ASSOCIATING CORPORATIONS WITH COLLEGIATE ATHLETICS THROUGH FACILITY NAMING RIGHTS SPONSORSHIP: MEASURING THE EFFECTS ON CONSUMERS ATTITUDE AND PURCHASE INTENTION

By

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To my family and friends

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BE	beliefs about naming rights sponsorship
ATC	attitudes toward commercialization
TI	team identification
SI	stadium identification
POF	perception of financial status
ATS	attitude toward sponsor
PIP	purchase intention of sponsor's products
PIE	willing to attend sport events

Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate School
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The limited opportunities of facility naming in major league professional sports have caused corporations to shift their target to college sports. Collegiate athletics has become increasingly attractive for sponsorship investment but also been laden with potentially negative side effects. How university stakeholders, such as students, perceive and response to stadium naming rights sponsorship is a major concern for both corporations and college administrators. The purpose of this study was to investigate students' beliefs about naming rights sponsorship (BE), attitudes toward commercialization (ATC), team and stadium identification (TI, SI), and perception of financial status (POF), and how these factors affect naming rights sponsorship outcomes in the areas of attitude toward sponsor (ATS), purchase intention of sponsor's products (PIP), and willing to attend sport events (PIE). A theoretical model for measuring the effectiveness of collegiate facility naming right sponsorship was proposed and tested. Hierarchical regression analyses revealed significantly ($p < .05$) hierarchical relationships of BE, ATC and POF to ATS, ATS and TI to PIP, and TI and SI to PIE. This study provided a preliminary model for explaining the potential viability of stadium naming rights sponsorship for intercollegiate athletics.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Before becoming widely adopted as a commercial approach in marketing strategies, sponsorship was lack of apparent borderline with philanthropy donations (Meenaghan, 2001a). Corporations that sponsor sporting events are generally motivated by personal interest rather than profitable business objectives (Crompton, 2004). Today, sponsorship has become a widely-adopted approach for sport marketing and continues to grow dramatically in its importance within a corporation's overall marketing strategies. International Events Group (IEG; 2007) sponsorship report indicated that the total sponsorship spending by U.S. and Canadian companies was $14.91 billion in 2007, up 11.5% over 2006. A greater proportion, 66% (i.e., $9.94 billion) of the $14.91 billion sponsorship expenditures in 2007 went to sport properties. Kolah (2005) forecasted that the investment in sports sponsorship would grow at an even faster pace considering that sports are reaching ever larger audiences.

Along with the growth of sport sponsorship, there are two notable trends that have grown dramatically fast: (a) investment in facility naming rights and (b) investment in intercollegiate athletics. Selling facilities naming rights is fast occurring on a global scale after major sport facilities were identified as a consistent source of long-term income for a professional sport franchise (McCarthy & Irwin, 1998). A record of 44 companies committed more than $1.1 billion in naming rights in 2006 (Show, 2006). In such a partnership, the venue can earn the payment to keep up pace with escalating player salaries and in the meantime, the businesses can obtain the needed exposure and marketing opportunity (Clark, Cornwell, & Pruitt, 2002; Thornburg, 2003). Intercollegiate athletics, which is a relative new sport sponsorship avenue with the potential for tremendous exposure of corporations and their products to unique market segments, have gathered a tremendous amount of sponsorships in recent years. In 2007,

corporations invested $515 million in sponsorship deals with collegiate sports, which was $225 million more than the NHL (Miller & Associates, 2008).

Crompton and Howard (2003) predicted that naming rights sponsorship of sport facilities would become more widespread. By 2006, over 70% of the 122 major league professional sport franchises had their home stadia or arenas named after corporate sponsors, which accumulatively accounted for $5 billion in annual revenue. However, only 38 higher education institutions had their facilities named after corporations at the same time period, with accumulative $306 million revenue among the institutions (Show, 2006). Apparently, a potential exists and is also needed for this number to grow when considering the increase rate of expenses in collegiate athletics has been approximately three times the rate of growth of general university budget in the past decade (Wolverton, 2007; Greenberg, 2008). Many internal and external factors, such as facility expansion projects, winning pressures from alumni, and compliance of Title IX, have significantly increased financial demands within college athletic departments. In fact, many collegiate athletics programs are facing financial difficulties; for instance, 84% of institutions in the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) reported budget deficit in 2006. Collegiate athletic directors constantly face challenges in finding the necessary fiscal resources to adequately support their programs (Fulks, 2008). These financial needs have forced athletic directors to look for corporate supports and seek more sponsorship, possibly including sales of facility naming rights. For example, recently the Rutgers University are seeking corporate naming rights partner to fill the $30 million budget shortage for a stadium expansion project that costs $102 million (Eichelberger, 2008). It was expected that over the next 10 years, there would be a dramatic change in various aspects of collegiate naming rights sponsorship (Wolf, 2007).

However, collegiate athletics is widely viewed as one of the last amateur sport competition in the United States. Although the number and value of sponsorship agreements have increased, there has always been resistance among various stakeholders within institutions, such as faculty and students, worrying about over commercialization on university campuses (Benford, 2007; Jensen & Butler, 2007). There are also many issues about stadium naming rights sponsorship that have been debated since early 1990s (Boyd, 2000; Chen & Stone, 2002; McCarthy & Irwin, 1998; Moorman, 2002). Boyd (2000) explained that stadium names in the United States usually conveyed a sense of the institution's history, recognition, and nostalgia. When a corporation places its name on a stadium, however, the only sent message is that the firm paid a lot of money for the right. Several cases provide instances in which a stadium naming rights agreement created a public relations liability. For example, in San Francisco, fans protested against the city government and the football franchise after the name of the historic Candlestick Park was sold to 3Com (Crompton & Howard, 2003; Siebert & Brovsky, 2001). Although these types of concerns do not always stop the trend of naming rights sponsorships, they may still cause certain negative impact for both sponsors and sponsees. Thus, it is extremely important for corporations and college administrators to comprehensively understand how stakeholders perceive corporate naming deals and how they respond to these sponsorships. Furthermore, although the effectiveness of sponsorship is generally acknowledged, academic research in the area of facility naming rights is still lacking. There is an inadequate understanding about the theoretical and practical mechanism of sponsorship effectiveness (Cornwell & Maignan, 1998; Speed & Thompson, 2000). Sponsors need more empirical evidence to guide their decisions about whether and how facility naming rights as a form of sponsorship is functioning in meeting the marketing objectives of the corporations.

When providing sponsorship through facility naming rights, corporations usually attempt to establish marketing connections with fans of collegiate sports. They certainly hope that the favorable associations held by fans toward the athletic programs would be transferred to their brands, which in turn increase their product sales (Madrigal, 2001; Dees, Bennett, & Villegas, 2008). On the other hand, athletic departments need corporate financial support for the rising costs in running a strong program. A facility naming rights can have a huge potential of benefiting both sides of sponsor and sponsee, and can also cause concerns that may potentially generate negative impacts for both sides of the entities in the areas of commercialization, amateurism, and psychological attachment with the stadium. For sponsors who invest millions of dollars on a stadium, it is meaningful to know how these possible negative attitudes of key stakeholders could impact the effectiveness of sponsorship. As higher education institutions are often scrutinized elaborately with highest moral standards, negative perceptions in the minds of the public could lead to reduced donations, endowments, student applications, and student and alumnus identifications. Apparently, to name or not name a collegiate sport facility is a dilemma for corporations and also collegiate athletic programs. Investigating consumer reactions before executing a proposed facility naming plan can help identify the possible negative attributes and formulate strategies to avoid unfavorable consequences for both sides of the entities (Dean, 2002).

Statement of Problem

Intercollegiate athletics has been considered as a good sponsorship avenue to build and enhance brand image of sponsors (Madrigal, 2000). However, this relatively new sponsorship venture, intercollegiate athletics, has been laden with potentially negative side effects (Zhang, Won, & Pastore, 2005). A number of studies have been conducted to measure sponsorship effectiveness in collegiate athletic settings (Dees et al., 2008; Gray, 1996; Gwinner & Swanson,

2003; Kuzma et al., 2003; Madrigal, 2000, 2001; Zhang et al., 2005). While many of these studies reported positive effect of collegiate sport sponsorships on attitude towards product brands (Dees et al., 2008; Gwinner & Swanson, 2003) and purchase intentions (Dees et al., 2008; Madrigal, 2001), some have noticed negative impacts (Kuzma et al., 2003; Zhang et al., 2005). Of studies related to sponsorship effectiveness, only two focused on facility naming rights sponsorships and both of these studies focused on professional sport stadiums. Different findings were revealed in these studies: Clark et al. (2003) found a significant increase in stock price due to the facility naming rights and Becker-Olsen (2003) did not. No similar study has been found that examined collegiate facility naming rights sponsorship. Because of the unique market environment associated with higher education institutions, it is necessary to study corporate naming rights in collegiate settings.

One of the major differences between sponsorship and advertising in consumers' perceptions is the existence of goodwill associated with sport sponsorship (Meenaghan, 1991; McDonald, 1991). Even so, consumers may still hold some negative beliefs and attitudes toward commercial sponsorship activities at times (Alexandris et al., 2007). In the situation of college stadium naming rights sponsorship, a student may hold the belief that financial gain from the naming rights of a facility is an important revenue source for building a strong athletic program and support the mission of a higher education institution. This belief would associate the sponsorship with a favorable attribute. Conversely, a negative belief may exist, leading to unfavorable disposition. How these beliefs construct the person's attitude toward the naming rights partnership and how these attitudes further influence consumers' behavior intention should be examined. Conducting a study in the intercollegiate athletic setting, Zhang et al. (2005) examined the effects of college students' attitudes toward commercialization and the sequential

influence on their purchasing intentions of products supplied by the sponsors. Findings of the study revealed that students' attitudes toward commercialization positively explained 12% of the variance in purchasing intentions. The researchers indicated the need of conducting further studies that would include various types of sponsorship activities and also address concerns related to amateurism in intercollegiate athletics.

Communicating with target audiences through the vehicle of sports instead of direct communication is another difference between sponsorship and other commercial advertisement activities (Meenaghan, 1996). When fans have stronger attachment toward a sport team or athlete, the effect of balanced tendency on the change of their attitudes toward sponsorships would be strengthened (Dalakas & Levin, 2005; Madrigal, 2001). One of the most well documented forms of psychological attachments in sponsorship studies is team identification (Cornwell, Weeks, & Roy, 2005; Dees et al., 2008; Gwinner & Swanson, 2003; Madrigal, 2001; Zhang et al., 2005). Team identification was defined as one's level of attachment to a particular sport team (Wann & Barnscombe, 1993). Researchers usually agree that team identification plays a significant role in consumers' relationship with sports (Laverie & Arnett, 2000; Pease & Zhang, 2001; Sutton, McDonald, Milne, & Cimperman, 1997; Trail, Fink, & Anderson, 2003; Trail & James, 2001; Wann & Robinson, 2002; Wann & Branscombe, 1993). The object with which fans identify could be extended from a team to a stadium that is under a corporate naming sponsorship. Fans that are highly identified with the tradition of a stadium, including its existing name, would be more likely to generate or strengthen negative attitudes towards corporate naming rights sponsorship because of their strong emotional attachment with the old name. Conversely, low identification fans are expected to evaluate the corporate naming rights sponsorship more neutrally. Using a stadium as a marketing medium is the major component of corporate naming

rights sponsorship, which also distinguishes it from other forms of sponsorship. This concept could be as important as team identification in the team sponsorship. Fans with different identification level with a team often display distinct responses to sponsorship activities; nonetheless, how team identification affects naming rights sponsorship effectiveness has yet to be tested in the setting of collegiate athletics.

Finally, how fans perceive about the financial status of their favorite athletic programs could have an important influence in their affective orientation toward corporate sponsorships, which in turn would affect the overall effectiveness of naming rights sponsorship. Corporate sponsorship would be easier to be embraced by those fans who perceive their favorite athletic programs are facing financial shortage. Instead of negative attitude caused by commercialization, fans may regard the sponsorship as an important support of athletic teams and in turn show positive attitude. Conversely, fans who perceive that an athletic program is making profit may not consider the corporate naming rights sponsorship necessary.

These recognized differences in perceived goodwill, team identification, and perceived financial status between sport sponsorship and conventional advertising have been investigated in various sponsorship forms (e.g., Alexandris et al., 2007; Cianfrone & Zhang, 2006; Meenaghan, 1996). Yet, no study has been found to address issues associated facility naming rights sponsorship in the intercollegiate athletic setting; thus, it is necessary to examine the association of corporations with collegiate athletics through facility naming rights sponsorship by measuring its influence on consumers' attitude and consumption behaviors. When studying the mechanism of sport sponsorships, Madrigal (2001) once adopted the consumer behavior model developed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) and proposed a belief-attitude-behavior intention hierarchy model to explain how sport sponsorship affects consumers. Other researchers have

postulated similar models and pointed out the need for further investigations (Cornwell, 2000; Crompton, 2004; Gwinner & Swanson, 2003; Meenaghan, 2001a). To some extent, these models may be adopted when studying facility naming rights sponsorship.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate students' beliefs about facility naming rights sponsorship, attitudes toward commercialization and amateurism, team and stadium identification, perceptions of financial status, and how they affect naming rights sponsorship outcomes in the areas of attitudes toward the sponsor and purchase intention of products and services offered by the sponsor. Whether these variables affect students' willingness to attend sport events was also investigated to see if any negative effect exists toward the athletic program engaging in a corporate naming rights agreement. The theoretical foundation of this study was based on Madrigal's (2001) belief-attitude-behavior intentions hierarchy model. Adapting the theoretical framework for the current study, students' beliefs in naming rights sponsorship were assessed based on the attribution theory; the interactions between various attitudes were assessed based on the balance theory; and the impact of team identification and stadium identification on the process of attitude integration were assessed based on the social identify theory. The proposed theoretical relationship is shown in Figure 1-1. It was expected that through examining the proposed research model, the findings of this investigation would provide a comprehensive understanding on how college students perceive corporate naming rights sponsorship of sport facilities, and how they would respond in their attitudes and behavior intentions. Corporations and college administrators may take into consideration the findings of this study as a reference when planning to enter into a naming rights agreement.

Research Questions

The following were the research questions in this study:

1. Were college students' beliefs about naming rights sponsorship related to their attitude toward sponsor, purchase intention, and willing to attend games?

2. Was college students' attitude toward commercialization related to their attitude toward sponsor, purchase intention, and willing to attend games?

3. Was college students' team identification related to their attitude toward sponsor, purchase intention, and willing to attend games?

4. Was college students' stadium identification related to their attitude toward sponsor, purchase intention, and willing to attend games?

5. Was college students' perception of financial status related to their attitude toward sponsor, purchase intention, and willing to attend games?

6. Was college students' attitude toward sponsor related to their purchase intention?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were tested in this study:

1. College students' beliefs about naming rights sponsorship would be positively related to their attitude toward sponsor, purchase intention, and willing to attend games.

2. College students' attitude toward commercialization (including amateurism) would be positively related to their attitude toward sponsor, purchase intention, and willing to attend games.

3. College students' team identification would be positively related to their attitude toward sponsor, purchase intention, and willing to attend games.

4. College students' stadium identification would be negatively related to their attitude toward sponsor, purchase intention, and willing to attend games.

5. College students' perceptions of financial status would be positively related to their attitude toward sponsor, purchase intention, and willing to attend games.

6. College students' attitude toward sponsor would be positively related to their purchase intention.

Research Delimitations

1. This study focused on studying the relevance of students' beliefs about naming rights sponsorship, attitude toward commercialization, team identification, stadium identification, perception of financial status, and attitude toward sponsor to consumption variables in the areas of purchase intention and willing to attend games, without intending to identify all variables affecting the consumption variables.

2. This study focused on stadium naming right sponsorship issues associated with the FBS intercollegiate athletic setting.

3. This study adopted the reason action theory as the primary theoretical framework to examine the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors associated with acceptance of stadium naming right agreement.

4. This study involved only one major segment of intercollegiate athletic stakeholders, namely students.

5. This study was carried out by a survey study.

Research Limitations

The study had the following limitations, which might hamper the internal and external validity of the study:

1. This study was limited to a convenience sample of volunteer participants.
2. The survey was conducted in a specific university, which might not represent all institutions.

3. This study was limited to the administration of a survey form to research participants, where social desirability and level of sincerity could not be controlled.

Significance of Study

Naming rights sponsorship benefits the sport facility owner by providing stable revenue source to meet financial obligations, benefits the sport team through making reality a new and improved stadium or arena, and benefits the corporate by providing an unique marketing approach for the entity to connect with target audience and heighten brand awareness (Hollis, 2008). Intercollegiate athletics has been viewed as a good sponsorship venue for developing and enhancing brand image as well as providing an opportunity to connect with the community and capitalize on the goodwill of the institution (Lee, 2003). Combining all of these advantages, facility naming rights sponsorship in collegiate athletics can become one of the most valuable sponsorship opportunities. Today, most of collegiate athletic programs are facing financial challenges when the cost of building or remodeling facilities happens to be one of the major

factors of rising expenses (Fulks, 2008). The quality of sport facilities is key to recruiting and training athletes, hosting events, and representing and elevating institutional image. Their capacities and installations are directly related to revenue generation from ticket sales. Collegiate athletic directors have to find constant fiscal resources to adequately fund the soaring expenses. When corporations are looking for new avenues of sponsorships while athletics departments are anxious for financial supports, the potential of facility naming rights sponsorship can be a helpful joint venture to each other. However, without a comprehensive understanding of corporate naming rights sponsorship's impact, negative consequences could occur for both parties involved in this form of partnership. This study examined multidimensional factors of consumers' perspectives and measured naming rights sponsorship effectiveness through testing a theoretical model developed from related theories and previous research findings. Findings of this study would help improve the understanding of the mechanism and function of collegiate facility naming rights sponsorship in an effort to maximize the value of this sponsorship form in collegiate athletics and avoid negative consequences at the same time.

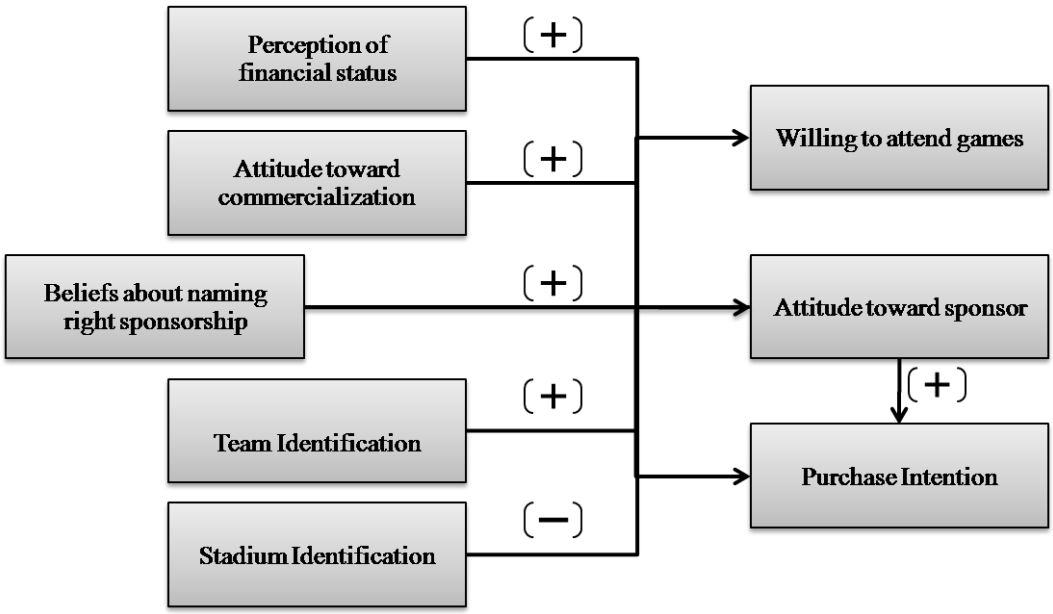

Figure 1-1. Theoretical Model--Relationships of Beliefs, Attitudes, Psychological attachments, and Sponsorship Effectiveness.

CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Controversies in stadium naming rights sponsorship seem to be a major difference between professional and collegiate sports in terms of the number of naming rights deals and their transaction values. Elite college athletic programs are increasingly following the lead of professional franchises, raising significant revenues by selling corporate naming rights of athletic facilities to business entities (Wolf, 2007). The emergent needs for further research on its effectiveness on university campuses leads to the review of existing literature on the theories and functions of sport sponsorship. To have a better understanding of the phenomenon of growing facility naming rights sponsorship in collegiate sports, this review of literature begins with examining financial status of intercollegiate athletic programs, which leads to the exploration of roles that corporate sponsorships play in collegiate athletics. Then, contemporary trends of sport sponsorships including the fast growing naming rights agreements are examined, followed by discussing the mechanism and functions of facility naming rights. Finally, to facilitate the study on the effectiveness of facility naming rights sponsorship on university campuses, a theoretical framework was derived from summarizing the literature reviewed, which was used to guide the current study.

Financial Situations of Intercollegiate Athletics

Intercollegiate athletics refer primarily to sports and athletic competitions organized and funded by institutions of higher education, namely colleges or universities. In the United States, there are over 2,100 higher education institutions with intercollegiate athletics programs, participating mostly in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA). Among these programs, NCAA Division I member institutions with major football and men’s basketball programs have the most visibility

and attraction, especially the Football Bowl Subdivision athletic programs. They compete at the highest level, generate the most attention, and obtain multi-million dollar television contracts each year (Fulks, 2008).

According to NCAA bylaws, to be a Division I member, institutions have to sponsor at least seven sports for men and seven for women (or six for men and eight for women) with two team sports for each gender (NCAA, 2008). The NCAA also divides all the Division I schools into three subdivisions. Schools that have football programs are classified as Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS, formerly Division I-A) or NCAA Football Championship Subdivision (FCS, formerly Division I-AA); the others are classified as Division I without football (formerly Division I-AAA). In 2006, among the total 1,054 NCAA member institutions there were 330 Division I schools, including 119 members in the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS), 118 members in the Football Championship Subdivision (FCS), and 93 members in Division I without football Subdivision (Fulks, 2008). Football Bowl Subdivision schools have extremely elaborate programs inasmuch as they are required to meet minimum attendance requirements (average 15,000 people in actual or paid attendance per home game) at least once in a rolling two-year period (NCAA, 2008). They are required to arrange at least 60% of their football games playing against other institutions in FBS. There are also requirements for scheduling and financial aid (Fulks, 2008).

By 2000, NCAA college athletics had become a $4.0 billion enterprise (Fulks, 2000), and it continued to grow at a terrific speed in recent years. According to the 2002-03 NCAA revenues and expenses of intercollegiate athletics programs report, the average total revenue for athletic departments in the Football Bowl Subdivision (Division I-A) increased from $25.1 million in 2001 to $29.4 million in 2003 (Fulks, 2005). In the following report in 2008, from

2004 to 2006, revenues and expenses continue to increase in all three subdivisions, and the median total revenue of a FBS program was approximately $35.4 million in 2006 (Fulks, 2008). According to a Sports Business Journal study of the 22 bowls in 2006, revenue ranged from $1.3 million to more than $16 million. After including the TV broadcasting rights and sponsorship revenues, the Orange, Sugar, Rose, and Fiesta Bowl are well over $30 million a year. These numbers combine to make the bowl system a $400 million industry (Smith, 2007). Recently, the BCS announced a $500 million contract for four years with ESPN. The television broadcasting rights rose from $82.5 million to $125 million annually (Weir & Hiestand, 2008). Many aspects of financial reports show that collegiate sports have become a big business in recent years. Athletic directors in colleges nowadays are now used to overseeing multi-million dollar licensing deals, corporate sponsorships, premium seating programs, and television contracts (Greenberg, 2008).

However, although revenues continue to increase in recent years, expenses seem to increase even faster. Litan, Orszag, and Orszag (2003) found that athletic spending in FBS institutions increased by an average of 4.5% annually from 1985 to 2001, whereas total educational and general spending of those institutions increased only 2.7%. The new NCAA financial report in 2008 also confirmed that average athletics expenses have grown at 7 to 8% annually in the last six years, which is double of the 3.7% average annual increase in university costs as a whole during the same period (Fulks, 2008). This is largely because of the increasing value in media contracts, corporate sponsorships, and ticket sales. With the unprecedented high popularity of college sports, many universities have embarked aggressively on facility expansions to accommodate the market demand. King (2005) reported that colleges have spent $15.2 billion on sport facility renovations between 1995 and 2004. The facility expansion

projects, increasing pressures for winning games, spiraling coaches salaries, and compliance of Title IX requirements have all significantly caused the increase of college athletic departments' budgets (Greenberg, 2008).

In the current business environment, athletic directors struggle to find the necessary fiscal resources to balance spending of their programs while they are required to stay competitive. In fact, most of intercollegiate athletic departments have only two sports that produce revenues larger than expenses: football and men's basketball (Fort, 2003; Fulks, 2008; Sheehan, 2000). According to Fulks' report in 2008, the median FBS football program generated approximately $10.6 million in revenues in 2006 while expending $8.5 million. The median FBS men's basketball program generated approximately $4.0 million in revenue in 2006, and had $3.0 million in expenses. Together, they generated at least 60% of total revenues, which are used to subsidize non-profit sport teams in the athletic department. In this situation, only a few successful programs can avoid operating in the red. In the FBS, there were totally 19 programs in which generated revenues exceeded expenses in the 2006 fiscal year. These 19 institutions generated $4.3 million net revenue in average. By contrast, the average net deficit for the other institutions was approximately $8.9 million. The gap between the financially successful programs and the remaining programs was approximately $13.2 million in 2006, which has almost doubled since 2004 and continues to widen (Fulks, 2008).

When taking a further look, salaries and scholarships are the two major expense items for athletic programs in Division I programs. At the FBS level, they account for one half of the total expenses: Salaries for coaches and other athletics department employees account for 32% while scholarships account for 16% (Fulks, 2008). It is a fact that scholarship costs have increased enormously since Title IX was implemented; yet, coaches salaries are the largest and fastest-

growing expense in all Division I sport programs in recent years. For the 2006 season, 42 of the 119 FBS coaches were earning more than one million dollars, while there were only five millionaire coaches in 1999 (Upton & Wieberg, 2007). The median value of all 119 FBS programs' spending on salaries and benefits for coaches and administrative employees was $5.0 billion. In terms of salaries for specific coaches at FBS institutions, the median salary was $611,900 for men's basketball head coaches and $855,500 for football head coaches. Each represents a 15% and 47% increase from the median level in 2004 (Fulks, 2008). The University of Alabama's 8-year, $32 million deal with their head football coach, Nick Saban, in 2007 is the largest in college football history. It is all about winning games. Coaches' salaries as well as facilities are part of the soaring arms race among premium athletics programs in FBS (Greenberg, 2008). Empirical evidence indicates that the ability to win football games has direct influence on revenue generated by athletic programs (Padilla & Baumer, 1994). For athletic directors, only continuing to win games can fill the extreme expectations from alumni, governing boards, and their fans, and thus bring in more revenues through tickets sales and donations. Since major basketball and football programs are the underwriters of Title IX and non-revenue sports, no one would like to cut the budgets and take the risk of losing games. This vicious circle is the best image of current big-time college athletics.

Importance of Sponsorship to Collegiate Sport

Without a doubt, financial problems have become one of the most important issues lying before all who work in athletics departments in college sports. All aforementioned financial reports and discussions indicate that intercollegiate athletics is lacking a sustainable financial structure. Collegiate athletics in most FBS institutions are facing the same problem that expenditures are growing considerably faster than revenues. As it was aforementioned, during the past six years, the growth of athletics spending has been approximately three times the

growth of the general university budget (Greenberg, 2008; Wolverton, 2007). Athletic directors have to find more sources to increase revenue substantially.

In terms of revenue sources, according to the Fulk's report in 2008, private donations and ticket sales are two major revenue sources of FBS athletics programs. The cash contributions from alumni and others account for 31% of generated revenues and 25% of total revenue, while the total ticket sales account for 28% of generated revenues and 23% of total revenue (Fulks, 2008). Again, these two items of revenue sources were the major reasons of the spiraling arms race in athletic departments since they are believed to be influenced a lot by the winning percentage. Athletic directors might have to invest more to build a winning team and win more games if they want more from these financial sources. Moreover, the revenue from the total ticket sale is relatively constant because of the limitations of facility capacities. Unless the tickets prices were raised, it is hard to increase revenue generation substantially if the ticket sales have been good already.

Donations may have fewer limitations; however, sport fund-raising has been reported causing a potential conflict with the academic donations. Stinson and Howard (2007) indicated that overall giving to FBS member institutions has stayed relatively flat in recent years while donations to their athletics departments have increased significantly. This finding means that an increasing share of the colleges' overall donations goes to athletics departments. The percentage of which athletic gifts accounted for the colleges' overall donations increased from 14.7% in 1998 to 26% in 2003 (Wolverton, 2007). The example of the University of Connecticut has well illustrated the problem that contributions to athletics may reduce contributions to the school's academic programs. The athletic fund-raising of the University of Connecticut increased from $900,000 in 1989 to $4.29 million in 1993 because of the outstanding performance of its men's

basketball team. However, the university's general fund suffered a decrease from $7.5 million to $4.5 million during the same period (Zimbalist, 2007).

Fundraisers of the athletic program have to be more careful when negotiating with donors who are also willing to support their academic institutions because no athletic director would like to lose the important support from institution subsidies. The NCAA Presidential Task Force on the Future of Division I Intercollegiate Athletics Forum indicated that most athletic departments have to rely on the funding from the institution's general budget to square athletics spending (Brown, 2006). The evidence of this reliance on subsidies could be found in the NCAA report in 2008. It showed that the subsidies from institution and student fees is the third largest revenue source of FBS athletics programs, which account for 20% of total budget. Athletics departments at public universities receive more than $1 billion in student fees and general campus revenues and services. Without such support, less than 10% of the athletics programs would have been able to sustain themselves based only on ticket sales, private donations, television contracts, and other sports-related sources of revenue. Most would have lost more than $5 million annually (Fulks, 2008). But this trend of relying on subsidies is not sustainable in the long term, especially in an era of higher-education budget crunching. Universities are facing budget shortage that increases the pressure to control costs and to keep tuition reasonable. Although support for athletics is necessary, the amount that a university should or would expend is limited. A new revenue source is important for athletics directors not only to fund their programs but also to relieve the overall budget pressure on their institutions (Brown, 2006).

Athletic programs may want to consider corporate sponsorship as a new revenue opportunity for their programs. A corporate sponsorship can bring the needed revenue for sport programs to grow and stay competitive, and it also gives the corporation favorable exposure to

the considerable size of market environment. Many professional sport organizations have entered into business agreements with corporate sponsors for the naming of stadia, in-stadium promotions, advertisements, and promotions (Covell, 2001; McCarthy & Irwin, 1998). The reason is that those professional sport organizations have faced the same financial problems that intercollegiate athletic directors are facing. When administrators of sport franchises are facing the escalating cost of running major league sport programs, sponsorship revenues can avoid the unpleasant consequence caused by raising the ticket price or cutting player salaries (Shelton, 2006; Walberg, 2004).

On the other hand, corporations are eager to search out new sport sponsorship avenues because of its ability to reach niche markets. Intercollegiate athletics, which is the relatively new area with the potential for tremendous exposure, has become an increasingly attractive avenue of sponsorship. In ESPN's 2006 poll of 26,000 consumers, 58% indicated that they were fans of college football, while 48.5% indicated that they were fans of college basketball (Miller & Associates, 2008). Attendance at college sport events is approximately 100 million annually. According to the NCAA, regular-season game attendance for the 2006 season in Division I was 42.5 million for football and 25.2 million for men's basketball (Fulks, 2008). This great market attracts a considerable number of corporations to keep looking for innovative ways to reach, and they are willing to pay big dollars to connect their brands with major universities. From businesses' perspective, collegiate sponsorships are best opportunities to reach youth market for increasing sales (White & Irwin, 1996).

Decades ago, corporate sponsorship in college sports was still a rare phenomenon; but now, it has become an important revenue source for many colleges and continues to increase in popularity. Comparing the NCAA financial figures in 2005 and 2008, the average percentage of

signage/sponsorship in total revenue increased from 4% ($1,259,000) in 2003 to 7% ($1,850,240) in 2006 (Fulks, 2005, 2008). This trend is not only happening in individual schools, but also in the NCAA overall. The high exposure of the current Bowl Championship Series (BCS) attracted corporations to pay $11 million to $15 million per year to become the title sponsor, e.g., the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl in Arizona and the FedEx Orange Bowl in Miami (Smith, 2007). The NCAA has generated considerable amount of revenues from sponsorships, while their three Corporate Champions, Coca-Cola, AT&T Wireless, and General Motors Corp, contribute more than $100 million annually (Smith, 2007).

Sponsorships in collegiate athletics have been well developed and expanded to include in such areas as public address announcements, complimentary tickets, facility signage, souvenir program advertising, ticket-back ads, coupon distribution, on-air broadcast mentions, booster club memberships, and hospitality privileges. Even the number of official sponsors can vary greatly; many schools hover around the 50-sponsor mark while a school like the University of Northern Colorado has 90 official sponsors (Lieberman, 2003). Besides the financial benefit directly related to program budget, there are other advantages for schools to involve in sponsorships. For example, game-day promotions can help boost ticket sales, and teams can save on travel, beverage, uniforms and apparel costs. At Stanford University, if no official apparel sponsorship contract has existed; many smaller teams would have to buy their own uniforms (Covell, 2001). Game-day promotions are broadly utilized to increase the attendance for less-viable sports. At University of Tennessee, women's basketball games' sponsorships provide indoor fireworks, T-shirt give-away, and free pizza to attract fans (Davis, 2002). In brief, corporate sponsorships can help athletic departments in so many ways, including that the

generated revenue can alleviate the schools' problems from the spiraling arms race. They play a necessary and important role in college sports.

Types of Sponsorships

Before becoming widely used as a commercial approach in marketing strategies, sponsorship was lacking an apparent borderline with philanthropy donations. Many scholars attempted to theoretically define sponsorship. Speed and Thompson (2000) suggested that the involvement of a second party distinguishes sponsorship from advertising, and the commercial motivation distinguishes sponsorship from altruism. Cornwell and Maignan (1998) suggested that "sponsorship involves two main activities: (a) an exchange between a sponsor and a sponsee whereby the latter receives a fee and the former obtains the right to associate itself with the activity sponsored, and (b) the marketing of the association by the sponsor" (p. 11). Meenaghan (2001b) outlined the results of a focus group research and indicated that sponsorship is well received by consumers, and represents a relative goodwill in consumers' perceptions that also make sponsorship more effective than advertising.

Sponsorships may be defined as "an investment, in cash or kind, in an activity, in return for access to exploitable commercial potential(s) associated with that activity" (Meenaghan, 1991, p. 36). A typical sponsorship usually includes signage in arenas, advertising in game programs and television/radio broadcasts of the team's games, the mark as official sponsor of the team or athletic department offering exclusivity in that category, in-game promotions, and tickets to games (McDowell, 1999). Other benefits that can be included in sponsorship deals are the opportunity for product sampling at game events, some type of on-site presence, hospitality booths, and use of athletic facilities for certain corporate events, just to name a few, as sponsorship deals continue to become more and more creative. Sandler and Shani (1996) categorized various sponsorships with the Sports Event Pyramid, which consists of five levels:

global events, international events, national events, regional events, and local events. Sponsorships can also be classified by the athletic platform they utilized, such as the sport, the team, the event, or the athlete. The most common forms of sport sponsorship agreements in each platform are presented below:

Athletes

In 1995, U.S. companies paid more than one billion dollars to over 2,000 athletes for endorsement deals (Lane, 1996). "Athletes can have tremendous credibility with the target audience and can create an immediate association with product in the consumer's mind" (Shank, 2005, p. 355). For example, Michael Jordan (MJ) and Nike are as closely linked as any athlete and product in history (Amis, Pant, & Slack, 1997). MJ was part of Nike's most successful marketing campaigns, as his impact on Nike has translated into over a billion dollars in sales (Katz, 1994). The other megastar on the golf course, Tiger Woods, earned an estimated $105 million from endorsement deals and the 1st place of the 50 top-earning American athletes in 2008. Today's athletic stars have a chance to sign multiple contracts with a range of companies from different business areas to endorse their products (Freeman, 2008).

Teams

"Teams at any level of competition (little league, high school, college, and professional) can serve as the athletic platform" (Shank, 2005, p. 355). By creating all kinds of sponsorship opportunities, NASCAR became the fastest growing sport in the United States. NASCAR teams get up to 80% of their revenue from their sponsors, which typically equates to nearly $20 million per year for the sponsors (Clarke, 2008). Racing teams, in general, have three basic types of sponsors: primary, secondary, and associate level sponsors, depending on the visible presence, frequency, and providing dollars. In the biggest shirt sponsorship deal in British soccer history,

American International Group, Inc. (AIG) signed a four-year, $99.9 million deal with Manchester United soccer team to put the company's logo on the uniform (Scott, 2006).

"Although sponsorship is typically associated with professional teams, college athletic departments also rely heavily on sponsorship partnerships" (Shank, 2005, p. 355), such as Sport Chalet's signing of a three-year sponsorship deal with the University of Southern California (USC) to become the official sporting goods store of USC athletics. The deal includes in-stadium and arena advertising and signs, video and message board opportunities, and direct marketing (Cadreau, 2008). Another deal between Texas Tech University and Under Armour allowed Under Armour to become the "performance footwear and apparel outfitter" for all 17 Red Raider sports teams. The deal expands upon a sponsorship agreement the Texas Tech football team signed with Under Armour in 2006, and began outfitting the men's basketball team in the 2008-09 season and the rest of the Texas Tech teams in 2009. The exclusive deal was reported to be worth $11 million dollars over those five-years (Sharrow, 2008).

Sport Organization or League

Besides sport teams, sport organizations or leagues can also become sponsorship platforms for corporations. Coca-Cola pays $35 million per year to become one of the three leading corporate sponsors of the NCAA (Smith, 2007). T-Mobile, the nation's fourth-largest wireless service provider has been a NBA league sponsor since 2005. It supported the league with $11.9 million media buys in national TV, including title rights to TNT's NBA halftime show and is now the presenting sponsor of that league's MVP award and voting. Milk Processors is the other NBA corporate partner; it uses a NBA star Chris Paul of the New Orleans Hornets in TV, print media, and online ads for milk. Linking with milk gets the NBA in front of the kids that the league's marketers covet (Lefton, 2008). In order to reach female audiences, Procter & Gamble (P&G) signed a multiyear contract with the WNBA to promote its brands. Major League

Baseball (MLB) and General Motors Corporation (GM) have a sponsorship agreement to make Chevrolet the "Official Vehicle of Major League Baseball" (Shank, 2005).

Event

Sport events are the most common athletic platform in sport marketplace (Shank, 2005). Examples of sporting events sponsorship are plentiful, including The Olympic Program (TOP) that was run by the International Olympic Committee. TOP sponsors gain the rights to promote their Olympic affiliations in every participating country and have worldwide exclusivity within their product category during a four-year period. TOP sponsorship revenues brought in $350 million from 10 companies in 1996 during Atlanta Olympic Games, and $550 million from 11 companies in Sydney 2000 Games (Brown, 2002).

There are usually various sponsorship opportunities provided in a sport event, such as title and associate sponsorships, activity or promotion sponsorships, media sponsorships, facility sponsorships, award or presenting sponsorships, broadcast sponsorships, technology sponsorship, in-stadium signage, official licensing, official marketing partners, and official suppliers. Most of sponsors would use a combination of these sponsorship options when attempting to leverage their involvement (Shank, 2005). For example, the 2006 FIFA World Cup had 15 official partners and 6 official suppliers. The official partners owned global marketing rights to the event, while the official suppliers received marketing rights in the host country only. These sponsors benefited from a range of exclusive and customized marketing opportunities to associate their brands with that of the FIFA World Cup™. Hyundai Motor Company supplied team buses for each of the 32 finalists, and held a contest to decide the team bus slogans. Adidas supplied 15 personalized match balls for every match of the tournament, and built the "Adidas World of Football", a replica of Berlin's Olympic stadium, to broadcast all 2006 FIFA World Cup matches. Yahoo designed and hosted FIFAworldcup.com, the event’s official website, and marketed it

jointly with FIFA (FIFA, 2006). These sponsorship partnerships are not only the major revenue source of the event holder, but also an important component for the event's overall success.

Contemporary Trends of Sponsorship

In the early days of modern sponsorship, to support a sporting event was often not differentiated from philanthropy. However, today corporations are trying to sponsor every sporting event with an expectation for huge business return on investment (ROI; Kover, 2001). The value of sport sponsorships in its ability to reach new markets and retain an existing customer base is generally acknowledged by businesses. From their perspective, the abilities of sponsorship include heighten awareness, changed attitudes, increased sales, and established relationships with customers (Cornwell & Maignan 1998; Gwinner & Eaton 1999; Levin, Joiner, & Cameron, 2001; Speed & Thompson, 2000). It has become a significant element of the promotion mix in sport marketing and continues to grow dramatically in importance. The difference between $2 billion spent on sponsorship in 1984 and $23.16 billion in 1999 illustrates the phenomenal surge in worldwide growth of the sponsorship market (Meenaghan, 2001b).

More recently, the International Events Group (IEG) sponsorship report indicated that total sponsorship spending by U.S. and Canadian companies was $14.91 billion in 2007, up 11.5% over 2006. Comparing to the 10.5% in 2006, this was the fifth consecutive year that the growth rate was higher than the year before. At the mean time, the annual growth of spending on advertising dropped from 7.4% in 2004 to 2.4% in 2007 (IEG, 2008). Sponsorship has far outpaced investment growth in other forms of marketing communication vehicles (Crompton, 2004; Poon & Prendergast, 2006), and this is expected to continue as sponsorship becomes more visible, accessible, and popular as a communication medium (Meenaghan, 1999). Overall, including North American spending, 2007 global outlays on sponsorship reached $37.9 billion, a 12.5% increase over $33.7 billion in 2006 (IEG, 2008).

A greater proportion of the $14.91 billion sponsorship expenditure in 2007 went to sports properties, with that category garnering 66%, i.e., $9.94 billion, of the total dollar amount. It was a 10.8% growth from $8.94 billion in 2006, while no other property type had double-digit growth in 2007. Three other related industrial sectors, entertainment tours and attractions, causes, and festivals and fairs annual events, now claim only 10%, 9%, and 4% of spending, respectively (IEG, 2008). It is almost impossible to watch a sporting event without corporate sponsorship influence today (Boyd, 2000; Chen & Stone, 2002). The investment in sport sponsorship is currently growing at a healthy rate, but it is forecast that over the next few years it will grow even faster (Kolah, 2005, IEG, 2008). The most important reason is the fact that sport is reaching extremely large audiences, which are far greater than other cultural or artistic activities. It is believed that sport sponsorship will play an increasingly important role in the marketing mix. For professional sport franchises, sponsorship rights fees have become an irreplaceable revenue source.

Not surprisingly motorsports continued to lead the market share, attracting $3.2 billion investigation in sport sponsorship deals annually, followed by the $785 million of NFL (Miller & Associates, 2008). However one avenue of sponsorship that has grown dramatically fast is college athletics, which is a relative new area with the potential for tremendous exposure. Because of the NCAA's commitment to stay in amateurism, there is no commercial activity allowed in NCAA events in the past. However, after finding a way(s) out to make intercollegiate athletes as indirect endorsers, NCAA events are now laden with advertisements and sponsorships (Cutler, 1999). College sports have surpassed three of the four major league professional sports in America in the ability of garnering sponsorships. Together, they made a total of $515 million

in 2007 solely from sponsorship deals, which are $10 million more than MLB and $225 million more than NHL (Miller & Associates, 2008).

This result is largely contributed by the phenomenon that major NCAA events are widely broadcast on network television, cable television, radio, satellite radio, and the internet. Because of the consistently high broadcast ratings and effective profitability, the broadcasting right fees for these games are climbing up to a new climax that reflects the value of this marketing outlet. For example, CBS Sports signed a $6-billion, 11-year contract with NCAA to have exclusive rights to broadcast the NCAA men's basketball tournament on television and also on the internet, including merchandising rights for tournament-related products through 2014. During the 2008 March Madness, CBS draw 4.8 million viewers online and the other 132 million on TV, and made $567 million solely in advertising revenues (Whoriskey, 2008). The high exposure of current college sports, especially football and men’s basketball, has made corporations willing to pay multimillion dollars chasing the sponsorship opportunities.

Throughout sports, the incidence of commercial sponsorship is increasing and shows no signs of slowing. In order to stand out in the sea of sponsorships, sports organizations and corporations are constantly searching for new sponsorship opportunities or to be more creative with existing opportunities. Besides the four common platforms mentioned above, there is a notable trend of sport sponsorship with an increasing popularity, which cannot be overlooked – the facility naming rights. Selling facilities naming rights has been identified as a consistent source of long-term income for a professional sport franchise (McCarthy & Irwin, 1998). In such a partnership, the venue can earn the money to keep pace with escalating player salaries and the businesses can obtain the needed exposure and marketing opportunity (Clark, Cornwell, & Pruitt, 2002; Thornburg, 2003). For example, it costs Ford $40 million to purchase the naming rights for

Ford Field over 20 years. The company received an estimated $19.2 million of broadcast media value during the 2006 Super Bowl which was broadcasted on ABC. Ford received an estimated three minutes and 42 seconds of exposure, and the cost for a 30-second broadcast commercial spot in the game was $2.6 million (Front Row Marketing, 2006). Selling facilities' names is not an entirely new concept of corporate sponsorship, which was started from professional sports venues during the late 1980s (McCarthy & Irwin, 1998). However, the seeming proliferation of stadium naming rights deals in recent years, and their increasing value are nothing like they were decades ago. The $400 million deal of naming the New York Mets stadium Citi Field was the highest price ever for a contract. This price was matched in January 2007, when Barclays signed a $400 million naming-rights deal with the New Jersey Nets (Hollis, 2008).

It is believed that the practice of selling naming rights will continue to become more widespread (Boyd, 2000; Crompton & Howard, 2003). According to Sports Business Journal, a record 44 companies committed more than $1.1 billion in naming rights in 2006. A summary of naming-rights deals for sports venues also indicated that 20 of 32 teams in NFL, 20 of 30 teams in MLB, 27 of 30 teams in NHL, and 23 of 30 teams in NBA (10 arenas are shared by NBA and NHL teams) had their home stadia and arenas named after corporate sponsors, which accumulatively account for $5 billion in their annual revenue. However, only 38 institutions in college sport have sold their facilities' names to corporations for accumulative $306 million revenue (Show, 2006). Comparing those numbers to the trend of increasing popularity of sponsorship and extreme exposure rate of college sports, apparently facility naming rights sponsorships in college sports is still at an early stage, but with a huge potentiality.

Mechanism of Naming Rights

Stadium naming rights has been defined as "transaction in which money or consideration changes hands in order to secure the right to name a sports facility" (Thornburg, 2003, p. 2). The

corporate naming of major sport facilities is a relatively recent phenomenon. Although the first known example can date as far back as 1926 when William Wrigley, chewing gum entrepreneur and owner of the Chicago Cubs, decided to name the team's home venue "Wrigley Field" (McCarthy & Irwin, 1998). Since the capitalist owned both the facility and the corporation, there was no sponsorship agreement within the naming process. The true birth of major corporate naming rights deals is recognized as the Rich Products' agreement with the Buffalo Bills (Clark et al., 2002). The Bills renamed War Memorial Stadium Rich Stadium in 1973 after signing a 25-year, $60,000 contract with businessman Robert Rich, owner of the Rich Products. While some might argue that it was him rather than his dairy foods company, who sponsored the stadium, it was the first reputed naming-rights sponsorship (Clark et al., 2002).

The first naming rights agreement did not stimulate a trend in sport facility entitlements in other regions of the United States. Stadium sponsorships were not considered normal operational procedure until the late 1980s, and they became prominent from the last half of the 1990s (Bruno, 2001; Clark et al., 2002; McCarthy & Irwin, 1998). Great Western Bank purchased the naming rights of the Los Angeles Forum from the Lakers in 1987, Atlantic Richfield Company paid $7 million to name the Kings' stadium ARCO Arena in 1988, and the Target Center in Minneapolis was named in 1990 (Crompton & Howard, 2003; McCarthy & Irwin, 1998). These were the only three major league arenas in North America had corporate names at that time. These agreements have been regarded as the beginning of today's incredible corporate naming rights deals (Thornburg, 2003). The number and financial magnitude of facility naming rights sponsorships started to grow exponentially from 1995. By 1997, 41 of 113 teams in the four major professional sport leagues had reached venue sponsorship agreements with corporations (Boyd,

2000). This number was doubled in the next five years; by 2002, 80 of 121 teams playing in facilities named after major companies (Crompton & Howard, 2003; Kump, 2002).

It took little too long for stadium naming rights to become a business investment of choice before they widely spread because the ability of such sponsorships to play a significant role within a corporation's marketing strategies was ignored and underestimated for a period of time (Clark et al., 2002). After stadium sponsorships finally being recognized as a relatively low-cost communications medium, there were not many spots available on the market (Clark et al., 2002). The sport facility construction boom during the late 1990s created over 160 new opportunities in both major and minor league sports, and directly stimulated the dramatic growth in sport facility naming sponsorships (Mahoney & Howard, 2001).

Cities throughout the United States have become enthusiastic about building and refurbishing stadia to attract or to keep professional teams and become one of the major cities. It has been generally believed that professional sports teams have substantial positive impacts on their cities (Irani, 1997; Zhang, Pease, & Hui, 1996; Zimbalist, 2000). Sport franchises also thirst for a better and bigger new stadium that can substantially increase revenue and boost the value of the team (Crompton & Howard, 2003). The only problem for them is the difficulty to find a financial support for the building project. Without a stable and predictable income source to be considered as contractually obligated income (COI), there is no way to obtain the debt service from financial institutions. In this regard, naming rights arrangements become critical elements of the funding process because of their financial magnitude and the long-term nature to be an excellent source of COI (Crompton & Howard, 2003; Hollis, 2008; McCarthy & Irwin, 1998). As facility naming rights prices raised dramatically following the increased need, portion of facility construction costs that must be financed by public and team funds has decreased. The

growing number of business firms that are seeking to sponsor a sports facility has had a significant impact on the decisions of numerous cities considering building a new facility. In fact, the tide of stadium building and refurbishing activities are largely dependent upon corporate naming-rights support (DeSchriver & Jensen, 2003).

It was obvious that naming rights deals have relieved some of the financial burden on clubs of building expensive new stadia or redeveloping existing facilities, but what kind of motivations could make sponsors to pay such a big money? Researchers have indicated that the stadium naming rights sponsors have the similar objectives with the normal sport event sponsors, which can include increasing brand awareness and recognition, development of goodwill and brand image, positioning the brand within target audiences, enhancing media exposure, increasing sales, building relationship with communities, and being part of an integrated marketing communication plan (Becker-Olsen, 2003; Clark et al., 2002; Friedman, 1997; McCarthy & Irwin, 1998; Welch & Calabro, 1997). For example, America West Airlines paid $550,000 annually to name the home arena of the Phoenix Suns. When the NBA Finals played at Phoenix, America West's name and logo were seen countless times throughout the series. It costs $300,000 to put a 30-second commercial on NBC during the series (Greenberg & Gray, 1996).

Swedish telecommunications giant Ericsson, Inc. was virtually unknown in the United States when it purchased the naming rights for the Carolina Panthers' new football stadium in Charlotte in 1995 at a cost of $20 million. The brand name increased by 400% in media exposure from 1996 to 1998, mostly in connection with the stadium. The awareness of Ericsson brand grew from almost no public presence in 1995 to being recognized by 50% of adults in the Carolinas and by 44% adults nationally (Friedman, 1997). Right after 3Com Corp. extended its deal to rename San Francisco's Candlestick Park Stadium as 3Com Park, the company found its

name in 180 published articles. In addition, it saw its revenues increase from $1.5 billion in 1995 to $2.3 billion in 1996 and saw a sharp increase in trading of its stock (Greenberg & Gray, 1996; Welch & Calabro, 1997).

The success of these precedent investments was a key to the substantial increase of companies' willingness to pay at a premium for the naming rights; yet, it was not the only reason for the raising price in following deals. The creativity and evolution in naming rights packages were the other major force for the appearance of hundred-million-dollar contracts. In the late 1990s, facility naming rights sponsorship evolved from being single-dimensional signage deals to multi-dimensional, integrated packages. They provide corporate naming partners a range of benefits in addition to the facility's name, such as premium seating and tickets to every event, preferred parking, all forms of advertising and signage on/around the building, right to use the building by schedule, on-site exhibit space or shops, exclusive pouring rights and catering rights, ATMs, branding on press conference, uniforms of ushers, food service and other vendors, cups, plates, and napkins, business cards, press releases, and click-through links on the club's website (Becker-Olsen, 2003; Clark et al., 2002; Crompton & Howard, 2003; Hollis, 2008; McCarthy & Irwin, 1998).

The corporate sponsor purchasing the naming rights is also purchasing the right to market its products or services to people attending the facility as well as to local, national, and international audiences. Besides the major naming rights of the stadium, every deal is unique and negotiable based on the sponsor's overall marketing plan. The classic integrated naming rights sponsorship agreements is the $185 million/20-year deal between Philips Electrics North America and Turner Broadcast System. The contract named the 20,000-seat arena shared by Atlanta Hawks (NBA) and Atlanta Thrashers (NHL) as Philips Arena, and provided the sponsor

a 10,000-square-foot consumer products display area in the arena's most noticeable location. The arena was also required to equip with all the company's products, which included hundreds of big-screen television monitors and all the electric lights throughout the facility (Crompton & Howard, 2003).

Naming rights sponsorship have been repeatedly reported how they benefit the facility owner, the team, and the corporation. Briefly, each year the multi-million contract provides the owner constant revenue and help to meet debt obligations related to construction or operation. The team obtains a new and improved stadium equally meaning increase in revenues. Meanwhile, the sponsor brand earns a unique approach to connect with target audience, and heightens brand awareness and profile in an increasingly crowded marketplace (Hollis, 2008). The long-term nature of naming rights sponsorships make all involved parties easier to build stronger business connection between each other, and make themselves more effective than short-term event sponsorships (Becker-Olsen, 2003; Clark et al., 2002). However, the long-term contracts also reduce the availability of these unique marketing opportunities that were relatively few in the beginning. As McCarthy and Irwin suggested in 1998, since there were only 94 (101 in 2008) major league properties in North America, the trend would continue to grow and expand beyond major league facilities into middle-tier markets, such as minor league and collegiate sports.

As the constructions of new stadia in major leagues have been slowing down, the trend has been growing on university campuses. The Carrier Dome of Syracuse University was considered as the first corporate named stadium in college sport (Dome Sweet Dome, 2002). The Carrier Corporation paid $2.5 million gift to the university to help the $27 million construction project of the 50,000-seat domed stadium in 1980. Unlike today's practice of sponsorships, the company can keep the naming rights in perpetuity with one-time payment (Crompton & Howard, 2003;

Dome Sweet Dome, 2002). This was also the only one deal in college sports signed before 1990s, when naming rights sponsorships trends started. This form of sponsorship did not start to increase on campus until 1998-2000, when there were 11 deals signed in that period including the single largest one (Crompton & Howard, 2003). The agreement between Pepsi and Fresno State University was worth $40 million for 23 year, starting in 2000. Pepsi subsequently passed the right to their major business partner in California to name the facility Save Mart Center, but keep the exclusive pouring rights across the entire Fresno State University campus (Crompton & Howard, 2003). The number of collegiate corporate naming rights deals has increased to 38 by 2006, showing that corporations' focuses on facility naming rights have been transferred into collegiate sports (Show, 2006).

On the other hand, collegiate sports have struggled financially in recent years due to rising costs and the need for expanded revenue sources (Shelton, 2006; Walberg, 2004). The cost of building or remodeling facilities happens to be one of the major factors of rising expenses. Facilities are a key factor to recruiting and institutional image, and their capacities and installations are directly related to the major revenue generated from ticket sales; however, facility expenditures are especially difficult to be under control for athletic directors (Fulks, 2008). Many institutions have to take on long-term indebtedness to construct new, brighter, and bigger facilities, which can place potentially serious stress on both the athletic program and the institution (Eichelberger, 2008). Nevertheless, financial burdens make institutions feel constrained from maintaining their competitive edge. Looking for corporate supports for facility improvement has then become a considerable option (Shelton, 2006). For example, recently Rutgers University are seeking corporate naming rights partner to fill the $30 million short of $102 million stadium expansion, which would increase its seating by 13,500 to 56,000. The

Scarlet Knights need stadium sponsorship revenue to underwrite their debt before the 2009 season-opener and they are closing to a deal with a New Jersey-based company for between $1.5 million and $2 million annually (Eichelberger, 2008).

Big-time college athletic programs are increasingly following the lead of professional franchises, raising significant revenues by selling the corporate naming rights of athletic facilities for specific terms (Wolf, 2007). Rutgers University is the 10th school in the FBS to sell the name of its football stadium to a corporation. Besides the aforementioned Carrier Dome of Syracuse University, the other eight leaders are Jones AT&T Stadium of Texas Tech University, Papa John's Cardinal Stadium of the University of Louisville, BB&T Field of Wake Forest University, Chevy Chase Bank Field at Byrd Stadium of the University of Maryland, Movie Gallery Veterans Stadium of Troy University, Bright House Networks Stadium of the University of Central Florida, InfoCision Stadium of the University of Akron, and TCF Bank Stadium of the University of Minnesota (Eichelberger, 2008; Wolf, 2007). Five of these deals were signed in just the past few years with a price higher than $20 million on average, and it seems that the price is still rising. The combined corporate naming-rights price for both its stadium and arena (Comcast Center) at the University of Maryland was $45 million (Eichelberger, 2008). It was expected that over the next 10 years, there would be a dramatic change in naming rights in collegiate areas (Wolf, 2007).

Controversies in Stadium Naming Rights Sponsorship

There are many business corporations that are eager for new venues to sponsor; athletics departments are anxious for obtaining stable financial support; and sponsorship exposure through college football and men’s basketball facilities are even considered at times higher than some of the major league sports. From every aspect of considerations, it seems that a naming rights deals explosion in college sports is reasonable and expectable. However, collegiate athletics is one of

the last bastions of true amateur sport competition in the United States. There have been considerable critiques about the deeply corporate involvement and over commercialization of intercollegiate athletics. Scholars condemn the over commercialization as direct attack on academic foundations and violation of the educational mission of institutions (Benford, 2007; Covell, 2001; Gray, 1996; Jensen & Butler, 2007; McAllister, 1998; Yaeger & Welzel, 2000). There have been several issues about stadium naming rights sponsorship that have been discussed since early 1990s (Boyd, 2000; Chen & Stone, 2002; Jensen & Butler, 2007; McCarthy & Irwin, 1998; Moorman, 2002; Welch & Calabro, 1997). Although these concerns did not stop the trend of naming rights sponsorships in sports, some of them indeed have caused certain negative impact for both naming rights sponsor and sponsee. If college athletics directors hastily pursue naming rights deals without comprehensively assessing the situation, these issues would potentially harm institutions in various ways.

Commercialization in College Sports

Andersen (1995) noted that professional sport is probably the most commercialized sector of popular entertainment in the U.S. society because of the invasion of corporate sponsorship. McAllister (1998) explained that after experiencing the financial cuts in federal grants, colleges and universities have started embracing corporate sponsorships and developing reliance on this revenue source, which has certainly made college sports become one of the most visible and influential segments of commercialized sports. This commercialism is diagnosed to be the source of the cheating and financial scandals associated with college sports (Zimbalist, 1999). It causes an endless, vicious cycle that athletics departments have to pursue for more athletic profit to fuel the pursuit of more victories. The pressure to win more games is actually from the need of more revenues. Consequently, academic scandals within athletic departments become commonplace. David Ridpath, former Assistant Athletic Director at Marshall University, was demoted,

ridiculed, and finally quitted his job because of his reporting that a professor at Marshall University was distributing tests to the football players before the test date (Benford, 2007). Nike and Adidas were found putting their efforts to influence high school prospects to attend those universities that were their sponsorship partners (Yaeger & Welzel, 2000). These scandals emerge in college sports in an endless stream and continue threatening the very integrity of higher education (Benford, 2007).

The NCAA's commitment to amateurism is also challenged by the unprecedented commercialization of college sport. The ongoing commercialization is transforming college athletes into professional entertainers for whom maintaining athletic eligibility often takes precedence over obtaining a meaningful education. Institutions' increasing involvement in public entertainment is regarded as ruining the reputation of higher learning and violating its fundamental educational mission (McAllister, 1998). When sponsorships are exclusively benefiting the athletic department, they are also having a negative effect on the reputation of the entire university (Benford, 2007; Gray, 1996; Zimbalist, 1999). Covell (2001) indicated that institutions are aware that corporate sponsorship may adversely affect the reputation of the college. For instance, the University of Oregon had to weather criticism after their corporate sponsor, Nike, was accused of underpaying workers in Third World countries.

Stanford University reacted to criticism of growing commercialism by removing all large corporate signs and banners from its football, basketball, and baseball venues. This corporate "cleansing" costs the athletic department approximately $2.5 million per year (Workman, 1998). Instead of jump into the vicious cycle to join the arm-race with other schools in Division I, Harvard University does not offer any athletic related scholarship and operates 41 sports for 1,500 student-athletes with $4 million annual deficit annually. Its athletic department chose to

stay away from sponsorship and corporate involvement in order to maintain a non-profit, community-based image (Covell, 2001).

It seems like a choice between reality and ideality, and the price for ideality is usually costly. Although many people today feel that collegiate sports are tainted and have lost their purity because of the amount of commercialism and marketing that are enclosed in collegiate athletics, college administrators would argue that this is indeed a necessary support for the soaring costs involved in running a successful athletic department in today's competitive society. When all the factors are considered, corporate sponsorships may be viewed by some institutions and their fans as acceptable compromise (Shelton, 2006). Corporate sponsorships would be easier to be embraced by those fans who perceive their athletic programs are losing because of financial shortage. Instead of negative attitude caused by commercialization, fans may regard the sponsors as an important support of the teams and show positive attitude in return. To build a strong athletic program as fans often expect may be a good excuse for both college athletic director and sponsors when they are dealing with these conflicts; even so, it is necessary for both sides to have a comprehensive evaluation before entering a corporate naming rights deal.

Issues in Corporate Naming Rights Sponsorship

Welch and Calabro (1997) first reported that corporate naming of a sport facility may bring negative impact on the community. Chen and Stone (2002) indicated that there could be many financial and ethical challenges happened to corporate naming rights partners, which may in turn pose challenges for sport organizations. Especially for facilities with rich tradition and history, it is difficult for fans to like the new facility names. It is hard even just to imagine calling New York's Yankee Stadium, or Fenway Park in Boston, or Soldier Field in Chicago by any other designation (McCarthy & Irwin, 1998).

For many years, sports stadia were named after a local trait of the community, the team, or one of the area's landmarks or heroes to highlight the connection among the team, facility, and place (Boyd, 2000; Chacar & Hesterly, 2004). For example, the famous Fenway Park opened in 1912 and was named after the Fenway section of Boston. Yankee Stadium, which was built in 1923 and retired in 2008, was named after the baseball team. The former Mile High Stadium demonstrates the local characteristic of Denver City. Soldier Field in Chicago was explicitly commemorative as a war memorial, named in tribute to America's fallen soldiers. Shea Stadium, retired home of the Mets, was named for lawyer William A. Shea, who helped bring the National League back to New York. These names are not only labels of the buildings, but also identities that declare the relationships among cities, teams, fans, and buildings via those legends in public memory (Boyd, 2000), just like every baseball fan would never forget what happened in Fenway Park in 2004, when the Red Sox finally broke the Babe Ruth's Curse and won the World Series.

Community members usually have strong emotional attachment for these commemorative names, which represent the past and continuing story at the place (Boyd, 2000). Siebert and Brovsky (2001) describe how Denver residents refused to acknowledge the corporate name of the new stadium built for the Denver Broncos. The public of Denver perceived 'Mile High' was an integral part of heritage of the Broncos, which was also their identification with the team and should be owned by the community. The name was a source of pride of many residents with its widely spread national recognition by saying the stadium's perch 5280 feet above sea level (Kass, 2000). Therefore, when the old Mile High Stadium retired in 2000, voters of Denver approved a tax increase to build a new stadium. Although Invesco Funds Group paid $120 million/20 years to name the new facility Invesco Field at Mile High, Denver residents, Mayor Wellington Webb, and the city's major newspaper insisted that priceless local icon should not be traded away and

continued to call the facility ‘Mile High Stadium’ (Crompton & Howard, 2003; Seibert & Brovsky, 2001).

Obviously, when a corporate name is attached to something that already has a strong identity, it then does not become part of the community conversation. The Mile High is not the only instance in which a stadium naming rights agreement provoked a public protestation (Crompton & Howard, 2003; Siebert & Brovsky, 2001). In San Francisco, fans protested after the name of historic Candlestick Park was sold to 3Com. Although the official name became 3Com Park at Candlestick Point, a majority of fans and media continued to call it Candlestick or ‘the Stick’ (Guzzo, 2001). When the $900,000 yearly contract expired in 2002, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors decided against granting the 49ers the ability to enter into a second naming rights deal. The City's Board of Supervisors believed that the municipal park should not be commercialized (Crompton & Howard, 2003).

These concerns could also be true for sport stadiums on university campuses. Spectator sports, especially football and basketball, contribute in important ways to the institution's culture by providing campuses with distinct identities and connections to the student body, alumni bases, and fans across the nation (Toma, 2003). The identification and connection among students, faculty, alumni, community members, athletic team, and stadium are even stronger than that in professional sports because they are all parts of the university in nature. Identifying with the football team can be a source of civic pride, and bonds developed between students and an institution through athletic programs can extend for years beyond their time on campus (Lee, Miloch, Kraft, & Tatum, 2008). All those members of the university were connected by their memories of the history, tradition, big athletic rivalries, and big moments that happened in the stadium. For example, the traditional Gator Walk and Gator chop at the Swamp (i.e., Ben Hill

Griffin Stadium -football stadium of the University of Florida) connect over 90,000 screaming fans on every single game-day and turn the stadium into an orange-and-blue thunderdome (O'Keefe, 2007). The name is not only an identity of every citizen of Gator Nation, but has also been registered as a trademark for use in licensing merchandise of the University of Florida (Thornburg, 2003).

As Boyd (2000) warned, replacing these commemorative names with corporate names could threaten the tenuous relationships that the athletic programs have established. The old name communicates a message about the connection, and helps the team to be identified as part of the community by the fans. When a corporation places its name on a stadium, however, it sends out only a message saying that the business corporation has paid a lot of money for the temporary name. This could remind people that the sport event is actually a business, and fans that support this team are nothing but paying customers. Sport fans tend to overlook the pragmatic, commercial aspects of the game in search of idealized, pure sport in their minds. To sell the place of pure games just for money could smash the illusion and passion for sports (Boyd, 2000).

The other problem is that a temporarily sold name has its timetable; one day at some point, it will expire. The name will be replaced again, and then the new name has to rebuild the connection and identity. DeSchriver and Jensen (2003) noted that sponsors are rather to pay to have their name on a new facility than to invest in a stadium that has previously been known by a corporate name, but now has an expired contract. It definitely would be troublesome for a new name to start over an old one. The original relationship was built on the fans' commitment to remember the name and connect with what they have experienced in the place in their memory.

Fans are less likely to remember and connect themselves with a temporary corporation's name. Besides, sometimes they do not even know how long the name is going to exist (Boyd, 2000).

In 2000, the Patriots acquired $114 million from an internet company, CMGI, for 15 years of naming rights of their new stadium, which matched the largest NFL naming deal to date. However, CMGI decided to drop the naming rights of the stadium before the Patriots even played a single game in the new stadium. The company had fallen on desperate financial times, and gave up the naming rights as part of a restructuring plan. The stadium was finally renamed as Gillette Stadium after its new sponsor (Wright, 2002). The Patriots fans were not the first, and also may not be the last, who suffered through this type of windy changes. PSINet dropped the naming rights to the NFL's Baltimore Ravens' home and later declared bankruptcy in 2002 (Wright, 2002). Adelphia Communications pulled its name from the NFL's Tennessee Titans stadium just one month before CMGI did. Apparently, level of financial stability has become one of the major considerations that need to be addressed when seeking corporate naming partners (Crompton & Howard, 2003).

The name of the stadium represents a connection, not only between the team and the fans, but also between the sponsor and the sponsee. If a sport team chose a wrong corporate naming partner, things are going much worse than just dropped the deal. Once in 2002, Houston Astros was connected with an accounting scandal, bringing in negative public perceptions and media scrutiny because of their partner, Enron Corporation. The Astros eventually paid $2.1 million to buy the naming rights back when the telecommunications company filed for bankruptcy and several of their executives were arrested and charged with fraud (Crompton & Howard, 2003).

No organization would like to have any connection with a bad name that could stain its image, and this is especially true for academic institutions. Similar situations also happened on

campuses, even though they were not a corporate name. Villanova University received $5 million from John E. Du Pont to build a recreation centre, which was named the Du Pont Pavilion. However, a few years later, Du Pont was convicted in a murder charge. Fortunately, there was no formal contract for the deal and the university was able to simply call the centre The Pavilion. The University of Missouri's new basketball arena was named 'Paige Sports Arena' when it opened in 2004. It was named after Elizabeth Paige Laurie, a college student at that time, because her parent donated $25 million to help build the arena. To Name an arena after a college student seemed strange, particularly since Elizabeth Paige went to college at USC, not Missouri. But Laurie's parents finally returned the arena's naming rights to the university after Elizabeth Paige was found paying her roommate $20,000 to write papers and coursework at USC (Crompton & Howard, 2003).

Sport facilities in colleges are frequently named after major donors, who may have contributed 30-50% of the construction fees (Cohen, 1999). Although this could also be regarded as selling the name for facilities' construction fees, the major difference is that they do not have commercial activities involved in the name. The donation is made by one-time giving and the name is perpetual, which is also different from the annual corporate naming rights fees that are given in exchange for naming rights within a timeframe (Crompton & Howard, 2003). Despite the aforementioned deals, corporate naming rights sponsorship in college sports still have not grown as quickly as they were in professional sports (Eichelberger, 2008). Academic institutions tend to be more conservative, particularly public universities, since they may worry about contradictory voices on the appropriateness of putting university assets on a commercial name. But even at these institutions, there are a growing number of people who are convinced that

corporate support is essential to making a stadium reality, especially when the athletic programs are facing a tight budget (Wolf, 2007).

For example, The Ohio State University just raised $200 million to upgrade their Ohio Stadium without selling the naming rights. Athletic Director Gene Smith contended that the stadium is not for sale because it is owned by the people of Ohio. It appears that commercialism requires a fine balance (Eichelberger, 2008). In the contrary, the Buckeyes basketball and men's ice hockey teams' 19,000-seat arena was actually named after a local department store and its chairman as Value City Arena at The Jerome Schottenstein Center. The Schottenstein family donated $11.3 million for the facility's construction, while $1.1 million came from Value City Furniture and $100,000 from Schottenstein Stores. The university set a policy to comfort contradictory voices while selling the corporate naming rights by not putting a corporate name on an actual building, but on the space inside. Keeping the traditional way of naming a college facility is the other remedy. The Buckeyes now have the Value City Arena, Huntington Club, and Worthington Industries weight room been sold. When a premiere athletic program like The Ohio State University has to rely on corporation support so deeply, it is not difficult to image why colleges would like to enter corporate naming rights sponsorship deals. Instead of creating new way to hide the corporate names, college administrators would better to comprehensively investigate how stakeholders perceive corporate naming deals and how they response to these sponsorships (Wolf, 2007).

Studying Sponsorship Effectiveness

Facility naming rights sponsorship has become the fast growing form of corporate sponsorship in recent years, and the practice appears to continue and become more widespread (Boyd, 2000; Crompton & Howard, 2003). It is a trend that is fast catching on a global scale because of the increasing commercialization of sport over the past two decades (Hollis, 2008).

According to Sports Business Journal, a record 44 companies committed more than $1.1 billion in naming rights in 2006 (Show, 2006). Corporate sponsorship spending on college sports reached $515 million in 2007, which was the third largest spending category behind only Motorsports and NFL (Miller & Associates, 2008).

Intercollegiate athletics have been credited as a good sponsorship venue to enhance or build brand image by sponsors (Madrigal, 2000). When sponsoring college sports, corporations are also looking for an opportunity to connect with the university community and capitalize on the good-will of the institution (Lee, 2003). However, this relatively new sponsorship venture, intercollegiate athletics, is laden with potentially negative side effects (Zhang et al., 2005). A small number of studies have been conducted that examined sponsorship effectiveness in collegiate sport settings (Dees et al., 2008; Gray, 1996; Gwinner & Swanson, 2003; Kuzma, Veltri, Kuzma, & Miller, 2003; Madrigal, 2000, 2001; Zhang et al., 2005). Most of these studies reported a positive impact of collegiate sport sponsorship on attitude towards brand (Dees et al., 2008; Gwinner & Swanson, 2003) and purchase intentions (Dees et al., 2008; Madrigal, 2000, 2001); whereas, Kuzma et al. (2003) and Zhang et al. (2005) noticed negative effect could also occur.

Specific to stadium/arena naming rights impact on sponsorship effectiveness, McCarthy and Irwin (1998) examined the evolution of the selling of stadium and arena naming rights and the legal and contractual issues involved. Thornburg (2003) used litigation case examples to discuss legal issues in corporate naming sponsorship contracts. DeSchriver and Jensen (2003) attempted to utilize explanatory variables, such as number of games played and facility type, to calculate the financial value of naming rights sponsorship deals. Only two studies attempted to quantify the effectiveness of naming rights sponsorship, which were done by Becker-Olsen

(2003) and Clark et al. (2002). Both studies compared the changes in stock prices during the time of sponsorship announcement to evaluate the effectiveness of naming rights sponsorship on sponsoring companies. While Clark et al. (2002) found a significant increase in stock price at the time of announcement, but Becker-Olsen (2003) did not. All of these previous studies were focused on naming rights deals in professional sports. Unfortunately, no empirical investigations were found that examined how college stadium naming rights sponsorship would be perceived and to what extent it would be effective.

As the value and popularity of corporate sponsorship continue to soar, having a better evaluation about its effectiveness has become the major concern of both researchers and marketers. Researchers make their efforts on examining whether the sponsorship has achieved the sponsors' objects, such as brand image enhancement and increasing purchase intention. In the past decade, researchers have adopted theories from advertising research or attempted to build new theoretical models to measure the effectiveness of sponsorship. It is unknown if these theories and models are applicable to the setting of collegiate corporate naming right. Universities are seeing corporate naming sponsorship as a controversial dilemma that can provide a considerable financial support and also bring possible damages to intuitional reputation. Both of the athletic programs and the corporations need a better understanding in key conceptual areas about the effectiveness and possible negative impacts of collegiate facility naming rights.

Beliefs about Sponsorship

One of the major differences between sponsorship and advertising in consumers' perception is the existence of goodwill (Meenaghan, 1991; McDonald, 1991). Such a perception about goodwill was from the appreciation of individuals who believe the sponsorship is a benefit to the event (or organization) with which they are involved (Meenaghan, 1991). This would be the major factor that has contributed to sponsorship success (Alexandris et al, 2007; Bennett,

1999; Harvey, 2001; Meenaghan, 2001b). McDonald (1991) found that consumers who were involved in the sponsored activities usually appreciated the benefits brought in by the sponsors. Madrigal (2001) found that consumers who held positive beliefs about the sponsorship would form more positive attitude toward the sponsor. Alexandris et al. (2007) attempted to establish an explanatory model for predicting sponsorship outcomes from attitudinal constructs, and they found that beliefs about sponsorship contributed most in explaining the variance in the outcome variables. It was also observed that consumers might simultaneously hold some negative beliefs in commercial sponsorship activities (Alexandris et al., 2007). Lee et al. (1997) reported that sponsorship outcomes are influenced by both positive and negative beliefs in the mind of consumers when studying commercial sponsorship activities in Olympic Games.

Madrigal (2001) applied the planned-behavior conceptualization of choice process to explain how consumers response to sponsorship activities. This model was originally proposed by Fishbein and Ajzen in 1975 as the theory of reasoned action, which was used to explain the relationship between attitudes and behavior. Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) explained that a specific behavior is directly caused by one's intention to engage in the behavior, which is influenced by his/her attitudes. Ajzen (1985) developed the theory of planned behavior to make the model more complete, which indicated that behaviors are made from an ordered process composed of belief, attitude, and behavior intentions. In this hierarchy, a person's attitude toward an object is a function of his/her beliefs about the object and the implicit evaluative importance of those beliefs. This attitude can influence the person's behavior intentions and his/her behavioral response to the object can then be predicted by the intention (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Madrigal, 2001). Accordingly, the expected outcomes from a sponsorship investment, including attitude transfer and increased sales, are considerably contributed by consumers' beliefs about the

advantages and disadvantages of the sponsorship and their perceived importance. Eagly and Chaiken (1993) defined an attitude as "a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor" (p. 1). The formation of attitude is a stimulus-response conditioning process, where an individual has bias that predisposes his/her evaluative responses to attitude object in either a positive or negative direction. On other hand, beliefs are the evaluative responses such as thoughts or ideas about the attitude object, which are associated the attitude object with its various attributes (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

College athletics have been credited for shaping institutional image and building community bonds among supporters (Beyer & Hannah, 2000; Shulman & Bowen, 2001). In college stadium naming rights sponsorship, sponsors hope that by building such a connection, the athletic program or stadium's meanings to consumers could be transferred to their brands or products. It is also hoped that consumers would credit the sponsoring company for its financial support, formulate favorable evaluations and attitudes, and favor the company in later product choices (Keller 2003). As a supporter of the athletic program, an individual may believe the corporate money is an important revenue source for building a strong program. This belief associates the sponsor (attitude object) with a favorable attribute. Conversely, he/she may hold a negative belief thinking that the corporate naming leads to over commercialization, which would associate the sponsor with a disfavor attribute. These beliefs construct the person's attitude toward the sponsor. When a person perceives that the overall importance of positive beliefs is greater than the combinative importance of negative beliefs, he/she would have more positive attitude toward the sponsor. Otherwise, this individual would be likely to form negative attitude against the corporation. In turn, these attitudes would influence consumers' behavior intentions to support the sponsor and the sponsee.

Attitude towards Commercialization

Although commercial support is necessary for sports, it should be noted that there is a growing concern about the over-commercialization in sports (Zhang et al., 2005). Lee, Sandler, and Shani (1997) indicated that the increasing marketing activities in the Atlanta Olympic Games had caused considerable discussions of over-commercialization and the loss of amateur nature of the Games. Consumers' attitudes towards commercialization reflect their reaction to these excessive marketing activities, which may also affect their attitudes toward events and sponsors (Lee et al., 1997). Corporations choose to sponsor sport events as a marketing communications to facilitate brand image building (Lee et al., 1997; Shanklin & Kuzma, 1992). However, it has been found that consumers negatively respond to sponsors who excessively promote or market products in sport events. Excessive commercial activities can cause negative image transfer (Zhang et al., 2005).

The commercialization in college sports has been a unique characteristic of the United States. There is no colleges in other nations sell the broadcast rights of athletic events for millions of dollars and make millions more from the sale of corporate sponsorships, licensed apparel, luxury seating, parking, concessions, and other revenue streams (Sack, 2005). Although most people in the United States have come to accept commercialized college sport as a normal part of campus life, considerable debate continues regarding the status of college athletes. This commercialism is diagnosed to be one major source of cheating and financial scandals associated with college sports (Zimbalist, 1999). Scholars condemn these deeply corporate involvement and over commercialization of intercollegiate athletics as direct attack on academic foundations and educational mission of institutions (Benford, 2007; Covell, 2001; Gray, 1996; Jensen & Butler, 2007; McAllister, 1998; Yaeger & Welzel, 2000). To appease contradictory voices around the

campus, college administrators even have to create new way to hide the corporate names when they are selling the corporate naming rights (Wolf, 2007).

For both corporate sponsors and college administrators who wish to enter a corporate naming rights sponsorship, it is vital to find out how stakeholders perceive commercialization on campus and how these attitudes affect the sponsorship outcomes. Zhang et al. (2005) measured the impact of college students' attitudes toward commercialization of an intercollegiate athletic program on their purchasing intentions of sponsors' products, and found that attitude toward commercialization explained 12% of the variance in purchasing intentions; whereas, attitude toward commercialization and psychological attachment together explained 28% of purchasing intentions. These researchers also suggested that further study using different institutions and different type of sponsorship activities are needed, and the perception concerning amateurism in intercollegiate athletics should be included (Zhang et al., 2005).

The concern of amateurism in intercollegiate athletics is often the central issue in the debate over the commercialized status of college athletes (Sack, 2005). The NCAA's commitment to amateurism makes collegiate athletics to be regarded as amateur sport competition. However, people have seen that the ongoing commercialization is transforming college athletes into professional entertainers for whom maintaining athletic eligibility often takes precedence over obtaining a meaningful education (McAllister, 1998). Zhang et al. (2005) argued that this concern for amateurism plays a critical role for individuals in their psychological attachment with their teams although this issue was not examined in their study. Alexandris et al. (2007) indicated that the danger of negative attitude toward commercialization of sponsorship activities could be higher in the case of sports that are purported to be amateur.

Psychological Attachment

Communicating with target audiences through the vehicle of sport instead of direct communication is the other difference between sponsorship and other commercial activities (Meenaghan, 1996). The audience is drawn by the sponsored sport property, and builds relationship with the sponsors based on their connections with the sport property. This uniqueness raises the importance of the psychological attachment between consumer and the sport venue (Zhang et al., 2005). When fans have stronger attachment toward a sport team or athlete, the effect of balanced tendency on the change of their attitude toward sponsors would be strengthened (Dalakas & Levin, 2005; Madrigal, 2001).

When studying sport sponsorships, researchers usually conceptualize a consumer's emotion connection or attachments to a sponsored sport property in the context of social identify theory (Dees et al., 2008; Gwinner & Swanson, 2003; Madrigal, 2001; Zhang et al., 2005). According to the social identify theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), an individual constructs characteristics and ideas of his/her personality to forms self-identities, and each of these concepts ranges from personal identity on one end to social identity on the other end. Whereas personal identity reflects a specific individual, social identity consists of the characteristics and ideas that an individual drives from his/her association with a social category or group (Dees et al., 2008; Madrigal, 2001). A person strives to maintain and enhance his/her group identity by behaving as a group member to establish in-group favoritism, driven by a pursuit of self-esteem (Madrigal, 2001; Zhang et al., 2005). Self-esteem can be heightened by individual's emphasizing the positive aspects and minimizing negative information within the group or by emphasizing the negative information among contrasting group (Gwinner & Swanson, 2003).

Team Identification

The most well documented forms of psychological attachment in sponsorship studies are fan involvement (Bennett, 1999; Cornwell et al., 2005; McDaniel, 1999; Meenaghan, 2001b) and team identification (Cornwell et al., 2005; Dees et al., 2008; Gwinner & Swanson, 2003; Madrigal, 2001; Zhang et al., 2005). Cornwell et al. (2005) classifies involvement as one of the "individual and group factors" that influence processing of sponsorship messages, and identification as one of the "processing mechanics" related to sponsorship outcomes. Both of them have been reported to play important roles in sponsorship effectiveness. However, Meenaghan (2001a) indicated that "fan involvement" refers specifically to the extent that consumers identify with their engagement in particular activities. Most of the applications of this concept are found in event sponsorship studies.

Rather, the influence of team identification could be more relevant to assessing the effectiveness of corporate naming rights sponsorship. Team identification was defined as one's level of attachment to or concern about a particular sport team (Wann & Barnscombe, 1993). Researchers often agree that team identification plays a significant role in consumers' relationship with sport teams and organizations (Laverie & Arnett, 2000; Pease & Zhang, 2001; Sutton et al., 1997; Trail et al., 2003; Trail & James, 2001; Wann, 2002; Wann & Branscombe, 1993, 1995). For example, Gwinner and Swanson (2003) demonstrated the positive effects of identification in sponsorship. Their study showed that team identification was positively related to the ability to correctly identify sponsors, attitude toward a sponsor, patronage behaviors toward a sponsor, and satisfaction with a sponsor. Team identification creates the need for fans to distinguish themselves from other groups, which leads to behavioral support for their team. Madrigal (2001) suggested that psychological connection to a sports team represents an important aspect of self-identity, and prescribes certain behavioral intentions to support the team.

Sutton et al. (1997) classified sport fans according to the level of team identification and found that a high level of fan identity would impact sport fan's behavior, such as decreasing price sensitivity and performance-outcome sensitivity. Fans with strong team identification are more likely to attend games (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998; Laverie & Arnett, 2000; Pease & Zhang, 2001; Trail et al., 2003; Zhang et al., 2001), to purchase licensed team merchandise (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998; Trail et al., 2003; Wann & Barnscombe, 1993; Williamson, Zhang, Pease, & Gaa, 2003), to identify sponsors (Lascu, Giese, Toolan, Guehring, & Mercer, 1995), and to purchase sponsors' products (Madrigal, 2000, 2001). It was also reported that highly identified fans often view the success and failures of their team as personal success and failures (Hirt, Zillman, Erickson, & Kennedy, 1992; Pease & Zhang, 2001; Williamson et al., 2003), while low-identified fans would likely decrease their association with the team if they perform poorly (Pease & Zhang, 2001; Wann, 1993; Williamson et al., 2003; Zhang et al., 2001). Comparing to other fans, highly identified fans are found more likely to belittle fans of opposing team (Branscombe & Wann, 1994) and show favoritism to other fans of their favorite team (Wann & Barnscombe, 1995; Williamson et al., 2003; Zhang et al., 2001).

Fans with different level of team identification have showed distinct response to sponsorship activities in these studies. Therefore, it can be expected that team identification would also play an important role in naming rights sponsorship effectiveness. For example, highly identified fans have stronger emotional attachment with the performance of their team. They glory in the team's success and are shamed for the team's failure (Hirt et al., 1992). Consequently, they may view the financial support from the corporate naming partner as an advantage for the team's success, and generate favorable attitudes towards the sponsor. On the

other hand, fans that have lower identification with the team are less likely to care about the team's revenue, but view naming rights sponsorship as just a commercial activity.

Stadium Identification

Boyd (2000) indicated that sport stadium is a public memory place, and the name is the identity that connects the team, the stadium, and the community in history. Fans usually have strong emotional attachment and identity with the name of "their stadium". Although the role of this psychological attachment in sponsorship effectiveness is not clear, it has been reported to cause several protests against corporate naming rights sponsorship (Boyd, 2000; Crompton & Howard, 2003; Siebert & Brovsky, 2001). In their research about identification in sponsorship, Trail, Anderson, and Fink (2000) defined identification as "an orientation of the self in regard to other objects, which results in feelings or sentiments of close attachment" (p. 161). The object with which fans identify could be extended to a stadium in a corporate naming sponsorship. Using a stadium as a medium is the major component of corporate naming rights sponsorship, which also distinguishes it from other forms of sponsorship. Although this concept has not been examined in any sponsorship studies, it could be as important as team identification in the team sponsorship. The difference is that stadium identification work reversely in its influence on sponsorship outcomes. Fans that are highly identified with the stadium would be more likely to generate or strengthen negative attitudes towards corporate naming rights sponsorship because of their strong emotion attachment with the old name. Conversely, low identification fans are expected to evaluate the corporate naming rights sponsorship more neutrally.

Balance Theory

Balance theory, first presented by Heider in 1958, is useful in explaining the attitude formation and attitude change caused by a sponsorship (Dean, 2002). The basic concept of this theory is the cognitive consistency, indicating that people tend to harmonize the values in their

mind and to have balance and order in their lives (Heider, 1958). When incongruence happens in their thoughts, they are likely to reconcile the conflict and build a new balance. This means that people would tend to like anything that is connected to things they already like, and dislike anything that is associated with things they do not like before; otherwise, they will not have a balance (Dalakas & Levin, 2005; Dean, 2002). Consequentially, a consumer's attitude or behavior toward an object would be built or changed in a way to restore balance (Dean, 2002). For example, when a product is endorsed by an athlete, it creates a positive sentiment connection between the product and the athlete. Consumers then will tend to build or change their attitudes toward the product and the athlete. If the consumer has preexisting positive attitudes toward the athlete, he/she will be more likely to form a positive attitude (or change an existing attitude to be positive) toward the product or be more willing to purchase the product.

In a sport sponsorship partnership, the sponsor is building a connection with the sport venue. According to the balance theory, fans who like the sponsored sport venue will then form (or change to) similarly positive attitudes or behaviors toward the sponsor. This balancing process is believed as the major function and objective of sponsorship investment, and it has been proved effective in several reports (Dalakas & Levin, 2005; Dean, 2002; Madrigal, 2001). Stipp and Schiavone (1996) demonstrated that attitude toward the Olympics could actually transfer Olympic sponsors, and they found that the attitude toward Olympic sponsorships in general had a significant impact on a sponsor's image. On the other hand, one cannot overlook those fans who do not like the sponsored sport venue and tend to form attitude to balance in negative direction. This phenomenon was supported by Dalakas and Levin (2005) in their inquiry of NASCAR fans, which revealed that fans tended to form a negative attitude toward the

major competing drivers of their favorite driver and consequently form a negative attitude toward their sponsors.

According to the Madrigal's (2001) belief-attitude-behavior intention model, consumers form their attitude toward sponsors based on their brief about corporate naming rights sponsorship activities, and their attitude toward sponsors will further influence their behavior intention, such as purchasing sponsor's products. Balance theory suggests that when an individual holds different attitudes toward two associated objects, he/she tends to reconcile the conflict and build a new balance (Dean, 2002). The individual and two associated objects resemble the three points of a triangle; his/her attitudes toward two objects will be changed to a balance point whenever there is a triangle appearing on his/her mind (Madrigal, 2001). This could mean that a student's attitude toward the sponsor and his/her attitude toward commercialization might cause an interaction when they are connected by the facility naming rights sponsorship contract on his/her university campus. In turn, this interaction could change his/her attitude in an either positive or negative direction toward both objects and have an influence on his/her behavior intentions, such as purchasing products from the sponsor.

Attribution Theory

According to balance theory, a well-liked corporate sponsorship is hypothesized to result in significant enhancement of sponsor image in consumers' perception. However, in attribution theory, it is suggested that consumers could also use negative attributions (i.e., corporate self-interest) to explain the sponsor-sponsee linkage. Attribution theory suggests that consumers would attempt to understand why a sponsor likes to give money (or other resources) to a sponsorship deal (Dean, 2002; Kelly 1973; Kelly & Michela, 1980). This means that a consumer will try to develop a subjective explanation of why actions have occurred and make causal inferences. Kelly (1973) conducted an analysis of causation based on the plausibility of possible

causes and further proposed a corollary theory, the discounting principle, which indicates that people will discount the effect of an attribution when an alternative explanation could specify the behavior. Studies in attribution theory have consistently shown that when extrinsic motivation explains an event, intrinsic motivation is discounted. Folkes (1988) used the discounting principle to explain consumers' reactions to a product endorsement, which indicated that consumers attributed an automobile endorsement to mercenary motives and discounted the linkage between the endorser and endorsed product. It has also been proved that consumers form negative attributions in response to causal relation marketing (CRM) research. In a study that conducted in-depth personal interviews by Webb and Mohr (1998), about 50% of the consumers believed that corporations used CRM for selfish reasons.

To apply attribution theory into examining sponsorship effectiveness, Adams (1963) proposed the equity theory to explain how consumer generates attribution in sponsorship activities. The theory suggests that when people are involved in an exchange process, they determine the equity by assessing the ratio of what they receive from the exchange to what they give into the process. If the output is proportional to the input, people will perceive an equitable relationship. Dean (2002) used the equity theory to explain how attributions are developed in a charity event sponsorship and indicated that the donation by the sponsor could be evaluated as an inequitable exchange since the company received only the right to have some promotional messages in the event. The perceived inequity may lead consumers to attribute some hidden objective to the company's motivation for sponsorship (Dean, 2002). This was supported in a study conducted by Walliser (2003), who found that the perceived benefit and returned goodwill to be negatively related to the perceived exploitation of the event. The researcher suggested that

the right balance between visibility and perceived exploitation has to be found for each sponsorship activity.

The attribution theory posits that consumers cognitively infer a motive for the sponsorship behavior and attributions are not always negative (Dean, 2002). Sponsorship could also be attributed to the goodwill or an altruistic motive of the corporation and results in positive belief, image, and attitudes. Conversely, consumers might attribute to the self-interest and more exploitive motive to the sponsor, which would create negative responses such as less desirable sponsor image, beliefs, and attitude. Dean (2002) indicated that both positive and negative attributions could occur and thus, the effect of consumer attributions in sponsorship need to be further investigated in various situations. Similarly, Rifon, Choi, Trimble, and Li (2004) conducted an experimental study to test the attribution theory, and demonstrated that corporate sponsorship of a disease preventions website generated consumer attributions of altruistic sponsor motives, which subsequently enhanced sponsor credibility and attitude toward the sponsor.

In the current study, Madrigal's (2001) belief- attitude-behavior intention model would be adopted to examine how consumers perceive corporate naming rights sponsorship, how consumers' beliefs affect their attitudes and in turn influence their behavioral intentions. The attribution theory would help to explain how a consumer builds his/her belief toward corporate naming rights sponsorship, and how that would affect his/her attitudes toward the sponsor. According to this theory, fans might believe that a naming rights deal is simply a ploy to exploit the athletic program and gain goodwill for the firm (a negative attribution). Yet, fans may also believe that a naming rights deal is worthwhile because it enables their athletic department to obtain needed resources and win games (a positive rationale). Pretesting consumer reaction to a

proposed sponsorship can help ensure that unexpected negative attributions do not appear (Dean, 2002) and also prevent negative attributions that would result in unfavorable consequences for both institutions and corporations involved in the naming rights sponsorship.

Perception of Financial Status

As previously indicated, college athletic directors have found it increasingly difficult to find the necessary fiscal resources to adequately fund their programs because of enormous growth in the costs of facility arms race, spiraling coaches' salaries, and athletic scholarships (Fulks, 2008). Only 19 programs in the FBS generated revenues that exceeded expenses in the 2006 fiscal year. For these 19 institutions, they generated $4.3 million net revenue in average. By contrast, the average net deficit for the other institutions was approximately $8.9 million. The gap between the financially successful programs and the remaining programs was approximately $13.2 million and continues to widen (Fulks, 2008). The largest program in the nation reported total revenue $241 million that exceeded its expenses by more than $100 million, while there were 84% of institutions in FBS reported deficit.

Financial difficulty has forced athletic directors to look for corporate support and sell more sponsorship including facilities naming rights. Although commercial sponsorship on campuses has regarded as tainting the purity of intercollegiate athletics in many people's minds, college administrators would argue that this is indeed a necessary support for the soaring costs of running a successful athletic program as people expect. When all the factors are considered, corporate sponsorship may be viewed by some institutions and their fans as acceptable compromise (Shelton, 2006). According to Wolf (2007), when people are convinced that corporate support is essential to making an arena or stadium a reality, athletic programs are able to overcome most of the resistance, especially when fans perceive that their favorite program is facing a tight budget. Therefore, how fans perceive about the financial status of their favored

athletic program could have an important influence on the assessment of corporate naming rights sponsorship effectiveness. Corporate sponsorship would be easier to be embraced by those fans who perceive their athletic programs to be facing financial shortage. Instead of negative attitude caused by commercialization, fans may regard the sponsor as an important support of the teams and show positive attitude in return. Conversely, fans who perceive their athletic programs are making profit may think the corporate naming rights sponsorship is not necessary. They may have contradictory views on the appropriateness of putting university assets on a commercial footing.

Measuring Sponsorship Effectiveness

Early studies on sponsorship have largely focused on the definition related issues and managerial issues, which attempted to conceptualize sponsorship as a new marketing approach (Dolphin, 2003; Meenaghan, 1998). Media objectives were usually viewed as first priority of sponsors in these early studies (Abratt, Clayton, & Pitt, 1987), and media exposure frequency was hence the major tool for evaluating sponsorship effectiveness (Grohs, Wagner, & Vsetecka, 2004). As sponsorship goals have moved towards matters more directly associated with consumer behavior (Grohs et al., 2004), researchers started looking for more viable ways to measure sponsorship effectiveness. Following the fast growing popularity and value of sponsorship deals, measuring their effectiveness became the major concern among researchers and administrators (Cianfrone & Zhang, 2006; Cornwell, 2000; Crompton, 2004; Gwinner & Swanson, 2003; Meenaghan, 2001a). As Cornwell (2000) noticed that, sponsorship effectiveness is largely unknown but it is changing.

Modern sponsorship strategies are used to reach a variety of marketing objectives, which are also benefits of sponsorship from sponsors' perspective and the force behind the fast growing investments in sponsorship. Reported objectives include development of goodwill, increase in

brand awareness and recognition, image enhancement, increasing sales as well as market share, community involvement, and establishment of brand loyalty (Alexandris et al., 2007; Cornwell & Maignan, 1998; Cornwell et al., 2001). In order to systematically measure sponsorship effectiveness, Cianfrone and Zhang (2006) and Crompton (2004) linked aforementioned sponsorship benefits with general consumer decision-making process and categorized them into the four stages in AIDA model (Awareness, Interest, Desire, Action). The ultimately goal, to impact sales, is more likely to achieve if corporations success in moving consumers from stage to stage in the adoption process toward making a purchase decision. Therefore, different types of measures and designs are required for different objectives in the four categories: awareness, image, intent to purchase, and sales.

This is correspondent with the Lavidge and Steiner's Hierarchy of Effects Model (1961), which is widely used to examine the consumers' response to advertising via a hierarchy of four domains. Beginning with consumers being aware of the product, the first domain is cognition, such as awareness about the product. The second domain is affect, including attitude and feelings. These affections lead to the stage of motivation and desire for consumption, which are characters of the conation domain. The last domain is behavioral outcomes, such as actual purchase of the product. This hierarchical process has now become the major concept in measuring sponsorship effectiveness (e.g., Cianfrone, Zhang, Lutz, & Trail, 2008; Cornwell & Maignan, 1998; Gwinner & Swanson, 2003; Madrigal, 2001). For example, Koo, Quarterman, and Flynn (2006) used corporate image, consumers' recognition of sponsors, and attitude toward sponsoring brands to explain purchase intentions of sponsoring products. They found that both recognition (cognitive) and attitude (affective) have significant effects on purchase intentions.

Although the direct impact on sales is the most desirable measure from a sponsor's perspective, there is lacking a consistent and efficient approach to measure this domain accurately. Some researchers tried to accomplish this by evaluating the boosting traffic at retail points, comparing the number of retailers participating in the sponsorship-themed promotion, or measuring actual increase in sales associated with a sponsorship; yet, they are not widely accepted in academic research due to the difficulty in practice and the lack of accuracy (Crompton, 2004). In hopes of predicting and understanding future purchase patterns, most researchers focus on the first three stages prior to consumption. Especially, it is most popular in the using of brand recall and recognition as major indicators to evaluate sponsorship effectiveness (Bennett, Henson, & Zhang, 2002; Cianfrone et al., 2008; Crimmins & Horn, 1996; Meenaghan, 1996; Nicholls, Roslow, & Dublish, 1999; Stotlar, 1993).

However, Crompton (2004) noticed that the emphasis of sponsorship objectives has shifted to focus on intent-to-purchase and sales, and suggested measuring the extent to which these benefits are required. Although awareness plays an important role as the first stage in Lavidge and Steiner's (1961) Hierarchy of Effects model (cognitive, affective, conative, and behavioral), it provides limited knowledge of consumer satisfaction with sponsorships. Meenaghan (1999) argued that awareness effects were overemphasized in sponsorship research and suggested that future research should focus on how the linkage between a sponsor and sponsee influences consumers. Further, Madrigal (2001) indicated a need to understand how a consumer feels (perceives) about sponsorship, and how this feeling (perception) influences his/her purchase intention. This notion would be particularly relevant when trying to understand the potential influence of corporate naming rights sponsorship on college campuses.

In a corporate naming rights sponsorship, a corporation tries to build a connection with fans of college sports via naming their stadium. They hope that the favorable association held by fans toward the athletic program will be transferred to their brands and then in turn to purchasing their products (Madrigal, 2001; Dees et al., 2008). On the other hand, athletic departments need corporate supports for the rising cost in running a strong program. This sport sponsorship avenue is special with a huge potential value, but also holds concerns that may generate negative influence for both sponsor and sponsee, such as commercialization, amateurism, and stadium identification. It appears that these concerns are not going to stop the growth of naming rights sponsorship in colleges, and fans have continued to attend games to support their teams no matter how commercialized the games are. Nonetheless, for sponsors who invest millions of dollars on the sponsorship, it is meaningful for them to know how these possible negative attitudes impact the effectiveness of sponsorship, so is for the academic institutions that are always examined elaborately with highest moral standards by the society. Additionally, an athletic program generally plays an important role in connecting the university with students, faculty, alumni, and the public; thus, it contributes directly to the social reputations of the institution (Goff, 2000). Any negative perception in the mind of the public can cause impacts on donations, student applications, and community identifications. Overall, examining effects of corporate naming rights sponsorships is meaningful for both the sponsor and sponsee.

Affective Response – Attitude toward Sponsor

Attitude can be defined as "a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor" (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, p. 1). Consumers' attitudes towards a sponsoring brand do not always require real cognitive elaboration or conscious awareness of the sponsorship. Pope and Voges (2000) found that there was a direct relationship between consumer purchase intentions and attitude toward company.

Their research findings also indicated that consumers' attitudes change toward sponsor was a viable variable to measure sponsorship effectiveness.

The following studies also illustrate the function of attitude in measuring sponsorship outcomes. Crompton (2004) indicated that consumer attitude toward a sponsor was more meaningful than pure awareness in predicting sales. Gwinner and Swanson (2003) reported that understanding a fan's attitude toward a sponsor would help in understanding consumer purchase behaviors. Speed and Thompson (2000) reported that positive attitudes toward a sponsor were related to higher favorability and willingness to consider sponsor's products. It was also found that attitudes toward commercialization and attitudes toward the event were both significant predictors of consumer purchase intentions at a state festival (Dees, Bennett, & Tsuji, 2007). A number of studies have been conducted to measure on how sponsorship affects attitude towards a sponsor in college sports (Cianfrone et al., 2008; Cianfrone & Zhang, 2006; Dees et al., 2008; Gray, 1996; Gwinner & Swanson, 2003; Kuzma et al., 2003; Madrigal, 2000, 2001; Speed and Thompson, 2000; Zhang et al., 2005), while only Kuzma et al. (2003) and Zhang et al. (2005) noticed negative effect could occur. To date, there has no study conducted to examine how college stadium naming rights sponsorship would affect consumer's attitudes. When considering its relevance and function as revealed in previous studies, consumers' attitude toward sponsor appears to be a good indicator for studying the effectiveness of facility naming rights sponsorship.

Conative Response

Purchase intention is an indicator of conative response, and it can be defined as "the person's motivation in the sense of his or her conscious plan to exert effort or carry out a behavior" (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, p. 168). Although purchase intentions are not the same as actual purchase behaviors, a person's intentions have a strong influence on his/her future

behaviors (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Crompton (2004) indicated that purchase intentions are perhaps the most useful indicators of the impact of sponsorship on future sales. Madrigal (2001) suggested that a behavior is predicted by behavior intentions.

Dees et al. (2008) indicated that purchase intentions provide a sense of the strength of an individual's motivation to perform a specified purchasing behavior. Increasing number of studies have used purchase intentions as a sponsorship outcome in recent years (Alexandris et al., 2007; Cianfrone et al., 2008; Dees et al., 2008; Gwinner & Swanson, 2003; Harvery, 2001; Madrigal, 2001; Zhang et al., 2005). The increase of positive consumer attitude toward sponsorship has been proved to relate with the increase of purchase intention (Kuzma et al., 2003). Apparently, it would be meaningful to examine the sponsorship effect on purchase intention of sponsor's products in corporate naming rights sponsorships in college sports.

Willingness to attend games held in the stadium would be another conative response to facility naming rights agreement. In a sponsorship partnership, the sponsor invests resources in exchange for the opportunity to reach its marketing goals, and the sponsee gain the needed resources in the meantime. Previous studies in the area of measuring sponsorship effectiveness primarily focused on how sponsorship would benefit the sponsor or how the sponsorship would achieves its marketing objectives. However, in a corporate naming sponsorship agreement between businesses and college institutions, the potential negative response could be generated toward both parties as aforementioned. These potential effects can be major concerns for both corporations and college administrators. A student's willing to attend games of their athletic programs that are involved in the naming rights sponsorship deserve to be studied.

Nedungadi (1990) suggested that strong feelings toward some object may act as a heuristic that has direct impact on consumer behavior. This behavior could be an individual's support for

the sponsor, but it could also be the support for the team (sponsee). Braunstein, Zhang, Trail, and Gibson (2005) investigated market demand factors that affect the attendance of MLB spring training games and found that supporting one' favorite team was a part of the attractiveness of coming to the training facilities. Williamson et al. (2003) studied dimensions of spectator identification associated with women's professional basketball game attendance and found that supporting a team was a strong indication of team identifying from both psychological and behavioral perspectives. Although there is no direct research evidence to illustrate how an individual's support of facility naming rights would translate to attending events at the named facility, it is certainly worthwhile to examine this phenomenon and see how it would enhance the interactive relationships among athletic programs, sponsorships, and named facilities.

CHAPTER 3
METHOD

The purpose of this study was to investigate students' beliefs about facility naming rights sponsorship, attitudes toward commercialization and amateurism, team and stadium identification, perception of financial status, and how they would affect naming rights sponsorship outcomes in the areas of attitudes toward the sponsor and purchase intention of products and services produced by the sponsor. A survey study was carried out to investigate the research questions.

Participants

Research participants were students (*N* = 548) attending a FBS university in Florida, who voluntarily participated in this study. Focusing the study on Division I FBS universities was based on the consideration that these institutions would usually have a high level of financial pressure, typically generate a good amount of revenue from sponsorships and donations, and likely step into facility naming rights agreements. Demographic information of participants is presented in Table 1. Of the respondents, there were 310 males (56.6%) and 238 females (43.4%). In terms of age, 54% of them were within the age range of 18-21, 28.1% were 22-25 years old, 11.9% were 26-30 years old, and 6% were 31 years or older. From a total of 77 different academic majors, these students were composed of 0.9 % freshman, 14.2% sophomore, 23% junior, 33.9% senior, and 27.7% graduate or professional school students. Ethnic composition of the participants included 48.7% Caucasian, 13.9% Hispanic, 20.8% Asian, 10.9% African-American, 0.2% American Indian, 5.3% mixed ethnicity or other, and 0.2% of them did not specify. These ethnic characteristics generally well-represented the student body of the university.

Instrument

A questionnaire was formulated that included the following sections: (a) beliefs about facility naming rights, (b) attitude toward commercialization, (c) team identification, (d) stadium identification, (e) attitude toward sponsor, (f) purchase intentions, and (g) willingness to attend games. Additionally, a demographic-variable section was included at the end of the questionnaire for sample description purpose. At the beginning of the questionnaire, a fictional naming rights sponsorship deal was described in detail. The paragraph was intended to convince respondents that their familiar football stadium would soon be named as Info Tech Stadium for an annual naming fee of $5 million in order to renovate the stadium and maintain a high quality program. Participants were asked to read the sponsorship announcement before they started to answer the questionnaire. To ensure the influence of the announcement script, a question, asking "When answering questions above, have you kept in mind the ANNOUNCEMENT about changing the name of football stadium? was added to the end of the questionnaire. Items in each of following sections are arranged in a random sequence.

Beliefs about Naming Rights (BF)

Based on Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) definition, beliefs are the evaluative responses such as thoughts or ideas about the attitude object, which are associated the attitude object with its various attributes. Five items appropriate for this study were selected and modified from literatures. This 5-item scale was designed to measure different attributes of respondents' briefs about facility naming rights sponsorship. Four of these items, including: "This naming rights sponsorship offers valuable financial support to both the athletic program and 'university name' students," "This naming rights sponsorship will likely over-commercialize the 'university name' campus," "This naming rights sponsorship helps the 'team's name' to build a strong football program," and "This naming rights sponsorship is necessary for the renovations of the football

stadium," were modified from the items used by Alexandris et al. (2007) measuring beliefs about an event sponsorship. One item, "This naming rights sponsorship overall benefits 'university name' students," was modified from the scale used by Dees et al. (2008) measuring goodwill in sponsorship. Each of the items was phrased in a Likert 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strong agree).

Attitude toward Commercialization (ATC)

Eagly and Chaiken (1993) defined an attitude as "a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor" (p. 1). To measure respondents' evaluative responses to commercialization in either a positive or negative direction, five items appropriate for this purpose were selected or generated from literature and modified for this study. Zhang et al. (2005) modified the measurement items of attitudinal constructs towards commercialization developed by Lee et al. (1997) for the use in the intercollegiate athletics setting. They also suggested that the perception concerning amateurism in intercollegiate athletics should be included in measuring ATC. Therefore, we selected and modified three items from their original scale, including "I feel that commercial activities are necessary for today's intercollegiate sport programs," "I am in favor of naming the football stadium to be used for commercial purposes," and "I feel that the commercialization is necessary for funding intercollegiate athletic programs." Also, we generated two items from literature to measure respondents' evaluative responses to commercialization from the perception concerning amateurism in intercollegiate athletics, which included "I believe that intercollegiate football is no longer an amateur competition" and "I prefer intercollegiate athletics to remain a pure amateur sport with fewer commercial activities." Each of these items was phrased in a Likert 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strong agree).

Team Identification (TI)

Team identification was defined as one's level of attachment to or concern about a particular sport team (Wann & Barnscombe, 1993). In their study about sponsorship, Cornwell et al. (2005) suggested that identification is one of the "processing mechanics" related to sponsorship outcomes. To measure this property, five items in the modified version of the Sport Spectator Identification Scale by Madrigal (2001) were adopted. The original Sport Spectator Identification Scale was developed by Wann and Branscombe (1993) to study spectator behaviors; whereas, the modification of the original scale by Madrigal (2001) was for the purpose of applying it to studying sport sponsorships. We also modified the wording of each item into the setting of intercollegiate facility naming right sponsorship for the purpose of this study. Each of the items was phrased in a Likert 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strong agree).

Stadium Identification (SI)

In their research about identification in sponsorship, Trail et al. (2000) defined identification as "an orientation of the self in regard to other objects, which results in feelings or sentiments of close attachment" (p. 161). The object with which fans identify could be extended to a stadium in a corporate naming sponsorship. Although this concept could be as important as team identification in the team sponsorship, it has not been examined in any sponsorship studies. Since the concept of stadium identification was extended mostly from team identification, and there was no scale that had been developed for this research purpose, we generated items from the literature review, following the concept of team identification scale. These items were designed to measure respondents' feelings, sentiments, memories, and overall psychological attachment about the stadium. A total of five items were established in the SI scale, which included: "There is no better place than 'original name of the stadium' in college football," "I

have a lot of memories of ‘original name of the stadium’,” “’original name of the stadium’ cannot be replaced by any name in my mind,” “When the players run into ‘original name of the stadium’, it is the best moment in college football,” and “’original name of the stadium’ represents the home of ‘team name’ football team.” Each of the items was phrased in a Likert 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strong agree).

Perception of Financial Status (POF)

According to the literature review, most fans in college sports do not realize the financial difficulties of the athletic programs. However, how they perceive about the financial status of their favored athletic program could have an important influence on the assessment of corporate naming rights sponsorship effectiveness. In order to assess how respondents think about the financial situation of their athletic program, a 5-item scale was developed from the literature review in this study. Items included “I know that a majority of intercollegiate athletic departments in the U.S. operate with a budget deficit,” “Without the stadium naming rights sponsorship, the ‘university name’ athletic department does not have enough funds to renovate the stadium,” “I think that the ‘university name’ athletic department needs the income from the stadium naming rights sponsorship to run its programs,” “Due to enormous growth in the costs of facilities, coaches’ salaries, and athletic scholarships, university athletics have struggled to find needed resources to fund their programs,” and “The ‘university name’ athletic department is financially challenged to run competitive sport programs.” Each of the items was phrased in a Likert 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strong agree).

Attitude toward Sponsor (ATS)

Attitude can be defined as “a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor” (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, p. 1). A number of studies have been conducted to measure to how sponsorship affect attitude towards

sponsor in college sports (Cianfrone et al., 2008; Cianfrone & Zhang, 2006; Dees et al., 2008; Gray, 1996; Gwinner & Swanson, 2003; Kuzma et al., 2003; Madrigal, 2000, 2001; Speed and Thompson, 2000; Zhang et al., 2005). However, items used to measure the constructs were inconsistent across studies, and need to be modified into facility naming right setting. From these literatures, we initially selected five items that were believed to be most appropriate for this study and then modified each of them to suit this specific form of sponsorship. Among the five items in the developed scale, "The sponsor cares more about its promotion than the success of the 'team's name' football team," was adopted and modified from Alexandris et al. (2007). "I think favorably of the naming rights sponsor," was adopted and modified from Dees et al. (2008). "I am favorable of the 'team's name' football fans to purchase merchandise from the naming rights sponsor," "I think that it is a wonderful idea to buy products produced by the naming rights sponsor," and "Because Info Tech is the naming rights sponsor, I have a positive attitude toward Info Tech," was adopted and modified from Madrigal (2001). Each of the items was phrased in a Likert 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strong agree).

Conative Response

We measure purchase intention in this study as an indicator of conative response, which can be defined as "the person's motivation in the sense of his or her conscious plan to exert effort or carry out a behavior" (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, p. 168). Purchase intentions of sponsor's product (PIP), was defined as conative response towards the sponsor, while willingness to attend events (PIE) was defined as conative response towards the sponsee in this study.Increasing number of studies have used purchase intentions as a sponsorship outcome in recent years (Alexandris et al., 2007; Cianfrone et al., 2008; Dees et al., 2008; Gwinner & Swanson, 2003; Harvery, 2001; Lee et al. (1997); Madrigal, 2001; Zhang et al., 2005). Five items were adopted and modified from these literatures to serve the purpose of this study, "I would consider

purchasing products made by the naming rights sponsor, and “I would definitely purchase products made by the naming rights sponsor,” were from Dees et al. (2008), “The fact that Info Tech is the sponsor in this naming rights sponsorship has no impact on my purchase decision of their products,” from Lee et al. (1997), “Whenever possible, I would like to buy products made by the naming rights sponsor,” from Madrigal (2001), and “I am more likely to buy products made by the naming rights sponsor,” was from Zhang et al. (2005). Each of the items was phrased in a Likert 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strong agree).We measured PIE as the respondents’ conative response towards the athletic program in this study. Previous studies in the area of measuring sponsorship effectiveness primarily focused on how sponsorship would benefit the sponsor or how the sponsorship would achieves its marketing objectives, no similar study have been done to measure the response to the other side of a sponsorship agreement. From both Braunstein et al. (2005) and Williamson et al. (2003) studies about game attendance, we generated five items to be used in this study. These items included “I plan to attend ‘team’s name’ football games next season,” “I will try to attend ‘team’s name’ football games in the future,” “I will try to attend various events held at the Info Tech stadium,” “The likelihood that I will attend ‘team’s name’ football games in the future is high,” “I will continue to attend ‘team’s name’ football games in the future.” Each of the items was phrased in a Likert 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strong agree). These five items were randomly sequenced and mixed with the five items in PIP scale to prevent unnecessary bias.

Demographic Variables

The demographic variables section included the following variables: gender, age, ethnicity, university enrollment classification, and major area of study. These items were phrased in multiple-choice response format.

Content validity of the questionnaire was examined by a panel of six experts including three university professors in sport management and three athletic administrators. The panel members were asked to examine the relevance, clarity, and representativeness of each item and rated each item in a 5-point scale (1 = low to 5 = high). The average scores of each item in these three constructs were calculated and evaluated with a criterion of 3.0 (i.e., the neutral point on a Likert 5-point scale). All 40 items in the questionnaire scored above 3.0 in all three constructs by the panel review, suggesting overall high ratings in relevance, representativeness, and clarity. Alpha reliability was assessed in this study before proceeding with testing the research questions.

Procedures

After obtaining approval for data collection from the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Participants, data collection took place on the campus of a major university located in the Southeast region of the U.S. University students were approached by the researcher in such locations as cafeterias, student lounges, libraries, outside of classrooms, outside or at recreation facilities, and inside classrooms when an instructor gave the permission and cooperated with the test administration process. Upon signing the Informed Consent form to voluntarily participate in the study, a participant was asked to read the fictional naming rights sponsorship announcement. After a respondent fully comprehended the script, which varied among individuals in terms of time needed, the questionnaire was administered. Finally, the respondent had to answer the question on whether he/she had kept the ‘announcement’ in mind when responding to the items in the questionnaire. Only those with a positive answer of this final question were included in the analyses of research questions. A total of 610 students agreed to participate in the study and 603 of them (98.9%) completed the survey instruments. Of them, 55 participants did not keep the sponsorship announcement in mind when answering the survey

questions; they were hence excluded from further analyses. Consequently, a total of 548 viable participants were included in the study.

Data Analyses

Procedures in the SPSS program (SPSS, 2008) were carried out to conduct data analyses. Descriptive statistics were first calculated for variables in each of the sections. Internal consistency of each factor was examined by calculating the alpha reliability coefficient. Zero-order correlations were computed to examine basic interrelationships among the factors. Finally, three hierarchical regression analyses were carried out to test the stated research hypotheses. In the first analysis, attitude toward sponsor was used as the dependent variable and regressed on independent variables including beliefs about naming rights sponsorship, perceptions of financial status, attitude toward commercialization, team identification, and stadium identification. In the second and third analyses, purchase intentions and willing to attend games were the dependent variables and the independent variables included beliefs about naming rights sponsorship, perceptions of financial status, attitude toward commercialization, team identification, and stadium identification, as well as attitude toward sponsor.

CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics for all the 40 items under eight conceptual factors are presented in Table 2. Overall, participants in this study showed high team identification, stadium identification, and willing to attend events in the future. Noticeably, items under stadium identification had means and standard deviations ranging from 5.30 ±1.89 to 6.31 ±1.17 when compared to 4.0 as the midpoint on the 7-point Likert scale. Most participants strongly agreed with the item "'The original name of the stadium' represents the home of 'team's name' football team", which had the highest mean (*M* = 6.31, *SD* = 1.17).On the contrary, mean scores for items under perception of financial status (POF), attitude toward naming rights sponsor (ATS), and purchase intentions of sponsor's products (PIP) were relatively lower. For ATS, means and standard deviations ranged from 2.56 ±1.53 to 3.53 ±1.55. These descriptive statistics showed that students essentially had strong identification with the football program and the stadium, but did not think the financial gain from the naming right sponsorship was necessary and helpful. They also took a negative attitude toward the naming right sponsor, and showed low intention to purchase sponsor's products.

The descriptive statistics, along with alpha reliability coefficients, for the eight conceptual factors are presented in Table 3. Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from .73 for the factor

Beliefs about Naming Rights Sponsorship (BE) to .92 for the factor Purchase Intentions of Sponsor's Products (PIP), which indicated good internal consistencies when judging on the suggested cut-off values of .70 (Nunnally, 1994). One item, 'The fact that Info Tech is the sponsor in this naming rights sponsorship has no impact on my purchase decision of their products', was removed from further analyses because of its negative correlation with other items in the factor of purchase intentions of sponsor's products. Removal of this item increased the Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the factor from .76 to .92.

Intercorrelations

Zero-order correlation coefficients were tested and are presented in Table 4. College students' beliefs about naming rights sponsorship (BE) were found to be positively related to their attitude toward sponsor (ATS) (r =. 53, p< .01), purchase intention of sponsors' products (PIP) (r = .38, p < .01), and willingness to attend games (PIE) (r = .09, p < .01); thus, Hypothesis 1 was retained. For Hypothesis 2, college students' attitude toward commercialization (ATC) including amateurism was found to be positively related to ATS (r = .57, p < .01) and PIP (r = .39, p < .01). However, the relationship between college students' ATC and their PIE was not found to be statistically significant (r = .02, p > .05).

Hypothesis 3 was also supported, as college students' team identification (TI) was found to be positively related to their PIP (r = .19, p < .01), and PIE (r = .53, p < .01). Similarly, college

students' stadium identification (SI) was found to be significantly related to their willingness to attend games (r = .573, p < .01). However, as Hypothesis 4 predicted, changing stadium name did cause a negative relationship between SI and ATS (r = -.202, p < .01). Similar to attitude toward commercialization, college students' perception of financial status (POF) was found to positively related to their ATS (r = .434, p < .01), and their PIP (r = .333, p < .01), but not related to PIE. Predictably, POF was also found to be positively related to attitude toward commercialization (r = .500, p < .01). Hypothesis 5 was partially supported by these results.

Lastly, Hypothesis 6 was supported by the finding that college students' ATS was positively correlated with their PIP (r = .690, p < .01).

Hierarchical Regression Analyses

Three hierarchical regression analyses were conducted to examine the proposed theoretical model by using independent variables to explain the three sponsorship outcome variables. The findings are displayed in Tables 5, 6 and 7.Two hierarchical models, as shown in Table 5, indicated that college students' attitude toward sponsor (ATS) was well explained by predicting variables. In model 1, four factors including attitude toward commercialization (ATC), stadium identification (SI), team identification (TI), and perception of financial status (POF) were entered to predict ATS using stepwise regression analysis. The findings showed that roughly 35% of the variance in ATS was explained by ATC and POF (F = 147.82, p < .01). When beliefs about the

sponsorship (BF) was entered into the second stage along with the other four independent variables in the first stage, variance explanation increased about 4% ($\Delta R^2 = 0.04$). Students' beliefs about the sponsorship became the third significant predictors of ATS, jointly accounting for about 40% of the total variance in attitude toward sponsor ($R^2 = .39$). As proposed, beliefs about naming right sponsorship ($\beta = .26$, $p < .01$), attitude toward commercialization ($\beta = .13$, $p < .01$), and perception of financial status ($\beta = .14$, $p < .01$) all had positive contributions to the attitude toward sponsor. Nevertheless, although stadium identification had negative contribution in this model as expected, the coefficient was not statistically significant ($\beta = -0.7$, $p > .05$).

The second set of hierarchical regression analyses was conducted to examine the relationship of BF, ATC, TI, SI, POF, and ATS on purchase intentions of sponsor's products (PIP). The findings are shown in Table 6. Attitude toward sponsor was a major predictor to the college students' purchase intention of sponsor's products in collegiate stadium naming right sponsorship settings, where about one half of the variance in purchase intentions of sponsor's products was explained in model 1 ($R^2 = .48$). When ATC, TI, SI and POF were entered into the second regression model, the total variance explanation increased to 52% ($R^2 = .52$). ATS was still the most contributed factor ($\beta = .70$, $p < .01$). However, only team identification was also found to be a significant predictor in this model ($\beta = .22$, $p < .01$). As showed in Model 3, BF did

not significantly contribute to predicting PIP when it was entered with the other variables (β = .03, p > .05).

The third set of hierarchical regression analyses were performed by entering willingness to attend games (purchase intention of events, PIE) as the dependent variable, while ATC, TI, SI, and POF were entered in block 1 and BE was entered in block 2 as independent variables. The findings showed that students' responses to naming right sponsorship in terms of behavior intentions were formed differently, when the object changed from the sponsor to the university itself. SI and TI, instead of ATS, became most influential predictors in explaining PIE in all models. They combined explained 36% of the variance in PIE in Model 2. The β value ranged from 0.39 to 0.57 for SI, and 0.22 to 0.26 for SI (p < .01 level). ATC was another significant predictor in Model 3 (β = .14, p < .01); however, when BE was entered into the fourth model, ATC (β = .06, p > .05) was replaced by BE (β = .16, p < .01). Adding either ATC or BE into the regression model did not significantly increase variance explanation when comparing to Model 2 (R^2 = .38 and .39).

Table 4-1. Descriptive Statistics for Demographic Variables

Variables	Category	N	%
Awareness of Sponsorship	Yes	548	90.9
	No	55	9.1
Gender	Male	333(310)	55.2(56.6)
	Female	270(238)	44.8(43.4)
Age	18-21	316(296)	52.4(54.0)
	22-25	175(154)	29.0(28.1)
	26-30	72(65)	11.9(11.9)
	31 or older	38(33)	6.3(6)
	unknown	2(0)	0.3(0)
School Year	freshman	7(5)	1.2(.9)
	sophomore	85(78)	14.1(14.2)
	junior	137(126)	22.7(23)
	senior	202(186)	33.5(33.9)
	graduate or professional school	164(152)	27.2(27.7)
	other	3(1)	0.5(.2)
	unknown	5(0)	0.8(0)
Ethnicity	Caucasian	284(267)	47.1(48.7)
	Hispanic	86(76)	14.3(13.9)
	Asian	129(114)	21.4(20.8)
	African-American	70(60)	11.6(10.9)
	American Indian	1(1)	.2(.2)
	Mixed ethnicity or other	30(29)	5.0(5.3)
	unknown	3(1)	0.5(.2)

* Numbers within parentheses are numbers from effective samples.

Table 4-2. Descriptive Statistics for Variables of Beliefs about Naming Rights Sponsorship, Attitude toward Commercialization, Team Identification, Stadium Identification, Perception of Financial Status, Attitude toward Naming Rights Sponsor, Purchase Intentions of Sponsor's Products, and Purchase Intentions (Events).

Variables		M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Beliefs about Naming Rights Sponsorship (BE)					
This naming rights sponsorship…					
(1)	offers valuable financial support to both the athletic program and UF students.	4.82	1.55	-.638	-.023
(2)	will likely over-commercialize the UF campus.*	2.88	1.52	.591	-.199
(3)	helps the Florida Gators to build a strong football program.	3.97	1.69	-.128	-.713
(4)	is necessary for the renovations of the football stadium.	3.62	1.64	.031	-.804
(5)	overall benefits UF students.	3.49	1.59	.008	-.785
Attitude toward Commercialization (ATC)					
1.	I feel that commercial activities are necessary for today's intercollegiate sport programs.	3.76	1.65	-.124	-.739
2.	I am in favor of naming the football stadium to be used for commercial purposes.	2.54	1.63	.792	-.350
3.	I believe that intercollegiate football is no longer an amateur competition.	4.59	1.62	-.533	-.337
4.	I feel that the commercialization is necessary for funding intercollegiate athletic programs.	3.67	1.72	-.098	-.978
5.	I prefer intercollegiate athletics to remain a pure amateur sport with fewer commercial activities.	3.42	1.55	.194	-.448
Team Identification (TI)					
1.	I often display the Florida Gators name or insignia at my workplace, home, or on my clothing.	5.29	1.78	-.991	.046
2.	When someone praises the Florida Gators football team, it feels like a personal compliment.	5.16	1.75	-.937	.088
3.	I feel a sense of "ownership" for the Florida Gators football rather than being just a fan.	4.77	1.79	-.623	-.451
4.	When someone criticizes the Florida Gators football team, it feels like a personal insult.	4.56	1.90	-.459	-.833
5.	When the Florida Gators football team loses a game, it feels like my personal failure.	3.62	1.97	.112	-1.155
Stadium Identification (SI)					
1.	There is no better place than "The Swamp" in college football.	5.86	1.52	-1.388	1.418
2.	I have a lot of memories of "The Swamp".	5.30	1.89	-.936	-.210
3.	"The Swamp" cannot be replaced by any name in my mind.	5.99	1.54	-1.672	2.178
4.	When the Gators run into "The Swamp", it is the best moment in college football.	5.43	1.71	-1.005	.254
5.	"The Swamp" represents the home of Florida Gators football team.	6.31	1.17	-2.132	4.986

* Converse items (BE2, ATC5) coded on a Likert Scale from 1=Strongly Disagree to 7=Strongly Agree have been re-coded reversely to 1=Strongly Agree to 7=Strongly Disagree.

Table 4-2. (Continued)

Variables	M	SD	Skew.	Kurtosis
Perception of Financial Status (POF)				
1. I know that a majority of intercollegiate athletic departments in the U.S. operate with a budget deficit.	4.31	1.30	-.112	.207
2. Without the stadium naming rights sponsorship, the Florida Gators athletic department does not have enough funds to renovate the stadium.	3.50	1.47	-.007	-.394
3. I think that the Florida Gators athletic department needs the income from the stadium naming rights sponsorship to run its programs.	3.26	1.52	.162	-.547
4. Due to enormous growth in the costs of facilities, coaches' salaries, and athletic scholarships, university athletics have struggled to find needed resources to fund their programs.	3.71	1.47	-.195	-.399
5. The Florida Gators athletic department is financially challenged to run competitive sport programs.	3.29	1.50	.093	-.622
Attitude toward Naming Rights Sponsor (ATS)				
1. I am favorable of the Florida Gators football fans to purchase merchandise from the naming rights sponsor.	3.53	1.55	-.130	-.581
2. The sponsor cares more about its promotion than the success of the Florida Gators football team.*	2.56	1.53	.876	.206
3. I think that it is a wonderful idea to buy products produced by the naming rights sponsor.	3.15	1.45	-.050	-.752
4. I think favorably of the naming rights sponsor.	3.02	1.47	.101	-.717
5. Because Info Tech is the naming rights sponsor, I have a positive attitude toward Info Tech.	2.88	1.52	.301	-.677
Purchase Intentions of Sponsor's Products (PIP)				
1. I would consider purchasing products made by the naming rights sponsor.	3.30	1.61	.063	-.783
2. Whenever possible, I would like to buy products made by the naming rights sponsor.	2.82	1.48	.311	-.668
3. The fact that Info Tech is the sponsor in this naming rights sponsorship has no impact on my purchase decision of their products.*	3.56	1.91	.205	.948
4. I am more likely to buy products made by the naming rights sponsor.	2.77	1.43	.293	-.696
5. I would definitely purchase products made by the naming rights sponsor.	2.82	1.49	.292	-.777
Purchase Intentions (Events Attendance) (PIE)				
1. I plan to attend Florida Gators football games next season.	5.50	1.92	-1.167	.199
2. I will try to attend Florida Gators football games in the future.	5.84	1.53	-1.566	2.120
3. I will try to attend various events held at the Info Tech stadium.	4.01	1.67	-.185	-.492
4. The likelihood that I will attend Florida Gators football games in the future is high.	5.62	1.65	-1.218	.769
5. I will continue to attend Florida Gators football games in the future.	5.63	1.61	-1.240	.997

* Converse items (ATS2, PIP3) coded on a Likert Scale from 1=Strongly Disagree to 7=Strongly Agree have been re-coded reversely to 1=Strongly Agree to 7=Strongly Disagree

Table 4-3. Descriptive Statistics for the Factors of Beliefs about Naming Rights Sponsorship (BE), Attitude toward Commercialization (ATC), Team Identification (TI), Stadium Identification (SI), Perception of Financial Status (POF), Attitude toward Naming Rights Sponsor (ATS), Purchase Intentions (Sponsor's Products) (PIP), Purchase Intentions (Events) (PIE).

Factors	Min	Max	M	SD	α
Beliefs about Naming Rights Sponsorship (BE)	5	35	18.77	5.57	.73
Attitude toward Commercialization (ATC)	5	33	17.98	5.70	.74
Team Identification (TI)	5	35	23.40	7.74	.90
Stadium Identification (SI)	5	35	28.89	6.76	.91
Perception of Financial Status (POF)	5	35	18.07	5.55	.82
Attitude toward Naming Rights Sponsor (ATS)	5	29	15.14	5.71	.82
Purchase Intentions (Sponsor's Products) (PIP)	4	27	11.72	5.39	.92
Purchase Intentions (Events) (PIE)	5	35	26.60	7.07	.90

Table 4-4. Zero-order Correlation among the Factors.

Factor	BE	ATC	TI	SI	POF	ATS	PIP	PIE
Beliefs about Naming Rights Sponsorship (BE)	1.00	.592**	-.039	-.187**	.482**	.530**	.380**	.093**
Attitude toward Commercialization (ATC)		1.00	-.083	-.228**	.500**	.567**	.392**	.024
Team Identification (TI)			1.00	.703**	-.008	-.045	.188**	.534**
Stadium Identification (SI)				1.00	-.158**	-.202**	.048	.573**
Perception of Financial Status (POF)					1.00	.434**	.333**	.024
Attitude toward Naming Rights Sponsor (ATS)						1.00	.690**	.096*
Purchase Intentions (Sponsor's Products) (PIP)							1.00	.325**
Purchase Intentions (Events) (PIE)								1.00

* Significant at .05 level

** Significant at .01 level

Table 4-5. Hierarchical Regression analysis examining the relationship of Beliefs about Naming Rights Sponsorship (BE), Attitude toward Commercialization (ATC), Team Identification (TI), Stadium Identification (SI), and Perception of Financial Status (POF) on Attitude toward Naming Rights Sponsor.

Factor	R	R^2_{adj}	ΔR^2	F	B	SEB	β	t
Model 1	.59	.35	.35	147.82**				
Attitude toward Commercialization (ATC)					.47	.04	.47	11.72**
Perception of Financial Status (POF)					.21	.04	.20	5.05**
Model 2	.63	.39	.04	117.14**				
Attitude toward Commercialization (ATC)					.35	.04	.35	7.92**
Perception of Financial Status (POF)					.14	.04	.14	3.41**
Beliefs about Naming Rights Sponsorship (BE)					.27	.04	.26	6.04**

* Significant at .05 level
** Significant at .01 level

Table 4-6. Hierarchical Regression analysis examining the relationship of Beliefs about Naming Rights Sponsorship (BE), Attitude toward Commercialization (ATC), Team Identification (TI), Stadium Identification (SI), Perception of Financial Status (POF), and Attitude toward Naming Rights Sponsor (ATS) on Purchase Intentions (Sponsor's Products) (PIP).

Factor	R	R^2_{adj}	ΔR^2	F	B	SEB	β	t
Model 1	.69	.47	.47	494.82**				
Attitude toward Naming Rights Sponsor (ATS)					.65	.03	.69	22.25**
Model 2	.72	.52	.05	299.53**				
Attitude toward Naming Rights Sponsor (ATS)					.66	.03	.70	23.64**
Team Identification (TI)					.15	.02	.22	7.43**
Model 3	.72	.52	.00	199.70**				
Attitude toward Naming Rights Sponsor (ATS)					.65	.03	.69	19.66**
Team Identification (TI)					.15	.02	.22	7.44**
Beliefs about Naming Rights Sponsorship (BE)					.02	.03	.03	.730

* Significant at .05 level
** Significant at .01 level

Table 4-7. Hierarchical Regression analysis examining the relationship of Beliefs about Naming Rights Sponsorship (BE), Attitude toward Commercialization (ATC), Team Identification (TI), Stadium Identification (SI), Perception of Financial Status (POF), and Attitude toward Naming Rights Sponsor (ATS) on Purchase Intentions (Events) (PIE).

Factor	R	R^2_{adj}	ΔR^2	F	B	SEB	β	t
Model 1	.57	.33	.33	266.86*				
Stadium Identification (SI)					.60	.04	.57	16.34**
Model 2	.60	.36	.03	154.75**				
Stadium Identification (SI)					.41	.05	.39	8.12**
Team Identification (TI)					.24	.04	.26	5.38**
Model 3	.62	.38	.02	111.93**				
Stadium Identification (SI)					.46	.05	.44	8.99**
Team Identification (TI)					.22	.04	.24	4.96**
Attitude toward Commercialization (ATC)					.18	.04	.14	4.14**
Model 4	.63	.39	.02	89.39**				
Stadium Identification (SI)					.48	.05	.46	9.44**
Team Identification (TI)					.20	.04	.22	4.69**
Attitude toward Commercialization (ATC)					.07	.05	.06	1.33
Beliefs about Naming Rights Sponsorship (BE)					.20	.05	.16	3.72**

* Significant at .05 level
** Significant at .01 level

CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

Through these results, we have achieved some of the objectives in this study. First, facility naming rights sponsorship in the intercollegiate athletic is exploding, but it have not yet been studied. We tried to explore possible factors adopted or inferred from literatures, which can contribute to the effectiveness of college facility naming right sponsorship. Through examining their influences on consumers' attitude and purchase intensions, we have developed a conceptual model to measure this specific type of sponsorship.

For adopted factors, beliefs about facility naming rights sponsorship, attitudes toward commercialization, and team identification were found to some extent correlated to the naming right sponsorship outcomes. Beliefs about facility naming rights sponsorship was mentioned to be the major factor that has contributed to sponsorship success in earlier studies (Alexandris et al., 2007; Bennett, 1999; Harvey, 2001; Meenaghan, 2001b). Consistently, it is found positively correlated to all the three dependent variables, and also the most contributing factor predicting student's attitude toward sponsor. Students, who thought more favorably about the naming right sponsorship deal, were more likely to think and act positively toward the sponsor and football program. These findings found in the college stadium naming rights sponsorship setting were consistent with existing literatures (Alexandris et al, 2007; Lee et al., 1997; Madrigal, 2001).

Students who thought more favorably about commercialization in collegiate sports and their campus were more likely to generate positive attitude toward sponsor and purchase their products. These relationships were consistent with the findings of Lee et al. (1997) and Zhang et al. (2005), from which the factor ATC was adopted. Zhang et al. (2005) examined the effects of college students' attitude toward commercialization and revealed that students' attitudes toward commercialization positively explained 12% of the variance in purchasing intentions. In this

study, attitude toward commercialization was found to be significantly correlated to students' attitudes toward sponsor and purchase intention of their products. It was also found to be a major contributor in predicting students' attitudes toward sponsor, but not directly accounting for purchase intention of sponsor's products in our models. With ATC being one of the significant predictors, our models explained 35-40% of variance in ATS. Combined with TI, ATS explained 52% of variance in PIP. Although not directly accounting for the prediction of PIP, ATC still had indirect contribution. However, the concern of over-commercialization on campus or in intercollegiate athletics did not have significant influence on students' behavior intention to support the team (i.e., willingness to attend events). It appears that the negative impact only took effect on the sponsor's side in this case. The possible reason was that the negative effect was not strong enough to shake the native connection between students and their team, but it might be easy to attribute the negative thought to the new comer who happened to be the source of the commercialization.

Researchers usually agree that team identification plays a significant role in sponsorship effectiveness and is one of the most well documented forms of psychological attachments in sponsorship studies (Cornwell, Weeks, & Roy, 2005; Dees et al., 2008; Gwinner & Swanson, 2003; Madrigal, 2001; Zhang et al., 2005). Consistently, in this study, students who had stronger team identification were found more likely to attend games. Moreover, team identification also play a significant role in predicting purchase intention of sponsors' product. When combined with attitude toward sponsor, they account for 52% of variance in PIP. For corporation seeking a naming right partner, a well identified program may bring them some advantages in this regard. However, using a stadium as a marketing medium distinguishes facility naming rights from other forms of sponsorship, which was the major reason we suggested a new concept of stadium

identification in this study. Our perspective was partially supported by the results. First, team identification and stadium identification were found to be highly correlated, but this correlation did not have a significant influence on the results of regression analyses. They were found to have different contributions in the effectiveness of naming right sponsorship in this study. Students' stadium identification was negatively correlated with their attitude toward sponsor, while team identification was not. That is, students who were highly identified with the stadium would be more likely to generate or strengthen negative attitudes towards corporate naming rights sponsorship because of their strong emotion attachment with the old name. Although the contribution of SI was not statistically significant ($p < .05$) in the regression model predicting attitude toward sponsor, it did cause negative effect to some extent as anticipated.

Another new factor we induced in this study that had not been discussed much in previous sponsorship studies was the perception of financial status. Since the pressure to build a winning team is partly coming from the expectation of fans, realizing that financial shortage is one of the major obstacles would make it easier to embrace the corporate naming right sponsorship. Instead of concerning about commercialization, fans may regard the sponsorship as an important support of athletic teams and in turn show positive attitude. Our inferences about POF were supported in this study by the two regression models showed in Table 5. Perceptions of difficult financial status showed a counter effect on attitude toward commercialization in our model. This finding might provide athletic directors a way to moderate the negative effect caused by ATC, which need to be further studied. Future researches may want to focus on the interaction between POF and ATC to see how much POF can actually conciliate negative attitude. When studying this issue, one should not neglect the moderating role of team identification. As we mentioned in the literature review, POF could have a stronger influence on the sponsorship effectiveness when

students have stronger team identification, which means that there should be a significant interaction between these two factors. However, attitude toward commercialization might not have such an interaction with team identification since it is supposed to be an implanted concept operated independently on students' mind.

To recapture, the purpose of this study was to investigate students' beliefs about facility naming rights sponsorship, attitudes toward commercialization and amateurism, team and stadium identification, and perception of financial status and see if any negative effect existed toward either the corporation or athletic program, and whether they would affect naming rights sponsorship outcomes in the areas of attitudes toward the sponsor, purchase intention of products produced by the sponsor, and also willingness to attend sport events. Our findings in this study confirmed that the existing measurement and model for sponsorship effectiveness are applicable in collegiate facility naming right sponsorship settings. Madrigal's (2001) belief-attitude-behavior intentions hierarchy model functioned well as the theoretical foundation of this study.

From administrative perspective, we did find some potential negative effects that need to be taken into consideration before entering into a naming right sponsorship. The first one is the concern of over-commercialization on campus or intercollegiate sports. Consistent with Alexandris et al. (2007) and Zhang et al. (2005), we found that attitude toward commercialization significantly affect the sponsorship outcomes especially on the attitude toward sponsor. Meanwhile, we also found that the perception of financial difficulty could have some counter effect on ATC that might be utilized by athletic administrators. The other factor that has the potential to cause negative effect is stadium identification, the factor we induced specifically for the distinguishing form of stadium sponsorship. Administrators need to be more careful when they are dealing with stadiums with rich history and highly identified by the fans.

Although the findings did not show that these negative factors would have impact on students' willingness to attend games, it does not mean that athletic administrators do not have to pay attention to them. Without doubt, intercollegiate athletics facility naming right sponsorship has an enormous potential in its value and ability to relieve the financial pressure for intercollegiate athletic programs. To have a comprehensive understanding of its mechanism and function is an urgency that demands sincere attention. This study provided a preliminary model for this specific form of sponsorship, and also provided some fundamental evidence for further studies.

It is very important to note that the research findings in this study could not be extended to other fans population, such as alumni and major donors; neither to other forms of support, such as purchase intention of licensing merchandises. Future studies may consider studying stakeholders beyond the student population. Our study was also limited to a specific FBS institution and its student body. Although it severed well for the purpose of this study, it may not be able to be generalized to settings of other FBS institutions. Future study may consider choosing another institution in a similar financial status and considering a facility renovation project.

APPENDIX A
SAMPLE OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Facility Naming Rights Survey

March 30, 2009

Dear participants:

I am conducting a study about facility naming rights sponsorship on a college campus. I am interested in how University of Florida students perceive and respond to a facility naming right agreement. Your participation is entirely voluntary. It would be greatly appreciated if you would simply complete the enclosed questionnaire.

Please do not include your name or identification number on the survey instrument. It will take approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete. There are no physical and psychological risks associated with participating in completing this questionnaire. Upon completion, please return the questionnaire to the survey administrator.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about this study. Thank you!

Sincerely yours,

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STADIUM NAMING RIGHTS QUESTIONNAIRE

Purpose: This survey is for the purpose of understanding issues related to naming rights of intercollegiate arenas and stadiums. The collected information will be solely used for research, and your name will not be identified. Your sincere and honest response is greatly appreciated.

UF FOOTBALL GAME ATTENDANCE. Please provide the following by filling out a blank or circling an answer.

1. Number of UF football game(s) you attended last season (2008): _____
2. Your football game ticket type last season (2008)? a. full season ticket b. single game ticket c. none
3. Number of UF football game(s) you watched on TV last season (2008): _____
4. How often did you read about UF football via Internet or printed media last season (2008): a. Everyday b. 5-6 times weekly c. 3-4 times weekly d. 1-2 times weekly e. never
5. Number of UF football game(s) you are planning to attend this coming season (2009): _____

.....

ANNOUNCEMENT

According to the University Athletic Association, Inc. (UAA), the home of the Florida Gators football team will become Info Tech Stadium. The Gators have reached a 10-year $50 million sponsorship agreement with Info Tech, Inc., to rename the Ben Hill Griffin Stadium as Info Tech Stadium on April 20, 2009. The naming rights sponsor, Info Tech, Inc. is an American multinational corporation that designs and manufactures consumer electronics and software products. The sponsorship agreement will officially change the name of Gators' football stadium in August, 2009, and also prohibit the press from using the nickname "The Swamp". New signage will be installed in time for the Gators' home opener against Charleston Southern University on September 5, 2009.

The money from the naming rights sponsorship will mainly be used for a stadium renovation project that would cost $50 million as well as to support the entire athletic program. The expansion will not only increase seating by 3,500 to a total of 94,048, but also add concourses on both sides of the stadium, as well as new concession areas and rest rooms. With its new and improved construction, the home of the Gator football stadium will be a world-class facility that is second to none. Additionally, the stadium naming rights agreement includes academic scholarships and internship opportunities for university students, while the sponsor will receive a stadium suite, year-round advertising, and could also secure the rights to sell products and services to the university.

"Thanks to Info Tech, we are stronger academically and more competitive in SEC athletics." said Athletics Director Jeremy Foley. "We are excited to call Info Tech Stadium home of the Florida Gators. We believe that having Info Tech's name on this facility will only enhance our reputation in the SEC Conference and across the country."

After reading this announcement, please answer the questions in the following sections:

Items	*Scale*
Your Beliefs:	Strongly Disagree Neutral Strongly Agree
This naming rights sponsorship…..	
(6) offers valuable financial support to both the athletic program and UF students.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(7) will likely over-commercialize the UF campus.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(8) helps the Florida Gators to build a strong football program.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(9) is necessary for the renovations of the football stadium.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(10) overall benefits UF students.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Your Attitude towards Commercialization:	Strongly Disagree Neutral Strongly Agree
(1) I feel that commercial activities are necessary for today's intercollegiate sport programs.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(2) I am in favor of naming the football stadium to be used for commercial purposes.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(3) I believe that intercollegiate football is no longer an amateur competition.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(4) I feel that the commercialization is necessary for funding intercollegiate athletic programs.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(5) I prefer intercollegiate athletics to remain a pure amateur sport with fewer commercial activities.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Your Team Identification:	Strongly Disagree Neutral Strongly Agree
(1) I often display the Florida Gators name or insignia at my workplace, home, or on my clothing.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(2) When someone praises the Florida Gators football team, it feels like a personal compliment.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(3) I feel a sense of "ownership" for the Florida Gators football rather than being just a fan.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(4) When someone criticizes the Florida Gators football team, it feels like a personal insult.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(5) When the Florida Gators football team loses a game, it feels like my personal failure.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Your Stadium Identification:	Strongly Disagree Neutral Strongly Agree
(1) There is no better place than "The Swamp" in college football.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(2) I have a lot of memories of "The Swamp".	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(3) "The Swamp" cannot be replaced by any name in my mind.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(4) When the Gators run into "The Swamp", it is the best moment in college football.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(5) "The Swamp" represents the home of Florida Gators football team.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Items	*Scale*
Your Perception of Financial Status:	Strongly Disagree Neutral Strongly Agree
(1) I know that a majority of intercollegiate athletic departments in the U.S. operate with a budget deficit.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(2) Without the stadium naming rights sponsorship, the Florida Gators athletic department does not have enough funds to renovate the stadium.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(3) I think that the Florida Gators athletic department needs the income from the stadium naming rights sponsorship to run its programs.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(4) Due to enormous growth in the costs of facilities, coaches' salaries, and athletic scholarships, university athletics have struggled to find needed resources to fund their programs.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(5) The Florida Gators athletic department is financially challenged to run competitive sport programs.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Your Attitude toward Naming Rights Sponsor:	Strongly Disagree Neutral Strongly Agree
(1) I am favorable of the Florida Gators football fans to purchase merchandise from the naming rights sponsor.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(2) The sponsor cares more about its promotion than the success of the Florida Gators football team.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(3) I think that it is a wonderful idea to buy products produced by the naming rights sponsor.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(4) I think favorably of the naming rights sponsor.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(5) Because Info Tech is the naming rights sponsor, I have a positive attitude toward Info Tech.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Your Purchase Intentions:	Strongly Disagree Neutral Strongly Agree
(1) I plan to attend Florida Gators football games next season.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(2) I would consider purchasing products made by the naming rights sponsor.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(3) I will try to attend Florida Gators football games in the future.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(4) Whenever possible, I would like to buy products made by the naming rights sponsor.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(5) The fact that Info Tech is the sponsor in this naming rights sponsorship has no impact on my purchase decision of their products.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(6) I will try to attend various events held at the Info Tech stadium.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(7) The likelihood that I will attend Florida Gators football games in the future is high.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(8) I am more likely to buy products made by the naming rights sponsor.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(9) I will continue to attend Florida Gators football games in the future.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
(10) I would definitely purchase products made by the naming rights sponsor.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

When answering questions above, have you kept in mind the ANNOUNCEMENT about changing the name of football stadium? Yes_____ No_____

DEMOGRAPHICS. Please provide the following information by filling out a blank or circling an answer.

1. Gender: a. male b. female
2. Age: a. 18-21 b. 22-25 c. 26-30 d. 30+
3. Ethnicity: a. Caucasian b. Hispanic c. Asian d. African-American e. American Indian
f. mixed ethnicity or other
4. What is your academic major in the university: _____
5. School Year Classification at University of Florida: a. freshman b. sophomore c. junior d. senior
e. graduate or professional school
f. other

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Kuan-Chou Chen was born and grew up in Nantou, Taiwan. He completed his undergraduate study at the National Taiwan Normal University, which is one of the top higher educational institutions in Taiwan. During the four years in NTNU, he played intercollegiate basketball for the school and was the team captain in his junior and senior years.

He continued his graduate study at the Tunghai University and received a master's degree in biology with a 3.6 GPA. There, his critical thinking ability was developed and his first research publication and overseas presentation were completed through a strict academic training in scientific research. After graduation, Kuan-Chou became a teacher and basketball coach in a private high school with a stable salary above average. Although it was a job that could fulfill his pursuit of achievement, it couldn't satisfy his passion and dedication to sports. Therefore, he quit the enviable occupation and entered the Taipei Physical Educational College to dedicate himself to the sport industry. With an outstanding academic background, he maintained a perfect 4.0 GPA in class while spending a lot of time working in various sport organizations in positions such as athletic trainer, assistant manager, account executive and assistant basketball operation. Through these experiences he realized that the sport industry in Taiwan cannot improve without a well developed system and decided to learn more in the U.S.

Kuan-Chou came to UF in fall 2007. As an outstanding graduate student in the Department of Tourism, Recreation and Sport Management, Kuan-Chou maintains a superior level of academic performance. Upon completion of his master's program, he will continue his Ph.D. program in the Drpartment of Tourism, Recreation, and Sport Management at the University of Florida.