Using Exploratory Factor Analysis to Identify Star Players’ Effects on the Branding Process of Professional Sports Teams

N. David Pifer  
*Marshall University*

Jennifer Y. Mak  
*Marshall University*, mak@marshall.edu

Won-Yul Bae  
*Marshall University*

Jarrod Schenewark  
*Marshall University*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/amtp-proceedings_2013](https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/amtp-proceedings_2013)

Part of the Marketing Commons

**Recommended Citation**

[https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/amtp-proceedings_2013/67](https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/amtp-proceedings_2013/67)

This conference proceeding is brought to you for free and open access by the Association of Marketing Theory and Practice Proceedings at Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. It has been accepted for inclusion in Association of Marketing Theory and Practice Proceedings 2013 by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@georgiasouthern.edu.
Using Exploratory Factor Analysis to Identify Star Players’ Effects on the Branding Process of Professional Sports Teams

N. David Pifer
Jennifer Y. Mak
Won-Yul Bae
Jarrod Schenewark
Marshall University

ABSTRACT

Given the extremely competitive nature of professional sports and the high levels of risk associated with exorbitant player salaries, it is important for management to examine the specific effects that star players can have on a sport franchise’s brand. Gladden and Milne (1999) provided an early framework for examining the relationship between marquee athletes and a team’s brand by developing a model to assess brand equity in professional sport. This model, based largely on previous work by Aaker (1991), listed the star player as a product-related antecedent capable of generating brand equity that could bring about national media exposure, merchandise sales, corporate support, atmosphere changes, ticket sales, and additional revenues for a team. Meanwhile, athletic superstars like David Beckham, Tim Tebow, Yao Ming, Jeremy Lin, and Lebron James have served as living examples of this illustration, improving the performances, attendance numbers, television ratings, and merchandise sales of the teams on which they play. (Matuszewski, 2010; Ozanian, 2011; Roling, 2012; Gilmour & Rowe, 2010; Yu, 2005; Wang, 2004; Torre, 2012).

However, the relationship between star players and the branding process of professional sports teams is one that remains rather vague and unquantified. Though certain models and real-life examples do seem to suggest that star players are capable of exerting an effect on a team’s brand, more thorough analysis is required in order to decipher which areas of a brand’s development are more or less affected by these marquee athletes.

Taking responses from survey questionnaires containing 40 items pertinent to the topic, this study deployed Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to uncover six underlying factors that were identifiable as various areas of the branding process. These six factors had loadings and eigenvalues sufficient enough to support the conclusion that star players did in fact have an effect on various areas of the team branding process. After it became apparent that the items loaded onto each factor were appropriate to various aspects of the branding process, this analysis helped the researchers classify Factor 1 as brand loyalty, Factor 2 as brand awareness, Factor 3 as brand image, Factor 4 as direct brand equity, Factor 5 as perceived quality, and Factor 6 as brand reputation. It was then determined by its revelation of player-brand relationships and consistency with previous branding process models that this study was validated in its mission to explore which areas of a professional sports team are truly affected by star players.
ABOUT THE AUTHORS

N. David Pifer recently graduated from Marshall University with his M.S. in Sport Administration. While a student at Marshall, David was heavily involved with the Sports Information Department and wrote a thesis paper entitled *An Examination of Star Players’ Effects on the Branding Process of Professional Sports Teams* that is serving as the basis of this presentation. In addition, he is currently assisting Dr. Jennifer Y. Mak and Dr. Won-Yul Bae in studies related to consumer behavior in the golf and soccer industries. David obtained his B.A. in Business from Covenant College while playing varsity soccer there from 2007-2011. He is currently applying to PhD programs for the upcoming fall.

Jennifer Y. Mak is a Full Professor and Director of the Sport Management at Marshall University. She received her Ph.D. and M.S. from Indiana University – Bloomington as well as an MBA from Marshall University. She has served as editorial board member and reviewer in different journals and conferences (e.g. Association of Marketing Theory and Practice, Sport Management Education Journal, Event Management: an International Journal, American Marketing Association Marketing Educators’ Conference, and Academy of Management Annual Conference, etc).

Dr. Bae is an assistant professor in Sport Management at Marshall University. He is teaching Sport Finance, Business of Sport Agent, Seminar in Sport Management, and Research Methods in Sport Studies. Dr. Bae received his Ph.D. in Sport Management at Indiana University. He also holds a Master’s Degree in Sport Administration and Facility Management from Ohio University. Dr. Bae received his B.A. in Marketing at the University of Utah and B.S. in Japanese Literature at Dan Kook University in Korea. He played Basketball for four years at Dan Kook University (e.g., Division I) on a full athletic scholarship. Dr. Bae’s primary areas of scholarly interest are sport marketing, sponsorship, sport media, and sport agency. Dr. Bae is now researching, publishing, and presenting about the golf participation motivation of Korean and American students who attend universities in the United States, and the reasons why Korean professional female golfers have been successful in securing such a dominant position on the LPGA Tour. Dr. Bae is also interested in examining the influence of marketing and brand image of Social Network Service (e.g., facebook and twitter) on the interaction between sports teams and fans. Furthermore, Dr. Bae is a basketball agent for the Korean Professional Basketball League. He is representing many American basketball players and working with prestigious sport agencies in U.S. He has placed several players in Korea over the last three years and also helps other players to secure contracts with various Asian and European teams.

Jarrod Schenewark, MA, PhD, is an Assistant Professor of Sports Management at Marshall University. He earned a Master of Arts (Human Biodynamics) from the University of California, Berkeley. While at Berkeley he worked with Dr. Roberta Park and focused on the history of exercise science and sport. In August of 2003 he entered the Graduate School of the University of Texas. While at Texas he has twice been awarded the Alderson Graduate Instructor Award. Professionally, he has spent six years working as a collegiate football coach at all levels of the NCAA, and has spent an additional five years as head coach of high school track and field and...
boys and girls volleyball. He worked as an instructor or graduate instructor of basketball, golf, racquetball, weight lifting, and aerobic fitness at Texas, California, and Eastern New Mexico University. Currently he teaches sport law, sport history, facility management, and sport organization and administration. Dr. Schenewark's research interests are work-family conflict and enrichment among sport professionals, development of coaches, and the history of health, human performance, and fitness.