ANALYZING VARIATION IN FAN IDENTIFICATION DEVELOPMENT AND THE EFFECTS ON INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETIC FUNDRAISING

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ABSTRACT

Andrew Hunter Barrett: Analyzing Variation in Fan Identification Development and the Effects on Intercollegiate Athletic Fundraising
(Under the direction of Nels Popp)

More money is currently being invested in intercollegiate sports than ever and it has led to an “arms race” including spending hundreds of millions of dollars on athletic facilities, enhancing student-athlete welfare, and multi-million dollar contracts for coaches. The onus has been placed on athletic development organizations to increase fundraising efforts to meet the needs of expanding budgets. The purpose of this study is to analyze how highly identified fans are with an institution at different ages and examine the relationship between when a person develops an identification and their donor behavior. The highest rated motivating factors were analyzed for the population as a whole and in demographic sub-categories. There were no statistically significant differences between high and low identification scores and different donor groups (annual gift and total lifetime giving). Additionally, no statistically significant differences were found on fan identification scores based on annual giving levels at different age categories.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Many college athletic departments are continually being asked to “do more with less” as economic pressures have forced them to cut budgets and reduce institutional subsidization. At the same time, more money is currently being invested in intercollegiate sport (especially at the Division I level) than ever before and it has led to an “arms race” that includes spending hundreds of millions of dollars on improving and building new athletic facilities, improvements in student-athlete welfare, and multi-million dollar contracts for head coaches. The onus has been placed on athletic departments and their development organizations to increase fundraising efforts to meet the needs of expanding budgets. It has become increasingly important to target highly identified fans who will donate large amounts of money and give for the duration of their lifetime. Consequently, it is imperative that research be conducted which examines donor behavior in conjunction with fan identification to provide athletic departments with information and best practices they can use to maximize revenue.

Several researchers have examined the motives behind fan identification and its effects on consumer behavior and attendance at athletic events (Fink, Trail, & Anderson, 2002; Greenwood, Kanters, & Casper, 2006; Wann, Tucker, & Schrader, 1996). In addition, research has been conducted on the differences between highly and lowly identified sport fans (Kim, Trail, & Magnusen, 2013; Trail, Fink, & Anderson, 2003; Wann, Ensor, & Bilyeu, 2001) as well as different levels of fan identification and development (Funk & James, 2001; Stephens-
Davidowitz, 2014; Trail & James, 2001). However, little research has been conducted to investigate the timing of when a person develops an identification with a particular school or how highly identified they are at different stages of their life. This study will contribute to the existing literature on the motives behind fan identification as well as identify specific stages of a person’s life when they are prone to develop an identification and become highly identified with a particular college or university. Finally, this study will attempt to draw conclusions pertaining to the effects of the development and differing levels of fan identification on intercollegiate fundraising.

**Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to analyze how highly identified fans are with a college or university at different times of their life. In addition, this study will examine if there is a relationship between when a person develops an identification and their donor behavior. In other words, this study will attempt to answer questions about whether or not certain people are more likely to donate to an athletic department for an extended period of time throughout their life based on if they became a fan a very young age, if their parents were fans of the school, or if they attended that school for their undergraduate career.

Many athletic departments spend considerable amounts of money targeting specific populations (students, alumni, etc.) as potential donors in order to ensure fundraising goals are met. With the information taken from this study athletic administrators will be able to allocate funds more efficiently for marketing and fundraising to target specific age populations and groups of people who are likely to become donors at a particular school. Ideally, these efforts could lead to increased numbers of donors and potentially higher giving levels that last the duration of a person’s lifetime.
Research Questions

Based on the review of literature, the following questions were formed for this study:

**RQ 1.** At what age ranges do athletic donors become highly identified with a college or university’s athletic program?

**RQ 2.** What are the most important motivating factors that influence the initial development of a fan’s affiliation with a college or university’s athletic program?

**RQ 3.** Do donors who become highly identified at younger ages contribute more annually and over the course of their lifetime to intercollegiate athletics?

**RQ 4.** Are there statistically significant differences in fan identification scores amongst athletic donors based on their annual giving levels?

Assumptions

1. The research methods used in this study are valid and reliable.

2. Survey participants will answer the survey questions truthfully and completely.

Delimitations

1. This study only included athletic donors from an institution that competes in intercollegiate athletics at the Division I level of the NCAA. A suggested future study would be to replicate these research methods and extend the survey to schools that compete at the Division II and Division III levels.

2. This study only included donors from one institution. Attempts were made to include different types of universities but, ultimately, only one institution agreed to participate in the study.
3. This study focused only on participants that were already donors at a particular school and did not include potential donors or people who have never given to intercollegiate athletics before.

Limitations

1. This study is limited by the fact that participants must answer the survey questions based on memories which may have been altered or changed throughout the course of their life.

2. This study is limited by the fact that putting a concrete value on levels of fan identification is difficult. The scales used in this study were carefully constructed to measure identification in an attempt to remove bias or areas for subjectivity.

Definition of Terms

1. **Fan Identification** - For the purposes of this study, the terms “fan identification” will be defined as “an orientation of the self in regard to other objects including a person or group that results in feelings or sentiments of close attachment” (i.e., to a particular college or university) (Trail, Fink, & Anderson, 2000, p. 165-166).

2. **Donor** - Any person who has donated money to a university or college’s athletic department.

Significance of Study

Opportunities for people to give charitably have grown exponentially over the last few decades, and individuals must make choices about where they choose to contribute. Donors who give money to a university’s athletic department do so for a variety of reasons. They may be interested in the tangible benefits (tickets, parking) they receive for their donations, or their giving may grow out of a sense of pride and philanthropy (Mahoney, Gladden, & Funk, 2003).
Whatever the case may be, it is imperative for athletic departments to target and connect with donors who are interested in giving over the course of their lifetime as well as those who have the ability to give at much higher levels than others. While it is commonly accepted that capitalizing on donor motives and developing highly identified fans are important strategies for intercollegiate athletic fundraising, there is little empirical data to support how to target or locate supporters at the points in their life when they are most highly identified with an athletic program. Additionally, minimal research has been conducted to examine the relationship between level of identification and donor behavior. The lack of empirical research on this topic makes this study a critical and necessary addition to the existing body of literature on donor motivation, fan identification, and intercollegiate athletic fundraising.

This research can also be used by athletic administrators to more efficiently allocate resources toward marketing and fundraising efforts to develop new athletic donors. It will be beneficial for them to know the age groups they should be targeting and the types of people who are more likely to donate to an athletic department and give over an extended period of time. For example, it may be more useful to shift the targeting focus away from current students and alumni and more toward local youth or young families who are new to the community surrounding an institution. Developing such relationships could ultimately lead to a highly identified fan which can, in turn, result in contributions to the institution’s athletic program. Lastly, in a time when athletic departments and fundraising organizations are forced to raise more money each year to compete in the “arms race”, this study demonstrates the importance of attempting to establish fan affiliation early on in order to maximize on a donor’s giving over the course of their lifetime.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter provides a thorough review of existing literature pertaining to the motives and variations in fan identification development and their effect on donor behavior in intercollegiate athletics. The first section presents research on the development and analysis of fan identification. This topic is broken down into further subtopics including (a) fan identification as a part of group identity and effects on self-esteem, (b) primary motives behind fan identification, (c) differences between highly identified fans and lowly identified fans, and (d) development of fan identification at different ages or levels of attachment. The second section examines literature related to donor motivation and analyzes differences in donor behavior. This section is broken down into three sub-groups: (a) primary motives behind donation to intercollegiate athletics, (b) athletic success and effects on donor giving, and (c) differences in donor giving based on a variety of demographics. The information gathered from the literature on these topics provide a foundation for this study on the relationship between the timing, creation, and variation in fan identification development and intercollegiate athletic donor behavior.

Sport Team Fan Identification

Effects of Fan Identification on Group Identity and Self-Esteem

Before studying the donor behavior toward an intercollegiate athletic program, it is important to understand why donors become fans in the first place. A clear understanding of
consumer behavior, attitudes, and desires “provides valuable information for determining how best to place, package, price, and promote products” (Greenwood, Kanters, & Casper, 2006, p. 253). Strengthening the relationship between fans and a team could help build a team identity and loyalty and, in turn, increase the consumption behavior of fans.

Funk and James (2001) established that team identity is based on an individual’s sense of belonging to a group of team supporters or on a perceived psychological connection with a sports team. Additionally, Dimmock et al. (2005) highlighted the role of team identification as a specific part of social identification that reflects a fan’s connection to a team. Sports teams serve as a source for group identity and also provide a representation of other aspects of social or community life such as geography, ethnicity, vocation, or gender. A sports team might represent not only owners, coaches, and players but also the city or state in which they operate, the university to which they are linked, or other groups such as ethnic, racial, gender, political, or religious. Highly identified fans no longer distinguish the team and their surrounding community as different units, rather, they are perceived as being linked together (Heere & James, 2007).

According to Murrell and Dietz (1992) fans identify with a team because doing so provides them with a sense of belonging, has a positive effect on self-esteem and mood, and influences the perceptions fans have of themselves. They become fans not only to feel good about themselves but also to belong something larger than themselves. Associating with successful teams is one way individuals may enhance their self-esteem in reference to their team identity. However, fan identification with sport teams may be less effected by team performance than previous research suggests (Murrell & Dietz, 1992). Additionally, many sports teams work to develop a sense of community around a team through programs designed to foster stronger
team identification. In turn, people come to identify not only with a team but also with the community a team represents (Heere & James, 2007).

The relationship between group identity and team loyalty has multiple effects. First, identification with a team creates an “in-group” that an individual feels that they belong to as well as an “out-group”, or other teams’ fans. In addition, team loyalty can also to an unrealistic optimism about the success of the program. Additionally, team identification is also characterized by an unyielding perseverance. Once a fan perceives a team to represent a part of their identity, it becomes extremely difficult to change his or her commitment to that team even if that teams experiences “hard times” (Heere & James, 2007). This can be seen in multiple sport examples such as the fan bases of the Chicago Cubs or Boston Red Sox. Even though both teams went multiple decades without winning a World Series, they were able to maintain an extremely loyal fan base because of strong relationships with their surrounding communities.

There is a special bond between fans and a team that leads to the phenomenon in which fans refer to their team as we, meaning they feel they are a part of the team (Heere & James, 2007). Identifying the strength of team identification could provide athletic departments with a fan base that is less likely to abandon their institution after a few losses or the departure of a star player. In the long run, it is valuable to develop fans as part of an institution in order to increase loyalty which could lead to higher rates of consumption as well as support in the form of financial contributions to intercollegiate athletic programs (Wann & Branscombe, 1993).

**Primary Motives behind Sport Fan Team Identification**

Team identification, or the degree to which an individual feels psychologically linked to a team, has been a major focal point in studies of fans and their spectatorship behaviors. Trail et al. (2000) defined identification as “an orientation of the self in regard to other objects including a
person or group that results in feelings or sentiments of close attachment” (p. 165-166). While some motivating factors for original fan identification are widely agreed upon, there is some disagreement in what are the most important factors in developing fan identification. One goal of many athletic departments is to develop highly identified fans who remain loyal to their institution for the duration of their life. If a person identifies with an organization, he or she observes, “a oneness with or belongingness to the organization, where the individual defines him or herself in terms of the organization of which he or she is a member” (Fink et al., 2002, p. 196).

Fans with high levels of identification behave differently than those with lower levels because highly identified fans are more likely to have a strong sense of attachment and belonging to the team (Fink et al., 2002). “Fair weather” fans only associate with the team when it is performing well, while die-hard fans show loyalty regardless of performance (Fink et al., 2002). Highly identified fans have been found to attend more games, spend more money and time while watching their team play, are more optimistic about the teams’ future success, and view attendance at games as a more enjoyable experience (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). A loyal fan base of engaged fans leads to higher revenue in the form of ticket sales, concessions, and merchandise purchases and can also lead to higher donations to an institution’s athletic department.

There are a myriad of reasons why a person becomes a fan of a particular college or university. The role of player talent has been identified as an important predictor of sport fan identification in previous research (Fink et al., 2002; Jones, 1997; Wann et al., 1996) Wann et al. (1996) also found that parental and family influence, peer/geographic influence, and success of the team were the most prevalent reasons for initial identification with a team. In contrast, Jones
(1997) argued that geographical reasons were the most dominant reason for supporting a team. Greenwood et al. (2006) established that the players and coaches of the team, being native to or currently living in the area, friends and family as fans, and tailgating and party atmosphere each account for a portion of the variability in initial sport fan team identification. Although McDonald et al. (2002) found differences in motives when comparing different sports, they did not find any significant differences when comparing levels of the same sport. That is, there were no differences on fan identification motives between college basketball and professional basketball.

On the other hand, Fink et al. (2002) found gleaning personal worth through an association with a sport team is the strongest motivator of becoming attached to the team. Similarly, Wann et al. (1996) highlighted the success of the team is important because fans have a tendency to “bask in the glory of a team” (p. 1000). This feeling of “vicarious achievement” is associated with attachment to the team, coach, community, and university (Robinson et al., 2004). However, building team identification solely through the motive of vicarious achievement presents a dilemma. If a fan’s only motive is to build self-esteem through the association with a successful team, he or she will be tempted to disassociate themselves when the team is unsuccessful.

In summary, the proximity of a school to where a person lives, which affects the ability of fans to attend games and follow the team in local media, is a key factor in developing and maintaining high levels of fan identification. In addition, one’s parents and family are common reasons for the origination and continuation of identification. Team success is a highly motivating factor for the origination of fan identification but is not necessarily correlated to team loyalty. Finally, the players themselves also play a major role as the abilities and traits of the
players are important for identification while the loss of specific players is a major factor in the cessation of identification.

**Differences between Highly Identified Fans and Lowly Identified Fans**

Through a variety of different reasons and motivating factors, fans develop affiliations with particulars colleges and universities. However, once the affiliation is established there is a broad spectrum of fans based on their “identification level”, or the degree to which they identify with the institution. Sport fans range from mere observers of a sporting event to highly committed fans. Highly committed fans continue their interest in the event or team to the point that parts of every day are devoted to either the team or the sport itself (Trail & James, 2001). This section explores the differences between highly identified fans and lowly identified fans.

Highly identified fans are more likely to consume products (attend games, consume media, purchase merchandise, etc.) regardless of team performance, whereas less identified individuals may not consume products during trying times (Kim et al., 2013). Wann and Branscombe (1993) showed expectations for future performance differed by fan identification level. Highly identified fans expected the team to perform at a higher level than those with lower levels of identification. In addition, Wann and Dolan (1994) and Wann (1994) found highly identified individuals differed from those less identified in their beliefs about the future success or failure of the team. Tsiotsou (2007) found the low motivation segment of fans consists of donors who make smaller donations, are less involved in the athletic program of the university, and score less in the values instrument. The high motivation segment consists of donors who contribute larger amounts, are more “involved”, and appreciate more values such as sense of belonging, excitement, and self-fulfillment. There is also considerable evidence indicating that
identification is highly correlated with basking-in-reflected-glory (BIRGing) behavior, attending more games, and willingness to pay more for tickets (Trail et al., 2003).

Wann and Dolan (2001) studied fans of the Murray State University men’s basketball team. They found highly identified fans demonstrated a “success/failure” attributional bias by forming more internal attributions following the team’s success and more external attributions subsequent to its defeat. In other words, they identify or attribute part of the team’s successes to themselves and the team’s failure to external factors. Lowly identified participants reported attributions of success/failure bias but to a lesser degree. Highly identified fans maintain their allegiance, even in difficult times, and must develop other strategies to maintain their positive social identity, whereas lowly identified fans are less likely to use these strategies because they simply “jump ship” after a team’s defeat (Wann & Dolan, 2001).

Wann and his associates also conducted a study in 2001 which explored the intrinsic and extrinsic motives for following a sport team and team identification. They hypothesized highly and lowly identified fans would be different in their motivations. They expected highly identified fans would rate higher on extrinsic motivation (i.e., the rewards and benefits of identifying with a successful team). However, both highly and lowly identified fans were more likely to be intrinsically motivated (involving interest and enjoyment of task), and highly identified fans reported a particularly strong inclination for intrinsic motivation.

Wann et al. (2001) concluded that, although the success of the team is important to highly identified fans, “their main reasons for watching the team are still based on the activity itself rather than simply on the team’s successes” (p. 451-452). This follows a logical line of reasoning. For example, a fan who only follows a team because the team success boosts self-esteem may disassociate themselves once the team begins to perform poorly. Conversely, a fan
who develops an affiliation based on intrinsic factors such as liking the sport itself will be much more likely to continue following the team even when they perform poorly. This line of reasoning is consistent with research indicating highly identified fans are more likely to stay with a team during difficult times (Wann et al., 2001). Kim et al. (2013) similarly found the stronger association between motives and sport consumption behaviors of highly identified fans may be canceled out by the weak, or even slightly negative, association for lowly identified fans (i.e., attendance levels, merchandise/concession sales, etc.).

Fan identification plays a large role in spectator loyalty and behavior, and building high levels of identification are important to sport administrators and fundraising officers. When athletic departments market to spectators, it is important to understand the motives correlating strongly with identification. For example, because vicarious achievement and the aesthetics of sports are highly related to fan identification, marketers could design ad campaigns or slogans that represent those motives (Trail, et al., 2003).

**Fan Identification at Specific Ages and Eras of Sport**

The final section of this literature review will explore the limited research into fan identification and affiliation at different ages of a person’s life or during specific eras of sports. Substantial research exists examining the different motivations behind initially forming an identification with a college or university and how that impacts sport consumption and donor behavior (Mahoney et al., 2003, Stinson & Howard, 2010, Gladden 2005). However, there has not been thorough research on how the timing of initial identification affects how highly identified fans remain throughout their lives as well as how it affects their donor behavior in intercollegiate athletics.
Multiple scales and instruments have been developed to measure sport motivation and identification. Wann’s (1995) Sport Fan Motivation Scale (SFMS) was designed to “document empirically the motives of sports fans and establish the relative importance of each” (p. 378). Eight factors that motivate fan behavior were identified from the literature: (a) eustress, (b) self-esteem benefits, (c) escape, (d) entertainment, (e) economic factors, (f) aesthetic qualities, (g) group affiliation, and (h) family needs. Milne and McDonald (1999) suggested twelve motivation constructs for spectators; a) risk-taking; b) stress reduction; c) aggression; d) affiliation; e) social facilitation; f) self-esteem; g) competition; h) achievement; i) skill mastery; j) aesthetics; k) value development; and l) self-actualization. Trail and James (2001) developed the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC) which had multiple sections, one of which pertained to fan motives. Respondents were asked to complete a three-item scale measuring their level of identification with the team, indicate the number of games that they had attended to date, and complete a single item self-rating of fanship with the team. The latter items were measured on a scale ranging from “not a fan at all” to “an extremely loyal fan” (p. 116). While all of these instruments measure motives behind identification, and the MSSC actually measured levels of identification, none of them establish the timing of initial identification and effects on future behavior.

Nakazawa, Mahoney, Funk, and Hirakawa (1999) examined the relationship between length of time as a fan, motives to attend games, and involvement with the Japanese Professional Soccer league (J. League). Their study suggested that length of time as a fan, which corresponds to both spectators’ motivation and involvement with a team or sport, represented a useful independent variable for creating marketing segments. Similarly, Mahoney, Nakazawa, Funk, James, and Gladden (2002) conducted a study in response to the declining interest in the J.
League by examining selected motives influencing the behavior of J. League spectators. They then used a measurement scale to examine the impact of these motives on spectator behavior. They found that attachment to a sport and team attachment are significantly related to longer periods of spectator support. Their results suggested that fans may initially be attracted by players, but forming a strong attachment to the sport and to a particular team is more important for long-term support (Mahoney et al., 2002). These findings could impact intercollegiate athletics because they suggest that forming an attachment to a particular sport and team at a young age could lead to long-term support and involvement. For athletic fundraisers this could mean increased donations over longer periods of time to athletic fundraising organizations. However, these studies were limited to examining results based on frequency of attendance at games and not financial support to the team.

One study conducted by Stephens-Davidowitz (2014) analyzed baseball teams and how their performance at every age of a fan’s childhood affected which team they rooted for as adults. Major league Baseball fan data was collected from Facebook and the most popular teams were found to be the Yankees, Red Sox, Mets, Cardinals, and Braves. The results of the study found the team men identified with fluctuated with the year they were born much more than women. Stephens-Davidowitz suggested swings correlated with the age in which members of the population were born and team success. For example, there were a much larger number of Mets fans than Yankees fans that were born specifically in 1961 and 1978. Fans born in both of those years were 8 years old when the Mets won the World Series. The data showed an 8% increase in the chances boys between the ages of 8-12 will become fans of a team after it wins a championship (Stephens-Davidowitz, 2014). The implications of this research have significant consequences in sports. Stephens-Davidowitz estimated if young boys are even 5% more likely
to become lifelong fans of a team after a World Series championship, that team could expect as much as $30 million in net present value for the duration of those newly developed fans’ lives in the form of future ticket, merchandise, and concessions sales.

Funk and James (2001) developed a different way of viewing an individual’s psychological connection to sport. The Psychological Continuum Model (PCM) specifies the general parameters in which a relationship between an individual, sport, or athlete is reconciled. The first level, Awareness, occurs when an individual first learns certain sports and teams exists but does not have a specific favorite. The second level, Attraction, indicates when an individual develops a favorite team or favorite sport based on various motives. At the third level, Attachment, a psychological connection begins to form creating various degrees of association between the individual and the sport object (e.g., a favorite team). Finally, the last level is Allegiance and occurs when an individual has become a loyal (or committed) fan of the sport or team. Allegiance results in “influential attitudes that produce consistent and durable behavior” (Funk & James, 2001, p. 121).

The PCM moves more toward establishing when an individual moves up the scale from Awareness to Allegiance. Using this model, researchers can find the answers to questions such as: (a) When do people become aware of sports and teams, (b) How do people become aware of sports and teams? and (c) What causes people to move from Attraction to Attachment or Attachment to Allegiance? (Funk & James, 2001).

While the PCM model measures how to move fans along the spectrum of fan identification, it does not assess the timing of changes in fan identification level. It can be used to measure the level of identification a person currently has with a particular team, but does not ask about the timing of the origin of the identification. If the PCM model was slightly adjusted to
include a timing component, researchers might be able to identify the periods in a person’s life which provide the best opportunity to develop high levels of fan identification.

Finally, James and Trail (2008) and Trail, Robinson, Dick, and Gillentine (2003) utilized a measure of team identification known as the Team Identification Index (TII), which has shown good past reliability (Trail et al., 2003; 2005). The TII is a three part test to determine level of team identification. The three TII items have a 7-point response format ranging from “Strongly Disagree” (1) to “Strongly Agree” (7). An average of the three measures is taken to give respondents a fan identification score which is then used to measure their overall fan identification. However, both James and Trail (2008) and Trail et al. (2003) only used the TII to determine current levels of fan identification. This measure could be used to measure levels of fan identification at different points in a person’s life if they were asked to rate themselves on the three part tests for multiple age ranges. This would then provide information into how a person’s level of fan identification varied throughout their lifetime.

Intercollegiate Athletic Donor Motivation and Behavior

In 2012, just 23 of 228 athletic departments at NCAA Division I public schools generated enough revenue to cover their expenses (Berkowitz, Upton & Brady, 2013). Because of increased pressure to offer multi-million dollar contracts to head coaches and build new facilities to keep up in the “arms race”, athletic departments are forced to find other ways to generate funds to meet their financial needs. Emphasis on athletic fundraising continues to escalate as intercollegiate athletics becomes more and more commercialized. According to a 2002 study, athletic fundraising accounts for 18% of the total revenue generated by NCAA Division I athletic departments (Fulks, 2002). Thus, “in a time when more than one-half of all Division I college and university athletic departments run a deficit, one can argue that furthering an understanding
of why people donate to athletic support groups is important” (Gladden, 2005). Due to the increased financial pressure, it has become critical for athletic departments to understand the primary motives driving donors to contribute to athletics. In order to answer this question, we must first review the primary motives driving donors to contribute to intercollegiate athletics.

**Primary Motives for Intercollegiate Athletic Donors**

Multiple scholars have conducted research on the different motivations behind donating to intercollegiate athletics (Mahoney, Gladden, & Funk, 2003; Gladden, 2005; Tsiotsou, 1998). The research on intercollegiate fundraising shows donor behavior is influenced by (a) priority seating, (b) parking privileges, (c) special recognition, (d) social events, (e) improving the quality and image of the athletic program, (f) promoting the image of the university, and (g) contributing to the academic success of student-athletes (Gladden, 2005). Previous research also has shown the factors hindering fundraising include: (a) economic downturns, (b) competition amongst charitable organizations, (c) irregular donor behavior with regards to giving to educational institutions, and (d) because athletic fundraising is motivated by a desire to attain priority seating (Hall & Mahoney, 1997).

Gladden (2005) conducted a study comparing athletic donor motives across different universities. The study found the desire to support and improve the athletic program was the most commonly mentioned motivational factor. The second most common motive was the desire to receive ticket-oriented benefits. Finally, a desire to help student-athletes was the third most frequently identified athletic donor motivation. This research supports the commonly held belief that people give to athletic programs to improve the program as well as “bask in the glory” of the program’s success. In addition, clear support was also found for the importance of transactional benefits such as ticketing and parking (Gladden, 2005, p. 26-27).
Wells, Southall, Stotlar, and Mundfrom (2005) found the variable most highly correlated with annual contributions was football season-ticket sales. This was not surprising as most large NCAA Division I institutions utilize priority seating rewarding donors who contribute more money with better seating and parking options. The other variables highly correlated with contributions were deemed to be: (a) number of living alumni, (b) accumulated season football attendance and, (c) appearance in a bowl game (Wells et al., 2005).

Similarly, Mahoney et al. (2003) found obtaining priority seating for football and men’s basketball were generally very important motives and, at some schools, the most important motivators. For some donors, the donation is based more on a commercial exchange than altruistic feelings and may be seen as a requirement for good seats (Mahoney & Gladden, 2001).

Smith (1989) reported that 92% of alumni and non-alumni athletic donors rank the opportunity to obtain tickets as one of the most important in making donations and may be the only reason for giving by non-alumni. In addition, raising mandatory contribution requirements does not have a significant impact on donors’ willingness to give (Schaefer, 2011). These findings are important because they highlight a difference between intercollegiate athletic fundraising and most other non-profit organizations – college athletics donors frequently give in order to receive better seats. This is a significant difference to motives typically associated with giving to a university or college.

Tsiotsou (2007) highlighted the emphasis on donor motivation research has been placed on tangible donor motives, whereas intangible motives have not received equal attention. She conducted a study identifying four motivation factors including three intangible factors: belongingness (loyalty, identification), trusting (of the leadership and vision of the university), prestige, and social and practical motivation (tangible motives such as tax deductions or priority
seating). Tsiotsou found, contrary to previous findings, the intangible dimensions of motivation seem to play a dominant role in athletic giving compared to its intangible aspects. Over half of respondents valued the intangible factors higher than the tangible factors. She also found that athletic donors of the study did not differ significantly in their capacity to give (household income) but in their motivation to give. Thus, “motivation might be a more reliable predictor of athletic giving at the low and medium donation level than income” (p. 87).

Mahoney et al. (2003) also found while improving the quality of the athletic program was rated as very important, not all sports were equal in the eyes of donors. Generally, improving the quality of revenue sports was much more important than improving the quality of other sports. Thus, athletic departments tend to ignore, and therefore fail to cultivate donors interested in other sports programs.

**Athletic Success and Effects on Donor Giving**

There has been extensive research on the relationship between athletic success and donations to intercollegiate athletic programs. A common term when discussing the relationship athletic success has on an institution is the “Flutie effect” or “Flutie factor”. This term is a reference to Doug Flutie who played quarterback at Boston College in the 1980’s. He rose to fame after a memorable game against the University of Miami which culminated in a last-second “hail-mary” pass that gave Boston College the win. Johnson (2006) summarizes the Flutie effect as the impact of sudden athletic success on a college or university’s fiscal well-being, the number and quality of admissions, and amount of donations. Goff (2000) noted that athletic success can produce both direct and indirect financial benefits. Direct benefits include higher attendance (which leads to increases in ticket, parking, and concession revenues) and broadcast-appearance revenues generated by television and postseason appearances. Indirect benefits from athletic
success were categorized into two groups: indirect nonfinancial benefits and indirect financial benefits. Indirect nonfinancial benefits include increased applications and enrollment, attracting higher quality students, and increased exposure of the university. Indirect financial benefits include increased donations by alumni and increased state funds for public colleges and universities.

Stinson and Howard (2004) conducted a study on the differences between alumni and non-alumni donors and their respective giving to academics versus athletics. The results indicated in all but two years, alumni made larger gifts to academics than non-alumni. However, in every year of the study non-alumni contributed more to athletics than to academics. During the study’s time period average donations to athletics increased by more than $700 per donor, the amount of donors making academic donations decreased, average giving to academics decreased, and the average gifts to athletics increased.

According to Stinson and Howard (2007) alumni and non-alumni are likely to have different relationships with a university and, consequently, exhibit different giving patterns. They found alumni developed multiple related identities during their collegiate careers based on their academic experiences, involvement with student activities, and extracurricular activities which can also include exposure to intercollegiate athletics. Thus, alumni who identify with their alma mater are expected to maintain, reinforce, and strengthen their identity with the university (i.e., by giving charitably to support the institution) (Arnett, German, & Hunt, 2003). Non-alumni, conversely, are more likely to identify with the university based on less extensive connections to the institution. Their direct experience is most likely associated with an institution’s extracurricular activities which are most prominently intercollegiate athletic programs (Stinson & Howard, 2007). This finding is consistent with previous research starting the higher the level
of satisfaction with the undergraduate academic experience, the more likely alumni are to give and/or participate with the university (Gaier, 2005; McDearmon & Shirley, 2009).

In addition to examining the effects of athletic success on athletic giving, the effects on giving to athletic programs versus giving to academic programs has also been examined. Two commonly held positions become evident after review of the literature. Some researchers argue the positive influence of athletics on giving both to athletic and academic programs by emphasizing the success of athletic giving programs in bringing in new donors to the institution. This group refutes the notion of athletic fund-raising competing for the same donations as academic fund-raising (Stinson & Howard, 2007). An alternative view is provided by Sperber (2000), who argued the “college sports equal giving myth”, stating not only do athletic donations by alumni compete with academic donations, but nonalumni make athletic gifts with little or no interest in the academic mission of the university. This results in a net loss of support directed toward academic programs.

It is difficult to examine the effects of athletic success on academic and athletic giving because the two types of giving are measured in very different ways. Toma (2003) argued success level and outcomes (e.g., wins and losses) linked with intercollegiate athletics are much easier to quantify than the success and outcomes of academic programs. In addition, the benefits (e.g., tickets, parking) offered in exchange for athletic-related gifts are a primary motive for donations to intercollegiate athletic programs. There is a lack of similar tangible benefits offered in exchange for gifts to academic programs, and it is much more difficult to evaluate the successes and outcomes of academic programs.

The research on the effects of athletic success on overall giving to collegiate institutions produced some mixed results. Stinson and Howard (2007) found although athletic success might
not be directly related to academic giving it does appear to influence the percentage of total charitable dollars donated to academics. However, athletic success did influence giving to athletic programs differently than giving to academic programs. Less “prestigious” academic institutions are more influenced by athletic success and have a larger percentage of total institutional gifts directed to intercollegiate athletic programs. Although higher ranked academic institutions are not as susceptible to the influence of athletic success on giving, “the allocation patterns at all levels toward athletic giving suggest an increasingly important role for athletics at colleges and universities” (Stinson & Howard, 2007, p. 260). Thus, even at the most prestigious colleges and universities the proportion of total gifts directed toward athletic programs is increasing.

Covell (2005) took a different approach to exploring the perception of winning on donations, using stakeholder theory to measure the impact of winning on athletic donations within a conference, specifically the Ivy League. Hypothesizing colleges and universities use athletics to foster a sense of community among students, alumni, and the general public, Covell concluded any connection between winning and giving can only be accurately measured on an institution-by-institution basis. Consistent with stakeholder theory, a significant finding was donors who had been giving for longer than 25 years were less likely to have their donations impacted by winning, while those who had been donating for fewer years were more likely to be impacted negatively by short-term team results. Thus, athletic departments which cultivate donors who will give over the extent of their lifetimes are also cultivating fans who are less likely to be impacted by success “on the field” and more likely to remain loyal to the institution.

Humphreys and Mondello (2007) researched the effects of athletic success on institutional giving by using two measures of athletic success that appear to be correlated with
changes in donations: appearances in football bowl games and in the NCAA Division I men’s basketball tournament. They found appearing in bowl games and the postseason basketball tournament in the previous season had no effect on unrestricted donations to public institutions (donations that generally go toward academics), but both types of athletic success were correlated with increases in restricted donations (which include donations targeted for a school’s athletic program). The effect of a postseason athletic appearance on restricted giving at private schools was modest, however, the effect on restricted giving to public institutions is much more substantial. Their results indicated that only restricted giving changes in response to athletic success and does not appear to induce donors to increase their unrestricted contributions.

Similarly, Helliker (2014) examined the increases in donations for schools the year after an athletic success, defined as playing in a Bowl Championship Series game or the Final Four, compared with the year before the success. In the year following an athletic success donations to private schools rose 28% from the year before. At public institutions, the comparable figure was 11%.

After reviewing the literature it appears some are worried the revenue increases due to athletic success are a temporary phenomenon (Gladden, 2005). Over an extended period of time, pressure to succeed in athletics might drive up costs beyond the increase in donations, which can lead to the “arms race” in capital costs previously mentioned. The expenditure increases for athletics are persistent but, unfortunately, athletic success (i.e., postseason football and basketball appearances) may be infrequent for many institutions with small athletic budgets. Stinson and Howard (2010) suggested an increased emphasis on by athletic departments on donating for the betterment of the university and increasing opportunities for student-athletes rather than athletic success or tangible benefits related to giving. Additionally, they also highlighted donors making
both academic and athletic gifts only make up a third of all donors to higher education. However, they make higher total gifts to their respective institutions and are retained at a higher rate than other donors. Thus, these donors have a higher potential lifetime value than donors who support only athletic or only academic programs and could be high priority targets for athletic fundraising organizations.

**Variations in Donor Behavior**

Athletic development organizations target alumni, current students, former student-athletes, and their surrounding communities to form emotional connections with their university and contribute money to athletics over the course of their lifetime. When emotional motivation increases, donations to athletics are expected to increase too (Tsiotsou, 1998). This section will examine literature focused on the differences between different types of donors and how their differences affect their giving behaviors.

Clotfelter (2001) found, consistent with many studies of charitable giving, contributions tend to rise with age, independent of income. High income is a significant predictor of large contributions regardless of other factors such as being alumni of an institution or being satisfied with their undergraduate experience (Clotfelter, 2013). Alumni who once had a leadership position in an extracurricular activity or remembered someone who took a special interest in them during college were more likely to give and give more. Having graduated from the institution where they first enrolled was strongly related to giving. Legacies (those with relatives who previously attended the institution) tended to make larger gifts, and they were slightly more likely than other alumni to give at all. Not surprisingly, those who contributed the most tended to have the highest incomes, with 97% making $100,000 or more. Although the act of donating to
athletics is common, alumni giving is extremely concentrated, with more than half of all
donations being given by just 1% of all alumni (p. 134).

There has also been research conducted on the differences between male and female
athletic donors. It has been reported female athletic donors contribute at lower donation levels,
are more inclined to give to women’s programs, and are more motivated by success and

Tsiotsou (2006) found more men give to intercollegiate athletics than women. Females
donated almost 3.5 times less than their counterparts, however, the income of female athletic
donors was less than male athletic donors (which affects the ability to give). Donors generally
prefer their donations go to the major revenue producing sports such as football or men’s
basketball. On the other hand, prominent women and successful women alumni give support
more readily to women’s sports programs. Webb (1989) established that women usually make
numerous small gifts rather than a few substantial ones and females give a higher percentage of
their income than males. Additionally, wealthy women are less motivated by tax and estate laws
to give to charity than wealthy men, and more inspired by philanthropic feelings about the
institution.

A common tactic of athletic fundraising is to target people who have previous
connections with sports and are, therefore, more likely to contribute to athletics. Tsiotsou (1998)
found the more “involved” an individual is with athletics, the more he/she will donate to athletic
programs. In this case, “involved” meant people with past participation in athletics, athletic
coaching, and attending sporting events. In addition, Tsiotsou also found the more experience
with sports someone has, the more involved he/she is with sports, and the more athletic events
they attend all lead to more emotionally motivated fans who give at higher levels. In response to
this research, many athletic departments identify people involved in sports as well as people who have previous experience in sports as their prospective donors in order to develop lifetime donors and maximize revenue (Stinson & Howard, 2010, Tsiotsou, 1998).

In many instances, the emotional connection a fan has with the institution (which makes them more like to give) was first established a very young age. In a qualitative study Stinson and Howard (2010) surveyed donors and many respondents expressed their age of introduction to the school (almost always centered on football) occurred by eight years of age. They added it was “very common” that their fathers or grandparents were passionate fans, passing that affiliation on to their children or grandchildren. Thus, according to Stinson and Howard, athletics provided the foundation for an affiliation and, ultimately, the choice to attend the institution as a student. In turn, respondents began supporting the institution’s athletics and academic programs with significant financial gifts upon graduation. Nonalumni donors were also interviewed and indicated they did not support their alma mater or only supported it with small gifts. For a variety of reasons they chose to attend another institution but did not form the same emotional connection. These donors “demonstrate the power that sports have to generate emotional connections that academic and other institutional programs often have difficulty creating” (p. 319).

Research has also shown donors making their first gift to athletics indicated their initial gift was based solely on the desire to access tickets (Mahoney et al., 2003). This type of giving, based on a commercial exchange, is motivated by tangible benefits rather than any philanthropic motive. As long as the exchange is commercial, a donor may not give more than the apparent value of the benefit received in exchange for the donation. Conversely, it appears many donors who make larger gifts are motivated more by philanthropy. As capacity to give increased, many
donors were proud to make a larger philanthropic gift to a program or organization they cared much about (Stinson & Howard, 2010).

There has been considerable research on donor motivation, and some research beyond surface level motivations (i.e., tickets and parking). However, empirical consensus about what motivates individuals to give has not been reached. Athletic departments and development organizations are attempting to develop strategies and promotional activities aimed at fostering, maintaining, and reinforcing stronger emotional connections with donors. If these goals are attained, they would then be “better equipped to build a base of donors who feel affiliated, important, and rewarded for their gifts” (Ko, Rhee, & Walker, & Lee, 2013). Because successful intercollegiate athletic teams have the ability to develop emotional connections between the fans and the athletics program, it is important for athletic fundraisers to foster and leverage that connection over the lives of alumni and nonalumni to fully realize the gift potential of major donors.

Conclusion

Clearly, developing highly identified fans who view their relationship with an institution as an integral part of their daily lives is an important goal for athletic administrators and development officers. While the Stephens-Davidowitz (2014) study and the Psychological Continuum Model developed by Funk and James (2001) have opened the door into researching when fan identification is developed and how it affects intercollegiate athletic donors, they must be tested in a college/university space to gain a better understanding of how identification affects donor behavior.

This thesis will analyze the specific points in an individual’s life when they are more likely to develop an affiliation with a school and how highly identified they remain throughout
their lifetime. Additionally, it will examine if there is a correlation between development of fan identification early in life and giving habits of athletic donors. This study is unique because it will examine the relationship between unique background characteristics of donors (age of affiliation, strength of affiliation, and undergraduate experience) and willingness to give, not necessarily their motives. Other studies have examined some background characteristics (gender, race, socioeconomic status, etc.) but not “age of affinity”. The information taken from this study should help development officers implement strategies to target populations who are likely to develop strong identifications and strengthen identification with existing fans which should result in increased rates of giving to the institution’s athletic department.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Subjects

The target population for this study was the donor base of a Division I athletic program. The sample was compiled from existing athletic donors from a large public university in a “Power Five” athletic conference. A membership list was obtained from the athletic development organization to distribute the survey via e-mail. Of the 10,667 surveys that were distributed via e-mail 2,312 subjects completed the survey, for a response rate of 21.67%. A total of 200 surveys that were started but not completed were not included in the statistical analysis of this study.

Instrumentation

Due to the unique and exploratory nature of this study, it was necessary to develop an instrument specific to the research questions addressed. The instrument was compiled based on an extensive review of literature. James and Trail (2008) and Trail et al. (2003) developed the Team Identification Index (TII) which has shown past reliability in measuring fan identification. Specifically, their three-part test was used to measure levels of fan identification at specific age categories. In an effort to enhance validity, the survey was reviewed by a panel of experts including a sport administration professor, an athletic administrator, and a development officer from the athletic development organization at a large public university. Prior to distributing the survey to the subjects, a pilot study with a sample size of twelve athletic donors was conducted to confirm that the questions were clear and easily understood.
The survey was completely anonymous, participants were given the option to skip any question, and included a total of twenty items. Each subject received a link to the survey via e-mail and completed the survey online using Qualtrics. Each question on the survey relates to at least one of the four stated research questions. The survey featured Likert scale, multiple choice, and open-ended questions.

Data Analysis

After entering the quantitative data collected from the completed surveys into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software (SPSS), various statistical tests were run to analyze the results. As stated earlier, RQ 1 asked “At what age ranges do athletic donors become highly identified with a college or university’s athletic program?” and RQ2 asked “What are the most important motivating factors that influence the initial development of a fan’s affiliation with a college or university’s athletic program?” Descriptive statistics provided the means and standard deviations necessary to indicate the age ranges at which people tended to become highly identified as well as the most important motivating factors which influenced initial development of an affiliation with the university’s athletic program (answering RQ’s 1 and 2). In addition, an ANOVA test was used to determine group mean differences based on gender, graduate of the school, and age of affiliation for fan identification motivation.

RQ3 asked “Do donors who become highly identified at younger ages contribute more annually and over the course of their lifetime to intercollegiate athletics?” To answer this research question we chose to stratify the sample into groups of participants that became highly identified at different age brackets. For five different age ranges (13 years old and younger, 14-17, 18-22, 23-29, and 30 years or older) participants rated themselves on the same three fan identification statements: “I considered myself a fan of the team”, “I would have felt a loss if I
had to give up being a fan of the team”, and “Others recognized that I was a big fan of the team”. They were asked to respond using the following five-point Likert scale: (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (4) Agree, and (5) Strongly Agree. A mean score of the three responses was calculated to give each participant a “Fan Identification Score” at each of the five age ranges. For the purposes of this survey a donor was considered “highly identified” if their average Fan ID score was 4.0 or higher (Agree). This three item test measuring fan identification was taken from James and Trail (2008) and Trail et al. (2003) and has proven to be a reliable method for measuring fan identification.

Participants were also asked to choose between seven annual giving levels that reflected their annual giving toward intercollegiate athletics: (a) $0-$500, (b) $501-$2,500, (c) $2,501-$10,000, (d) $10,001-$25,000, (e) $25,001-$100,000, (f) $100,001-$500,000, and (g) more than $500,000 per year. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of the age at which participants became highly identified (4.0 Fan Identification score or higher at a particular age category) on annual giving and total lifetime giving to intercollegiate athletics.

Finally, RQ4 asked “Are there statistically significant differences in fan identification scores amongst athletic donors based on their annual giving levels?” To answer the fourth research question, the sample was grouped into seven annual giving levels. A one-way ANOVA was run to determine if significant group mean differences in fan identification levels existed for these giving level groups.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Demographics

Of the 2,312 participants for this survey, 78% (n=1,739) were male and 22% (n=498) were female. The mean age of all participants (n=2,312) was 54.65 years old ($M=54.65$, $SD=14.77$). Five participants (0.002%) fell between the ages of 18-22, 6.5% (n=151) were between 23-29 years old, and the remaining 93.3% were 30 years or older.

A small number of participants did not graduate from a 4-year university (8%, n=184). Among the participants who graduated from a 4-year university, 57% (n=1,129) earned an undergraduate degree from UNC-Chapel Hill, 10% (n=201) earned an undergraduate degree from a school other than UNC-Chapel Hill, 18% (n=361) earned a graduate degree from UNC-Chapel Hill, and 14% (n=283) earned a graduate degree from a school other than UNC-Chapel Hill.

Participants were also asked to estimate their combined annual household income. A large percentage (42%, n=952) earned more than $150,000 annually, while 10% (n=214) earned $125,000-$150,000 per year, and 10% (n=230) earned $100,000-$125,000 per year. A complete listing of participant demographic information is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic information of participants</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Gender
Male 77.7% 1,739
Female 22.2% 498

Age
18-22 0.002% 5
23-29 6.5% 151
30+ 93.3% 2,156

Annual Income
$0-$25,000 0.005% 11
$25,001-$50,000 3.5% 78
$50,001-$75,000 6.2% 138
$75,001-$100,000 9.1% 203
$100,001-$125,000 10.3% 230
$125,001-$150,000 9.5% 214
$150,000+ 42.5% 952
Preferred not to disclose 18.6% 416

Graduate from a 4-year University?
Yes 91.7% 2,039
No 8.2% 184

Level of Education
Completed undergrad/grad degree at the institution 48.8% 1,129
Did not complete undergrad/grad degree at the institution 51.2% 1,183

Fan Identification Levels at Different Age Ranges

Participants were initially asked “At what age did you start following or become a fan of the athletic program?” Among the 2,312 participants the mean age at which they began their affiliation with the athletic program was 14.6 years old ($M=14.60$, $SD=8.94$). Of the 2,312 participants, 72.7% ($n=1,680$) reported that their affiliation began before traditional college-age (18 years old) and 27.3% ($n=632$) began their affiliation after the age of 18. They were then asked to reflect on how they felt about the program at different times of their lives. For five
different age ranges (13 years old and younger, 14-17, 18-22, 23-29, and 30 years or older) participants rated themselves on the same three fan identification statements: “I considered myself a fan of the team”, “I would have felt a loss if I had to give up being a fan of the team”, and “Others recognized that I was a big fan of the team”. They were asked to respond using the following five-point Likert scale: (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (4) Agree, and (5) Strongly Agree. A mean score of the three responses was calculated to give each participant a “Fan Identification Score” at each of the five age ranges. For the purposes of this survey a donor was considered “highly identified” if their average Fan ID score was 4.0 or higher (Agree). See Table 2 for a complete breakdown of Fan ID scores at different age ranges.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fan identification scores by age range</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>13 years old or younger</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly Identified</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
<td>1,062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Highly Identified</td>
<td>52.7%</td>
<td>1,181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>14-17 years old</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly Identified</td>
<td>57.6%</td>
<td>1,290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Highly Identified</td>
<td>42.4%</td>
<td>950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>18-22 years old</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly Identified</td>
<td>85.2%</td>
<td>1,917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Highly Identified</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>23-29 years old</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly Identified</td>
<td>89.1%</td>
<td>2,003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Highly Identified</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>30+</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly Identified</td>
<td>92.3%</td>
<td>1,948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Highly Identified</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Motivating Factors for Initial Fan Identification
Participants were given a list of motivating factors for initial fan identification development and asked to rate “How important were each of the following motives to you when you first began following the institution’s athletic program?” They were asked to respond using the following three-point Likert scale: (1) not important, (2) somewhat important, and (3) very important. The motive with the highest overall mean score was “I attended college at the institution”. See Table 3 for a complete list of the motivating factors for initial fan identification development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivating factors for initial fan identification development</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attended college at the institution</td>
<td>2.65 0.735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team’s success in men’s basketball</td>
<td>2.62 0.598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended a game in person</td>
<td>2.50 0.718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall athletic success of the team</td>
<td>2.46 0.647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic success of the institution</td>
<td>2.35 0.767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National media visibility of the team</td>
<td>2.27 0.732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team’s success in football</td>
<td>2.18 0.699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents were fans of the team</td>
<td>2.07 0.901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Met a coach or player</td>
<td>2.01 0.852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends/peers were fans of the team</td>
<td>1.96 0.737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grew up living close to the institution</td>
<td>1.90 0.794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse/partner is a fan of the team</td>
<td>1.71 0.840</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Scale from (1) not important to (3) very important

The results from the initial fan identification development were further subdivided into demographic subcategories. The first grouping analyzed the differences in motivations for fan identification development between participants who became a fan at age 17 or younger and those that became a fan after the age of 18 (traditional age of a first-year college student). The
next subcategory analyzed the differences in initial motivating factors for fan identification development between males and females. Finally, the last subcategory analyzed featured participants who attended the institution and those who did not attend the institution. For the purposes of this subcategory anyone who responded that they earned their undergraduate or graduate degree at the institution were considered “graduates” (48.8%, n=1,129). All other participants were classified as “non-graduates” (51.2 %, n=1,183). One-way ANOVAs were run to compare differences in group means for each of the motivating factors between these three demographic groups to determine if there were any statistically significant differences. See Tables 4-6 for a complete breakdown of the ANOVA comparisons for initial fan identification development by demographic subcategory.

**Table 4**

*Motivating factors for fan identification by age of initial identification*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motive</th>
<th>Initial ID 17 and under</th>
<th>Initial 18 or older</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended college at the institution*</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>0.770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team’s success in men’s basketball*</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>0.564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended a game in person</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>0.727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall athletic success of the team*</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>0.633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic success of the institution</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>0.775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National media visibility of the team*</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>0.729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team’s success in football*</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>0.693</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parents were fans of the team* 2.22 0.874 1.36 0.653 0.000
Met a coach or player* 2.03 0.855 1.94 0.841 0.050
Friends/peers were fans of the team* 1.99 0.727 1.87 0.758 0.001
Grew up living close to the institution* 1.99 0.790 1.56 0.720 0.000
Spouse/partner is a fan of the team* 1.66 0.836 1.82 0.842 0.002

*Indicates a statistically significant difference of means (p<.05)

Table 5
Motivating factors for fan identification by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motive</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attended college at the institution</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>0.739</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>0.745</td>
<td>0.816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team’s success in men’s basketball*</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>0.584</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>0.621</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended a game in person</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>0.725</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>0.711</td>
<td>0.434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall athletic success of the team*</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>0.637</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>0.655</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic success of the institution*</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>0.779</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>0.720</td>
<td>0.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National media visibility of the team</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>0.734</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>0.722</td>
<td>0.809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team’s success in football*</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>0.688</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>0.701</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents were fans of the team*</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>0.896</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>0.888</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Met a coach or player</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>0.855</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>0.856</td>
<td>0.475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motive</td>
<td>Graduates</td>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Graduates</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended college at the institution*</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>0.591</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>0.934</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team’s success in men’s basketball</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>0.585</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>0.622</td>
<td>0.182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended a game in person</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>0.733</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>0.687</td>
<td>0.126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall athletic success of the team</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>0.653</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>0.634</td>
<td>0.251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic success of the institution*</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>0.759</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>0.777</td>
<td>0.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National media visibility of the team</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>0.732</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>0.732</td>
<td>0.842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team’s success in football</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>0.710</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>0.676</td>
<td>0.332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents were fans of the team</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>0.900</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>0.902</td>
<td>0.075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Met a coach or player*</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>0.851</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>0.843</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends/peers were fans of the team</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>0.730</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>0.749</td>
<td>0.539</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates a statistically significant difference of means (p<.05)
Fan Identification Levels and Effects on Athletic Donor Behavior

Participants were asked to estimate their total lifetime giving to intercollegiate athletics at the institution as well select from a range of choices for how much they donate annually. Of the 1,623 participants who entered their total lifetime giving (they were given the choice to skip the question if they preferred not to answer), the mean of lifetime giving total was $47,437.08 (n=1,623). A total of 2,226 participants answered how much they give annually to the intercollegiate athletic program. See Table 7 for a complete breakdown of annual contributions.

Table 7

Annual contributions to intercollegiate athletics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Contribution</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$0-500</td>
<td>39.5%</td>
<td>897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$501-$2,500</td>
<td>39.6%</td>
<td>881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$2,501-$10,000</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,001-$25,000</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,001-$100,000</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,001-$500,000</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than $500,000</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Each participant was assigned a score based on their selection in the annual giving scale previously mentioned. Participants were assigned a “1” if they chose $0-$500, a “2” if they chose $501-$2,500, and so on through “7” if they chose more than $500,000 per year. The mean score for all highly identified participants was 1.86 which reflects an annual giving level of $500-$2,500 ($D=0.901).

In order to answer the question of whether donors who become highly identified at younger ages have significantly different giving levels (both annually and over their lifetime), participants were given an overall Fan ID score at five different age ranges based on the three-part Fan Identification test taken from James and Trail (2008) and Trail et al. (2003). Donors were considered highly identified if their average score at a specific age range was 4.0 or higher based on a five-point scale: 1) Strongly Disagree, 2) Disagree, 3) Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4) Agree, and 5) Strongly Agree. Each age category was then analyzed to determine at what age the participant became highly identified.

The mean annual giving scores for all of the age categories at which participants became highly identified ranged from 1.81 to 1.97 which reflects the $501-$2,500 annual giving level. As reported earlier, the mean lifetime gift was reported at $47,437.08 but had a very high standard deviation of $154,217.51. The mean lifetime giving amounts for the different age categories at which participants became highly identified ranged from $25,069 to $53,363.

Of the 2,270 respondents who completed this section, 48.6% were highly identified before they turned 14 (n=1,062), 12.2% between age 14-17 (n=276), 27.1% between age 18-22 (n=616), 4.8% between age 23-29 (n=108), 4.0% after the age of 30 (n=91), and 5.2% never rated themselves as highly identified (n=117).
A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of age at which participants became highly identified on annual giving and total lifetime gifts to athletics. There was no significant effect between when donors became highly identified and annual giving at the p<.05 level; F(5, 1,632)= 0.710, p=0.616. There was also no significant effect between when donors became highly identified and total lifetime giving at the p<.05 level; F(5, 1,641)=0.624, p=0.681.

**Annual Giving and Lifetime Gift Effects on Fan Identification Scores**

To answer RQ4 the mean fan identification score for giving level within each age bracket was determined. See Table 8 for a complete list of results.

**Table 8**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fan identification scores for giving level by age category</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age Category</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 or younger</td>
<td>1,630</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-17</td>
<td>1,625</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-22</td>
<td>1,631</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-29</td>
<td>1,626</td>
<td>4.59</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30+</td>
<td>1,508</td>
<td>4.68</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A one-way ANOVA was run to determine if annual giving levels at each age category had a statistically significant effect on fan identification scores. Again, there were no statistically significant effects found on fan identification scores based on annual giving levels at particular age categories. The results of these ANOVAs are listed in the table below.

**Table 9**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fan identification scores effect on annual giving</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age Group</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 years old and younger</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.411</td>
<td>0.872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.490</td>
<td>0.817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-22</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.645</td>
<td>0.694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-29</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.659</td>
<td>0.683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30+</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.771</td>
<td>0.593</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 2,064
Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

Fan Identification Levels at Different Age Ranges

The percentage of participants who rated themselves as highly identified with the institution’s athletic program increased as they got older. Only 47.3% of participants rated themselves as highly identified before they were 14 years old (n=1,062) but by the time they were 30 or older that number grew to 92.3% (n=1,948), increasing at each successive age category. These findings are intriguing because they suggest that as donors get older they tend to become increasingly highly identified. The biggest difference between age categories occurred between the 14-17 year old and 18-22 year old age ranges: 57.6% of participants rated themselves as highly identified between ages 14-17 (n=1,290) but 85.2% (n=1,917) rated themselves highly identified between ages 18-22 (traditional college age). Again, this is not surprising because 48.8% of survey respondents attended the institution as an undergraduate. However, once they attended college the differences in the amount of participants who highly identified between 23-29 years old (89.1%, n=2,003) and 30 years or older (92.3%, n=1,948) were not as significant.

Motivating Factors for Initial Fan Identification

As stated earlier, the mean age at which participants reported that they began their affiliation with the athletic program was 14.6 years old (n=2,312). Of the 2,312 respondents, 72.7% (n=1,680) reported that their affiliation began before traditional college-age (18 years old)
and 27.3% (n=632) began their affiliation after the age of 18. This finding was extremely interesting because the highest scoring factor overall for the initial development of fan identification was “I attended college at the institution” ($M=2.65$, $SD=0.74$). Even though attending college at the institution rated as the most important motivating factor behind initial fan identification, the mean age was still well below the traditional college entrance age of 18 years old. It’s possible that some participants may have begun to follow the institution’s athletic program prior to attending college there, but didn’t consider themselves to be “fans” until they actually enrolled in college at the institution. Of the respondents who identified at age 17 or younger, 75% attended the institution for undergraduate education (n=1,260). Therefore, even though attending college at the institution rated as the most important motivating factor in initial fan identification it seems that a large number of respondents began their affiliation before traditional college-age and eventually enrolled at the institution for their undergraduate education. These findings align with previous research conducted by Stinson and Howard (2010) who found that athletics provide a foundation for a relationship with the institution which often blossoms into attending the institution as a student and, ultimately, supporting the institution’s athletics and academic programs with financial gifts.

After breaking down the results of motivating factors for initial fan identification development into three different demographic categories, one-way ANOVAs were run to determine if there were statistically significant differences in group means. There were numerous statistically significant differences between motivating factors for the groups of donors who initially identified at age 17 or younger versus 18 and older. There was a significant difference in the means for the two age groups for “attended college at the institution”. Donors who began their initial identification after the age of 18 rated this factor significantly higher than those who
first identified at age 17 or younger. This is somewhat surprising considering of the 542 respondents who identified after 18 years old who indicated their education level, only 47.1% (n=255) attended the institution for undergraduate education.

Additionally, donors who identified before college-age rated all of these “team success” motivating factors (“team’s success in basketball, “team’s success in football, and “overall athletic success of the team”) significantly higher than donors who identified after enrolling in college. These findings are similar to previous research which analyzed motivating factors for initial fan identification development. Wann et al. (1996) found that success of the team was one of the most prevalent reasons for initial identification with a team. The results of this comparison highlight the impact that athletics can have on young people, especially when they are exposed to successful athletic programs. Highlighting the success of the team and finding creative ways to expose the athletic program to individuals before they are reach college-age should be vital strategies for athletic administrators and development officers.

Furthermore, “parents were fans of the team”, “friends/peers were fans of the team”, and “grew up living close to the institution” all rated statistically significantly higher for donors who identified before age 17. These factors, which are somewhat out of the individual’s control, influence an individual’s life early on and seem to make a difference on how important they are to initial fan identification. It makes sense that the respondents who began their affiliation before college-age would be influenced by their parents, friends/peers growing up, and geographic proximity to the school. These findings also align with previous research that found that geographical reasons (Jones, 1997) and parental and family influence (Greenwood et al., 2006; Wann et al., 1996) were extremely important motivating factors in initial fan identification.

Offering programs to include children from the surrounding community and creating a family
atmosphere should also be vital to an athletic department’s strategy to reach fans and establish lasting connections.

When comparing group means for the motivating factors of initial fan identification based on gender the results were also telling. Females rated “parents were fans of the team”, “academic success of the institution”, and “spouse/partner is a fan of the team” statistically significantly higher than males. Conversely, males rated “team’s success in men’s basketball”, “teams’ success in football”, and “overall athletic success of the team” (all related to athletic success) significantly higher than females. It seems that females value academic success of the institution higher than males. Additionally, they are more influenced by the people around them (i.e., parents, spouse) when it comes to fan identification.

The differences between genders offer valuable information, especially when trying to segment marketing strategies to particular groups. In order to reach females more effectively athletic programs can promote the academic reputation of the institution to get them to identify with student-athletes individually or with the athletic program as a whole. Also, it could prove useful to host specific events where parents bring their daughters or “couples” events where spouses are involved. These events may create an atmosphere in which females are more likely to identify with an institution or athletic program. On the other hand, it seems that highlighting the athletic success of the program can be extremely effective in influencing males to identify with the athletic program. Both the success of individual teams and the athletic program overall were rated significantly higher as motivating factors for initial fan identification.

Finally, the group means of graduates of the institution versus non-graduates were compared to see if there were statistical differences in motivating factors for fan identification. Non-graduates rated “met a coach or player” and “spouse/partner was a fan of the team”
significantly higher than graduates. This follows the previous findings stated earlier that those who did not attend the institution tend to be influenced by external factors, specifically their spouse or meeting a coach or player from the team, in their initial fan identification.

Graduates of the institution rated “attended college at the institution” and “academic success of the institution” significantly higher than non-graduates. Graduates tend to value the fact that they attended college at the institution and the overall academic reputation of the institution much higher than non-graduates. This result is consistent with previous research conducted by Stinson and Howard (2004) who found that graduates made larger gifts to academics than non-graduates and non-graduates contributed more to athletics than academics. This information can be valuable to athletic departments because the academic side of intercollegiate athletics can sometimes get lost or forgotten. The results of this study suggest that advertising the academic success of student-athletes or the institution as a whole can prove effective in helping individuals identify with the athletic program, especially for those who attended the institution.

**Fan Identification Levels and Effects on Athletic Donor Behavior**

The results from RQ 3 highlight which age categories each participant became highly identified at and the potential effects on their annual giving and total lifetime giving to intercollegiate athletics. A large number (48.6%, n=1,062) became highly identified before they turned 14 years old. However, there were a considerable number of new highly identified fans at the traditional college-age category (18-22 years old) where 27.1% of participants became highly identified (n=616). So while almost a quarter of participants reported that they became highly identified during college, more than half became highly identified prior to the traditional college age of 18 years old.
To examine group mean differences between different donor groups (annual gift and total lifetime giving), an ANOVA test was conducted. The results demonstrated no statistically significant differences between high and low identification scores. In other words, donors who become highly identified with an athletic program early in their lifetime are no more likely to give greater amounts annually or over the course of their lifetime than those who were not highly identified at early life stages. The levels at which they give annually or over their lifetime are random and not statistically predictable.

By combining these two results, the implications for athletic development organizations are noteworthy. Traditional marketing and targeting strategies attempt to get college students and young alumni to attend games and identify with the athletic program by giving them free tickets, giveaways, concessions vouchers/discounts, etc. The amount of resources college athletic departments divert toward these efforts are extremely high. Additionally, giving away free tickets to revenue-generating sports such as football or men’s basketball also hurt athletic development organizations’ efforts to fundraise. The ticket allotments students receive are generally very “good seats” in the lower levels of football bowls or basketball arenas. While the students may pay student fees that go toward those tickets, the amount of money that development organizations could raise by selling those seats is substantial. Not only could they make more money by selling tickets at face value for those seats, they could also include seat leases or minimum annual contributions to reserve those seats in order to raise more money for their intercollegiate athletic program.

The results of this study suggest a large number of donors become highly identified before college and those who do give at the same rates (both annually and over the course of their lifetime) as those who become highly identified in college. Allocating resources to students
and young alumni will remain very important because attending college seems to be a crucial factor in getting an individual to become highly identified and “attending college at the institution” was the highest rated motivating factor for initial fan identification development. However, some of those efforts can and should be redirected at targeting other groups of individuals such as young children, families, and people who did not attend college at the institution.

It is important to remember that 48.8% of participants in this study received an undergraduate or graduate degree from the institution (n=1,129). However, 51.2% did not receive an undergraduate or graduate degree from the institution (n=1,183). These results indicate over half of the athletic donors at the institution did not attend the institution. Athletic departments are remiss if they ignore these groups of donors who, according to this study, are statistically just as likely to give at similar rates annually and over their lifetime based on when they became highly identified. Better efforts should be made to create family experiences, kids’ clubs, and programs aimed at people who did not attend the institution to showcase the success of that athletic program. Additionally, offering exclusive experiences to these groups such as attending games with special ticket deals and meeting current players or coaches are useful tools in order to get individuals to begin an affiliation with an institution’s athletic program and eventually become highly identified.

**Annual Giving and Lifetime Gift Effects on Fan Identification Scores**

RQ 4 analyzed fan identification scores of all participants to see if there were any statistically significant differences in fan identification scores based on annual giving levels at the different age categories. The mean fan identification scores increased and the standard deviations decreased with each successive age category. These findings were consistent with
previous study results that suggested that individuals became more highly identified as they got older. Additionally, the biggest increase between age categories remained between 14-17 years old ($M=3.60, SD=1.47$) and 18-22 years old ($M=4.48, SD=1.09$). As previously stated these findings suggest attending college at the institution is an important factor in becoming highly identified with an institution’s athletic program. After conducting a one-way ANOVA no statistically significant differences were found on fan identification scores based on annual giving levels at different age categories. Athletic donors at all annual giving levels reported similar mean scores for fan identification at all age categories. Once more, these results run parallel to what was found in analyzing RQ 3. It was not possible to predict how someone would score on fan identification tests based on their annual giving levels at particular age categories.

While appealing to college students will remain a common practice for athletic marketing and development organizations, targeting other groups could be just as successful in getting people to highly identify with an athletic program and contribute to intercollegiate athletics. Athletic departments and athletic development organizations that fail to target children, young families, and members of their surrounding communities that did not attend college at the institution (and identified with the athletic program at a young age or later in life) will fail to benefit from significant opportunities to cultivate donors who can give at commensurate annual levels and over the course of their lifetime.

The high levels of resources that are allocated to current students and young alumni can be reduced to start kids’ clubs, offer special ticket prices and opportunities for families, and reach out to people who did not attend college at the institution. Because there are no significant differences in when someone becomes highly identified or how highly they identify at particular age ranges on annual giving or lifetime gifts, it is imperative for athletic departments and athletic
development organizations create a diverse set of programs to target and market to all categories of potential donors in order to successfully fundraise for their intercollegiate athletic programs.

**Future Studies**

Many related studies could be conducted which would make excellent follow-up studies to this thesis. The most logical follow-up would be to replicate this exact study but to include multiple universities to analyze the differences in fan identification and athletic donor behavior. The purpose of this thesis was to determine if there was a way to predict how much someone would give over to athletics annually or over their lifetime based on how highly they identified at particular ages. However, the study was conducted at one large Division I institution that competes in a “Power 5” conference with an extremely successful men’s basketball program. The school also offers football at the Division I level and competes at the national level, though it is not considered an elite program. It is possible there might be differences in fan identification and athletic donor behavior at a “Power 5” Division I school that is considered a “football school”, mid-major Division I universities that offer football and men’s basketball but are not nationally elite programs, or small schools and private colleges that only offer one revenue-generating sport.

In addition, this study investigated the effects of fan identification on athletic donor behavior at an institution that competes at the Division I level. Another potential follow-up study would be to replicate this study and include institutions that compete at the Division II or Division III levels. Perhaps the age at which a donor identifies with a school that competes at one of these intercollegiate levels of athletics would have significant effects on how much they contribute to their athletic programs. It would also be interesting to compare how much their
donors give annually and over the course of their lifetimes to donors who contribute at the Division I level.
REFERENCES


Berkowitz S., Upton J., & Brady E. (2013). NCAA subsidies up $200M in year. *USA Today*, p. 01A.


