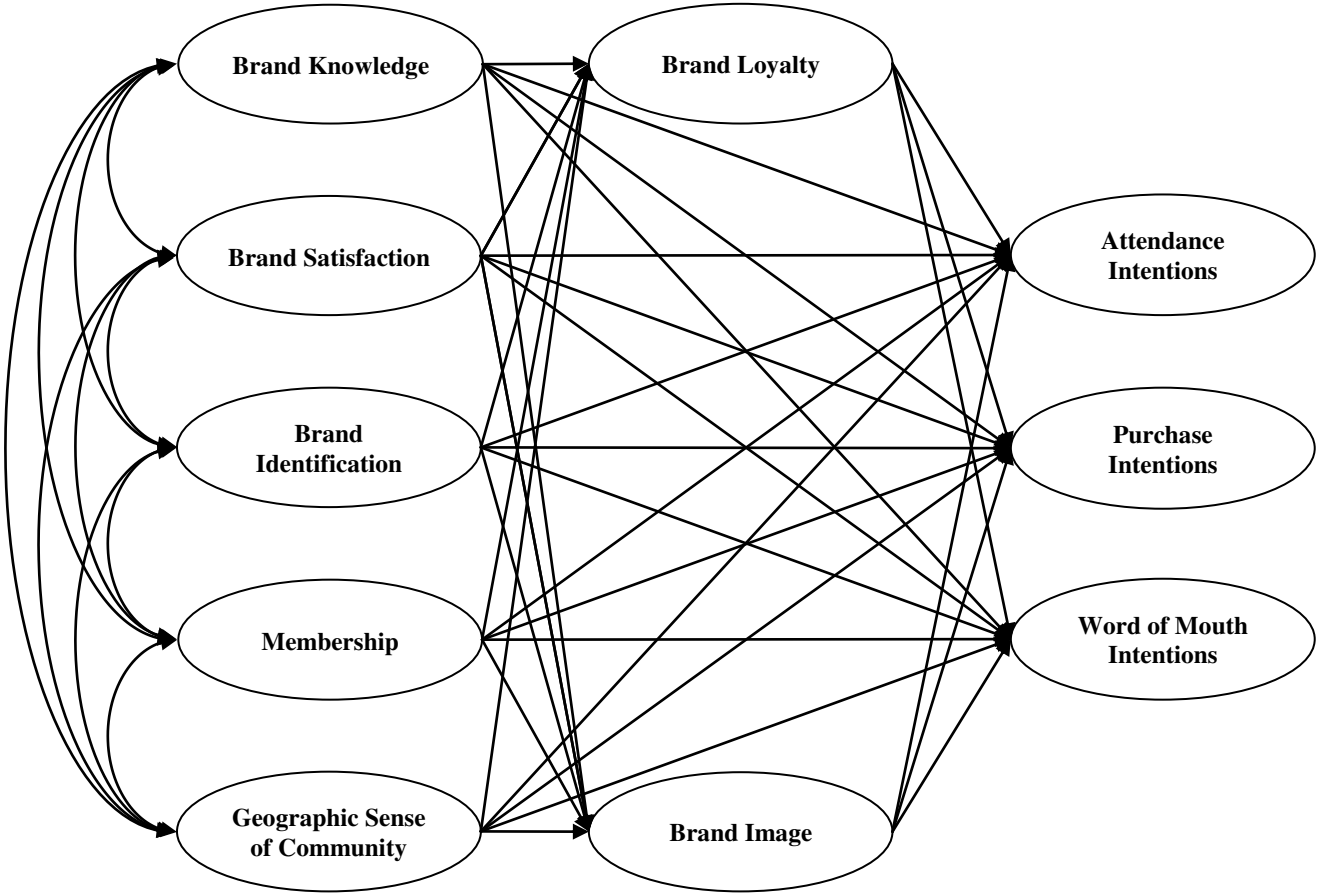


Figure 3.4
The Structural Model

Sampling, Data Collection, and Instrumentation

In the previous sections, details about the procedures that are undertaken to analyze the data are discussed. Several important issues, however, remain not discussed, including information about the sample population(s) that is targeted and the rationale behind this decision, the data collection procedures, and the instrumentation (e.g., the actual measurement items are used to measure each of the ten latent constructs). In the following sections, these issues are discussed.

Sample Population

The focal sport brand community that is examined in this research is the football team at a large Southeastern university in the United States. According to the 2010 media guide for the football team:

- the team has been competing for sixty-four years,
- according to the Wall Street Journal, the university is ranked #1 for producing National Football League (NFL) players,
- the team has won two national championships (1993 and 1999) ,
- the team has produced two Heisman Trophy winners,
- the team has won twelve Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) championships,
- the team finished the season ranked in the top five in the nation for fourteen consecutive years (from 1987-2000) ,
- the team has played in twenty-eight consecutive bowl games,
- players from the team have won thirty-one NFL Super Bowl championships,
- the team has produced thirty-five first round NFL draft picks,
- the team has played in more bowl games than any other team since 1985 (28 total) ,
- the team has produced the second highest number of NFL draft picks since 1993 (104 total) ,
- the team is tied for third in the category of "Most BCS Game Appearances" (6),
- the team is second overall in the category of "Most TV Appearances on a Major Network Since 1995" (180 appearances),
- the team has produced one Rhodes Scholar,
- in 2008, the team's helmet won the "College Football Helmet Clash" on ESPN,

- and the team has four unique traditions and rituals including (1) Osceola and Renegade (Chief Osceola rides on a horse named Renegade, and they represent the Native American Seminole Tribe which provides the nickname for the team – the Seminoles; (2) the Warchant/tomahawk chop which is a song and arm motion that represents going into battle and winning; (3) the sod cemetery and "sod games" (a game that is played on the road, and the team is the underdog) which represents the most difficult competitions for the football team; and (4) the "Downtown GetDown" which occurs the night before home games in the center of the city, and it represents a pep rally and party for local and out-of-town guests (Florida State University Athletics Department Sports Information, 2010).

The above listed accomplishments, rituals, and traditions give rise to the importance and success of the team to the local and university communities (which includes past, present and future students, families, relatives and friends of those who attend the university).

Two groups are sampled through convenience, purposeful, and snowball sampling that includes former students (e.g., university alumni) and current university undergraduate/graduate students. Convenience sampling is used because it is not possible to gain access to the full population of individuals that are affiliated with the university brand and the football team. Based on past inquiries and due to privacy concerns, access to the sample populations is based on convenience (e.g., who the researcher can get access to). Purposeful sampling is used because many individuals who do not have a relationship with or connection to the university may not be an appropriate sample. Snowball sampling, which occurs when individuals participate in the research and then "recruit" additional individuals who might be interested in participating in the research and who meet the characteristics required to participate (Johnson & Christensen, 2008), is used as a promotional tactic to encourage participation in this research. Therefore, the current research examines current and former students (e.g., alumni) of the university.

Current students are sampled through the Department of Sport Management and Lifetime Activities Program (LAP) classes because all of the LAP classes and several of Sport Management classes allow "open enrollment", and any student from any department in the university can attend the classes. Former students (e.g., alumni) are sampled through an advertisement on Facebook and other marketing and promotions on social media (e.g., LinkedIn) that linked to an electronic version of the survey. Facebook advertising allows advertisers the

opportunity to specify the population that has the ad appear on their page, and in this case, any individual who has put the name of the university currently being researched on their profile is a target of the ad and the survey. A chance to enter a drawing for multiple $25.00 gift cards from a local and online university merchandise retailer are used to entice current students and alumni to take the online survey. Finally, in order to satisfy the independence assumption (e.g., to ensure that potential respondents do not take the survey more than once), IP computer addresses are recorded and screened for duplicates. In addition, to facilitate individuals not attempting to take the survey more than once to be entered to win one of the gift cards, participants can also recommend to others that they take the survey, and once an individual takes the survey, they can indicate who recommended that they take the survey (e.g., snowball sampling). It is hoped that this increases the interest and response rate for the online survey, while also preventing individuals from attempting to take the survey more than once.

Sampling Considerations

The initial measurement instrument contains ten latent construct sections (brand knowledge, brand satisfaction, brand identification, membership, geographic sense of community, brand loyalty, brand image, and attendance, purchase and word of mouth intentions). One hundred twenty-four items were generated based on a review of the relevant literature (Step 1). In Step 2, a panel of experts examines all of the items for content validity and inter-rater reliability. Based on the validity and reliability ratings that are discussed in more detail later in this chapter, the panel of experts made recommendations on improving the items and reducing the total number of items. As a result, fifty-eight items are used in the initial data collection (Step 3).

The first sampling issue that is considered is sample size. Cohen (1969) notes that while it is better to obtain a larger sample size as compared to a smaller sample size, as the sample size increases, there is a higher likelihood of obtaining statistically significant results. Therefore, the researcher must balance practical significance and statistical significance (Cohen, 1969; Hinkin, 1995). In a review of seventy-five articles published in leading academic journals from 1989-1994, Hinkin (1995) recommends that the item-to-response ratio should range from 1:4 to 1:10. Hinkin (1995) also notes that for CFA, a sample size of two hundred is recommended. For the initial data collection, between one hundred and two hundred participants are targeted. For the final data collection, CFA and SEM are used. CFA and SEM are generally not used with the

same data set. Typically, a large sample is collected and randomly split in half. As such, based on the number of items that remain after the initial data collection and screening, a minimum of at least four hundred total participants are targeted for the final data collection. Moreover, the lower-bound item-to-response ratio of 1:4 will also be considered in determining the appropriate sample size for the final data collection. Therefore, a sample size of six hundred usable responses (three hundred for the CFA analysis and three hundred for the SEM analysis) for the final data collection is targeted.

Scaling

One of the most important issues in developing a measurement instrument (e.g., a questionnaire) is the rating scale(s) that subjects use to indicate their responses (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). The measurement and statistics literature is replete with suggestions for rating scales that range from 5- to 101-point Likert-type scales. In the marketing and consumer behavior literature, 5- and 7-point Likert-type scales are the most popular (see Bruner, 2009). Recently, however, 11-point (0-10) scales have become increasingly prevalent. It is often argued that the more points that exist on a rating scale, the more difficult it is for subjects to discriminate between points. Yet, theoretical and empirical research is emerging that supports the notion of using 11-point rating scales.

In empirical research, Alwin (1997) provides evidence that the reliability and validity of measurement with 11-point rating scales are improved over comparable 7-point scales and concludes that

> questions with more response categories may be preferable to those with fewer response categories, when feasible, in that they produce measures that are both more reliable and more valid. Reductions in measurement errors in this sense can result in more powerful statistical decision making, less biased correlation and regression estimates, and greater confidence in the usefulness of the data (p. 335).

In forthcoming research, Coelho and Esteves (In Press) argue that having a small number of responses does not allow for discriminating responses, and it limits researchers' ability to find significant differences. Moreover, based on customer satisfaction data, Coelho and Esteves (In Press) find that there is no significant difference in non-response rates between 5- and 10-point scales, and both scales produce equivalent mean scores. Therefore, there is growing empirical evidence that 11-point rating scales are superior to 5- or 7-point rating scales.

In the 2006 book, *The ultimate question: Driving good profits and true growth*, Frederick Reichheld provides six reasons for the use of 11-point scales (e.g., 0-10).

1. 11-point rating scales make intuitive sense to consumers because of the way that grading is often done in schools based on percentages.
2. Human beings are "ten digited" and think in units of ten.
3. Many consumers believe that there is always room for improvement in everything, and as a result, they refuse to answer any question with a "perfect score". As a result, finer discriminations and distinctions can be made.
4. Many consumers reverse (e.g., transpose) the scale, where a 1 actually means a 7. In a 0-10 scale, few consumers misunderstand what a 0 (zero) means.
5. Important distinctions can be hidden in scales with fewer points. Increasing the number of points on a scale allows for finer distinctions.
6. Many of the world's leading companies (e.g., General Electric, American Express. Allianz, Intuit, and the publishers of the *Wall Street Journal*) have adopted 0-10 rating scales for their corporate research.

In summary, there is growing evidence and rationale for the use of 11-point rating scales. As such, all of the measurement items in this research use 11-point scales. Based on the Juster (1966) scale (for a review, see Day, Gan, Gendall, & Esslemont, 1991), all of the scales except for brand image are measured using a 0-10 rating scale (adapted from Alwin, 1997) that is anchored by "totally disagree" for "0" and "totally agree" for "10". Table 3.3 details the meaning of both of the proposed 0-10 rating scales that are used in this research.

Brand image is measured using an 11-point rating scale, however, the response format for brand image is a semantic differential (+5 to -5). Based on the work Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum (1957), a semantic differential is defined as "a scaling technique that is used to measure the meaning that participants give to various attitudinal objects or concepts" (Johnson & Christensen, 2008, p. 183). Due to the fact that brand image is operationalized in this research as an attitude, and because it is extremely difficult to create items that can be used to measure brand image without utilizing "leading words" (e.g., positive), using semantic differentials is preferable. Table 3.3 also details an example of a semantic differential scale.

Table 3.3
The Meanings of the Rating Scales

Rating	Likert-Type Scale	Rating	Semantic Differential Scale
10	Totally agree	+5	"Positive adjective" (e.g., good)
9		+4	
8		+3	
7		+2	
6		+1	
5	Neutral (do not agree, do not disagree)	0	Neutral
4		-1	
3		-2	
2		-3	
1		-4	
0	Totally disagree	-5	"Negative adjective" (e.g., bad)

Instrumentation

In the following sections, the fifty-eight items for the ten latent constructs are briefly reviewed. These items provide the basis for the measurement instrument that is content analyzed in Step 2 and pilot tested in Step 3.

Brand Knowledge

Consumer knowledge of a brand is the starting point for this research. Keller (2003) posits that brand knowledge is the personal meaning about a brand that is stored in a consumer's memory. Brand knowledge is also associated with the descriptive and evaluative information that a consumer knows about a brand (Keller, 2003) and the level of familiarity and expertise that a consumer has with a brand (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987; Jacoby et al., 1986). In this research, brand knowledge is operationalized as the general level of knowledge and information that a consumer knows about a brand. For example, before a consumer develops a relationship with or purchases a brand, the consumer must learn about the brand. The information that the consumer learns is brand knowledge.

The identification of the items that are used to measure brand knowledge scale begins with an examination of numerous scales. Three scales in particular are noted which contain items that are used in this research. The first two scales measure the knowledge of consumers within a brand community. Algesheimer et al. (2005) conceptualize brand knowledge as the degree to which consumers believe that they are familiar and experienced with the brand. Hedlund (2010)

conceptualizes and operationalizes brand knowledge as specific brand-related information that sport fans know about a sport brand. In the third scale, Flynn, Goldsmith, and Eastman (1996) measure consumers' familiarity and expertise with a specific product category.

In order to measure the general level of knowledge and information that a consumer has about a brand, one item is adapted from Algesheimer et al. (2005) and two items are adapted from Flynn et al. (1996). The items from Hedlund (2010) are deemed in the content analysis to measure specific pieces of information that a consumer may know about a brand, and due to the specificity of the items, these items are removed. As a result, two new items that measure general knowledge and information are added (see Table 3.4).

Table 3.4
Measures of Brand Knowledge

Brand Knowledge Items	Author(s)
I know a great deal of information about the FSU Football team.	Algesheimer et al. (2005)
I believe that I am knowledgeable about the FSU Football team.	Flynn et al. (1996)
When it comes to the FSU Football team, I know a lot.	Flynn et al. (1996)
I know a lot of information about the FSU Football team.	New
I have a lot of knowledge about the FSU Football team.	New

Brand Satisfaction

Brand satisfaction is defined as a consumer's judgment that a brand provides a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment (Oliver, 1997). Moreover, brand satisfaction occurs after the consumer gains knowledge about and experience with the brand. Brand satisfaction is the result of consumers having a pleasing or fulfilling experience with a brand, and generally this occurs when the actual performance of the brand is greater than the consumer's expectations (Oliver, 1977; Oliver, 1980; Parasuraman et al., 1988). In other words, brand satisfaction results from an experience with the brand when the costs associated with the brand experience are perceived as "less than" the actual experience or results of the experience with the brand. For example, a sport consumer is likely to spend time, effort, and financial resources to attend a sporting event. If the consumer judges the experience and/or outcome of the sporting event is greater than the resources that he/she expended to attend the sporting event, then the consumer will be satisfied. This feeling of satisfaction is likely to extend to both the consumer

him/herself (e.g., the consumer feels good about expending the resources necessary to attend the sporting event), and the consumer feels good about the sport brand itself (e.g., the sport organization and its brand) that facilitated their feeling(s) of satisfaction.

Numerous scales exist that purport to measure a variety of states of consumer satisfaction. For example, satisfaction scales have been used to measure general satisfaction based on recent purchases (Westbrook & Oliver, 1981), consumer satisfaction with the performance of a product, company, or brand (Tsiros & Mittal, 2000), consumer satisfaction with a service encounter (Oliver, 1997), and consumer satisfaction with a brand community and their perceived membership in the community (Woisetschlager et al., 2008).

In order to measure the brand-related satisfaction of consumers with the sport brand, three items are adapted from Woisetschlager et al. (2008), and two items are adapted from Tsiros and Mittal (2000). The items from Westbrook and Oliver (1981), because they are based on recent purchases, were deemed to be specifically oriented towards satisfaction with particular aspects of the purchase decision-making process, while items from Oliver (1997) were entirely focused on service encounters in a retail setting. As such, five items are used to measure brand satisfaction (see Table 3.5).

Table 3.5
Measures of Brand Satisfaction

Brand Satisfaction Items	Author(s)
Overall, my expectations of the FSU Football team are satisfied.	Woisetschlager et al. (2008)
I am satisfied with the FSU Football team.	Woisetschlager et al. (2008)
The FSU Football team satisfies me.	Woisetschlager et al. (2008)
I am happy with the FSU Football team.	Tsiros and Mittal (2000)
I am pleased with the FSU Football team	Tsiros and Mittal (2000)

Brand Identification

As is discussed in previous chapters, brand identification has multiple meanings depending on the context of its use. In this research, brand identification is conceptualized as the degree to which an individual defines him or herself by the same attributes that he or she believes define the brand (Dutton et al., 1994). For example, Nike might be perceived by an individual as a “high quality” or “high performance” sport brand, while Puma might be

perceived as a "leisure" or "recreational" sport brand. In the mind of the individual, the brand has meaning. Based on how the individual defines him or herself, consumers identify with a brand that shares the same attributes or qualities.

There are a multitude of scales that measure consumers' identification with a brand. For example, researchers measure the strength of the relationship that a consumer has with a brand and the degree to which they identify themselves as a member of a brand community (Algesheimer et al., 2005), the degree to which a consumer relates to a brand and believes that the brand matches their own self-concept (Aaker, Fournier, & Brasel, 2004), a consumer's sense of belonging to and identification with a brand community (Woisetschlager et al., 2008), and the consumer's expression of self-identity to others based on the expressed values of a product (Grewal, Mehta, & Kardes, 2004).

In order to measure brand identification, items are chosen and adapted based on including the relationship between the brand and the individual. Moreover, the items need to measure an expressive purpose (e.g., the brand expresses or represents attributes that are shared by the individual). As such, one item is adapted from Algesheimer et al. (2005), two items are adapted from Aaker et al. (2004), and one item is adapted from Woisetschlager et al. (2008). In addition, two new items that express the reflection of the brand in an individual and the commonality that is shared between the brand and the individual. Six items are used to measure brand identification (see Table 3.6).

Table 3.6
Measures of Brand Identification

Brand Identification Items	Author(s)
The FSU Football team says a lot about the kind of person I am.	Algesheimer et al. (2005)
The FSU Football team connects with the part of me that really makes me who I am.	Aaker et al. (2004)
The FSU Football team says a lot about the kind of person I would like to be.	Aaker et al. (2004)
I identify with the FSU Football team.	Woisetschlager et al. (2008)
The FSU Football team reflects the kind of person I am.	New
The FSU Football team and I have a lot in common.	New

Sense of Sport Brand Community: Membership

Earlier in this research, the Sense of Community Index (SCI) and the next generation of the SCI, the SCI-2, are discussed. The SCI and the SCI-2 both utilize formative scales. A formative scale consists of measurement items that combine together to measure the latent construct, while a reflective scale consists of items that reflect the variation in the latent construct (Diamantopoulos, 2008). In recent literature, there is debate about the use of formative and reflective scales in SEM research. The Special Issue of the *Journal of Business Research*, (2008, Volume 61, Issue 12) examines reflective and formative measures in marketing and business research. In this research, the original four dimensions (e.g., latent constructs) of sense of community are included, however, because the items in this research are reflective, adapted or new items are generated to measure each of the sense of community dimensions.

The first dimension in the sense of community construct that is utilized in this research is membership. Membership is defined as the feeling of belonging or of sharing a sense of personal relatedness (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Membership includes a variety of potential attributes including feelings of belonging, connections, and similarity with others. The six formative measures of membership in the SCI-2 include attributes such as trust, recognition, mutual support, expressions of membership, utilization or personal resources (e.g., time and effort) on behalf of the group, and identification with the group (Chavis, Lee, & Acosta, 2008). Due to the wide range of attributes that are covered in the formative measures of the SCI-2, all of the original items are discarded, and new reflective measures that indicate an individual's perception of their belonging, connections, and actual membership are created. As such, five items are used to measure membership (see Table 3.7).

Table 3.7
Measures of Membership

Membership Items	Author(s)
I belong to the FSU Football team's fan community.	New
I consider myself a member of the FSU Football team's fan community.	New
I am a part of the FSU Football team's fan community.	New
I am connected to the FSU Football team's fan community.	New
I am a member of the FSU Football team's fan community.	New

Sense of Sport Brand Community: Geographic Sense of Community

The second dimension of sense of community that is utilized in this research is geographic sense of community (GSOC). GSOC is defined as the sense of belonging to a physical location with territorial boundaries (Gusfield, 1975). The physical location that is used in this research is the city in which the university is located. The city is well-known as the geographic location of the university.

Numerous scales exist that purport to measure GSOC. These scales include the "Neighborhood Cohesion Instrument" (Buckner, 1988), the "Multidimensional Measure of Neighboring" (Skjaeveland, Garling, & Maeland, 1996), the "Ingroup Ties" subscale (Cameron, 2004), and the "Multidimensional Territorial Sense of Community Scale" (Prezza et al., 2009). Many of these scales contain items that measure both the connection that an individual feels toward the physical location and the people who reside in the physical location. The previous four dimensions of sense of community measure the feelings and connections between people, so the items that are used to measure GSOC only reflect the connection or feelings of belonging to the physical location (e.g., the city). Therefore, two items are adapted from Cameron (2004), one item is adapted from Prezza et al. (2009), and three new items are created (see Table 3.8).

Table 3.8
Measures of Geographic Sense of Community

Geographic Sense of Community Items	Author(s)
I feel ties to Tallahassee.	Cameron (2004)
Tallahassee reflects who I am.	Cameron (2004)
I feel like I belong in Tallahassee.	Prezza et al. (2009)
I feel connected to Tallahassee.	New
I like Tallahassee.	New
There is no place like Tallahassee.	New

Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is conceptualized as an attitude and is defined as the overall attachment or deep commitment to a brand (Oliver, 1999). Based on Dick and Basu's (1994) loyalty framework and Oliver's (1997) operationalizations, Harris and Goode (2004) create loyalty measures for cognitive, affective, conative, and action (e.g., behavioral) loyalty. In terms of service quality, active loyalty is operationalized and measured by Zeithaml, Berry, and

Parasuraman (1996) through the use of purchase and word of mouth intention items. In the brand community context, some research similarly operationalizes loyalty as intentions to engage in a particular behavior (Casaló et al., 2007; Rosenbaum et al., 2005), however because behavioral intentions are the outcome variables in this research, these types of loyalty measures are not used. In other brand community research, Algesheimer et al. (2005) conceptualize loyalty as a commitment to the brand community itself.

Based on the wide range of loyalty measures and the multiple different objects (e.g., referent levels) with which an individual feels or acts loyal, new general items of attitudinal loyalty are created. One item is taken from Hedlund (2010) because it represents a general measure of an individual's overall attitudinal loyalty, and six new items are created based on related yet slightly divergent concepts that are often discussed in terms of loyalty. As such, seven items are used to measure brand loyalty (see Table 3.9).

Table 3.9
Measures of Brand Loyalty

Brand Loyalty Items	Author(s)
I am loyal to the FSU Football team.	Hedlund (2010)
I am attached to the FSU Football team.	New
I am committed to the FSU Football team.	New
I am devoted to the FSU Football team.	New
I am dedicated to the FSU Football team.	New
I am faithful to the FSU Football team.	New
I am steadfast toward the FSU Football team.	New

Brand Image

Similar to brand loyalty, brand image is conceptualized and operationalized as an attitude. Brand image is defined as the perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory (Keller, 1993). Moreover, the image of the brand represents what consumers think about the brand and the meaning (e.g., the personality, traits, and characteristics) that the brand conveys when a consumer comes into contact with it. In a brand community, consumers develop similar notions and associations with the brand, and as a result, the mutual liking or admiration of what the brand represents results in increased consumption and/or use of the brand.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, while all of the other latent constructs in this research are measured with Likert-type items, brand image is measured using a semantic differential scale. In a review of the scales used to measure attitudes toward a product or brand, Bruner (2009) lists more than one hundred research studies using a combination of semantic differentials from a list of nearly fifty options. In this research, nine semantic differentials are chosen based on their perceived use in measuring an individual's impression of the image of the sport team (e.g., the focal brand) (see Table 3.10).

Table 3.10
Measures of Brand Image

Brand Image Semantic Differential Items	Author(s)
Good / Bad	N/A
High Quality / Low Quality	N/A
Favorable / Unfavorable	N/A
Likable / Not Likable	N/A
Positive / Negative	N/A
Unique / Not Unique	N/A
Superior / Inferior	N/A
Appealing / Unappealing	N/A
Impressive / Not Impressive	N/A

Behavioral Intentions: Attendance, Purchase, and Word of Mouth Intentions

Behavioral intentions are defined as a person's subject probability that he/she performs a given behavior. In a review of the intentions literature and its measurement, Gollwitzer (1993) demarcates intentions into two types: goal intentions (e.g., I wish, I desire) and implementation intentions (e.g., I intend to). It is important to note the difference between the phrasing because each one indicates a nuanced notion of an individual's subjective probability of performing some behavior. For example, an individual may wish to attend a sporting event, however, he/she cannot due to a previous commitment. Furthermore, an individual may intend to attend the same sporting event, however due to a medical emergency, he/she may not actually make it to the event.

In an attempt to remedy the subjective distinctions that an individual makes based on the phrasing on the intentions' items, a wide-range of similarly worded implementations intentions are adapted based on several phrasings that are found in the consumer satisfaction literature

(Hess et al., 2003), sponsorship literature (Tsiotsou & Alexandris, 2009), and sport literature (Hedlund, 2010). As such, consistent wording across the five items that are used to measure each of the three behavioral intentions' constructs are used (see Table 3.11, Table 3.12, and Table 3.13).

Table 3.11
Measures of Attendance Intentions

Attendance Intentions Items	Author(s)
I plan to attend FSU Football games in the near future.	Hedlund (2010)
It is likely I will attend FSU Football games in the near future.	Hess et al. (2003)
I expect to attend FSU Football games in the near future.	Hess et al. (2003)
I will attend FSU Football games in the near future.	Tsiotsou and Alexandris (2009)
I am determined to attend FSU Football games in the near future.	New

Table 3.12
Measures of Purchase Intentions

Purchase Intentions Items	Author(s)
I plan to purchase FSU Football team merchandise in the near future.	Hedlund (2010)
It is likely I will purchase FSU Football team merchandise in the near future.	Hess et al. (2003)
I expect to purchase FSU Football team merchandise in the near future.	Hess et al. (2003)
I will purchase FSU Football team merchandise in the near future.	Tsiotsou and Alexandris (2009)
I am determined to purchase FSU Football team merchandise in the near future.	New

Table 3.13
Measures of Word of Mouth Intentions

Word of Mouth Intentions Items	Author(s)
I plan to recommend the FSU Football team's games to friends.	Hedlund (2010)
It is likely I will recommend the FSU Football team's games to friends.	Hess et al. (2003)
I expect to recommend the FSU Football team's games to friends.	Hess et al. (2003)
I will recommend the FSU Football team's games to friends.	Tsiotsou and Alexandris (2009)
I am determined to recommend the FSU Football team's games to friends.	New

Summary

In this chapter, the methodology that is used to conduct this research is discussed. The research procedures, including information about causation, reliability, and validity evidence, are discussed. A detailed description of the research design that is based on Churchill's (1979) eight-step procedure is provided. Finally, information about the sampling, data collection, and instrumentation are also discussed, including the fifty-eight proposed items that are used to measure the ten latent constructs. In the next chapter, the results of the pilot study are discussed.

CHAPTER 4
PILOT STUDY

Introduction

The purpose of this research is to generate a model of the antecedents and consequences of consumer participation in a sport brand community, develop an instrument to measure the model, and empirically test the model. Chapters 1 and 2 detail information about why and how the model is generated, while Chapter 3 provides information and a step-by-step procedural outline for the development of the instrument and the empirical testing of the model. In Chapter 3, Churchill's (1979) eight-step procedure as it applies to this research is described in detail. In this chapter, the results of content analysis (Step 2), and the pilot study (Steps 3 and 4) are reported.

Results of the Content Analysis

As briefly introduced in Chapter 3, Step 2 of Churchill's (1979) eight-step procedure includes a literature, measurement scale, and item review by the researcher, and a content analysis of the sample items by experts. Based on the review of the literature, relevant scales, and items, one hundred twenty-four items were generated. Due to the large number of items, a three-stage ad hoc process was utilized to conduct a content analysis of the items. First, two marketing and consumer behavior academics (hereafter referred to as "coders") were provided with the definition of the ten latent constructs and a list of the items. The coders were asked to independently rate each item on a 5-point Likert-type scale anchored by "The item measures the construct well" and "The item does not measure the construct well". In addition, two comment sections were included for each respective item and the construct as a whole. For the first stage, the level of agreement between the two coders was 56.5% (70 out of 124). In addition, 50.0% (35 out of 70) of the ratings were classified in the "Neutral" to "The item does not measure the construct well" range, while 50.0% (35 out of 70) were classified in "The item measures the construct well" range. Due to the poor initial ratings for the items and the large number of comments, the two coders and the researcher completed an in-depth analysis of all of the items, identified problematic items, and proposed improved items and wording.

In the second stage, the researcher updated the list of items, and a list of seventy-five items was generated. Two expert research methodologists who were familiar with the research

topic were asked to provide feedback on all of the items. The methodologists provided feedback on the wording and content of all of the items. The goal of the second stage was to ensure that the items were understandable to lay-persons, and that the items did not include confusing word choice or jargon-like content. In addition, the methodologists provided suggestions for new items in addition to comments on the wording and content of all of the items. Due to the fact that the methodologists were utilized primarily for their expertise in item design, no items were deleted.

In the final stage, the original two coders were provided with the same type of rating and comment sheet as was provided in the first stage for all seventy-five items. The level of agreement between the two coders was 82.6% (62 out of 75). Differences were reconciled through a discussion among the two coders and the researcher. The comments and feedback from the two methodologists were also included in the discussion. The highest rated items were chosen for each of the ten constructs. As a result of the three-stage process, fifty-eight items for the ten constructs were chosen and used in the pilot study.

Results of the Pilot Study

Data for the pilot study was collected from current students (undergraduate and graduate) and former students (e.g., alumni) from a large southeastern university. An electronic version of the survey was created using Survey Monkey (www.SurveyMonkey.com), and an internet link to the survey was created and emailed to potential participants. Current students for this study were solicited by emails that were sent from the author of the study either directly to students or from the author to a course instructor who then forwarded the email to his/her students. The email contained information mandated by the Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A) of the university and the link to the survey. Former students and alumni of the university were solicited by two advertisements placed on Facebook (www.Facebook.com). The advertisements (see Appendix B) were placed on individuals' pages who indicated that they had attended or graduated from the university and who "liked" the university's football team.

Description of Sample

Data was collected over a three-week period. One hundred fifty-three individuals started the online survey. Yet, when an individual did not respond to all of the "primary" questions, all of their responses were removed from the analysis. As a result, one hundred thirteen responses were deemed usable (73.9%). The average age of the participants was 35.9 years old (SD=15.6).

In terms of the gender of the participants, 62.5% of the participants were male, and 28.3% were married. In terms of the racial composition of the participants, 83.0% were Caucasian, 9.0% were African-American, 4.4% were Hispanic, 1.8% were Asian, and 1.8% were classified as "other" or "mixed" race. In terms of their current educational status, 38.1% of the participants indicated they were currently a student. As for the geographical dispersion of the participants, 29.2% indicated that they were a full-time resident of the city that the university is located in, while 21.2% were part-time residents, and 49.6% were not residents. In addition, 46.9% of the participants indicated that they lived within 25 miles of the university, while 3.5% lived 25-99 miles away, 31.9% lived 100-499 miles away, 9.7% lived 500-999 miles away, and 8.0% lived more than 1000 miles away. In terms of the consumption of the sport product, 56.6% of all of the participants traveled to one or more away games. Further, 36.6% of the participants were members of the student or alumni booster organization for the athletic department at the university. Finally, 90.2% of the participants agreed that they are "die-hard" fans of the team, while 92.9% agreed that they would be a "lifetime" fan of the team.

Descriptive and Psychometric Statistics for the Pilot Study

In order to assess the psychometric properties of the items and constructs, basic statistical tests (mean scores of the items (MEAN) and standard deviations for the mean scores (SD)) were calculated. In addition, the reliability and internal consistency of the items were calculated through an examination of the item-to-total correlations (ITT), Cronbach's alpha (α) coefficient, and the alpha (α) if deleted calculation. Further evidence of the psychometric properties of the items that measure each construct was produced by an examination of the inter-item correlations.

In terms of evaluating the ITT values and the inter-item correlations, a higher value (e.g., close to 1.000) provided evidence that the item measures the construct in a consistent way in comparison with the remaining items. When examining Cronbach's alpha coefficient, a higher value (e.g., close to 1.000) was also desired. A Cronbach's alpha coefficient value above .700 is generally desired because higher values indicate that the items measure the construct in a reliable manner (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). In addition, a higher Cronbach's alpha coefficient indicates that a large portion of variance in the scale is attributable to the latent construct (Cortina, 1993). In the case of this research, because items were specifically generated for use in this context, none of the combined items that measure an individual construct were validated in previous research. As such, this study represents the first time that the items are used in concert

to measure each construct. Therefore, the purpose of analyzing the pilot study data was to provide evidence that the items in concert measure each construct in a reliable and consistent way. Problematic items are identified and recommendations are proposed for the problematic items. In addition, if all or many of the items are problematic, then new items are proposed.

Brand Knowledge

Brand knowledge was measured by five items. The first three items were used in previous research, while the final two items were new operationalizations of brand knowledge. Table 4.1 displays the psychometric properties found for the five brand knowledge items. The item-to-total correlations indicated the first and second items had slightly lower correlations with the total score than the remaining three items. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was above .700. In addition, the inclusion of the second item was expected to decrease Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

Table 4.2 shows the correlations found among the brand knowledge items. The correlation evidence indicated that all of the items measure brand knowledge in a consistent way. Based on the results, there is evidence that the five items measured brand knowledge in a reliable and consistent manner. As a result, all of the brand knowledge items from the pilot study will be used in the main study.

Table 4.1
Properties of the Brand Knowledge Items and Construct

LABEL	ITEM	MEAN	SD	ITT	α / α if deleted
					α = 0.978
KNO1	I know a great deal of information about the FSU Football team.	7.681	2.515	0.910	0.976
KNO2	I believe that I am knowledgeable about the FSU Football team.	8.124	2.284	0.873	0.981
KNO3	When it comes to the FSU Football team, I know a lot.	7.823	2.660	0.959	0.968
KNO4	I know a lot of information about the FSU Football team.	7.761	2.740	0.969	0.967
KNO5	I have a lot of knowledge about the FSU Football team	7.805	2.639	0.967	0.967

Table 4.2
Correlations Among the Brand Knowledge Items

	KNO1	KNO2	KNO3	KNO4	KNO5
KNO1	1.000				
KNO2	0.809	1.000			
KNO3	0.904	0.846	1.000		
KNO4	0.911	0.854	0.961	1.000	
KNO5	0.884	0.889	0.949	0.966	1.000

Brand Satisfaction

Brand satisfaction was measured by five items. All of the items were utilized in one of two previous research studies. Table 4.3 displays the psychometric properties found for the five brand satisfaction items. The item-to-total correlations indicated that the first and second items were lower than the remaining items. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was above .700. The deletion of any of the items was not expected to increase the Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

Table 4.4 displays the correlations found among the brand satisfaction items. The correlation evidence indicated that the first and second items did not measure brand satisfaction as consistently as the remaining three items. Based on the results, there is evidence that the five items measured brand satisfaction in a reliable and consistent manner. As a result, all of the brand satisfaction items from the pilot study will be used in the main study

Table 4.3
Properties of the Brand Satisfaction Items and Construct

LABEL	ITEM	MEAN	SD	ITT	α / α if deleted
					α = 0.936
SAT1	Overall, my expectations of the FSU Football team are satisfied.	8.142	1.908	0.774	0.925
SAT2	I am satisfied with the FSU Football team.	8.062	1.915	0.761	0.928
SAT3	The FSU Football team satisfies me.	7.903	2.307	0.828	0.919
SAT4	I am happy with the FSU Football team.	8.478	1.727	0.867	0.910
SAT5	I am pleased with the FSU Football team.	8.434	1.856	0.910	0.901

Table 4.4
Correlations Among the Brand Satisfaction Items

	SAT1	SAT2	SAT3	SAT4	SAT5
SAT1	1.000				
SAT2	0.648	1.000			
SAT3	0.681	0.693	1.000		
SAT4	0.730	0.693	0.785	1.000	
SAT5	0.767	0.744	0.821	0.885	1.000

Brand Identification

Brand identification was measured by six items. The first four items for this scale were taken from three different studies, and the last two items were new operationalizations for this research. Table 4.5 displays the psychometric properties found for the six brand identification items. The item-to-total correlations indicated that the third, fourth, and sixth items had lower correlations with the total score than the remaining three items. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was above .700, and the removal of any items was not expected to increase Cronbach's alpha.

Table 4.6 shows the correlations found among the brand identification items. The correlation evidence provided evidence of some measurement similarities and consistency between at least four items (first, second, third, and fifth). Overall, the evidence indicates that the six items measured brand identification in a reliable and consistent manner. As a result, all of the brand identification items from the pilot study will be used in the main study.

Table 4.5
Properties of the Brand Identification Items and Construct

LABEL	ITEM	MEAN	SD	ITT	α / α if deleted
					α = 0.950
ID1	The FSU Football team says a lot about the kind of person I am.	5.681	3.442	0.910	0.933
ID2	The FSU Football team connects with the part of me that really makes me who I am.	6.319	3.188	0.874	0.937
ID3	The FSU Football team says a lot about the kind of person I am.	5.602	3.353	0.830	0.943
ID4	I identify with the FSU Football team.	8.027	2.634	0.775	0.949
ID5	The FSU Football team reflects the kind of person I am.	5.956	3.326	0.901	0.934
ID6	The FSU Football team and I have a lot in common.	6.434	3.204	0.799	0.946

Table 4.6
Correlations Among the Brand Identification Items

	ID1	ID2	ID3	ID4	ID5	ID6
ID1	1.000					
ID2	0.822	1.000				
ID3	0.841	0.756	1.000			
ID4	0.683	0.721	0.647	1.000		
ID5	0.928	0.811	0.847	0.719	1.000	
ID6	0.751	0.798	0.639	0.768	0.693	1.000

While the evidence supported the notion that the six items measured brand identification in a reliable and consistent manner, the mean score for the fourth item was perplexing. Based on the theory that was discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, it is possible that the fourth item was the best measurement for this construct, and the remaining five items failed to capture the same idea. It is also possible that the differences in wording might have caused some of the large mean score differences. The fourth item began with "I", while the remaining five items began with "The FSU Football team". Therefore, the wording of the five similar items were a possible cause of the mean score differences. The recommended solution for this issue is to create and use new items to measure this construct. As such, four items modified from Mael and Ashforth's (1992) study of organizational identification are identified for testing (When someone criticizes the FSU Football team, it feels like a personal insult, When someone praises the FSU Football team, it feels like a personal compliment, When I talk about the FSU Football team, I usually say "we" rather than "they", I feel like the FSU Football team's successes are my successes). In the analysis of the results of the main study, the brand identification items can be examined to ascertain whether the mean scores for the brand identification items were truly lower, or whether the items that were used to measure the construct were poorly conceptualized, poorly worded, or both. As such, all of the current items will be retained, and the four new items will also be tested in the main study.

Sense of Community: Membership

Membership was measured by five items. All of these items were new operationalizations of the membership construct. Table 4.7 displays the psychometric properties found for the five membership items. The item-to-total correlations indicated the third and fourth items correlate to

a smaller degree with the total score for the construct. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was above .700. In addition, the removal of the fourth item was expected to increase the Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

Table 4.8 shows the correlations among the membership items. The correlation evidence indicated that all of the items measure membership in a consistent way. Based on the results, there is evidence that the five items measured membership in a reliable and consistent manner. As a result, all of the membership items from the pilot study will be used in the main study.

Table 4.7
Properties of the Membership Items and Construct

LABEL	ITEM	MEAN	SD	ITT	α / α if deleted
					α = 0.960
MEM1	I belong to the FSU Football team's fan community.	7.920	2.626	0.924	0.944
MEM2	I consider myself a member of the FSU Football team's fan community.	8.168	2.618	0.929	0.943
MEM3	I am a part of the FSU Football team's fan community.	8.372	2.468	0.865	0.954
MEM4	I am connected to the FSU Football team's fan community.	7.460	2.716	0.808	0.963
MEM5	I am a member of the FSU Football team's fan community.	8.009	2.681	0.911	0.946

Table 4.8
Correlations Among the Membership Items

	MEM1	MEM2	MEM3	MEM4	MEM5
MEM1	1.000				
MEM2	0.889	1.000			
MEM3	0.812	0.874	1.000		
MEM4	0.793	0.790	0.736	1.000	
MEM5	0.925	0.886	0.823	0.750	1.000

Sense of Community: Geographic Sense of Community

Geographic sense of community was measured by six items. The first three items were used in previous research, while the last three items represented new operationalizations of geographic sense of community for this research. Table 4.9 displays the psychometric properties found for the six geographic sense of community items. The item-to-total correlations showed

that the first, second and sixth items were lower than the remaining three items. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was above .700, however, the deletion of any of the items was not expected to increase Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

Table 4.10 displays the correlations found among the geographic sense of community items. These correlations provided evidence that the third, fourth and fifth items measured geographic sense of community consistently, however overall, all of the items measure geographic sense of community in a fairly consistent way. Based on the results, there is evidence that the six items measured geographic sense of community in a reliable and consistent manner. As a result, all of the geographic sense of community items from the pilot study will be used in the main study.

Table 4.9
Properties of the Geographic Sense of Community Items and Construct

LABEL	ITEM	MEAN	SD	ITT	α / α if deleted
					α = 0.933
GEO1	I feel ties to Tallahassee.	8.310	2.232	0.736	0.925
GEO2	Tallahassee reflects who I am.	6.088	3.184	0.759	0.925
GEO3	I feel like I belong in Tallahassee.	7.150	2.813	0.849	0.909
GEO4	I feel connected to Tallahassee.	7.708	2.524	0.884	0.906
GEO5	I like Tallahassee.	8.212	2.440	0.829	0.913
GEO6	There is no place like Tallahassee.	7.434	2.774	0.756	0.922

Table 4.10
Correlations Among the Geographic Sense of Community Items

	GEO1	GEO2	GEO3	GEO4	GEO5	GEO6
GEO1	1.000					
GEO2	0.593	1.000				
GEO3	0.639	0.717	1.000			
GEO4	0.709	0.736	0.826	1.000		
GEO5	0.671	0.661	0.812	0.795	1.000	
GEO6	0.647	0.625	0.672	0.726	0.663	1.000

Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty was measured by seven items. The first item was utilized in previous research, while the remaining six items were new operationalizations for this research. Table 4.11 displays the psychometric properties found for the seven brand loyalty items. The item-to-

total correlations indicated that the first, second, and seventh values were the lower than the remaining four items. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was above .700. In addition, the removal of the second item was expected to increase Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

Table 4.12 displays the correlations for the brand loyalty items. The correlation evidence indicated that the first, second, and seventh items had slightly lower correlations compared to the remaining four items. Based on the overall results, however, there is evidence that the seven items measured brand loyalty in a reliable and consistent manner. As a result, all of the brand loyalty items from the pilot study will be used in the main study.

Table 4.11
Properties of the Brand Loyalty Items and Construct

LABEL	ITEM	MEAN	SD	ITT	α / α if deleted
					α = 0.969
LOY1	I am loyal to the FSU Football team.	8.947	2.158	0.844	0.966
LOY2	I am attached to the FSU Football team.	8.000	2.800	0.797	0.970
LOY3	I am committed to the FSU Football team.	8.487	2.493	0.904	0.961
LOY4	I am devoted to the FSU Football team.	8.407	2.611	0.942	0.958
LOY5	I am dedicated to the FSU Football team.	8.416	2.635	0.944	0.958
LOY6	I am faithful to the FSU Football team.	8.611	2.562	0.946	0.958
LOY7	I am steadfast toward the FSU Football team.	8.664	2.111	0.837	0.966

Table 4.12
Correlations Among the Brand Loyalty Items

	LOY1	LOY2	LOY3	LOY4	LOY5	LOY6	LOY7
LOY1	1.000						
LOY2	0.703	1.000					
LOY3	0.771	0.750	1.000				
LOY4	0.806	0.776	0.880	1.000			
LOY5	0.762	0.795	0.900	0.951	1.000		
LOY6	0.841	0.753	0.904	0.931	0.944	1.000	
LOY7	0.825	0.681	0.766	0.808	0.794	0.801	1.000

Brand Image

Brand image was measured by nine semantic differential items. All of the items were adapted from previous research. Table 4.13 displays the psychometric properties found for the nine brand image items. The item-to-total correlations indicated that first, sixth, and ninth items correlated the lowest with the total score. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was above .700.

Moreover, the deletion of the sixth item was expected to increase the Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

Table 4.14 displays the correlations for the brand image items. The correlations for the sixth item were the lowest among all of the items, however, there was evidence that the remaining eight items all measured brand image in a consistent way. Based on the overall results, there is evidence that the nine items measured brand image in a reliable and consistent manner. As a result, all of the brand image items from the pilot study will be used in the main study.

Table 4.13
Properties of the Brand Image Items and Construct

LABEL	ITEM	MEAN	SD	ITT	α / α if deleted
	Please rate your impression of the image of the FSU Football team on the following scale:				α = 0.978
IMA1	Good / Bad	8.726	1.345	0.860	0.975
IMA2	High Quality / Low Quality	8.646	1.603	0.906	0.973
IMA3	Favorable / Unfavorable	8.681	1.525	0.951	0.971
IMA4	Likable / Not Likable	8.735	1.524	0.914	0.973
IMA5	Positive / Negative	8.699	1.552	0.943	0.971
IMA6	Unique / Not Unique	8.283	1.998	0.784	0.980
IMA7	Superior / Inferior	8.513	1.643	0.936	0.972
IMA8	Appealing / Unappealing	8.717	1.719	0.930	0.972
IMA9	Impressive/ Not Impressive	8.602	1.573	0.894	0.973

Table 4.14
Correlations Among the Brand Image Items

	IMA1	IMA2	IMA3	IMA4	IMA5	IMA6	IMA7	IMA8	IMA9
IMA1	1.000								
IMA2	0.841	1.000							
IMA3	0.867	0.907	1.000						
IMA4	0.814	0.882	0.878	1.000					
IMA5	0.829	0.890	0.925	0.910	1.000				
IMA6	0.681	0.681	0.789	0.673	0.756	1.000			
IMA7	0.816	0.846	0.886	0.865	0.888	0.807	1.000		
IMA8	0.808	0.871	0.878	0.919	0.895	0.752	0.887	1.000	
IMA9	0.750	0.808	0.873	0.835	0.861	0.738	0.895	0.853	1.000

Attendance Intentions

The attendance intentions construct was measured by five items. The first four items were utilized in previous research, while the fifth item represented a new operationalization of

attendance intentions for this research. Table 4.15 displays the psychometric properties found for the five attendance intentions items. The item-to-total correlations indicated the five items had similar correlations with the total score. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was above .700. In addition, the removal of the first item was not expected to change the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, while the removal of the second item was expected to increase the Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

Table 4.16 shows the correlations found among the attendance intentions items. The correlation evidence indicated that all of the items measure attendance intentions in a consistent way. Based on the overall results, there is evidence that the five items measured attendance intentions in a reliable and consistent manner. As a result, all of the attendance intentions items from the pilot study will be used in the main study.

Table 4.15
Properties of the Attendance Intentions Items and Construct

LABEL	ITEM	MEAN	SD	ITT	α / α if deleted
					α = 0.989
ATT1	I plan to attend FSU Football games in the near future.	8.301	2.915	0.949	0.989
ATT2	It is likely I will attend FSU Football games in the near future.	8.088	3.028	0.937	0.991
ATT3	I expect to attend FSU Football games in the near future.	8.124	3.039	0.988	0.984
ATT4	I will attend FSU Football games in the near future.	8.044	3.104	0.982	0.985
ATT5	I am determined to attend FSU Football games in the near future.	8.053	3.035	0.983	0.984

Table 4.16
Correlations Among the Attendance Intentions Items

	ATT1	ATT2	ATT3	ATT4	ATT5
ATT1	1.000				
ATT2	0.906	1.000			
ATT3	0.959	0.928	1.000		
ATT4	0.930	0.937	0.985	1.000	
ATT5	0.942	0.925	0.988	0.987	1.000

Purchase Intentions

The purchase intentions construct was measured by five items. The first four items were utilized in previous research, while the fifth item represented a new operationalization of purchase intentions for this research. Table 4.17 displays the psychometric properties found for the five purchase intentions items. The item-to-total correlations indicated the first item had a slightly lower correlation with the total score than the remaining four items. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was above .700. Moreover, the removal of the first item was expected to increase the Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

Table 4.18 shows the correlations found among the purchase intentions items. The correlation evidence indicated that all of the items measure purchase intentions in a consistent way. Based on the overall results, there is evidence that the five items measured purchase intentions in a reliable and consistent manner. As a result, all of the purchase intentions items from the pilot study will be used in the main study.

Table 4.17
Properties of the Purchase Intentions Items and Construct

LABEL	ITEM	MEAN	SD	ITT	α / α if deleted
					α = 0.985
PUR1	I plan to purchase FSU Football team merchandise in the near future.	8.115	2.583	0.917	0.987
PUR2	It is likely I will purchase FSU Football team merchandise in the near future.	8.283	2.600	0.962	0.981
PUR3	I expect to purchase FSU Football team merchandise in the near future.	8.142	2.728	0.975	0.979
PUR4	I will purchase FSU Football team merchandise in the near future.	8.168	2.809	0.972	0.979
PUR5	I am determined to purchase FSU Football team merchandise in the near future.	7.965	2.828	0.958	0.981

Table 4.18
Correlations Among the Purchase Intentions Items

	PUR1	PUR2	PUR3	PUR4	PUR5
PUR1	1.000				
PUR2	0.896	1.000			
PUR3	0.914	0.957	1.000		
PUR4	0.899	0.952	0.965	1.000	
PUR5	0.891	0.936	0.947	0.956	1.000

Word of Mouth Intentions

The word of mouth intentions construct was measured by five items. The first four items were utilized in previous research, while the fifth item represented a new operationalization of word of mouth intentions for this research. Table 4.19 displays the psychometric properties found for the five word of mouth intentions items. The item-to-total correlations indicated that the second item had the lowest correlation with the total score. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was above .700, and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was not expected to increase if any of the items were removed.

Table 4.20 shows the correlations among the word of mouth intentions items. The correlation evidence indicated that all of the items measure word of mouth intentions in a consistent way. Based on the overall results, there is evidence that the five items measured word of mouth intentions in a reliable and consistent manner. As a result, all of the word of mouth intentions items from the pilot study will be used in the main study.

Table 4.19
Properties of the Word of Mouth Intentions Items and Construct

LABEL	ITEM	MEAN	SD	ITT	α / α if deleted
					α = 0.965
WOM1	I plan to recommend the FSU Football team's games to friends.	8.593	2.351	0.880	0.957
WOM2	It is likely I will recommend the FSU Football team's games to friends.	8.699	2.449	0.869	0.958
WOM3	I expect to recommend the FSU Football team's games to friends.	8.637	2.413	0.917	0.950
WOM4	I will recommend the FSU Football team's games to friends.	8.796	2.160	0.933	0.950
WOM5	I am determined to recommend the FSU Football team's games to friends.	8.221	2.734	0.896	0.956

Table 4.20
Correlations Among the Word of Mouth Intentions Items

	WOM1	WOM2	WOM3	WOM4	WOM5
WOM1	1.000				
WOM2	0.769	1.000			
WOM3	0.823	0.862	1.000		
WOM4	0.891	0.854	0.887	1.000	
WOM5	0.845	0.807	0.865	0.857	1.000

Correlations Among Constructs

Table 4.21 displays the correlations among the ten constructs. The purpose behind an examination of the correlations among the latent constructs is to provide evidence of the validity of the constructs. The content analysis (step 2) provided evidence of face validity. An examination of the correlations among constructs provides evidence of discriminant validity. One way to provide evidence of discriminant validity is to demonstrate that measures, or constructs in this case, do not correlate highly with other constructs from which they should differ (Campbell, 1960). High correlation (also called multicollinearity) is generally indicated when correlations between constructs are between .750 and .950 (Grewal, Cote, & Baumgartner, 2004). In an examination of the effect of multicollinearity in structural equation models, Grewal, Cote, and Baumgartner (2004) find that as reliability improves (e.g., greater than .800) and sample size becomes relatively large, the effect of high correlations weakens.

As shown in Table 4.21, eleven of the forty-five construct correlations found are between .750 and .950. The two highest correlations were found between brand loyalty and membership (.896) and brand loyalty and word of mouth intentions (.892). The Cronbach's alpha coefficients of reliability for the pilot study data, however, ranged from .933 to .989. None of these coefficients are below .800. As a result, during the analysis of the main study results, attention will be paid to these relationships, however, no modifications are made to any of the constructs at this point.

Table 4.21
Correlations Among the Constructs

	BKNOW	BSAT	BID	SOCMEM	SOCGEO	BLOY	BIMA	ATTINT	PURINT	WOMINT
BKNOW	1.000									
BSAT	0.689	1.000								
BID	0.672	0.768	1.000							
SOCMEM	0.798	0.815	0.782	1.000						
SOCGEO	0.552	0.432	0.679	0.570	1.000					
BLOY	0.706	0.848	0.760	0.896	0.517	1.000				
BIMA	0.451	0.713	0.638	0.573	0.380	0.720	1.000			
ATTINT	0.635	0.650	0.628	0.730	0.417	0.642	0.550	1.000		
PURINT	0.670	0.651	0.657	0.739	0.468	0.766	0.532	0.656	1.000	
WOMINT	0.660	0.716	0.660	0.839	0.372	0.892	0.645	0.711	0.759	1.000

Note: BKNOW=Brand Knowledge; BSAT=Brand Satisfaction; BID=Brand Identification; SOCMEM=Membership (Sense of Community); SOCGEO=Geographical Sense of Community; BLOY=Brand Loyalty; BIMA=Brand Image; ATTINT=Attendance Intentions; PURINT=Purchase Intentions; WOMINT=Word of Mouth Intentions.

Summary and Final Conclusions from the Pilot Study

At the outset of the pilot study, ten constructs were measured by fifty-eight total items. Based on the analyses of the ten constructs, the item structure for all ten constructs was found to be reliable and internally consistent. It must be noted, however, that while the item structure for the brand identification construct was found to be reliable, a potential issue with the wording and operationalizations of the items was noted. Four new items were proposed to be tested, in addition to the original six items, to ensure that the items that were found to be reliable also validly measure brand identification. As such, four items were adapted from Mael and Ashforth (1992) and are used in the main study. In total, fifty-eight items were analyzed and four items were added. No further recommendations were made based on the results of the pilot study. Table 4.22 displays the sixty-two items that are used in the main study.

Table 4.22
Final Item List Based on the Results of the Pilot Study

LABEL	ITEM
BKNOW1	I know a great deal of information about the FSU Football team.
BKNOW2	I believe that I am knowledgeable about the FSU Football team.
BKNOW3	When it comes to the FSU Football team, I know a lot.
BKNOW4	I know a lot of information about the FSU Football team.
BKNOW5	I have a lot of knowledge about the FSU Football team.
BSAT1	Overall, my expectations of the FSU Football team are satisfied.
BSAT2	I am satisfied with the FSU Football team.
BSAT3	The FSU Football team satisfies me.
BSAT4	I am happy with the FSU Football team.
BSAT5	I am pleased with the FSU Football team
BID1	The FSU Football team says a lot about the kind of person I am.
BID2	The FSU Football team connects with the part of me that really makes me who I am.
BID3	The FSU Football team says a lot about the kind of person I would like to be.
BID4	I identify with the FSU Football team.
BID5	The FSU Football team reflects the kind of person I am.
BID6	The FSU Football team and I have a lot in common.
NEWBID7	When someone criticizes the FSU Football team, it feels like a personal insult.
NEWBID8	When someone praises the FSU Football team, it feels like a personal compliment.
NEWBID9	When I talk about the FSU Football team, I usually say “we” rather than “they”.
NEWBID10	I feel like the FSU Football team’s successes are my successes.
SOCMEM1	I belong to the FSU Football team’s fan community.
SOCMEM2	I consider myself a member of the FSU Football team’s fan community.
SOCMEM3	I am a part of the FSU Football team’s fan community.

Table 4.22 (continued)
Final Item List Based on the Results of the Pilot Study

LABEL	ITEM
SOCMEM4	I am connected to the FSU Football team's fan community.
SOCMEM5	I am a member of the FSU Football team's fan community.
SOCGEO1	I feel ties to Tallahassee.
SOCGEO2	Tallahassee reflects who I am.
SOCGEO3	I feel like I belong in Tallahassee.
SOCGEO4	I feel connected to Tallahassee.
SOCGEO5	I like Tallahassee.
SOCGEO6	There is no place like Tallahassee.
BLOY1	I am loyal to the FSU Football team.
BLOY2	I am attached to the FSU Football team.
BLOY3	I am committed to the FSU Football team.
BLOY4	I am devoted to the FSU Football team.
BLOY5	I am dedicated to the FSU Football team.
BLOY6	I am faithful to the FSU Football team.
BLOY7	I am steadfast toward the FSU Football team.
BIMA1	Good / Bad
BIMA2	High Quality / Low Quality
BIMA3	Favorable / Unfavorable
BIMA4	Likable / Not Likable
BIMA5	Positive / Negative
BIMA6	Unique / Not Unique
BIMA7	Superior / Inferior
BIMA8	Appealing / Unappealing
BIMA9	Impressive/ Not Impressive
ATTINT1	I plan to attend FSU Football games in the near future.
ATTINT2	It is likely I will attend FSU Football games in the near future.
ATTINT3	I expect to attend FSU Football games in the near future.
ATTINT4	I will attend FSU Football games in the near future.
ATTINT5	I am determined to attend FSU Football games in the near future.
PURINT1	I plan to purchase FSU Football team merchandise in the near future.
PURINT2	It is likely I will purchase FSU Football team merchandise in the near future.
PURINT3	I expect to purchase FSU Football team merchandise in the near future.
PURINT4	I will purchase FSU Football team merchandise in the near future.
PURINT5	I am determined to purchase FSU Football team merchandise in the near future.
WOMINT1	I plan to recommend the FSU Football team's games to friends.
WOMINT2	It is likely I will recommend the FSU Football team's games to friends.
WOMINT3	I expect to recommend the FSU Football team's games to friends.
WOMINT4	I will recommend the FSU Football team's games to friends.
WOMINT5	I am determined to recommend the FSU Football team's games to friends.

Note: BKNOW=Brand Knowledge; BSAT=Brand Satisfaction; BID=Brand Identification; NEWBID=New Brand Identification Items; SOCMEM=Membership (Sense of Community); SOCGEO=Geographical Sense of Community; BLOY=Brand Loyalty; BIMA=Brand Image; ATTINT=Attendance Intentions; PURINT=Purchase Intentions; WOMINT=Word of Mouth Intentions.

CHAPTER 5
MAIN STUDY

Introduction

In Chapter 3, the methods used in this research are detailed, and Churchill's (1979) eight-step process for creating better marketing measures is outlined. In Chapter 2, step 1 (engaging in a literature review) is completed. In Chapter 3, step 2 (generating a sample of items) is done. In Chapter 4, steps 3 and 4 (collecting pilot study data and assessing the items used in the pilot study) are reported. In this chapter, the results of steps 5, 6, 7, and 8 are reported.

Results of the Main Study

Based on the results reported in Chapter 4, sixty-two items were used in the main study. A process similar to the pilot study was used to collect data for the main study. Data for the main study was collected from current (undergraduate and graduate) and former students (e.g., alumni) from a large southeastern university. An electronic (e.g., online) version of the survey was created using Survey Monkey (www.SurveyMonkey.com), and an internet link to the survey was created. The online survey had items for each construct spread throughout the entire survey. Moreover, the online survey was programmed to rotate questions, so throughout the survey, questions for each construct were randomly distributed and rotated. The internet link for the main study was distributed through email, social media (Facebook and LinkedIn), and through five advertisements that were placed on Facebook (see Appendix C).

Description of Sample

Data was collected over a five-week period. Seven hundred eighty-three individuals started the online survey. Similar to the pilot study, if an individual did not answer 100% of the "primary" questions, all of their responses were removed from the analysis (see Alison, 2003). Using this standard, one hundred forty-nine partially completed surveys were discarded. As a result, six hundred thirty-four responses were subjected to further analysis. In the online survey, nine marker variables were also used to assess common method variance (e.g., common method bias) and identify potential outliers (e.g., individuals who did not truthfully complete the survey). Common method variance is "variance that is attributable to the measurement method rather than to the constructs the measures represent" (Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003, p. 879). The marker variables asked about which team was the best college football team in the

nation. One marker variable item asked about the university under investigation in this research, and the remaining eight items asked about (1) the most bitter rivals of the team under investigation, (2) teams that had recently been the subject of NCAA invesitagations, or (3) teams that had recently or frequently defeated the team under investigation. Similar to the online survey programming listed above, the marker variables were also randomly distributed and rotated throughout the survey to ensure that any potential issues with order bias were alleviated.

In the context of this research, common method variance was utilized for several reasons. First, the survey was conducted online, so individuals used their mouse to click a response to each item. The survey contained approximately one hundred questions, so individuals may have become fatigued, stopped reading, and simply clicked any response. Second, individuals were offered an incentive to participate in this research. As such, an individual may have simply answered all of the questions with the same response in order to finish the survey as fast as possible as their interest in taking the survey was only to receive the incentive.

As a result, detailed analysis was undertaken of all survey respondents based on their responses to the marker variable items. Two unusual "outlier-type" patterns were noted. First, three individuals responded to every question, including the marker variable items, in the same way (e.g., all of the responses were "Strongly Agree" or "Strongly Disagree"). Second, four individuals engaged in a random clicking type of response pattern. These four individuals were first identified based on unusual responses to the marker variable items. Further examination of all of their responses indicated that they appeared to switch between either two ("Strongly Agree" or "Strongly Disagree") or three ("Strongly Agree", "Neutral", or "Strongly Disagree") responses. As a result, seven completed surveys were discarded due to a concern about the truthfulness of the responses. Due to the removal of these seven responses, six hundred twenty-seven responses were deemed usable (80.1%).

The average age of the participants was 38.1 years old (SD=17.8). In terms of the gender of the participants, 56.1% of the participants were male, and 36.5% were married. In terms of the racial composition of the participants, 82.5% were Caucasian, 4.8% were African-American, 6.6% were Hispanic, 1.6% were Asian, and 4.5% were classified as "other" or "mixed" race. In terms of their current educational status, 23.7% of the participants indicated they were currently a student. As for the geographical dispersion of the participants, 30.8% indicated that they were a full-time resident of the city where the university is located, while 14.0% were part-time

residents, and 55.2% were not residents. In addition, for those individuals who were not a resident of the city where the university is located, 3.1% of the participants indicated that they lived within 25 miles of the university, while 3.6% lived 25-99 miles away, 63.6% lived 100-499 miles away, 15.8% lived 500-999 miles away, and 13.9% lived more than 1000 miles away. In terms of the consumption of the sport product for individuals who were not a resident of the city where the university is located, 78.7% of all of the participants traveled to "home" games and 53.7% traveled to one or more "away" games. Further, 51.3% of the participants were members of the university's student or alumni booster organizations. Finally, 90.0% of the participants agreed that they were "die-hard" fans of the team, while 93.6% agreed that they would be a "lifetime" fan of the team.

Data Preparation

Before the data analysis began, the data was split into two subsamples. As discussed in Chapter 3, splitting the sample into two subsamples allows the researcher to first conduct CFA procedures (e.g., the measurement model) on one subsample to calibrate the measurement tool, and then, the measurement tool is validated with the second subsample through testing of the structural model with SEM procedures (Mueller & Hancock, 2001). In order to ensure that the data was split into two similar subsamples, the nine marker variables were rank ordered from highest to lowest. Then, an odd-even split was undertaken. Table 5.1 displays the descriptive statistics for the two subsamples as well as the complete sample for all sixty-two items. The results indicated that the two subsamples were similar in terms of their means and standard deviations (SD).

Table 5.1
Descriptive Statistics Comparisons Among Samples

		Subsample 1 (n=314)		Subsample 2 (n=313)		Full Sample (n=627)	
Label	Item	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
BKNOW1	I know a great deal of information about the FSU Football team.	7.873	2.328	8.058	2.230	7.965	2.280
BKNOW2	I believe that I am knowledgeable about the FSU Football team.	7.930	2.448	8.262	2.105	8.096	2.288
BKNOW3	When it comes to the FSU Football team, I know a lot.	7.701	2.540	7.911	2.292	7.805	2.420

Table 5.1 (continued)
Descriptive Statistics Comparisons Among Samples

		Subsample 1 (n=314)		Subsample 2 (n=313)		Full Sample (n=627)	
Label	Item	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
BKNOW4	I know a lot of information about the FSU Football team.	7.717	2.605	7.962	2.288	7.839	2.453
BKNOW5	I have a lot of knowledge about the FSU Football team.	7.739	2.555	7.987	2.281	7.863	2.423
BSAT1	Overall, my expectations of the FSU Football team are satisfied.	8.019	1.964	7.997	1.994	8.008	1.978
BSAT2	I am satisfied with the FSU Football team.	8.194	1.826	8.201	1.886	8.198	1.855
BSAT3	The FSU Football team satisfies me.	7.889	2.210	7.879	2.214	7.884	2.210
BSAT4	I am happy with the FSU Football team.	8.497	1.732	8.450	1.755	8.474	1.742
BSAT5	I am pleased with the FSU Football team	8.385	1.835	8.383	1.776	8.384	1.804
BID1	The FSU Football team says a lot about the kind of person I am.	6.264	3.073	6.204	3.018	6.234	3.043
BID2	The FSU Football team connects with the part of me that really makes me who I am.	6.325	3.124	6.470	2.989	6.397	3.056
BID3	The FSU Football team says a lot about the kind of person I would like to be.	6.118	3.076	6.022	3.165	6.070	3.118
BID4	I identify with the FSU Football team.	7.987	2.455	8.048	2.402	8.018	2.427
BID5	The FSU Football team reflects the kind of person I am.	6.274	3.072	6.227	3.126	6.250	3.097
BID6	The FSU Football team and I have a lot in common.	6.720	2.751	6.754	2.779	6.737	2.763
NEWBID7	When someone criticizes the FSU Football team, it feels like a personal insult.	7.169	3.074	7.329	2.915	7.249	2.994
NEWBID8	When someone praises the FSU Football team, it feels like a personal compliment.	7.303	3.001	7.502	2.687	7.402	2.848
NEWBID9	When I talk about the FSU Football team, I usually say “we” rather than “they”.	8.274	2.806	8.348	2.544	8.311	2.676
NEWBID10	I feel like the FSU Football team’s successes are my successes.	6.968	3.026	7.067	2.911	7.018	2.967
SOCMEM1	I belong to the FSU Football team’s fan community.	8.561	2.537	8.530	2.320	8.545	2.430

Table 5.1 (continued)
Descriptive Statistics Comparisons Among Samples

		Subsample 1 (n=314)		Subsample 2 (n=313)		Full Sample (n=627)	
Label	Item	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
SOCMEM2	I consider myself a member of the FSU Football team's fan community.	8.732	2.297	8.741	2.112	8.737	2.205
SOCMEM3	I am a part of the FSU Football team's fan community.	8.455	2.410	8.546	2.220	8.501	2.316
SOCMEM4	I am connected to the FSU Football team's fan community.	8.115	2.524	8.147	2.391	8.131	2.456
SOCMEM5	I am a member of the FSU Football team's fan community.	8.484	2.450	8.476	2.327	8.480	2.388
SOCGEO1	I feel ties to Tallahassee.	9.022	1.792	8.930	1.691	8.976	1.742
SOCGEO2	Tallahassee reflects who I am.	6.774	2.612	6.383	2.875	6.579	2.751
SOCGEO3	I feel like I belong in Tallahassee.	7.229	2.810	6.885	3.033	7.057	2.926
SOCGEO4	I feel connected to Tallahassee.	7.927	2.367	7.597	2.645	7.762	2.513
SOCGEO5	I like Tallahassee.	8.742	1.956	8.351	2.277	8.547	2.130
SOCGEO6	There is no place like Tallahassee.	7.424	2.817	7.262	2.808	7.343	2.812
BLOY1	I am loyal to the FSU Football team.	9.188	1.771	9.179	1.698	9.183	1.734
BLOY2	I am attached to the FSU Football team.	8.347	2.421	8.489	2.287	8.418	2.355
BLOY3	I am committed to the FSU Football team.	8.678	2.287	8.639	2.209	8.659	2.246
BLOY4	I am devoted to the FSU Football team.	8.535	2.375	8.649	2.237	8.592	2.306
BLOY5	I am dedicated to the FSU Football team.	8.465	2.434	8.601	2.198	8.533	2.318
BLOY6	I am faithful to the FSU Football team.	8.806	2.272	8.891	1.910	8.848	2.098
BLOY7	I am steadfast toward the FSU Football team.	8.446	2.422	8.617	2.066	8.531	2.251
BIMA1	Good / Bad	9.118	1.168	9.064	1.239	9.091	1.203
BIMA2	High Quality / Low Quality	9.025	1.236	8.911	1.356	8.968	1.297
BIMA3	Favorable / Unfavorable	9.016	1.285	8.911	1.434	8.963	1.361
BIMA4	Likable / Not Likable	9.013	1.347	8.907	1.472	8.960	1.411
BIMA5	Positive / Negative	9.006	1.304	8.901	1.419	8.954	1.362
BIMA6	Unique / Not Unique	8.834	1.400	8.649	1.660	8.742	1.537
BIMA7	Superior / Inferior	8.860	1.363	8.728	1.465	8.794	1.416
BIMA8	Appealing / Unappealing	9.006	1.389	8.958	1.399	8.982	1.393
BIMA9	Impressive / Not Impressive	8.949	1.367	8.859	1.349	8.904	1.358
ATTINT1	I plan to attend FSU Football games in the near future.	8.831	2.444	8.783	2.395	8.807	2.418
ATTINT2	It is likely I will attend FSU Football games in the near future.	8.780	2.484	8.748	2.446	8.764	2.463

Table 5.1 (continued)
Descriptive Statistics Comparisons Among Samples

		Subsample 1 (n=314)		Subsample 2 (n=313)		Full Sample (n=627)	
Label	Item	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
ATTINT3	I expect to attend FSU Football games in the near future.	8.761	2.492	8.744	2.475	8.753	2.481
ATTINT4	I will attend FSU Football games in the near future.	8.704	2.589	8.722	2.520	8.713	2.552
ATTINT5	I am determined to attend FSU Football games in the near future.	8.627	2.664	8.693	2.493	8.660	2.578
PURINT1	I plan to purchase FSU Football team merchandise in the near future.	8.449	2.621	8.447	2.456	8.448	2.538
PURINT2	It is likely I will purchase FSU Football team merchandise in the near future.	8.465	2.582	8.620	2.322	8.542	2.455
PURINT3	I expect to purchase FSU Football team merchandise in the near future.	8.452	2.694	8.601	2.342	8.526	2.523
PURINT4	I will purchase FSU Football team merchandise in the near future.	8.490	2.602	8.597	2.384	8.544	2.494
PURINT5	I am determined to purchase FSU Football team merchandise in the near future.	8.299	2.691	8.415	2.483	8.357	2.588
WOMINT1	I plan to recommend the FSU Football team's games to friends.	9.067	1.796	9.019	1.923	9.043	1.859
WOMINT2	It is likely I will recommend the FSU Football team's games to friends.	9.064	1.741	8.949	1.933	9.006	1.839
WOMINT3	I expect to recommend the FSU Football team's games to friends.	8.847	2.018	8.754	2.032	8.801	2.024
WOMINT4	I will recommend the FSU Football team's games to friends.	8.955	1.933	8.840	1.910	8.898	1.921
WOMINT5	I am determined to recommend the FSU Football team's games to friends.	8.465	2.347	8.409	2.361	8.437	2.352

Note: BKNOW=Brand Knowledge; BSAT=Brand Satisfaction; BID=Brand Identification; NEWBID=New Brand Identification Items; SOCMEM=Membership (Sense of Community); SOCGEO=Geographical Sense of Community; BLOY=Brand Loyalty; BIMA=Brand Image; ATTINT=Attendance Intentions; PURINT=Purchase Intentions; WOMINT=Word of Mouth Intentions.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Measurement Model

The first step in examining the measurement model for subsample 1 was to examine the multivariate normality of the data in order to determine the appropriate estimation method (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). In order to test the assumption of multivariate normality, Mardia's coefficient (see Mardia, 1970) was calculated using PRELIS in LISREL 8.80. Mardia's calculated coefficients of skewness (value = 2516.433, z-score = 202.463, p-value <.001),

kurtosis (value = 6102.597, z-score = 36.914, p-value <.001), and skewness and kurtosis (χ^2 = 42353.893, p-value <.001) indicated that the data had a non-normal distribution. Consequently, a robust estimation method, the maximum likelihood parameter estimates with standard errors and a mean-adjusted chi-squared statistic (MLM), was utilized. MLM, as compared to maximum likelihood (ML), is a more robust estimation method for non-normally distributed data (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2009).

In the next step, the measurement model for the ten latent constructs was specified. The number of items that measured each latent construct ranged from five to ten (see Table 5.2). Due to the fact that the total number of variances and covariances of the latent factors and measurement errors plus the estimated loadings of measurement items on the latent factors was greater than the number of parameters, the model was identified (Kline, 2005).

Following the specification of the model, SPSS 17.0 was used to calculate the item-to-total correlations, while Mplus 5.21 was used to calculate the standardized factor loadings and t-value. The t-value was calculated by dividing the standardized factor loading by its standard error. A t-value above 1.96 indicated that the standardized loading was significant at the p<.05 level. In addition, the construct reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) were calculated. Table 5.2 displays the initial psychometric properties and measurement model results for subsample 1. Table 5.3 shows the initial construct correlations among the ten latent constructs for subsample 1.

Table 5.2
Initial Psychometric Properties and Measurement Model Results for Subsample 1

Construct	Item	Item-to-Total Correlation	Standardized Factor Loading (λ)	t-Value	Construct Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Brand Knowledge					0.986	0.933
	BKNOW1	0.920	0.918	127.078		
	BKNOW2	0.960	0.959	214.940		
	BKNOW3	0.968	0.977	117.832		
	BKNOW4	0.977	0.990	568.146		
	BKNOW5	0.969	0.983	285.671		

Table 5.2 (continued)
Initial Psychometric Properties and Measurement Model Results for Subsample 1

Construct	Item	Item-to-Total Correlation	Standardized Factor Loading (λ)	*t*-Value	Construct Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Brand Satisfaction					0.944	0.773
	BSAT1	0.815	0.827	33.615		
	BSAT2	0.869	0.881	62.545		
	BSAT3	0.760	0.795	41.500		
	BSAT4	0.875	0.924	82.874		
	BSAT5	0.906	0.958	139.165		
Brand Identification					0.956	0.686
	BID1	0.849	0.896	89.963		
	BID2	0.823	0.877	68.124		
	BID3	0.860	0.916	120.087		
	BID4	0.799	0.807	41.999		
	BID5	0.887	0.930	135.538		
	BID6	0.844	0.874	68.292		
	NEWBID7	0.745	0.714	33.756		
	NEWBID8	0.804	0.780	45.357		
	NEWBID9	0.629	0.619	17.419		
	NEWBID10	0.836	0.819	49.878		
Membership (Sense of Community)					0.963	0.840
	SOCMEM1	0.867	0.887	47.248		
	SOCMEM2	0.907	0.929	108.413		
	SOCMEM3	0.923	0.946	131.911		
	SOCMEM4	0.848	0.881	59.771		
	SOCMEM5	0.920	0.937	68.088		
Geographic Sense of Community					0.921	0.663
	SOCGEO1	0.647	0.700	26.018		
	SOCGEO2	0.792	0.832	49.899		
	SOCGEO3	0.820	0.862	55.704		
	SOCGEO4	0.866	0.904	75.678		
	SOCGEO5	0.749	0.782	26.061		
	SOCGEO6	0.757	0.790	34.933		
Brand Loyalty					0.975	0.848
	BLOY1	0.868	0.884	70.377		
	BLOY2	0.800	0.815	35.234		
	BLOY3	0.938	0.949	165.246		
	BLOY4	0.948	0.962	211.705		
	BLOY5	0.928	0.942	140.235		
	BLOY6	0.944	0.962	215.233		
	BLOY7	0.911	0.924	88.284		

Table 5.2 (continued)
Initial Psychometric Properties and Measurement Model Results for Subsample 1

Construct	Item	Item-to-Total Correlation	Standardized Factor Loading (λ)	*t*-Value	Construct Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Brand Image					0.980	0.843
	BIMA1	0.768	0.772	28.963		
	BIMA2	0.932	0.942	103.821		
	BIMA3	0.925	0.932	94.260		
	BIMA4	0.943	0.959	164.912		
	BIMA5	0.955	0.971	215.853		
	BIMA6	0.850	0.856	36.061		
	BIMA7	0.924	0.928	94.633		
	BIMA8	0.924	0.941	111.442		
	BIMA9	0.939	0.946	144.320		
Attendance Intentions					0.988	0.941
	ATTINT1	0.955	0.966	182.036		
	ATTINT2	0.981	0.990	572.719		
	ATTINT3	0.988	0.996	942.953		
	ATTINT4	0.955	0.961	46.041		
	ATTINT5	0.928	0.936	105.167		
Purchase Intentions					0.990	0.951
	PURINT1	0.945	0.950	148.560		
	PURINT2	0.982	0.987	501.249		
	PURINT3	0.966	0.972	153.384		
	PURINT4	0.981	0.990	625.878		
	PURINT5	0.970	0.977	221.977		
Word of Mouth Intentions					0.969	0.863
	WOMINT1	0.887	0.905	67.537		
	WOMINT2	0.919	0.944	141.153		
	WOMINT3	0.927	0.942	118.525		
	WOMINT4	0.938	0.958	190.085		
	WOMINT5	0.874	0.893	68.309		

Note: BKNOW=Brand Knowledge; BSAT=Brand Satisfaction; BID=Brand Identification; NEWBID=New Brand Identification Items; SOCMEM=Membership (Sense of Community); SOCGEO=Geographical Sense of Community; BLOY=Brand Loyalty; BIMA=Brand Image; ATTINT=Attendance Intentions; PURINT=Purchase Intentions; WOMINT=Word of Mouth Intentions.

Table 5.3
Initial Construct Correlations for Subsample 1

	BKNOW	BSAT	BID	SOCMEM	SOCGEO	BLOY	BIMA	ATTINT	PURINT	WOMINT
BKNOW	1.000									
BSAT	0.587	1.000								
BID	0.655	0.651	1.000							
SOCMEM	0.729	0.629	0.697	1.000						
SOCGEO	0.533	0.498	0.669	0.586	1.000					
BLOY	0.726	0.695	0.775	0.871	0.626	1.000				
BIMA	0.547	0.690	0.598	0.582	0.417	0.635	1.000			
ATTINT	0.476	0.402	0.447	0.586	0.329	0.599	0.361	1.000		
PURINT	0.582	0.536	0.631	0.715	0.435	0.783	0.474	0.727	1.000	
WOMINT	0.610	0.591	0.627	0.733	0.499	0.771	0.501	0.729	0.716	1.000

Note: BKNOW=Brand Knowledge; BSAT=Brand Satisfaction; BID=Brand Identification; SOCMEM=Membership (Sense of Community); SOCGEO=Geographical Sense of Community; BLOY=Brand Loyalty; BIMA=Brand Image; ATTINT=Attendance Intentions; PURINT=Purchase Intentions; WOMINT=Word of Mouth Intentions.

In the next step, the initial results for the measurement model were analyzed. As posited by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), the measurement model "specifies the posited relations of the observed variables to the underlying constructs, with the constructs allowed to intercorrelate freely" (p. 414). The purpose of testing the measurement model is to examine the relationships between the items (e.g., the observed variables) and latent constructs. In this research, sixty-two items were measured for ten latent constructs. Each latent construct was measured by five to ten items. Bollen (1989) posits that each latent construct should be measured by at least three to four items. In an effort to reduce the total number of items, the initial results of the measurement model were subjected to a multifaceted analysis that consisted of an examination of:

1. the fit indices (χ^2 value, degrees of freedom (*df*), *p*-value for the χ^2 test, χ^2 value to *df* ratio, comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) which is also known as the non-normed fit index (NNFI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR)) (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Bollen, 1989; Kline, 2005; Thompson, 2008),
2. the standardized loadings (e.g., poor standardized loadings are below 0.707) (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Kline, 2005; Thompson, 2008),
3. the pattern of standardized residual correlation values (e.g., standardized residual correlation values above |1.960| are insignificant at $p < .05$) (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Bollen, 1989; Kline, 2005),
4. the modification indices (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Kline, 2005; Thompson, 2008),
5. and most importantly, the theoretical justification for removing an item (Bollen, 1989; Kline, 2005; Thompson, 2008).

The purpose behind the multifaceted and detailed examination results of the measurement model was first to reduce the total number of items and identify a parsimonious set of three to four items for each construct. Second, because this research was one of the first attempts to empirically examine a hypothesized model of sport brand community, using items that show evidence of reliability and validity provides a starting point for future research.

Results of the Measurement Model for Subsample 1

The fit indices for the measurement model provided evidence that the model had acceptable fit to the data for most of the fit indices (χ^2 value = 3693.790, *df* = 1784, χ^2/*df* ratio = 2.071, *p*-value < .001, CFI = 0.915, TLI = 0.910, RMSEA = 0.058, and SRMR = 0.061). The

significant *p*-value was the only noteworthy issue, however, it is well-documented that the *p*-value is sensitive to large sample sizes (e.g., sample sizes greater than two hundred) (Bollen, 1989; Kline, 2005). Moreover, Bollen (1989) posits that if a model has a large number of observed variables, and if the observed variables have excessive kurtosis, then the *p*-value for the χ^2 value loses some of its usefulness. In this research, sixty-two observed variables were measured, and Mardia's coefficient indicated that the observed variables showed evidence of excessive kurtosis (value = 6102.597, *z*-score = 36.914, *p*-value <.001). While the fit indices showed acceptable fit to the data, improvements to the model were undertaken. As a result, the standardized loadings, the pattern of standardized residual values, the modification indices, and theoretical justifications for the potential removal of any of the sixty-two items were examined.

For the brand knowledge construct, BKNOW1 (I know a great deal of information about the FSU Football team) was removed. The removal of BKNOW1 was theoretically justifiable because BKNOW1 and BKNOW4 (I know a lot of information about the FSU Football team) were quite similar in wording. In addition, the examination of the results indicated that twenty-six out of sixty-one (42.6%) standardized residual correlations for BKNOW1 had values greater than |1.960|. The large number of standardized residual correlations above |1.960| indicated that BKNOW1 was correlated with numerous other items. The removal of BKNOW1 was expected to result in a more parsimonious measurement of brand knowledge.

For the brand satisfaction construct, BSAT1 and BSAT3 were removed. The removal of BSAT1 (Overall, my expectations of the FSU Football team are satisfied) was theoretically justifiable because all of the remaining observed variables used wording that indicated satisfaction-based feelings, while BSAT1 asked about expectations. As discussed in Chapter 2, individuals who have experienced the sport brand differ in terms of expectations from those who have not based on their prior knowledge and experience. The removal of BSAT3 (The FSU Football team satisfies me) is theoretically justifiable because it is quite similar in wording to BSAT2 (I am satisfied with the FSU Football team). In addition, thirty-two out of sixty-one (52.5%) standardized residual correlations for BSAT1 had values greater than |1.960|. The large number of standardized residual correlations above |1.960| indicated that BSAT1 was correlated with numerous other items. In addition, the standardized residual correlations indicated that BSAT1 loaded on the constructs of membership and brand loyalty (total χ^2 value increase of 22.123). An examination of the results indicated that BSAT3 had fifty-seven out of sixty-one

(93.4%) standardized residual correlations greater than |1.960|. The standardized residual correlations indicated that BSAT3 loaded on eight of the nine remaining constructs (total χ^2 value increase of 165.341). The only construct that BSAT3 did not load on was purchase intentions. Overall, the removal of BSAT1 and BSAT3 was expected to result in a more parsimonious measurement of brand satisfaction.

For the brand identification construct, BID3 (The FSU Football team says a lot about the kind of person I would like to be), BID4 (I identify with the FSU Football team), BID6 (The FSU Football team and I have a lot in common), NEWBID7 (When someone criticizes the FSU Football team, it feels like a personal insult), NEWBID8 (When someone praises the FSU Football team, it feels like a personal compliment), and NEWBID9 (When I talk about the FSU Football team, I usually say "we" rather than "they") were removed. In the pilot study, BID4 was identified as a problematic item, while the item-to-item correlations indicated that BID6 also was also potentially problematic. While BID4 seemed to be the most straightforward item (as noted by the high mean score), it is possible that the item was too generic and the meaning of "identify" broadly encompassed too many concepts. As for BID6, it is possible that this item was understood literally, and respondents did not perceive that he/she had many things in common with the "elite" athletes on the team. In terms of BID3, the item asked individuals to respond to a future unknown (e.g., "the person I would like to be), while the remaining items all asked about the individuals' present feelings. Thus, the removal of BID3, BID4, and BID6 were theoretically justifiable.

An examination of the results for BID1-BID6 indicated that thirty-seven out of sixty-one (60.7%) standardized residual correlations for BID3, fifty-two out of sixty-one (85.2%) standardized residual correlations for BID4, and seventeen out of sixty-one (27.9%) standardized residual correlations for BID6 had values greater than |1.960|. The large number of standardized residual correlations above |1.960| indicated that BID3 was correlated with numerous other items and loaded on the constructs of membership and brand loyalty (total χ^2 value increase of 35.080). The standardized residual correlations indicated that BID4 loaded on the constructs of brand knowledge, brand satisfaction, membership, brand loyalty, brand image, purchase intentions, and word of mouth intentions (total χ^2 value increase of 220.184). Finally, the standardized residual correlations indicated that BID6 loaded on the construct of membership

(χ^2 value increase of 11.816). The removal of BID3, BID4 and BID6 was expected to result in a more parsimonious measurement of brand identification.

In the pilot study, issues were encountered with BID4. As a result, four new items were tested in the main study to ensure that the brand identification items reliably and validly measured the construct. The four new brand identification items were adapted from organizational identification research. The adaptation and application of these items to brand identification research was theoretically justifiable. Yet, with no basis for comparison, statistical results were relied on as the basis for making judgments about the removal of any of the new items. As shown in Table 5.4, the correlations among the four new brand identification items ranged from 0.575 to 0.834, while the correlations between the four new brand identification items and the six original brand identification items ranged from 0.460 to 0.738. The first encountered issue was that the standardized factor loading for NEWBID9 was lower ($\lambda = 0.619$) than the recommended cutoff of 0.707. The examination of the results indicated that thirty-six out of sixty-one (59.0%) standardized residual correlations for NEWBID7 were greater than |1.960|. The large number of standardized residual correlations above |1.960| indicated that NEWBID7 was correlated with numerous other items and loaded on the construct of brand loyalty (χ^2 value increase of 18.289). For NEWBID8, nineteen out of sixty-one (31.1%) standardized residual correlations had values greater than |1.960|. The large number of standardized residual correlations above |1.960| indicated that NEWBID8 was correlated with numerous other items. The results also showed that fifty-five out of sixty-one (90.2%) standardized residual correlations for NEWBID9 had values greater than |1.960|. The large number of standardized residual correlations above |1.960| indicated that NEWBIB9 was correlated with numerous other items and loaded on the constructs of brand knowledge, membership, brand loyalty, attendance intentions, purchase intentions, and word of mouth intentions (total χ^2 value increase of 168.100). The removal of NEWBID7, NEWBID8 and NEWBID9 was expected to result in a more parsimonious measurement of brand identification.

Table 5.4
Correlations Among the Old and New Brand Identification Items

	BID1	BID2	BID3	BID4	BID5	BID6	NEWBID7	NEWBID8	NEWBID9	NEWBID10
BID1	1.000									
BID2	0.818	1.000								
BID3	0.865	0.832	1.000							
BID4	0.681	0.683	0.698	1.000						
BID5	0.854	0.841	0.911	0.688	1.000					
BID6	0.762	0.779	0.790	0.770	0.805	1.000				
NEWBID7	0.594	0.526	0.581	0.615	0.630	0.590	1.000			
NEWBID8	0.661	0.616	0.659	0.659	0.709	0.637	0.834	1.000		
NEWBID9	0.502	0.460	0.476	0.634	0.513	0.546	0.643	0.575	1.000	
NEWBID10	0.698	0.709	0.698	0.687	0.735	0.738	0.727	0.783	0.581	1.000

Note: BID=Brand Identification; NEWBID=New Brand Identification Items.

For the membership (sense of community) construct, SOCMEM2 (I consider myself a member of the FSU Football team's fan community) and SOCMEM4 (I am connected to the FSU Football team's fan community) were removed. The removal of SOCMEM2 was theoretically justifiable because SOCMEM5 (I am a member of the FSU Football team's fan community) used the same language but in a more straightforward way. Similarly, the phrasing of "I consider" indicated less certainty than "I am". The removal of SOCMEM4 was theoretically justifiable because the phrasing of "I am connected" can be interpreted in a variety of ways. An individual can have many types of connections, where some connections could be weak and others strong, yet both could still be considered connections. Overall, items with more precise and specific language appeared to measure the construct better. The examination of the results indicated that twenty-one out of sixty-one (34.4%) standardized residual correlations for SOCMEM2 had values greater than |1.960|. The large number of standardized residual correlations above |1.960| indicated that SOCMEM2 was correlated with numerous other items and loaded on the construct of brand loyalty (χ^2 value increase of 13.212). In addition, the examination of the results indicated that thirty-three out of sixty-one (54.1%) standardized residual correlations for SOCMEM4 had values greater than |1.960|. The large number of standardized residual correlations above |1.960| indicated that SOCMEM4 was correlated with numerous other items and loaded on the constructs of brand identification and geographic sense of community (total χ^2 value increase of 36.366).The removal of SOCMEM2 and SOCMEM4 was expected to result in a more parsimonious measurement of membership (sense of community).

For the geographic sense of community construct, SOCGEO1 (I feel ties to Tallahassee) and SOCGEO5 (I like Tallahassee) were removed. The removal of SOCGEO1 was theoretically justifiable because SOCGEO3 (I feel like I belong in Tallahassee) and SOCGEO4 (I feel connected to Tallahassee) asked about feelings of belonging and connection. Both of these feelings exemplified different types of "ties" that can exist. Thus, it appeared that SOCGEO3 and SOCGEO4 both were more specific than SOCGEO1. The removal of SOCGEO5 was theoretically justifiable because an individual can like Tallahassee for many reasons. Yet, simply liking Tallahassee does not necessarily mean that the individual felt a connection to the city. For example, an individual may like the weather in Tallahassee, however, that did not mean that they

feel a connection with the city. The examination of the results indicated that twenty-four out of sixty-one (39.3%) standardized residual correlations for SOCGEO1and thirty-two out of sixty-one (52.5%) standardized residual correlations for SOCGEO5 had values greater than |1.960|. The large numbers of standardized residual correlations above |1.960| indicated that SOCGEO1 and SOCGEO5 were correlated with numerous other items. The removal of SOCGEO1 and SOCGEO5 was expected to result in a more parsimonious measurement of geographic sense of community.

For the brand loyalty construct, BLOY1 (I am loyal to the FSU Football team), BLOY5 (I am dedicated to the FSU Football team), and BLOY6 (I am faithful to the FSU Football team) were removed. The removal of BLOY1 was theoretically justifiable because the term loyalty can hold a different meaning to different individuals. In addition, individuals can be loyal to numerous facets of the team (e.g., coaches, players, team as a whole). The remaining items all used more specific language that referred to specific feelings associated with loyalty. The removal of BLOY5 and BLOY6 were theoretically justifiable because dedication and faithfulness are very similar to attachment, commitment, devotion, and steadfastness. Dedication was very close in meaning to both commitment and devotion. While faithful has a similar meaning to the aforementioned terms, faithful also can indicate feelings of trust. It was not a necessary condition for individuals to have trust in order to feel loyal. The examination of the results indicated that twenty-five out of sixty-one (41.0%) standardized residual correlations for BLOY1 and twenty-five out of sixty-one (41.0%) standardized residual correlations for BLOY5 were greater than |1.960|. The large numbers of standardized residual correlations above |1.960| indicated that BLOY1 and BLOY5 were correlated with numerous other items. In addition, the examination of the results indicated that thirty out of sixty-one (49.2%) standardized residual correlations for BLOY6 had values greater than |1.960|. The large number of standardized residual correlations above |1.960| indicated that BLOY6 was correlated with numerous other items and loaded on the constructs of brand identification and geographic sense of community (χ^2 value increase of 22.727). The removal of BLOY1, BLOY5, and BLOY6 was expected to result in a more parsimonious measurement of brand loyalty.

For the brand image construct, BIMA1 (Good / Bad), BIMA3 (Favorable / Unfavorable), BIMA4 (Likable / Not Likable), BIMA5 (Positive / Negative), BIMA8 (Appealing / Unappealing), and BIMA9 (Impressive / Not Impressive) were removed. The original nine brand

image items were chosen based on the perceived similarities to words and phrases that were commonly used to describe the sport brand and the team. As discussed in Chapter 3, more than one hundred research studies used various combinations of nearly fifty words and phrases to measure image (Bruner, 2009). As such, there was no theoretical rationale for the inclusion or exclusion of any of the nine items, except for the fact that the pilot study revealed potential issues with BIMA1, BIMA6, and BIMA9. The examination of the results indicated that eighteen out of sixty-one (29.5%) standardized residual correlations for BIMA3, thirty out of sixty-one (49.2%) standardized residual correlations for BIMA4, seventeen out of sixty-one (27.9%) standardized residual correlations for BIMA8, and seventeen out of sixty-one (27.9%) standardized residual correlations for BIMA9 had values greater than |1.960|. The large numbers of standardized residual correlations above |1.960| indicated that BIMA3, BIMA4, BIMA8, and BIMA9 were correlated with numerous other items. Moreover, thirty-eight out of sixty-one (62.3%) standardized residual correlations for BIMA1 were greater than |1.960|. The large number of standardized residual correlations above |1.960| indicated that BIMA1 was correlated with numerous other items and loaded on the constructs of attendance intentions and word of mouth intentions (total χ^2 value increase of 29.105). For BIMA5, thirty-five out of sixty-one (57.4%) standardized residual correlations were greater than |1.960|. The large number of standardized residual correlations above |1.960| indicated that BIMA5 was correlated with numerous other items and loaded on the constructs of brand knowledge, membership, geographic sense of community, and brand loyalty (total χ^2 value increase of 58.484). The removal of BIMA1, BIMA3, BIMA4, BIMA5, BIMA8, and BIMA9 was expected to result in a more parsimonious measurement of brand image.

In Chapter 3, the three behavioral intentions constructs of attendance, purchase, and word of mouth were discussed in detail. The same wording was used to measure all three constructs for each of the respective five items (e.g., I plan, It is likely I will, I expect, I will, and I am determined). No theoretical justification existed for which of the five items worked best, and the pilot study only provided evidence that all five items for each construct were highly correlated. As a result, the statistical evidence in the main study was used to provide the rationale for the removal of items. Based on the statistical evidence, one item was removed from each construct, including ATTINT5 (I am determined to attend FSU Football games in the near future), PURINT4 (I will purchase FSU Football team merchandise in the near future), and WOMINT2

(It is likely I will recommend the FSU Football team's games to friends). The examination of the results indicated that twenty-three out of sixty-one (37.7%) standardized residual correlations for PURINT4, and nineteen out of sixty-one (31.1%) standardized residual correlations for WOMINT2 had values greater than |1.960|. The large numbers of standardized residual correlations above |1.960| indicated that PURINT4 and WOMINT2 were correlated with numerous other items. In addition, the results indicated that forty-seven out of sixty-one (77.0%) standardized residual correlations for ATTINT5 were greater than |1.960|. The large number of standardized residual correlations above |1.960| indicated that ATTINT5 was correlated with numerous other items and loaded on the constructs of brand knowledge, brand satisfaction, brand identification, membership, geographic sense of community, brand loyalty, and word of mouth intentions (total χ^2 value increase of 234.027).

Overall, the theoretical and statistical examination of the sixty-two items from subsample 1 resulted in the removal of twenty-five items. The remaining thirty-seven items for the ten constructs were again tested with the measurement model through CFA procedures. Table 5.5 displays the final psychometric properties and measurement model results for subsample 1.

Table 5.5
Final Psychometric Properties and Measurement Model Results for Subsample 1

Construct	Item	Item-to-Total Correlation	Standardized Factor Loading (λ)	*t*-Value	Construct Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Brand Knowledge					0.984	0.940
	BKNOW2	0.952	0.956	129.342		
	BKNOW3	0.971	0.977	105.922		
	BKNOW4	0.981	0.992	456.912		
	BKNOW5	0.974	0.983	224.434		
Brand Satisfaction					0.912	0.776
	BSAT2	0.845	0.865	36.619		
	BSAT4	0.884	0.924	58.886		
	BSAT5	0.913	0.970	100.481		
Brand Identification					0.908	0.712
	BID1	0.862	0.911	79.695		
	BID2	0.861	0.899	49.877		
	BID5	0.891	0.932	76.268		
	NEWBID10	0.756	0.789	29.314		

Table 5.5 (continued)
Final Psychometric Properties and Measurement Model Results for Subsample 1

Construct	Item	Item-to-Total Correlation	Standardized Factor Loading (λ)	*t*-Value	Construct Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Membership (Sense of Community)					0.915	0.783
	SOCMEM1	0.846	0.871	30.230		
	SOCMEM3	0.905	0.955	83.909		
	SOCMEM5	0.902	0.944	48.097		
Geographic Sense of Community					0.877	0.641
	SOCGEO2	0.783	0.838	39.776		
	SOCGEO3	0.837	0.889	48.307		
	SOCGEO4	0.823	0.877	42.155		
	SOCGEO6	0.757	0.801	24.308		
Brand Loyalty					0.935	0.782
	BLOY2	0.804	0.833	27.903		
	BLOY3	0.916	0.947	78.464		
	BLOY4	0.923	0.955	112.053		
	BLOY7	0.890	0.925	61.125		
Brand Image					0.909	0.769
	BIMA2	0.863	0.908	45.666		
	BIMA6	0.855	0.889	31.751		
	BIMA7	0.912	0.959	68.193		
Attendance Intentions					0.985	0.944
	ATTINT1	0.961	0.967	114.036		
	ATTINT2	0.983	0.991	480.603		
	ATTINT3	0.987	0.996	606.274		
	ATTINT4	0.954	0.961	42.243		
Purchase Intentions					0.980	0.926
	PURINT1	0.946	0.956	117.025		
	PURINT2	0.977	0.988	288.827		
	PURINT3	0.961	0.970	104.152		
	PURINT5	0.965	0.975	187.567		
Word of Mouth Intentions					0.944	0.809
	WOMINT1	0.865	0.887	47.188		
	WOMINT3	0.924	0.953	85.078		
	WOMINT4	0.926	0.951	84.567		
	WOMINT5	0.881	0.908	58.080		

Note: BKNOW=Brand Knowledge; BSAT=Brand Satisfaction; BID=Brand Identification; NEWBID=New Brand Identification Items; SOCMEM=Membership (Sense of Community); SOCGEO=Geographical Sense of Community; BLOY=Brand Loyalty; BIMA=Brand Image; ATTINT=Attendance Intentions; PURINT=Purchase Intentions; WOMINT=Word of Mouth Intentions.

After the removal of the twenty-five items, all of the standardized loadings for the remaining thirty-seven items were greater than 0.707. While more parsimonious sets of items

were found to measure each construct, the CR and the AVE values changed compared to the original values (see Table 5.2). The CR value for the brand knowledge construct decreased from 0.986 to 0.984, while the AVE value increased from 0.933 to 0.940. For the brand satisfaction construct, the CR value decreased from 0.944 to 0.912, while the AVE value increased slightly from 0.773 to 0.776. For the brand identification construct, the CR value decreased from 0.956 to 0.908, while the AVE value increased from 0.686 to 0.712. The construct of membership showed a different pattern, in that the CR value decreased from 0.963 to 0.915, and the AVE value decreased from 0.840 to 0.783. The construct of geographic sense of community followed a similar pattern to the construct of membership, in that the CR value decreased from 0.921 to 0.877, while the AVE value decreased from 0.663 to 0.641. The construct of brand loyalty also followed the same pattern, in that the CR value decreased from 0.975 to 0.935, while the AVE value decreased from 0.848 to 0.782. The construct of brand image continued the trend, in that the CR value decreased from 0.980 to 0.909, while the AVE value decreased from 0.843 to 0.769. The construct of attendance intentions returned to the original pattern, in that the CR value decreased from 0.988 to 0.985, while the AVE value increased from 0.941 to 0.944. The construct of purchase intentions reverted to the secondary pattern, in that the CR value decreased from 0.990 to 0.980, while the AVE value decreased from 0.951 to 0.926. The construct of word of mouth intentions continued the secondary pattern, in that the CR value decreased from 0.969 to 0.944, while the AVE value decreased from 0.863 to 0.809.

Overall, the pattern of change among all ten constructs showed that the CR values decreased after the removal of the twenty-five items. These results indicated that some removed items increased the reliability of the measurement of the respective constructs. The results, however, provided evidence that the final items continued to reliably measure all ten constructs. The pattern of change among the AVE values indicated that four constructs (e.g., brand knowledge, brand satisfaction, brand identification, and attendance intentions) increased while six constructs (e.g., membership, geographic sense of community, brand loyalty, brand image, purchase intentions, and word of mouth intentions) decreased. The results provided evidence that the final items continued to retain a large amount of the variance in the respective constructs.

In addition to the examination of the psychometric properties and the measurement model results for subsample 1, the fit indices were also examined. The fit indices (χ^2 value = 731.268, df = 584, χ^2/df ratio = 1.252, p-value < .001, CFI = 0.987, TLI = 0.986, RMSEA = 0.028, and

SRMR = 0.027) provided evidence that the measurement model for subsample 1 had good and improved fit compared to the initial measurement model for subsample 1. Due to the fact that a measurement model with good fit to the subsample 1 data was found, the next step included an assessment of the validity of the items for subsample 1.

Validity Results for the Measurement Model for Subsample 1

In Chapter 3, Churchill's (1979) eight-step procedure for creating marketing measures was outlined. Steps 1-6 have been completed. The next step included an assessment of the validity of the items. In Chapter 4, a content analysis by two marketing and consumer behavior academics and two research methodologists provided evidence of face validity. In this chapter, CFA procedures were used to provide evidence of the validity of the internal structure of the data. The third form of validity evidence examined the relationships between constructs (e.g., convergent and discriminant validity) (Campbell & Fiske, 1959). As discussed in Chapter 3, evidence of convergent validity indicated that items for a construct actually measure the construct in question, while evidence of discriminant validity indicated that items that measure one construct did not measure a separate construct.

Evidence of convergent validity was provided by an examination of the construct's calculated average variance extracted (AVE) score. If a latent construct has an AVE value greater than the threshold of .500, then the variance of the construct is greater than the measurement error for the construct, and evidence of convergent validity is established (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Evidence of discriminant validity was provided by comparing a construct's calculated AVE score and the squared multiple correlation for the associated constructs. When the construct's calculated AVE score exceeds the squared multiple correlation for associated constructs, evidence of discriminant validity is established (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Table 5.6 displays the construct correlations among the ten latent constructs for the final measurement model for subsample 1. Table 5.7 displays the AVE scores for each construct and the squared correlations among the ten latent constructs for the final measurement model for subsample 1. As the data showed, none of the AVE scores were below .500, so evidence of convergent validity was found. Moreover, a comparison of the AVE scores to the squared multiple correlations showed that none of the squared correlations for any associated constructs exceeded the AVE scores for the related correlations. Therefore, evidence of discriminant validity was also found.

Table 5.6
Construct Correlations for the Final Measurement Model Results for Subsample 1

	BKNOW	BSAT	BID	SOCMEM	SOCGEO	BLOY	BIMA	ATTINT	PURINT	WOMINT
BKNOW	1.000									
BSAT	0.572	1.000								
BID	0.618	0.601	1.000							
SOCMEM	0.715	0.612	0.626	1.000						
SOCGEO	0.501	0.468	0.666	0.537	1.000					
BLOY	0.738	0.705	0.743	0.852	0.625	1.000				
BIMA	0.584	0.685	0.600	0.577	0.444	0.664	1.000			
ATTINT	0.471	0.384	0.407	0.571	0.316	0.594	0.358	1.000		
PURINT	0.582	0.532	0.595	0.700	0.422	0.780	0.495	0.725	1.000	
WOMINT	0.609	0.581	0.586	0.727	0.481	0.770	0.496	0.722	0.719	1.000

Note: BKNOW=Brand Knowledge; BSAT=Brand Satisfaction; BID=Brand Identification; SOCMEM=Membership (Sense of Community); SOCGEO=Geographical Sense of Community; BLOY=Brand Loyalty; BIMA=Brand Image; ATTINT=Attendance Intentions; PURINT=Purchase Intentions; WOMINT=Word of Mouth Intentions.

Table 5.7
Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Squared Construct Correlations for the Final Measurement Model Results for Subsample 1

	BKNOW	BSAT	BID	SOCMEM	SOCGEO	BLOY	BIMA	ATTINT	PURINT	WOMINT
BKNOW	*0.940*									
BSAT	0.327	*0.776*								
BID	0.382	0.361	*0.712*							
SOCMEM	0.511	0.375	0.392	*0.783*						
SOCGEO	0.251	0.219	0.444	0.288	*0.641*					
BLOY	0.545	0.497	0.552	0.726	0.391	*0.782*				
BIMA	0.341	0.469	0.360	0.333	0.197	0.441	*0.769*			
ATTINT	0.222	0.147	0.166	0.326	0.100	0.353	0.128	*0.944*		
PURINT	0.339	0.283	0.354	0.490	0.178	0.608	0.245	0.526	*0.926*	
WOMINT	0.371	0.338	0.343	0.529	0.231	0.593	0.246	0.521	0.517	*0.809*

Note: AVE is in *italics* in the diagonal; BKNOW=Brand Knowledge; BSAT=Brand Satisfaction; BID=Brand Identification; SOCMEM=Membership (Sense of Community); SOCGEO=Geographical Sense of Community; BLOY=Brand Loyalty; BIMA=Brand Image; ATTINT=Attendance Intentions; PURINT=Purchase Intentions; WOMINT=Word of Mouth Intentions.

Results of the Measurement Model for Subsample 2

Prior to testing the structural model, the thirty-seven items for the ten constructs that were finalized with subsample 1 were tested on subsample 2. In other words, no changes were made to the analysis and testing procedures when the final structure from subsample 1 was applied to subsample 2. Table 5.8 displays the psychometric properties and measurement model results for subsample 2.

Table 5.8
Psychometric Properties and Measurement Model Results for Subsample 2

Construct	Item	Item-to-Total Correlation	Standardized Factor Loading (λ)	*t*-Value	Construct Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Brand Knowledge					0.984	0.937
	BKNOW2	0.932	0.936	89.919		
	BKNOW3	0.965	0.972	219.520		
	BKNOW4	0.974	0.987	297.225		
	BKNOW5	0.963	0.977	146.077		
Brand Satisfaction					0.944	0.849
	BSAT2	0.844	0.869	41.726		
	BSAT4	0.919	0.971	119.333		
	BSAT5	0.876	0.921	59.442		
Brand Identification					0.947	0.819
	BID1	0.883	0.923	79.566		
	BID2	0.899	0.932	78.408		
	BID5	0.910	0.941	93.902		
	NEWBID10	0.792	0.818	31.814		
Membership (Sense of Community)					0.943	0.847
	SOCMEM1	0.791	0.804	29.940		
	SOCMEM3	0.915	0.973	139.865		
	SOCMEM5	0.913	0.973	162.342		
Geographic Sense of Community					0.897	0.685
	SOCGEO2	0.759	0.820	37.826		
	SOCGEO3	0.814	0.874	38.422		
	SOCGEO4	0.792	0.857	36.642		
	SOCGEO6	0.709	0.754	23.139		
Brand Loyalty					0.947	0.817
	BLOY2	0.838	0.864	36.615		
	BLOY3	0.908	0.944	100.642		
	BLOY4	0.900	0.943	89.259		
	BLOY7	0.833	0.860	33.370		

Table 5.8 (continued)
Psychometric Properties and Measurement Model Results for Subsample 2

Construct	Item	Item-to-Total Correlation	Standardized Factor Loading (λ)	*t*-Value	Construct Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Brand Image					0.909	0.769
	BIMA2	0.786	0.846	30.558		
	BIMA6	0.814	0.858	29.741		
	BIMA7	0.848	0.924	44.808		
Attendance Intentions						
	ATTINT1	0.932	0.934	67.852	0.988	0.954
	ATTINT2	0.983	0.988	383.850		
	ATTINT3	0.981	0.991	262.366		
	ATTINT4	0.981	0.993	429.602		
Purchase Intentions					0.976	0.912
	PURINT1	0.886	0.894	32.827		
	PURINT2	0.960	0.973	208.050		
	PURINT3	0.969	0.990	412.270		
	PURINT5	0.938	0.960	134.951		
Word of Mouth Intentions					0.960	0.856
	WOMINT1	0.849	0.876	43.135		
	WOMINT3	0.940	0.972	196.093		
	WOMINT4	0.935	0.962	134.351		
	WOMINT5	0.862	0.887	47.686		

Note: BKNOW=Brand Knowledge; BSAT=Brand Satisfaction; BID=Brand Identification; NEWBID=New Brand Identification Items; SOCMEM=Membership (Sense of Community); SOCGEO=Geographical Sense of Community; BLOY=Brand Loyalty; BIMA=Brand Image; ATTINT=Attendance Intentions; PURINT=Purchase Intentions; WOMINT=Word of Mouth Intentions.

An examination of the results displayed in Table 5.8 provided evidence that there were no apparent problems with the application of the measurement model to subsample 2. The fit indices (χ^2 value = 805.899, *df* = 584, χ^2/df ratio = 1.380, *p*-value < .001, CFI = 0.979, TLI = 0.976, RMSEA = 0.035, and SRMR = 0.032) also indicated no significant problems as all of the fit indices showed that the measurement model had good fit to the data. Table 5.9 shows the correlations among constructs. The correlations also did not indicate any significant problems with the model.

Table 5.9
Construct Correlations for the Final CFA Results for Subsample 2

	BKNOW	BSAT	BID	SOCMEM	SOCGEO	BLOY	BIMA	ATTINT	PURINT	WOMINT
BKNOW	1.000									
BSAT	0.541	1.000								
BID	0.570	0.596	1.000							
SOCMEM	0.636	0.636	0.595	1.000						
SOCGEO	0.433	0.518	0.630	0.435	1.000					
BLOY	0.686	0.694	0.689	0.830	0.525	1.000				
BIMA	0.511	0.773	0.561	0.606	0.447	0.676	1.000			
ATTINT	0.493	0.532	0.418	0.655	0.379	0.576	0.499	1.000		
PURINT	0.507	0.582	0.525	0.645	0.485	0.736	0.510	0.582	1.000	
WOMINT	0.556	0.657	0.603	0.747	0.492	0.735	0.635	0.646	0.631	1.000

Note: BKNOW=Brand Knowledge; BSAT=Brand Satisfaction; BID=Brand Identification; SOCMEM=Membership (Sense of Community); SOCGEO=Geographical Sense of Community; BLOY=Brand Loyalty; BIMA=Brand Image; ATTINT=Attendance Intentions; PURINT=Purchase Intentions; WOMINT=Word of Mouth Intentions.

Summary of the Results for the Measurement Models

In summary, sixty-two items for ten constructs were tested using CFA procedures on subsample 1. An iterative process was used to remove items that had a theoretical justification for removal. In addition, items were also removed based on statistical evidence such as if the items had standardized loadings below .707, showed a pattern of standardized residual values greater than |1.960|, and had modification indices that showed that the item was highly correlated with other items or cross-loaded on to other constructs (e.g., a χ^2 value increase was possible). The CFA procedures resulted in the removal of twenty-five items. The remaining thirty-seven items for the ten constructs were then tested with subsample 2. The final results of the CFA procedures, the fit indices, and the construct correlations indicated that the final model had good fit to both subsample 1 and subsample 2. The next and final step in Churchill's (1979) eight-step procedure was to submit the final measurement model to testing using structural equation modeling procedures with subsample 2.

Structural Equation Modeling Results

The assessment of the structural model was conducted through SEM using Mplus 5.21. The structural model was based on the final measurement model that was tested with both subsample 1 and subsample 2. The final measurement model contained ten constructs and thirty-seven items. In Chapter 2, thirty-one hypothesized relationships were proposed. In Chapter 3, the structural model was shown and discussed. Figure 5.1 displays the structural model and hypotheses, while Table 5.10 lists the thirty-one hypotheses.

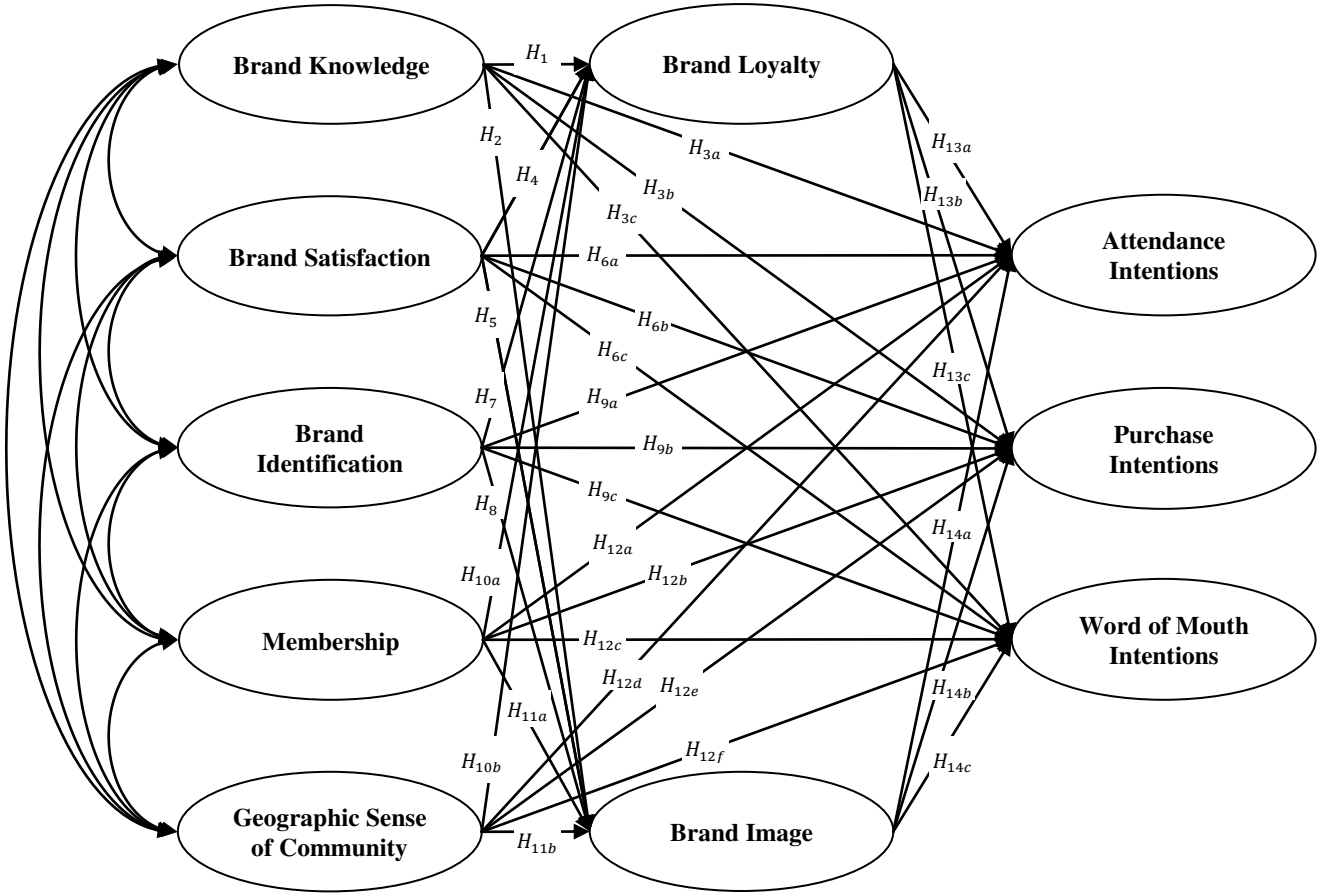


Figure 5.1
Structural Model with Hypothesized Relationships

Table 5.10
List of Hypotheses

Label	Hypothesis
H_1:	Brand knowledge is positively and significantly related to brand loyalty
H_2:	Brand knowledge is positively and significantly related to brand image
H_{3a}:	Brand knowledge is positively and significantly related to attendance intentions
H_{3b}:	Brand knowledge is positively and significantly related to purchase intentions
H_{3c}:	Brand knowledge is positively and significantly related to word of mouth intentions
H_4:	Brand satisfaction is positively and significantly related to brand loyalty
H_5:	Brand satisfaction is positively and significantly related to brand image
H_{6a}:	Brand satisfaction is positively and significantly related to attendance intentions
H_{6b}:	Brand satisfaction is positively and significantly related to purchase intentions
H_{6c}:	Brand satisfaction is positively and significantly related to word of mouth intentions
H_7:	Brand identification is positively and significantly related to brand loyalty
H_8:	Brand identification is positively and significantly related to brand image
H_{9a}:	Brand identification is positively and significantly related to attendance intentions
H_{9b}:	Brand identification is positively and significantly related to purchase intentions
H_{9c}:	Brand identification is positively and significantly related to word of mouth intentions
H_{10a}:	Sense of membership in the sport brand community is positively and significantly related to brand loyalty
H_{10b}:	Geographic sense of sport brand community is positively and significantly related to brand loyalty
H_{11a}:	Sense of membership in the sport brand community is positively and significantly related to brand image
H_{11b}:	Geographic sense of sport brand community is positively and significantly related to brand image
H_{12a}:	Sense of membership in the sport brand community is positively and significantly related to attendance intentions
H_{12b}:	Sense of membership in the sport brand community is positively and significantly related to purchase intentions
H_{12c}:	Sense of membership in the sport brand community is positively and significantly related to word of mouth intentions
H_{12d}:	Geographic sense of sport brand community is positively and significantly related to attendance intentions
H_{12e}:	Geographic sense of sport brand community is positively and significantly related to purchase intentions
H_{12f}:	Geographic sense of sport brand community is positively and significantly related to word of mouth intentions
H_{13a}:	Brand loyalty is positively and significantly related to attendance intentions
H_{13b}:	Brand loyalty is positively and significantly related to purchase intentions
H_{13c}:	Brand loyalty is positively and significantly related to word of mouth intentions
H_{14a}:	Brand image is positively and significantly related to attendance intentions
H_{14b}:	Brand image is positively and significantly related to purchase intentions
H_{14c}:	Brand image is positively and significantly related to word of mouth intentions

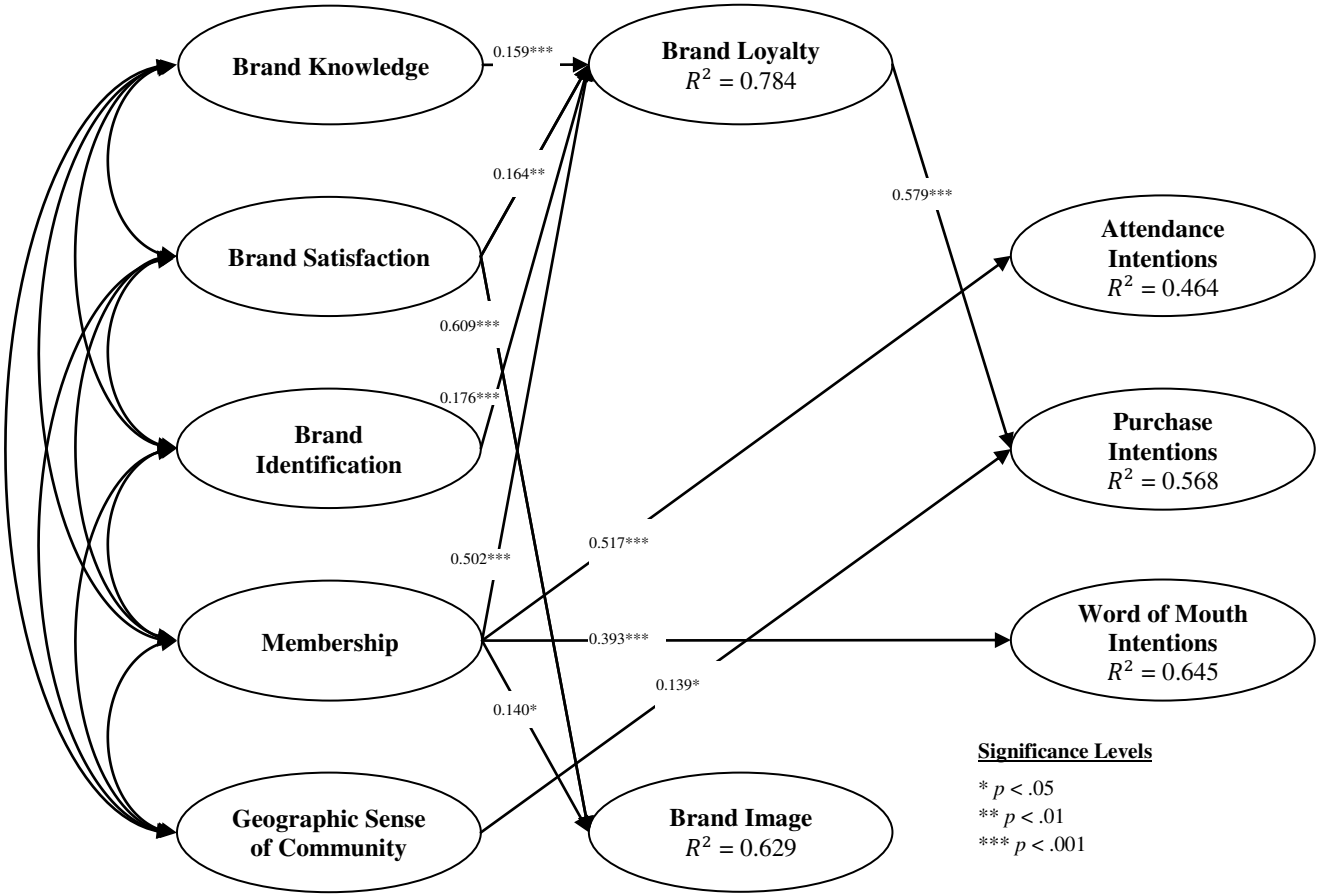
Similar to the measurement model, the fit indices were examined in order to assess how well the hypothesized structural model fit the data. The model demonstrated good fit to the data (χ^2 value = 808.187, *df* = 585, χ^2/df ratio = 1.382, *p*-value < .001, CFI = 0.979, TLI = 0.976, RMSEA = 0.035, and SRMR = 0.033). The results indicated nearly identical fit as the measurement model. In terms of the hypothesized relationships, ten of the thirty-one relationships were significant at the $p < .05$, $p < .01$, or $p < .001$ level. First, brand knowledge, brand satisfaction, brand identification, and membership were found to be positively and significantly related to brand loyalty (H_1: $\gamma = 0.159$, $p < 0.001$; H_4: $\gamma = 0.164$, $p < 0.01$; H_7: $\gamma = 0.609$, $p < 0.001$; H_{10a}: $\gamma = 0.176$, $p < 0.001$). Second, brand satisfaction was found to be positively and significantly related to brand image (H_5: $\gamma = 0.609$, $p < 0.001$). Third, membership was found to be positively and significantly related to brand image, attendance intentions, and word of mouth intentions (H_{11a}: $\gamma = 0.140$, $p < 0.05$; H_{12a}: $\gamma = 0.517$, $p < 0.001$; H_{12c}: $\gamma = 0.393$, $p < 0.001$). Fourth, geographic sense of community was found to be positively and significantly related to purchase intentions (H_{12e}: $\gamma = 0.139$, $p < 0.05$). Finally, brand loyalty was found to be positively and significantly related to purchase intentions (H_{13b}: $\beta = 0.579$, $p < 0.05$). Table 5.11 lists the results for the thirty-one hypotheses, coefficients, and significance levels. Figure 5.2 displays the structural model results.

Table 5.11
Results of the Hypotheses Testing

Label	Hypothesis	Coefficient (γ/β)	Significance
H_1:	Brand knowledge is positively and significantly related to brand loyalty	γ = 0.159	$p < 0.001$
H_2:	Brand knowledge is positively and significantly related to brand image	γ = 0.041	N.S.
H_{3a}:	Brand knowledge is positively and significantly related to attendance intentions	γ = 0.101	N.S.
H_{3b}:	Brand knowledge is positively and significantly related to purchase intentions	γ = -0.028	N.S.
H_{3c}:	Brand knowledge is positively and significantly related to word of mouth intentions	γ = -0.004	N.S.
H_4:	Brand satisfaction is positively and significantly related to brand loyalty	γ = 0.164	$p < 0.01$
H_5:	Brand satisfaction is positively and significantly related to brand image	γ = 0.609	$p < 0.001$
H_{6a}:	Brand satisfaction is positively and significantly related to attendance intentions	γ = 0.135	N.S.
H_{6b}:	Brand satisfaction is positively and significantly related to purchase intentions	γ = 0.141	N.S.
H_{6c}:	Brand satisfaction is positively and significantly related to word of mouth intentions	γ = 0.126	N.S.
H_7:	Brand identification is positively and significantly related to brand loyalty	γ = 0.176	$p < 0.001$
H_8:	Brand identification is positively and significantly related to brand image	γ = 0.099	N.S.
H_{9a}:	Brand identification is positively and significantly related to attendance intentions	γ = -0.092	N.S.
H_{9b}:	Brand identification is positively and significantly related to purchase intentions	γ = -0.056	N.S.
H_{9c}:	Brand identification is positively and significantly related to word of mouth intentions	γ = 0.076	N.S.
H_{10a}:	Sense of membership in the sport brand community is positively and significantly related to brand loyalty	γ = 0.502	$p < 0.001$
H_{10b}:	Geographic sense of sport brand community is positively and significantly related to brand loyalty	γ = 0.042	N.S.
H_{11a}:	Sense of membership in the sport brand community is positively and significantly related to brand image	γ = 0.140	$p < 0.05$
H_{11b}:	Geographic sense of sport brand community is positively and significantly related to brand image	γ = -0.009	N.S.

Table 5.11 (continued)
Results of the Hypotheses Testing

Label	Hypothesis	Coefficient (γ/β)	Significance
H_{12a}:	Sense of membership in the sport brand community is positively and significantly related to attendance intentions	γ = 0.517	$p < 0.001$
H_{12b}:	Sense of membership in the sport brand community is positively and significantly related to purchase intentions	γ = 0.105	N.S.
H_{12c}:	Sense of membership in the sport brand community is positively and significantly related to word of mouth intentions	γ = 0.393	$p < 0.001$
H_{12d}:	Geographic sense of sport brand community is positively and significantly related to attendance intentions	γ = 0.092	N.S.
H_{12e}:	Geographic sense of sport brand community is positively and significantly related to purchase intentions	γ = 0.139	$p < 0.05$
H_{13a}:	Brand loyalty is positively and significantly related to attendance intentions	β = -0.050	N.S.
H_{13b}:	Brand loyalty is positively and significantly related to purchase intentions	β = 0.579	$p < 0.001$
H_{13c}:	Brand loyalty is positively and significantly related to word of mouth intentions	β = 0.148	N.S.
H_{14a}:	Brand image is positively and significantly related to attendance intentions	β = 0.072	N.S.
H_{14b}:	Brand image is positively and significantly related to purchase intentions	β = -0.067	N.S.
H_{14c}:	Brand image is positively and significantly related to word of mouth intentions	β = 0.125	N.S.



Note: n = 313, $\chi 2$ value = 808.187, df = 585, $\chi 2/df$ ratio = 1.382, p-value < .001, CFI = 0.979, TLI = 0.976, RMSEA = 0.035, SRMR = 0.033

Figure 5.2
Final Structural Model Results

Final Structural Model Results

The structural model tested in this research contained two potential mediating variables (brand loyalty and brand image). Three types of mediated relationships exist between independent, dependent, and mediating variables, including fully-mediated, partially-mediated, and not-mediated relationships (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Fully-mediated relationships occur when no direct effect exists between the independent and dependent variables, yet indirect effects exist between both the independent and mediating variable and the mediating and dependent variable. Partially-mediated relationships occur when relationships exist for the direct effect and both indirect effects. Non-mediated relationships occur when a direct effect exists between the independent and dependent variables and either of the indirect effects (independent-mediating or mediating-dependent) does not exist.

The results of the structural model provided evidence that fully-mediated and non-mediated relationships exist in this research. No evidence was found for any partially-mediated relationships in the structural model. In order to determine the total effect for each of the fully-mediated relationships, calculations were performed for the four fully-mediated relationships, including brand knowledge-brand loyalty-purchase intentions (total effect = 0.092), brand satisfaction-brand loyalty-purchase intentions (total effect = 0.095), brand identification-brand loyalty-purchase intentions (total effect = 0.102), and membership-brand loyalty-purchase intentions (total effect = 0.291). Tables 5.12, 5.13, 5.14, and 5.15 illustrate the total effect calculations for each of the four fully-mediated relationships. Table 5.16 displays all of the direct, indirect, and total effects for the structural model

Table 5.12
Total Effect Calculation for Brand Knowledge-Brand Loyalty-Purchase Intentions' Fully-Mediated Relationship

Direct/Indirect Effect	Path	Standardized Coefficients
Direct Effect	BKNOW ⟶ BLOY	0.159
Direct Effect	BLOY ⟶ PURINT	0.579
Indirect Effect	BKNOW ⟶ BLOY ⟶ PURINT	0.159 x 0.579
Total Effect		0.092

Note: BKNOW=Brand Knowledge; BLOY=Brand Loyalty; PURINT=Purchase Intentions

Table 5.13
Total Effect Calculation for Brand Satisfaction-Brand Loyalty-Purchase Intentions' Fully-Mediated Relationship

Direct/Indirect Effect	Path	Standardized Coefficients
Direct Effect	BSAT ⟶ BLOY	0.164
Direct Effect	BLOY ⟶ PURINT	0.579
Indirect Effect	BSAT ⟶ BLOY ⟶ PURINT	0.164 x 0.579
Total Effect		0.095

Note: BSAT=Brand Satisfaction; BLOY=Brand Loyalty; PURINT=Purchase Intentions

Table 5.14
Total Effect Calculation for Brand Identification-Brand Loyalty-Purchase Intentions' Fully-Mediated Relationship

Direct/Indirect Effect	Path	Standardized Coefficients
Direct Effect	BID ⟶ BLOY	0.176
Direct Effect	BLOY ⟶ PURINT	0.579
Indirect Effect	BID ⟶ BLOY ⟶ PURINT	0.176 x 0.579
Total Effect		0.102

Note: BID=Brand Identification; BLOY=Brand Loyalty; PURINT=Purchase Intentions

Table 5.15
Total Effect Calculation for Membership-Brand Loyalty-Purchase Intentions' Fully-Mediated Relationship

Direct/Indirect Effect	Path	Standardized Coefficients
Direct Effect	SOCMEM ⟶ BLOY	0.502
Direct Effect	BLOY ⟶ PURINT	0.579
Indirect Effect	SOCMEM ⟶ BLOY ⟶ PURINT	0.502 x 0.579
Total Effect		0.291

Note: SOCMEM=Membership (Sense of Community); BLOY=Brand Loyalty; PURINT=Purchase Intentions

Table 5.16
Structural Model Results

Direct/Indirect/Total Effects	Path	Standardized Coefficients
Direct Effect	BKNOW ⟶ BLOY	0.159
Direct Effect	BSAT ⟶ BLOY	0.164
Direct Effect	BID ⟶ BLOY	0.176
Direct Effect	SOCMEM ⟶ BLOY	0.502
Direct Effect	BLOY ⟶ PURINT	0.579
Indirect & Total Effects	BKNOW ⟶ BLOY ⟶ PURINT	0.159 x 0.579 = 0.092
Indirect & Total Effects	BSAT ⟶ BLOY ⟶ PURINT	0.164 x 0.579 = 0.095
Indirect & Total Effects	BID ⟶ BLOY ⟶ PURINT	0.176 x 0.579 = 0.102
Indirect & Total Effects	SOCMEM ⟶ BLOY ⟶ PURINT	0.502 x 0.579 = 0.291
Direct & Total Effects	BSAT ⟶ BIMA	0.609
Direct & Total Effects	SOCMEM ⟶ BIMA	0.140
Direct & Total Effects	SOCMEM ⟶ ATTINT	0.517
Direct & Total Effects	SOCMEM ⟶ WOMINT	0.393
Direct & Total Effects	SOCGEO ⟶ PURINT	0.139

Note: BKNOW=Brand Knowledge; BSAT=Brand Satisfaction; BID=Brand Identification; SOCMEM=Membership (Sense of Community); SOCGEO=Geographical Sense of Community; BLOY=Brand Loyalty; BIMA=Brand Image; ATTINT=Attendance Intentions; PURINT=Purchase Intentions; WOMINT=Word of Mouth Intentions.

The final assessment of the structural model results included an examination of the R^2 results (e.g., variance explained) for the endogenous constructs. In terms of the potential mediating variables, 78.4% of the variance in brand loyalty and 62.9% of the variance in brand image were respectively explained by brand knowledge, brand satisfaction, brand identification, membership, and geographic sense of community. As for the dependent variables, 46.4% of the variance in attendance intentions, 56.8% of the variance in purchase intentions, and 64.5% of the variance in word of mouth intentions were respectively explained by brand knowledge, brand satisfaction, brand identification, membership, geographic sense of community, brand loyalty, and brand image.

Summary of the Results for the Main Study

Following the eight-step procedure proposed by Churchill (1979), this chapter reported the results of steps 5-8. First, based on the pilot study results, the data collection for the main study was completed. The survey contained sixty-two items for ten constructs. During the data collection period, seven hundred eighty-three individuals started the survey. Due to the removal of individuals with missing responses and outlier-type responses, six hundred twenty-seven responses were deemed usable. The full sample was split into two subsamples (subsample 1,

n=314; subsample 2, *n*=313). CFA procedures based on Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) two-step procedure tested the measurement model with the data from subsample 1. Based on theoretical and statistical evidence, twenty-seven items were removed from consideration. The final measurement model had good fit to the data. Similarly, when applied to subsample 2, the final measurement model also had good fit to the data. Finally, the structural model and hypothesized relationships were tested using SEM procedures with subsample 2. After examining the results of the structural model, statistical evidence was found in support of ten of the proposed thirty-one hypotheses. In the next chapter, the results of the structural model, as well as the significant findings, practical implications, limitations, and future research are discussed.

CHAPTER 6
DISCUSSION & CONLUSION

Introduction

The overall purpose of this research was to identify the antecedents and consequences of consumer participation in a sport brand community, construct a theoretically-based model of the relationships among and between the antecedents and consequences, and empirically test the model. At the outset of this research, five research questions were posed:

RQ_1: What are the antecedents of consumer participation in a sport brand community?

RQ_2: What are the relationships among the antecedents of consumer participation in a sport brand community?

RQ_3: What are the consequences of consumer participation in a sport brand community?

RQ_4: What are the relationships among the consequences of consumer participation in a sport brand community?

RQ_5: What are the relationships among the antecedents and consequences of consumer participation in a sport brand community?

The testing of the structural model provided empirical evidence that is used to answer each of the research questions. The results of the thirty-one hypotheses are used to answer RQ_1, RQ_3, and RQ_5, while the correlation evidence is used to answer RQ_2 and RQ_4. In this chapter, first, the results are discussed. Next, the significant findings are addressed. Then, the implications and contributions of the current research study are discussed. Following that, the limitations of the research study are identified. Finally, future research based on the current research is proposed.

Discussion of the Results

The methodological framework used in this research was based on Churchill's (1979) recommendations for creating and testing marketing measures. In step 1, ten constructs for testing the model of consumer participation in a sport brand community were identified based on a review of the relevant literature. In step 2, one hundred twenty-four items in total were identified to measure the ten constructs, and a three-step ad hoc content analysis was conducted by two marketing academics, two expert methodologists, and the author of this research. Fifty-eight items were judged to have content validity in terms of measuring the ten constructs. In step 3, the fifty-eight items were tested in a pilot study on a convenience sample (n = 113). In step 4,

an examination of the results of the pilot study revealed that the fifty-eight items that measured the ten constructs showed evidence of reliability. One issue was noted with the construct of brand identification. As a result, four items were added to measure this construct. In step 5, the sixty-two items were tested on a second convenience sample (n = 627). In order to conduct CFA and SEM procedures in the following steps, the sample was split into two subsamples (n_1 = 314 and n_2 = 313). In step 6, the reliabilities of the sixty-two items were examined using subsample 1. The results indicated that twenty-five items were problematic and therefore removed. In step 7, the validity of the thirty-seven items was assessed using subsample 1. The items showed evidence of both convergent and discriminant validity. Finally in step 8, the thirty-one hypothesized relationships were tested using SEM procedures on the data from subsample 2. The SEM results indicated empirical support for ten of the thirty-one hypothesized relationships. Due to the existence of four fully-mediated relationships, nine total effects were identified. In addition, the fit indices for the structural model suggested good fit to the data, and the model explained between 46.4% and 78.4% of the variance in the five endogenous constructs (e.g., brand loyalty, brand image, attendance intentions, purchase intentions, and word of mouth intentions).

To address the five research questions, ten constructs were included in this research. Five antecedents were examined, including brand knowledge, brand satisfaction, brand identification, membership (sense of community), and geographic sense of community. Brand loyalty and brand image were included as potential mediating variables, and attendance intentions, purchase intentions, and word of mouth intentions were included in the model as the consequences (e.g., outcome variables). RQ_1 and RQ_2 raised questions about the antecedents of consumer participation in a sport brand community. Earlier in this research, the psychological continuum model (PCM) was used to describe the potential relationships among the five antecedents. The PCM indicates that awareness leads to attraction, then attachment, and eventually allegiance (Funk & James, 2001, 2006). In this research, it was argued that brand knowledge leads to brand satisfaction, then brand identification, and eventually a sense of sport brand community (membership and geographic sense of community). The correlations found among the five antecedents ranged from 0.433 to 0.636 (see Table 5.9). All of the correlations were positive and significant at $p < .001$. In addition, all five constructs had at least one significant relationship in the structural model. As a result, the theoretical and empirical evidence suggest that all five

antecedents play a meaningful role in determining the outcomes of consumer participation in a sport brand community. In addition, the evidence suggested that relationships existed among the five antecedents. Suggestions for future research on the interrelationships among the five antecedents can be found in the section entitled "Future Research" below.

RQ_3 and RQ_4 raised questions about the consequences of consumer participation in a sport brand community. The three consequences examined were attendance, purchase, and word of mouth intentions. Previously in this research, the theory of reasoned action (TRA) was described and discussed. The TRA indicated that attitudes and subjective norms lead to intentions, which eventually lead to behaviors (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Due to the fact that the research design used in this research was cross-sectional rather than longitudinal, only future intentions were measured. The correlations found among the three consequences ranged from 0.146-0.265. All of the correlations were positive. Moreover, the correlations between attendance intentions-purchase intentions and attendance intentions-word of mouth intentions were significant at $p < .001$, while the correlation between purchase intentions-word of mouth intentions was significant at $p < .05$. In addition, all three constructs had at least one significant relationship in the structural model. As a result, the theoretical and empirical evidence suggested that all three intentions constructs were meaningful outcomes of consumer participation in a sport brand community. Moreover, the evidence suggested that relationships existed among the three outcomes. In the future research section found later in this chapter, ideas for future research to examine the intentions-behavior relationship will be discussed.

RQ_5 raised a question about the relationships among the antecedents and consequences of consumer participation in a sport brand community. As illustrated in the results of the structural model, three direct relationships (membership-attendance intentions, membership-word of mouth intentions, and geographic sense of community-purchase intentions) had empirical support. In addition, four fully-mediated relationships (brand knowledge-brand loyalty-purchase intentions, brand satisfaction-brand loyalty-purchase intentions, brand identification-brand loyalty-purchase intentions, and membership-brand loyalty-purchase intentions) had empirical support. In total, seven relationships between the antecedents and consequences had empirical support (see Figure 6.1). Overall, the evidence suggests that both fully-mediated and direct (e.g., non-mediated) relationships between the antecedents and consequences of consumer participation in a sport brand community exist.

Based on the discussion of the five research questions, it can be concluded that all ten constructs played unique and meaningful roles in the structural model of consumer participation in a sport brand community. Moreover, all ten constructs made unique contributions in terms of the strength of the relationships. The significant findings are now discussed.

Significant Findings

In order to identify the initial one hundred twenty-four items for the ten constructs, numerous scales were examined and compared. The most noteworthy challenge that was faced during the content analysis was providing evidence of construct validity (e.g., face validity) for each construct. Despite having clear operationalizations of each construct, finding or creating items that provide a valid measure of each construct proved to be a cumbersome task. The results of the pilot study and the main study, however, led the researcher to conclude that the fifty-eight items used in the pilot study and the sixty-two items used in the main study were reliable. Moreover, as a result of the pilot study, no items were removed. In fact, four items were added to ensure the validity of the measurement of brand identification.

The most important issue encountered during the analysis of the results of the main study was not that items performed poorly, but that items in some cases performed too similarly. The item-to-item and item-to-total correlations rarely were below 0.800. The correlations were above 0.900 for several items for each construct except geographic sense of community, and the correlations were above 0.950 for attendance and purchase intentions. Items that are highly correlated are often assumed to be redundant and measure the same concept in the same way (Grewal et al., 2004). In the examination of the results of the main study, issues related to highly correlated items and potential redundancy in the measurement items were explicitly examined. The removal if items was undertaken to improve the overall measurement of the latent constructs.

The process that was used to remove items during the analysis of the subsample 1 data was described in detail in Chapter 5. In total, approximately half of the items used in this research were items that were previously validated in other research studies. The remaining half of the items represented new operationalizations of the constructs. The final thirty-seven items were derived from the results of the main study and represented a wide range of items that came from a variety of previously validated sources in addition to new operationalizations. Despite the variety of sources, the construct reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) values

were all above minimum recommended cutoff levels. As shown in Chapter 5, for subsample 1, the CR values ranged from 0.877 to 0.985 (see Table 5.5) and AVE values ranged from 0.641 to 0.944 (see Table 5.5). For subsample 2, the CR values ranged from 0.897 to 0.988 (see Table 5.8) and AVE values ranged from 0.685 to 0.954 (see Table 5.8). None of the squared correlations exceeded the established AVE values (see Table 5.7). The only potential issue was the found correlation of 0.852 in subsample 1 between the membership and brand loyalty constructs (see Table 5.6).

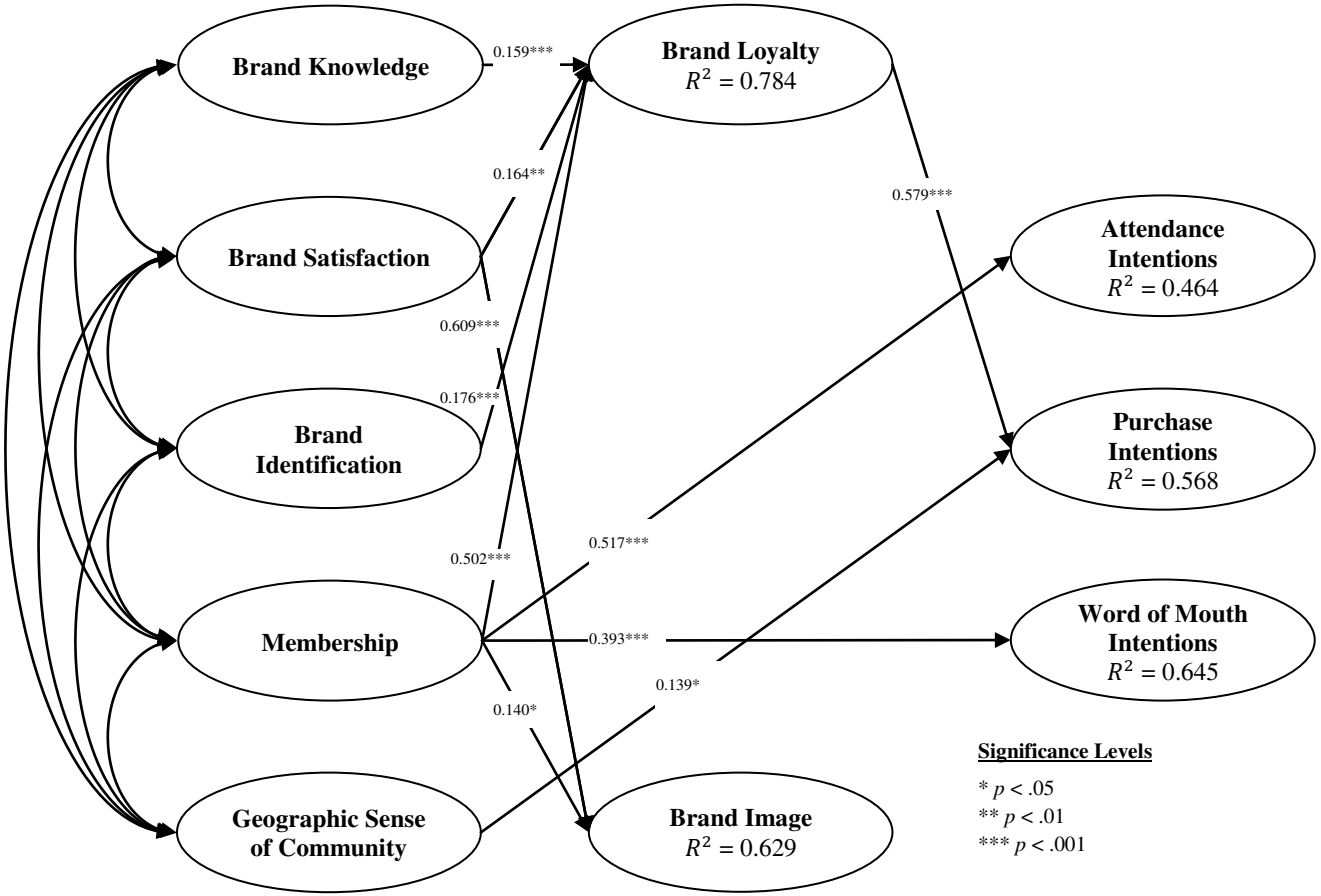
The high correlation between membership and brand loyalty was understandable based on similar conceptualizations of the constructs. Membership was defined as the feeling of belonging or of sharing a sense of personal relatedness (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Brand loyalty was defined as the overall attachment or deep commitment to a brand (Oliver, 1999). Feelings of belonging-relatedness and attachment-commitment all reflected similar types of relationships, however, the object of each construct differed. Membership was based on the relationship that existed among individuals in the fan community, while brand loyalty was based on the relationship between the individual and the brand.

In the case of brand communities, Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) and McAlexander at al. (2002) noted that individual-individual and individual-brand relationships simultaneously exist. Moreover, in sport brand communities, co-consumption of a "branded" sporting event brings individuals together. Through the co-consumption of the sporting event, individual-individual and individual-brand relationships can be strengthened. The implications of individual-individual and individual-brand relationships through the application of relationship marketing practices are discussed in a subsequent section on managerial implications.

Another important finding in this research was the existence and usefulness of two separate types of antecedents. As discussed earlier, brand- and sense of community-based antecedents were included and examined in this research. The focal object of the brand-based antecedents was the sport brand (e.g., the team), while the focal object of the sense of community-based antecedents was the fan community of the team and an individual's connection to the geographic area of the sport team. In previous brand community research, most researchers narrowly focused on the brand, and few researchers considered the importance of sense of community constructs (Carlson et al., 2008). This research provides theoretical and empirical justifications for the future inclusion of sense of community-based constructs. A sense of

membership in the community, for example, impacted attendance, purchase and word of mouth intentions both directly and indirectly. No other construct in the model had a similar number of significant relationships. In addition, the only remaining direct effect from an antecedent directly to a consequence was geographic sense of community. The remaining three brand-based antecedents only showed evidence of fully-mediated relationships with purchase intentions through brand loyalty. In other words, the brand-based antecedents all had fully-mediated relationships, while geographic sense of community had a direct relationship, and membership had both fully-mediated and direct relationships. As a result, there is strong evidence to suggest that in future brand community research, sense of community constructs should be included.

It is noteworthy to point out that the results of the structural model (see Figure 6.1) further illustrated the importance and role of brand loyalty as a mediating variable. As discussed earlier, brand loyalty has been conceptualized in marketing research as both an attitude and a behavior (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Dick & Basu, 1994). In this research, brand loyalty was conceptualized and operationalized as an attitude. Throughout the years, attitudinal loyalty, consistent with the TRA, has often been used in models as a mediating variable (see Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Dick & Basu, 1994; Hirschman, 1970). The results of this research provided further evidence in support of the role of brand loyalty as a mediator. The empirical evidence indicated that brand loyalty fully-mediated the relationships between the antecedents of brand knowledge, brand satisfaction, brand identification, membership, and the consequence of purchase intentions. Further, the fact that the fully-mediated relationships only included purchase intentions (and did not include attendance intentions or word of mouth intentions), provided empirical support for the notion that behavioral brand loyalty is often exemplified by purchase intentions (e.g., repurchase) (see American Marketing Association, 2011).



Note: $n = 313$, $\chi 2$ value = 808.187, df = 585, $\chi 2/df$ ratio = 1.382, p-value < .001, CFI = 0.979, TLI = 0.976, RMSEA = 0.035, SRMR = 0.033

Figure 6.1
Final Structural Model Results

In an examination of the significant relationships between the antecedents and brand loyalty, brand knowledge was found to be positively and significantly related to brand loyalty. The standardized path coefficient between brand knowledge and brand loyalty was positive and significant ($\gamma = 0.159$, $p < 0.001$) (see Figure 6.1). Therefore, an increase in brand knowledge resulted in an increase in brand loyalty. This result is consistent with Esch, Langner, Schmitt, and Geus (2006), Keller (1993), and Ross' (2006) propositions that brand knowledge positively impacts brand loyalty. The implications of this result suggest that the information and knowledge that consumers/fans have of a brand or sport team, which includes brand awareness and brand associations (e.g., perceptions of the brand/sport team), lead to stronger feelings of loyalty and eventually increased intentions to purchase sport brand/team merchandise. As related to a sport brand community, if a sport team can generate awareness, educate and inform potential and current members of the fan community about the brand/team (e.g., the team's history, symbols, rituals, and traditions; players and coaches on the team; important events, dates, games, and rivalries for the team), then these individuals are likely to be more loyal to the team and the brand.

The second significant relationship indicated that brand satisfaction was positively and significantly related to brand loyalty. The standardized path coefficient between brand satisfaction and brand loyalty was positive and significant ($\gamma = 0.164$, $p < 0.01$) (see Figure 6.1). Accordingly, an increase in brand satisfaction resulted in an increase in brand loyalty. This result is consistent with numerous marketing research studies (Aaker, 1996; Bloemer and Kasper, 1995; Keller, 2001; Mittal & Kamakura, 2001; Szymanski & Henard, 2001) and sport management and marketing research studies (Laverie & Arnett, 2000; Madrigal, 1995; Trail et al., 2005). The results suggest that when the sport team satisfies its consumers, then consumers have stronger feelings of loyalty toward the sport team. Sport teams, similar to any branded good or service, should attempt to satisfy the wants and needs of consumers. If a sport team is unable to satisfy the wants and needs of consumers, then consumers may reconsider their choice and support of a sport team. One of the most fundamental needs that a sport team can satisfy is a consumer's desire to feel satisfied with their consumption choice. In sports, this phenomenon is known as basking in reflected glory (BIRGing) (see Cialdini et al., 1976). When the team that a consumer supports wins, the consumer often feels satisfied and engages in BIRGing. The increase in positive self-esteem for the consumer creates feelings of loyalty toward the team,

based on the notion that the consumer associates the team winning and their satisfied feelings of BIRGing. In addition, if the consumer is satisfied by the team that they support, then they are likely to feel more loyal to the team and desire to demonstrate their loyalty to the team by purchasing merchandise that identifies and symbolizes their support of the team. As a result, marketers need to understand the processes and mechanisms that satisfy consumers. They should also engage in tactics that promote and reinforce the satisfaction that is derived from the consumption of the goods and services associated with a sport experience. Sport marketers can promote the satisfaction that is derived from supporting the sport team based on the tradition of success of the team and other notable factors. Examples of these factors include coaches and players giving back to the community, the positive impact the team, coaches and players have on others, and the individuals with high moral character who are members of the team.

The third significant relationship indicated that brand identification was positively and significantly related to brand loyalty. The standardized path coefficient between brand identification and brand loyalty was positive and significant ($\gamma = 0.176$, $p < 0.001$) (see Figure 6.1). As a result, an increase in brand identification resulted in an increase in brand loyalty. This result was consistent with numerous marketing research studies (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Johnson et al., 2006; Keller, 2001; Mael & Ashforth, 1992) and sport management and marketing research studies (Gladden & Funk, 2001; Matsuoka et al., 2003). The implications of this result are that the more that a consumer feels they share common attributes (e.g., successful, high performance) with a sport team, a higher level of loyalty results. In other words, the more that the sport team reflects the perceived self-identity of the consumer, the more loyal the consumer is to the sport team.

The marketing of goods and services is generally oriented toward meeting or exceeding the expectations of consumers. Recent research, however, provides evidence that brands symbolize and take on meaning in the minds of consumers (Fournier, 1998). When the symbolism or meaning of a brand overlaps with the self-concept of the consumer or improves the self-esteem of the consumer, then the consumer feels more loyal to that brand based on the positive reinforcement that is received. As a result, marketers should research and examine the meaning and associations that consumers have of the team, and then they should develop and execute marketing strategies and tactics that promote consumers' most desired meanings and associations with the team.

Moreover, the results indicated that when consumers identify with a sport team, they eventually purchase team merchandise. This relationship, in the context of this research, also makes intuitive sense based on the notion that merchandise is used to display consumers' relationship with the team. When consumers identify with the team, they desire to show their support to others and connect with others who also support the team. One of the most straightforward ways to show one's support is to wear or visibly display clothing or other merchandise that features logos, symbols, and colors that represent the team. The displaying of merchandise identifies a consumer as a supporter of the team, and the displaying can be used by other consumers to identify fellow consumers who also support the team.

The fourth significant relationship indicated that membership was positively and significantly related to brand loyalty. The standardized path coefficient between membership and brand loyalty was positive and significant ($\gamma = 0.502$, $p < 0.001$) (see Figure 6.1). Accordingly, an increase in an individual's sense of membership in the community resulted in an increase in brand loyalty. This result was consistent with numerous marketing research studies (Algesheimer et al., 2005; Koh & Kim, 2004; McAlexander et al., 2002; Oliver, 1999; Rosenbaum et al., 2005; Schouten et al., 2007), sport management and marketing research studies (Clopton, 2007; Warner & Dixon, 2011), and community research studies (Glynn, 1981). The implications of this result are that as consumers developed a sense of membership in the sport fan community, they felt more loyal toward the sport team around which the fan community developed.

While several processes may have occurred that explain this result, the most obvious conclusion is that if a consumer does not feel or lacks a sense of belonging to any particular group or organization in their day-to-day life, then membership in a sport fan community fills this void. Moreover, based on the co-consumption of the sport team and its games, consumers who feel like they belong to the community are able to share these experiences with one another. Additionally, consumers are able to meet and socialize with other similarly-supportive fans at sporting events. This is expected to lead to feelings of gratitude and loyalty toward the sport team that foster the relationships. In other words, as bonds are created between members of the community, the resulting relationships lead to feelings of loyalty toward the object that provided the setting and opportunity for these relationships to be created and improved. In the case of this research, the sport team and its events are the objects that brought consumers together.

In addition, as consumers feel more strongly connected to the community of fans associated with a sport team, these feelings result in an increase in intentions to purchase merchandise. Similar to the notions put forth earlier, consumers who are knowledgeable, satisfied, and identified with the sport team often desire to display their relationship with the sport team to others through the wearing or displaying of merchandise that signifies their liking or connection with the team. As discussed in Chapter 1, the TRA includes subjective norms as an antecedent of an attitude. In a brand community, social norms also cause individuals who perceive themselves as members of the community to purchase merchandise. If a consumer desires to raise their status in the community or feels like they are a strong supporter of the team, then the social norms and community pressures also motivate consumers to purchase branded merchandise in order to be similar to other members. In other words, consumers who feel stronger relationships with the community and its members purchase merchandise in order to feel as though they fit in or are a "true" member of the community. As a result, as consumers' sense of membership in the community rises, so too does their need to purchase merchandise that displays their membership status in the community to other members.

A comparison of the four standardized path coefficients also provides interesting insight into the relative strength of each antecedent. The coefficient for the membership-brand loyalty path ($\gamma = 0.502$) (see Figure 6.1) was more than three times the strength of the brand knowledge-brand loyalty path ($\gamma = 0.159$) (see Figure 6.1) and the brand satisfaction-brand loyalty path ($\gamma = 0.164$) (see Figure 6.1), and it was nearly three times the strength of the brand identification-brand loyalty path ($\gamma = 0.176$) (see Figure 6.1). These standardized results suggest that the unique contribution of an individual's sense of membership in the community is the strongest among the four antecedents of brand loyalty. Moreover, these results suggest that brand loyalty and eventual purchase intentions are most strongly influenced by a sense of membership in the community. As is further discussed in the managerial implications section, this provides empirical evidence that sport managers and marketers should not only focus on strengthening consumers' knowledge, satisfaction, and identification with the brand, but they should also focus on developing membership-type groups (e.g., a sport brand community). These groups should receive incentives and support from the organization to further develop and grow. In addition, these results imply that sport team consumers strongly desire to feel like an important member of the community of fans. Therefore, sport organizations should facilitate and organize events that

strengthen the relationships between consumers and between the sport organization and consumers.

Besides the four significant path coefficients between the antecedents and brand loyalty, two significant path coefficients were noted between brand satisfaction-brand image and membership-brand image. While significant correlations existed between brand image and the three consequences, when controlling for other variables, the unique contribution of brand image on attendance, purchase, and word of mouth intentions was insignificant. As a result, only the two paths were significant.

The first significant relationship indicated that brand satisfaction was positively and significantly related to brand image. The standardized path coefficient between brand satisfaction and brand image was positive and significant ($\gamma = 0.609$, $p < 0.001$) (see Figure 6.1). As a result, an increase in brand satisfaction resulted in an increase in brand image. This result was consistent with the propositions of Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh (1987) and Holt (1995). The implications here are that if a consumer feels satisfied by the sport team or the results of a sporting event, then the image that they have of the sport team will be improved. In the case of a sporting event, a consumer purchasing a ticket to the game and then watching the game is tantamount to a resource exchange or transaction (Mullin et al., 2007). If the consumer's level of fulfillment with the overall event experience is higher than their expectations prior to the event, then the consumer feels satisfied. Moreover, if the consumer feels that they invest their resources (e.g., time, energy, money) well, they are likely to place the responsibility for their satisfaction on the object that caused them to feel satisfied. In the case of this research, the object that facilitated feelings of satisfaction was the sport team. In the case of the sport team under consideration in this research, the team had a winning record for more than thirty-five years and received numerous accolades and awards. While sport managers and marketers cannot control the outcome of the sporting event, the environment at the event and the service quality associated with the event both impacted the level of consumer satisfaction despite the team's potential poor performance (Theodorakis et al., 2001). As a result of the team's overall success and consumers' overall satisfying experience at the sporting event, consumers were satisfied and resulted in a more positive image of the team.

The next significant relationship indicated that membership was positively and significantly related to brand image. The standardized path coefficient between membership and

brand image was positive and significant ($\gamma = 0.140$, $p < 0.05$) (see Figure 6.1). Accordingly, increasing an individual's sense of membership in the community resulted in an increase in brand image. This result was consistent with several marketing research studies (Hoeffler & Keller, 2002; Keller, 2001, 2003) and community research studies (Derrett, 2003; Pretty et al., 2003). One conclusion from this result is that consumers who felt a stronger sense of membership in the community had a more positive image of the sport team. There are two general rationales relative to how a stronger sense of membership in the community leads to a more positive image of the team. First, the relationships among members of community facilitate a more positive image of the team. In this condition, members of the community develop relationships with other members of the community. Through the exchange of knowledge and resources, members' image of the team improves based on the development of enduring relationships and positive interactions. Moreover, members' image of the team improves based on shared positive co-consumption experiences with like-minded members of the community. Alternatively, the relationship between members of community and the team facilitates a more positive image of the team. Based on a shared sense of belonging to the community of fans, members of the community feel happiness when co-consuming the sporting event with other members. Again, feelings of gratitude toward the team cause positive feelings that result in an improved image of the team.

The remaining three significant relationships were direct effects from the antecedents to the consequences and included only sense of community variables. Membership was positively and significantly related to attendance intentions ($\gamma = 0.517$, $p < 0.001$) (see Figure 6.1) and word of mouth intentions ($\gamma = 0.393$, $p < 0.001$) (see Figure 6.1), while geographic sense of community was positively and significantly related to purchase intentions ($\gamma = 0.139$, $p < 0.05$) (see Figure 6.1). Taken together, an increase in an individual's sense of membership in the community increased intentions to attend future games and intentions to positively recommend team's games to other consumers. Additionally, an increase in an individual's geographic sense of community increased intentions to purchase sport team merchandise. These results were consistent with several marketing research studies (Carlson et al., 2008; McAlexander et al., 2002; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001) and sport management and marketing research studies (Kahle et al., 1996; Wakefield, 1995). The implications drawn from these results are that when a consumer

feels a stronger sense of community with other brand community members, then intentions to engage in future behaviors increased.

In the case of the membership-attendance intentions relationship, membership was the only construct that when controlling for other variables uniquely contributed to attendance intentions. In short, when a consumer felt a sense of membership in the community, their intentions to attend future sporting events increased. It is noteworthy to point out that this result illustrated the importance of having a strong community of fans. Further, it lent credibility to the argument that while marketers do not control the outcome of the sporting event, if a community of fans is strong and members are firmly connected to one another, then consumers will attend future sporting events (Holt, 1995). This result also suggested that consumers wanted to feel connected to their team. Perhaps more importantly, they wanted to feel connected to other fans of the team. The desire to socialize prior to the start of an event, and the proliferation in fans' desire to buy blocks of tickets where they can sit close to their "friends" was evidence of this phenomenon. Additionally, this result indicated that consumers wanted to share the consumption experience of the game with other members of the community whom they feel close, or similar to, as fans of the team.

While an increase in a consumer's sense of membership in a community is expected to lead to an increase in attendance intentions, the sense of membership should also lead to intentions to give positive word of mouth recommendations to others about the team. Based on the previous relationship, the desire to tell one's friends that they should attend future games is seen as a "reinforcing cycle" that motivates people to join the community and then attend games. If a consumer has a positive or satisfying experience in the community and at the game, then they are likely to tell others about their positive experiences based on the desire to share experiences with friends at future games. Moreover, it stands to reason that if an individual maintains or increases their level or feelings of membership in the community, there is something positive that the community provides. Otherwise, a consumer would not maintain their membership in the community. As a result of their continuing membership and potentially to achieve a higher status or membership level in the community, the consumer is inclined to recruit new members to the community. In loyalty program research (see Pritchard & Negro, 2001; Rosenbaum et al., 2005), recruiting new members is often seen as a way to raise one's status in the community. Therefore, if there are perceived benefits to recommending that others

join the fan community, as members moves up the ranks of the community, they are expected to help "replenish the flock" by recruiting new members.

In the last significant relationship, increases in a consumer's geographic sense of community increases purchase intentions for team merchandise. Geographic sense of community indicates consumers' feelings of connection or belonging to a physical area (Gusfield, 1975). In this research, the physical area is the city that is home to the university. In all likelihood, most of the survey respondents lived in this city while attending the university. As a result, it is expected that the city holds meaning for respondents based on the fact that the university has existed in the city for over one hundred years and students live in the city while attending the university. This suggests that consumers feel connected to the city. Based on this connection, because the city is associated with the university and the team, the team can represent the city in the minds of consumers. Moreover, when consumers want to show their connection to the team and the city, team merchandise is purchased that represents and displays this connection.

The results of this research indicated that ten of the thirty-one hypotheses were supported. The results also indicated that twenty-one of thirty-one hypotheses were not supported. It is easy to argue that due to the strength of the team brand under examination and the relationships among all of the constructs, there is not enough statistical variance among the constructs to provide empirical support for all thirty-one hypotheses. There are, however, theoretical reasons why the twenty-one hypotheses were not significant. As a result, a brief explanation of the theoretical reasons behind the twenty-one insignificant relationships is provided.

The empirical evidence indicated that brand knowledge was not significantly related to brand image, attendance intentions, purchase intentions, and word of mouth intentions. For the relationship between brand knowledge and brand image, as identified earlier in this research, Keller (2003) posits that brand image is one dimension of brand knowledge. While brand knowledge was conceptualized and measured as the information that an individual has about the brand, and brand image was conceptualized and measured as the feelings that an individual has about the brand, the information and the feelings that an individual has about the brand may be too interrelated in order to successfully measure these constructs separately. As a result, in an individual's mind, it may not be possible to separate these constructs into measureable and distinct constructs. Therefore, brand knowledge did not significantly influence brand image when controlling for all other variables.

Brand knowledge was also hypothesized to be significantly related to attendance intentions, purchase intentions, and word of mouth intentions. While a significant indirect relationship was noted from brand knowledge to brand loyalty to purchase intentions, evidence of significant direct relationships was not found. The reason behind the lack of significant direct relationships may be caused by the conceptualization and/or operationalization of the brand knowledge construct. For example, an individual gains some knowledge about a brand. At this point, what does the individual do with the knowledge? The evidence suggests that having knowledge of the brand does not lead to any of the three behavioral intentions. Perhaps, something needs to happen in the mind or experiences of the individual before brand knowledge translates into intentions. Just because an individual knows something does not mean that they will intend to do something. It is possible, that individuals may be skeptical of what they know until they have confirmed what they know through additional knowledge and/or experiences.

Next, the empirical evidence indicated that brand satisfaction was not significantly related to attendance intentions, purchase intentions, and word of mouth intentions. While a significant indirect relationship was noted from brand satisfaction to brand loyalty to purchase intentions, evidence of significant direct relationships was not found. The final items that were used to measure brand satisfaction implicitly indicated that the individual had at least some experiences with the brand. In other words, the items were worded as "overall" measures of satisfaction. The exact type of the satisfying experience with the brand, however, is unknown. It is possible that the results of the team (brand) were satisfying, however, the experiences of attending games, purchasing merchandise, and giving word of mouth recommendations to others were not satisfying. Due to not having measured the precise experiences that led to individuals feeling satisfied, it is possible that some of the intention outcomes of this research did not result from feeling satisfied. In other words, other factors were the result of feeling satisfied, not attendance intentions, purchase intentions, and word of mouth intentions.

The empirical evidence also indicated that brand identification was not significantly related to brand image, attendance intentions, purchase intentions, and word of mouth intentions. For the relationship between brand identification and brand image, it is possible that if an individual is identified with the brand (e.g., the brand represents me), then the brand image is already known. As discussed earlier in this research, brand identification is often based on the characteristics of the brand being imbued onto the individual. Based on the notion that brand

image is a component of brand knowledge (Keller, 2003), then the image of the brand may already be known by the individual. As a result, the image of the brand may be part of what facilitates a consumer to feel brand identification. Therefore, it is possible that brand image may influence brand identification, because it may be the known characteristics of the brand that influence and individual to feel identified with the brand.

Brand identification was also hypothesized to be significantly related to attendance intentions, purchase intentions, and word of mouth intentions. While a significant indirect relationship was noted from brand identification to brand loyalty to purchase intentions, evidence of significant direct relationships was not found. In this case, it is possible that an individual who identifies with the team brand does not feel that they need to (intend to) engage in any further behavior to display their identification. The individual may feel that once they identify with the team, no further (intentions to) engage in behavior(s) are necessary. The individual can continue to engage in their previous behaviors to maintain their identification with the team brand, and maintenance of their identification may not necessitate attendance intentions, purchase intentions, and word of mouth intentions. As a result, it is possible in this case that brand identification may be a consequence rather than an antecedent.

Next, the empirical evidence indicated that membership was not significantly related to purchase intentions, however, a significant indirect relationship was noted from membership to brand loyalty to purchase intentions. In other words, brand loyalty fully-mediated the relationship between membership and purchase intentions. In short, the evidence suggests that the individual needed to feel loyal to the brand before they could purchase branded merchandise. Based on the previously discussed notion that merchandise can be used to signal an individual's membership in a group, it is possible that attending a game or giving positive recommendations does not signal the same type of membership. Individuals may receive free tickets to a game or just happen to recommend a fun sporting event to others. Yet, in order to purchase merchandise, the individual must be loyal to the team brand. In other words, in order to indicate one's membership through the purchase of merchandise, an individual must be loyal. As a result, a member might not purchase merchandise unless they are first loyal to the team.

The empirical evidence indicated that brand geographic sense of community was not significantly related to brand loyalty, brand image, attendance intentions, and word of mouth intentions. Based on the notion put forth by Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) that a brand community

is composed of non-geographically bound individuals, an individual who feels connected to the geographic area (e.g., the hometown) of the team brand may not result in increased brand loyalty or brand image. Alternatively, an individual can feel loyal to the team brand and have a positive image of the brand without feeling connected to the geographical area.

In terms of the lack of significant relationships between geographic sense of community, attendance intentions, and word of mouth intentions, feelings of a connection with the geographic area (e.g., the hometown) of the team brand may not result in attendance intentions or word of mouth intentions. The reason behind these insignificant relationships may be based on the notion that once an individual leaves the geographic area, their relationship with the geographic area weakens. The relationship between the individual and the team brand, however, may not weaken. As a result, an individual does not need to feel connected to the geographic area in order to have attendance intentions or word of mouth intentions, because their connection is with the team brand, not the geographic region.

Next, the empirical evidence indicated that brand loyalty was not significantly related to attendance intentions and word of mouth intentions. The reason behind this lack of significant relationships may be that individuals do not need to be loyal to the team brand in order to have attendance intentions and word of mouth intentions. There are many reasons why individuals attend games and give word of mouth recommendations, however, an individual being loyal to the team brand may not be one of these reasons. For example, an individual may intend to attend games because they were given a free ticket or because their friends are attending the game. In this instance, an individual would not need to be loyal in order to intend to attend a game. Similarly, an individual may feel that the sport event experience was positive and recommend the experience to others without feeling loyal. For example, the sporting event may be one of only a few large-scale events in the geographic area. As a result, if an individual who recently moved to the area wishes to join an activity where many local people are present, then an individual who might be asked to provide word of mouth recommendations may have very few choices to recommend besides the sporting event. Therefore, being loyal to the team brand may not be a necessary condition for an individual to have attendance intentions and word of mouth intentions.

Finally, the empirical evidence indicated that brand image was not significantly related to attendance intentions, purchase intentions, and word of mouth intentions. Similar to the notions

put forth earlier in this research, brand image may be more appropriately conceptualized as a dimension of brand knowledge. If this notion is correct, then in order to have attendance intentions, purchase intentions, and word of mouth intentions, and individual may need to confirm the image that they have of the team brand before engaging in any behavioral intentions. Alternatively, simply because an individual has a positive image of the brand, this does not necessarily translate into any behavioral intentions. There are many brands that an individual may perceive positively, however, this does not mean that they will (intend to) act on these feelings. There may be constraints placed on the individual that might cause the individual not to (intend to) act on a positive image of the team brand.

In summary, the results of the content analysis reduced the initial number of items from one hundred twenty-four to fifty-eight. Despite offering incentives for participating in the research, it is likely that more truthful responses are given to a short survey with a parsimonious set of items as compared to a long survey, as respondent fatigue sets in when taking a long survey (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). The pilot study was employed to assess the reliability and the construct validity of the items. The results of the pilot study indicate that the fifty-eight items yield evidence of reliability, and the construct validity of the six items that measure brand identification are called into question. Consequently, four additional items that measure brand identification were added, and sixty-two total items were used in the main study. In the main study, the reliability and validity of the items and constructs were examined again. CFA procedures reduced the total number of items used in the analysis from sixty-two to thirty-seven. The items were judged to reliably, validly, and parsimoniously measure the respective ten constructs. SEM procedures were used to test the hypothesized structural model. The model exhibited good fit to the data, and ten of thirty-one hypothesized relationships were supported (see Figure 6.1). The model (see Figure 6.1) explained between 46.4% and 78.4% of the variance in the five endogenous constructs (see Figure 6.1). Based on these results, the findings of this research are now discussed in terms of their practical implications and contributions.

Practical Implications and Contributions of the Research

This research contributes to the growing brand community research area, and it has a number of practical implications for sport managers and marketers. First, the methodological framework for this research is based on Churchill's (1979) eight-step procedure for creating better marketing measures. As a result of the utilization of this procedure, the theoretical and

empirical evidence indicates that a new, reliable, and valid measurement tool for brand and community is created, calibrated, and validated in sport brand community setting. In previous research, several measurement tools and scales are used to measure the antecedents and consequences of brand communities (see Algesheimer et al., 2005; Woisetschlager et al., 2008) and sense of community constructs (see Carlson et al., 2008). In total, evidence of reliability and validity for the ten scales was demonstrated in this research. Therefore, future research can use these scales as a starting point for the measurement of brand and sense of community concepts in brand community research. Moreover, sport brand research can use the brand-based scales, and sport community research can use the sense of community-based scales. Despite the proliferation of scales in marketing (see Bruner, 2009), many researchers, including the author of this research, continue to create hybrid scales based on previously used and new items. This research provides evidence of reliable and valid scales that can be used in future sport, brand, and community research.

The second contribution of this research is based on the hypothesized model. The model of consumer participation in a sport brand community includes five antecedents (three brand-based and two sense of community-based antecedents), two potential mediating variables, and three consequence or outcome variables. An examination of previous research highlights the uniqueness of the model in this research. Few previous research studies include community constructs. No previous research examines the antecedents and consequences of a brand community in a real (e.g., non-virtual) world setting. Additionally, no previous research attempts to apply and test a model of brand community in a sport setting.

Based on the results of this research, it is concluded that community constructs should be considered in future brand community research. A sport brand community is formed based on consumers' common interests in and liking/support of a sport brand or team. The community is held together by a common interest in a brand (the consumer-brand relationship), however, the community may also be held together by relationships that develop among consumers (the consumer-consumer relationship). The most appropriate conclusion based on previous theoretical propositions and current empirical research is that both of these relationships exist, as originally proposed by McAlexander et al. (2002) and Muniz and O'Guinn (2001). While the consumer-consumer relationship was not explicitly examined in this research, further examination of the importance of both of these types of relationships should be conducted in future research.

It should also be noted that much of the recent brand community research focuses on virtual world (online) brand communities. While the trends identified by Putnam (2000) (e.g., in-person membership organizations are disappearing) continue to occur and more relationships and connections move to online or technology-based mediums, sports and sporting events are one area that remains immune to the recent trends. Despite recent economic and labor stoppage issues in American sports, consumers continue to attend sporting events in large numbers. In the future, it is certainly possible for technological advancements to make the sport event experience in one's home more enjoyable than the live in-person experience. Moreover, if recent ticket pricing trends to sporting events continue, it may become too expensive for consumers (and their family) to attend. Therefore, attendance at sporting events may begin to decline. As of yet, however, consumers are still attending sporting events in large numbers. Thus, attending sporting events is one of the last bastions of in-person entertainment where consumers physically connect and interact with other consumers. Research is needed that continues to examine the sport and entertainment industry and more fully explains why consumers appear to be choosing sport as one of their primary entertainment choices outside of the home.

The results of this research also emphasize to sport management and marketing practitioners the importance of sport brand communities for fans of a team. The existence of a sport brand community for a sport team leads to competitive advantages and outcomes such as attendance at sporting events, the purchase of sport organization's merchandise, and positive word of mouth recommendations of current sport consumers. In order to more fully understand the competitive advantage that is garnered from a sport brand community, comparisons between sport organizations that have and do not have sport brand communities is needed. The results of this research, however, indicate that sport brand communities lead to positive outcomes. If these outcomes differentiate the team from other teams, competitive advantage is achieved.

From a practical standpoint, the potential to gain a competitive advantage over one's rivals highlights the importance of creating relationships between the sport brand and team and consumers. The creation and use of a sport brand community is an application of relationship marketing principles. Relationship marketing focuses on creating long-term relationships as opposed to transaction-specific relationships. If a sport organization is planning to support the creation and development of a sport brand community, the activity needs to focus on more than just a single transaction. Moreover in sports, individual consumers rarely attend games.

Typically, consumers attend sporting events in groups. As a result, a sport organization's focus on developing a sport brand community is expected to result in less of a need for organization-based marketing efforts. As a result, word of mouth recommendations and the creation of brand evangelists supplements, or even potentially replaces, existing traditional marketing efforts.

In addition, due to the fact that the focus of this research is on sport brand communities, the results suggest that brand loyalty and eventual purchase intentions are most strongly influenced by a sense of membership in the community. Therefore sport organizations need to focus marketing and management resources on providing members of loyalty clubs (e.g., fan and booster organizations) with unique opportunities to buy and receive special tickets, merchandise, and other related perks (e.g., tours of the facility, attending coach/player events).

In summary, the importance of sport brand communities to sport marketing practitioners boils down to an understanding of how to develop the community, how to maintain the community, and how to use the community to achieve organizational goals. The results presented suggest that the sport brand community can be developed by educating consumers, satisfying consumers, and making consumers feel like "one with the sport organization/team". The community is maintained and strengthened by making consumers feel connected to one another and the sport organization/team. Finally, if many or all of these activities occur, higher levels of intentions to attend games, purchase merchandise, and positively recommend the team and its events occur.

Limitations

As briefly noted in Chapter 1, several limitations may have influenced the results of this research. First, the sample population for this research was recruited by advertisements placed on social media networks and through emails sent to various university-based groups. The researcher made inquiries to the university about receiving contact information for a random sampling of current and former students, however, privacy laws prohibited the acquisition of this information. As a result, segments of the population that do not use social media or do not belong to university-based groups may have been excluded. Consequently, the sample population may not have been representative of the entire population of current and former students of the university. The lack of representativeness limits the generalizability of the results.

A similar limitation was also noted based on the demographics of the sample population. The researcher made inquiries to the university about the demographics of the entire population,

however, information of this type was not published. The published student body demographics for 2010 indicated that women comprised 54.8% of the student body and that minorities comprised 27.2% of the student body (Florida State University, 2011). Contrastingly, in the main study, 43.1% of the respondents were female and 17.5% were minorities. While the composition for the total university population is unknown, based on comparing the most recent study body demographics to the demographics of sample population for the main study, it is possible that women and minorities were under-represented in the main study.

Another limitation that may have affected the results of this research was the recent success of the team. As reported in Chapter 3, the team under investigation received numerous awards and accolades over the last three decades. The last time the team won the national championship was in 1999. Since 1999, the team's record generally declined in terms of their overall winning percentage. In 2010, the coach-in-waiting took full control of the team when the previous coach of thirty-five years resigned. After the new coach's first season ended with a 10-4 record and a win in the Chick-Fil-A Bowl game, the 2011 recruiting class was ranked as the #2 recruiting class in the nation (Yahoo! Inc., 2011). The winning record, bowl game win, and highly ranked recruiting class may have influenced the results of this research, as the general sentiment around the campus and in the news seemed to suggest that current and former students were excited and optimistic about the potential success of the team in the upcoming season. As a result, the excitement and optimism toward the upcoming season may have skewed the results to be more positive based on high future expectations.

Sampling, demographic, and situational limitations are common in survey-based research. Specifically, several methodological limitations should be noted. As discussed at the outset of this research, the research design was cross-sectional rather than longitudinal. Due to this limitation, intentions constructs were used as proxy constructs for behavioral constructs, based on the fact that current intentions and future behaviors cannot be measured with a cross-sectional design. Meta-analysis research on the relationship between intentions and future behavior in longitudinal research has shown that intentions to engage in a behavior do not always lead actual behavior (Webb & Sheeran, 2006). As a result, while significant relationships were observed between the antecedents, mediators, and intentions outcomes, the intention to engage in a behavior does not always translate into actual behaviors in the future. In the future research section, this issue is discussed more thoroughly.

The second methodological issue is related to splitting the sample and removing items in the main study. In order to provide more evidence of reliability and validity for this research, the data collected during the main study is split into two subsamples based on rank ordering of the nine marker variables. The first subsample is used to calibrate the measurement of the constructs. The second subsample is used to validate the measurement of the constructs and test the structural model. As is suggested in Chapter 5, the two subsamples are quite similar in terms of mean scores and standard deviation values, however, the two samples were not completely identical. As a result, the final results of the structural model could be different based on whether subsample 1, subsample 2, or the full sample is used in the final analysis.

In addition to splitting the sample to provide more evidence of the reliability and validity of the items, constructs, and model, twenty-five items were removed during the examination and testing of the measurement model with subsample 1. Prior to the removal of any of the items, the measurement model had acceptable fit to the data based on the model fit indices. Due to the fact that most of the items were deemed to be theoretically valid and empirically reliable based on the results of the content analysis and pilot study, it was not necessary to remove any items. Nevertheless, the choice was made to test the structural model with a parsimonious set of items for each construct. As a result, a thorough analysis of each item was undertaken, yet, the removal of the twenty-five items again could have changed the final results of the structural model.

The next limitation is based on the variance explained by the five endogenous variables. The variance explained by the five endogenous variables ranged from 46.4% to 78.4% (see Figure 6.1). While it is unlikely in practice that any model explains 100% of the variance in any and all endogenous constructs, the amount of variance explained by the model of consumer participation in a sport brand community indicates that there are missing constructs and relationships in the model. As a result, future research should examine other constructs that might help to explain more variance in the endogenous constructs.

The final limitations are based on theoretical considerations. In this research, a brand community model is applied and tested in a sport setting. Constructs from marketing, branding, and community studies are included, however, the brand community concept may not be the most accurate way to conceptualize consumers and fans of a sport team. Consumers and fans may not conceptualize a sport team as a brand. Instead they may perceive a sport team as a good or service. Accordingly, a consumption community or consumer tribe may be a more accurate

reflection or moniker of the community of sport fans. The future research section addresses this limitation.

The second and final theoretical limitation is based on the concept of consumer participation in a sport brand community. At the outset of this research, a description of consumer participation in the community is identified, however, no theoretical or empirical considerations are given to determining what attitudes or behaviors are engendered by a "participant" in the community. There is no doubt that two sport consumers both feel like they are a participant or member of the community, however, other consumers inside and outside of the community may have markedly different opinions of which consumer appears to be a more active or engaged participant. The only criterion used in this research to determine eligibility for inclusion is that the individual must have attended the university at some point in time. The individual that attends a university may never attend a sporting event or even pay attention to the sport team under investigation. In addition, some individuals may complete their undergraduate studies at a different university and are attending the university under investigation for graduate school. In future research, a more targeted approach that identifies participants in the fan community is needed during the solicitation of survey respondents.

Future Research

Throughout this chapter, areas and topics for future research are brought to light. In this section, five major topics and areas for future research are discussed. Based on the discussed limitation of cross-sectional research, the first area for future research is to use a longitudinal research design to examine whether consumers' intentions lead to future behaviors based on sport brand community membership. For example, if a consumer feels a sense of membership in the sport brand community, and this results in intentions to attend a future game, does the consumer follow through on their intentions and attend game? For sport organizations, it is more useful and more accurate to have data on the actual behaviors of consumers rather than their intentions.

The second area for future research is based on the amount of variance that is explained by the five endogenous constructs. As noted in Chapter 1 and earlier in this chapter, norms of behavior are generally included in TRA research. Additionally, norms of behavior are potentially an integral component of how brand communities function and operate. Therefore, the addition of a behavioral norm construct might explain more variance. Moreover, as discussed in Chapter

2, sense of community is traditionally measured by membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection. While the four "traditional" sense of community constructs have never been tested in the context of a brand community, the use of these constructs as a starting point may help future research to explain more variance.

The third area for future research is based on an examination and comparison of the concepts of brand community, consumption community, and consumer tribes. A brand community framework, based on its perceived appropriateness, is applied to this research. It is, however, unknown as to whether a more appropriate label and set of processes and circumstances describe the functioning of a sport fan community. This research provides empirical evidence that a brand community framework can be used to explain three important outcomes for sport organizations. On the other hand, the results do not consider whether a more appropriate framework is applicable. As a result, future qualitative research is needed to examine how the community of sport consumers and fans is organized and functions.

The fourth area for future research is based on the qualities and traits of consumers that characterize participation and membership in a community. Individuals in the community are likely able to identify, based on their perceptions and experiences, who is or is not a participant/member of the community. For a sport organization, understanding the characteristics of participants/members is useful in appropriately finding, targeting, developing, and engaging in activities that foster a sense of community among consumers. This research can be included in previously mentioned qualitative research designed to examine how the community of sport consumers and fans is organized and functions.

A final area for future research includes a comparison of consumer communities that form around different goods and services. Sports and other entertainment opportunities are generally considered as both goods and services, however, previous brand community research generally focuses on either well-established or niche goods or brands. Future consumer community research is needed to begin to establish how consumer communities are similar and different. Understanding the similarities and differences helps marketing and consumer researchers and practitioners develop strategies that improve the effectiveness of resources that are allocated toward developing, maintaining and using consumer communities.

Reflections on this Research

Before concluding this research, it is important to reflect on the results. In order to move forward with the future research indicated above, it is important to address and explore three issues related to what constructs could have been added to this research (e.g., what constructs were missing), what constructs were included in this research that did not work out as originally expected (e.g., what constructs could be removed), and what, if anything, could have been done differently during this research. In order to put some of the limitations and future research ideas into practice in the future, a brief discussion of each of these three issues follows.

The first issue addresses what constructs could have been added to this research. As indicated in the future research section, norms of behavior and the remaining three sense of community constructs (e.g., influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection) could be explored in future research. In order to more fully examine consumer-consumer relationships and compare the importance of the brand and the community to individuals, knowledge of the community, satisfaction with the community, identification with the community, and loyalty toward the community could all be measured. As a result, a comparison of the brand and community constructs could be undertaken. Moreover, the brand-consumer and consumer-consumer relationships could be examined. Similarly, there are numerous other constructs that could be examined and compared such as trust in the brand/community, perceived value of the brand/community, and other types of attitudes (e.g., quality and utility) of the brand/community.

The second issue addresses what constructs were included in this research that did not work out as originally expected. Based on the empirical results of the hypothesized model (see Figure 6.1), brand image did not mediate any relationships between the antecedents and consequences. The reason behind why brand image was not a mediator and did not have any significant relationships with any of the outcome variables may lie in the similarity between the constructs of brand knowledge and brand image. As indicated earlier in this research, brand knowledge is the information that an individual knows about the brand, while brand image reflects the feelings that an individual has about the brand. As a result, brand image may be better conceptualized as a distinct dimension of brand knowledge. Moreover, nine semantic differential items were used to measure brand image. As indicated in Chapter 5, six of the nine brand image items were highly correlated with one another and other constructs which resulted

in their removal. It is also possible that the three final items did not properly reflect and measure the image of the brand, and as a result, none of the relationships with the outcomes were significant.

The other construct that was included in this research but did not work out as originally expected was geographic sense of community. The empirical results of the hypothesized model (see Figure 6.1) indicated that geographic sense of community was only positively and significantly related to purchase intentions. Geographic sense of community was included as a construct in this research due to the theorized connection between a sport team, its community, and the geographic area (e.g., hometown) of the team. Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) posited that a brand community is non-geographically bound. In modern society, sport teams are no longer limited and bound to their local geographic region. With recent increases in the mobility of populations (Putnam, 2000), geographic sense of community may no longer be an important factor in the relationship between sport teams and their fans. Moreover, if geographic sense of community is important to geographically-based sport teams, the influence and importance of this construct is marginalized when considering international brands that are consumed worldwide. As a result, only in a very select group of branded goods and services would it be worthwhile to consider geographic sense of community. There may be little generalizability of research related to geographic sense of community to brand and consumption communities.

The third and final issue addresses what, if anything, could have been done differently during this research. As indicated previously, the biggest limitation of this research may be related to who is or is not (perceived as) a true participant or member of the brand community. In this research all potential participants and members of the brand community were included, however, individuals have numerous motivations that underlie why they might attend a sporting event, purchase merchandise, and provide positive word of mouth recommendations. It is possible that some of the individuals who participated in this research never attended sporting events. In other words, these individuals were connected to the university brand, yet not the team brand. In addition, some of the individuals who participated in this research may have attended the sporting event in order to socialize with their friends, yet had no interest in the sporting event. In future research, attention should be paid to identifying the characteristics of individuals who are actual participants or members of the brand community. Then, the population under

examination can be segmented and attention can be specifically paid to individuals who are actual participants or members of the brand community.

Conclusion

The concept of brand community has played an increasingly important role in marketing and branding research over the last decade. Traditionally, companies and organizations created, developed, and fostered marketing strategies and tactics that attempted to motivate consumption. More recently, due to an increase in the attention paid to groups of like-minded consumers, many companies and organizations moved from a focus on the consumption of individuals to the creation of communities of consumers that engage in the co-consumption and co-creation of goods and services.

In the area of sports, consumers generally consume sporting events in groups, not as individuals. The consumption of sporting events by groups of consumers is well-known to sport management and marketing practitioners. Evidence of this is seen through the numerous marketing efforts that encourage groups to attend sporting events. For example, sport organizations offer discounted group ticket prices, preferred parking, merchandise giveaways, and other preferential treatment and enticements. Anecdotal evidence suggests that these tactics motivate consumer co-consumption of the sporting events, however, empirical examination and testing of how this process works is not undertaken in sport research.

A model of consumer participation in a sport brand community is tested in this research. The results provide empirical evidence of significant relationships between three brand-based antecedents (brand knowledge, brand satisfaction, and brand identification), two sense of community-based antecedents (membership and geographic sense of community), one mediating variable (brand loyalty), one non-mediating variable (brand image) and three behavioral intentions consequences (game attendance, merchandise purchase, positive word of mouth recommendations) (see Figure 6.1). Despite the exploratory nature of this research, relatively large amounts of variance (ranging from 46.4% to 78.4%) in the endogenous variables is explained (see Figure 6.1).

This research provides a better understanding of the application of brand communities to a sport setting. Sports are used to bridge and bond individuals together, very similar to the notion of social capital. Based on the connections and relationships that develop around a sport brand, organization or team, the co-consumption or co-creation of a sporting event affects consumers'

affiliations, attitudes, behaviors, and lives. As a result, a sport organization has the opportunity to facilitate and expand the development of such relationships. Moreover, the development of these relationships can be used to increase the resources consumers allocate toward a sport organization, brand, and goods and services (e.g., the game). While many sport management and marketing practitioners and academics debate how to best satisfy the wants and needs of consumers, the establishment, development, and maintenance of successful relationships between consumers and the sport organization, brand, and team is accomplished through creation and utilization of sport brand communities. In order to better understand how to successfully create and utilize sport brand communities, more research needs to be conducted and more understanding needs to be gained about how sport brand communities develop, improve, and extend relationships with consumers. This research provides an initial framework and model that provides suggestions and evidence that can be used to improve the effectiveness of sport brand communities.

APPENDIX A

IRB Approval

Office of the Vice President For Research
Human Subjects Committee
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-2742
(850) 644-8673, FAX (850) 644-4392

APPROVAL MEMORANDUM

Date: 4/28/2011

To: David Hedlund

Address: 1002 Tully Gym
Dept.: SPORT MANAGEMENT

From: Thomas L. Jacobson, Chair

Re: Use of Human Subjects in Research
Sport Brand Community

The application that you submitted to this office in regard to the use of human subjects in the proposal referenced above have been reviewed by the Secretary, the Chair, and one member of the Human Subjects Committee. Your project is determined to be Expedited per 45 CFR Â§ 46.110(7) and has been approved by an expedited review process.

The Human Subjects Committee has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk and benefit. This approval does not replace any departmental or other approvals, which may be required.

If you submitted a proposed consent form with your application, the approved stamped consent form is attached to this approval notice. Only the stamped version of the consent form may be used in recruiting research subjects.

If the project has not been completed by 4/25/2012 you must request a renewal of approval for continuation of the project. As a courtesy, a renewal notice will be sent to you prior to your expiration date; however, it is your responsibility as the Principal Investigator to timely request renewal of your approval from the Committee.

You are advised that any change in protocol for this project must be reviewed and approved by the Committee prior to implementation of the proposed change in the protocol. A protocol change/amendment form is required to be submitted for approval by the Committee. In addition, federal regulations require that the Principal Investigator promptly report, in writing any unanticipated problems or adverse events involving risks to research subjects or others.

By copy of this memorandum, the Chair of your department and/or your major professor is reminded that he/she is responsible for being informed concerning research projects involving human subjects in the department, and should review protocols as often as needed to insure that the project is being conducted in compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations.

This institution has an Assurance on file with the Office for Human Research Protection. The Assurance Number is FWA00000168/IRB number IRB00000446.

Cc: Jeffrey James, Advisor
HSC No. 2011.6166

APPENDIX A (continued)

THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
Department of Sport Management

Dear Sir/Madam,

A graduate student in the Florida State University Department of Sport Management, working under the supervision of his major advisor, Dr. Jeffrey James, is conducting research on communities based around sport teams at FSU. The specific objective of the research is to understand the ties and relationships that students have with the FSU Sport Community which includes sport teams, the athletics department, fans, spectators, boosters, alumni, and supporters.

The FSU researcher is requesting your participation, which will involve completing an online questionnaire. The online questionnaire will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. If you complete the online questionnaire, you will be entered for a chance to win a $25.00 gift card. All participants must be at least 18 years old. The online questionnaire is anonymous. The records of this study will be kept private and confidential to the extent permitted by law. The results of the study may be published but neither your name nor your individual answers will be known. Benefits of this study include providing sport marketers with a better understanding of the attitudes of sport consumers. There are no known risks to participants in this research project.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact David Hedlund [redacted] or Dr. Jeffrey James (jdjames@fsu.edu). If you have any further questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researchers, you are encouraged to contact the FSU Institutional Review Board at 2010 Levy Street, Research Building B, Suite 276, Tallahassee, FL 32306-2742, or 850-644-8633, or by email at humansubjects@magnet.fsu.edu.

Completion of the online questionnaire will be considered your consent to participate.

Sincerely,

David Hedlund
Doctoral Candidate
Department of Sport Management
Florida State University
Tully Gym 1002
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4280
Phone: [redacted]

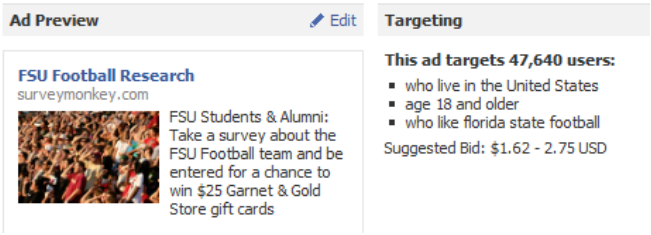
Dr. Jeffrey James
Professor (Advisor)
Department of Sport Management
Florida State University
Tully Gym 1002
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4280
Phone: 850-644-4813

FSU Human Subjects Committee Approved 4/27/11. Void after 4/25/12 HSC# 2011.6166

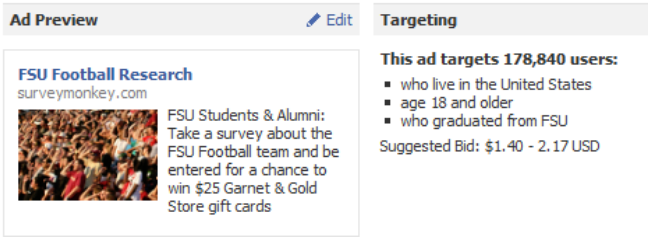
APPENDIX B

Facebook Advertising for the Pilot Study

Advertisement 1



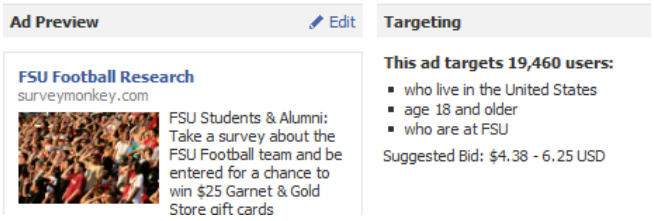
Advertisement 2



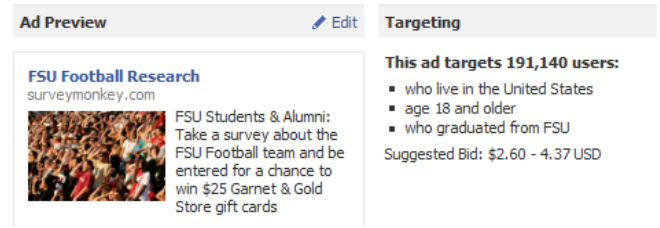
APPENDIX C

Facebook Advertising for the Main Study

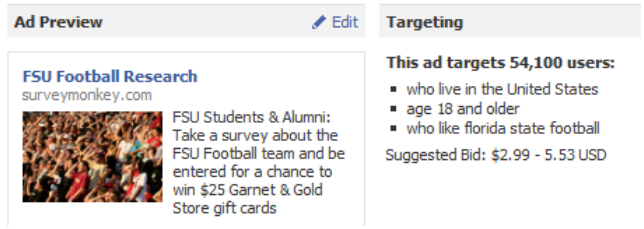
Advertisement 1



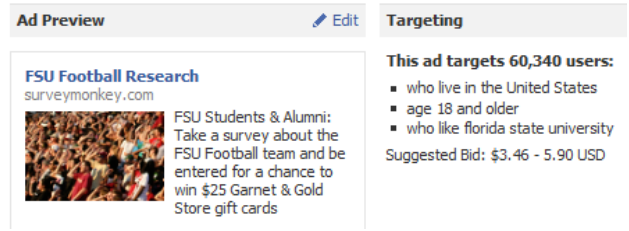
Advertisement 2



Advertisement 3

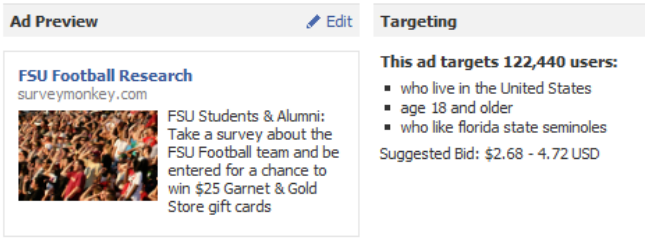


Advertisement 4



APPENDIX C (continued)

Advertisement 5



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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

David P. Hedlund was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin to Dr. Ronald D. Hedlund and Dr. Ellen L. Hedlund. He graduated from St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota with a Bachelors degree in history, a grade 7-12 teaching license in the area of social studies, and a coaching license. While completing his student teaching requirements, he acted as an assistant coach for the Park Center High School boys soccer team in Brooklyn Center, Minnesota. He subsequently spent two years in Kobe-city, Hyogo prefecture, Japan employed as an Assistant Language Teacher in the Japan Exchange and Teaching program at Kobe-Kohoku Senior High School and Minatogawa Senior High School. After returning to the United States, he coached Division I men's and women's soccer while simultaneously pursuing a Masters degree. He spent two years at Northeastern University in Boston, MA and one year at Fairleigh Dickinson University in Hackensack, NJ. At FDU, he completed his Masters degree in Public Administration. Subsequently, he accepted an instructor position at Ming Chuan University in Taipei, Taiwan. During five years in Taiwan, he also taught at Soochow University and National Yang Ming University. He also worked as an assistant coach for the Under-19 Chinese-Taipei women's national soccer team, and as the team manager and assistant coach for the Under-17 Chinese-Taipei women's national soccer team. During his final three years in Taiwan, he was the Associate General Manager of a company he co-founded that engaged in marketing, advertising, promotions, event management, and produced online and print publications. He also acted as a consultant for several international Fortune 500 companies. In the fall of 2008, he returned to the United States and enrolled in the doctoral program in the Department of Sport Management at Florida State University. In December of 2011, he was awarded the Doctor of Philosophy degree.