

ABSTRACT

The Impact of Construed External Image Factors on Sport Management Student Perceptions of Pride in a Sport Employer

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This study examined whether the construed external image (CEI) factors of organizational reputation, familiarity, and social prestige have a positive and direct effect on sport management students' levels of perceived pride in being employed by a professional sport organization. Pride represents an important outcome to explore in sport-based studies because employees who demonstrate pride in the organization employing them are less likely to leave (turnover) and more likely to demonstrate a greater level of organizational commitment. A total of 91 undergraduate sport management students from two different universities participated in this study. Results revealed that higher levels of familiarity and social prestige with a sport organization were associated with higher levels of pride in a hypothetical sport organization employer by sport management students. Organizational reputation was not found to impact students' perceptions of pride. Implications for scholars and practitioners, study limitations, and suggestions for future research are also discussed.

The Impact of Construed External Image Factors on Sport Management Student
Perceptions of Pride in a Sport Employer

by

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A Thesis

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this to my lord and savior Jesus Christ.

I dedicate this to my mother and father. They have blessed me with their love, support,
and patience. I am truly fortunate to be their daughter.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Todd and Kent (2009), in a conceptual paper published in *Management Decision*, argued that sport employees “derive certain emotionally significant benefits from their ‘group membership’ in sport organizations in excess of what may be seen in other industries” (p. 174). In other words, sport employees, possibly more so than individuals working in other, non-sport industries, may be more inclined to develop a connection to their employer that determines, in part, their desire to remain a group member. Todd and Kent further argued that reputation, familiarity, and prestige factors (categorized as construed external image or CEI) would contribute to an employee connecting with a sport employer, a conceptualization which was grounded in Bandura’s (1968) social identity theory (SIT).

The development of SIT is grounded in the exploration of the minimal group paradigm (Turner, 1975). Research conducted about minimal group studies typically includes the random assignment of participants into distinctive yet minimally-defined groups. Next, researchers observe the interplay between groups, proceeding with the belief that, despite the minimally-defined groups, study participants will still form group identities as well as in-group and out-group biases (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995; Turner & Onorato, 1999).

According to SIT, individuals have a personal identity as well as a social identity, and that the social identity connects (acts as a mechanism that links) the individual and society. Whereas personal identity refers to unique personal attributes, such as a keen intellect or photographic memory, social identity is “the perception of oneness with or belongingness to some human aggregate” (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p.

21). Social identity describes the connection an individual has to a focal group, such as organizational membership or demographic parallels (e.g., age, education level, gender). By extension, if current sport employees or sport management students (potential sport employees) envision themselves as being a part of a well-regarded sport organization, they may perceive themselves as having greater levels of pride in that organization because of the opportunity to boost their self-concept through basking in the reflected glory (BIRGing) of the sport organization and its observed position of high social veneration (Cialdini, Borden, Thorne, Walker, Freeman, & Sloan, 1976; Wann, Melnick, Russell, & Pease, 2001). BIRGing is when individuals associate themselves with successful others (e.g., sport teams) so that the success of another becomes their own success.

Accordingly, SIT may form a useful theoretical foundation for empirically examining the link between CEI factors and pride in one's employer. CEI factors such as reputation, familiarity, and social prestige may enhance the social position of a valued social group, i.e., a sport employer, and they also are factors that may correspondingly impact current or future sport employees' perceptions of pride if they were to be a part of a socially desirable professional sport organization. Though the work of Todd and Kent (2009) lays out a useful conceptualization of the basic ideas of social identification in sport, they did not provide empirical support for their model. Thus, as was recommended by Todd and Kent as a next step in the investigation of this research topic, a benefit of the present study is that it provides an initial empirical examination of the impact of CEI factors on the attitudes of potential sport industry employees.

Problem

Pride in one's employer can act as a potent motivator and contributor to individual- and organizational-level success. Employees who demonstrate pride in the organization employing them are less likely to leave and engage in counterproductive work behaviors (e.g., coming to work late, leaving work early, slacking) and more likely to demonstrate a greater level of commitment to job-related tasks and collegiality. Remarkably, sparse empirical attention has been given to the study of organizational pride in the extant sport management literature. As a result, the findings from this study can be used to help sport managers better understand what CEI factors have a notable impact on pride in a sport employer.

Purpose of the Study

This thesis attempts to improve scholarly understanding of the antecedents of sport management students' levels of anticipated (perceived) pride in being employed by a professional sport organization. Specifically, the purpose of the present study was to explore whether CEI factors impact sport management students' levels of perceived pride in working for a professional sport organization. Construed external image was evaluated using three factors: firm reputation, firm familiarity, and firm social prestige.

Hypothesis

The following three null hypotheses were developed for this study:

H₀₁: Organizational reputation will not have a positive and direct effect on sport management student perceptions of pride.

H₀₂: Organizational familiarity will not have a positive and direct effect on sport management student perceptions of pride.

H₀₃: Social prestige will not have a positive and direct effect on sport management student perceptions of pride.

Definitions

The following concepts are pivotal to this study. Therefore, definitions for these important concepts are provided:

1. Social Identity Theory (SIT): a supposition that individuals have a personal identity as well as a social identity, and that the social identity connects the individual and society (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).
2. Construed External Image (CEI): categorized as three factors: firm reputation, firm familiarity, and firm social prestige (Todd & Kent, 2009).
3. Attitudinal pride: emotional pride is an intense but short-lived emotional expression of individual commitment (Katzenbach, 2003); however, attitudinal pride represents a collective pride that stems from individuals need for affiliation with a specific group, such as the organization that employs them (Lea & Webley, 1997).
4. Firm reputation: represents the collective knowledge about and recognition of a business firm by observers. It is a universal perception of the extent to which an organization is held in high regard (Weiss, Anderson, & MacInnis, 1999).
5. Familiarity: the extent to which an individual is knowledgeable about a particular organization (Cable & Turban, 2001).
6. Social prestige: refers to individuals' perceptions of how the outside world (those individuals who are not a part of their organization) views their organization (Bartels, Pruyn, de Jong, & Joustra, 2007).

Assumptions

For the purpose of this study, the researcher assumes:

1. Study participants answered the survey questions truthfully.
2. Study participants understood the survey questions correctly.
3. Study participants followed the instructions of the survey correctly.

Limitations

The following limitations apply to this study:

1. The existing instruments used in this study were modified slightly to represent a sport management context, which could limit the generalizability of the results outside of the two schools and sample used in this examination.
2. The sample comprised only undergraduate sport management students from two mid-sized academic institutions, which could limit the generalizability of the findings.
3. Sport management students were asked to fill out a survey about a hypothetical sport organization employer instead of being asked to fill out a survey about a current sport employer. Thus, the IVs and DV were hypothetical, which limits the accuracy of the results. The participants' perceptions of what they might think if employed by a sport organization could vary significantly from their perceptions of what they think if actually employed by a professional sport organization.

Delimitations

The researcher delimited the study to the following criteria:

1. Participation in this study was completely voluntary.

2. Participants in this study were undergraduate sport management students who had completed at least one semester's worth of sport management courses required for the completion of their degree.
3. The survey was confidential and it was designed to protect the anonymity in that no identifying information from the participants was required.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Each component of the proposed research model will be discussed in the ensuing sections of this chapter. First, the theoretical foundations of the research model will be explored. Next, the outcome variable of pride will be explained. Thereafter, each of the three antecedents to sport management student pride will be discussed and the corresponding research hypotheses will be presented.

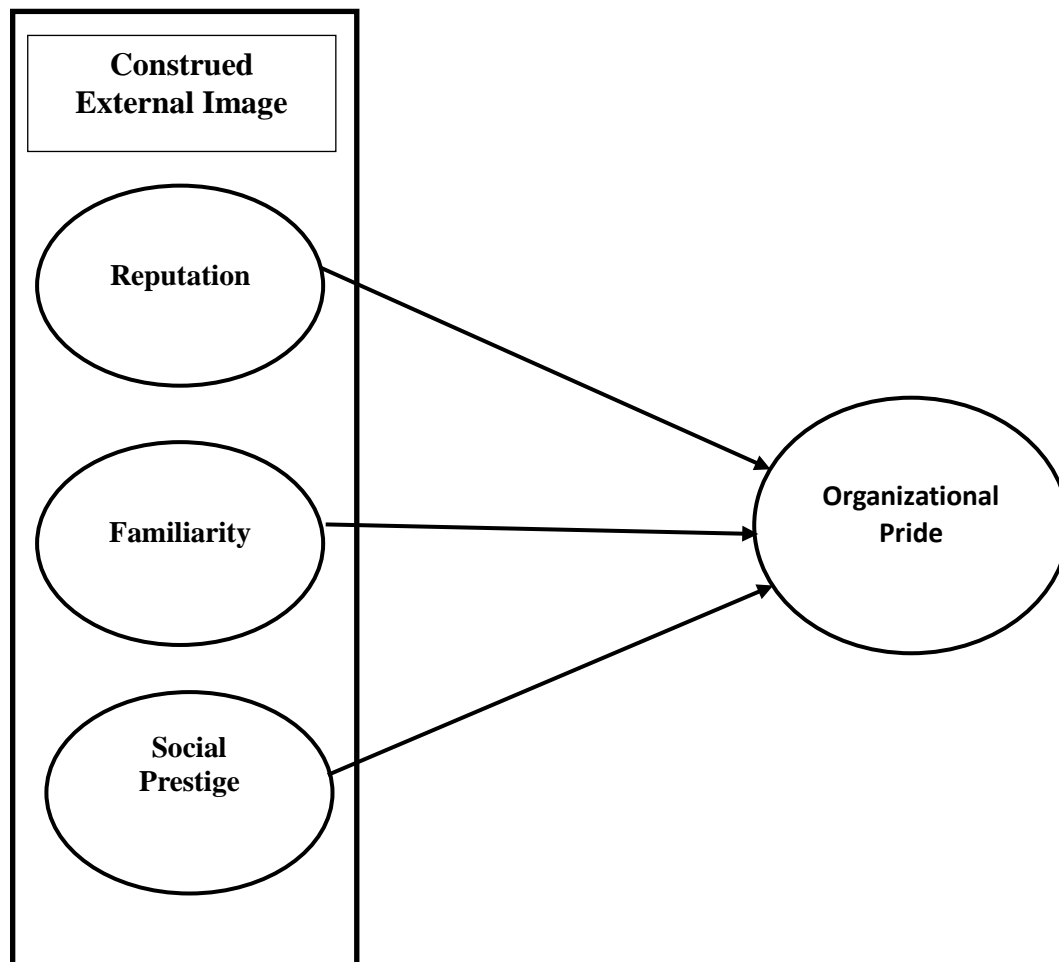


Figure 1. Model of Antecedents to Sport Management Student Pride in Working for a Professional Sport Organization

Theoretical Foundation of the Model

Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986) is viewed as a suitable underlying theoretical basis for the proposed model in Figure 1. According to SIT, the self-concept is a basic human need, and as a result, humans possess a strong motivation to maintain a positive self-concept (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The extent to which membership in a group impacts an individual's self-concept depends on the value and emotional significance the individual attributes to group membership (Tajfel, 1981). Contributing to why an individual would want to be a part of a specific social group is the self-concept. More precisely, "if belonging to a certain group makes individuals feel good about themselves, maintaining affiliation with that group and preserving its positive evaluation compared to other groups will be very important to them" (Shinnar, 2008, p. 554).

Applying SIT to the context of the present study, if sport management students value professional sports and value the possibility of being a member (employee) within a professional sport organization, it is highly likely that social identity will be used to enhance their self-concept (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Cable & Turban, 2003). Factors that influence how sport management students view professional sport organizations (possible employers) should contribute to the development of their self-concept. Specifically, CEI factors such as a positive reputation, outsider familiarity with the organization, and social prestige are likely to impact how sport management students would view themselves if they happened to be a part of a well-regarded professional sport organization (Todd & Kent, 2009).

If sport management students envision themselves as being a part of a well-regarded organization, they are likely to perceive themselves as having greater levels of pride in that organization because of the opportunity to boost their

self-concept through basking in reflected glory (BIRGing) and being associated with the sport organization's social position (Cialdini et al., 1976; Todd & Kent, 2009; Wann et al., 2001). Thus, SIT can be used to explain the link between CEI factors and pride because factors that can enhance the social position of a valued social group, such as an employee's employer, are factors that may correspondingly impact sport management students' perceptions of pride if they were to be a part of a professional sport business.

Employee Pride

Defining Pride

Employee pride in their employer is a strategic asset. Pride, possibly more so than any other motivator, inspires individual initiative, encourages cooperative effort, and promotes teamwork (Katzenbach, 2003). From a workplace perspective, employees' levels of pride in their workplace can be thought of in terms of emotion and attitude. With respect to the former, pride represents "the emotional expression of individual commitment" (Katzenbach, pp. 33). Whereas attitudinal pride is durable and likely to have developed over time, emotional pride is an intense but short-lived mental experience (Fairfield & Wagner, 2004; C. D. Fisher & Ashkanasy, 2000). Accomplishments can trigger emotional pride. A college football team winning a conference championship, for example, is likely to cause athletic department employees to be proud of the football team's success. Employees' pride in the team would be intense but short-lived. In comparison, though repeated emotional pride emotions can contribute to the formation of attitudinal organizational pride, attitudinal pride still represents a distinctive psychological construct (Lines, 2005).

Unlike emotional pride, attitudinal pride represents a more wide-ranging and resilient state that is separate from a specific triumph, such as a team winning a

national championship. Attitudinal pride, more so than emotion-based pride, also aligns with the theoretical basis of this study because it is grounded in employee group membership (Arnett, Laverie, & McLane, 2002). Indeed, the combination of employee work experiences and needs for affiliation with their employers can result in high levels of favor toward employers (Lea & Webley, 1997). A high degree of favor toward an employer can manifest itself in the form of attitudinal organizational pride. Therefore, in order to stay consistent with SIT and the proposed research model, the focus of this study is how CEI factors impact attitudinal pride development rather than emotional pride development.

Benefits of Pride to Business Organizations

Pride in one's employer can be a powerful contributor to individual and organizational success, helping to contribute to a win-win relationship between employees and employers. Individuals who have pride in the organization employing them are more likely to demonstrate a greater level of commitment to interpersonal relationships and organizational tasks, such as social exchanges and customer service (Gouthier & Rhein, 2011). As well, pride can stimulate employee creativity and motivate employees to come up with clever ways in which to overcome obstacles to organizational goals. Pride in one's employer can also help reduce employee turnover rates (Gouthier & Rhein). Overall, employees who are filled with pride are more likely to experience higher levels of self-esteem, be committed to their work tasks and the achievement of individual and organizational goals, and be less-likely to have negative work attitudes and the desire to leave their present employer for a different job.

Construed External Image

The proposed research model (see Figure 1) illustrates that pride is formulated from three CEI factors. The category of CEI represents an overarching conceptualization of what sport management students (possible organizational members) believe outsiders would think about the students' professional sport organization employers (Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994).

Dutton et al. (1994) contend that CEI can be partitioned into three key factors: firm reputation, firm familiarity, and firm social prestige. Their organization of CEI is based on an extensive review of the extant business literature, and it has been adopted by other scholars, including Todd and Kent (2009). Therefore, this study adheres to the partitioning of CEI employed by Dutton et al. Next, each CEI factor will be defined, the extant literature reviewed, and how the factor contributes to sport management student perceptions of pride will be explicitly examined.

Firm Reputation

Defining firm reputation. As aforementioned, CEI is thought to represent a total impression (global impression) a business firm has on the minds of others (Dichter, 1985; Dutton et al., 1994). In the proposed model found in Figure 1, reputation is argued to be linked to yet distinct from the overarching concept of CEI. This distinction is important because it is not uncommon to see the concept of reputation labeled as “identity” or “image” in the extant management literature (Cable & Turban, 2001). Such overlap is incorrect. The concept of identity, for example, refers to “the attributions made of an organization by its members and “reputation” relates to the attributions made about the same organization by outsiders” (Ferris, Berkson, & Harris, 2002, p. 361). Nevertheless, despite the fact concepts such as

image and identify have been used synonymously with reputation (Dowling, 1993), adequate research evidence points to it being a distinctive concept of which a factor such as a firm reputation may be a part (Barich & Kotler, 1991; Davies, Chun, da Silva, & Roper, 2004; Sung & Yang, 2008).

Over the past several decades numerous definitions of reputation have been put forth in the scholarly literatures. The definitions usually correspond with the focus of the respective academic discipline. For instance, from a marketing perspective, reputation represents “the level of awareness that the firm has been able to develop for itself...as well as for its brands” (Shamsie, 2003, p. 199). Taking a broader institutional perspective, Fombrun (1996) referred to reputation as “a firm’s overall appeal compared to other leading rivals” (p. 72). Similarly, the reputation of an organization can be thought to represent a “generalized understanding in the minds of observers as to what it is known for, and can be judged favorably or unfavorably by its observers” (Lange, Lee, & Dai, 2011, p.154)

Despite variations in how reputation is defined and applied in the business literature, a recurring feature of the concept is that it tends to be perceived as outsider’s beliefs about an organization (Carmeli & Freund, 2002). Thus, for the purposes of this study, firm reputation is understood to represent the collective knowledge about and recognition of a business firm by observers. In short, reputation refers to “a global perception of the extent to which an organization is held in high esteem or regard” (Weiss et al., 1999, p.75).

Outcomes of firm reputation. There exist numerous benefits to firm reputation. Indeed, in a broader business sense, scholars have linked organizational reputation to the ability of a business firm to charge premium prices for their goods or services (Fombrun, 1996; Rindova, Williamson, Petkova, & Sever, 2005), increased firm

profitability and earnings quality (Roberts & Dowling, 2002), and consumer patronage behaviors such as positive word-of-mouth (WOM) intentions (Hong & Yang, 2009). In terms of human resource management (HRM), organizational reputation can impact current and potential employees that are hired (or could be hired) by an organization.

As for current employees, organizational reputation can influence their attitudes and behaviors. Just as reputation can positively influence job seekers' perceptions of an organization, so too can it strengthen current employees' levels of connection to their employer and desires to remain with their employer (Elsbach & Glynn, 1996; Helm, 2011; Smidts, Pruyn, & Van Riel, 2001; Svendsen, 1998). For example, self-esteem, which is the level of self-respect someone has for themselves, can be improved through affiliation with a reputable organization (Cable & Turban, 2003; Fisher & Wakefield, 1998; Riordan, Gatewood, & Bill, 1997). Additionally, and with particular relevance to this study, firm reputation is likely to have a significant and positive impact on employees' levels of pride in their employers.

Corresponding to SIT, employees who are aware of their organization being positively perceived by others are likely to experience pride. These individuals are proud to be a part of an organization, sport or otherwise, that is held in high repute by those outside of the organization and may, therefore, want to bask in the reflected glory (BIRG) of their employer (Cialdini et al., 1976; Dutton et al., 1994). Lending empirical support to such viewpoints, Helm (2011) reported a significant and positive relationship between firm reputation (referred to as corporate reputation) and employee pride.

With respect to potential employees, organizational reputation is likely to make an employer seem more attractive to job prospects (Highhouse, Zickar,

Thorsteinson, Stierwalt, & Slaughter, 1999). Organizations with a good reputation also have been shown to attract a larger higher-quality job applicant pool than organizations lacking a good reputation (Barber, 1998; Fombrun, 1996; Turban & Cable, 2003; Williamson, King, Lepak, & Sarma, 2010). In a study by Cable and Turban, job seekers were reportedly willing to accept lower wages from an organization with a positive reputation than from an organization without a positive reputation. In all, it appears that reputation can impact how employees act toward and think about their current employer as well as impact the affective, cognitive, and behavioral processes of individuals who could be employees of a particular organization. Therefore, in light of both theory and research evidence, the following hypothesis is generated:

H₁: Organizational reputation will have a positive and direct effect on sport management student perceptions of pride.

Firm Familiarity

Defining firm familiarity. It is difficult to introduce and discuss familiarity from a HRM perspective without first considering a marketing perspective to the concept (Cable & Turban, 2001). Brand familiarity is when consumers become accustomed to a brand (e.g., Ford, Sony, Nike) due to consistently seeing, reading, or hearing about a particular company's products and/or services (Aaker, 1991; Alba & Hutchinson, 1987; Keller, 1993). For instance, imagine that a consumer is asked by a researcher about athletic clothing. When asked, Nike or Adidas may be the first company that the consumer associates with athletic apparel because they are well-known, global sports brand that most sport consumers have seen, worn, or read about in magazines. Similar to the impact of brand awareness on consumer behaviors,

familiarity with a business firm also has been found to have a significant impact on job seekers.

In a management context, firm familiarity refers to the extent to which an individual, such as a job seeker or employee, is aware of/knowledgeable about a focal organization (Cable & Turban, 2001). Put differently, firm familiarity “represents a general overall level of acquaintance with the firm, most likely without reference to specific, identifiable sources of information” (Luce, Barber, & Hillman, 2001, p.410). As well, Gomes and Neves (2011) referred to firm familiarity as “the degree of awareness and the level of exposure an organization has for prospective applicants” (p. 696). Ultimately, just as consumers need brand awareness to develop an informed template (or basis of knowledge) about a particular brand, job seekers and current employees need to possess an acceptable level of firm familiarity if they are to develop well-informed perceptions of and beliefs about an organization.

Outcomes of firm familiarity. Several opinions have been offered as to why familiarity could have a significant impact on how outsiders (e.g., job seekers) think and feel about an organization. Tichener (1910) suggested the ‘glow of warmth’ theory as a possible explanation. The glow of warmth theory puts forth the idea that familiarity causes people to experience a glow of warmth or a sense of nonsexual intimacy (i.e., openness and closeness) with an organization. Decades later, Zajonc (1968) proposed the ‘mere exposure’ theory. Mere exposure effects theory suggests that the simple process of someone, be it a consumer or job seeker, being repeatedly exposed to a stimulus is sufficient to generate affective responses in those individuals toward the entity transmitting the stimulus. In other words, simply being exposed to an organization (or brand) may cause individuals (those men and women who are exposed to the organization) to then view it more favorably (Janiszewski, 1993).

Further, and once again returning to SIT, the extent to which an organization is familiar to the public is likely to represent a social factor that can influence how individuals who are part of that organization or looking to be a part that organization perceive themselves and the organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Dutton, et al., 1994; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). That is, someone who is part of a more recognizable business firm may perceive themselves and the employer differently than someone who a member in a less recognizable business firm (Todd & Kent, 2009). For instance, similar to what Todd and Andrew (2008) reported with prestige and job seekers perceptions of sport employers, it was demonstrated in a study by Turban, Lau, Ngo, Chow, and Si (2001) that job seekers would feel greater levels of pride if they were associated with a familiar business firm than if they were hired by a less familiar business firm.

The result of Turban et al.'s (2001) study is not surprising because job seekers' and employees' self-concepts and personal identities are partially formed and modified by how they believe others view the organization for which they could or do work, respectively (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991). With specific regard to the concept of pride, how individuals (be they job seekers or current employees) come to think and feel about an organization is likely to be positively correlated with their perceptions of openness and closeness with the organization. For illustration purposes, if a job seeker, such as a sport management student, has a high level of personal familiarity with a professional sport organization and views others (e.g., community at large) as viewing the professional sport organization as highly recognizable, being associated with that sport organization is likely to be viewed by the job seeker as a useful way to enhance his/her self-concept through work associations (i.e., job seeker being associated with the professional sport organization). Thus, a familiar business firm is expected to be

viewed as a more attractive employer by current and prospective employees as well as an employer in whom one could take great pride in being associated (Turban et al., 2001). Accordingly, the second hypothesis for this study was formulated as follows:

H₂: Organizational familiarity will have a positive and direct effect on sport management student perceptions of pride.

Firm Social Prestige

Defining social prestige. Similar to firm reputation, social prestige (also known as perceived external prestige), is another factor of CEI. Perceived social prestige is the employees' perceptions of how the outside world views their organization (Bartels et al., 2007). While firm reputation and social prestige may appear to be identical, they are distinctive concepts.

Reputation, as discussed previously, refers to outsiders' beliefs about what distinguishes an organization. In contrast, social prestige refers to a member's own views of the outsiders' belief (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Dutton & Dukerich, 1991; Dutton et al., 1994). In short, firm reputation is at the organizational level whereas social prestige is at the individual level. Herein, social prestige represents sport management students' perceptions of the extent to which organizational outsiders would hold the professional sport organization in high regard or esteem because of its positive, socially valued characteristics (Fuller et al., 2006).

Outcomes of social prestige. High levels of social prestige can enhance the organizational identification of current employees (Bollinger & Smith, 2001; Fuller et al., 2006). High levels of social prestige also can lead to higher levels of loyalty among current employees and reduce their turnover intentions, assuming these individuals are sufficiently satisfied with their jobs (Herrbach, Mignonac, & Gatignon,

2004; Mignonac, Herrbach, & Guerrero, 2006). Furthermore, with regard to potential employees, social prestige has been argued to impact job seekers' attitudes, behaviors, and thoughts (Todd & Kent, 2009). In fact, with specific regard to sport management students, it has been noted in several studies that sport job seekers may have enhanced elements of social identity present in their career preferences (Andrew, Todd, Greenwell, Pack, & Cannon, 2005; Kjeldsen, 1990; Mathner & Martin, 2012). Of note, Todd and Andrew (2008) demonstrated that prestige impacted (in terms of perceived fit) how American sport management students viewed potential sport employers. Also, in a different sport culture, Australian sport volunteers were reported to be strongly influenced in their decisions to be involved with prestigious sport organizations due to enhanced social recognition and peer acceptance (ACOSS, 1996).

Therefore, once again drawing from SIT, it appears that the social identities of individuals interested in sport industry careers act as functions of their perceptions. Working for a sport organization of high repute and social prestige is highly desirable due to what these characteristics convey about the standing of the job seeker (i.e., the professional sport organization is prestigious, so I, too, am prestigious because I work for the organization). With that in mind, it is argued that social prestige and sport management students' perceptions of pride in working for a professional sport organization will be positively correlated. Hence, the third hypothesis is presented as follows:

H₃: Social prestige will have a positive and direct effect on sport management student perceptions of pride.

CHAPTER THREE

Method

The aim of this thesis is to explore the impact of several CEI factors on sport management students' perceptions of pride in a hypothetical professional sport organization employer. The CEI factors examined in this study are organizational reputation, familiarity, and social prestige (also known as perceived external prestige or PEP). To explore the impact of the aforementioned CEI factors on pride, a quantitative research approach was employed in this thesis. The outline of Chapter 3 is as follows: (a) research design, (b) participants and procedures, (c) measures, and (d) data analysis.

Research Design

This study is a quantitative survey design. While a causal relationship cannot be determined, this study design still provides an opportunity to empirically test a relationship (interaction) between three CEI factors and sport management student perceptions of pride.

Participants and Procedures

Participants

Minimal sport-based research has been conducted about the impact of CEI factors on prospective and current sport employee levels of pride. The reason for selecting sport management students as a sampling frame for this study is because they represent a convenient and accessible population. Moreover, students interested in the sport industry may be more inclined to evaluate sport-based job openings with heuristics (possibly due to social veneration and social identification) than individuals

evaluating non-sport job opportunities (Andrew et al., 2005; Mathner & Martin, 2012; Todd & Kent, 2009). Hence, sport management students looking for employment in the sport industry may represent a particularly interesting population in which to evaluate CEI factors and pride.

Procedures

This study was conducted using hard copies of the questionnaire instead of using an online e-survey. The questionnaire packets consisted of the following documents: (a) participant consent form, (b) questionnaire packet, and (c) a self-addressed stamped mailing envelope (SASE). The researcher collected data from sport management students at two different mid-sized (below 15,000 undergraduate students), post-secondary institutions in the United States during the 2013 spring and summer semesters. The schools were located in the Midwest and Southeast. Two different approaches were employed to collect the data.

The first method employed by the researcher consisted of a classroom visit. The researcher visited a classroom with sport management students, read the consent form, explained the study, and collected data prior to the start of the class period. The second method employed by the researcher required assistance from a research colleague at another institution. The research colleague agreed to collect data on behalf of the primary researcher. The participating professor was sent a small box filled with questionnaires as well as an additional SASE. The professor read the consent form, explained the study, and then collected data prior to the start of the class period. Once the questionnaires were completed, the assisting research colleague placed the surveys inside the SASE and returned them to Baylor University. After one month, if fewer than 74 responses were received, a third institution would have been identified for possible participation in this study.

Upon receipt, the researcher transferred all data to a SmartPLS (Ringle, Wende, & Will, 2005) database stored in the researcher's primary advisor's secured, university office. This study did not require identifiers such as names, e-mail addresses, or school affiliation. All data is kept anonymous and confidential.

Measures

The scales employed in this thesis represent established scales. Each scale has previously demonstrated internal consistency reliabilities exceeding the recommended threshold of .70 (Nunnally, 1978). A copy of the survey instrument is included in Appendix A. The procedures of this study were reviewed and approved by the institutional IRB (see Appendices B and C).

Organization Reputation

Herein, professional sport organization reputation represents "a global perception of the extent to which an organization is held in high esteem or regard" (Weiss et al., 1999, p.75). With that conceptualization established, professional sport organization reputation was measured using 4-items from a scale by Turban, Forret, and Hendrickson (1998). An additional item was adapted from Cable and Graham (2000). The 1-item adapted from Cable and Graham was: "This [professional sport organization] is reputable." Each of the 5-items have previously demonstrated acceptable reliability scores ($\alpha > .70$). The phrasing of the items was changed to reflect a specific sport organization context. All items were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree).

Popularity/Familiarity

To evaluate familiarity, 3-items were adopted from Kim, Trail, Woo, and Zhang's (2011) Sports Consumer-Team Relationship Quality Scale (SCTRQS). The

familiarity items adopted from Kim et al. were measured on a 7-point Liker-type scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree). In addition, 1-item was adapted from Turban (2001). The item adopted from Turban read: “In general, I am familiar with the [professional sport organization].” All 4-items have previously demonstrated acceptable reliability scores. The phrasing of each of the 4-items was changed to reflect a specific sport organization context.

Social Prestige (Perceived External Prestige)

Social prestige was measured using a 3-item measure of industry prestige (Mael & Tetrick, 1992). The 3-item scale previously has been reported as a valid and reliable instrument to assess professional sport organizational prestige (Todd & Harris, 2009). All items have demonstrated acceptable reliability scores in past research. All items were measured on a 7-point Liker-type scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree).

Attitudinal Pride

Several items were adapted from Cable and Turban’s (2003) scale to measure attitudinal-based organizational pride. Their scale can be used to measure job applicants anticipated pride of organizational membership. The items used in this study included: “I would be proud to be a part of this [professional sport organization],” “I would be proud when others associate me with this [professional sport organization],” and “I would be proud to tell others that I work for this [professional sport organization].” An additional item, “I would be proud to contribute to this [professional sport organization’s] success” was adapted from Gouthier and Rhein (2011). All items previously demonstrated acceptable reliability scores. The phrasing of the items was changed to reflect a specific sport organization instead of a

generic company. All items were measured on a 7-point Liker-type scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree).

Data Analysis

Data Analysis included descriptive statistics, correlation, consistency, construct validity, latent variable correlation, cross loadings, and path significance.

Descriptive statistics were calculated by IBM SPSS Statistics Version 19 whereas the others analyses were calculated by SmartPLS 2.0 (M3) Beta. The level of significance was set at $\alpha < .05$ for all analyses.

CHAPTER FOUR

Data Analysis

This study included the participation of 91 sport management students. This total is slightly below the recommended number of 100 participants (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2009) but above the formula total of 74 (Green, 1991). Analysis of the data was calculated using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 19 and SmartPLS 2.0 (M3) Beta. Three variables were used in the descriptive statistical analysis: age, gender and ethnicity. Two variables adopted the *nominal scale* (gender and ethnicity); one used the *interval scale* (age). The variables adopted were collected from a sample population of undergraduate students at two mid-sized, post-secondary institutions in the United States.

Of those students who participated in this study, 37 respondents were female and 54 were male (40.7% and 59.3% respectively). Twenty-five participants identified themselves as African Americans (27.5%). Fifty-five participants identified themselves as Caucasian (60.4%). Four of the participants identified themselves as Hispanic American (4.4%) Seven of the participants reported they were multiracial (7.7%). The age of participants ranged from 19 years to 41 years old. The mean age of all the participants was 22.93 ($SD = 3.467$). A histogram of the age-related information of the study participants is provided in Figure 2.

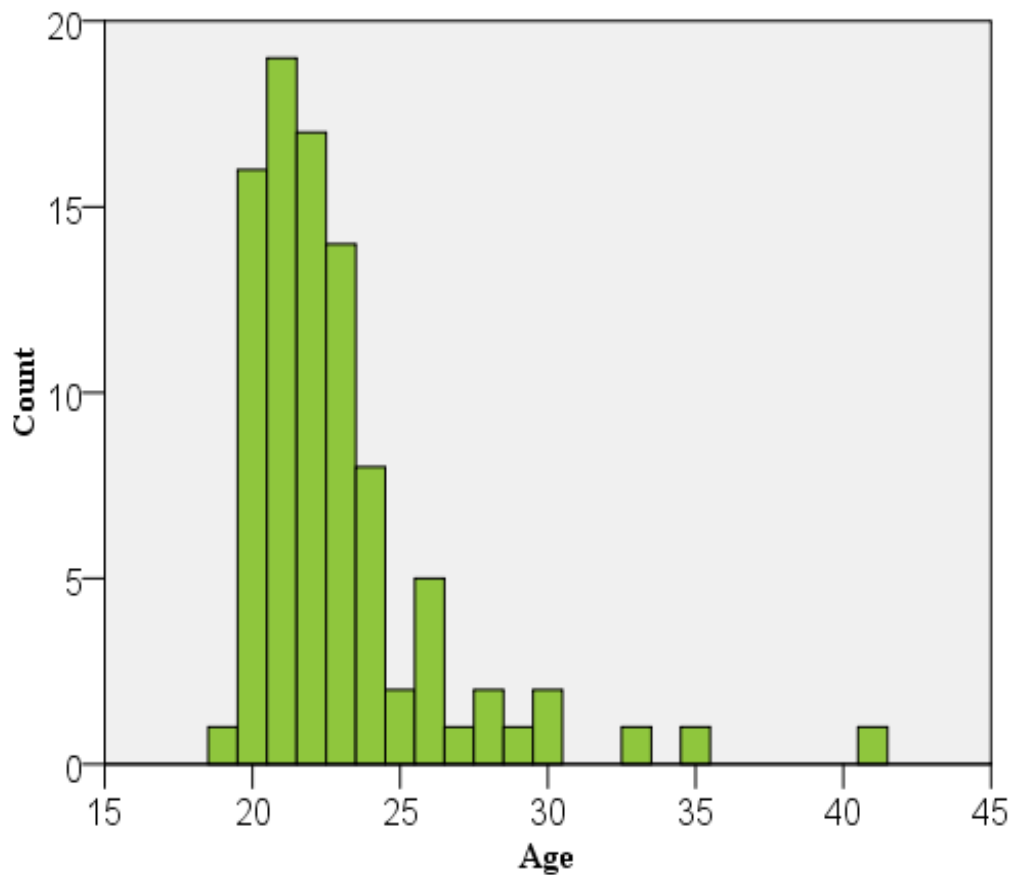


Figure 2. Sport Management Student Histogram (Age)

SmartPLS (Ringle, Wende, & Will, 2005) was used to analyze the results. An SEM technique was chosen to test the proposed research model because PLS is best suited to study model relationships rather than test established theory (Chin, Marcolin, & Newsted, 2003; Gefen & Straub, 2005). The results of the measurement model are shown in Table 1.

The results displayed in Table 1 reveal that the measures are robust in terms of their internal consistency reliabilities. The composite reliabilities of the different measures in the model range from 0.8981 to 0.9848, which exceed the recommended threshold value of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978). Consistent with the recommendation of

Table 1

CEI and Pride Scales Consistency and Construct Validity

Composite Name	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha
Familiarity	0.8604	0.9199
Prestige	0.8302	0.8981
Pride	0.9564	0.9848
Reputation	0.8799	0.9659

Fornell and Larcker (1981), the average variance extracted (AVE) for each measure also exceeded 0.50, which indicates that this construct accounts for at least half of their items' variance. Further, the results of AVE and Cronbach's Alpha show that the items used in this study have acceptable reliabilities.

Table 2

Latent Variable Correlations of CEI and Pride Factors

Item	Familiarity	Prestige	Pride	Reputation
Familiarity	1.0000			
Prestige	0.6172	1.0000		
Pride	0.7117	0.7812	1.0000	
Reputation	0.5821	0.7087	0.6931	1.0000

High cross loadings, more so than the loadings on an items own construct, indicate low discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2009). As a consequence, such items

should be discarded. Items with low discriminant validity were deleted, after which the research model was tested. Table 2 shows the latent variable correlations of CEI and pride factors.

Table 3

Cross Loadings of CEI and Pride Factors

Item	Familiarity	Prestige	Pride	Reputation
Familiarity Item 1	0.8906	0.5775	0.6634	0.5200
Familiarity Item 2	0.8829	0.6228	0.6494	0.4992
Familiarity Item 3	0.8933	0.4806	0.6073	0.5646
Familiarity Item 4	0.9246	0.5295	0.6328	0.5089
Prestige Item 1	0.5927	0.9275	0.7632	0.7330
Prestige Item 2	0.5722	0.9010	0.7374	0.5751
Prestige Item 3	0.5143	0.9048	0.6192	0.6234
Pride Item 1	0.7009	0.7360	0.9750	0.7007
Pride Item 2	0.6983	0.7984	0.9882	0.6774
Pride Item 3	0.6943	0.7793	0.9858	0.6695
Pride Item 4	0.6907	0.7413	0.9626	0.6637
Reputation Item 1	0.5331	0.6233	0.6504	0.9379
Reputation Item 2	0.5945	0.6857	0.6529	0.9530
Reputation Item 3	0.5060	0.7178	0.6672	0.9288
Reputation Item 4	0.5102	0.6492	0.6230	0.9389
Reputation Item 5	0.5853	0.6455	0.6553	0.9314

The results reported in Table 3 show the CEI and pride factor loadings. The elements in the matrix diagonals, representing the square roots of the AVEs, are greater in all cases than the off-diagonal elements in their corresponding row and column. This shows support for good discriminant validity.

Next, the PLS and path significance results are shown in Figures 3 and 4 respectively. All the items have a loading higher than 0.7 on its own construct. Thus, the consistency of the constructs was determined to be reliable. Moreover, almost 72% (71.1%) of the total variance in sport organization pride was explained by the IVs.

In terms of the research hypotheses, two of the three hypotheses were supported. Hypothesis 1 was not supported. The t-value of the path from organizational reputation to pride was 1.656, which is less than the critical value of 1.96. Therefore, higher sport organizational reputation in this study did not result in a higher level of pride in a potential sport organization employer by sport management students.

Hypothesis 2 was supported by the data. The t-value of the path from familiarity to pride was 3.864, which is higher than the critical value of 1.96 at the 5% significant level. The coefficient of the path was 0.327. Thus, higher levels of familiarity with a sport organization were associated with higher levels of pride in a potential sport organization employer by sport management students.

Hypothesis 3 also was supported by the data. The t-value of the path from prestige to pride was 3.939, which is higher than the critical value of 1.96 at the 5% significant level. The coefficient of the path was 0.448. Therefore, higher levels of prestige with a sport organization were associated with higher levels of pride in a potential sport organization employer by sport management students.

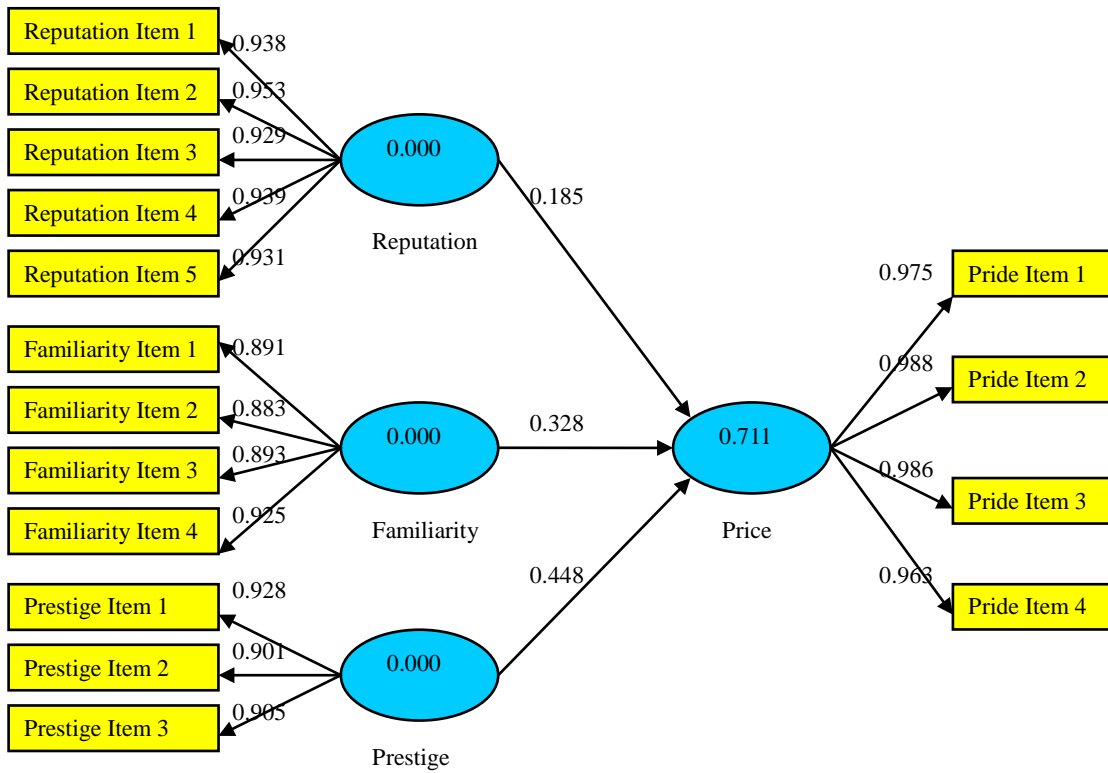


Figure 3. PLS Results

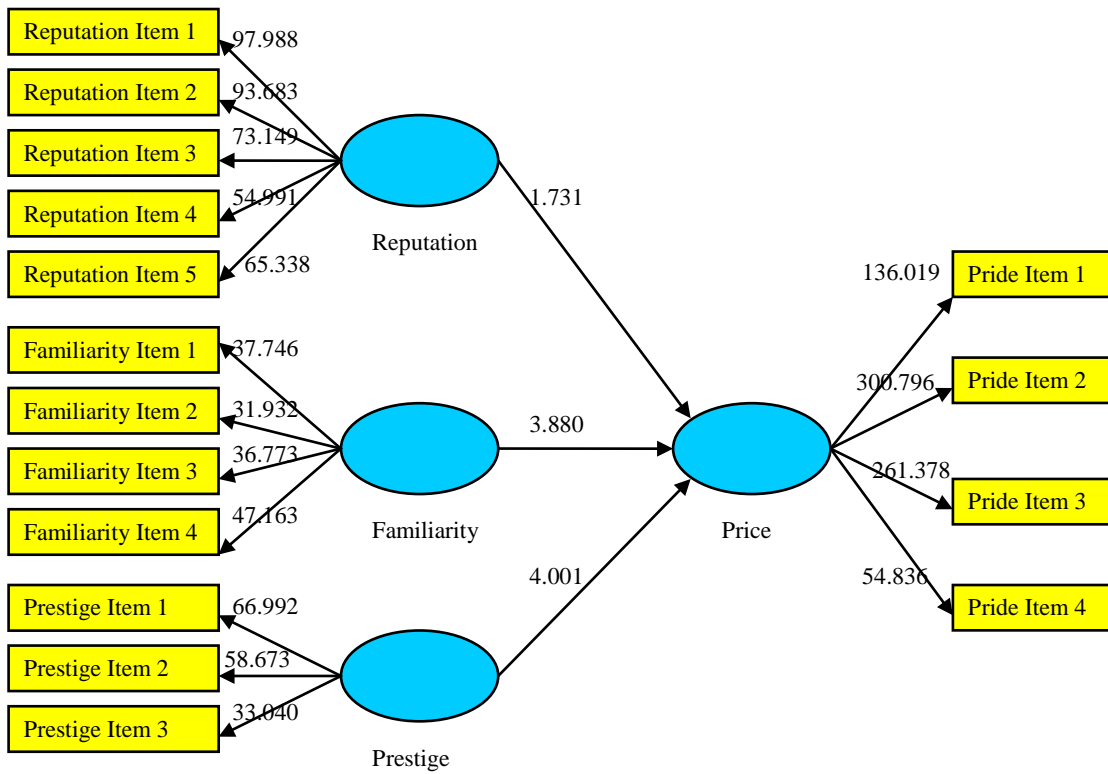


Figure 4. Demonstration of Path Significance

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

This thesis examined the impact of three CEI antecedents, which were adopted from a conceptual model developed by Todd and Kent (2009), on sport management students' levels of perceived pride in being employed by a professional sport organization. Specifically hypothesized in this study was that the CEI factors of organizational reputation, familiarity, and social prestige will have a positive and direct effect on organizational pride perceptions. Hypotheses 2 and 3 were supported; however, Hypothesis 1 was not supported. What follows in this section is a discussion of the research results, applications of the data for sport practitioners, and future research recommendations.

Hypothesis 1 (H₁) proposed that organizational reputation will have a positive and direct effect on sport management student's perceptions of pride in a hypothetical sport organization employer. This results runs contrary to previous findings. Numerous studies (e.g., Elsbach & Glynn, 1996; Smidts et al., 2001; Riordan et al., 1997) have demonstrated that organizational reputation is positively linked to how individuals, such as employees, view an organization. What is more, in a study by Helm (2011), organizational reputation was linked specifically to employee pride perceptions. There are several possible explanations for the present result.

One possible explanation is that this study focused on undergraduate sport management students and their perceptions of pride in working for a professional sport organization. However, just because these individuals are getting a sport management degree does not guarantee they will be working in sport or have an interest in working for a professional sport organization. Kjeldsen (1990), for example, provided a ranking of appealing subfields from the responses of sport management students. Collegiate athletic administration was rated as the most attractive subfield. Rated second was professional sports. Rated third was the broad category of sport facility management. Thus, if undergraduate sport management student have little interest in working for a professional sport organization, organizational reputation may have little bearing on whether or not they would have pride in a possible professional sport organization employer.

Another possible explanation is that this study did not evaluate student perceptions of an actual sport employer. The survey was structured so that participants had to base their answers on a hypothetical sport employer. This required participants to envision whether or not they would experience pride if actually working for a specified professional sport organization. Undoubtedly, the relationship between reputation and perceptions of pride may vary when a hypothetical scenario is compared to an actual employment scenario. That is, reputation may have a bigger impact on pride perceptions when the reputation of the organization actual matters to an individual, such as would be the case if that organization employed him/her.

The second hypothesis (H_2) was that organizational familiarity will have a positive and direct effect on undergraduate sport management students' perceptions of pride in a hypothetical sport organization employer. This hypothesis was

supported, a result which is consistent with past studies. For example, Turban et al. (2001) demonstrated that individuals hired by a business firm that was familiar to them experienced greater levels of organizational pride than individuals hired by business firms that were less familiar to them.

Accordingly, it appears that sport managements who are familiar with a possible professional organization employer may be more likely to experience pride if hired than students who are less familiar with a focal sport organization. This may stem from familiarity strengthening an individual's level of understanding about an organization. Indeed, the degree to which an organization is familiar to sport management students is likely to represent a social factor that can impact the extent to which they view that organization and envision themselves as/desire to be a part of that organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Dutton et al., 1994; Todd & Kent, 2009). Hence, students who are more familiar with a professional sport organizational may perceive themselves differently (i.e., have greater pride perceptions) if employed by this organization than if they were employed by an organization that was less familiar to them.

The third hypothesis (H₃) was that social prestige (of a professional sport organization) will have a positive and direct effect on undergraduate sport management students' perceptions of pride in a hypothetical sport organization employer. This hypothesis was supported. Once more, this result is consistent with previous empirical findings.

Social prestige can have a significant, positive impact on employees' thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors. Identification with an employer, loyalty to an employer, and sense of pride can all be impacted by social prestige (Bollinger & Smith, 2001; Fuller et al., 2006; Mignonac et al., 2006; Todd & Kent, 2009). Also,

with regard to sports, both Todd and Andrew (2008) and ACOSS (1996) showed evidence that social prestige was linked to enhanced elements of social connection/identification to a sport organization among sport management students and sport volunteers respectively.

If employees believe that mainstream society perceives their employer as prestigious, the employees may be more likely to be proud of working for that organization (Fuller et al., 2006). A possible explanation for this result is that sport management students may be more prideful when perceiving themselves associated with a prestigious sport organization than when employed by a less prestigious sport organization due to an enhanced sense of self-esteem and social identity that is more pronounced when employed by the former type of sport organization (Andrew et al., 2005; Todd & Andrew, 2008; Todd & Kent, 2009). For instance, sport management students may perceive it as more prestigious to be employed by a National Basketball Association (NBA) team such as the Miami Heat or a National Football League (NFL) team such as the Dallas Cowboys than be employed by the NBA's Milwaukee Bucks or the NFL's Jacksonville Jaguars. As a result, sport management students may experience more pride and enhanced self-worth if employed by the former two teams rather than the latter two teams.

Practical Implications

The results of this thesis have several applications for sport practitioners. First, familiarity and social prestige may have a significant influence on sport employees' sense of pride in their employer. Pride in one's employer is an important variable for an organization to cultivate. Thus, professional sport organizations should be sure to engage in activities that broaden the familiarity of the organization beyond local and regional boundaries. They also should engage in activities and

business practices that can make their organization more prestigious in the eyes of current and future employees.

Campus job fairs that go beyond state lines may be one way in which professional sport organizations can increase familiarity with their sport organization with a more diverse group of job prospects. For instance, in addition to the visual presence of a booth at a job fair, sport organization representatives, such as HRM personnel or position-specific directors (e.g., marketing director, facility manager), may have a noticeable impact on improving undergraduate and graduate students' level of familiarity with their sport employer because through interpersonal exchanges they can humanize a sport organization. In effect, through actual social exchanges with prospective employees, sport organizations can enhance these individuals' perceptions of familiarity with a sport organization, even if that organization is not located within the student's home state or the state in which a student is attending college.

Additionally, because a variable such as social prestige can impact perceptions of pride, the HRM staff for a sport organization may want to consider how prestige impacts students' perceptions of and reasons for wanting to join their organization. Being associated with a sport organization that is prestigious may greatly enhance a sport management student's sense of self-worth, self-esteem and, social identity (Todd & Kent, 2009). As a result, certain students may pay more attention to the social prestige of a sport organization instead of more meaningful career-related elements, such as job requirements, job expectations, and person-job and person-organization fit. Because recruitment and personnel selection is a costly and labor intensive process, it is important for sport organizations to effectively screen for individuals who are interested in a job because the job is a great fit for

them as compared to individuals who are interested in a job solely because it gives them a chance to be a part of a prestigious sport organization. In other words, identifying and hiring students who want to work for the Miami Heat because the job opening with the basketball team is a great fit rather than hiring students, even ones with acceptable job qualifications, who only want to work for the Heat because they are a prestigious NBA team.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations that need to be addressed. First, the sample of this study is not very diverse and, as a result, the findings may not be generalizable to other populations. The results may not be applicable to non-students who are currently employed by a professional sport organization. Future studies should examine actual sport employees' perceptions of CEI factors and pride in their sport organization employer rather than examine students' perceptions of pride in a hypothetical sport employer. Subsequent studies on this topic should consider collecting data from current employees of professional sport organizations as well as getting data from individuals who previously worked for a professional sports management organization but who now are employed in a different career field. This sort of inquiry may provide a broader, if not panoramic view of the sport industry, with particular reference to what factors contribute to pride, and the extent to which pride in one's employer is sufficient enough of a variable for employees to stay (rather than leave) a sport employer. Therefore, future research should increase the size and diversity of the sample so that it includes more than just undergraduate sport management students.

A second limitation is that the focus of the present study was a hypothetical professional sport organization. Not every student who gets a sport management

degree wants to work for a professional-level sport organization. Future studies should broaden the focus to include professional-, college-, and high school-level sport organizations.

Another limitation is that the sport management students were not categorized by age or year in college (i.e., freshman, sophomore, junior, senior). Age may be an important issue to consider (Parks, 1991). Students' perceptions may change as a result of their professional experiences and sport management courses. For instance, a freshman in college may not be as mature and knowledgeable about the professional sports industry as a college senior who is about to graduate and search for a full-time job in the sport industry. Thus, while a freshman may be more attracted to jobs in sport that are highly prestigious, a senior may be thinking in terms of a job that is the best fit for his/her skill sets and that provides that best opportunity for professional development and career advancement.

Further, as it was shown in a study by Cunningham, Sagas, Dixon, Kent, and Turner (2005), student internships in sport can change how students perceive sport industry jobs. Specifically, an internship may enhance a student's perceptions of a sport industry career or shatter unrealistic sport industry career expectations. Accordingly, future studies should consider how age, year in school, and sport industry experiences (e.g., internships) impact the extent to which CEI factors influence perceptions of pride in a sport employer.

Lastly, the results of the present study found that organizational reputation had no significant influence on organizational pride perceptions. However, a post-hoc analysis was not conducted in order to determine whether or not reputation is correlated with other significant independent variables, such as familiarity and social prestige. Future research that examines these three CEI variables should be

sure to include a post-hoc analysis in order to better determine if these three predictor variables have internal correlations.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Survey Instrument

Section 1 of 3

Instructions: Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about the [Team Name]. Using the following 7-point scale, circle the number that best describes how much you agree with that statement based on your perceptions of the [Team Name] professional football organization.

Item	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1)The [Team Name] are a sport organization with a good public image.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2)The [Team Name] are a sport organization with a good reputation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3)I am familiar with the [Team Name].	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4)The [Team Name] organization is attractive to outsiders as a place to work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5)I have heard a lot of good things about the [Team Name].	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

6)The [Team Name] have an excellent reputation within the sport industry.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7)I know a lot about the [Team Name].	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8)In general, people think jobs in professional sports are fascinating.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9)The [Team Name] organization is reputable.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10)I feel as though I really understand the [Team Name] organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11)In general, I am familiar with the [Team Name].	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12)Many people I meet would die to work in a professional sports organization such as the [Team Name].	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section 2 of 3

Instructions: Using the following 7-point scale, circle the number that best describes how much you agree with that statement based on your perceptions of the [Team Name].

	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1)I would be proud to be a part of the [Team Name] organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2)I would be proud when others associate me with the [Team Name] Organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3)I would be proud to tell others that I work for the [Team Name].	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4)I would be proud to contribute to the [Team Name] organization's success.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section 3 of 3

- 1) Gender (circle one): Male Female
- 2) Age: _____
- 3) What is your ethnicity?
- a. African American
 - b. Asian American
 - c. Caucasian
 - d. Hispanic American
 - e. Native American Indian
 - f. Pacific Islander
 - g. Multiracial
 - h. Other
 - i. International student. Country of Origin: _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.

IT IS VERY MUCH APPRECIATED!

APPENDIX B

Consent Form

I freely, voluntarily, and without element of force or coercion, consent to be a participant in the research project entitled “The Impact of Construed External Image Factors on Sport Management Student Perceptions of Pride in a Sport Employer.” This research is being conducted by Emily Guo, who is a Sport Management Program graduate student in the Department of Health, Human Performance and Recreation at Baylor University. I acknowledge that the purpose of this research project is to better understand how sport management student develop perceptions of pride in a possible sport organization employer. I understand that if I participate in the project I will complete a short pencil/pen and paper survey. I also understand that if I participate I will be asked questions about my perceptions of an NFL team and my levels of pride if I were to be employed by organization. I acknowledge there are no risks to me by completing this survey.

I understand that my participation will involve completing a survey. I recognize that my participation is totally voluntary and I may stop participation at any time without penalty. I understand that the information gathered from this project is entirely confidential. Only the designated researchers of this project have access to the data. Records of this study will be kept private and confidential to the extent allowed by the law.

I understand there are benefits from participating in this research project. This study has implications for sport educators and the management of professional sport teams. Specifically, my responses will enhance sport organizational scientists’ levels understanding of what factors lead to pride in a possible sport organization employer.

I understand this consent may be withdrawn at any time without prejudice, penalty, or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. Once again, there are no foreseeable risks or discomforts if I agree to participate in this study. Also, if I choose not to participate, there will not be any negative consequences for the researcher. If you would like to learn about the findings of the study, information requests can be sent to Dr. Magnusen through email at Marshall_Magnusen@baylor.edu. In addition, if you have questions about the consent process, you may contact David W. Schlueter, Ph.D., Chair Baylor IRB, Baylor University, One Bear Place #97368 Waco, TX 76798-7368. Dr. Schlueter may also be reached at (254) 710-6920 or (254) 710-3708.

As an adult and able to, I give my consent to participate in this study. By completing the survey I am indicating my willingness to participate in the proposed study and thereby give my consent. Even after completing the survey, I recognize that I may quit

the survey at any time without penalty and in doing so, I am indicating my decision to not participate in the survey. By asking my completed survey to be disregarded, I am indicating I do not want to participate.

APPENDIX C

IRB Approval

DATE: May 30, 2013

TO: Hua Guo, Master

FROM: Baylor University Institutional Review Board

STUDY TITLE: [462249-1] The Impact of Construed External Image Factors on Sport Management Student Perceptions of Pride in a Sport Employer

IRB REFERENCE #:

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS

DECISION DATE: May 30, 2013

REVIEW CATEGORY: Exemption category 2

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this research study. Baylor University Institutional Review Board has determined this project is EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to federal regulations.

We will put a copy of this correspondence on file in our office.

If you have any questions, please contact David Schlueter at (254) 710-6920 or david_schlueter@baylor.edu. Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

Sincerely,

David W. Schlueter, Ph.D.
Chair, Baylor IRB

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