

## **Sport Fans and Their Teams' Redesigned Logos: An Examination of the Moderating Effect of Team Identification on Attitude and Purchase Intention of Team-Logoed Merchandise**

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The current study sought to identify the effect of team identification on brand attitude and purchase intention in terms of team logo changes. Doubly Multivariate Analysis of repeated measures, 2 (logo change: original and redesigned logo)  $\times$  3 (team identification: high, moderate, and low), was conducted on attitude toward the brand and purchase intention of team-logoed merchandise. The results showed that there were significant differences between fans with high identification and fans with low identification. The findings of this study can be beneficial for both sport industry practitioners and marketing scholars by providing an understanding of brand attitude and purchase intention related to new redesigned logos based upon different levels of team identification.

Because logo design is one of the most imperative brand elements of a business entity, organizations dedicate a great deal of effort, time, and money in the development, design, and promotion of their logos (Henderson & Cote, 1998). There is almost a ubiquitous logo presence in today's society, with logos appearing in traditional and new media outlets, throughout marketing and advertising endeavors, and on organizations' products and business materials. In fact, money generated from the sale of myriad embroidered logo products (e.g., clothing, caps, accessories) is one of the major revenue sources for many organizations (Walsh, Winterich, & Mittal, 2011). Not surprisingly, for a variety of reasons (e.g., increase market share, attractiveness, relevancy, new

organizational direction) many well-known companies have redesigned their logos, all at an incredible expense in terms of each company's workforce, opportunity costs, and finances. For instance, Pepsi spent \$1 million for its new logo in 2009 (Edwards, 2009) and Xerox invested millions of dollars for its updated logo (Linder, 2008). Because logos require such a major investment on the part of the companies involved, it is prudent for companies with large budgets dedicated to logo redesign to have an understanding of their stakeholders' (e.g., consumers) favorable or unfavorable impressions related to such visual changes (Walsh, Winterich, & Mittal, 2010).

Facing rapid changes and competition, recently many organizations and teams in the sport industry have also attempted to rebrand themselves for reasons such as endeavoring to stay competitive, generate higher profits, or change trends. For instance, in Major League Soccer (MLS), the Kansas City Wizards were renamed Sporting Kansas City. The renaming was accompanied with a new team logo, crest, and uniform design. Other recent rebranding examples are related to teams' relocation. In 2012, the New Jersey Nets of the National Basketball

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Association (NBA) were renamed to Brooklyn Nets, while the Florida Marlins in Major League Baseball (MLB) were changed to the Miami Marlins. Again, this renaming of the two professional teams also involved new logos. Such rebranding efforts relevant to brand equity are obviously considered as a significant module to make a connection between the sport organization and its consumers (Keller, 2005). Moreover, marketing practitioners in the sport industry devote significant resources to create brand association and consumer recognition as well as to increase buying intentions (Fullerton, 2011). These professionals might accomplish this by using rebranding strategies such as changing visual elements (e.g., the revamping in 2012 of the logo, uniform, and helmet of the National Football League's [NFL] Seattle Seahawks) with integrated marketing communications involving advertising, promotion, and Internet marketing endeavors (Walsh et al., 2010).

Given that logo redesign can possibly provide opportunities for enhancing benefits in terms of financial gains and repositioning of brand image, there is a need for sport scholars and practitioners to understand the influence of logo redesign on brand attitude and customers' purchase intentions. Furthermore, in practice, it is known that not all changes bring about good results or success. That is, customers' responses toward the new logo are sometimes significantly different. For instance, after the Tampa Bay Lightning of the National Hockey League (NHL) launched a new logo in 2011, some fans responded in a positive manner to the change, mentioning that the new logo had been updated with a speedy and more powerful look. In contrast, there was also substantial stakeholder criticism of the new logo, with fans commenting that the new redesigned logo did not represent their team in the right way, that the logo was "too plain", and that it looked "boring and unoriginal" (Wyshynski, 2011).

There are many questions that arise whenever team logo redesigns are discussed and researched. For instance, do the fans really like a team's logo change? If some fans like the new logo and others do not, why do fans react differently in terms of logo changes and why do some applaud while others criticize the redesigned logos? Thus, the assumption of the current study was that fans' responses are not just based on whether the new logo looks good, but rather the responses are based on the various levels of the fans' team identification with the franchise instituting the logo change. This assumption was examined both theoretically and empirically in this study of whether there are different reactions to logo changes from fans who have different levels of team identification. Until now, little research has been conducted to analyze the effect of team identification on brand strategy. Therefore, the current study sought to identify the effect of team identification on brand attitude and purchase intention in terms of two different redesigned logos: minor changes (i.e., the Utah Jazz of the NBA) and major changes (i.e., the Golden State Warriors of the NBA). The findings of this study will contribute the body of knowledge by extending the research and literature

pertaining to the relationship between team identification and brand strategy.

## Logo Redesign in Sport Franchises

A logo can be defined as a graphic indicator or feature to promote customers' recognition of the target brand and might be regarded as a significant asset for most organizations and companies (Walsh et al., 2010). Early studies (e.g., Henderson & Cote, 1998) have found that creating a reliable logo could be a key element of brand equity. However, selecting a poor logo design can evoke contrary results related to an organization's image and cause a loss of potential customers (Bird, 1992). Thus, considerable research, time, and investment for high quality logo design and logo redesign may be necessary factors to create brand recognition and maintain brand loyalty, as well as bring other positive effects (Kohli & Suri, 2002). Several scholars have devoted their efforts to providing appropriate directions in terms of logo redesign. For example, Henderson and Cote (1998) suggested several guidelines for selecting and modifying corporations' logos. The scholars analyzed 195 real logos and categorized underlying logo design dimensions: natural, harmony, elaborate, parallel, round, proportion, and repetition. Their findings revealed that moderately elaborate, fairly natural, and harmonious logos enhance logo effect and bring positive evaluation and satisfaction from consumers. In a similar study a few years later, Henderson, Cote, Leong, and Bernd (2003) examined the elements of logo design from the perspective of different cultures (e.g., Singapore, China). The researchers, in finding similar results from both countries when compared with their 1998 research, discovered that three dimensions (i.e., natural, harmony, and elaborate) for both countries evoke an effect (e.g., positive evaluation). More recently, Alshebil (2007) examined consumers' perceptions of rebranding with logo changes and proposed that two dimensions (i.e., degree of logo change and the valence of logo change) have an influence on the coping process of rebranding.

Regarding sport teams, logos are symbolic images or marks by which the franchises want to be perceived (Holt, 1998). Previously, many sport franchises have tried to establish strong brand value by changing their logos and uniforms. For example, in the mid-1990s, more than 25 professional teams announced various redesigned logos and uniforms (Mullin, Hardy, & Sutton, 2007). This trend is still occurring. In 2010, for instance, three NBA teams (i.e., the Utah Jazz, Golden State Warriors, and Orlando Magic) unveiled new logo designs. The Utah Jazz introduced a newly redesigned logo in the 2010–11 season, and presented it affixed to the season's new uniforms. Regarding the rationale used by the team in deciding to change the logo, the team president noted that, "Over the past few years we've heard a resounding sentiment among our fans to bring back the music note. For many fans in the community, it was the logo they grew up watching the Jazz play in" (Lotzia, 2010). The

Golden State Warriors also announced a new logo and color scheme with a redesigned team website, which introduced the organization's history and symbolized the local sport community. The Orlando Magic switched its primary logo for a specific reason as well. According to the team's website, "This new look 'turns the page' on the next chapter in Orlando sport history. As the team and the Magic brand continue to grow, the logo evolves with a stronger, cleaner, more timeless design to match the team's championship ideals" (Kerby, 2010). The logo changes and redesigns do not just happen in professional sports. For example, in college sports, starting with the 2011–12 academic year, the Big Ten Conference announced a newly designed logo, which represents "rich heritage" and "strong tradition" image of the conference (Rittenberg, 2010).

There are some fairly obvious reasons for the rebranding strategy of introducing new or redesigned team logos for sport franchises. One of the main reasons is to increase team merchandising sales. For example, the NFL's San Diego Chargers changed their logo in part to increase the team's logoed merchandise sales (Acee, 2007). This trend relates to recent increase of licensed product industry. In MLB, for example, licensed team merchandise sales reached \$ 3.2 billion in 2011, which increased 8.1% compared with the previous year (Norman, 2012). In addition, NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell mentioned that his league's licensed product sales consist of one fourth of the total NFL revenue (Fager, 2012). Another reason to change a team logo is when the franchise has a new ownership or a new stadium. For example, under new ownership in 2003, the NFL's Atlanta Falcons introduced a new team logo, which was a successful transitional strategy as the new logo featured a meaner and more aggressive appearance compared with the previous logo (Foster, Greyser, & Walsh, 2006). Sometimes, logo (and uniform, color schemes, etc.) changes are used to demarcate a shift from past losing records and poor seasons. For example, in the late 1980s the Baltimore Orioles of MLB put a newly designed logo on their caps to rebuild the team's reputation and affect the perceptions that fans had of the team (Lears, 2011).

In the past, when sport teams have introduced new redesigned logos, one of the concerns for sport marketers has been whether the fans will like the new logo and in turn buy the newly team logoed merchandise. The sport marketers often assumed that the newly logoed merchandise would elicit positive fan reactions in terms of attitudes and increased sales. However, the results varied from extremely negative to extremely positive (Foster, Greyser, & Walsh, 2006). Even though there could be various reasons explaining why fans react differently toward the redesigned logos, a possible explanation may be related to the fans' different levels of team identification. Based on this notion, the following section examined the two important outcomes (i.e., attitude and purchase intention) to evaluate logo change, and the effects of team identification on those outcomes.

## Attitude and Purchase Intention Related to Logo Redesign

Attitude can be defined as "a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor" (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, p. 1). Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) conceptualized attitude as "the amount of affect for or against some object" (p. 6). They argued that attitude toward some object is dependent on beliefs about the object, and eventually determines behavioral intention to the object. It is very likely that specific behavioral intentions lead to specific behaviors in regard to the object (Spears & Singh, 2004). Particularly, consumer behavior researchers have agreed that attitudes are critical part of marketing practice because what consumers think (or feel) about products is significantly related to what consumers will buy in the marketplace (Foxall, Goldsmith, & Brown, 1998). In addition, Mitchell and Olson (1981) explained that attitude toward the brand is consumer's internal evaluation of the brand. For this reason, studies in marketing have been done related to consumer attitudes toward brands, products, companies, stores, and advertising (e.g., Batra & Ahtola, 1991; Keller & Aaker, 1992; Mitchell & Olson, 1981; Spears & Singh, 2004). In the context of sports, attitude-related research has been studied with the concept of team identification. For example, in sponsorship research, Madrigal (2001) reported that attitude toward purchasing a sponsor's products was highly related to level of team identifications. Namely, for highly identified fans, team identification plays a role of heuristic cue in which they are more likely to possess favorable attitude toward buying sponsored products. In research related to team licensed merchandise, Kwon, Kim, and Mondello (2008) found that attitude toward cobranded licensed apparel is affected by different levels of team identification.

Similar to previous research, the current study investigated whether there are differences of brand attitudes related to team logo changes regarding different levels of team identification. In this study, a logo was regarded as a significant element of recognition, which affects the brand value of organization and its main objective. In terms of the relationship between logo evaluation and brand attitude, Walsh et al. (2010) mentioned that logos are a dominant visual element of brand evaluation, which consequently generate brand associations. Thus, consumers' logo evaluations (i.e., positive or negative) affect the consumers' overall attitude toward the brand (i.e., positive or negative). For this reason, Walsh et al. (2010) argued that a redesigned logo influences both the logo evaluation itself and the brand attitude. In addition, Janiszewski and Meyvis (2001) regarded attitude toward the logo as an indicator of forming attitude toward the brand with respect to understand processing fluency and consumer judgment. Based on these past studies, an assumption of the current study was that attitude toward the brand would be a useful indicator of logo evaluation.

Furthermore, as noted by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), the attitudinal theory is related to intentions to behave toward the object. According to these scholars, attitude toward a certain object influences behavioral intentions, which could eventually lead to actual behavior. Studies in sport have supported the consistency of attitude and behavior intention in different contexts such as team-licensing sales (e.g., Kwon et al., 2008), sponsorship (e.g., Irwin, Lachowetz, Cornwell, & Clark, 2003; Madrigal, 2001), and media usage (e.g., Mahony & Moorman, 2000). In summary, the studies constantly supported the notion that fans with high identification are more likely to possess positive attitudes toward team-related products (e.g., team licensed merchandises, team sponsored products), which consequently lead to positive behavioral intention of them. However, in this study, an inquiry was made regarding the following question: Do fans with different levels of team identification provide the consistency between attitude toward the brand associated with logos (i.e., original and redesigned team logo) and purchase intention of the team logoed merchandise (i.e., original and redesigned team logoed merchandise)? To investigate this multifaceted question the concept of team identification must be established. Therefore, the next section defines and explains this concept in relation to logos.

### Effect of Team Identification on Logo Redesign

Team identification, according to Wann, Melnick, Russell, and Pease (2001), refers to “the extent to which fan feels psychologically connected to a team” (p. 3). The concept of team identification is derived from social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Different from personal identity, which investigate idiosyncratic difference of a specific individual such as abilities and interest, social identity theory is focused on the group identification which is based on an individual’s knowledge of a social group such as similar values and emotional attachment to the group (Tajfel, 1982). For example, members of the group make comparisons among and distinctions between their group’s and other social groups’ values and norms. The group members are more likely to show favorable attitudes toward their group’s values and norms while at the same time having biased attitudes against other groups (Hogg & Abrams, 1999). This notion is well applicable to sport fans, in which highly identified fans—when compared with lower identified fans—are more likely to show favoritism toward their team (Wann & Branscombe, 1993).

Over the past several decades, numerous sport marketing researchers have investigated team identification within various contexts and found that different levels of team identification toward a team cause various affective, cognitive, and behavioral outcomes (e.g., Fink, Parker, Brett, & Higgins, 2009; Fisher & Wakefield, 1998; Kwon, Trail, & James, 2007; Madrigal, 2000, 2001, 2003; Madrigal & Chen, 2008; Walker & Kent,

2009; Wann & Branscombe, 1993; Williamson, Zhang, Pease, & Gaa, 2003). For example, highly identified fans express strong positive reactions toward winning games and negative reactions toward games that their team lost (Madrigal, 2003). Highly identified fans are more likely to show strong negative reactions to losses by their favorite team and intense positive responses to their team’s wins, whereas lower identified fans did not report any significant differences in emotion in terms of game outcomes (Wann, 1994). Similar to Wann’s study, other studies (e.g., Bizman & Yinon, 2002) also confirmed the same pattern of fan’s different emotional attachment to the team based on different levels of team identification. Madrigal and Chen (2008) found that team identification moderates fans’ attribution responses to game outcomes (i.e., self-serving bias toward their favorite team). In addition, compared with lower identified fans, fans with high identification reported different behavioral responses toward their favorite teams such as frequently attending games of their favorite teams and buying team merchandise (Wann et al., 2001). In addition, highly identified fans exhibit increased consumption behaviors toward their favorite teams. For example, they are more likely to attend games (Wann & Branscombe, 1993; Williamson et al., 2003) as well as watch mediated games and purchase team merchandise (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998; Kwon et al., 2008; Kwon et al., 2007).

In Psychological Continuum Model (PCM), Funk and James (2001) mentioned that fans in the stage of allegiance are more likely to show a “tendency to resist change in response to conflicting information or experience” (p. 136). Those fans possessed strong connections with teams and their stakeholders and properties (e.g., tradition, stadium, players, coaches) and are usually reluctant to change them. In the same context, team logos could be a key component for loyal sport fans to identify their favorite teams and connect fans’ memories of the teams. Therefore, changing a team logo could hurt the previous connection between the highly identified fans and the respective teams. However, it would be assumed that fans with low team identification will react differently to logo changes. It could be expected that changing a team logo could attract lower levels of loyal fans, and could consequently lead to positive attitudes toward the brand. Previous studies have shown that lower identified fans are more likely to be attracted by novel experiences (e.g., new stadium, special events, give-away promotion, price discounts; Funk & James, 2001). Thus, in the current study, it was expected that when a team logo is changed, the different levels of team identification would have a different effect on attitudes toward the brand. Namely, it was postulated that there would be a significant interaction between different levels of fan identification and attitude toward the brand in original and redesigned logos. Regarding segmentation of team identification, recent studies divided team identification into either two-group segmentations (i.e., high and low; e.g., Walker & Kent, 2009) or three-group segmentations (i.e., high, moderate, and low; e.g., Kwon et al., 2008). In this study, the researchers used three-group segmentation

analysis because it was expected that there should be meaningful differences among three groups in terms of effects on attitude and purchase intention related to the logo changes. The argument above led to the following hypothesis:

H1: Team identification will be a moderating factor between logo change and attitude toward brand. The brand attitude for highly identified fans will be declined after a team changes its logo, whereas the brand attitude for lowly identified fans and moderately identified fans will be increased after a team changes its logo.

Another concern in this study related to purchase intention of new logo merchandise. If a team releases new logoed merchandise, are fans willing to buy the merchandise? Is there a different reaction between fans with low and high team identification regarding new logo merchandise? It is not surprising that there is a strong relationship between team identification and team merchandise purchases, because it has been proven by previous studies (e.g., Kwon & Armstrong, 2002; Kwon et al., 2007; Mahony & Howard, 1998; Wakefield, 1995; Wann, 2006). For instance, Wann and Branscombe (1993) found that highly identified fans are more likely to stay loyal to the team even though the team's performance is poor. A few years later Fisher and Wakefield (1998) found that fans with high identification often showed high game attendance and purchasing licensed products regardless of team's performance. Furthermore, studies by Madrigal (2000, 2001) revealed that as fans' levels of identification toward a team increase, the favorable purchase intentions are also more likely to be increased. More recently, Kwon et al. (2008) investigated the moderating effect of different team identification on the manufacturer brand, noting that fans with high team identification did not concern manufacturer brand compared with fans with moderate and low team identification. Combining all the findings and perspectives, Lee and Trail (2011, 2012) developed a theoretical model of team-licensed merchandise purchasing, which includes team identification as one of critical antecedents to explain potential team-product buying behavior. Following in line with this finding, the assumption behind the current study was that fans with high levels of team identification would be more likely to purchase new logoed team merchandise regardless of their preference of the new logo. Therefore, based on arguments above, this is the second hypothesis proposed:

H2: Purchase intentions for highly identified fans will be increased after a team changes its logo, whereas purchase intentions for lowly identified fans and moderately identified fans will not be changed after a team changes its logo.

## Method

To test the effect of a redesigned logo on attitude toward the brand and purchase intention of team logoed merchandise, two NBA teams were selected (i.e., the Utah

Jazz and Golden State Warriors), which recently changed their team logos. To measure the genuine redesigned logo effect in the "real world", it is important to use actual redesigned logos rather than fictional ones. The two NBA team logos were used in different ways. First, the logo for the Utah Jazz only involved minor changes (see Figure 1). Second, the logo for the Golden State Warriors involved major changes (see Figure 2). Because the Jazz logo was only slightly changed, a pretest ( $n=30$ ) was conducted to confirm whether the change between the original logo and the revised logo was significantly noticeable. Respondents perceived significant changes between the previous and redesigned logos ( $p < .01$ ).

## Sample

Data were collected from convenience sampling method with an online survey tool known as Survey Monkey. The sample of this study was selected from message board users provided by different sports websites (i.e., ESPN.com and Yahoo! Sports). The subjects were able to access the URL of survey questionnaire which posted on each message boards during a three week period (the same year when the teams introduced the newly redesigned logos). On the new media sport websites, an invitation message was posted that included the online survey link. If the participants agreed to participate and clicked the attached link, it was directly accessed to the online survey questionnaire. The participants were randomly assigned to a survey related to the logos for either the Utah Jazz or the Golden State Warriors. Each participant was given either a questionnaire related to the Jazz or the Warriors. First, the participants were exposed to an original logo. After viewing the logo, they answered the questions related to team identification, attitude toward the brand, and purchase intention of original team-logoed merchandise (i.e., evaluation of original logo exposure). Next, participants



Figure 1 — Utah Jazz logo with minor changes.

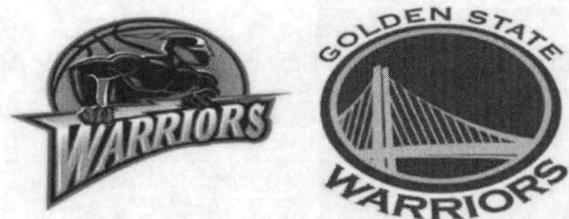


Figure 2 — Golden State Warrior logo with major changes.

viewed the redesigned logo, and then completed the questions related to attitude toward the brand and purchase intention of redesigned team-logoed merchandise (i.e., evaluation of redesigned logo exposure). Finally, they provided demographic information including gender and ethnicity. A total of 353 subjects responded to the questionnaire. Among them, only 264 questionnaires provided useable data in this study. Among the subjects used in this study, 64% of the respondents were males and 84% of the respondents were White/Caucasian. The majority of the respondents (98%) ranged between 19 and 34 years of age, which is typical for sport fans and internet users (Fullerton, 2011).

## Measures

The questionnaire included scales for attitude toward the brand, purchase intention of team-logoed merchandise, and team identification. The scale of attitude toward the brand was measured with three items using a seven-point Likert scale (bad/good, unfavorable/favorable, and unsatisfactory/satisfactory), which was originally developed by Bruner and Hensel (1992) and has been used in other studies (e.g., Goldsmith, Lafferty, & Newell, 2000; Lin, Wang, & Chen, 2008; Tsai, 2007). An example of an attitude item is, "Please rate your overall impression toward the Utah Jazz brand." The scale of purchase intention of team merchandise was also evaluated by three items using a seven point Likert scale (very unlikely/very likely, improbable/probable, and impossible/possible), which was modified from Yi's study (1990). An example of a purchase intention item is, "Please rate how likely you will consider buying team-logoed Utah Jazz products."

To measure team identification, the study used the Sport Spectator Identification Scale (SSIS) by Wann

and Branscombe (1993), which consisted of seven items with an eight-point Likert scale. Examples of questions within the modified version of the SSIS used in this study include "How strongly do you see yourself as a fan of Utah Jazz (or Golden State Warriors)" and "How strongly do your friends see you as fan of Utah Jazz (or Golden State Warriors)." As previously mentioned, the study used a three-group segmentation of team identification. Wann et al. (2001) mentioned SSIS can be used to differentiate three levels of team identification, dividing by the sum of seven scale score (i.e., less than 18, 18–35, and higher than 35). Based on this recommendation, the mean score of team identification was divided into the following three groups: 1–3 (low team identification), 4–5 (moderate team identification), and 6–8 (high team identification). The reliabilities of the scales were measured with Cronbach's alpha: attitude toward the brand (.91), purchase intention of team-logoed merchandise (.94), and team identification (.93). All scales exceeded the recommended value of .70 (Nunnally, 1978).

## Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 20.0. Doubly Multivariate Analysis of repeated measures, 2 (logo change: original logo and redesigned logo)  $\times$  3 (team identification: high, moderate, and low), was conducted on attitude toward the brand and purchase intention of team-logoed merchandises. Tables 1 and 2 include the means and standards deviations for the two dependent variables (i.e., attitude toward the brand and purchase intention of team-logoed merchandises) for the two different logos (i.e., original and redesigned).

**Table 1 Means and Standard Deviations of Attitude and Purchase Intention (Utah Jazz)**

Team Identification	Low <i>n</i> = 39		Moderate <i>n</i> = 33		High <i>n</i> = 60	
	Original	Redesigned	Original	Redesigned	Original	Redesigned
Attitude	3.16 (1.48)	4.31 (1.50)	3.86 (1.60)	4.36 (1.45)	5.46 (1.57)	5.13 (1.65)
Purchase Intention	3.79 (1.62)	4.12 (1.52)	4.90 (1.48)	4.92 (1.41)	5.08 (1.35)	5.73 (1.23)

**Table 2 Means and Standard Deviations of Attitude and Purchase Intention (Golden State Warriors)**

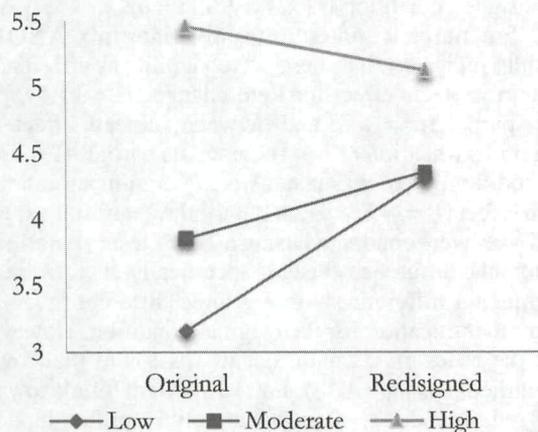
Team Identification	Low <i>n</i> = 33		Moderate <i>n</i> = 40		High <i>n</i> = 59	
	Original	Redesigned	Original	Redesigned	Original	Redesigned
Attitude	3.12 (1.81)	3.47 (1.30)	4.40 (1.56)	3.66 (1.59)	5.56 (1.68)	3.75 (1.84)
Purchase Intention	3.17 (1.53)	4.18 (1.97)	4.09 (1.38)	5.10 (1.27)	4.03 (2.05)	5.55 (1.75)

## Results

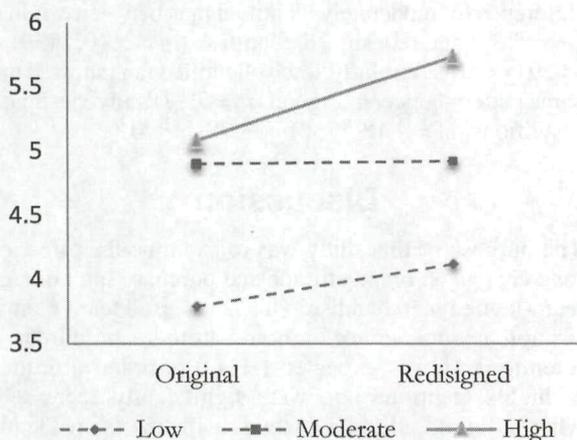
The information provided below first details the results related to the NBA's Utah Jazz, which focused on the minor logo changes. Next, the results for the major changes to the logo of the NBA's Golden State Warriors are presented.

### Utah Jazz Logo With Minor Changes

In the minor changes to the logo of the NBA's Utah Jazz, the main effects of team identification (Wilks's Lambda = .70,  $F = 12.77$ ,  $p < .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .17$ ) and logo change (i.e., original and redesigned logos; Wilks's Lambda = .93,  $F = 5.06$ ,  $p < .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .07$ ) were statistically significant. The interaction between team identifications and logo change was also statistically significant (Wilks's Lambda = .80,  $F = 7.45$ ,  $p < .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .10$ ; see Figure 3 and 4).



**Figure 3** — Interaction between logo change and team identification on attitude toward the brand (Utah Jazz).



**Figure 4** — Interaction between logo change and team identification on purchasing intention (Utah Jazz).

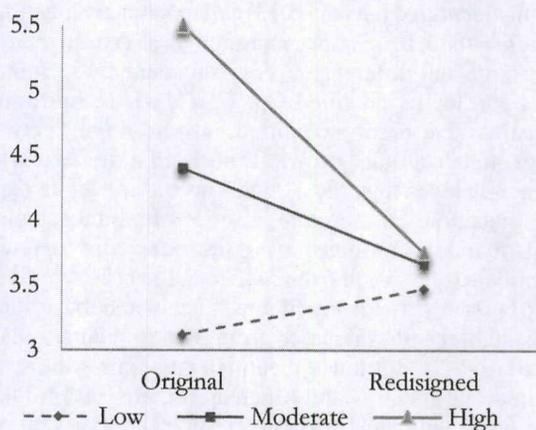
Two follow-up univariate mixed Analyses of Variance (one for each dependent variable) were calculated. For attitude toward the brand, there were significant differences within subjects effect for the logo change ( $F = 8.61$ ,  $p < .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .06$ ) and between subjects effect for team identification ( $F = 19.08$ ,  $p < .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .23$ ). In addition, there was a statistically significant interaction effect ( $F = 9.57$ ,  $p < .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .13$ ). Post hoc analyses were conducted using a Tukey test to determine where the mean differences existed. Specifically, for the original condition, the results indicated that there were significant differences between highly identified fan ( $m = 5.46$ ) and lowly identified fan ( $m = 3.16$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and between highly identified fan ( $m = 5.46$ ) and moderately identified fan ( $m = 3.86$ ,  $p < .01$ ). However, there was no significant difference found between moderately identified fans and lowly identified fans ( $p = n.s.$ ). For the redesigned condition, the results found significant differences between highly identified fan ( $m = 5.13$ ) and lowly identified fan ( $m = 4.31$ ,  $p = .03$ ) and between highly identified fan ( $m = 5.13$ ) and moderately identified fan ( $m = 4.35$ ,  $p = .06$ ) at a marginal level. Again, there is no significant difference between moderately identified fans and lowly identified fans ( $p = n.s.$ ). These results illustrate that highly identified fans are more likely to have higher attitudes toward the Utah Jazz logo with minor changes than those with low and moderate team identification. Furthermore, a series of paired sample  $t$  tests found that attitude toward the redesigned logo was significantly reduced from 5.46 to 5.13 ( $t(59) = 1.51$ ,  $p < .01$ ) for highly identified fans, meanwhile the attitude was significantly increased from 3.16 to 4.31 ( $t(38) = -3.63$ ,  $p < .01$ ) for lowly identified fans. In addition, the attitude was significantly increased from 3.86 to 4.35 for moderately identified fans ( $t(32) = -2.50$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

For purchase intention of team-logoed merchandise, results indicated that there were also significant differences within subjects effect for logo change ( $F = 5.35$ ,  $p < .02$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .04$ ) and between subjects effect for team identifications ( $F = 18.42$ ,  $p < .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .22$ ). However, there was no significant interaction effect ( $F = 1.69$ ,  $p = .19$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .025$ ). Post hoc analyses were conducted using a Tukey test to determine where the mean differences existed. Specifically, for the original condition, there were significant differences between lowly identified fans ( $m = 3.79$ ) and moderately identified fans ( $m = 4.90$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and between lowly identified fans ( $m = 3.79$ ) and highly identified fans ( $m = 5.08$ ,  $p < .01$ ). However, no significant difference was found between moderately identified fans and highly identified fans ( $p = n.s.$ ). For the redesigned condition, highly identified fans showed significantly higher attitude ( $m = 5.73$ ) toward the redesigned logo than moderately identified fans ( $m = 4.92$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and lowly identified fans ( $m = 4.11$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Paired sample  $t$  tests found that there were no significant attitude difference between original and redesigned logo for moderately identified fans ( $t(32) = -.084$ ,  $p = n.s.$ ) and lowly identified fans ( $t(38) = -1.33$ ,  $p = n.s.$ ) respectively, whereas there was a significant attitude difference found for highly identified fans ( $t(59) = -2.87$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

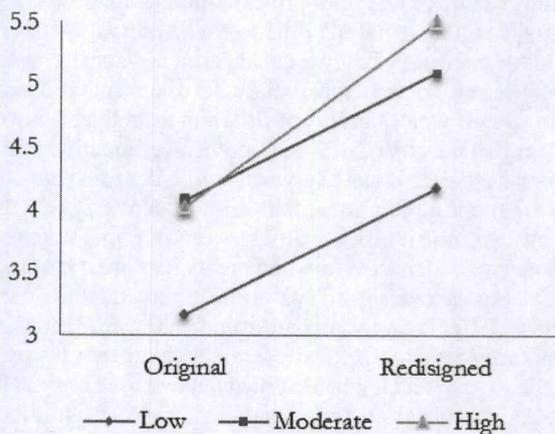
## Golden State Warriors Logo With Major Changes

While the previous study examined minor logo changes, this study involved the major logo changes pertaining to the Golden State Warriors. The main effects of team identification (Wilks's Lambda = .84,  $F = 5.68$ ,  $p < .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .08$ ) and logo change (i.e., original and redesigned logos; Wilks's Lambda = .67,  $F = 31.60$ ,  $p < .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .33$ ) were statistically significant. The interaction between team identification and logo change was also statistically significant (Wilks's Lambda = .80,  $F = 7.37$ ,  $p < .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .10$ ; see Figures 5 and 6).

Two follow-up univariate mixed Analyses of Variance ANOVAs (one for each dependent variable) were calculated. For attitude toward the brand, results showed that there was a significant differences within subjects



**Figure 5** — Interaction between logo change and team identification on attitude toward the brand (Golden State Warriors).



**Figure 6** — Interaction between logo change and team identification on purchasing intention (Golden State Warriors).

effect for logo change ( $F = 9.97$ ,  $p < .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .07$ ) and between subjects effect for team identification ( $F = 8.70$ ,  $p < .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .12$ ). In addition, significant interaction effect was found ( $F = 18.12$ ,  $p < .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .22$ ). Post hoc analyses were conducted using a Tukey test to determine where the mean difference existed. To be specific, for the original condition, there were significant differences between highly identified fans ( $m = 5.55$ ) and moderately identified fans ( $m = 4.40$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and between highly identified fans ( $m = 5.55$ ) and lowly identified fans ( $m = 3.12$ ,  $p < .01$ ) respectively. However, for the redesigned condition, no significant differences among three groups were found. Paired sample  $t$  tests found that there were significant attitude difference for highly identified fans between original condition ( $m = 5.5$ ) and redesigned condition ( $m = 3.74$ ,  $t(58) = -8.86$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Similarly, a significant difference was found for moderately identified fans between original condition ( $m = 4.40$ ) and redesigned condition ( $m = 3.66$ ,  $t(39) = -2.29$ ,  $p < .01$ ). However, there was no significant difference for lowly identified fans between original condition and redesigned condition ( $t(32) = .96$ ,  $p = n.s.$ ).

For purchase intention, univariate mix ANOVA results indicated that there were significant differences within subjects effect for logo change ( $F = 11.49$ ,  $p < .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .08$ ) and between subjects effect for team identification ( $F = 4.08$ ,  $p < .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .06$ ). In addition, there was a statistically significant interaction effect ( $F = 24.86$ ,  $p < .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .09$ ). Post hoc analyses were conducted using a Tukey test to determine where the difference existed. Specifically, there were no significant differences among three different levels of team identification for the original condition. However, for the redesigned condition, it was found that lowly identified fans ( $m = 4.18$ ) showed a lower attitude toward the redesigned logo than moderately identified fans ( $m = 5.10$ ,  $p = .06$ ) at a marginal level and highly identified fans ( $m = 5.55$ ,  $p < .01$ ) respectively. A series of paired sample  $t$  tests found that there was a significant mean difference for highly identified fans between previous ( $m = 4.03$ ) and redesigned conditions ( $m = 5.55$ ,  $t(58) = -6.64$ ,  $p < .01$ ). In addition, there was a significant mean difference for moderately identified fans between original ( $m = 4.09$ ) and redesigned condition ( $m = 5.10$ ,  $t(39) = -4.59$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Similarly, lowly identified fans showed the same pattern between original ( $m = 3.17$ ) and redesigned conditions ( $m = 4.18$ ,  $t(32) = -3.28$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

## Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of logo change on brand attitude and purchase intention of team-logoed merchandise. This study used team identification as a moderator on brand attitude and purchase intention. As was expected (H1), the brand attitudes of highly identified fans were significantly decreased, whereas brand attitudes of fans with low team identification were significantly increased. This finding was

consistent with previous research conducted by Walsh et al. (2010), which identified how the role of brand commitment affects consumers' responses to logo redesign. Walsh et al. found that strongly committed consumers had negative attitudes toward the redesigned logos (i.e., moderately redesigned logo and considerably redesigned logo), but weakly committed consumers had positive attitudes toward the redesigned logos.

In comparison with Walsh et al. (2010), the findings of the current study extended to the idea that highly identified fans are more likely to have negative feedback on changes to the teams' properties (e.g., logo, uniform, crest, tradition, players, coaches) than lowly identified fans. Our findings also supported the notion that highly identified fans are more likely to maintain their existing attitudes toward their beliefs by refuting counter-attitudinal information (Ahluwalia 2000, Chao, Wüher, & Werani 2005; Tannenbaum 1968). In addition, highly identified fans might be unwilling to accept the changes regardless of the degree (e.g., minor, major) of logo changes whereas lowly identified fans are less sensitive to logo changes. Therefore, highly identified fans should be consulted and their opinions and input need to be solicited whenever a logo redesign is being considered or processed.

On the other hand, brand attitudes of moderately identified fans provided different results in the minor (i.e., Utah Jazz) and major (i.e., Golden State Warrior) redesigned logos. In the minor redesigned logo, the brand attitudes for the moderately identified fans were significantly different from original logo to redesigned logo. In contrast, in the major redesigned logo, the brand attitudes for moderately identified fans were negatively transformed from original logo to redesigned logo. Thus, it could be concluded that moderately identified fans will form favorable attitude toward minor logo changes, which is relatively consistent with its previous logo design and falls within some degree of latitude regarding acceptance. However, in the major redesigned logo condition, their attitudes might be different in a negative direction because their attitudinal positions fall into the latitude of rejection, thus negatively affected their attitudes. Sport marketers and advertisers should be aware that drastic changes of an original logo might not be a winning strategy for moderately identified fans.

Regarding purchase intention of team-logoed merchandise, the result showed that team identification can be a moderator in changing purchase intention related to logo redesign. As was expected (H2), the purchase intentions of highly identified fans were significantly increased with both the minor and major redesigned logos. However, the results of lower identified and moderately identified fans' purchasing intentions were not consistent; those results were insignificant in minor redesigned logo but were significant in major redesigned logo. Such findings were supported by previous studies as the high level of team identification is one of significant indicators in predicting positive behavioral intentions (Mahony et al., 2002; Williamson et al., 2003).

Another interesting finding of the current study involves the discrepancy between brand attitude and purchase intention in terms of the redesigned logos. Specifically, even though highly identified fans in the both minor and major redesigned logos indicated negative attitudes regarding the redesigned logo, they showed positive intentions in buying team merchandise with the redesigned logo regardless of the magnitude of the logo redesign. This result contradicts the assumption of consistency between attitude and behavior intention supported by previous studies (e.g., Spears & Singh, 2004). For example, Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) found that attitude toward a certain object influenced behavioral intentions, which could eventually lead to actual behavior. However, the findings of the current study indicate that there was no such positive relationship between attitudes and behavioral intentions in terms of highly identified fans. Opposite to negative attitude toward the new logo, the purchase intentions of highly identified fans were significantly increased (i.e., positive purchase intention). This discrepancy could be explained that although the fans' attitudes toward the redesigned logo decreased in the minor (i.e., Utah Jazz) and major (i.e., Golden State Warrior) redesigned logos, fans with high identification try to maintain their psychological balance by continuously purchasing merchandises with redesigned logo in both conditions.

Namely, highly identified fans tend to maintain their existing attitudes by adjusting their behaviors to avoid cognitive dissonance state. It could be explained that highly identified fans have no choice but to simply purchase items with redesigned logo to maintain their existing attitudes toward their team. This result also supported previous findings which noted that highly identified fans show their attachment to team brands, purchasing team merchandises (Kwon & Armstrong, 2002; Mahony & Howard, 1998; Wakefield, 1995, Wann & Branscombe, 1993), and highly involved fans are more likely to engage themselves with their team, while they tend to resist to changes with teams and their properties (Funk & James 2001). These findings can be clearly explained by cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger 1957). Based on cognitive dissonance theory (Heider, 1958), highly identified fans could experience psychologically uncomfortable state coming from the existence of contradictory or dissonant relations among cognitive elements. Past literature has found that people tend to accept pro-attitudinal information to protect their existing attitude, while denying counter-attitudinal information (Chao et al., 2005; Cummings & Venkatesan, 1976; Tannenbaum, 1968). Similarly, highly involved fans have at times an irrevocable commitment to their teams. Because they have firmly-rooted attitudes toward their teams and their properties, they tend to negate counter-attitudinal information.

However, not all highly identified fans are successful in refuting the counter-attitudinal information, particularly when the source of information is highly credible

and trustworthy (Ahluwalia 2000, Chao et al., 2005; Tannenbaum, 1968). Nonetheless, they are likely to show favorably biased attitudes toward their existing beliefs by selectively exposing themselves to pro-attitudinal messages or intentionally ignore counter-attitudinal messages. Factors such as content, its level of repetition, and the consumers' ability to counterargue it determine the extent to which how they refute the source of information. Biased memory research might help highly identified fans support their desired conclusion and make them more critical to the validity of counter-attitudinal messages (Ahluwalia 2000).

When it is difficult to simply refute negative information, highly identified fans may choose to give less weight to the attribute that was negatively influenced by counter-attitudinal information, while giving more weight to attitude-consistent information (Ahluwalia, 2000). In the end, when highly identified fans have to accept counter-attitudinal information, they try to minimize the negative spillover effects by separating each relevant attribute that is influenced by negative information from other unrelated attributes. This psychological defense mechanism protects existing attitudes from negative messages by restraining spillover effect to other unrelated attributes (Ahluwalia, 2000). Therefore, in the current study, it could be explained that highly identified fans might purchase redesigned team-logoed merchandise to maintain their preexisting attitudes toward the team.

## Implications and Limitations

The findings of this study can be beneficial for both sport industry practitioners and marketing scholars by providing understanding of brand attitude and purchase intention of new designed logo upon different levels of team identification. First of all, one implication of the study is that sport practitioners need to be careful when thinking about—and when changing—their logos. They may assume that a new logo could enhance strong brand attitude and increase potential merchandise sales. However, this study indicated that this assumption is only partially correct. Sport marketing professionals should not ignore that dramatic changes of the logo could hurt even a loyal fan base. Even though the results showed that fans with high identification have strong potential to purchase new logoed team merchandise, it is important to note that their attitudes toward the logo itself are not always positive. One of major revenue sources for professional teams depends on how much money loyal fans spend on purchases such as buying season tickets and team merchandise (Fullerton, 2011). As such it is critical for sport marketers to find out how they can implement a team logo change while also diminishing any negative responses from loyal fans.

A possible approach might be that through using various communication channels, sport industry practitioners can provide an opportunity for fans to participate in the

process of logo change. For example, emails including a survey questionnaire can be delivered to season ticket holders asking them to select their favorite team logo among several potential new logos, so that fans understand that they have input (e.g., buy in) into the process of team logo change. With this process, loyal fans would anticipate the team's intention to change its logo in advance, and this effort may reduce potential backlash from loyal fans related to the announcement of a new logo. Eventually, these strategies can possibly maintain or foster positive relationships between team and fans. In addition, it is important to note for sport practitioners that teams with strong fan bases such as the Montreal Canadiens and New York Yankees have not significantly changed their traditional logos for many decades. This could be interpreted that these teams would maintain their logos, so fans from different generations can easily recognize their logo and feel a sense of belonging to the team. A conundrum facing sport practitioners would be deciding whether they want to sell more team logoed merchandise to diverse fans even though there is uncertainty if the loyal fans do not like their new logo. For sport scholars, this study provides a reliable and valid framework to understanding the role of team identification as a moderator on both brand attitude and behavioral intention. In addition, the suggested idea was based upon the results of previous research (e.g., Walsh et al., 2010) and provided the rationale to comprehend the effects of team identification on sport fans' attitudes and purchase intentions.

However, there are several limitations that need to be addressed in future research along this line of inquiry. First, the stimulus logos in the current study featured only two teams and one sport (e.g., basketball [NBA]). It is suggested that sport scholars develop more reliable and valid measures with different circumstances. For instance, future studies should be conducted with different brand logos from various sport teams and organizations as well as a variety of degree of logo change (e.g., major/moderate/minor of logo changes, similarity of new/old logo changes). It is important to note that some sport teams introduced new logos which are very similar to old logo. For example, the redesigned Golden State Warriors logo (2012) looks fairly similar to the team's old-time logo (1969–1970). Future researchers could also investigate the effect of similarity of new logo and old logo, which could enhance previous fans' purchasing intentions of team-logoed merchandise. Along with the similarity of the logos, the recent changes of the logos might have influenced the respondents' attitudes and purchase intentions in this study. This study was conducted the same year that the Utah Jazz and Golden State Warriors introduced their newly redesigned logos. Therefore, these new logos were exposed through to media (e.g., Internet, TV, print) and were issued among fans, all of which may have consequently affected the respondents' perceptions of the new logos. While it is difficult to control for external factors, it is suggested that scholars consider using an extended timeline or longitudinal approach when conducting future studies in this area.

Second, researchers examining this topic in the future should expand their investigations beyond team identification and into other variables that may have an impact on attitudes and purchase intentions related to logo change. For example, the aesthetics perspective of the logo design (e.g., roundness, angularity) could be a significant variable related to attitudes and potential purchasing intentions as fans may have different responses to logo shapes and designs. Research has provided that roundedness is associated with approachableness, friendliness, and harmony (Berlyne, 1971), whereas angularity is associated with energy, toughness, and strength. Even though there most likely is no right answer regarding which shape or design is necessarily better than the other, sport fans may very well differentiate and perceive a change based on differences in the angularity and roundness of a logo. This research could give guideline for team marketers in their development of strategies related to logo changes. Lastly, a study limitation in terms of generalizability was the focus on securing samples from sports blogs and forums. Therefore, it is suggested that different samples (e.g., season ticket holders, half season ticket holders, premium ticket holders, single ticket buyers) should be examined for future research to better understand effect of logo change on attitudes and purchase intentions.

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