

Do Non-Profit Charities and Foundations Benefit From Affiliation with Professional Athletes
and Teams?

Ellis Gamache

Endicott College

SM 490

Dr. Glazer

July 25, 2018

Table of Contents

	Page Number
Abstract	2
Chapter One	3
Chapter Two	8
Chapter Three	23
Chapter Four	26
Chapter Five	36
Bibliography	40
Appendix A	42
Appendix B	43

Abstract

As the philanthropy industry consistently grows, there has been little research on how non-profit organization's benefit from professional sport association. There is a gap in the research when it comes to the organization benefiting from professional sport association, in terms of donations and volunteer recruitment. Babiak, Mills, Tainsky, and Juravich (2012) mentioned the fact that there is more of a focus on how the athletes and teams are benefitting, rather than the actual organization itself, which is where the gap in research initially comes from. Therefore, this research study will attempt to solve that gap in research and look at how non-profit charities and foundations benefit from affiliation with professional athletes and teams.

A twenty-two question online survey was administered to 49 participants. Participants were of adult ages from 18 - over 50, sports fans who supported a variety of professional sport teams in the National Football League, Major League Baseball, National Hockey League, and the National Basketball Association. The survey measured the likeliness for the participants to donate or contribute to charitable organizations when a professional sport entity is involved. It was found, firstly, participation in non-profit charities has potential to increase when there is a professional sport entity involved. Secondly, levels of awareness are high in regards to professional sport entities being involved in charitable endeavors. Finally, donation intentions are likely to increase if a professional sport entity is tied to a charity or charitable event. Therefore it can be concluded that because donation intentions and participation levels with non-profit foundations affiliated with professional sport entities are high, non-profits that are not working with professional sport entities should begin to do so due to the benefits that are brought in.

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

An idealized concept of life, philanthropy, came to be in the 19th century with the large corporations that were brought to the United States (Godfrey, 2009). As of the mid-1900s, the relationship of philanthropy and sport presented itself when the Boston Braves appearance with a young cancer patient, Jimmy, went public and raised thousands of dollars for the boy (Sparvero & Kent, 2014). Fast forward to present-day and sport philanthropy is a whole industry of its own. Many professional sport teams operate non-profit organizations under their name, while many professional athletes create their own non-profit organizations, and others align themselves with non-profit organizations as an ambassador. However, as the industry consistently grows, there has been little research on how these organization's benefit from professional sport association. There is a gap in the research when it comes to the organization benefiting from professional sport association, in means of donations and volunteer recruitment. Babiak, Mills, Tainsky, and Juravich (2012) mentioned the fact that there is more of a focus on how the athletes and teams are benefitting, rather than the actual organization itself, which is where the gap in research initially comes from.

As stated above, this research study will attempt to solve that gap in research and look at how non-profit charities and foundations benefit from affiliation with professional athletes and teams. In order to gather data for this research, a population of at least 100 adults between the ages of 30-60 who follow professional sports and have an income will be asked to complete a

survey questionnaire. The research study will look at the variables of professional sport affiliation with a non-profit charity and the benefits, such as donations and volunteer recruitment. By surveying adults, who are more likely to feel passionate about a certain cause and then have donation intentions towards the cause, the study should help to resolve the main gap in this research.

Definitions

The following definitions will be used throughout this study:

Cause-related marketing: Also known as (CRM), according to Atkins (1999), is “a commercial activity by which businesses and charities or causes form a partnership with each other to market an image, product or service for a mutual benefit” (p. 11).

Community initiatives: Any particular scheme set up by a business organization with the aim of making a positive contribution to the life of the community by helping local people take practical action to solve their problems (Community initiative, 2017).

Corporate social responsibility: Also known as (CSR), according to Godfrey (2009), "represents a set of actions that appear to further some social good, extend beyond the explicit pecuniary interests of the firm, and are not required by law" (p. 704).

Gross domestic product: Also known as GDP, is the “monetary value of nation’s goods and services produced within a nation’s borders and within a particular period of time, such as a year” (Gross domestic product, n.d., par. 1).

Sport philanthropy: A form of philanthropy or philanthropical campaign and donation, project or undertaking from an amateur or professional athlete or sportsperson from every form of sport

or form of collective sport or sports team philanthropy or philanthropical campaign and donation, project or undertaking to contribute to the development and achievement of the united nations sustainable development goals (SDG sport philanthropy, n.d.).

Strategic philanthropy: Babiak, et al. (2012) suggested that this type of philanthropy involves philanthropic activities that provide athletes or teams with multiple benefits, to both the image of the individual, as well as the causes that are the beneficiaries (p. 161).

Delimitations

This study will be delimited by the following factors:

1. Participants will be mainly from New England/Boston area.
2. Participants were generally adults ages 30-60 years old who have an income, but may be either full-time or part-time employed.
3. This study only involved philanthropy in terms of sport as measured by responses to the survey
4. Data is only being collected during the first two weeks of July 2018.
5. This study only used information that could be gathered through a survey.

Limitations

This study will be limited by the following factors:

1. Honesty and effort of the participants can not be guaranteed.
2. The reliability and validity of the survey was limited.

3. The possibility that participants answered questions as they were expected to rather than how they truly felt is another limitation.
4. The individual experiences of the participants may have limited the conclusions of the study.
5. Participants' access to modern media sources, such as the internet, magazines, and television may have also limited the study.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will be tested in the study:

1. If an athlete is affiliated with a non-profit organization, people will be more willing to donate or volunteer to that organization.
2. Sport fans are more likely to donate to a charity when it falls under a professional sport team organization.

Significance of the Problem

This is an important topic to study because people do not realize the amount of professional athletes or teams that have founded their own charities or are affiliated with one. It is very important to understand if people do recognize this aspect of sport, and if they do, how impactful it is for the foundation or charity. For this research topic, there is also both theoretical significance and practical significance.

For practical significance, this study is going to help practitioners in the fields of not-for-profits or athletes determine if athletes end up helping benefit the charity in terms of

donations and/or volunteer recruitment. Will people gravitate more towards a non-profit because of the athlete or team that it is affiliated with? For theoretical significance, this study can help future academic researchers. This field is under researched, and this study can help researchers navigate the information and field a bit better. This study could go more in depth in regards to how the athletes or teams benefit from non-profit work as well. However, in short, future researchers can expand on this study with information from other studies to examine sport management domain topics in the non-profit area.

Chapter Two

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In recent years, professional athletes and sport teams have made it a mission to partake in charitable activities. These activities can range anywhere from donating portions of his or her salary to charity to actually forming a not for profit foundation of his or her own. Many athletes have teamed up with charitable foundations as the organization's ambassador and commits to helping raise funds for the organization. No matter the affiliation with a charitable foundation, athletes and teams are out in the community working to make a difference. When a charitable organization teams up with or is formed by a professional sport team or athlete, it is suggested that the organization benefits greatly in terms of funds raised (Harris & Ruth, 2015; Ilicic & Baxter, 2014; Kim & Walker, 2013).

The following literature review will look at researchers who focused on professional sport philanthropy, which is the broader category that this topic falls under. It is important to study this topic due to the fact that it is somewhat under-studied. It often goes unrecognized how much charitable work that professional teams and athletes do as a part of their day-to-day work. More importantly, it is important to recognize how the charitable foundations benefit from these affiliations whether it is in numbers of volunteers or funds raised. Due to the fact that professional sport is a huge part of society around the world, it is smart that charitable organizations work with professional athletes or teams to benefit the organization.

Therefore, it is important for charitable organizations to consider working with professional athletes or teams, as well as these teams or athletes to consider forming their own

charitable organizations. The following literature review will provide an outline and overview of relevant themes in past and current academic literature. The literature review will look specifically at sport philanthropy and how charitable organizations benefit. First, the history and background of sport philanthropy will be examined to better understand how it has come to be the way it is today. Following that is a look at how charities benefit from affiliation with professional sport teams and/or athletes. Next, the effects of philanthropy and sport together will be examined and how the two work together in the community. Finally, to end the review, there will be a summary of the research literature.

History/Background of Sport Philanthropy

In the early 19th century, corporate philanthropy became an emerging factor of the large, monopoly corporations in the steel, railroad, and communications industries (Godfrey, 2009). Private corporations started to be the main source of philanthropic donations. The social pressures for charitable giving increased as time went on, causing philanthropy to evolve into a social practice that was expected of the companies. However, while corporate philanthropy grew so did the oppositions for the practice. This is due to the fact that individuals believed that philanthropy went beyond the responsibilities of corporate organizations (Godfrey, 2009). Godfrey (2009) also mentioned that despite opposition and social pressures, philanthropy has become so large that it is a sector in and of itself, and only continues to grow.

One of the largest businesses in the world has come to be the business of professional sport. Similar to the corporations in the 19th century, sport organizations are also seeing the social pressures regarding charitable giving (Ilicic & Baxter, 2014). Once a business sector used

as a form of entertainment for fans and a celebration of talented athletes, now the sport industry has put an emphasis on giving back to their supporters and communities. This emphasis stems from the amount of money that the industry has generated. Each year it is estimated that at least \$700 billion is generated, which is about one percent of the total global gross domestic product (GDP) (Sport Management Degree Guide, n.d.). Sport philanthropy has since become an essential part of the sport industry and works on corporate social responsibility to use sport for the good of the community and world.

The earliest example of sport philanthropy and the connection between a charitable foundation and professional sport was in 1948 (Sparvero & Kent, 2014). “Jimmy” was a young cancer patient at Boston’s Memorial Hospital. During his time there, he was asked to name his favorite Boston Braves players, while being filmed for the popular television program *Truth or Consequences*. As he listed his favorite players, they walked into the room with Boston Braves memorabilia for him. At the end of the television program, the host asked viewers to donate money to help Jimmy and children like him. This one request resulted in \$200,000 in donations to the Children’s Cancer Research Fund (Sparvero & Kent, 2014). Even though this relationship was established in 1948, it is still around today. The Children’s Cancer Research Fund was renamed The Jimmy Fund, while the Boston Braves became the Boston Red Sox. According to Sparvero and Kent (2014) this relationship is one of the most well-known and longest lasting sport philanthropy relationships in sport today.

However, it did not take until 1994 for news outlets, such as USA Today, to recognize the work that sport organizations are doing in the community (Babiak, Mills, Tainsky, & Juravich, 2012). USA Today recognizes the work that athletes and teams are doing through the

giving of multiple awards every year since 1994. During the 1990s, there was also a huge growth in cause-related marketing programs, which are marketing programs that give back to the community. Investments in cause-related marketing (CRM) programs grew by 300% in the 1990s, which led sport organizations to invest in sport philanthropy programs in the beginning of the 21st century (Babiak, et al., 2012; Roy & Graeff, 2003).

Walker and Kent (2013), found that there were three factors that impacted the importance of corporate social responsibility in sport. The first factor was that sport organizations are influential members of the global community as a whole. The second factor was that sport organizations face a consumer public that is aware and pays attention to corporate social responsibility, in organizations both in and out of sport. The third, and final, factor was that the emphasis in corporate social responsibility made a shift to the role that sport plays in society. Therefore, sport organizations began to adopt programs geared toward philanthropy and improving the organization's corporate social responsibility (Walker & Kent, 2013).

Since 2002, sport philanthropy has become an emerging leading activity within social responsibility of athletes and public charities within sport have increased by 60% (Babiak, et al., 2012; Walker & Kent, 2013). Many people tend to believe that sport philanthropy and corporate social responsibility are one in the same, however they work together. Sport philanthropy is an activity that falls under corporate social responsibility. Within corporate social responsibility falls eight different types of activities that Walker and Kent (2013) listed. These activities include: athlete volunteerism, educational initiatives, philanthropic/charitable donations, community development, community initiatives, fan appreciation, health-related initiatives, and community environmental-related programs. However, as stated previously, philanthropic

activities have become the emerging leader in corporate social responsibility programs (Babiak, et al., 2012; Walker & Kent, 2013).

Due to the fact that sport philanthropy has become such a large activity and part of corporate social responsibility 95 out of 114 United States based professional sports teams, in 2005, had non-profit organizations (NPOs) established (Sparvero & Kent, 2014). In connection to that, there were 1,122 charities that had connections to professional athletes in North America alone in 2011 (Kim & Walker, 2013). These growing numbers can be attributed to the fact that the alignment of celebrities and charities have beneficial results for both involved parties. It should also be noted that the culture of the 21st century is very much celebrity-dominated (Ilicic & Baxter, 2014). Many consumers, or donors in this case, rely heavily on the opinions of celebrities because of the celebrity-dominated culture that is prominent today. Therefore, when athletes or teams align themselves with a philanthropic charity, it can be presumed that individuals will rely on the athletes' opinions and become donors.

The Effects of Philanthropy and Sport Together

Sport teams and athletes working together with charitable causes is not an uncommon sight in today's day and age. This is due to the effects that sport and philanthropy have on themselves, as well as the community when they work together (Babiak, et al., 2012). Many leagues, such as the National Football League (NFL), create causes that target children and promote an active, healthy lifestyle, or educational initiatives. There are many benefits seen for athletes, charities, and communities as a direct result of the work of philanthropy and sport

together, as seen by multiple researchers (Babiak, et al., 2012; Godfrey, 2009; Harris & Ruth, 2015; Ilicic & Baxter, 2014; Kim & Walker, 2013; Roy & Graeff, 2003).

Throughout the year, regardless of in or out of season, athletes and teams are seen on the media, typically being scrutinized. One way to undermine or avoid this type of scrutiny from the media is to make strong connections with the community they are based in. According to Babiak, et al. (2012), athletes are of great value to their community through charity work and philanthropy. While this charity work may be a part of the job for some of the athletes, many of them take the opportunity to find a cause or help a cause that they resonate with the most.

Hamilton (2004) stated:

Players, in addition to their work on the field, must also do their part in integrating the team into the community it represents. Whether it is through community appearances for a sponsor or other community activities, the goal is to have fans in the market associate them and the team for which they play to positive community activities (p. 82).

This charity work that is required does, however, face some scrutiny as well. Athletes may not be perceived as resonating with the cause because they are being “forced” to do the charity work. Therefore, athletes and teams must go about philanthropy work strategically (Babiak, et al., 2012).

Strategic philanthropy, involves philanthropic activities that provide athletes or teams with multiple benefits, to both the image of the individual, as well as the causes that are the beneficiaries (Babiak, et al., 2012). The teams and athletes do not want to come off egotistical, but do not want to be perceived as unwilling to help, so therefore

must use strategic philanthropy. One example of strategic philanthropy in sport is with Right to Play. Right to Play is a humanitarian organization which uses sports to benefit children throughout areas of the world that are less fortunate. This organization is supported by top-level athletes from all over the world, which makes it unique (Godfrey, 2009). When athletes come together from all different backgrounds to support one major cause, it resonates with people from all over the world and therefore brings attention to the cause. This becomes a direct effect of sport and philanthropy working together and an example of strategic philanthropy (Babiak, et al., 2012; Godfrey, 2009).

Due to the fact that sport plays a major role in the cultural fabric of society throughout the world, many people look to athletes, teams, and leagues to do the right thing (Babiak, et al., 2012). Consumers, or potential donors in this case, tend to have more favorable attitudes towards teams or athletes that support a specific cause or charity, according to Roy and Graeff (2003). Due to this, all eyes are on the work that athletes and teams do for their community. Roy and Graeff (2003) also found that when athletes did not make their charitable endeavors public, they were perceived as unwilling to help the community. This, therefore, had a negative impact on their image as a professional athlete.

An unfortunate, but ever-occurring circumstance in the industry, is that there is a high-degree of skepticism towards where the funds a charity raises are actually going (Ilicic & Baxter, 2014). However, Ilicic and Baxter (2014) found that when an athlete resonates themselves with a charity or cause, skepticism tends to decrease, another effect of charity and sport working together. Harris and Ruth (2015), as well as Kim and Walker

(2013), also found that athlete endorsers can be extremely effective when it comes to persuading potential donors, can give credibility to the organization, and can enhance solicitation efforts. However, in opposition to Ilicic and Baxter (2014), Harris and Ruth (2015) found in their study that a known celebrity did not produce higher donation intentions than an average person. While there were differing results in the studies completed, it shows that donation intentions may be related to the market that is being targeted or the location the study took place in (Roy & Graeff, 2003).

Any athlete that participates in charity work typically finds themselves sticking with or resonating with one particular cause. For example, Rob Gronkowski works with pediatric cancer or Tom Brady works with people with Downs Syndrome. This can be attributed to the fact that athletes, teams, and/or leagues pick causes that resonate with their target market (Kim & Walker, 2013; Roy & Graeff, 2003). Kim and Walker (2013) also stated that many young people look up to athletes as role models, which is why many athletes participate in charity endeavors to set an example. This discovery, therefore, becomes an effect of the work of philanthropy and sport working together.

Despite opposing findings, many of the researchers found direct effects of the philanthropy and sports industries working together as one (Babiak, et. al, 2012; Breitbarth & Harris, 2008; Ilicic & Baxter, 2014; Kim & Walker, 2013). According to Breitbarth and Harris (2008), athlete philanthropy leads to increased stakeholder accountability, strategic organizational partnerships, network value, and societal value. Kim and Walker (2013) added to Breitbarth and Harris (2018), by stating that athlete foundations are more successful than their counterparts when it comes to revenue

generation and outreach. People, more specifically potential donors or volunteers, are more attracted to athlete foundations or foundations affiliated with athletes. This then creates a mutually beneficial alliance that is reciprocal to both the cause and the athlete (Ilicic & Baxter, 2014). While it was shown through the previously stated studies that both athletes and charities benefit from working together, direct effects from the work are seen really on the charitable foundations.

Measuring Charity Benefits from Affiliation with Sport Professionals

As seen previously, professional sport teams or athletes affiliations with charitable foundations has direct effects on the athlete, the cause, and the community. However, there are researchers who examined all of the benefits that a charity reaps from affiliation with sport professionals (Harris & Ruth, 2015; Ilicic & Baxter, 2014; Kim & Walker, 2013; Sparvero & Kent, 2014; Yeung-Jo & June-Hee, 2007). While it is extremely impactful and beneficial for the athlete's image to do charity work, the charitable foundations are the ones seeing the most impact at the end of the day.

In order to achieve all of the objectives that are set forth to accomplish the mission of the organization, not for profits rely heavily on contributions from donors and volunteers. In order to obtain contributions these charities must be credible, trusted, highly visible, and use strategic marketing efforts (Harris & Ruth, 2015; Ilicic & Baxter, 2014; Kim & Walker, 2013). Donors are also typically motivated to donate due to the tax deductibility that comes along with donating money to charities (Sparvero & Kent, 2014). In other cases, communities or charities do not need to solicit contributions, as it is required through contracts with teams for them to donate.

Sparvero and Kent (2014) used the Dallas Cowboys for example, who must pay \$500,000 a year to a local non-profit organization to repay for the public financing of their stadium. Therefore, there are many ways that a non-profit organization can solicit donations from potential contributors.

In order to gain a higher amount of solicitations, non-profit organizations will become affiliated with an athlete or sport team (Kim & Walker, 2013). Many foundations will use athletes as a strategic marketing technique in order to increase donor intentions (Kim & Walker, 2013). This becomes an outlet for the organization's mission and the cause to be broadcast through a different media. Kim and Walker (2013) found that by being able to broadcast the mission through a sport broadcast medium, the organization reached a different group of potential contributors. This then increased the amount of potential donations and contributions towards the charity.

However, in order for the donation intentions to increase, the athlete must somewhat fit the cause that they are aligning themselves with. Ilicic and Baxter (2014) found that when a celebrity "fit" the charity, there was a heightened intention to donate to the charity and there was a reduced amount of skepticism towards the charity. In addition, Yeung-Jo and June-Hee (2007) found that when the athlete fits the cause they were affiliated with, there was a favorable outcome for the cause. Therefore, it is important that an athlete or team fits with the cause for the organization to see the most benefits.

Many people who look up to athletes or follow teams generally find themselves trusting the sport organization or athlete more than the regular person. When an athlete who is involved with a charitable cause is highly trusted by fans, it results in a higher involvement in charitable

giving programs (Kim & Walker, 2013). Due to the fact that these athletes are so trusted, Ilicic and Baxter (2014) also found that they can encourage consumer awareness, as well as encourage involvement in the cause. In addition, Harris and Ruth (2015) found that when an athlete is trusted, donors tend to trust the cause and the credibility of the cause even more. This research then suggests that it is important for a charity to recruit a trusted athlete when looking for an athlete ambassador for the cause (Harris & Ruth, 2015; Ilicic & Baxter, 2014; Kim & Walker, 2013).

Not only do charities benefit through increased donation intentions, they also see benefits in terms of organizational spending (Harris & Ruth, 2015; Sparvero & Kent, 2014). In order to raise money, many charitable foundations will host large fundraising events during the year. However, Harris and Ruth (2015) found that athlete endorsed non-profit foundations may be able to spend less on fundraising budgets typically. The same researchers also found that the charitable organization became more efficient, had less fundraising expenses, and saw 1.4% more contributions than charities not affiliated with athletes. In addition, Ilicic and Baxter (2014) found that athlete alliance with charities can affect the charitable brand's equity. With higher equity, potential donors tend to be more attracted to a cause.

By looking at these studies, one can assume that when a charity works with a major athlete or team, they see a large number of benefits. As stated previously, there are increases in trust, equity, donor intention, efficiency, and involvement (Breitbarth & Harris, 2008; Ilicic & Baxter, 2014; Harris & Ruth, 2015; Kim & Walker, 2013). There are also decreases in skepticism, expenses, and fundraising budgets. The researchers suggested the idea that working

with an athlete or team is extremely beneficial for any charity, as long as the affiliation of the athlete fits the cause (Harris & Ruth, 2015; Kim & Walker, 2013).

Summary of Research Literature

With the large amount of research literature that has been conducted regarding the relationship between philanthropy and sport, one is able to see how important it is in society. While researchers' conclusions do need to be further studied in order to better understand this mutually beneficial relationship, it can be seen that philanthropy in sport can benefit, at least, the charitable organization in a dramatic way. There also is clear information regarding the multiple ways that a charitable organization benefits from affiliation with professional athletes or teams.

As stated throughout this review of research literature, there are many ways that charities benefit from affiliation with teams and athletes. One major benefit that was found by Kim and Walker (2013) was the increased trust. Due to the fact that many people look up to athletes as role models, they see them as people who they can trust more. Therefore, potential donors are more likely to donate to a cause that is supported by or affiliated with an athlete, as concluded by Harris and Ruth (2015).

Another benefit that is seen within charitable organizations when they affiliate themselves with athletes or teams is increased donor intentions. Ilicic and Baxter (2014) concluded that when an athlete "fits" the cause they were affiliated with, donor intentions increased a dramatic amount. In addition to donor intention, involvement also increases for a charitable organization. Also concluded by Ilicic and Baxter (2014), trusted athletes can not only

increase donor intentions, mainly due to trust, but they can also increase involvement within the charity, in terms of volunteering or talking about the organization.

A final benefit that was seen throughout the reviewed research literature was that charitable organizations see significant improvements in their finances. Harris and Ruth (2015), as well as Ilicic and Baxter (2014) and Sparvero and Kent (2014), all concluded that when affiliated with an athlete or team, charitable organizations saw lower expenses, lower fundraising budgets, and higher equity within the organization. With all of these benefits in place for charitable organizations, it can be concluded that by aligning themselves with an athlete or team, charitable organizations will see substantial positive effects (Ilicic & Baxter, 2014; Sparvero & Kent, 2014; Harris & Ruth, 2015).

It is clear that obtaining and sustaining these benefits is another task that organizations must be willing to accomplish, as it is not easy. Babiak, et al. (2012) found that strategic philanthropy is the best way to obtain the best results for the organization. Strategic philanthropy will, according to the researchers, create a mutually beneficial relationship for the athletes and the charities. Therefore, if managers of charitable organizations wish to see, obtain, and sustain all of the benefits from partnering with an athlete or team, they must use strategic philanthropy tactics, such as CRM or CSR, as well as communicate wishes and wants of the partnership (Babiak, et al., 2012).

While many organizations do a great job with strategic philanthropy tactics and communication, the problem lies within the recognition (Roy & Graeff, 2003). There is a lack of awareness and recognition of charitable organizations and athletes or teams who work with charitable organizations. This could be due in part to the lack of communication out to the public

about charity work that an athlete is performing (Roy & Graeff, 2003). However, the public also rarely sees the direct effects and impacts that the charitable organization sees. This, therefore, causes skepticism within the donors, according to Ilicic and Baxter (2014). Thus, more research should be conducted on working towards determining the levels of awareness that the public has towards the relationships between sport and philanthropy, as well as improving communication with the public.

There are more areas where future research can be focused in order to improve knowledge and literature on the topic. The first being field practitioners can take current research into practice and build off it. Practitioners may use athletes from different sports, or athletes who are or are not as popular as others in the area to see how they actually benefit as a real life organization. Future researchers can also see how a team or athlete benefits from affiliating themselves with a charity. By looking at the reviewed literature, there is clearly an impact made on the charitable organizations, but little research has been conducted about how an athlete or team may benefit. Therefore, researchers should take time to look at the benefits an athlete or team reaps when affiliated with a charitable organization and what those benefits may look like.

Overall, philanthropy is a growing aspect of the sport industry and sport philanthropy is growing into an industry of its own. Creating a mutually beneficial relationship between a sport identity and a charitable organization is a tool managers of both sides can utilize in order to create and foster a relationship with the surrounding community. Hamilton (2004) summarized it best by stating:

Players, in addition to their work on the field, must also do their part in integrating the team into the community it represents. Whether it is through community appearances for

a sponsor or other community activities, the goal is to have fans in the market associate them and the team for which they play to positive community activities (p. 82).

This reasoning alone shows why professional athletes and teams aligning with charitable foundations is important, not only to the organizations and the benefitting causes, but to the community that they reside in.

Chapter Three

PROCEDURES

As the philanthropy industry consistently grows, there has been little research on how non-profit organization's benefit from professional sport association. There is a gap in the research when it comes to the organization benefiting from professional sport association, in terms of donations and volunteer recruitment. Babiak, Mills, Tainsky, and Juravich (2012) mentioned the fact that there is more of a focus on how the athletes and teams are benefitting, rather than the actual organization itself, which is where the gap in research initially comes from. Therefore, this research study will attempt to solve that gap in research and look at how non-profit charities and foundations benefit from affiliation with professional athletes and teams. This chapter will look at the participants in the study, the instrumentation for the study, the step-by-step procedure for the study, and finally how the data will be treated and analyzed once collected.

Source of Data

There were 49 adults between the ages of 18 and 60 who informed this study. These participants follow professional sports and had discretionary incomes or the ability to give money. The participants were asked to complete a survey questionnaire in order for the data to be collected. Participants were both men and women and may or may not have participated on a volunteer basis selected from the researcher's personal network of contacts throughout the

country. The participants did not need a specific level of education or training to participate in the study, but they did have to fill out a consent form in order to participate.

Instrumentation

In order to collect data for the study, the researcher used Google Forms to create and distribute a survey questionnaire. The survey consisted of four sections being: Informed Consent, Demographic Information, Research Questions, and Thank You. An example of one question asked if the participant follows professional athletes/professional sports teams. Another example of a question from the survey asked the participants to select all possible reasons as to why they may participate in charitable endeavors. By using these types of questions, the survey measured the likeliness of a participant to donate to a charitable organization if there is a professional sports team or athlete attached to the organization. The researcher based the formulated questions off the research done prior to creating the survey. Survey questions were both open-ended and closed-ended. Closed-ended questions were multiple responses, Likert scales, and categorical type questions.

Procedures

First, the survey questions were created by the researcher. Next, the questions were formatted into Google Forms to be sent out to participants. Once the questions were formatted into Google Forms, the researcher made it public for participants to take. The first section of the survey gave the informed consent to the participants and by selecting “Yes” the participants gave their consent to participate in the study. The survey was then open for a total of three weeks for

participants to take. After the three weeks, responses were analyzed and the researcher looked for patterns throughout the data. Participants were selected from the researcher's personal network and were asked to volunteer to complete the survey. There were no specific selections of participants, all were random using a snowball method.

Treatment of Data

The information that came back regarding the demographics of the participants was reviewed by the researcher before any of the other data. This way the researcher was able to take out the responses of participants who did not fit the needed demographics. Statistics were then calculated based on the data gathered from the Google Forms survey that was distributed. More specifically, the statistics were the percentages of respondents who chose each answer. Google Forms automatically created statistics for the researcher, making it very helpful to see different types of statistics and patterns in the answers. Due to the nature of some of the survey questions, further analyzing had to be done by the researcher. Based on the statistics from the collected data, generalizations and conclusions were drawn.

Chapter Four

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As the philanthropy industry consistently grows, there has been little research on how non-profit organization's benefit from professional sport association. There is a gap in the research when it comes to the organization benefiting from professional sport association, in terms of donations and volunteer recruitment. Babiak, Mills, Tainsky, and Juravich (2012) mentioned the fact that there is more of a focus on how the athletes and teams are benefitting, rather than the actual organization itself, which is where the gap in research initially comes from. Therefore, this research study will attempt to solve that gap in research and look at how non-profit charities and foundations benefit from affiliation with professional athletes and teams. The research study consisted of a survey that was administered online through Google Forms. The target demographic was adults (male and female) ages 30-60 years old. The data was then analyzed by looking at percentages and statistics, all of which were formulated by Google Forms. The following chapter will discuss all results from the study conducted.

Results

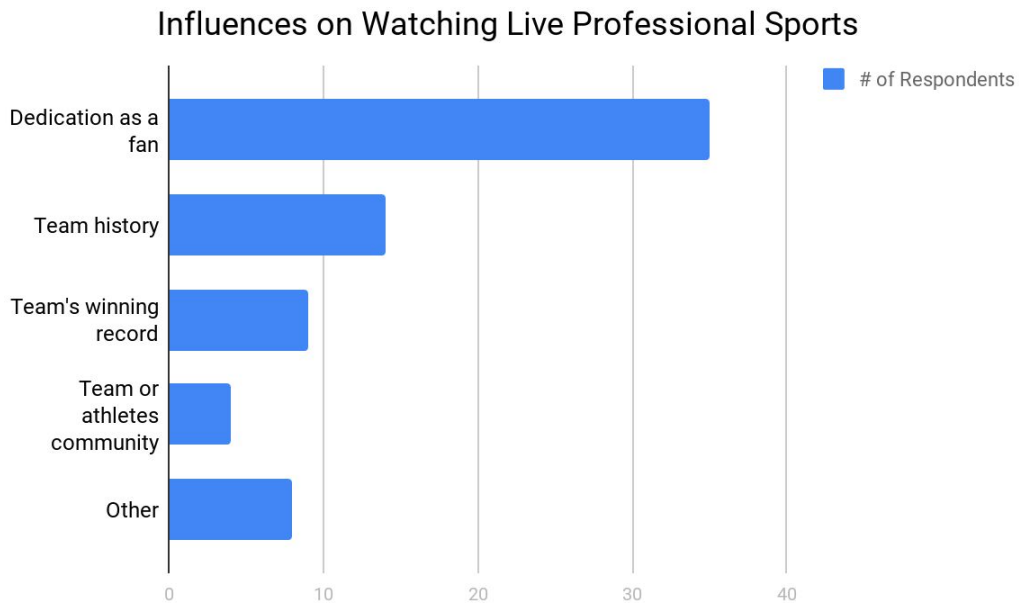
A total of 49 surveys were collected, all of which were fully completed, resulting in a completion rate of 100%. Although the targeted age group was 30-60 year olds, all responses were considered in the analysis. Twenty four (49%) of respondents were ages 18-28 years old, with only 1 (2%) respondent being under 18 years old. Two (4%) respondents were ages 29-39 years old, while 16 (33%) were 40-50 years old and 6 (12%) were over the age of 50. More

specifically, 38 (78%) of the respondents were females, while the other 11 (22%) were males. Respondents were also asked to identify their working status. Twenty five (51%) of the respondents identified as full-time workers, while the other 24 (49%) respondents identified as either unemployed, student, or part-time.

In order to gain a better understanding of participants' status as a sports fan, the researcher asked the respondents if they follow professional sports/athletes. Thirty three (67%) of the participants did follow professional sports/athletes, while 1 (2%) did not and 15 (31%) did sometimes. To get more specific, participants were also asked to identify which professional sports team from baseball, football, hockey, and basketball leagues that they affiliate themselves with. Forty six (94%) of participants stated they affiliate themselves with the New England Patriots in regards to professional football, while 1 (2%) said the Philadelphia Eagles and 2 (4%) said the New York Giants. Forty four (90%) of participants stated they affiliate themselves with the Boston Red Sox in regards to professional baseball, while 5 (10%) of participants said the New York Yankees. 44 (90%) of the participants stated they affiliate themselves with the Boston Bruins in regards to professional hockey. While 1 (2%) said the Toronto Maple Leafs, 1 (2%) said the Minnesota Wild, 1 (2%) said the New York Rangers, 1 (2%) said the New Jersey Devils, and 1 (2%) did not affiliate themselves with a team. Finally, 40 (85%) of the participants stated they affiliate themselves with the Boston Celtics in regards to professional basketball, while 1 (2%) said the Los Angeles Lakers and 8 (13%) did not affiliate themselves or did not follow a professional basketball team.

To get an idea of how often the participants view the events and games of the teams that they affiliate themselves with and the motivating factors behind viewing programs, the

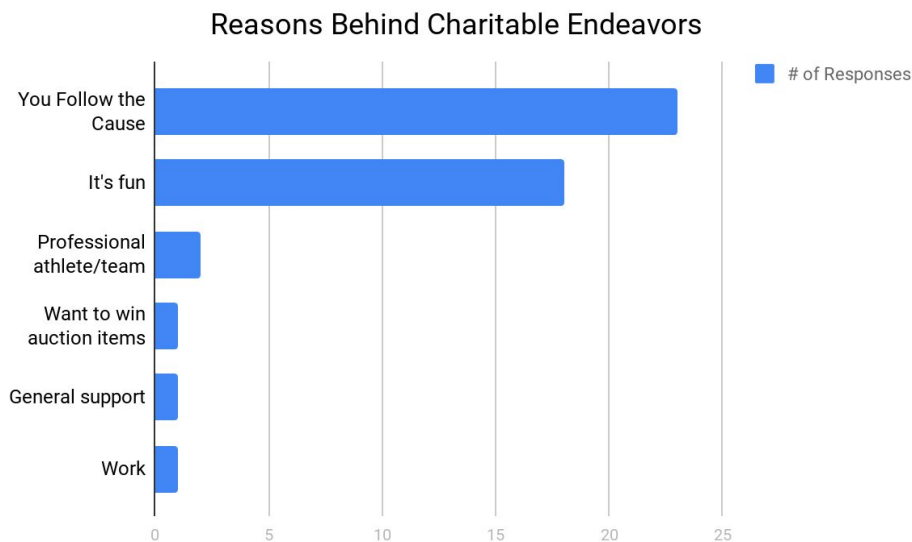
researcher asked participants three different questions. The first question asked participants how often they view sport programs of the listed team on TV. Twenty two (45%) of participants watch games multiple times a week, while 14 (29%) view games once a week, 10 (20%) view once to twice a month, and 3 (6%) view once every six months. The second question asked participants how often they attend live games of the teams that they listed. Twenty four (50%) stated they attend live games once a year, while 16 (33%) go once every few months, 6 (13%) go once every six months, and 2 (4%) go once a month. The third question in this section asked participants what influences them to watch or purchase tickets to a game. Thirty five (75%) of participants stated that their dedication as a fan was their biggest influencer. Fourteen (30%) of participants, on the other hand, stated that the team's history was an influencer, 9 (19%) stated it was if the team had a winning record, 4 (9%) stated the athlete or team's charity work in the community, and 8 (17%) stated other reasons. This data can be seen in the table below titled "Influences on Viewing Live Professional Sports". It should be noted that the previous question gave participants the option to select all options that applied to them, so there may be overlap.



The second half of questions asked participants if and how they support or do charity work. These questions also cover the main topic of this study, in regards to professional athletics and charity being intertwined. The first question asked participants whether or not they participate in charity endeavors. Charity endeavors included, but were not limited to, donations, volunteering, and attending events. Thirty two (65%) of participants answered “yes”, while 17 (35%) answered “no”. If a participant did answer “yes”, they were asked to answer the next question which asked why they chose to participate in charity endeavors. Participants were allowed to select all answers that applied to them. Twenty three (70%) of participants stated that they participate because they follow the cause of the charity. Eighteen (55%) of participants also said just because it is fun. Other answers included: 2 (6%) because of athlete or team’s involvement in the charity, 1 (3%) to win auction/raffle items, and 1 (3%) for general support.

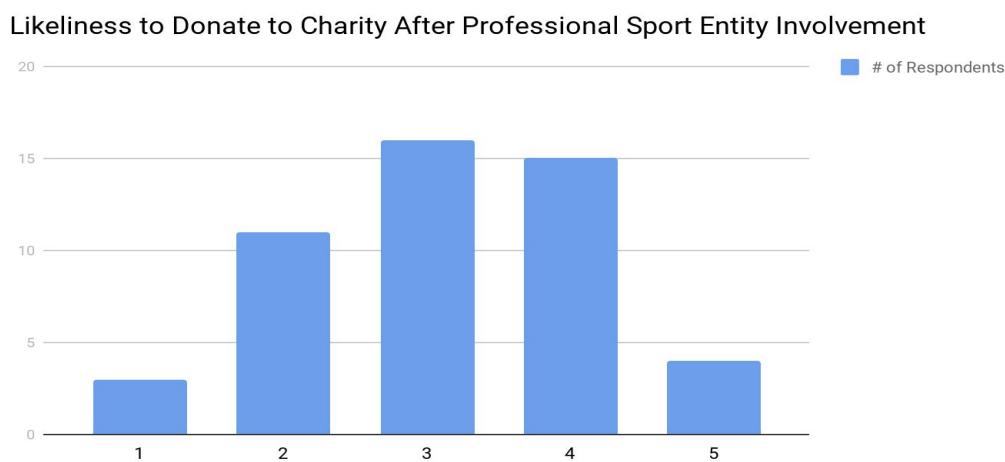
This information can be seen in the table titled “Reasons Behind Charitable Endeavors”.

Participants were then asked how often they participate in said charitable endeavors. Thirteen (30%) stated that they participate every few months, while 12 (28%) said once a year, 7 (16%) said once every six months, 6 (14%) said once a week, and 5 (12%) said once a month.



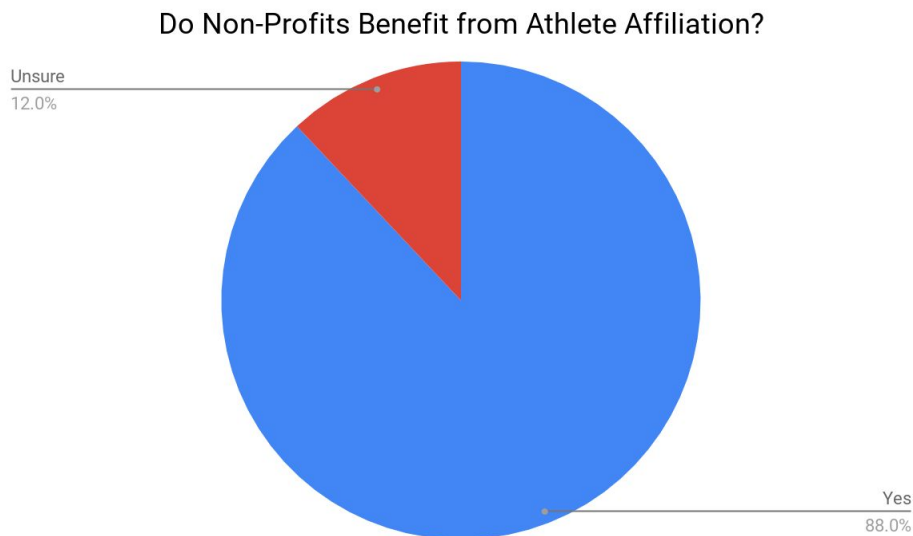
The final set of questions pertained directly to professional sports and charity being involved together. The first question asked participants if they were aware of any athletes or teams that they had stated in previous questions who are involved in charity work. Forty one (84%) of participants answered “yes”, while 8 (16%) answered “no”. Participants were then asked if they had ever participated in any charity endeavors that were sponsored or put on by a professional athlete, professional team, or one of their non-profit foundations. Forty (82%) of participants answered “yes” and 9 (18%) answered “no” to this question. If participants answered “yes” to the previous question, they were asked if their perception of the non-profit organization

changed positively. To this, 14 (61%) answered “no” and 9 (39%) answered “yes”. Participants were then asked to answer on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being not likely at all and 5 being extremely likely, how likely they are to donate to an organization after an event that benefits the community with the support of a professional athlete or team. Sixteen (33%) of participants answered in the middle with “3”, 15 (31%) of participants answered “4”, 11 (22%) of participants answered “2”, 4 (8%) participants answered “5” or extremely likely, and 3 (6%) answered “1” or not likely at all. The scale can be seen in the table below titled “Likeliness to Donate to Charity After Professional Sport Entity Involvement”.



The final four questions looked at the participants’ beliefs and perceptions regarding athletes or teams work with non-profit charities or organizations. Participants were first asked if their perception of a non-profit organization that they do not fully support would change if the organization is affiliated with a team or athlete that the participant is a supporter of. To this, 25 (51%) of participants were unsure, while 15 (31%) said “no” and 9 (18%) said “yes”.

Participants were then asked if they believe that non-profits benefit from affiliating themselves with athletes or teams. Forty three (88%) of the participants answered “yes” to this question, while 6 (12%) felt unsure. This information can be seen in the pie chart below titled “Do Non-Profits Benefit from Athlete Affiliation?” Following that question, participants were asked if they believed that non-profit organizations that affiliate themselves with athletes or teams make more of an impact than non-profit organizations who do not. To that, 29 (59%) of participants answered “yes”, 11 (22%) were unsure, and 9 (18%) answered “no”. The final question that participants were asked was if they believe that non-profit organizations can be affected by which athlete or team they affiliate themselves with. Forty five (92%) of participants said “yes” to that question and 4 (8%) were unsure. Data was analyzed into the following discussion below.



Discussion

Overall, the results from the research study conducted were able to assist the researcher in gaining a better insight into the two hypotheses of the study. As stated previously in the study, the two hypotheses were: If an athlete is affiliated with a non-profit organization, people will be more willing to donate or volunteer to that organization, and sport fans are more likely to donate to a charity when it falls under a professional sport team organization.

Firstly, results supported the hypothesis that if an athlete is affiliated with a non-profit foundation, he/she will be able to increase donations and volunteers to the foundation. This supports the findings of past research studies that stated non-profit foundations benefit more when affiliated with professional sports entities (Ilicic & Baxter, 2014; Sparvero & Kent, 2014; Harris & Ruth, 2015). In fact, about four fifths of respondents felt as though non-profit organizations benefit in terms of donations and volunteers when affiliated with a professional sport entity. The finding that about half of respondents answered “unsure” to their perception changing on a non-profit that they do not typically support if there is a professional sport entity affiliated with the organization may also support previous research studies, as well as the hypothesis. This is due to the fact that there is still the chance that they very may well feel as though the perceptions will change.

In addition, there is the possibility that the wording of the survey questions may have confused participants. Therefore, some answers may have been recorded as “unsure” instead of a solid “yes” or “no” answer. Results could have been further skewed due to the fact that some participants did not participate in charitable endeavors, and therefore are not as aware and others on their feelings regarding non-profit foundations. Even for participants that had participated in

charitable endeavors, some did not participate in charitable endeavors that were affiliated with professional sport entities. Most gave their opinions instead of actual experience. This, therefore, is not as reliable as the researcher wished due to the fact that it is likely participants may say they would do one thing, but when faced with the situation do another.

Secondly, the survey questionnaire did succeed in supporting the hypothesis that sport fans are more likely to donate to a charity when it falls under a professional sport team organization. About three fourths of the participants of the study did claim to follow professional sports, with almost half of them viewing the games of the team multiple times a week. The survey made it clear that the majority of participants were sports fans and did know about charitable initiatives made by professional sport entities.

The researcher was able to see that the participants were aware of charitable endeavors done by professional sport entities through the survey, which allowed the researcher to gain supporting findings of the second hypothesis. About four fifths of the participants were able to answer “yes” in regards to if they knew about charitable endeavors from professional sport entities.

The researcher also found evidence to support hypothesis two when participants were asked how likely they were to donate to a charitable organization following a charitable event supported or put on by a professional sport entity. The majority of responses (16) were a three, meaning they were neutral. However, 15 responses answered four, meaning that they were likely. This in turn benefited the hypothesis and supported the idea that sport fans are more likely to donate to charity when a professional sport entity is involved. This finding also supports the

same research from Ilicic & Baxter, 2014; Harris & Ruth, 2015; Kim & Walker, 2013 in hypothesis 1, as well as research from Breitbarth & Harris, 2008.

However, there seems to be a lack of research in regards to this specific topic. There is research that looks at how athletes benefit, but little to none on how the charitable organizations benefit. In order to better answer these questions and create more awareness regarding the topic, further research may need to be done.

Chapter Five

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

As the philanthropy industry consistently grows, there has been little research on how non-profit organization's benefit from professional sport association. There is a gap in the research when it comes to the organization benefiting from professional sport association, in terms of donations and volunteer recruitment. Babiak, Mills, Tainsky, and Juravich (2012) mentioned the fact that there is more of a focus on how the athletes and teams are benefitting, rather than the actual organization itself, which is where the gap in research initially comes from. Therefore, this research study attempted to solve that gap in research and look at how non-profit charities and foundations benefit from affiliation with professional athletes and teams. Adults of all ages were asked to fill out a survey in order to collect and analyze data to solve the gap in research.

Summary

Participants of this study were given an online survey questionnaire administered by Google Forms to determine their affiliation with sports in alignment with charitable endeavors. The initial questions were asked in order to gather demographic information of the participants. The three questions asked gender, age, and employment status to understand what types of people were contributing information to the data. The majority of respondents were females, between the ages of 18-28, and worked full-time jobs. Questions that followed asked about

participants' affiliations with sports teams, charitable endeavors, and perceptions/beliefs of athletes doing charity work.

The majority of respondents stated that they did follow professional sports, mainly Boston-based teams, by either viewing them on television or live games. The majority of participants also participate in charitable endeavors, however they all varied when stating how often they do participate in such endeavors. The majority of participants were also aware of the teams and/or athletes of the teams that they are affiliated with charity work in the community. However, to counter that, the majority of participants had not participated in charitable endeavors that were put on, sponsored by, or affiliated with any athletes or teams.

In terms of donations, the majority of participants scaled themselves as neutral or likely to donate to a non-profit organization after they do an event with a professional athlete or team. The majority of participants also stated that they felt as though a charity would benefit from affiliating themselves with an athlete or team, as well as the fact that the organization would be able to make more of an impact than non-profit organizations that are not working with any professional sport entities.

These results are very applicable to both sport managers, as well as non-profit managers. As stated in chapter two, 95 out of 114 United States based professional sports teams, in 2005, had non-profit organizations (NPOs) established and there were 1,122 charities that had connections to professional athletes in North America alone in 2011 (Kim & Walker, 2013; Sparvero & Kent, 2014). This research and results will be able to show the remaining professional teams and other charities that do not have connections to professional athletes that working with athletes and teams for charity actually benefits the organization. People actually

want to donate when there is a professional sport entity supporting a good cause, not only benefitting the cause, but also the athlete or team's image. This is information that sport teams can use when deciding whether or not to start a charitable foundation, as well as non-profit managers can use when deciding to work with athletes.

More-so, this study failed to measure levels of identification of the charitable work that teams or athletes do. Future studies should therefore look at what events or promotions that participants know about and have an understanding of. This would then help to gain a better understanding of how recognizable non-profits are when working with athletes or teams. This could in turn help marketing teams develop plans in order to target a larger group of people and promote the message of the organization. The study was limited to factors including: honesty and effort of the participants could not be guaranteed, the limited reliability and validity of the survey, the possibility that participants answered questions as they were expected to rather than how they truly felt, the individual experiences of the participants, and participants' access to modern media sources.

Conclusion

Overall, this study helped the researcher draw three main conclusions in regards to the topic. Firstly, participation in non-profit charities has potential to increase when there is a professional sport entity involved. Secondly, levels of awareness are high in regards to professional sport entities being involved in charitable endeavors. Finally, donation intentions are likely to increase if a professional sport entity is tied to a charity or charitable event.

The following suggestions should be considered for future research:

1. Ask participants which charitable endeavors that professional sport entities are involved in that they know of.
2. Reach a broader demographic of people (i.e. a larger sport fan base, not just New England).
3. Explore revenues of non-profits associated with professional sport entities, compared to organizations not associated with professional sport entities.

References

- Babiak, K., Mills, B., Tainsky, S., & Juravich, M. (2012). An investigation into professional athlete philanthropy: Why charity is part of the game. *Journal Of Sport Management*, 26(2), 159-176.
- Breitbarth, T., & Harris, P. (2008). The role of corporate social responsibility in the football business: Towards the development of a conceptual model. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 8(2), 179-206.
- Godfrey, P. C. (2009). Corporate social responsibility in sport: An overview and key issues. *Journal Of Sport Management*, 23(6), 698-716.
- Hamilton, D. (2004). Building a franchise for the long haul – locally and globally. In M. Falls (Ed.), *Inside the Minds: The Business of Sports*. Boston, MA: Aspatore, Inc.
- Harris, E. E., & Ruth, J. A. (2015). Analysis of the value of celebrity affiliation to nonprofit contributions. *Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 44(5), 945-967.
doi:10.1177/0899764014546428
- Ilicic, J., & Baxter, S. (2014). Fit in celebrity-charity alliances: When perceived philanthropy benefits nonprofit organisations. *International Journal Of Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Marketing*, 19(3), 200-208. doi:10.1002/nvsm.1497
- Kim, M., & Walker, M. (2013). The influence of professional athlete philanthropy on donation intentions. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 13(5), 579-601.
- Roy, D. P., & Graeff, T. R. (2003). Consumer attitudes toward cause-related marketing activities in professional sports. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 12(3), 163-172.

Sparvero, E., & Kent, A. (2014). Sport team nonprofit organizations. *Journal Of Applied Sport Management, 6*(4), 98-121.

Sport Management Degree Guide. (n.d.). Job Profile: Sports Philanthropy. Retrieved March 07, 2018, from

<https://www.sports-management-degrees.com/job-profiles/sports-philanthropy/>

Walker, M., & Kent, A. (2013). The roles of credibility and social consciousness in the corporate philanthropy-consumer behavior relationship. *Journal Of Business Ethics, 116*(2), 341-353. doi:10.1007/s10551-012-1472-6

Yeung-Jo, K., & June-Hee, N. (2007). Effects of celebrity athlete endorsement on attitude towards the product: The role of credibility, attractiveness and the concept of congruence. *International Journal Of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship, 8*(4), 310-320.

Appendix A

Informed Consent for Participation in a Research Study

It should be noted that because this was an online survey, participants gave their consent on the first page of the survey by clicking the “yes” option and then the “next” link that brought them to the first page of survey questions. Below is the text that was shown on the first page of the survey.

Dear Participant:

I am conducting a study on how professional teams and athletes benefit non-profit charities and foundations and I am inviting you to participate in this research. Your input is critical to the success of this study.

You may withdraw from the study at any point without penalty and may refuse to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable. By completing this survey, you consent to participate. It is anticipated the questionnaire will take approximately 3-5 minutes to complete.

Please be assured that your responses will be anonymous, as well as confidential. The results of the study will not be linked to any individual, and any discussion will be based only on group data. If you have any questions concerning your research rights at any time, contact Ellie Gamache at the number or email listed below.

Appendix B

Survey Questions

1. Please identify your gender
 - Female
 - Male
 - Prefer not to answer
2. Please identify your age range
 - Under 18
 - 18-28
 - 29-39
 - 40-50
 - Over 50
3. Please identify your working status
 - Unemployed
 - Student
 - Part-time
 - Full-time
4. Do you follow professional sports and/or professional athletes?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Sometimes
5. Please identify which professional football team you associate yourself with.
6. Please identify which professional baseball team you associate yourself with.
7. Please identify which professional hockey team you associate yourself with.
8. Please identify which professional basketball team you associate yourself with.
9. How often do you view sporting events of teams you listed on TV?
 - Once a year
 - Once every six months

- Once to twice a month
 - Once a week
 - Multiple times a week
10. How often do you go to live sporting events of teams you listed?
- Once a year
 - Once every 6 months
 - Once every few months
 - Once a month
 - Once a week
11. What influences your likeliness to watch or purchase tickets to a game? (Select all that apply)
- The team or athletes charity work in the community
 - If the team has a winning record
 - The history of the team
 - Your dedication as a fan
 - Other
12. Do you participate in charity endeavors? (i.e. volunteer, donate, attend events, etc.)
- Yes
 - No
13. If yes, why do you choose to participate in charitable endeavors? (Select all that apply)
- It's fun
 - You follow the cause
 - Professional athlete's/team's involvement
 - You want to win auction items
 - Other
14. How often do you participate in charitable endeavors (donations, volunteer, attend events, etc.)
- Once a week
 - Once a month

- Once every few months
 - Once every six months
 - Once a year
15. Are you aware of any athletes or teams you listed above who are involved in charity work? (i.e. community work, charity events, have their own charity)
- Yes
 - No
16. Have you participated in any charitable endeavors that are sponsored by or put on by a professional athlete, professional team, or their non-profit foundation?
- Yes
 - No
17. If yes, did your perception of this non-profit organization change positively?
- Yes
 - No
18. How likely are you to donate to the organization after an event that benefits the community with a professional athlete or team's support?
- Scale 1-5 (1 not likely at all, 5 extremely likely)
19. Would your perception of a non-profit organization that you dislike change if they are affiliated with a team or athlete you associate yourself with?
- Yes
 - No
 - Unsure
20. Do you believe that non-profit organizations benefit from affiliating themselves with athletes?
- Yes
 - No
 - Unsure
21. Do you believe that non-profit organizations that affiliate themselves with athletes or teams make more of an impact than non-profit organizations who do not?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

22. Do you believe that non-profit organizations can be affected by which athlete or team they affiliate themselves with? (i.e. An athlete who does not have the best rep compared to an athlete who is humble and kind)

- Yes
- No
- Unsure