

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA GRADUATE COLLEGE

BUILDING BONDS THROUGH NAME, IMAGE, AND LIKENESS:
ORGANIZATION-PUBLIC RELATIONSHIPS IN THE NEW ERA OF COLLEGE SPORTS

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By ELIZABETH S. COX

Norman, Oklahoma

2025

BUILDING BONDS THROUGH NAME, IMAGE, AND LIKENESS:
ORGANIZATION-PUBLIC RELATIONSHIPS IN THE NEW ERA OF COLLEGE SPORTS

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
GAYLORD COLLEGE OF JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION

BY THE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF

Dr. Jensen Moore, Chair

Dr. Glenn Leshner

Dr. David Craig

Dr. Daniel Larson

Dedication

To those who fostered my love of learning –

Lydia “Mother” Reiber Harris, Sandy “Grams” Cox, and Helen “Grandma” Brite –
smart and caring women whose lives were rooted in learning, storytelling, and quiet strength.

This dissertation is a reflection of the curiosity you sparked in me.

Acknowledgements

I want to express my gratitude to those who made this journey possible, bearable, and even fun. I would like to thank my chair, Dr. Jensen Moore, who has served as a teacher, collaborator, and mentor. Whether it be through constructive feedback of work, patient and kind responses to panicked emails, or genuine care of my wellbeing, her mentorship shaped who I am as a scholar and educator. I am honored to continue her legacy at my next institution.

I also want to extend my appreciation to the rest of my committee - Dr. Glenn Leshner, Dr. David Craig, and Dr. Daniel Larson. They each contributed time, not only in this document, but also in my education. This piece is better because of their expertise and guidance.

I want to give my heartfelt thanks to my family. My mom answered daily calls with a ready ear, and my dad offered a steady reminder to keep pushing forward. Together, they grounded me and surrounded me with love. I'm grateful for my brother Trey and sister-in-law Logan, who offered an escape through calls, texts, and visits. My nephew, Trax, offered an unwavering optimism – especially when he told me, “Everything’s going to be fine, Auntie.”

Tarryn and Shannon, from their respective locations in Nebraska and New York, offered a calming presence and supportive tone. Thank you to the friends and colleagues who showed up for me here at OU—especially Casey, Amanda, Jessica, Leslie, SunHa, Vishala, and Alex. An extra special thanks to my friend and collaborator Kyra, who celebrated every win with me. Words can't capture your impact, so all I'll say is: #HornsDown.

I also want to thank my students here at OU. This document has been shaped by the lessons you've taught me and the discussions you've fostered.

To end, I want to thank Ruthie and Diva, the best roommates and co-authors ever.

Table of Contents

Dedication	iv
Acknowledgements	v
List of Tables	ix
List of Figures	xvi
Abstract	xviii
Chapter 1: Introduction and Background	1
Purpose of the Study	1
Conceptual Framework	2
Overview of Research Questions & Hypotheses	2
Significance of Study	5
Structure of Dissertation	6
Chapter 2: College Athletics and Name, Image, and Likeness	8
College Athletics	8
The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)	9
Commercialization of College Athletics	16
Name, Image, and Likeness	20
The Evolution of NIL	21
Contemporary NIL Market	25
Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework	33
Public Relations and Relationship Management	33
Organization-Public Relationship	34
Theoretical Frameworks of OPR	37
OPR Dimensions	41
OPR Outcomes	48
OPR in Sports	51
Community Relations	53
Definition of a Community	55
Town-Gown Relationships	57
Team Identification	61
Team Identification Antecedents	62
Team Identification Outcomes	63
Team Identification Scales	65
Linking OPR, Community Relations, Team Identification, and Sports	66

Proposed Hypotheses and Research Questions	68
Chapter 4: Methodology	75
Experimental Design	75
Instrument	76
Stimuli	77
Measures	79
Covariates	80
Independent Variables	82
Dependent Variables	83
Moderator	89
Manipulation Check	90
Participants and Sampling	90
Research Sample	92
Data Analysis Process	96
Data Cleaning Procedure	96
Chapter 5: Results	98
Descriptive Statistics	98
Attitudes and Perceptions Prior to Experiment	98
Covariate Analysis	98
Hypothesis Testing and Research Questions Exploration	109
The Nature of NIL Deals	110
OPR, Team Identification, Attitudes, and Behaviors	128
Model Testing	130
Fan Antecedents	171
Additional Tests	177
Order Effects	177
Demographic Differences Across Groups	178
Chapter 6: Discussion	179
Influence of Fan Antecedents	180
Theoretical Implications	180
Practical Implications	181
Nature of NIL Deals	182
Theoretical Implications	183
Practical Implications	184

Conceptualized Model	185
Theoretical Implications	186
Practical Implications	187
Team Identification and OPR	188
Theoretical Implications	188
Practical Implications	189
Further Implications	189
Impact of NIL	190
Attitudes Toward NIL and Collectives	190
OPR Measurement for Fans	191
Limitations	192
Methodology and Design	192
Manipulations	193
Research Sample	193
Future Research Opportunities	194
NIL Changes	195
Giving Intentions	196
OPR to TFR Scale	196
Chapter 7: Conclusion	198
References	202
Appendix A: Stimuli	239
Appendix B: Internal Review Board Approval Letter	243

List of Tables

Table 2.1	NCAA Principles of Conduct (NCAA, 2024)	10
Table 2.2	Federal Legislation as of September 26, 2024 (Troutman Pepper, 2024)	24
Table 3.1	Dimensions of Organization-Public Relationship	42
Table 4.1	Reliabilities of OPR Scale and Subscale	85
Table 4.2	Factor Loadings of OPR Measurement Items in Pre-Stimuli Measurement	86
Table 4.3	Factor Loadings of OPR Measurement Items in Post-Stimuli Measurements	87
Table 4.4	Reliabilities of Attitudes Toward Favorite Team Scale	88
Table 4.5	Demographic characteristics of sample	92
Table 4.6	Favorite college football teams represented in sample	94
Table 5.1	Correlations for Covariates and Attitudes Toward Team across Conditions (N=190)	99
Table 5.2	Correlations for Covariates and Perceptions of OPR across Conditions (N=190)	100
Table 5.3	Correlations for Covariates and Future Game Attendance Intention across Conditions (N=190)	100
Table 5.4	Correlations for Covariates and Intention to Listen/Watch Games via Media across Conditions (N=190)	101
Table 5.5	Correlations for Covariates and Intention to Track News of Team via Media across Conditions (N=190)	101
Table 5.6	Correlations for Covariates and Future Team Merchandise Purchase Intention across Conditions (N=190)	101
Table 5.7	Correlations for Covariates and Future NIL Giving Intention Intention (to school) across Conditions (N=190)	102
Table 5.8	Correlations for Covariates and Future NIL Giving Intention (to collective) across Conditions (N=190)	102

Table 5.9	One-Way ANOVA Results for Gender Differences in Attitudes, OPR, and Behavioral Intention	101
Table 5.10	One-Way ANOVA Results for Education Level Differences in Attitudes, OPR, and Behavioral Intentions	105
Table 5.11	One-Way ANOVA Results for Household Income Differences in Attitudes, OPR, and Behavioral Intentions	107
Table 5.12	Descriptive Statistics for Perception of OPR in Local and National Groups Across Conditions	111
Table 5.13	Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance Results for the Effects of NIL Deal Characteristics on Perception of OPR (with covariates)	111
Table 5.14	Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance Results for the Effects of NIL Deal Characteristics on Perception of OPR (without covariates)	113
Table 5.15	Descriptive Statistics for Attitude Toward Team in Local and National Groups Across Conditions	113
Table 5.16	Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance Results for the Effects of NIL Deal Characteristics on Attitudes Toward Team	115
Table 5.17	Descriptive Statistics for Future Game Attendance Intention in Local and National Groups Across Conditions	118
Table 5.18	Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance Results for the Effects of NIL Deal Characteristics on Future Game Attendance Intention	119
Table 5.19	Descriptive Statistics for Future Game Viewing/Listening in Local and National Groups Across Conditions	120
Table 5.20	Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance Results for the Effects of NIL Deal Characteristics on the Intention to Watch/Listen to Games via the Media	120
Table 5.21	Descriptive Statistics for Future Team Tracking in Local and National Groups Across Conditions	121
Table 5.22	Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance Results for the Effects of NIL Deal Characteristics on the Intention to Track News of their Team via the Media	122
Table 5.23	Descriptive Statistics for Future Team Merchandise Purchase in Local and National Groups Across Conditions	123

Table 5.24	Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance Results for the Effects of NIL Deal Characteristics on the Intention to Purchase Team Merchandise	123
Table 5.25	Descriptive Statistics for Future Donation Intention (School) in Local and National Groups Across Conditions	124
Table 5.26	Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance Results for the Effects of NIL Deal Characteristics on Future Donation Intention (School)	125
Table 5.27	Descriptive Statistics for Future Donation Intention (Collective) in Local and National Groups Across Conditions	127
Table 5.28	Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance Results for the Effects of NIL Deal Characteristics on Future Donation Intention (Collective) (with covariates)	127
Table 5.29	Estimates of Fixed Effects (OPR and Team Identification) on Attitudes Toward the Team	129
Table 5.30	Estimates of Fixed Effects of Team Identification on OPR	129
Table 5.31	Estimates of Fixed Effects of Attitudes Toward the Team on Supportive Fan Behavioral Intentions	130
Table 5.32	Summary of Mediation Analysis for Collective, For-Profit Condition (OPR and Attitudes only)	131
Table 5.33	Summary of Mediation Analysis for Collective, For-Profit Condition (Future Game Attendance Intention)	132
Table 5.34	Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Collective, For-Profit Condition (Future Game Attendance Intention)	132
Table 5.35	Summary of Mediation Analysis for Collective, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Watch/Listen to Games via Media)	134
Table 5.36	Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Collective, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Watch/Listen to Games via Media)	134
Table 5.37	Summary of Mediation Analysis for Collective, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Track News of Team via Media)	135
Table 5.38	Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Collective, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Track News of Team via Media)	136

Table 5.39	Summary of Mediation Analysis for Collective, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Purchase Team Merchandise)	137
Table 5.40	Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Collective, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Purchase Team Merchandise)	137
Table 5.41	Summary of Mediation Analysis for Collective, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Give to School's NIL Fund)	138
Table 5.42	Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Collective, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Give to School's NIL Fund)	139
Table 5.43	Summary of Mediation Analysis for Collective, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Give to a Team's Collective)	139
Table 5.44	Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Collective, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Give to a Team's Collective)	140
Table 5.45	Summary of Mediation Analysis for Collective, Non-Profit Condition (OPR and Attitudes only)	141
Table 5.46	Summary of Mediation Analysis for Collective, Non-Profit Condition (Future Game Attendance Intention)	142
Table 5.47	Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Collective, Non-Profit Condition (Future Game Attendance Intention)	142
Table 5.48	Summary of Mediation Analysis for Collective, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Watch/Listen to Games via Media)	143
Table 5.49	Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Collective, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Watch/Listen to Games via Media)	144
Table 5.50	Summary of Mediation Analysis for Collective, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Track News of Team via Media)	145
Table 5.51	Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Collective, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Track News of Team via Media)	145
Table 5.52	Summary of Mediation Analysis for Collective, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Purchase Team Merchandise)	146
Table 5.53	Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for	147

	Collective, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Purchase Team Merchandise)	
Table 5.54	Summary of Mediation Analysis for Collective, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Give to School's NIL Fund)	148
Table 5.55	Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Collective, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Give to School's NIL Fund)	148
Table 5.56	Summary of Mediation Analysis for Collective, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Give to a Team's Collective)	149
Table 5.57	Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Collective, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Give to a Team's Collective)	149
Table 5.58	Summary of Mediation Analysis for Commercial, For-Profit Condition (OPR and Attitudes only)	150
Table 5.59	Summary of Mediation Analysis for Commercial, For-Profit Condition (Future Game Attendance Intention)	151
Table 5.60	Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Commercial, For-Profit Condition (Future Game Attendance Intention)	151
Table 5.61	Summary of Mediation Analysis for Commercial, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Watch/Listen to Games via Media)	153
Table 5.62	Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Commercial, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Watch/Listen to Games via Media)	153
Table 5.63	Summary of Mediation Analysis for Commercial, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Track News of Team via Media)	155
Table 5.64	Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Commercial, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Track News of Team via Media)	155
Table 5.65	Summary of Mediation Analysis for Commercial, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Purchase Team Merchandise)	156
Table 5.66	Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Commercial, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Purchase Team Merchandise)	157
Table 5.67	Summary of Mediation Analysis for Commercial, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Give to School's NIL Fund)	158

Table 5.68	Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Commercial, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Give to School's NIL Fund)	158
Table 5.69	Summary of Mediation Analysis for Commercial, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Give to a Team's Collective)	159
Table 5.70	Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Commercial, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Give to a Team's Collective)	159
Table 5.71	Summary of Mediation Analysis for Commercial, Non-Profit Condition (OPR and Attitudes only)	160
Table 5.72	Summary of Mediation Analysis for Commercial, Non-Profit Condition (Future Game Attendance Intention)	161
Table 5.73	Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Commercial, Non-Profit Condition (Future Game Attendance Intention)	161
Table 5.74	Summary of Mediation Analysis for Commercial, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Watch/Listen to Games via Media)	162
Table 5.75	Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Commercial, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Watch/Listen to Games via Media)	163
Table 5.76	Summary of Mediation Analysis for Commercial, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Track News of Team via Media)	164
Table 5.77	Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Commercial, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Track News of Team via Media)	164
Table 5.78	Summary of Mediation Analysis for Commercial, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Purchase Team Merchandise)	165
Table 5.79	Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Commercial, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Purchase Team Merchandise)	166
Table 5.80	Summary of Mediation Analysis for Commercial, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Give to School's NIL Fund)	167
Table 5.81	Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Commercial, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Give to School's NIL Fund)	167
Table 5.82	Summary of Mediation Analysis for Commercial, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Give to a Team's Collective)	168

Table 5.83	Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Commercial, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Give to a Team's Collective)	168
Table 5.84	Summary of Mediation Analysis for the Effect of State Locality on Team Identification and OPR	174
Table 5.85	Summary of Mediation Analysis for the Effect of Town Locality on Team Identification and OPR	174
Table 5.86	Summary of Mediation Analysis for the Effect of Alumni Status on Team Identification and OPR	175
Table 5.87	Summary of Mediation Analysis for the Effect of Gender on Team Identification and OPR	176

List of Figures

Figure 1.1	Hypothesized Model: Influence of NIL Deals	3
Figure 1.2	Hypothesized Model: Influence of Fan Identity Antecedents	4
Figure 3.1	Hypothesized Model: Influence of NIL Deals	70
Figure 3.2	Hypothesized Model: Influence of Fan Identity Antecedents	73
Figure 4.1	Examples of Stimulus Messages	79
Figure 5.1	Plot for Significant Deal Type x Profit Status Interaction on Attitudes Toward Team	116
Figure 5.2	Model Results for Collective, For-Profit Condition with Future Game Attendance as Outcome	133
Figure 5.3	Model Results for Collective, For-Profit Condition with Watching/ Listening to Future Games as Outcome	135
Figure 5.4	Model Results for Collective, For-Profit Condition with Tracking News of Team as Outcome	136
Figure 5.5	Model Results for Collective, For-Profit Condition with Team Merchandise Purchase Intention as Outcome	138
Figure 5.6	Model Results for Collective, Non-Profit Condition with Future Game Attendance as Outcome	143
Figure 5.7	Model Results for Collective, Non-Profit Condition with Watching/ Listening to Future Games as Outcome	144
Figure 5.8	Model Results for Collective, Non-Profit Condition with Tracking News of Team as Outcome	146
Figure 5.9	Model Results for Collective, Non-Profit Condition with Team Merchandise Purchase Intention as Outcome	147
Figure 5.10	Model Results for Commercial, For-Profit Condition with Future Game Attendance as Outcome	152
Figure 5.11	Model Results for Commercial, For-Profit Condition with Watching/ Listening to Future Games as Outcome	154
Figure 5.12	Model Results for Commercial, For-Profit Condition with Tracking	156

	News of Team as Outcome	
Figure 5.13	Model Results for Commercial, For-Profit Condition with Team Merchandise Purchase Intention as Outcome	157
Figure 5.14	Model Results for Commercial, Non-Profit Condition with Future Game Attendance as Outcome	162
Figure 5.15	Model Results for Commercial, Non-Profit Condition with Watching/Listening to Future Games as Outcome	163
Figure 5.16	Model Results for Commercial, Non-Profit Condition with Tracking News of Team as Outcome	165
Figure 5.17	Model Results for Commercial, Non-Profit Condition with Team Merchandise Purchase Intention as Outcome	166
Figure 5.18	Mediation Model of the Effect of a Fan's Locality to their Team on OPR Through Team Identification	174
Figure 5.19	Mediation Analysis of the Effect of a Fan's Alumni Status on OPR Through Team Identification	175
Figure 5.20	Mediation Analysis of the Effect of a Fan's Gender on OPR Through Team Identification	176
Figure 6.1	Significant Paths from Conceptualized Model Linking OPR, Team Identification, Attitudes, and Behavioral Intentions	187

Abstract

Since the Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) rule change in 2021, the entire landscape of the athlete marketplace has changed. In the next year, the NIL market is projected to reach \$1.67 billion (Opendorse, 2024). With revenue sharing beginning in the 2025 season, the way college athletes are paid is on the threshold of a new era. This new era will see universities and athletic departments depending greatly on support, both financial and other, from their fan base. Grounded in organization-public relationship (OPR) and team identification frameworks, this study positioned NIL partnerships as opportunities for community relations in college football. Using a 2x2x2 experiment, the profit-status and locality of the partnering organization and the type of NIL deal (collective vs commercial) were manipulated. The perception of organization-public relationships (OPR), attitude toward the team, and supportive behavioral intentions were measured to evaluate the impact of different NIL deals. Specific fan identity antecedents were also measured, including the fan's locality to the team, gender, and alumni status, to explore how each aspect influenced team identification and OPR. Theoretically, the findings explored two overall models. Significant findings related to the nature of NIL deals found that fans perceived partnerships with non-profit organizations and local companies more favorably. In addition, it was found that fans perceived deals organized by collectives differently, meaning that departments must consider fans' preconceived attitudes toward collectives when developing partnerships. Findings related to the conceptualized model offered additional insight to the connection between OPR, team identification, attitudes, and behaviors. This is the first study of its kind to explore how NIL influences perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors, offering key insight to university administration and practitioners within athletic departments as they manage relationships with various fan communities to financially support athletes.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

In July 2021, college athletes gained the *right to publicity* through a rule change by the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) (Hosick, 2021). From that moment on, athletes were able to make money from their name, image, and likeness, an opportunity that was previously banned under the NCAA's amateurism model. Also known as the "right to publicity," the right allows athletes to make money through sponsorships and partnerships that use their identifying features (name, general appearance, image, etc.) (FieldLevel, 2021). Three years later, the Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) market has grown from a worth of \$917 million in its first year to \$1.17 billion in its third year (Opendorse, 2024). Today, as the landmark *House v. NCAA* settlement is shaped, revenue sharing could be the future of athlete compensation as soon as the 2025-2026 school year (Williams, 2024).

Purpose of the Study

As universities and athletic departments navigate the compliance changes brought on by the rule shift, these entities are simultaneously trying to contend with the implications and impact of NIL on their institution's reputation. The purpose of this study is to explore a portion of these effects and their influence on a team-community relationship through two threads. By positioning NIL as community relations activities to strengthen the relationship between a team and their fan community, the experiment investigated how organization-public relationships (OPR) are affected by varying NIL deals. It offered a closer look at how the nature of NIL deals, such as its profit status and locality to the team, can influence OPR, attitudes toward the team, and supportive fan behavioral intentions. In addition, the type of NIL deal was evaluated to see if fans perceived deals organized by collectives differently. This study offered a first look at NIL as opportunities for strengthening the team-fan relationship.

As a secondary goal, the study collected fan identity antecedent measures, along with measurements on initial team identification, organization-public relations (OPR), attitudes toward the team, and general attitudes toward NIL and collectives. This data collection allowed for an analysis of the relationship between key antecedent measures, including a fan's locality to the team, gender, and alumni status, and their attitudes and perceptions of their favorite team.

Conceptual Framework

This study employed a dual-framework through organization-public relationship and team identification literature. Ledingham (2010) proposed a relationship management theory within public relations to promote a focus on relationships within the discipline's scholarship. The current study aimed to explore the unique relationship between a fan and a team. To do that, it was important to also ground the model in team identification, the psychological connection a fan feels toward a team (Wann et al., 2001). Utilized together within this study, the two concepts helped to fully encompass the unique relationship between a fan and a team.

Overview of Research Questions & Hypotheses

The direction of this study is grounded in several research questions and hypotheses. The first set of hypotheses consider the relationship of NIL deals on elements such as OPR, attitudes, and behavioral intentions. In addition, the moderating role of team identification was considered within this hypothesized model (Figure 1).

H1: Fans' perception of OPR will directly and positively influence their attitudes toward their favorite team.

H2: Fans' attitude toward their favorite team will directly and positively influence supportive behavioral intentions, including (a) game attendance, (b, c) media

consumption, (d) merchandise purchase, (e) financial giving to a team, and (f) financial giving to a collective.

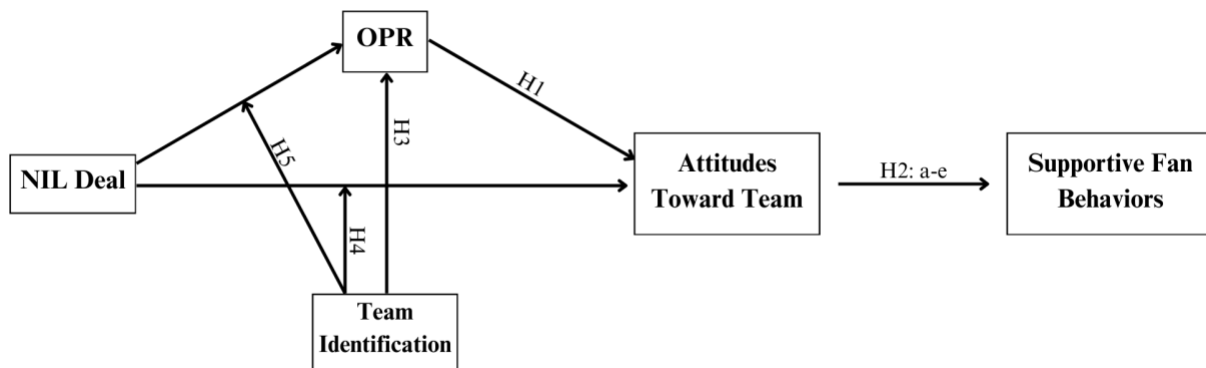
H3: Team identification will directly and positively influence fans' perception of OPR.

H4: Team identification will moderate the impact of an NIL deal on attitudes toward a team, such that the positive effect of NIL deals on attitudes toward the team is stronger for individuals with higher levels of team identification.

H5: Team identification will moderate the impact of NIL deals on OPR, such that the positive effect of NIL deals on OPR will be stronger for individuals with higher levels of team identification.

Figure 1.1

Hypothesized Model: Influence of NIL Deals



To examine the nature of NIL deals, a mixed-design 2 (locality of organization/company: local vs. non-local) x 2 (profit-status of organization/company: nonprofit vs. for-profit) x 2 (NIL deal type: commercial vs. collective) experiment was used to explore how varying deals can impact OPR, attitudes, and supportive behavioral intentions. These factors (locality, profit-status, and NIL deal type) were chosen due to the study's focus on community and fan relationships.

For locality and profit-status, the organization or company in the NIL partnership was

manipulated. For the NIL type, the source of the deal changed (i.e., organized by a collective or not). Based on prior literature, the following hypothesis and research question was proposed:

H6: NIL partnerships with local nonprofits will lead to (a) higher OPR perceptions, (b) more positive attitudes toward the team, and (c) more supportive fan behavioral intentions than both non-local and for-profit partnerships.

RQ1: How does the NIL deal type (commercial vs collective) impact (a) perception of OPR, (b) attitudes toward the team, and (c) supportive fan behavioral intentions?

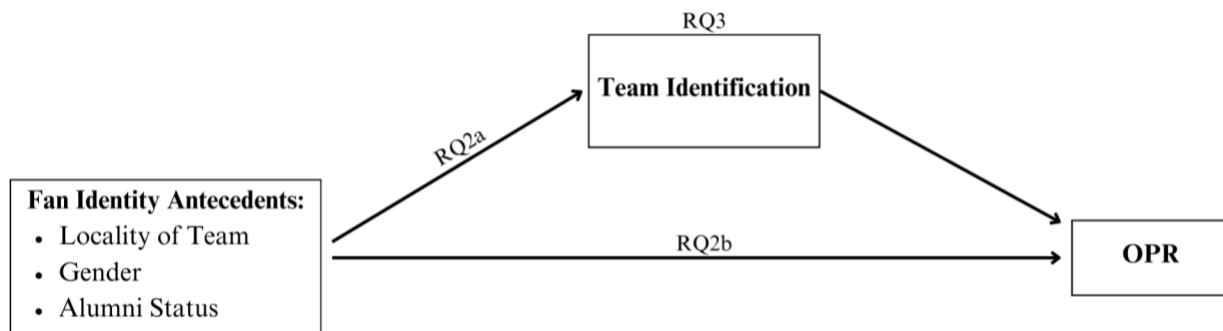
The final consideration within this study looked specifically at the pre-experiment questionnaire and pretest, which evaluated fan identity antecedents and their impact on OPR and team identification. The final research questions considered the relationship between these variables (Figure 2).

RQ2: What is the relationship between fan attachment points (locality of team, gender, and alumni status) and fans' (a) team identification and (b) perception of OPR?

RQ3: Does team identification mediate the relationship between fan antecedents and Organization-Public Relationships (OPR)?

Figure 1.2

Hypothesized Model: Influence of Fan Identity Antecedents



Significance of Study

The NIL market is growing year-after-year (Opendorse, 2024) and with revenue sharing on the horizon, its impacts, both financial and other, are growing (Williams, 2024). As athletic departments continue to navigate the space by increasing their internal staff focused on NIL (Christovich, 2024) and creating internal agencies to help athletes manage and pursue deals (Henderson, 2024b), universities must consider the way NIL could impact the institution as a whole and its relationship with fans and community. This study offers practical implications for athletic departments and their universities as they navigate the NIL space and begin to explore the benefits of community partnerships through NIL.

With the landscape shifting, academic research must continue to evaluate and study the overall ramifications of these changes. There is currently no research that explores the direct implications of NIL on fan relationship measures and team identification. This study expands Kim and Gower's (2023) model, which brought together OPR and team identification within one model for the first time in a professional sports setting. The researchers found that OPR had a larger effect on attitudes toward the team than team identification. "That means sport fans significantly consider the relational perception that receives from the team's effort" (Kim & Gower, 2023, p. 729). To further consider the relationship between these concepts, this study explored the added effect of NIL deals. In addition, contrary to Kim and Gower's (2023) model, this study proposed new antecedents to team identification and OPR, applying them in a college athletics context. Exploring these variables' effect on financial giving through NIL is also a new avenue of study that has not been explored.

Theoretically, this study expands relationship management theory (Ledingham, 2010) into the college sports context by considering it alongside team identification. Kian and

Zimmerman (2023) proposed that the way athletes “cultivate different audiences for stronger connections and potential purchase intentions” is a rich area of future study (p. 324). In addition, specific to the measurement of OPR, this study proposed an adapted subscale for community involvement to consider a community relations perspective. This proposed subscale allowed for the OPR measurement to consider the fan’s perception that the team organization is invested in the community it resides.

Structure of Dissertation

This manuscript comprehensively presents the study purpose and context, theoretical framework, experimental design and analysis, and findings. The document is organized through several chapters, described below:

- Chapter 1: Introduction - This initial chapter is a preview of the study’s purpose and overall direction. It offers a brief overview of the conceptual framework, the research questions and hypothesis, and the significance of the study.
- Chapter 2: College Athletics and NIL - This chapter offers the contextual framework of the study, focusing on the history of college athletics and the NCAA. In addition, this chapter overviews the changes and litigation that led to the NIL rule change and its significant impact on the college sports environment.
- Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework - Through an analysis of existing research, this chapter builds the conceptual framework of the study. A thorough review of relationship literature is offered, along with additional scholarship review of community relations and team identification. To finish, the research questions and hypotheses are provided.
- Chapter 4: Methodology - This chapter offers a detailed description of the methodological approach used to evaluate the hypotheses and research questions.

Specifically, the experiment design is explained, along with the sampling and data analysis process. The measurement tools and scales are also outlined.

- Chapter 5: Results - This chapter reports the tests conducted, including descriptive statistics and model analyses. The statistical findings related to the hypotheses and research questions are shared.
- Chapter 6: Discussion - After explicating the overall results, this chapter offers interpretation of the findings. For each area of the findings, the theoretical and practical implications are offered. In addition, this chapter reports the limitations of the design and findings. The chapter ends with potential avenues for future research.
- Chapter 7: Conclusion - The final chapter offers a wrap up of the topline findings and implications of the study, as well as how this research program can move forward.

Chapter 2: College Athletics and Name, Image, and Likeness

A core part of the higher education experience, college athletics has developed into a unifying force among sports fans and a lucrative industry for universities and other college sports organizations. At the center of this business sits the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), the governing body of college athletics. The following section traces the evolution of the NCAA and its amateurism model, examining how the extreme commercialization of sports and athletes impacted the NCAA's core values and shifted them to allow for the emergence of NIL. The following chapter also provides a timeline of key litigation that paved the way for NIL.

College Athletics

Athletics has not always been a core activity within institutions of higher education. Actually, prior to the Civil War, any type of activity outside of education was considered a distraction to the overall goal of higher education, leading to restless students who frequently caused disorder on campus (Lewis, 1970). "Almost all extracurricular activities were viewed as distractions from learning, resulting in games and sports being viewed as unwanted by faculty" (Czekanski & Siegrist, 2024, p. 4). It was during the second half of the 19th century that universities and students began to see physical education and sports as a potential benefit to the academic journey (Lewis, 1970).

Ball games, like football and baseball, were frequent on college campuses in the 1840s; however, the real turning point occurred when Yale created a boating club in 1843, with Harvard developing one a year later (Lewis, 1970). The first intercollegiate athletic competition occurred between the rowing teams of Harvard and Yale in 1852 (Smith, 2011). Sport associations were formed to begin managing intercollegiate games as sports became more and more popular on campuses, including baseball, track and field, and rugby/football (Lewis, 1970).

Today, intercollegiate athletics are jointly managed and governed by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), athletic conferences, and universities. What started off as student-run activities to combat restlessness in academically rigorous institutions has become a billion-dollar industry for the involved entities (Libit & Novy-Williams, 2024). Recent changes to the NCAA's core principles have led to a new area of growth for athletes: Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL). In the next year, the NIL market is projected to reach \$1.67 billion (Opendorse, 2024), and its impacts are still being discovered. Before evaluating the specific litigation and changes that took place to pave the way for NIL, the following section traces the origins of the NCAA and its amateurism model, exploring how the growth of commercialization in college sport changed the landscape.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)

The NCAA, described as a “member-led” entity, was founded in 1906 with the goal to govern and ensure the wellbeing of college athletics and athletes (NCAA, 2021c). Composed of approximately 1,100 member institutions (i.e., the universities with participating athletic departments) across three divisions, the NCAA governs the overall athletics experience for more than 500,000 athletes (NCAA, 2021a).

The governing body was initially founded to combat the brutal and rules-free world of college football but evolved to govern all college sports. The current mission of the NCAA aims to, “provide a world-class athletics and academic experience for student-athletes that fosters lifelong well-being” (NCAA, 2021b). The current NCAA constitution includes eight principles of conduct for its membership institutions (Table 2.1), which explicate the overall values of the governing body. These principles also offer a hint at the core values of the NCAA, including those it was founded on.

Table 2.1
NCAA Principles of Conduct (NCAA, 2024)

Principle	Description
Primacy of Academic Experience	The academic experience of student-athletes must be given priority before their voluntary participation in athletics.
Collegiate Student-Athlete Model	Athletes are not allowed to receive compensation from universities for participation in athletics (i.e., pay-for-play), outside of educational benefits.
Integrity and Sportsmanship	Institutions must uphold the integrity and fairness of sports through their athletics programs.
Student-Athlete Well-Being	The physical and mental well-being of student-athletes must be prioritized.
Institutional Control	The member institution is responsible to stay in compliance with NCAA rules and regulations.
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	Member institutions should prioritize the creation of an inclusive and diverse environment through equitable hiring practices and other activities.
Gender Equity	Gender equity is an important principle of member institutions.
Recruiting Standards	Each division should have clear recruiting guidelines that prioritize the well-being of the athlete.

Origins of the NCAA. The beginning of the NCAA can be traced to the sport of football to combat the increasing deaths and injuries seen in the game (Crowley, 2006). The first intercollegiate football game occurred on November 6, 1869 between Rutgers University and Princeton University (Smith, 2011). The game of football was formed through combining rules of soccer and rugby, and its violence was unmitigated. Even with the forming of the Intercollegiate Football Association (IFA) in 1873, the game of football was brutal for players.

The association was unable to enforce most of its rules due to a principle of home rule, wherein the home team authorized the rules of the game, and other disagreements between member institutions. The IFA collapsed in the 1890s after reducing to only two members and returned as the American Football Rules Committee (Crowley, 2006). However, similar to the IFA, this committee was unable to combat the violence seen in football at the time.

Football was not the only college sport in need of governance. College athletics was faced with similar issues to today, such as commercialization and regulatory gaps, which was exacerbated by the need to win (Smith, 2000). Primarily, intercollegiate sports and competitions were under student control in the early years (Lewis, 1970; Czekanski & Siegrist, 2024; Smith, 2011), and the intense competition showed the weaknesses where the integrity of sport was tarnished (Crowley, 2006). In a bid to beat their rival, Yale University, Harvard University recruited a non-student professional to join their rowing team (Smith, 2011). Baseball, beginning as a college sport in 1859, was especially known to staff their team with non-students in order to get ahead (Crowley, 2006). Referred to as “tramp athletes,” these players would play for whatever school paid the most and often never attended class (Oriard, 2012).

In the 1890s, intercollegiate athletics began to shift from student-run to faculty-run (Crowley, 2006). These faculty and administration-led entities were faced with continued pushback to increasing regulations surrounding college sports:

It is clear, however, that by the latter part of the nineteenth century, when initial efforts to control the excesses of intercollegiate athletics first were promulgated, that the very tensions facing reform efforts in intercollegiate athletics today - commercialization, institutional pride and vacillation among faculty and administration relating to the purposes of intercollegiate athletics - constituted significant impediments to those early reform efforts. (Smith, 1987, p. 990)

It was the football season of 1905 that finally moved the needle on reforming college football. During the season, there were 18 deaths and 149 injuries attributed to college football

(Crowley, 2006; Smith, 1987). President Theodore Roosevelt held a conference at the White House with university and football leaders to discuss the game. When the conference was unsuccessful in changing or ending the game, the chancellor of New York University, Henry MacCracken, brought together another conference of leaders after a football player at his own school was killed during a game (Crowley, 2006). It was then, after leaders from both conferences came together, that the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States (IAAUS) was founded (Smith, 1987) with 62 member institutions (NCAA, 2021c). In 1910, the IAAUS would change its name to the National Collegiate Athletic Association, known primarily as the NCAA (Crowley, 2006). At the beginning, the focus of the NCAA was to regulate football, but its purview expanded as the popularity of other sports (e.g., track and field, baseball) grew.

The Amateurism Model. The amateurism model as it is today can be explained through the principle of the Collegiate Student-Athlete Model (see Table 1). In addition, the NCAA's 2024-2025 Division I Manual includes a commitment to amateurism, which specifically distinguishes college athletes from professional athletes (NCAA, 2024). However, as Oriard (2012) posited, "what constitutes 'amateurism' today would have appalled its champions at the turn of the twentieth century" (p. 5).

In its founding constitution, the IAAUS aimed to combat eligibility issues by defining the parameters of a student and banning financial incentives based on athletic ability (Czekanski & Siegrist, 2024). Article VI of the first IAAUS constitution prohibited inducements based on athletic abilities (IAAUS, 1906). Article VII focused on eligibility rules, which proposed suggestions that were left to the member institutions to enforce. These proposed guidelines stated that athletes must be full-time students, cannot compete if they have already done so for four

years, cannot compete in their first (freshman) year at the school, and cannot compete for a year if they transfer before two-thirds of the school year is complete (IAAUS, 1906). Regarding payment to athletes, the constitution stated,

No student shall represent a College or University in any intercollegiate game or contest who has at any time received, either directly or indirectly, money, or any other consideration, to play on any team, or for his athletic services as a college trainer, athletic or gymnasium instructor, or who has competed for a money prize or portion of gate money in any contest or who has competed for any prize against a professional. (p. 34)

There are key athletes from the NCAA's history that hint to why the amateurism model became such a closely-held principle of the historic and contemporary NCAA. Fielding Yost, a former Michigan football coach, played football for West Virginia in 1896. He was so talented that Lafayette College "hired" him for their rivalry game against Penn State, helping them beat their rival before he re-enrolled back at West Virginia (Crowley, 2006; Yost, 2008). Star player James Hogan, while unconfirmed as a ringer, had a substantial compensation package from Yale, which included a share of gameday profits and a position with the American Tobacco Company where he received a portion of local cigarette sales (Crowley, 2006; Yost, 2008).

While the IAAUS had proposed guidelines for eligibility, it still faced constant regulatory issues surrounding compensation and its amateurism model as the enforcement was left to member institutions. The topic was a common discussion at annual conferences. In 1911, as conversations surrounding summer baseball leagues grew, the Committee on Amateur Law gave a report to the convention that offered a definition of amateurism (Crowley, 2006). Grounded in the concept of *play*, described as "nature's method of education," a definition of amateur was proposed: "...one who enters and takes part in athletic contests purely in obedience to the play impulses or for the satisfaction of purely play motives and for the exercise, training and social pleasures derived" (Crowley, 2006, p. 58). However, the NCAA continued to struggle in enforcing this principle, as it depended heavily on the home rule.

In 1922, a 10-point code was approved that emphasized several of its key principles, including a participation limit, ban on graduate student players, prohibition of betting, and the freshman rule (Crowley, 2006). A new definition of amateurism was also proposed as, “one who engages in sports solely for the physical, mental or social benefits he derives therefrom, and to whom the sport is nothing more than an avocation” (Crowley, 2006, p. 64). The Compliance Committee, charged with reviewing violations, used the code to end exploitative recruitment practices; however, like much of the NCAA governance since its start, it had little power (Smith, 1987).

The issues of amateurism and commercialism inspired a report from the Carnegie Foundation in 1929, which aimed its focus on the recruitment and subsidization of football players (Oriard, 2012). The report found that faculty control was mostly unsuccessful, commercialism needed to be combatted, and the subsidization of athletes was shameful (Crowley, 2006). While the report led to prominent news coverage, it did not last. Oriard (2012) proposed an explanation of the lackluster consideration of the report:

By the time of the Carnegie Foundation report, big-time college football had simply become too important (too big to fail, one might say)—to local communities and to the institutions depending on them—to be governed only by ethical and academic concerns. (p. 8)

In the 1930s, the conflict of professionalism continued. The athletic scholarship came under fire as conferences in the south were the first to approve them, while the Pacific Coast Conference (PCC) and the Big Ten gave athletes campus jobs to help pay for school (Oriard, 2012). The “Sanity Code,” also known as “The Principles for the Conduct of Intercollegiate Athletics,” passed in 1948 and again reiterated some of the values the NCAA had emphasized from its start (Oriard, 2012). It was also at this time that the NCAA finally became an enforcement agency (Smith, 2011). A Constitution Compliance Committee was created from the

Sanity Code to interpret the constitution and propose penalties for schools out of compliance (Sack & Staurowsky, 1998).

The code put limits on financial aid for athletes, which caused major pushback from the various southern conferences who were already covering educational expenses through athletic scholarships. When a two-thirds vote was not reached at the 1950 convention to ban the seven schools using athletic scholarships, the “Sanity Code” failed (Smith, 2011). A new 12-point code in 1956 allowed for a limit on full-ride institutional athletic scholarships and set guidelines to ensure academic wellness in athletics (Oriard, 2012). This was a turning point as the NCAA, for the first time, allowed a form of payment to the college athlete (Czekanski & Siegrist, 2024).

It is important to note that the enforcement of the amateurism model, along with the allowance of full-ride athletic scholarship, opened up a hypocrisy issue that the NCAA continued to face over the years. Smith (2011) considered the hypocrisy of the “Sanity Code,” noting, “Voting unanimously to support the ‘Principle of Amateurism’ and then allowing some payment to players was a little like voting to oppose drunkenness but allowing some intoxication” (p. 96). Sack and Staurowsky (1998) considered the allowance of financial aid as “NCAA-sponsored professionalism” (p. 43). This is an issue that the NCAA continued to face as it attempted to draw a line between college and professional sports.

The NCAA was first faced with the hypocrisy of its amateurism model in 1953 when University of Denver football player Ernest Nemeth went up against his school in the Colorado Supreme Court. After being injured during spring practice, Ernest successfully argued that he was hired by the school to play football and that he was eligible for compensation after his injury (Smith, 2016). A second Colorado Supreme Court case led to the creation of the term “student-athlete.” Ray Dennison, a football player for Fort Lewis A&M, was hit in the head with another

player's knee and died due to his injuries. His wife filed for death benefits as she claimed Ray died while working as an employee (Harry, 2020). The NCAA and Fort Lewis A&M claimed that Ray could not be identified as an employee as he was considered a "student-athlete," with student being his primary position. The Colorado Supreme Court sided with the NCAA in the case (Harry, 2020).

The NCAA president during this time, Walter Byers, later wrote in his memoir that the term *student-athlete* was created by the NCAA's legal and publicity team with the purpose of distinguishing college athletes from employees (Byers & Hammer, 1995). Over the last decade, the term has increasingly come under fire (Clarke, 2021; Staurowsky & Sack, 2005) as it was created to keep college athletes within their amateur status while allowing institutions to continue profiting on students' athletic ability. Harry (2020) emphasized that the term also has racial implications as it further led to the exploitation of minority athletes who make up almost half of the athletes in Division I sports. While the NCAA had successfully distinguished "student-athletes" from employees, it continued to face pushback against its model of amateurism, due primarily to the commercialization of college athletics (Czekanski & Siegrist, 2024).

Commercialization of College Athletics

The innovation and spread of mass media in the 1920s led to increased attention on college athletics (Oriard, 2012). "Newspapers now depended on sports news for circulations...Commercial radio began in 1921 and by the end of the 1920s was carrying football games throughout the day on Fall Saturdays on both local stations and national networks" (Oriard, 2012, p. 8). In addition, athletic figures started to appear in film in the 1930s, most often portrayed as the "dumb jock" (Oriard, 2012).

Stadiums. The rush to build stadiums also contributed to the increasing commercialization of college sports. Harvard, Yale, and Princeton were the first to build large football stadiums before 1920, with Yale's stadium seating 70,000 fans (Smith, 2011). After World War I, schools farther west began to build stadiums, with Ohio State University building one in 1922 that could fit 61,000 fans. "Before the decade closed, Big Ten institutions could house more than a half-million spectators on any fall afternoon" (Smith, 2011, p. 63). A total of 74 stadiums had popped up by 1930, exemplifying the growth of college athletics and football (Smith, 2011). In 2024, there are currently eight college football stadiums that can hold more than 100,000 fans (Kennedy, 2024), and ticket sales are often the largest source of revenue. The highest ranked university in athletic revenue generation (Parks, 2024), Ohio State University (2024) reported a 2023 revenue of \$73.3 million in total ticket sales for athletic events, with \$64.3 million in just football sales.

Coach Salaries. It would be remiss not to consider the growing salaries of college coaches in regard to the commercialization of college sports. As schools placed a larger emphasis on sports and winning, they turned to hiring professional coaches to help create a winning team (Smith, 2011). In 2023, the highest paid public employee in 40 states was a college coach, either for football or men's basketball, with the top 10 salaries averaging at \$9.8 million (Evans, 2023). While the salaries were smaller at the start of intercollegiate athletics, the competitiveness of attracting professional coaches was the same. Coaches were offered salaries that doubled those of faculty and even equaled that of university presidents. It was also common for coaches to move from school to school to attract the best deal (Smith, 2011). As the want to win continued to grow, universities shelled out growing salaries to attract the best coaches.

TV Deals. The first NCAA television deal was signed in 1952 with NBC. The network aired the football “Game of the Week,” with a fee of \$1,144,000 (Byers & Hammer, 1995). At the time, the NCAA managed the television rights and the choice of featured game (Sack & Staurowsky, 1998). The NCAA television deal was controversial at first as universities feared it would negatively impact physical attendance. However, as Byers (Byers & Hammer, 1995) found, television positively influenced attendance, going from 17.3 million in 1955 to 29.5 million in 1970.

Leading into the 1980s, the top football conferences began to realize that allowing the NCAA to decide television rights lost them regional opportunities and money. In 1984, the College Football Association, which was a coalition of top football schools (Smith, 2000), went up against the NCAA for television rights. In *NCAA v. Board of Regents at the University of Oklahoma and the University of Georgia*, the Supreme Court found that the NCAA had broken antitrust laws by controlling when games were broadcast (Smith, 1987). From this point on, schools and conferences had the right to broadcast their own games and sell the rights for them (Smith, 2000). In Walter Byers’ memoir, the NCAA president at the time of the case, he concluded that while he believed that the previous structure was good for college football, the final Supreme Court decision was “inevitable” (Byers & Hammer, 1995, p. 280). The growing commercialism of sports was becoming a lucrative business for universities, and they wanted more control over it.

Presently, most broadcasting rights are handled by a school’s athletic conference (Smith, 2000). The NCAA holds the television rights for its 40 championships, which is distributed by ESPN through an eight-year contract worth \$920 million (Golden, 2024). The richest conference, the Big Ten, recently entered a multi-network contract with Fox, CBS, NBC and the Big Ten

Network, totaling \$8 billion over seven years (Staples & Emerson, 2022). The Southeastern Conference (SEC) moved from CBS to ESPN (Disney) in 2024 for a \$3 billion deal over 10 years (Carp, 2020). Conference realignment, or the moving of schools from conference to conference, occurs primarily due to the chasing of these lucrative television deals (Sergeant, 2023).

Licensing Deals. Sponsorship and licensing opportunities have also increased the commercialization of college athletics. Apparel companies, especially Adidas, Nike, and Under Armour, have claimed exclusive deals with college teams (Kleinman, 2019; Sports Illustrated, 2017). UCLA's exclusive contract with Under Armour is valued at \$12.7 million (Kleinman, 2019). In Ohio State University's (2024) revenue report, the school reported \$42.8 million of its \$279.5 million total revenue came from sponsorships, licensing, royalties, and advertisements. Naming rights for bowl games began in the 1980s, leading to bowl games such as the Sunkist Fiesta Bowl and Mazda Gator Bowl (Shea, 2022). Starting in 2024, the NCAA now permits on-field logos for football games, allowing universities to generate further sponsorship opportunities (Dinich, 2024).

Donations. Athletic departments also depend greatly on donations. Athletic boosters have become strong partners for athletic departments in giving funds, offering employment to athletes, and spending time aiding in recruitment or promotional activities for athletics (NCAA, 2013). Boosters are defined as "individuals who contribute their time and finances to support a team or athletic department, thereby benefiting student athletes both on and off the field" (Johnson, 2023, pp. 43-44). Even at the turn of the 20th century, universities knew the importance of this group, found especially within its alumni community, as they helped with funding athletic facilities, travel, and equipment (Smith, 2011). Today, donations account for

approximately a quarter of athletic departments' total revenue (within Power Five and Group of Five programs; Akabas & Novy-Williams, 2024). In order to hold on to season tickets, fans are asked to give a required donation to the athletic department, which could be increasing with the continued growth of NIL (Emerson, 2024).

It is important to note that, across the board, college athletic programs often operate at a deficit and do not produce a profit (Hirko & Sweitzer, 2015). Revenue-creating sports, commonly football and men's basketball, are used to support sports that do not receive a profit. In addition, athletic programs pull from other areas such as student fees (Hirko & Sweitzer, 2015). For example, Ohio State University's (2024) revenue in football and men's basketball surpassed its expenses; however, it faced a deficit in women's basketball and all other sports. The revenues from profit-generating sports (football and men's basketball) offset that loss. For this reason, many schools are looking at ways to continue to offset that difference as the future of NIL begins to dip into that revenue as well (Emerson, 2024).

Name, Image, and Likeness

Name, Image, and Likeness, most often referred to as NIL, refers to the rule change that occurred in July 2021 when the NCAA allowed athletes to begin profiting from their brand image and notoriety through sponsorship and promotional deals (Hosick, 2021). The previous restriction was grounded in the NCAA's amateurism model; however, consistent pushback in the form of litigation limited the stronghold and ultimately resulted in a new age of college athletics.

The hypocrisy noted previously in the NCAA's Sanity Code (Smith, 2011) continued to face opposition. Sack and Staurowsky (1998) questioned the "amateur myth" in their book:

A band member who earns money on weekends by playing in a jazz club is free to do so. That same musician can leave school for a year, accept a salaried position with a symphony orchestra, and still return to school on a music scholarship...the amateur myth

denies [athletes] rights that are often taken for granted by other scholarship recipients. (p. 92)

Palmeiri (2021) noted that the financial influence of college athletes was demonstrated in 2019 when Duke University faced the University of North Carolina. Early in the game, Duke player Zion Williamson faced a serious injury after his shoe fell apart when he attempted to quickly change directions. Stock prices of Nike, the official gear sponsor of Duke's basketball team, fell a point the next day, with its competitor's stock (Under Armour) raising by 1.5 percent (Ferris, 2019). "This situation exemplifies the fact that these young athletes can have nearly a billion dollars riding on their performance and health in every matchup" (Palmieri, 2021, p. 10). As college athletics continued to grow, the question of who deserved payment became central.

The following section offers a timeline of the key litigation that paved the way for NIL, including the influx of state executive orders and laws that shaped the early years of NIL and the current litigation that is keeping the future in flux. The contemporary state of NIL is also considered, including notable NIL partnerships and the influence of donor-backed collectives.

The Evolution of NIL

It is important to note that the NCAA has been facing questions of the amateurism model and professionalism in college athletics since its beginning. By officially allowing athletic scholarships in 1956, the NCAA blurred the line of amateurism and opened itself up for accusations of hypocrisy (Sack & Staurowsky, 1998; Smith, 2011). The NCAA first faced antitrust allegations around its exclusive hold on television rights (Smith, 1987), and most of its litigation since has been grounded in antitrust law.

O'Bannon v. NCAA (2015). Ed O'Bannon, a former basketball player for the University of California in Los Angeles (UCLA), filed a suit in 2009 against the NCAA and Collegiate Licensing Company (CLC) pertaining to the use of his likeness in an Electronic Arts (EA) Sports

video game (*O'Bannon v. NCAA*, 2015; Palmieri, 2021). While the video game did not use athlete names, their likeness was obvious considering the game also used their jersey numbers (Rosenblatt, 2024). The class action lawsuit claimed, and the court agreed, that the NCAA violated the Sherman Antitrust Act in that they placed unreasonable restrictions on the college education market (*O'Bannon v. NCAA*, 2015). Specifically, the court found that if the restrictions were not placed on the market, “schools would compete with each other by offering recruits compensation exceeding the cost of attendance” (*O'Bannon v. NCAA*, 2015, p. 17). This case paved the way for future antitrust litigation as it became clear the NCAA was not above the Sherman Antitrust Act (Palmieri, 2021).

NCAA v. Alston (2021). The Alston case could be considered the catalyst for the NIL rule change, as it fully ignited the conversation surrounding athlete compensation. Ultimately decided by the United States Supreme Court, the case found that the NCAA violated antitrust law through its anti-competitive restrictions on education-related benefits (*NCAA v. Alston*, 2021). In its decision, the court also considered other NCAA restrictions. Justice Brett Kavanaugh, in his concurring opinion, raised critical points surrounding the NCAA and its amateurism model (*NCAA v. Alston*, 2021, Kavanaugh, J., concurring). He wrote,

The NCAA’s business model would be flatly illegal in almost any other industry in America... The bottom line is that the NCAA and its member colleges are suppressing the pay of student athletes who collectively generate billions of dollars in revenues for colleges every year. Those enormous sums of money flow to seemingly everyone except the student athletes. (*NCAA v. Alston*, 2021, Kavanaugh, J., concurring, pp. 3-4)

It was clear with this ruling that the NCAA’s amateurism model was not holding up in court. At this point, the states took over the fight for athlete compensation, starting in California.

State Laws and Executive Orders. While *NCAA v. Alston* (2021) was still in court, California passed the first state law that allowed college athletes to make money from their name, image, and likeness. Senate Bill 206, titled the Fair Pay to Play Act, specifically

prohibited any type of NCAA enforcement or punishment for schools that allow athletes to profit from their brand (Gutierrez & Fenno, 2019; Lockard, 2024). The law passed on September 30, 2019 (Gutierrez & Fenno, 2019). In October 2019, the NCAA announced that it would allow athletes to pursue name, image, and likeness sponsorship opportunities (NCAA, 2019), and it released an interim policy as the rule change officially took effect in July 2021 (Hosick, 2021).

While the interim policy put into place some restrictions, such as a ban on pay-for-play or improper use in recruitment (Hosick, 2021), NIL was primarily governed by state laws and executive orders. Thirty states had an active law or passed a law with NIL enforcement guidelines between August 2022 and May 2023 (Czekanski & Siegrist, 2024). Czekanski and Siegrist (2024) analyzed these state laws, evaluating their parameters and limitations. Seventeen of the state orders specified that the education institution and sport governing organization could not be involved in the negotiation or arrangement of NIL deals. Additional guidelines were proposed concerning university limits on permitting or denying NIL deals during official and unofficial team activities; the use of university intellectual property (IP) in deals; limits on NIL deals in risky categories of business (i.e., gambling, alcohol, adult entertainment, etc.); and disclosure requirements for athletes (Czekanski & Siegrist, 2024).

Berg et al. (2023) explored the policy discourse during this time and found that most discussions were about athlete well-being and competitiveness. Regarding athlete well-being, policy discourse was focused on making sure that athletes were taken care of economically for the work they put in. In addition, athletic programs and departments wanted to stay competitive, so states took charge to keep their institutions at the cutting-edge of the space (Berg et al., 2023).

One consistent aspect of state laws and executive orders was to draw a line between college and professional sports by specifying that money could not be earned through an

athlete's athletic ability (Czekanski & Siegrist, 2024, p. 18). In the NCAA's current Division I bylaws, the use of compensation based on athletic participation is prohibited (NCAA, 2024, p. 413). Adapting to the changing space, the NCAA once again redefined the amateurism line.

Federal Legislation Attempts. In the NCAA's first NIL policy announcement, it claimed that its interim policy would be in place until a federal regulation law was introduced (Hosick, 2021). While there has been congressional interest, along with several proposed bills, movement has primarily stalled. A total of six bills have either been officially referred to a committee or introduced in session (Table 2.2; Troutman Pepper, 2024). There has been little movement past this stage, however.

As state laws have managed the governing of NIL, the NCAA is hoping for a federal law that creates a consistent policy and allows the NCAA to enforce it (McCarter & English, 2024). While states are focused on keeping their universities competitive, laws have often varied. "The result has been a conflicting and decentralized legal framework for NIL opportunities across the country" (Kishner et al., 2023, para. 6). While it seems that there is interest in federal legislation, the timeline is still uncertain as factors such as the law's scope and ability to preempt state laws is discussed (McCarter & English, 2024).

Table 2.2

Federal Legislation as of September 26, 2024 (Troutman Pepper, 2024)

Bill Name	Sponsors
The Student-Athlete Level Playing Field Act	Representatives Emanuel Cleaver, II (D-Missouri) and Anthony Gonzalez (R-Ohio)
College Athlete Economic Freedom Act	Senator Christopher Murphy (D-CT)
Senator Ted Cruz Discussion Draft NIL Bill	Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX)
Protecting Athletes, Schools, and Sports (PASS) Act of 2023	Senators Joe Manchin (D-WV) and Tommy Tuberville (R-AL)
College Athletes Protection and Compensation	Senators Cory Booker (D-NJ), Richard

Act of 2023	Blumenthal (D-CT), and Jerry Moran (R-KS)
The Name, Image, and Likeness for International Collegiate Athletes Act	Senators Pete Ricketts (R-Nebraska) and Richard Blumenthal (D-Connecticut)

Contemporary NIL Market

In its first year, the NIL market reached a worth of \$917 million. Looking forward, the NIL market is expected to reach \$1.67 billion in its fourth year (2024-2025 school year) and \$2.55 billion in its fifth year (2025-2026 school year) (Opendorse, 2024). Athletes and brands are showing a stronger interest in participating in NIL deals, as both sides begin to feel the benefits of the growth and popularity of college athletics.

The contemporary NIL market is distinguished by the growth of donor-backed collectives, the enforcement ability of the NCAA, and the changes in transfer portal restrictions. Before diving into these aspects, key players and deals are explored to paint a picture of the current landscape of NIL and how athletes are utilizing their brand. In addition, the current scope of academic research related to NIL is reviewed.

Key Players. In considering the key stakeholders within the NIL space, the list includes college athletes, teams, athletic departments, universities, collectives, and third-party mediators (e.g., Opendorse), just to name a few. For college athletes, the immediate implications are clear as they now have the capability to make money from their name, image, and likeness. Implications and considerations past this fact are still being analyzed and evaluated. It is clear, however, that athletes are benefiting financially from the rule change.

Opendorse's (2024) recent analysis of NIL's third year found that spending and revenue within the space is growing. Division I men's basketball has seen a 72% growth, while women's basketball has seen an 85% growth year-over-year (Opendorse, 2024). Within Division I football, "the top 25 earners at any given position...can expect to earn \$294,134 annually"

(Opendorse, 2024, p. 6). On3, a sports analytics media company, tracks the NIL valuation of college athletes. In the top 10 earners as of October 2024, there were five football players, four men's basketball players, and one women's gymnastics athlete (On3, 2024). The average NIL evaluation of the top 10 athletes was \$2.9 million, with University of Colorado (CU) football quarterback Shedeur Sanders, Louisiana State University gymnast Livvy Dunne, and CU football cornerback Travis Hunter leading the list (On3, 2024).

When looking at the overall space of college athletics, however, these types of numbers are rare. The average college athlete is still capable of making an income from NIL opportunities. Johnson (2023) considered an example:

Rayquan Smith, a football and track student athlete at Norfolk State University, is a prime example. Although he is unlikely to become a professional athlete, Rayquan has secured over 70 NIL deals with popular brands, and he has even created his own company and website to further enhance his NIL profile. (p. 43)

Athletes of all levels are taking advantage of this new opportunity. Johnson (2023) even suggested that it is not the player's athletic ability that is pushing NIL, it is their marketability and promotional prowess. Keller (2021) agreed, stating that, "While superstardom on the field will help a handful of student-athletes find success in the NIL world, the vast majority of NIL earners will make their money off their creativity and marketability" (para. 8). Connor Printz, a former Division III basketball player from Claremont McKenna College, retired from college basketball after amassing a strong social media following and securing 80 NIL deals (Ehrlich, 2023). Skills in content creation, social media, and promotion are showing a larger impact on NIL marketability than athletic performance.

For teams, athletic departments, and universities, staying competitive and compliant are the main goals. NIL deals that go viral help in the promotion of a university, uplifting its brand, while also becoming a key recruitment tool (Kudialis, 2024). As athletic departments previously

promoted various campus amenities and perks, they now can lean on their NIL offerings and resources for recruiting athletes (Rubin, 2024). Compliance with the NCAA and state law is also important for a university to avoid any repercussions. Staying compliant includes, “educating student-athletes regarding how to monetize their NIL, developing legal document templates, and vetting each contract to determine whether they conflict with any agreements the school has with third parties” (Romano Law, 2021). Universities, such as the University of Georgia, are beginning to build in-house NIL departments to handle these tasks (Georgia Dogs, 2023), highlighting the increased emphasis that schools are putting on their NIL structure.

Universities have often partnered with third parties to manage NIL and partnerships. Companies like Opendorse and Teamworks have built platforms and structures to allow athletic departments and athletes make the most of NIL. Opendorse offers a marketplace for athletes to create profiles and directly connect with potential brand partners and endorsement opportunities (Opendorse, n.d.). While Teamworks (n.d.) offers programs for a variety of industries and areas, it has taken a step into the sports world with Influencer, a platform for teams and athletes to connect with brands to share content. Teamworks has also released a platform, NCAA NIL Assist, in partnership with the NCAA to provide resources for athletes (Wright, 2024b). Learfield, a company that partners with universities to assist in licensing, has also expanded into the NIL space, allowing universities and athletes to partner in brand deals (Learfield, n.d.).

The Deals. Opendorse (2024) has released annual reports since the onset of NIL, becoming a leader in the space by providing data on the growth of NIL and the nature of deals. The report categorizes deals as either collective or commercial. Collective deals are financed and organized by donors, while commercial brands are financed by a brand or fan (Opendorse, 2024). According to Opendorse’s (2024) most recent report, collectives account for more than

80% of the total compensation in NIL. While football is the leading sport in both categories, men's basketball accounts for 21.1% of collective compensation, while women's basketball accounts for 10.2 % of commercial deals (Opendorse, 2024). Within Division I women's volleyball, Opendorse's (2024) data indicates that the highest-earning athletes in the sport could sign up to 90 commercial activities annually.

Commercial activities, also referred to as brand deals, are the business partnership between a company or organization and an athlete (Kunkel, as cited in Hart, 2024; Opendorse, 2024). Dr. Thilo Kunkel, an associate professor at Temple University, explained in an interview with *Temple Now* that brand deals are the "purest form of NIL monetization" (Kunkel, as cited in Hart, 2024). An example of a commercial deal is University of Mississippi's quarterback Jaxson Dart's recent partnership with Dairy Alliance to endorse the benefits of dairy milk (Dairy Alliance, 2024). These deals are often completed through social media posts or other forms of endorsements (i.e., commercials, press events, etc.). Opendorse (2024) also considered deals with fans as commercial activities. These types of deals are often in the form of paying athletes to record a video message in the form of a shoutout, a deal offered through Opendorse's platform (Opendorse, 2024). Other types of deals include appearances, autograph signings, and other activities financed by a brand (Opendorse, 2024).

Collectives. Johnson (2023) defines a collective as "an independent business entity formed under state law to collect money from boosters and businesses through one-time payments or subscriptions" (p. 44). As stated previously, most of the compensation reaching athletes has been funneled through a collective (Opendorse, 2024), and it has also received the most pushback and criticism. "Collective deals have been criticized as "pay to play," as the compensation often exceeds the fair market NIL value of athletes" (Kunkel, as cited in Hart,

2024). This idea of “pay to play” goes back to the origins of the NCAA’s amateurism model and focuses on compensation to athletes based on their athletic ability (Oreard, 2012). Even today, the NCAA is focused on delineating college athletics from professional sports through its principle of Collegiate Student-Athlete Model (NCAA, 2024). These deals are characterized differently to commercial deals, as they are financed or organized by collectives.

Nakos (2022) proposed that there are three main types of collectives: marketplace, donor-driven, and the combined model. Marketplace collectives facilitate deals for athletes and teams. For example, The 15 Club, an NIL collective with the University of Kentucky, recently facilitated a partnership between its athletes and a local hotel, with the athletes appearing in an advertisement commercial (The 15 Club, 2024). The donor-driven aspect of collectives is the most criticized, as it can be perceived as pay-for-play. In an interview with the *Des Moines Register*, Brent Blum, the executive director of the We Will Collective for Iowa State University, shared that the collective paid athletes on the football team between \$1,500 and \$25,000 during the 2022-2023 season (Blum, as cited in Peterson, 2023). In return, collectives ask athletes to make appearances at collective subscriber events or partner and promote a local community partner or nonprofit. For example, Blum shared in the interview that the football players partnered with local nonprofits to help make an impact on the community (Blum, as cited in Peterson, 2023). Another example of how athletes appear on retainer for collectives, OneOklahoma, the official NIL collective of the University of Oklahoma, invites donors and collective subscribers to events that allow them to meet athletes (1Oklahoma, n.d.).

NCAA Enforcement. The NCAA has faced considerable obstacles when enforcing NIL guidelines. The first infraction was passed down in February 2023 to the University of Miami related to an incident regarding recruits for the women’s basketball team (Dellenger, 2023). A

meeting between two recruits and a booster was at the center of the case, with the punishment including a three-game suspension of the team's head coach for her part in organizing the communication and meeting (Murphy, 2023). Florida State University was also faced with penalties when an assistant football coach drove a recruit to a meeting with a booster, where the booster promised the recruit an NIL deal worth \$15,000 per month (Wright, 2024a).

The NCAA's ability to enforce potential NIL infractions came to a stop in January 2024 after attorney generals in Tennessee and Virginia filed a lawsuit against the NCAA's prohibition of using NIL for recruitment (Mandel, 2024a; Ubben, 2024). Attorney General Jonathan Skrmetti of Tennessee argued, "The NCAA's restraints on prospective students' ability to meaningfully negotiate NIL deals violate federal antitrust law" (Skrmetti, as cited in Ubben, 2024). The limits were lifted after a federal judge agreed with the lawsuits, granting an injunction that resulted in a NCAA that is unable to enforce its ban against using NIL in recruitment (Auerbach, 2024).

This landmark injunction occurred shortly after the NCAA's rules on transfer eligibility were also the topic of court battle in December 2023. The NCAA previously required athletes to sit out a season after transferring, but the rule was temporarily, and then permanently, enjoined after the NCAA settled with the United States Department of Justice's Antitrust Division (Mandel, 2024b). This has immediate and significant impacts on the space. Johnson (2023) posited two clear implications:

First, student athletes are now largely in control of where they play and for how long. Secondly, the interplay between NIL, transfer rules, and collectives is creating a new recruiting landscape and a college free-agency market akin to professional sports. It is no longer just about where a star high school or college athlete can win the most playing time or a national championship. (p. 47)

In addition to recent changes in recruiting and transfer eligibility, the NCAA is also navigating revenue sharing. In the landmark *House v. NCAA* settlement, which brought together

three of the NCAA's antitrust lawsuits (*House v. NCAA*, *Hubbard v. NCAA*, *Carter v. NCAA*), universities will be able to directly pay athletes (Pepe, 2024; Williams, 2024). The \$2.78 billion settlement includes back-pay to athletes (through 2016) who were unable to leverage their name, image, and likeness (Williams, 2024). While the settlement has been preliminarily approved, and revenue sharing could hit as early as the 2025-2026 season, the final model of what it will look like is still under deliberation (Williams, 2024).

The Study of NIL. Academic studies have begun to explore and evaluate NIL and its implications. Specifically, researchers have synthesized the multitude of policies, both state and university-level, and the perceptions of them. Czekanski and Siegrist (2024) explored the commonalities between 30 state laws focused on NIL, while Berg et al. (2023) evaluated the policy discourse in the early years of NIL. Through a critical discourse analysis, Harry (2024) analyzed 11 Congressional hearings surrounding NIL and the agendas within them from various stakeholder groups, including the NCAA and athletes.

Research has also considered the perception of NIL from athletes (Corr et al., 2023; Gulavani et al., 2023) and students (Fullerton et al., 2023). Corr and colleagues (2023) conducted interviews with athletes to gauge their understanding and knowledge of their own NIL value and their perception of institutional support. Their key findings uncovered that athletes did not have a clear idea of their NIL value, often discounting their potential earnings due to their sport's popularity, and that they felt institutional support was lacking (Corr et al., 2023).

Early studies explored the earning power of athletes (Cocco & Mooreman, 2022; Kunkel et al., 2021). Kunkel et al. (2021) found key evidence that NIL earnings would not solely be driven by institutions, which was a key concern early as universities worried that NIL success would only hit star athletes and top schools. While it was still a contributor to potential earning,

Kunkel et al. (2021) found that an individual's own brand and social media persona could lead to success in the space. Additional social media research within NIL has looked specifically at athletes' brand image creation (Hawkins-Jedlicka et al., 2023) and self-presentation differences (Wanzer et al., 2024), as well as how athletes showed emotion toward the NIL rule change via social media (Gulavani et al., 2023) and their evolving role as influencers (Fridley et al., 2023).

While NIL-focused research has begun to expose some of the implications and effects of the rule change, further consideration is necessary to understand the impacts from the athlete to the team to the university. The current study is the first, to this researcher's knowledge, that considers these impacts by positioning NIL as a public relations opportunity for college teams to build stronger relationships with its community.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

After introducing the contextual foundation of the study, this chapter examines the standing literature on organization-public relationships (OPR) in public relations, clarifying the theoretical and practical frameworks of the study. Key areas of research related to relationships are explored, including community relations and town-gown relationships, to consider the unique implications of college athletics in the relationship between a university and the town it resides in. In addition, the concept of team identification and its relationship with OPR is considered due to the study's placement in sports. This overview of research then leads into the study's proposed hypotheses and research questions.

Public Relations and Relationship Management

The public relations concept of relationship has been a focus of research since Ferguson's call for a stronger emphasis (1984; 2018). Several researchers followed this invitation, conceptualizing definitions and developing scales to understand the underlying components of a public's relationship with an organization. The focus on relationships in the current study stems from this call and invitation. Ferguson (2018) wrote, "It is difficult to think of any other field where the primary emphasis is on the relationships between organizations, between organizations and one or more groupings in society, or more generally with society itself" (p. 170). In the context of sports, especially, relationship management with fans is of high importance to teams, departments, and leagues as they navigate the intense emotions surrounding competitive sport.

Grunig (1993) posited that limiting public relations work to only managing "image" (i.e., symbolic relationships) is missing the opportunity to strengthen the behavioral relationships with publics. Contrary to symbolic relationships, which Grunig (1993) described as "superficial" (p. 123), behavioral relationships focus on the tangible interaction between publics and

organizations. Specifically, he proposed that behavioral relationships, while intertwined with the concept of image, are more powerful and have a greater effect on the organization's goals due to the personal characteristics of them (Grunig, 1993). To use this perspective, practitioners and researchers must create frameworks and practices that balance the issue of image and behavioral relationships.

The definition of public relations itself also lends itself to a focus on relationships. Cutlip et al. (1994) defined the field as “the management function that establishes and maintains *mutually beneficial relationships* [emphasis added] between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends” (p. 2). The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA, n.d.), defines public relations as “a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics.” Grunig and Hunt (1984) defined public relations as the “management of communication *between an organization and its publics* [emphasis added]” (p. 6). This focus on relationships is also seen in sports literature, as Stoldt and colleagues (2021) defined sport public relations as “a brand-centric communication function designed to *manage and advance relationships* [emphasis added] between a sport organization and its key publics” (Stoldt et al., 2021, p. 2). Considering these definitions from key public relations and sport scholars, it is clear that relationships are a key element of the public relations function.

Organization-Public Relationship

The definition of *relationship* has varied between scholars and disciplines. In a content analysis of relationship research in the public relations discipline, Ki and Shin (2015) found that only 7 out of the 124 articles between 1985 and 2013 included a definition of organization-public relationship. Broom, Casey, and Ritchey (1997, 2000) began the process of conceptualizing

relationships within public relations, offering several suggestions for future researchers to build from. One of these suggestions proposed that relationships are formed,

...when parties have perceptions and expectations of each other, when one or both parties need resources from the other, when one or both parties perceive mutual threats from an uncertain environment, or when there is either a legal or voluntary necessity to associate. (Broom et al., 2000, p. 18)

Ledingham and Bruning (1998), on the other hand, defined OPR as the “state which exists between an organization and its key publics in which the actions of either entity impact the economic, social, political, and/or cultural well-being of the other entity” (p. 62). Both of these definitions offer some boundaries to what public relations scholars consider as relationships, as they propose that relationships occur when the organization and public are aware of each other and influence the other.

OPR Research Streams. Most OPR research builds conceptually from the disciplines of interpersonal communication, organization and systems theory, marketing, and psychology (see Broom et al., 1997; Ledingham & Bruning, 1998). Huang and Zhang (2013) identified two main clusters of OPR research, with one focused on OPR as an outcome (dependent variable) and the other as a cause (independent variable). Within each of these clusters, various relationship elements have been explored.

From the review by Huang and Zhang (2013), the dependent variable thread stems from the work of Hon, Grunig, and Huang. Hon and Grunig (1999) proposed that while organizations should still measure outputs (instant and short-term effects of a public relations activity; Moore & Tapia, 2024) and outcomes (long-term effects of audience attention, understanding, and behavior; Moore & Tapia, 2024), they must also consider relationships. The researchers claim that organizations that effectively reach their goals do so because of the relationships they cultivate with publics (Hon & Grunig, 1999).

The OPR measurement from Hon and Grunig (1999) includes items for control mutuality (perception of agreement regarding balance of power), trust (perception of integrity and dependability), satisfaction (perception of relationship expectations being met), commitment (perception of investment in maintenance of relationship), and exchange relationship (relationship type with the expectation of equal benefits exchanged), and communal relationship (relationship type with no expectation of benefit exchange). Control mutuality, trust, satisfaction, and commitment are considered outcomes or signs of successful OPR. The scale also explores the type of relationship that the organization is achieving through the measurement of exchange and communal relationships. These elements explore how benefits of the relationship are balanced between the organization and public (Hon & Grunig, 1999).

Huang (2001) aimed to develop a cross-cultural scale from the scale by Hon and Grunig (1999). Huang (2001) included several similar relationship dimensions, including trust, commitment, satisfaction, and control mutuality. In addition, Huang (2001) added an element that tied to Chinese culture: face and favor. “In general, maintaining face or doing a face-work in front of others is important in social interactions, especially for expanding or enhancing human networks” (Huang, 2001, p. 69). This expansion allowed for the consideration of culture-specific relationship elements important within OPR.

The other thread noted by Huang and Zhang (2013) stemmed from the previous work of Bruning and Ledingham, wherein OPR is primarily an independent variable that influences various outcomes. For instance, the researchers found that OPR elements can predict publics who are staying or leaving a relationship with the organization (Ledingham & Bruning, 1998), consumer satisfaction (Bruning & Ledingham, 1998), and the type of relationship (personal, professional, or community) the organization has with a public (Bruning & Ledingham, 1999).

The researchers proposed that consumer behavior and perception is influenced by five relationship elements: trust (perception of reliance), involvement (perception of engagement with public), commitment (perception of maintaining a long-term relationship), openness (perception of transparency), and investment (perception of investing resources into maintaining the relationship) (Ledingham & Bruning, 1998). Within both research streams, the relationship dimensions have stayed fairly consistent and similar.

Theoretical Frameworks of OPR

Organization-public relationships (OPR) stem from a variety of theoretical frameworks, both within and outside of the public relations discipline. As mentioned previously, OPR elements have been formed through review of literature from interpersonal communication, organization and systems theory, marketing, psychology, among others (Broom et al., 1997; Ledingham & Bruning, 1998). The following theories offer insight to why OPR is an important and relevant concept to the current study.

Relationship Management Theory. This public relations theory stems from the work of Ledingham (2003; 2010), who proposed four discoveries that led to a paradigm shift within public relations. First, due in part to Ferguson's (1984) call, the concept of relationship became a focal point for the public relations function. Second, the push to recognize public relations as a management function led to a focus on discovering how practitioners should and can manage relationships. Third, researchers began to explore the various elements of relationships, including their antecedent and outcomes, and began to explicate the types of OPRs. Fourth, research led to the development of various models that helped to conceptualize OPRs antecedents, processes, and consequences (Ledingham, 2010, pp. 413-414).

Ledingham (2010) proposed that relationship management should be considered a general theory of public relations, offering a distinct theoretical framework and perspective of the discipline. He wrote,

...the overarching notion of relationships as an organizing concept for public relations offers an appropriate umbrella for subtheories ... provides both scholars and practitioners with a framework that is easily understood and that responds to the functional imperatives of organizations, publics and the greater society. Most importantly, the relational theory is predicated on the notion that the appropriate domain of public relations is that of relationships. Thus, the guiding principles of relationship building should be paramount in the study, teaching, and practice of public relations. (Ledingham, 2010, p. 422)

The relationship management perspective of public relations offers an opportunity to explore the various types of relationships that organizations face and, an important aspect of the current study, how relationships differ for each industry and therein organization. Exploring this aspect also offers key insights for professionals, allowing the findings to be directly applied to the practices of public relations practitioners (Ledingham, 2010).

While the theory has not been specifically used in sports communication research, concepts such as OPR and relationship dimensions have appeared across sports-related research (Kim & Gower, 2023; Çelebi, 2021). Research has continued to call for additional investigations into public relations theories in sports communication research (L'Etang, 2006; Waters, 2017).

Social Exchange Theory. Stemming from sociology, Social Exchange Theory looks specifically at the exchange of benefits from one to another, also considered the “voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring and typically do in fact bring from others” (Blau, 1964, p. 91). Erving Goffman (1959) also alluded to the concept of social exchange in his description of self presentation, proposing that an individual will express or present themselves with the goal of persuading those around them to believe that acting “voluntarily in accordance with his own plan” will be beneficial for all (p. 4).

While the foundation of Social Exchange Theory comes from interpersonal communication and sociology, it has also been cited and applied into OPR research. Clark and Mills (2012) based their dichotomous categorization of communal and exchange relationships on the theory. These opposing relationship-types are considered in Hon and Grunig's (1999) OPR scale to understand the type of relationship publics perceive to have with an organization. While exchange relationships expect some sort of exchange in benefits, communal relationships are not focused on the balance of the exchange and simply share benefits with the other entity (Hon & Grunig, 1999).

This theoretical perspective takes an economical approach to relationships, considering the costs and benefits of their creation and management (Kim, 2001). Within sports literature, the theory has been used in online fandom (Kirkwood et al., 2019) and sports marketing research (Rauf et al., 2024), as it considers how various benefits (social, financial, etc.) might be perceived or expected by fans when approaching various relationships. Kirkwood et al. (2019) highlighted how the sharing of content on social media resulted in social exchanges between fans. "Community members essentially combine fan spectatorship with the online social exchange to enhance their experience at both the individual and the group level" (Kirkwood et al., 2019, p. 70). Through this give-and-take of content on social media, fans create and form fandom experiences.

Relationship-Marketing Theory. Relationships have also been a core part of marketing research. Most definitions of relationship marketing prioritize the building of relationships with customers and markets. Berry (1983) defined relationship marketing as "attracting, maintaining and - in multi-service organizations - enhancing customer relationships" (p. 25).

Morgan and Hunt (1994) developed a commitment-trust perspective of relationship marketing to highlight the dimensions' key influences on customer relationships. Their study found that elements such as potential relationship termination costs and shared values led to relationship commitment, while shared values, communication, and opportunistic behavior (negative) influenced relationship trust. Through commitment and trust, the study found that customers were more likely to be compliant and cooperative, with any conflicts resulting in more beneficial solutions due to the built trust and commitment. In addition, customers were less likely to leave and show uncertainty (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Hennig-Thurau and Klee (1997) conceptually advanced the Morgan and Hunt (1994) model to consider the customer's quality perception of the product or service in addition to trust and commitment.

Grönroos (2004) proposed a three-factor process of relationship marketing. Often referred to as the CIV model, the three-part process includes communication, interaction, and value. Communication refers to the messages sent by the organization. Interaction can be considered similar to the way a transaction leads to the purchase of a product or service. The organization and customer must interact in some sort of two-way fashion. Finally, value refers to the customer's ability to perceive the value of not only the product but also the relationship (Grönroos, 2004). Abeza et al. (2013) found that social media could be used in creating opportunities for these elements of relationship marketing when evaluating the model in a sports context.

While OPRs focus more on publics rather than strictly customers, relationship marketing theory has been used within sports fan literature to explore donation behaviors (Bogina & Gordon, 2022), season ticket purchases (Finch et al., 2022), and social media strategies (Abeza et al., 2013; Abeza et al., 2017; Abeza et al., 2019; Stadler & Naraine, 2020). Overall, the research

found benefits in focusing on relationships and proposed benefits to developing strong relationships with fans. Abeza et al. (2019) suggested team- and fan-focused opportunities for social media as a relationship-building tool. These opportunities included increasing fan knowledge and improving sentiment toward different topics, humanizing the team brand, generating fan connection outside the game, fostering direct and ongoing communication between fan and team, and creating a space for customer service (Abeza et al., 2019).

These theoretical frameworks have direct lines to organization-public relationships, especially in considering the various elements of relationships. As highlighted previously, these theoretical frameworks, as well as literature from adjacent disciplines, has impacted the development of OPR scales and models. Overall, these measurements offer stable consideration of OPR dimensions and elements.

OPR Dimensions

Table 3.1 offers a look at the variety of relationship and identification dimensions across the discipline, highlighting the crossover seen among scales. While researchers have proposed some varying perspectives of OPR as a dependent or independent variable, the dimensions of a relationship have stayed fairly consistent and conceptualization similarities can be seen across studies. The following section explores the most common and relevant elements for the current study.

Table 3.1
Dimensions of Organization-Public Relationship

Authors	Scale	Relationship Elements
Grunig, Grunig, & Ehling, 1992	Important Elements of a Relationship	Reciprocity, Trust, Credibility, Mutual Legitimacy, Openness, Mutual Satisfaction, and Mutual Understanding
Ledingham & Bruning, 1998	OPR Dimensions	Trust, Openness, Involvement, Investment, Commitment
Hon & Grunig, 1999	PR Relationship Measurement Scale	Control Mutuality, Trust, Relational Satisfaction, Relational Commitment, Exchange Relationship, Communal Relationship
Huang, 2001	Organization-Public Relationship Assessment [OPRA]	Trust, Relationship Commitment, Relationship Satisfaction, Control Mutuality, Face & Favor
Kim, 2001	Four-Dimension OPR Scale	Trust, Commitment, Community Involvement, Reputation
Kim, 2008	Sport Consumer-Team Relationship Quality	Trust, Commitment, Reciprocity, Self-Connection, & Relationship Satisfaction

Trust. Trust is consistently used in all scales when focused on measuring OPR. Wilson (2001) posited that a relationship is “fundamentally based on trust” (p. 525). Ledingham and Bruning (1998), pulling from interpersonal communication literature, defined trust as a feeling of reliance between a public and an organization. Hon and Grunig (1999) characterized trust with three sub-elements: integrity, dependability, and competence. The researchers proposed that trust was the perceived level of confidence that an organization and public are open with each other

(Hon & Grunig, 1999). Additionally, Verčič and Grunig (2000) grounded trust in the framework of economics, stating that “companies are possible because they are trustworthy, and if they are not, they become improbable” (p. 19). Trust has become a key element within organizational research.

Considering how relationship qualities impact each other, Ki and Hon (2007a) found that satisfaction predicts trust that then predicts commitment. Within relationship marketing theory, Morgan and Hunt (1994) also found that trust had a significant impact on relational commitment. Across public relations literature, the concept of relational trust has been explored within corporate social responsibility (Ahn et al., 2021; Lim & Jiang, 2021; Vlachos et al., 2009), social media strategy (Ahuja & Alavi, 2018) and digital media (Suh & Pedersen, 2010), crisis communication (Kim, 2017), internal communication (Men et al., 2020), and source credibility (Ohanian, 1990; Wu & Wang, 2011).

Satisfaction. Similar to trust, satisfaction stems from interpersonal literature, with its original conceptualization considered in interpersonal communication (Hecht, 1978) and interpersonal relationship research (Hendrick, 1988). It should be noted that relational satisfaction and consumer satisfaction are distinguishable concepts. Consumer satisfaction is most often related to a specific moment between a consumer and a company, such as a product purchase, and is considered to be “the gap between what consumers perceive they have received and their expectations prior to consumption” (Bianchi et al., 2018, p. 209). Bruning and Ledingham (1998; 2000) considered consumer satisfaction as an outcome of their relationship qualities (trust, openness, involvement, investment, commitment), finding that the way consumers perceive the relationship through those qualities can predict consumer satisfaction with the organization.

Relational satisfaction shifts focus away from a specific product or consumer moment and instead prioritizes the perception of the relationship. Hon and Grunig (1999) defined relationship satisfaction as “the extent to which one party feels favorably toward the other because positive expectations about the relationship are reinforced” (p. 20). Ferguson (2018) considered four potential states of satisfaction:

... organization satisfied, public satisfied; organization satisfied, public unsatisfied; organization unsatisfied, public satisfied; and both organization and public unsatisfied. This simple classification scheme suggests that we would expect different behaviors to occur on the part of the organization and of the public depending on the degree of satisfaction with the relationship. (p. 171)

Grunig and Huang (2000) considered satisfaction as a relationship outcome in their process model, influenced more by emotion and affection than other outcomes. This conceptualization views relational satisfaction as an outcome of public relations strategies (maintenance strategies), along with other relational factors such as trust, control mutuality, and commitment (Grunig & Huang, 2000).

Commitment. Hon and Grunig (1999) defined commitment as “the extent to which one party believes and feels that the relationship is worth spending energy to maintain and promote” (p. 20). In Stensland et al.'s (2019) study on college athletics as a social anchor, they operationalized commitment within relationship quality as being devoted, committed, and dedicated to an athletic team.

In relationship marketing literature, Morgan and Hunt (1994) defined commitment as “an exchange partner believing that an ongoing relationship with another is so important as to warrant maximum efforts at maintaining it” (p. 23). Both of these definitions describe commitment as the level of perceived importance placed on building and maintaining the organization-public relationship.

Considering how relationship factors affect each other, Ki and Hon (2007a) found that commitment is significantly influenced by trust. Relationship marketing research has also found a similar path between trust and relationship commitment (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Commitment has become a key element within relationship literature, with findings showing connections from relational commitment to outcomes such as compliance and cooperation (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

Grunig and Huang (2000) focused on two types of commitment: continuance commitment and affective commitment. Continuance commitment referred to the commitment to a specific action, while affective commitment was an emotional commitment to the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1984). More clearly, continuance focused on a commitment to a supportive behavior, while affective commitment referred to the emotional or internal tie to an organization. Grunig and Huang (2000) posited that both types of commitment are important to understanding relational commitment and must be considered together.

Control Mutuality. Conceptualizations of control mutuality focus mainly on the locus of power within the relationship. Ki and Hon (2007a) posited that control mutuality is “related to the decision making process and the extent to which the opinion of each party is reflected in the final decision” (p. 421). Hon and Grunig (1999) defined control mutuality as “the degree to which parties agree on who has rightful power to influence one another” (p. 19). In order for relationships to be successful, there should be some form of agreement surrounding control within the relationship. This does not mean that control and power needs to be balanced and equal; however, there should be agreement surrounding it (Ki & Hon, 2007a).

Kim and Gower (2023) included control mutuality within their analysis of OPR and team identification; however, did not consider the subscales separately in analysis. They explained that the concept “is involved in the process of any decision-making and affects the extent to which

each party's voice can be heard in the final outcome" (pp. 718-719). Çelebi (2021) did consider the subscales and found that there was a correlation between control mutuality scores and fan commitment. The researcher suggested that organizations build opportunities to allow fans to take part in decision-making through "convincing, open, direct and active dialogue with the supporters' groups" (Çelebi, 2021, p. 101).

Investment. Ledingham and Bruning (1998), pulling from interpersonal communication literature, proposed that investment "refers to the time, energy, feelings, efforts and other resources given to build the relationship" (p. 58). Ledingham and Bruning (2000) found that communication campaigns that specifically focus on relationship elements, such as investment, can influence perceptions and behaviors. Ledingham and Bruning's conceptualization of investment (Bruning et al., 2006; Ledingham & Bruning, 1998, 2000) is focused on the perceived contribution to the community by the organization. Researchers have referred to investment in varying ways that overlap in their operationalization, including community involvement, reciprocity, and communal/exchange relationship.

Community Involvement. Adapted from Bruning and Ledingham (1998), Kim (2001) used community involvement when considering investment. Upon review of the scale items used within the study, investment and involvement are operationalized similarly by considering the organization's contribution to the community.

Consideration of community involvement has taken place within the OPR measurement and also alongside it. Mohammed (2014) included community involvement within their study of university performance, finding a significant relationship between the subscale and perceived university effectiveness. Based on their findings on government-public relationships, Kim and Cho (2019) proposed that a sense of community is vital to building strong relationships:

The results of this study indicate that relationship-management efforts such as developing personal trust between local authorities and the public, investing in the local community, and providing the public with professional services from local authorities can contribute to establishing a positive image of communities. (p. 304)

Overall, these findings highlight the need for a focus on community in relationship management and potentially measurement. Especially in the context of community-driven entities, such as government or higher education, the involvement in the community could have significant effects on OPR perceptions.

Reciprocity. Kim (2008) conceptualized reciprocity as a balanced give-and-take between the organization and its public. “The principle of reciprocity states that when one benefits from another, the recipient should return the favor in proportion to what the other has done for him or her” (Kim, 2008, p. 28). Reviewing the scale items, adapted by Kim (2008) from Uhl-Bien and Maslyn (2003), reciprocity shares a conceptual overlap with investment, with a few key differences. For instance, reciprocity is more focused on a balanced investment between the organization and public, while investment is more focused on the public’s perception of the organization’s investment, regardless of the public investment (Kim, 2008).

Harrison (2018) included reciprocity outside of her measurement of OPR through Stewardship Theory when looking at giving to higher education institutions. She found that reciprocity was an important factor in regards to OPR management, finding that donors appreciated acknowledgement of their giving in some way.

Exchange vs. Communal Relationship. Hon and Grunig (1999) also considered the kind of relationship – exchange vs. communal – that a public relations function aims for as a relationship indicator. This idea can be considered conceptually with the idea of investment as the type of relationship depends on the level of contribution between the organization and public. An exchange relationship expects some form of reciprocity in the benefits given, while a

communal relationship occurs when an entity in the relationship gives “benefits to the other because they are concerned for the welfare of the other—even when they get nothing in return” (Hon & Grunig, 1999, p. 21).

Namisango and Kang (2019) explored how relationship properties in social media interactions influenced the type of relationships perceived. Their findings showed that perceived symmetrical relationships were positively related to exchange relationships, while strong relationships were perceived with communal relationships and symbiotic relationships (Namisango & Kang, 2019). Symbiotic relationships were proposed by Hung (2005) in their relationship types continuum. These relationships are characterized by a shared understanding that the organization and public need each other, but there is not as strong a concern for the other as in exchange or communal (Hung, 2005). Hung (2005) proposed that mutual communal and exchange are among the relationship types that can develop a “win-win” relationship for publics and organizations.

OPR Outcomes

Organization-public relationship (OPR) studies have identified several outcomes of successful relationship management, including satisfaction (Bruning & Ledingham, 1998; 2000) and favorable attitude and behavioral intention (Kang & Yang, 2010; Ki & Hon, 2007b). In their exploration of the relationship elements of trust, openness, involvement, commitment, and investment, Bruning and Ledingham (1998; 2000) found that these dimensions can predict customer satisfaction with an organization. Bruning and Hatfield (2002) expanded on this, finding that when consumers perceive some sort of relationship with an organization, they are more satisfied with it. Kim and Gower (2023) supported this in a sports context as OPR was a significant predictor of attitudes.

As seen in the relationship scales, research has also positioned satisfaction within the OPR measurement, leading to a key impact on brand attitude. Ajzen and Cote (2011) defined attitude as the “evaluative disposition” to view something either positively or negatively (p. 289). When exploring OPR and attitude toward a brand, Kim and Chan-Olmsted (2005) found that the relational satisfaction significantly influenced brand attitude which therein impacted purchase intention. This is a similar finding to Ki and Hon (2007b), who also found that control mutuality significantly impacted brand attitude. The broader measurement of OPR has also been found to lead to a more positive attitude toward an organization (Kang & Yang, 2010), and Kim et al. (2011) added nuance to this by finding that perceived sincerity mediated the relationship.

In addition to satisfaction and attitude, OPR has been found to positively impact an organization’s reputation and consumers’ perception of organizational performance (Yang & Grunig, 2005; Yang, 2007). With reputation conceptualized as mental evaluations of an organization and its performance, Yang and Grunig (2005) found a direct line between OPR and reputation. This connection highlights the overall effectiveness of managing relationships through the public relations function.

Kim et al. (2011) also explored this link within sports sponsorship, finding that while OPR did not directly predict attitude toward a sponsor, it did influence each other through an indirect effect. Their study found that sincerity mediated the relationship between OPR and attitude toward a sponsor. “This result provides an explanation about how the psychological association between a sport consumer and a sport property may affect the sponsorship outcomes” (Kim et al., 2011, p. 573). This finding specifically highlights how the perception of a sponsor’s action is sincere is an important influencer of attitudes.

Research has also found a connection between OPR and behaviors. Specifically, OPR has been found to influence retention (Bruning & Ralston, 2000; Bruning, 2000; 2002; Ledingham & Bruning, 1998). Ledingham and Bruning (1998) found that the dimensions could predict whether customers would stay or leave a company service. Bruning (2000) advanced this, finding that those customers who perceived a relationship with an organization were more likely to stay as customers and perceive the relationship favorably.

In addition to retention, research has found that customers who perceive a stronger relationship also show more supportive behavioral intentions such as positive word-of-mouth and use of organizational media (Hong & Yang, 2011a; 2011b; Kang & Yang, 2010). In sports research specifically, these relationship elements have led to increased media consumption, licensed product purchase intention, community identification, attitude toward a sponsor, and event attendance (Kim, 2008; Kim & Gower, 2023; Kim et al., 2011; Stensland et al., 2019).

Donor Relations. When considering outcomes of giving, such as donation intention, the concept of relationship fundraising was born from OPR and relationship marketing literature. Burnett (1992) classified relationship fundraising as “a return to the close intimacy of the one-to-one relationship between a donor and cause” (p. 48). Nonprofit and fundraising literature has worked to theoretically and empirically conceptualize the connection between relationship management and fundraising (Burnett, 1992; Hall, 2002; Sargeant, 2001).

Research has also explored the connection between OPR elements and fundraising choices, finding that the connection a donor feels toward an organization is vital to their giving behaviors (Wright & Bocarnea, 2007). Considering OPR as the outcome, Harrison (2018) found that donors who give more than one major gift or endowment report higher OPR outcomes, similar to previous research that found that larger gift donors measure OPR elements higher than

annual givers (Waters, 2008). Repeat donors have also reported higher levels of OPR (O’Neil, 2007; Waters, 2008).

Regarding fundraising behaviors as the outcome, Waters (2011) found that the relationship elements of trust and satisfaction significantly predicted a donor's giving intentions, aligning slightly with previous research that found that commitment and trust most likely predicted giving (Waters, 2008). Wright and Bocarnea (2007) found that OPR elements significantly predicted alumni attitudes toward giving unrestricted funds. O’Neil (2007) also confirmed the importance of building strong relationships with publics: “The strongest indicators of a strong, positive relationship were between the relationship scores and donors’ happiness to continue giving and happiness to recommend others to donate” (p. 101). OPR and relationship management are key to building strong donor relations and sustaining donors.

In research evaluating fundraising to college athletics, Shapiro and Ridinger (2011) analyzed how gender influenced giving. The researchers found that overall donation behaviors, including size of contributions and longevity of giving were significantly lower for women. Female participants were also more likely to be affectively involved in giving, meaning they were tied closer by emotions rather than cognitive rationale (such as relevancy, value, etc.) (Shapiro & Ridinger, 2011). In the Giving to Athletics Model (GAM), Tsotsou (1998) found that athletics involvement and affective motivation predicted giving to athletic programs. This finding again confirmed the influence of emotions in giving and considered how involvement with college athletics can lead to higher giving.

OPR in Sports

OPR and public relations research has been explored less within sport communication than other contexts; however, researchers have begun to explore the unique relationship between

a fan and a team. In a dissertation, Kim (2008) proposed models that connected a conceptualization of relationship quality to attendance, consumption of sport media, and licensed merchandise purchase intention. Kim and Gower (2023) also brought OPR into a sports context, finding that relationship elements led to more positive attitudes and behavioral intentions, including attendance and purchase intention of merchandise.

Kim (2008) and Kim et al. (2011) explored how OPR affected attitudes and behavioral intentions toward a sports sponsor. Kim et al. (2011) found that OPR only predicted attitudes through the indirect effect of sincerity, meaning that the connection between relationship quality and attitudes was only significant when participants viewed the sponsor as sincere. In addition, this model then significantly predicted purchase intention of the sponsor's product, highlighting the significant path from OPR to purchase intention. Kim and Gower (2023) found similar findings in that OPR predicted supportive purchase intention through fans attitudes toward a team. Kim and Gower (2023) did not consider sincerity in their model, which highlights that fans might consider sincerity more strongly in their attitudes and behaviors toward a sponsor in comparison to a team.

For sport organizations, Kim et al. (2011) emphasizes the importance of building mutually beneficial and strong relationships with fans. "A good relationship with fans not only encourages sport consumption behavior related to the team, but also helps induce the purchase of the sponsor's product" (Kim et al., 2011, p. 574). This finding is especially important for sport organizations looking to improve the effectiveness of brand partnerships and sponsorships. By prioritizing strong relationships with fans, team organizations can highlight the benefits for sponsors who are evaluating the effectiveness of these paid opportunities. Kim and Gower

(2023) also offered similar implications for the team organization specifically, highlighting the importance of feedback loops with fans:

Sports fans recognize their identification with the teams and the relational endeavors of the team, and these fans' perceptions are directly linked to positive outcomes in terms of sports promotion and marketing. Therefore, sports teams must demonstrate a variety of in-depth communication styles and authenticity through a variety of communication channels as if they were in an interpersonal relationship with their fans. (p. 732)

Both studies, utilizing surveys, considered the unique way OPR should be considered within the sports industry (Kim et al., 2011; Kim & Gower, 2023). The relationship between a fan and their team is a unique one, and relationship literature in sport often adds the concept of team identification. Previous researchers have included the concept of self-connection within the relationship scale, claiming it “parallels team identification” (Kim, 2008, p. 26; Kim & Trail, 2011; Kim et al., 2011). On the other hand, Kim and Gower (2023) offered one of the first studies that brought team identification and OPR into the same model.

Community Relations

According to Ledingham and Bruning (2001), organizations that use strategic public relations should identify the community it is located in as an important public to build relationships with. Stoldt et al. (2021) described *community relations* as “a public relations function focused on building strong relationships with members of the community” (p. 241). Programs within this function are aimed to show the organization as a “good neighbor” in the community (Irwin et al., 2008, p. 13) and dedicated to the wellbeing of stakeholders (Thomas & Omojunikanbi, 2023).

Starck and Kruckeberg (2001) proposed that corporations are grounded in the value of public interest and introduced a community-building perspective of public relations that identified society itself as the most important stakeholder. Taking a communitarian philosophical approach to public relations, Wilson (2001) also argued that corporate success in the 21st century

will depend greatly on building relationships through corporate citizenship. “Corporate participation in the community will be driven by the strategic pursuit of an improved quality of life for all community participants, not because it is financially profitable but rather because it is the morally responsible course” (Wilson, 2001, p. 525). Additionally, Burke (1999) argued that even a company’s license to operate is in the hands of its communities, rather than the government.

Within OPR research, a company’s choice of developing a communal vs. exchange relationship can greatly impact its community engagement. When exploring the various types of relationships that an organization might develop, Hung (2005) found that companies most often described relationships as win-win, or covenantal relationships, mentioning public relations activities such as community relations and corporate social responsibility (CSR).

Hung (2005) proposed a relationship type continuum, which varied from concern for self and concern for others. The “win-win” relationships were considered exchange, covenantal, and mutual communal relationships, wherein benefits were exchanged between entities. “They believed that they not only invest in China but also participate in the development of China” (Hung, 2005, p. 403). These findings highlighted that, in the context of Fortune 500 companies in China and Taiwan, organizations aimed for developing a relationship that benefited itself and its publics and community.

Ledingham and Bruning (2001) described the relationship between a company and its community as symbiotic and dependent but not always equally beneficial. The goal of community relations is to work toward a mutually beneficial relationship between an organization and its community. These types of mutual relationships can lead to several benefits for both parties:

Organizations may benefit from tax incentives, favorable zoning rulings, and loyalty to the organizations' products and services from local citizens. Communities also may benefit through organizational sponsorship of community activities and events, investment in community infrastructure, support for educational initiatives, and so on. (p. 527)

Community relations has also been aligned with the concept of *corporate philanthropy*.

Burke (1999) proposed the idea of companies being a neighbor of choice, meaning that they are trusted to support, financially and other, the wellbeing of the community through its actions and contributions. Hall (2006) found that customers aware of a company's corporate philanthropy and community relations activities reported a stronger and more positive relationship with the company. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) also falls under this umbrella, where companies take actions outside the scope of their mission to meet the expectations of their community and society (Coombs & Holladay, 2011).

In his book on community relations, Burke (1999) made the claim that the way in which companies navigate relationships with their publics is vastly different than the two decades before. "There are dramatic and far-reaching changes in the expectations of communities and societies today that define and influence how a company can operate" (Burke, 1999, p. xiv). It can be argued that this has continued to be true in the two decades since his book was published. Most prominently, the definition of community itself has changed over time as social media and online connections have grown and strengthened.

Definition of a Community

Community relations is most often discussed in the context of geographically local communities but can also include any that an organization is strategically interested in or involved with (Stoldt et al., 2021). Researchers have stressed that the scope of community does not end with the geographical boundaries of where a company is located (Burke, 1999). Thomas and Omojunikanbi (2023) defined community as "a collection of people who interact in a

particular physical or online place and have shared traits, interests, or goals. It involves relationships on a social, cultural, and emotional level that foster a sense of support for one another” (p. 50). This conceptualization considered not just the geographical community, but also networks of communities that connect together in other ways, such as through social media or by a shared sense of identity (such as a fan or alumni).

Researchers have distinguished the concept of community with that of public, an important and prominent term in public relations literature. Ehling’s (1975) definition of community noted that individuals came together due to “a set of core concepts including such notions as public-ness, common-ness, shared interests or organization or locality, some kind of joint relationship or joint participation, and some kind of mutual interaction or intercommunication” (p. 32). His definition of public, on the other hand, centered around a shared situation or issue. A public is developed due to a common issue and, therefore, is not created or decided on by an organization, it is dependent on the shared issue. Ehling (1975) conceptualized publics as living within a community and developing through communication surrounding an issue or conflict.

Burke (1999) proposed that there are six community types that an organization must be knowledgeable of: site, employee, fenceline, impact, cyber, and common interest. The *site community* has to do with the geographical location of the company. According to Burke (1999), the site community is “the major definer of the company’s license or freedom to operate” (p. 61). This occurs through city and county ordinances, laws, and policies. The *employee community* refers to the communities that house the company’s employees, such as surrounding or separate areas from the site community. The *fenceline community* is the immediate neighbors to the company, impacted by the day-to-day realities of living near the company (i.e., increased traffic,

noise, etc.). An *impact community* are those additional communities, outside of site and employee communities, where an organization has or wants to have some kind of impact. This can occur unintentionally, such as when an organization dumps waste into a river that contaminates the water for communities downstream. It can also occur intentionally as communities increase activities or presence in a community that it does not have a usual direct impact. The *cyber community* is located online and has none of the geographical boundaries found in the other community types (Burke, 1999). Burke's (1999) definition of a *common interest community* is similar to the conceptualization of a public:

The purpose of a common interest community is to bring together all those who share an interest in common, develop plans that meet the needs of the common interest community, and win support for the plans from the larger or geographic community. (p. 66)

This type of community can include advocacy and interest groups who are focused on specific issues surrounding an organization. Contrary to Ehling's (1975) distinction of community and public, Burke (1999) considered the two intertwined. These six community types all have an impact on an organization's ability and right to operate within the community (Burke, 1999) and further highlights the breadth of what should be considered in an organization's community relations activities.

Town-Gown Relationships

The relationship between a college and the community it resides in, most often referred to as a town-gown relationship, has often been viewed and described in conflicting ways (Gavazzi et al., 2014; Gavazzi, 2015). Bruning et al. (2006) noted that these relationships "have been a source of difficulty, frustration and annoyance for both the town and the university" (p. 125). Communities often develop sour attitudes toward university tax breaks, heightened traffic congestion and noise, increased crime, and continual facility expansion; while university

leadership feel that the surrounding community does not appreciate the benefits of the institution (Harasta, 2002).

The various resources offered through university systems, however, have shown a light on some of the positive aspects of the partnership, such as university health and science institutions (Gavazzi, 2016). Cook and Nation (2016) posited that universities support democratic ideals and practices within the community through teaching, research, and service. Universities also have an economic impact on their communities by bringing in and training future residents. When conducting a case study analysis of Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio, Blackwell et al. (2002) found that 22% of the university's graduates remained in the area, building the trained workforce. The University of Alabama's economic impact report found that the university has a \$2.175 billion impact on the Tuscaloosa metro, including the creation of 12,853 jobs (Welbourne, 2024).

Athletics itself has been mentioned as a key benefit of town-gown relationships. When Ohio State University won the first ever College Football Playoff in 2014, the intense celebration within the university and community created stronger bonds (Gavazzi, 2016). Stensland et al. (2019) found that the perceived relationship quality between a community and its athletics department significantly influenced bridging (i.e., connections to disconnected groups within the community) and community identification. Athletics also grows the university's key economic impacts in the community. The University of Alabama's five home football games in the 2020-2021 season had a \$100 million impact on Tuscaloosa (Welbourne, 2024).

Universities must develop a strong and efficient relationship with their community in order to meet their overall mission of serving and educating students (i.e., their license to operate) (Burke, 1999; Harasta, 2022). Gavazzi (2016) proposed ten commandments for town-

gown relationships. These commandments offer key insight and guidance in developing positive community-college relationships, including the time needed in fostering mutually beneficial relationships and the key stakeholders (students, faculty, and alumni) affected by the university's mission (Gavazzi, 2016; 2019). In addition, the commandments emphasize the importance of remembering where the relationships have been, where they are now, and where they are going in the future (Gavazzi, 2016; 2019).

When universities do not cultivate positive relationships, they can encounter obstacles in their operations (Harasta, 2022). Gavazzi (2019) posited that universities must share the responsibility in building relationships with their community, holding just as much accountability as the community in fostering a win-win interaction. If time and work has not been used to develop the channels of feedback and discussion, the snowball of consequences grows larger. Gavazzi (2015) notes one consequence could include decreased state funding:

After all, politicians who wish to be reelected pay very close attention to the wishes of voters. And if those voters are more vocal about the cost of tuition than they are about the value of higher education because they have not been invited into sustained conversations about the return on investment that colleges and universities offer to communities, are we supposed to be surprised by a disinvestment outcome? (p. 3)

Gavazzi (2015) underscores the seriousness needed in developing strong and productive college-community relationships, as well as communicating the overall mission of the university and its benefits to a community. To better illustrate the complex dynamics of a town-gown relationship, researchers have also developed a typology, built from marriage literature, for categorizing and evaluating town-gown relationships.

Town-Gown Relationship Model. Gavazzi et al. (2014) used the metaphor of marriage when considering town-gown relations. “Although no diamond band is involved, the idea that some sort of “courtship” might be implied within in the process of bringing campus and community partners together should ring true to those who have participated in such efforts”

(Gavazzi et al., 2014, p. 363). This metaphor illustrates the complexities seen between towns and the universities within them.

Gavazzi and colleagues (2014) developed the typology grounded in two dimensions: comfort and effort. Through these two dimensions, four types of town-gown relationships were introduced: traditional, devitalized, conflicted, and harmonious. The default type is a *traditional town-gown relationship*, categorized as a low effort, high comfort state. In Gavazzi's (2019) interviews with university presidents and city managers, nearly all defined their relationship as traditional. While this relationship type calls for less work to remain comfortable, it is also described as "nothing ventured, nothing gained" (Gavazzi et al., 2014, p. 367). The two entities, communities and universities, live in bliss mainly due to ignoring each other.

The *conflicted town-gown relationship* is defined as high effort and low comfort, often due to continuous tension and arguments between the entities (Gavazzi et al., 2014). Gavazzi (2016) proposed that a contentious history can lead to a cycle of conflict that is hard for either entity to get past. A *devitalized town-gown relationship* refers to one with low effort and comfort; however, this was not always the case. This type of relationship "indicates disenchantment amidst a lost sense of connectedness" (Gavazzi et al., 2014, p. 366). Rather than continuing to show effort, both sides have given up and continue to live uncomfortably within the same community.

The *harmonious town-gown relationship* is the most sought-after type, defined as high effort and comfort. This type of relationship is seen when communities and universities continue to show effort in developing overall goals that benefit both entities (Gavazzi et al., 2014; Gavazzi, 2016). In Gavazzi's (2019) study of town-gown relationships, only one city manager described the relationship between the community and university as harmonious, lending credit

to an appointment on the university president's cabinet. This town-gown typology offers insight to not only understanding town-gown relationships, but also key dimensions to measure the relationship. When considering relationships between a community and its local, college sports team, it is vital that team identification is also included.

Team Identification

Team identification has primarily been considered in the sport communication discipline, rather than public relations, as it focuses more on the psychological connection with a team (Kim & Gower, 2023). Wann et al. (2001) defined team identification as “the extent to which a fan feels psychologically connected to a team” (p. 3). It has to do with a fan's “self-concept” and the strength to which it is tied to the team (Heere, 2016, p. 216).

Wann et al. (2001) offered distinction in classifying fans. First, they offer clear parameters to fans versus spectators. Fans are tied to a sport through interest, whether it be a team or player. Sport spectators are those considered to be sport consumers wherein they attend an event, whether in person or online. While these terms have been used synonymously in research, the difference between the two is important as sport spectators might attend a game without any sort of tie or interest to a team (Wann et al., 2001). Second, fans can be distinguished as direct and indirect sport consumers, based on the way they connect with a team. Direct sport consumers connect through a person's attendance at an event or game; while indirect sport consumers connect through some sort of media. Finally, Wann et al. (2001) distinguished fans between highly and lowly identified with the team. Through these categorizations, the strength and characteristics of a sports fan can vary greatly.

Theoretically, team identification is tied to Tajfel and Turner's (1986) Social Identity Theory (SIT), wherein individuals have both an individual identity and social identities. A social

identity is defined as, “that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the emotional significance attached to that membership” (Tajfel, 1974, p. 69). It is easy to see how this applies to sport fandom, as sport fans are likely to show public allegiance through wearing team merchandise and symbols (Giles & Stohl, 2016).

Team Identification Antecedents

Research has tied several antecedents to team identification, with one study finding more than 300 different explanations for why fans originally identify with a team and more than 500 reasons for why fans currently identify with a team (Wann et al., 1996). Wann (2006a) categorized antecedents into three types: psychological, environmental, and team-related.

Psychological antecedents include a want for a sense of connection and community with a team, as well as a togetherness with a fan group. This aligns with SIT where individuals will define themselves by identification with an ingroup (fans who are interested in the same team) (Giles & Stohl, 2016). The final psychological antecedent that Wann (2006a) mentioned refers to death salience, wherein a fan can more positively approach or consider their mortality. “When the salience of one’s mortality is increased, one’s identification for a sport team should also increase because, under such an environment, the protective properties of the identification should be most valuable” (Wann, 2006a, p. 335). This positive change would only occur with successful teams, as they are more likely to promote an enhanced image.

Environmental antecedents are tied to the “environment surrounding the spectator” (Wann, 2006a, p. 335). These antecedents include socialization, which has been supported by additional research that has found that family bonds have a strong tie to a fan’s choice of identity with a team (Towery, 2023). Additional environmental antecedents include interactions with

players, increased attention on an outgroup (i.e. rival), appreciation for the team's playing facility, and increased team-related stress (i.e. championship game, rivalry meeting) (Wann, 2006a). Finally, *team-related antecedents* include the history of the team and its organizational characteristics, as well as its success record and athletes (Wann, 2006a).

There have been conflicting findings regarding the geographic connection to team identification. While Schellenberg and Gaudreau (2023) found that team identification influenced social connectedness, it was not moderated by the locality of the team to the fan. Lianopoulos et al. (2020) also tested local versus distant fans within their model, finding insignificant differences. Yoshida et al. (2015) also found that being within the city of a team did not influence team identification; however, researchers have proposed and found evidence of a connection between team identification and an individual's identity with their city, state, or university (Heere & James, 2007; Heere et al., 2011; Towery, 2023).

Team Identification Outcomes

Wann (2006a) also distinguished outcomes of team identification into three categories: affective, behavioral, and psychological. Regarding affective outcomes, fans reporting higher levels of team identification will showcase stronger emotional reactions (Wann, 2006a). Prayag et al. (2020) found that the discrete emotions of love and happiness could be predicted by team identification. Fans show more positive emotions after a win, while also increasing their identity and connection with the team in the aftermath of success (Bizman & Yinon, 2002). This intensity is also seen in negative emotions. Ahn et al. (2012) found that highly identified fans were more likely to react stronger to team logo changes, showing the importance of communicating with a team's highly identified fans to understand their perspectives toward a team's history.

Fans who report a higher level of identification are more likely to showcase supportive behaviors toward the team (Wann & Branscombe, 1993). One well-researched outcome is BIRGing (Basking in Relegated Glory), when fans of a team celebrate and strengthen their tie with a team when they are successful (Cialdini et al., 1976). A fan's team identification has been significantly tied to BIRGing (Lianopoulous et al., 2020; Wann & Branscombe, 1990). Fan et al. (2020) found that BIRGing and team identification via social media were higher in fans when their team was winning. In addition, highly identified fans were less likely to separate themselves from the team after a loss, otherwise known as CORFing (Cutting Off Reflected Failure) (Wann & Branscombe, 1990).

In addition to BIRGing, team identification has also been linked to consumer behaviors, including game, team, and sponsor consumption (Wann, 2006a). This link has also been found in cross-cultural studies, including Australia (Melnick & Wann, 2011), Norway (Melnick & Wann, 2004), Greece (Theodorakis & Wann, 2008), the United Kingdom (Parry et al., 2014), Qatar (Theodorakis et al., 2017), and Iran (Salari & Mazyari, 2020). Regarding game and team consumption, team identification has been positively linked with attitude toward a team and brand, attitude toward a product, game attendance, and merchandise purchase intention (Kim & Gower, 2023; Kwon & Armstrong, 2002; Lee et al., 2013; Wakefield, 1995). This also translates to sponsor consumption, as research has linked high fan and team identification to purchase intention of a sponsors' products (Chih-Hung Wang et al., 2012; Madrigal, 2001).

The connection between team identification and collective attachment to other fans has been explored, both as an antecedent and outcome (Lianopoulous et al., 2020; Towery, 2023; Wann, 2006b; Yoshida et al., 2015). As an antecedent, Yoshida et al. (2015) found that sport attachment and fan community attachment were both related to team identification, with fan

community attachment having the strongest impact on game attendance. As an outcome, Lianopoulos et al. (2020) found a significant positive connection between team identification and social connections and collective self-esteem. Therefore, as a fan's team identification increases, they are more likely to build social connections with other fans and build a stronger sense of self-esteem (Lianopoulos et al., 2020). Wann (2006b) proposed the Team Identification–Social Psychological Health Model. “Once a fan has developed a sense of identification with a particular team, the identification is believed to have a positive impact on social psychological health” (Wann, 2006b, p. 275). This model and the concept of social connections ties to team identification's foundation in SIT.

Team Identification Scales

Researchers have developed several scales to further understand team identification. The Psychological Commitment to Team (PCT) scale from Mahony, Madrigal, and Howard (2000) was created to measure and categorize fans based on their reported loyalty and commitment to a specific team. This scale has been found to score poorly in construct validity (Kwon & Trail, 2003), which Heere and Dickson (2008) point to the ambiguity between loyalty and commitment as the cause.

The PCT classifies fans into four loyalty categories: high, spurious, latent, and low (Mahony et al., 2000). These four areas are based on psychological commitment (attitudinal) and behavioral loyalty. High loyalty fans exhibit both high psychological commitment and behavioral intentions. Spurious fans exhibit high behavioral consistency and weak psychological commitment. These fans attend games often but are not as tied to the team as high loyalty fans. Latent fans exhibit high psychological commitment and low behavioral consistency. Low or non-

loyalty fans show both low psychological commitment and behavioral consistency (Mahony et al., 2000).

Wann and Branscombe's (1993) Sport Spectator Identification Scale (SSIS) is one of the most used within sport communication and marketing research. This seven-item scale allows researchers to categorize fans by identification and has been tested widely and used in a variety of contexts and cultures (Wann, 2006a). According to James et al. (2019), the SSIS scale was used in more than half of the studies related to team identification by 2017. James et al. (2019) introduced a revised SSIS (SSIS-R) scale after finding that researchers were lumping lowly identified fans with those who did not identify at all as a fan.

Heere and James (2007) built from the unidimensional SSIS scale to create a multi-dimensional scale with six dimensions: public evaluation, private evaluation, interconnection of self, sense of interdependence, behavioral involvement, and cognitive awareness. Private and public evaluation focused on the overall satisfaction and perception of being aligned with a team by the individual and others, respectively. Interconnection of self and sense of interdependence are tied to attachment. Interconnection to self relates to the personal tie and connection the fan has to the team. Sense of interdependence also focuses on this tie but is focused on how the team's success and failures affect the fan. Behavioral involvement was described as the actions an individual takes part in that strengthens their tie to a specific identity, while cognitive awareness relates to an individual's degree of awareness that they are tied to a specific group (Heere & James, 2007).

Linking OPR, Community Relations, Team Identification, and Sports

Through this description of relationships in public relations literature, team identification in sports research, and community relations, the current study draws a connection between these

research streams and the college sport space. Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) deals have moved past just social media endorsements, with athletes now participating in initiatives that promote social impact, philanthropy, and local and community engagement. For example, North Carolina State University athletes raised \$4,635 through their NIL collective for a local nonprofit aiding those affected by Hurricane Helene (Henderson, 2024a). Additional deals and partnerships have been seen as athletes and collectives partner with local charities and community organizations.

Building from key research by Kim and Gower (2023), this study proposes a complementary model that positions NIL as an opportunity for community relations. Specifically, OPR and team identification are identified as key dimensions to measure the success of fostering and developing stronger town-gown relations between an athletic team and its community. Before introducing the model, it is important to reiterate and specify the key terms and concepts used.

This study uses a similar operationalization of OPR as Kim and Gower (2023), who introduced the first model using OPR and team identification simultaneously, wherein OPR is a fan's perception of the extent that an athletic team puts effort into its relationship with fans. Kim and Gower (2023) utilized dimensions of OPR that stemmed from research by Hon and Grunig (1999), including control mutuality, satisfaction, trust, and commitment. Due to this study's focus on NIL and its connection to community relations, the dimension of commitment has been reconceptualized as community investment and involvement. Within the typology model of town-gown relationships, Gavazzi et al. (2014) emphasized effort and comfort as key to the relationships. Investment considers this effort within OPR. In Bruning and colleagues' (2006) study on town-gown relationships, investment was defined as the perception that the university is

investing or will invest in the community. Adapted for the current study, investment is defined as a fan's perception that the team is committed through a show of dedication and willingness to invest resources, such as time and finances, to engage with a community and fans. Therefore, the current study measured OPR through the dimensions of trust, satisfaction, control mutuality, and investment.

Within the context of this study and model, team identification is defined as a fan's perception of their personal connection with a team, which is similar to previous research (Kim & Gower, 2023). While Kim (2008) utilized self-connection as an OPR dimension, the current study takes the perspective that OPR and team identification must remain separate. Contrary to OPR's focus on external effort by the team, team identification measures a more personal reflection on the individual attachment between a fan and team. Previous research has found that team identification is fairly stable, regardless of team success (Lock et al., 2014; Wann & Schrader, 1996), and also serves as a moderator for fan attitudes and perceptions (Ahn et al., 2012). For this reason, team identification is treated as a potential moderator, rather than a dependent variable, to assess its role in shaping the impact of NIL deals and exploring the relationship between OPR and team identification.

Proposed Hypotheses and Research Questions

The main goal of this research was to evaluate the way NIL deals influence fan and community relations (OPR and team identification) for a team and consider how these elements lead to supportive fan behaviors. The findings could have implications for broader university relationships, as Wann and Robinson (2002) found that higher team identification led to a more positive perception of the university. However, the current study focused specifically on the relationship between an athletic team and its community as a starting point.

The experiment explored the specific influence of NIL partnerships on community relations (Figure 3.1). This is the first study to consider the nature of NIL deals and their impact on attitudes, OPR, and supportive behaviors. The first set of hypotheses consider the relationships between attitudes, team identification, OPR, and supportive fan behaviors.

OPR, Team Identification, and Behaviors. Literature has found connections between relationship quality dimensions and various affective and behavioral outcomes (Bruning, 2000; 2002; Bruning & Ralston, 2000; Hong & Yang, 2011; Kang & Yang, 2010; Ki & Hon, 2007b; Kim & Chan-Olmsted, 2005; Kim et al., 2011; Ledingham & Bruning, 1998; O'Neil, 2007; Wright & Bocarnea, 2007; Yang, 2007; Yang & Grunig, 2005). In addition, the influence of team identification on fan attitudes and behaviors has been found (Kim & Gower, 2023; Kwon & Armstrong, 2002; Lee et al., 2013; Lianopoulous et al., 2020; Salari & Mazyari, 2020; Wakefield, 1995; Wann & Branscombe, 1990). As the context of this study is focused on college athletics and NIL implications, the final affective and behavioral outcomes focus primarily on attitudes, NIL giving behavior intention, game attendance intention, media consumption intention, and team merchandise purchase intention.

H1: Fans' perception of OPR will directly and positively influence their attitudes toward their favorite team.

H2: Fans' attitude toward their favorite team will directly and positively influence supportive behavioral intentions, including (a) game attendance, (b, c) media consumption, (d) merchandise purchase, (e) financial giving to a team, and (f) financial giving to a collective.

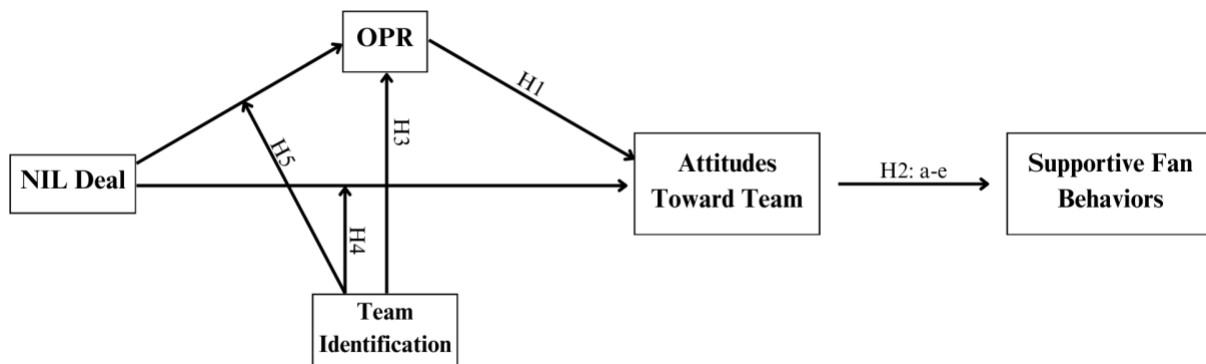
H3: Team identification will directly and positively influence fans' perception of OPR.

Team Identification as a Moderator. Team identification was considered in the context of this study as a moderator. Building from Kim and Gower (2023), the current study explored the relationship between OPR and team identification. Previous research has also found that highly identified fans show different attitudinal and behavioral reactions to outcomes and changes (Ahn et al., 2012; Madrigal & Chen, 2008). With this in mind, it is assumed that various paths within the model are moderated by team identification. Specifically, team identification was proposed as a moderator for the impact of NIL deals on OPR and attitudes toward the team.

H4: Team identification will moderate the impact of an NIL deal on attitudes toward a team, such that the positive effect of NIL deals on attitudes toward the team is stronger for individuals with higher levels of team identification.

H5: Team identification will moderate the impact of NIL deals on OPR, such that the positive effect of NIL deals on OPR will be stronger for individuals with higher levels of team identification.

Figure 3.1
Hypothesized Model: Influence of NIL Deals



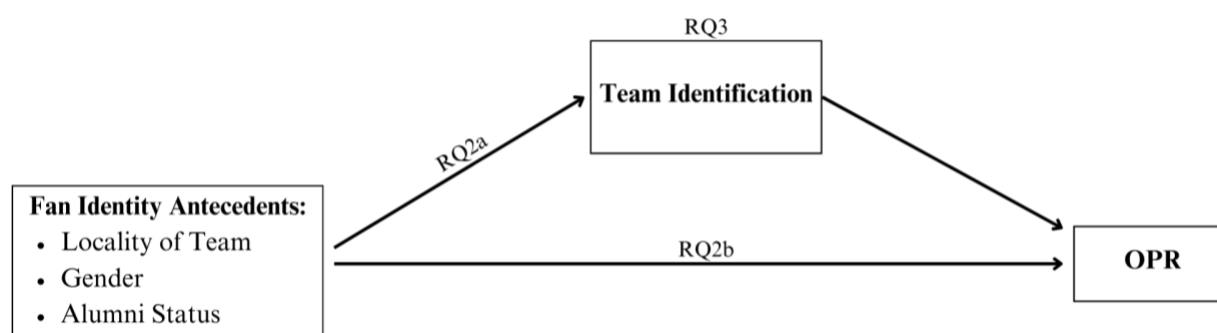
Nature of NIL Deals. Regarding the nature of NIL deals, the experiment also explored how the locality and profit-status of the company or organization in the partnership, as well as the type of NIL deal, impacted affective and behavioral outcomes. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) literature helped to identify a potential hypothesis. Research considering the impact of CSR has found positive outcomes, including favorable relationship perceptions (Hall, 2006). In addition, CSR partnerships with nonprofits have led to supportive outcome intentions and consumer-company identification (Rim et al., 2016). Lii and Lee (2012) found that philanthropic CSR initiatives led to more favorable attitudes compared to sponsorship or cause-related marketing initiatives. Regarding locality, sponsorship literature has found that local or regionally proximate partnerships result in more favorable attitudes and perceptions of the sponsorships and the participating brands (Cork, 2017; Woisetschläger et al., 2010).

In addition, the experiment considered the type of NIL deal. A systematic review of the current literature shows there has been no study on the effect of NIL deal type. Previous research has evaluated endorsement type (active vs. passive) (Um & Jang, 2020) and celebrity endorsement types (Jolly & L, 2013); however a broader look at varying types of NIL deals has not been considered. This experiment specifically looks at the two main ways that NIL deals are categorized: commercial and collective (Kunkel, as cited in Hart, 2024; Opendorse, 2024). Commercial deals are defined as traditional partnerships between a team or player and a company or organization, while collective deals are distinguished as organized by a third-party NIL collective.

H6: NIL partnerships with local nonprofits will lead to (a) higher OPR perceptions, (b) more positive attitudes toward the team, and (c) more supportive fan behavioral intentions than both non-local and for-profit partnerships.

RQ1: How does the NIL deal type (commercial vs collective) impact (a) perception of OPR, (b) attitudes toward the team, and (c) supportive fan behavioral intentions.

Fan Antecedents. A secondary goal of this research was to explore potential antecedents to a fans' perceptions of OPR and team identification (Figure 3.2). These antecedents, including alumni status, gender, and locality, offer insight to the factors that lead to loyal and connected fans. Kim and Gower (2023) evaluated gender as a potential moderator for fan identity and behavioral intentions; however, they found that the only significant difference was on the impact of attitude on attendance intention. While Kim and Gower (2023) used a professional team within their study, the current study considered this antecedent in the context of college athletics. Regarding the locality of a fan, previous research has been conflicted. While research in the context of professional teams in non-U.S. settings have found no evidence of a geographical connection (Lianopoulous et al., 2020; Schellenberg & Gaudreau, 2023; Yoshida et al., 2015), Towery's (2023) qualitative study on college fandom did see this connection. "Every participant was a fan of a college team within their state's borders" (Towery, 2023, p. 11). Therefore, this study considered the locality of the fan to their favorite college football team to evaluate its impact on team identification and OPR perception.

Figure 3.2*Hypothesized Model: Influence of Fan Identity Antecedents*

Team Identification as a Mediator. In addition, as shown in the previous study, the influence of team identification on OPR was considered. Within the context of fan identity antecedents, this study considered team identification as a mediator. Team identification is innately tied to an individual's self-concept (Heere, 2016). Previous research has shown that team identification results in stronger emotional reactions (Bizman & Yinon, 2002; Wann, 2006a) and more supportive behaviors (Kim & Gower, 2023; Wann & Branscombe, 1993). When looking at team identification within an organizational setting, Pugliese et al. (2023) found that it mediated the positive relationship between communication climate and perceived external prestige on organizational citizenship behavior, highlighting that team identification explains the relationship between the two concepts. Due to team identification's psychological and innate characteristics, it is assumed that the impact of fan identity antecedents on their perceived OPR with a team is explained by a fan's connection and identification with the team.

RQ2: What is the relationship between fan attachment points (locality of team, gender, and alumni status) and fans' (a) team identification and (b) perception of OPR?

RQ3: Does team identification mediate the relationship between fan antecedents and Organization-Public Relationships (OPR)?

From these hypotheses and research questions, this study extends existing OPR and team identification literature while examining their influence within the context of college athletics and NIL. This investigation not only expands the understanding of how these frameworks operate in the evolving space of college athletics but also considers the broader implications of NIL partnerships as community relations.

Chapter 4: Methodology

In order to explore the research questions and test the proposed hypotheses, an experiment was conducted. The experiment allowed for a specific and targeted analysis of NIL deals as opportunities for community relations by capturing insights from college football fans and examining the effect of various deal types on supportive behaviors. Specifically, utilizing an experiment allowed for causal relationships between variables to be explored and considered with the most precision (Thorson et al., 2012). The experiment analyzed fans' perceptions of NIL deals and measured the deals' impacts on attitudes, OPR, and behavioral intentions (NIL giving intention to a team and collective, game attendance intention, media consumption intention, and team merchandise purchase intention).

Experimental Design

A repeated measures factorial mixed-design 2 (locality of organization/company: local vs. non-local) x 2 (profit-status of organization/company: nonprofit vs. for-profit) x 2 (NIL deal type: commercial vs. collective) experiment was deployed. The stimuli included a short description of an NIL partnership with an organization that the participant's favorite college team was participating in. Locality was between-groups and manipulated through the organization or company description (i.e., local restaurant vs. national restaurant chain). NIL deal type and profit-status were within-groups. NIL deal type was manipulated through the inclusion of a source of the deal (i.e., organized by an NIL collective), while profit-status was manipulated through the organization type (i.e., community food bank vs. restaurant).

This mixed-design structure reduced error variance by accounting for individual differences as the individual acted as their own control, allowing for more statistical power when

detecting effects between the within-groups manipulations (i.e., NIL deal type and profit-status) (Coleman, 2018). In addition, this design allowed for a smaller sample size than a full between-groups design and for the exploration of individual differences regarding the perception of NIL deal type and profit-status. To minimize any order or carryover effects, the display order of within-group treatments was randomized for each participant and potential order effects were further analyzed (Grabe & Westley, 2003).

Instrument

The experiment and questionnaire was developed through two separate Qualtrics instruments for the between-groups factor (locality of partnering organization). In the invitation, participants were asked to click on either link one (local) if their birth day was an even number and link two (non-local) if their birth day was an odd number. This allowed for random assignment to the between-groups factor.

Each participant went through a pre-screening questionnaire that confirmed fan identity and other necessary participation requirements (i.e., older than 18 years old, resides in the United States). This made sure that only participants who are relevant for collection took the survey. Once this was confirmed, participants moved into an additional questionnaire that measured fan identity antecedents and team identification. Two potential covariates, attitudes toward NIL and attitudes toward NIL collectives, were also measured at this stage.

The participants then moved to the pretest. Elements in the pretest were measured in each post-test after stimulus exposure. Pretest and post-test variables included OPR, attitudes toward the team, and supportive fan behaviors. Each participant was exposed to four messages (see appendix A), each describing an NIL deal that their favorite college football team was

participating in. Participants who clicked on link one were shown only messages featuring local business/organization partners, while those who clicked link two were only shown messages featuring national business/organization partners. Within the four stimulus messages shown, they varied by NIL deal type (commercial vs. collective) and profit-status of the partnering organization (for-profit vs. nonprofit). Participants were forced to stay on the stimulus page for 30 seconds to allow and require thorough consideration of the post before moving to the questions. After each message, participants were given the posttest, including measures for perceived OPR, attitudes toward the team, and supportive fan behaviors. At the end of the experiment, all participants answered several demographic questions before reading a short debrief message that made clear that the deals mentioned in the study were fictional and not based on true partnerships with their favorite teams.

Stimuli

The stimuli for this experiment were short social media announcements of NIL deals that involved the participant's favorite college football team. These mock social media announcements appeared to come from a general football news account. All aspects of the social media post, other than the message, were kept consistent across all treatments. The choice to focus on team-wide deals was made to control for variation in perceptions of specific players. Football was chosen due to its popularity and success as the top NIL-generating sport (Opendorse, 2024).

The messages were manipulated through the organization type and description. References to the organization were kept vague so that participants could apply them to their favorite college football team. Only food-related companies and nonprofits were used to keep

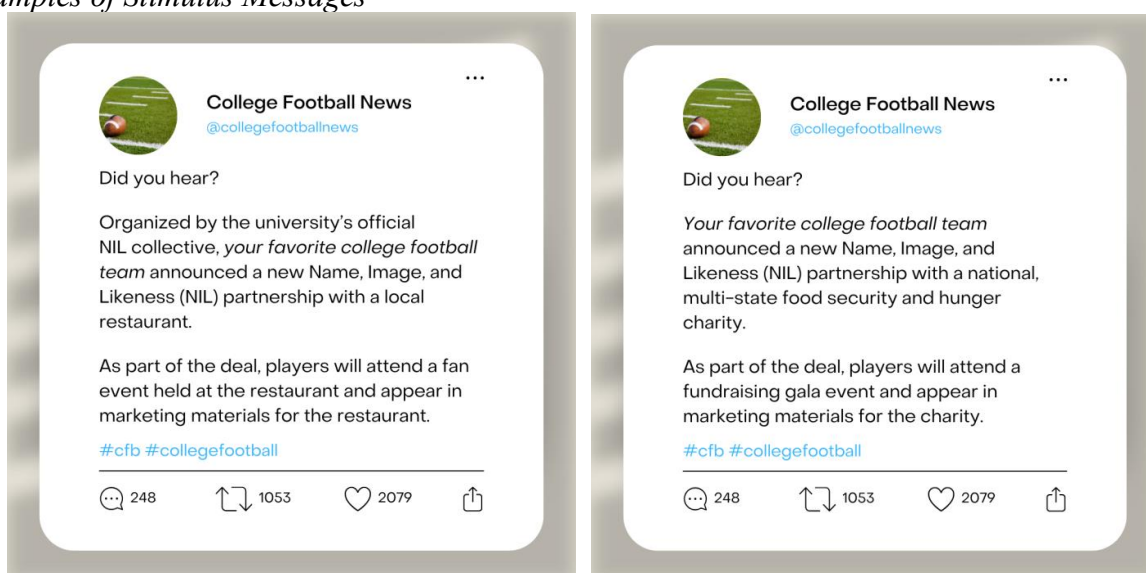
organization type stable. This was decided due to the food industry's prominence in NIL activities, with food products accounting for 5.9% and restaurants and dining accounting for 3.8%. These brand categories rank sixth and ninth, respectively (Opendorse, 2024). Higher ranking categories, such as technology, apparel, leisure and recreation, and healthcare, were avoided strictly due to recognition and the ease at which participants can apply the organization to their own experience. Food-related organizations, such as community food banks and restaurants, were chosen under the assumption that they are easier to recognize and consider than other categories.

For the local, nonprofit organization, a local community food bank was used. For the local, for-profit company, a local restaurant was used. A national food security and hunger organization was used for the non-local nonprofit, while a national restaurant chain was used for the non-local, for-profit company. In order to add some description to the messages, the second sentence of each stimulus gave a short description of the players' responsibilities. These were varied only to the degree that they were relevant for the deal. Each description included an action or appearance (e.g., players will attend a fan event held at the restaurant) and a reference to marketing materials (e.g., [players will] appear in marketing materials for the food bank). A pair of stimulus messages are included in Figure 4.1, with additional stimuli in appendix A.

Each of the treatments were then varied by NIL deal type. Within the stimuli, the perceived source or organizer of the deal was manipulated. For commercial deals, no reference to a third-party entity was mentioned. For collective deals, a mention of the university's official NIL collective was mentioned (i.e., organized by the university-affiliated NIL collective...). A manipulation check was included in the pilot test. Based on participant feedback, a few aspects

of the instrument were changed. First, the description of collectives was updated to make it clearer and offer more specifics to the nature of collectives. Second, rather than saying NIL in the announcements, the stimuli were updated to say “Name, Image, and Likeness” at least once. Finally, instructions were added and edited in places. For instance, an additional instruction was added to make sure participants knew they would be viewing four stimuli to ensure they stayed to the end of the experiment.

Figure 4.1
Examples of Stimulus Messages



Measures

In total, the instrument included seven concepts - college football fan antecedents, OPR, team identification, general attitudes toward NIL, general attitudes toward collectives, attitudes toward the team, supportive behavioral intentions, and demographics - with a total of 5 subscales with 53 individual items. In the pre-screening questionnaire, participants answered three questions related to fan identity and other study requirements (age and residence). In the pre-experiment questionnaire, participants were measured on team identification, attitudes toward

NIL and collectives, and fan identity antecedents. Within the pretest and post-test, participants were measured on items for perceptions of OPR, attitudes toward the team, and supportive fan behavioral intentions, including giving intention to a team, giving intention to a collective, game attendance intention, media consumption intention, and team merchandise purchase intention. With the mixed design, 26 items were asked five times (one pretest with four posttests), with each participant answering a total of 157 items.

Covariates

Demographics. Participants were asked a variety of demographic questions to collect a holistic view of the sample make-up, including age, race and ethnicity, education level, and household income. Age was measured with the open-ended questions, “What is your age today (in years)?” and allowed participants to type their response.

Gender was measured in a categorical question, “What is your identified gender?” Options included male, female, non-binary / third gender, prefer not to say, and prefer to self-identify, which included a text box for participants to offer their own response.

Ethnicity was measured with a categorical question, “What is your identified ethnicity?” Options included White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino/Spanish, and Other. An additional option allowed participants to self-identify.

Participants reported their education through the question, “What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?” Options included less than high school, high school graduate, some college but no degree, Associate degree in college (2-

year), Bachelor's degree in college (4-year), Master's degree, Doctorate degree, and Professional degree (JD, MD).

Household income was measured with a categorical question, “What is your annual household income?” Options included less than \$10,000, \$10,000 - \$19,999, \$20,000 - \$29,999, \$30,000 - \$39,999, \$40,000 - \$49,999, \$50,000 - \$59,999, \$60,000 - \$69,999, \$70,000 - \$79,999, \$80,000 - \$89,999, \$90,000 - \$99,999, \$100,000 - \$149,999, and more than \$150,000.

All demographics were considered as potential covariates.

General Attitudes Toward NIL. A four-item semantic scale was used to measure the general attitudes of participants toward NIL. A short description of NIL was provided:

Name, Image, and Likeness, often known as NIL, refers to the rule change that allows college athletes to make money with the use of their name, image, and likeness. These opportunities often include sponsorships, social media endorsements, or other business partnerships. Due to the NIL rule change, athletes can profit from their personal brand and maintain eligibility (the ability to compete in college athletics).

Participants measured their attitude toward NIL on a seven-point scale between contradicting descriptors, including unfavorable/favorable, bad/good, dislike/like, and negative/positive. This four-item scale was adapted from previous research that measured attitudes and was used for the below attitudinal measurements (Kim et al., 2011; Kim & Chan-Olmsted, 2005; Kim & Gower, 2023; Ko et al., 2017). A previous use of this scale from Kim et al. (2011) found a reliability of 0.89. Inter-item reliability was acceptable (Cronbach’s alpha = .942, $M = 4.659$, $SD = 1.430$).

General Attitudes Toward Collectives. A four-item semantic scale was used to measure the general attitudes toward NIL collectives. A short description of collectives was provided:

NIL collectives were created to support college athletes in profiting with their name, image, and likeness. While schools might be affiliated with a specific collective,

collectives are separate and independent from the university. While there are several types of collectives, the entities often pool resources from donors, sponsors, and fans to provide financial support to athletes. Collectives can also organize community events, sponsorships, or philanthropic initiatives involving athletes.

Participants measured their attitude toward collectives on a seven-point scale between contradicting descriptors, including unfavorable/favorable, bad/good, dislike/like, and negative/positive. This four-item scale was adapted from previous research that measured attitudes and was used for the below attitudinal measurements (Kim et al., 2011; Kim & Chan-Olmsted, 2005; Kim & Gower, 2023; Ko et al., 2017). A previous use of this scale from Kim et al. (2011) found a reliability of 0.89. Inter-item reliability was acceptable (Cronbach's $\alpha = .966$, $M = 4.341$, $SD = 4.565$).

Independent Variables

Antecedents. Two antecedent measures were asked early, after the fan identity confirmation. Gender, one of the fan identity antecedents, was measured with other demographics. To measure alumni membership, participants were asked if they are alumni of the university associated with their favorite college football team through a yes/no categorical question. For locality, previous research has utilized a variety of question forms. Yoshida et al. (2015) measured the concept through local city attachment scale, while Kim and Gower (2023) asked participants how far away their favorite team played. To avoid asking too much of fans' knowledge surrounding the distance of the home stadium, the current study utilized two questions (i.e., Is your favorite college football team's home stadium located within the same city/town that you reside? / Is your favorite college football team's home stadium within the same state that you reside?).

Dependent Variables

OPR. As previously proposed, the current study measured OPR through the dimensions of trust, satisfaction, control mutuality, and investment. Scale items were adapted to allow for the measurement of these dimensions (e.g., Bruning et al., 2006; Hon & Grunig, 1999; Ledingham & Bruning, 1998). The resulting scale for OPR was 16 items long, with 4 items per dimension. The items were measured on a seven-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree). For trust, satisfaction, and control mutuality, a shortened scale adapted from Hon and Grunig's (1999) original scale was used (Huang, 2001). This scale was successfully used by Kim and Gower (2023) and Ki and Brown (2013). Since OPR was measured after each stimuli exposure, Table 4.1 reports the Cronbach's alpha, mean, and standard deviation for each use of the scale and subscale. All scales and subscales resulted in an appropriate reliability ($\alpha > .7$), OPR was only considered as a cumulative scale due to inconsistent factor loading (see Tables 4.2 & 4.3). Further consideration of this is included in the discussion.

Trust. The items for trust included: "This team is truthful with me," "This team treats me fairly and justly, compared to other teams," "Generally speaking, I do not trust this team" (reverse coded), and "This team keeps its promises." Ki and Brown (2013) found reliabilities of .79 and .86 in their previous use of the subscale.

Satisfaction. For satisfaction, items include: "Generally speaking, this team meets my needs," "Generally speaking, my relationship with this team has problems" (reverse coded), "In general, I am satisfied with my relationship with this team," "My relationship with this team is good." Ki and Brown (2013) found reliabilities of .87 and .89 in their previous use of the subscale.

Control Mutuality. Control mutuality was measured with four items, including: “Generally speaking, this team and I are both satisfied with the team’s decisions,” “In most cases, when team decisions are made, both this team and I have equal influence,” “Both this team and I agree on what we can expect from one another,” and “This team and I equally contribute and benefit in our relationship.” Ki and Brown (2013) found reliabilities of .78 and .83 in their previous use.

Community Investment. Community investment is tied to the concepts of investment (Bruning et al., 2006), reciprocity (Kim et al., 2011), commitment (Hon & Grunig, 1999), and communal relationships (Hon & Grunig, 1999). As previously mentioned, investment in the context of this study is defined as a fan’s perception that the team is committed through actions of investment, such as time and finances to the community and fans. Therefore, items were selected based on a show of concern or action toward helping the community. The proposed measurement pulls two items from the Hon and Grunig (1999) scale on communal relationships, one item from Hon and Grunig’s (1999) scale on commitment, and Bruning et al.’s (2006) item for community involvement. These items include: “I feel that this team is trying to maintain a long-term commitment with my community,” “The team seems to invest in my community,” “This team is very concerned about the welfare of my community,” and “I don’t consider this team to be particularly helpful to my community” (reversed coded). As a subscale formed primarily for this study, a pilot test was used to check this subscale, as well as to confirm reliability of cumulative scale.

Table 4.1
Reliabilities of OPR Scale and Subscale

Scale		Pre-Test	Collective/ For-Profit	Collective/ Non-Profit	Commercial/ For-Profit	Commercial/ Non-Profit
OPR	<i>α</i>	.850	.897	.899	.906	.897
	<i>M</i>	4.897	4.952	5.150	4.982	5.213
	<i>SD</i>	.794	.919	.930	.944	.901
Trust	<i>α</i>	.886	.931	.942	.944	.932
	<i>M</i>	5.126	5.204	5.325	5.232	5.411
	<i>SD</i>	1.065	1.135	1.155	1.101	1.069
Satisfaction	<i>α</i>	.802	.776	.762	.777	.732
	<i>M</i>	5.312	5.241	5.347	5.290	5.382
	<i>SD</i>	1.022	1.034	1.030	1.024	1.001
Control Mutuality	<i>α</i>	.714	.764	.732	.777	.772
	<i>M</i>	4.212	4.171	4.370	4.212	4.404
	<i>SD</i>	1.336	1.293	1.257	1.336	1.327
Investment	<i>α</i>	.825	.796	.804	.844	.817
	<i>M</i>	5.325	5.193	5.558	5.196	5.655
	<i>SD</i>	1.214	1.220	1.241	1.282	1.184

Table 4.2
Factor Loadings of OPR Measurement Items in Pre-Stimuli Measurement

Factors and Items	λ
Trust	
This team is truthful with me	.815
This team treats me fairly and justly, compared to other teams	.815
Generally speaking, I do trust this team	.779
This team keeps its promises	.743
Satisfaction	
Generally speaking, this team meets my needs	.679
Generally speaking, my relationship with this team has problems [R]	.721
In general, I am satisfied with my relationship with this team	.699
My relationship with this team is good	.688
Control Mutuality	
Generally speaking, this team and I are both satisfied with the team's decisions	.352*
In most cases, when team decisions are made, both this team and I have equal influence	.759
Both this team and I agree on what we can expect from one another	.812
This team and I equally contribute and benefit in our relationship	.817
Community Involvement	
I feel that this team is trying to maintain a long-term commitment with my community	.854
The team seems to invest in my community	.866
This team is very concerned about the welfare of my community	.808
I don't consider this team to be particularly helpful to my community [R]	.672

* Item did not load on the expected factor.

Table 4.3*Factor Loadings of OPR Measurement Items in Post-Stimuli Measurements*

Factors and Items		λ per Condition			
		1	2	3	4
Factor 1 - Trust & Satisfaction	α	.921	.924	.927	.917
This team is truthful with me		.863	.878	.848	.820
This team treats me fairly and justly, compared to other teams		.815	.858	.863	.854
Generally speaking, I do trust this team		.861	.880	.889	.883
This team keeps its promises		.887	.879	.914	.868
Generally speaking, this team meets my needs		.811	.837	.797	.780
Generally speaking, my relationship with this team has problems [R]		.306*	.226*	.388*	.166*
In general, I am satisfied with my relationship with this team		.797	.835	.692	.761
My relationship with this team is good		.816	.826	.791	.821
Generally speaking, this team and I are both satisfied with the team's decisions		.721	.873	.807	.770
Factor 2 - Control Mutuality	α	.762	.736	.763	.783
In most cases, when team decisions are made, both this team and I have equal influence		.836	.837	.853	.833
Both this team and I agree on what we can expect from one another		.449*	.381*	.501	.682
This team and I equally contribute and benefit in our relationship		.734	.726	.695	.812
Factor 3 - Community Involvement	α	.796	.804	.844	.817
I feel that this team is trying to maintain a long-term commitment with my community		.873	.860	.865	.818
The team seems to invest in my community		.894	.863	.842	.807
This team is very concerned about the welfare of my community		.850	.828	.817	.738

I don't consider this team to be particularly helpful to my community [R]	.431*	.560*	.660	.685
---	-------	-------	------	------

* Items did not reach a factor loading of .60 or higher on any factor.

Attitudes Toward Favorite Team. A four-item semantic scale was used to measure attitudes toward their favorite football team. Participants measured their attitude toward the team on a seven-point scale between contradicting descriptors, including unfavorable/favorable, bad/good, dislike/like, and negative/positive. A previous use of this scale from Kim et al. (2011) found a reliability of 0.89. All uses of the scale resulted in an appropriate reliability ($\alpha > .8$) (Table 4.2).

Table 4.4
Reliabilities of Attitudes Toward Favorite Team Scale

	Pre-Test	Collective/ For-Profit	Collective/ Non-Profit	Commercial/ For-Profit	Commercial/ Non-Profit
<i>α</i>	.896	.982	.980	.965	.962
<i>M</i>	6.187	5.505	5.975	5.400	6.070
<i>SD</i>	.991	1.397	1.296	1.322	1.112

Supportive Behavioral Intention. Supportive behaviors were chosen based on previous research and relevance to the study (Ahn et al., 2012; Kim, 2008; Kim & Chan-Olmsted, 2005; Kim & Gower, 2023). These behavioral intentions included game attendance intention, media consumption intention, team merchandise purchase intention, financial giving intention to a team, and financial giving intention to a collective. All behaviors were measured with single items on a seven-point Likert scale (1=extremely unlikely, 7=extremely likely).

Game attendance intention was measured from a single item, “I will attend my team’s future games” (Fink et al., 2002; Kim & Gower, 2023). Media consumption intention was measured with two items, focused on watching games and tracking news. These items included, “I will watch or listen to my team’s game(s) through the media (e.g., TV, Internet, Radio, etc.) in the future” and “I will track the news of my team through the media (e.g., TV, Internet, Radio, etc.) in the future” (Kim, 2008). Team merchandise purchase intention was measured from a single adapted item, “I will purchase my team’s merchandise in the future” (Fink et al., 2002; Kim, 2008; Trail et al., 2003).

Giving intention toward the team and a collective were each measured with an item adapted from Kim and Walker (2013), with the specific donation entity changed. The item for giving intention to the team was, “I will donate to my team’s NIL fund (managed by the school) in the future.” The item for giving intention to the official collective was, “I will donate to my team’s official NIL collective (managed by the independent collective) in the future.”

Moderator

Team Identification. This study utilized an adapted version of Wann and Branscombe’s (1993) Sport Spectator Identification scale due to its popularity and wide testing (Wann, 2006a). James and colleagues (2019) revision improved the scale by allowing for the identification of non-identified individuals, who were previously assessed as lowly-identified. The current study includes this revision by asking a pre-screening question to ensure only college football fans complete the experiment. This question is given prior to the pre-test and includes, “Do you identify yourself as a fan of a college football team, even if just a little bit?” If participants fail to report themselves as a fan, they are not moved forward to complete the experiment.

Once participants showed that they identify as a college sports fan, they answered the seven-item team identification scale, which was measured on a seven-point Likert scale. While the original items utilized varying scale points, each item for this study was adapted to fit on an agreement scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree). Items include: “It is important to me that my favorite college football team wins”, “It is important to me to be a fan of my favorite college football team,” “I strongly see myself as a fan of my favorite college football team,” “My friends strongly see me as a fan of my favorite college football team,” “During the season, I closely follow my favorite college football team via any of the following: in person or on television, on the radio, on television news or a newspaper, or the Internet,” “I strongly dislike my favorite college football team’s greatest rivals,” and “I often display my favorite college football team’s name or insignia at my place of work, where I live, or on my clothing.” Clarke et al.’s (2024) recent use of the revised scale found a reliability of 0.91. Inter-item reliability was acceptable (Cronbach’s alpha = .891, $M = 6.048$, $SD = 0.966$).

Manipulation Check

While a pilot test was used to test the stimuli and independent variables, manipulation checks were not used in the experiment. This decision was made based on the argument from O’Keefe (2003) that manipulation checks are not necessary when the research focus is based on outcomes from specific message variations. In this instance, the participant perceptions are based on the NIL deal characteristics, which were manipulated in line with the factors under study.

Participants and Sampling

The research population was college football fans over the age of 18 and located within the United States. Participants were asked questions prior to the pre-test portion to confirm fan

identity, age, and residence. G*Power, a statistical power analysis program, was used to identify the appropriate sample size based on the between-groups measurements. The a priori estimates suggested a total of 204 participants to detect a small to medium effect size (0.35) at a power of .8, and a total of 172 participants to detect a medium effect size (0.45) at a power of .9 (Cohen, 1988; Faul et al., 2007; Mayr et al., 2007). After cleaning, the sample reached 190, which was deemed appropriate to move forward with analysis.

A volunteer sample was recruited through various means. Participants self-volunteered through an online social media post by the researcher that included the experiment via Qualtrics. The initial invite message stated that participants must be over the age of 18, reside in the United States, understand English, and identify as a college football fan. While this sampling method reduced the control in the experiment, it allowed the participant pool to include a wider demographic (Wimmer & Dominick, 2014). The researcher outreached to a volunteer sample, utilizing contacts and social media to spread the experiment link and recruit participants. Relevant hashtags were used to target college football fans (i.e., #CollegeFootball, #cfb, #cfbplayoffs). Participants were also recruited through college football fan groups and pages on social media platforms, such as Facebook and Reddit. A single link was used in recruitment, taking the participants to a landing page. The landing page prompted participants to select one of two experiment links based on their birthday date (odd or even).

Regarding compensation for this recruitment sample, a chance to win one of ten \$15 gift cards through a random raffle was offered as potential compensation. The average duration was approximately 30 minutes. Recruitment occurred over a month from February 14, 2025 to March 24, 2025. Upon completion of recruitment, there were a total of 361 recorded responses across

the two online links. The between-groups dispersion was nearly equal across participants who saw only local NIL deals ($n = 188$) and those who only saw national NIL deals ($n = 173$). In addition to the recorded responses, 140 responses were “in-progress” at the time and not included in analysis.

Research Sample

Table 4.5 reports the demographic characteristics of the research sample ($N = 190$). The sample’s ages ranged from 18 to 77, with an average age of 32 ($M = 31.96$, $SD = 13.245$). The majority of participants were male ($n = 125$, 65.8%) and white ($n = 153$, 80.5%) with a bachelor’s (four-year) degree ($n = 61$, 32.1%) and a household income of more than \$150,000 ($n = 48$, 25.3%).

Table 4.5
Demographic characteristics of sample

Demographic	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	125	65.8%
	Female	57	30%
	Non-Binary/Third Gender	5	2.6%
	Prefer Not to Say	3	1.6%
Age	18-20	38	20%
	21-30	71	37.4%
	31-40	36	18.9%
	41-50	27	14.5%
	51+	18	9.5%
Ethnicity	White	153	80.5%
	Asian	12	6.3%

	Hispanic/Latino/Spanish	11	5.8%
	Black/African American	6	3.2%
	American Indian/Alaska Native	4	2.1%
	Other	2	1.1%
	Prefer to Self-Identify	2	1.1%
Household Income	Less than \$10,000	20	10.5%
	\$10,000 - \$19,999	8	4.2%
	\$20,000 - \$29,999	7	3.7%
	\$30,000 - \$39,999	12	6.3%
	\$40,000 - \$49,999	10	5.3%
	\$50,000 - \$59,999	9	4.7%
	\$60,000 - \$69,999	7	3.7%
	\$70,000 - \$79,999	10	5.3%
	\$80,000 - \$89,999	14	7.4%
	\$90,000 - \$99,999	8	4.2%
	\$100,000 - \$149,999	37	19.5%
	More than \$150,000	48	25.3%
Education Level	High School Graduate	10	5.3%
	Some College but No Degree	56	29.5%
	Associate Degree in College (2-year)	13	6.8%
	Bachelor's Degree in College (4-year)	61	32.1%
	Master's Degree	34	17.9%
	Doctorate Degree	7	3.7%
	Professional Degree (JD, MD)	9	4.7%

Team and Fan Characteristics. When asked about the school that their favorite college football team is affiliated, participants reported a total of 37 schools across all three NCAA divisions and 11 athletic conferences (Table 4.6). The majority of teams were NCAA Division I ($n = 188$), with Division II and III represented with one school each. Regarding conferences, 83% of the schools represented were part of the Power 4, including the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) ($n = 4$), Big Ten Conference ($n = 9$), Big 12 Conference ($n = 8$), and Southeastern Conference (SEC) ($n = 9$). The schools were located in 28 different states, with multiple schools represented in Texas ($n = 4$), Oklahoma ($n = 3$), Florida ($n = 2$), Iowa ($n = 2$), Indiana ($n = 2$), and Utah ($n = 2$).

Of the participants, 54.2% reported that they were not alumni of the school affiliated with their favorite college football team, while 45.8% reported that they were alumni of the school. Regarding locality to the team, 40% reported that they lived in the same city as the team, while 65.8% reported that they lived in the same state.

Table 4.6
Favorite college football teams represented in sample

School	Location	Conference	Div.	Freq.	%
University of Oklahoma	Norman, OK	SEC	I	80	42%
University of Nebraska-Lincoln	Lincoln, NE	Big Ten	I	18	9.5%
University of Michigan	Ann Arbor, MI	Big Ten	I	14	7.4%
Louisiana State University	Baton Rouge, LA	SEC	I	10	5.3%
Ohio State University	Columbus, OH	Big Ten	I	10	5.3%
University of Tennessee	Knoxville, TN	SEC	I	10	5.3%
University of Kansas	Lawrence, KS	Big 12	I	7	3.7%

University of Oregon	Eugene, OR	Big Ten	I	6	3.2%
Florida State University	Tallahassee, FL	ACC	I	4	2.1%
Baylor University	Waco, TX	Big 12	I	2	1.1%
University of Alabama	Tuscaloosa, AL	SEC	I	2	1.1%
University of Wyoming	Laramie, WY	Mountain West	I	2	1.1%
Angelo State University	San Angelo, TX	Lone Star	II	1	.5%
Brigham Young University	Provo, UT	Big 12	I	1	.5%
Clemson University	Clemson, SC	ACC	I	1	.5%
Duke University	Durham, NC	ACC	I	1	.5%
Iowa State University	Ames, IA	Big 12	I	1	.5%
Manchester University	North Manchester, IN	Heartland Collegiate Athletic	III	1	.5%
Oklahoma State University	Stillwater, OK	Big 12	I	1	.5%
Penn State University	University Park, PA	Big Ten	I	1	.5%
Rutgers University	New Brunswick, NJ	Big Ten	I	1	.5%
Texas A&M University	College Station, TX	SEC	I	1	.5%
University of Arkansas	Fayetteville, AR	SEC	I	1	.5%
University of Colorado	Boulder, CO	Big 12	I	1	.5%
University of Florida	Gainesville, FL	SEC	I	1	.5%
University of Georgia	Athens, GA	SEC	I	1	.5%
University of Hawaii	Honolulu, HI	Big West	I	1	.5%
University of Iowa	Iowa City, IA	Big Ten	I	1	.5%
University of Notre Dame	Notre Dame, IN	ACC	I	1	.5%
University of Rhode	Kingston, RI	Atlantic 10	I	1	.5%

Island					
University of Southern California	Los Angeles, CA	Big Ten	I	1	.5%
University of Texas	Austin, TX	SEC	I	1	.5%
University of Tulsa	Tulsa, OK	American Athletic	I	1	.5%
University of Utah	Salt Lake City, UT	Big 12	I	1	.5%
University of Wisconsin	Madison, WI	Big Ten	I	1	.5%
Yale University	New Haven, CT	The Ivy League	I	1	.5%
West Virginia University	Morgantown, WV	Big 12	I	1	.5%

Data Analysis Process

Using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 30), descriptive statistics were used to give insight to the overall research sample. Independent samples t-tests and ANOVAs were also used to explore fan antecedents (gender, alumni status, and locality) impact on team identification and OPR. Mixed-design ANOVAs were used to explore the within- (NIL deal type and profit status of partnering organization) and between-groups factors (locality of the partnering organization) related to the nature of NIL deals and their impact on OPR, attitudes toward the team, and supportive fan behaviors. Mixed Linear Models (MLM) were conducted to consider direct paths within the model while accounting for multiple observations per participant. For the moderation and mediation models, Hayes Process Model was used to evaluate the indirect effects (Hayes, 2022).

Data Cleaning Procedure

Any response where participants did not complete every question or item measurement was excluded. In addition, any response where the participant completed the experiment in less

than five minutes was removed as it meant the participant spent less than a minute on each test block. This time limit was also chosen after analysis of the shorter experiment times saw a substantial increase in “straightlining” or answering with the same value (1) across all items in all scales.

After cleaning, the total sample size reached 190, with an even breakdown across the local ($n = 94$) and national ($n = 96$) links. This appropriately reached the recommended sample size identified in the *a priori* estimates.

Chapter 5: Results

The results of the analysis are presented in the following chapter. First, descriptive statistics are offered for the research sample, including demographic details and other fan-related characteristics measured within the study. Attitudes and perceptions measured prior to stimuli exposure are also reported. In addition, initial looks at the covariates through correlation testing was conducted. Next, to test the six hypotheses (H1-6) and research question one (RQ1), mixed linear models and mixed design ANOVAs were used. The overall proposed model in Figure 1.1 is then tested using Hayes Process Model. Finally, research question two and three (RQ2 and RQ3) are evaluated through independent samples t-tests. In addition, the proposed mediation model in Figure 1.2 is tested using Hayes Process Model.

Descriptive Statistics

Attitudes and Perceptions Prior to Experiment

When evaluating the participant attitudes and perceptions, the sample leaned positive toward NIL ($M = 4.66$, $SD = 1.43$) and collectives ($M = 4.34$, $SD = 1.56$). Team identification also leaned high ($M = 6.05$, $SD = .97$). In the pre-test, prior to stimuli exposure, team attitude also leaned positive ($M = 6.19$, $SD = .99$). Overall OPR perception was closer to neutral but leaned slightly positive ($M = 4.90$, $SD = .79$).

Covariate Analysis

Consideration of potential covariates was also considered prior to hypothesis testing and research question exploration. A correlation was used to see if attitudes toward NIL and attitudes toward collectives were significantly correlated with the outcome variables, including attitude toward the team, OPR, and all supportive behaviors. Regarding attitudes toward the team (Table

5.1), attitudes toward NIL were significantly correlated, with Pearson's r ranging from .338 to .412 ($p < .001$). In addition, attitudes toward collectives were also significantly correlated with attitudes toward the team, with correlations ranging from .235 to .293 ($p < .05$). Age was not correlated with attitudes toward the team. Due to the significant correlations of NIL and collective attitudes on overall attitudes toward the team, the variables were controlled for in additional analyses.

Table 5.1

Correlations for Covariates and Attitudes Toward Team across Conditions (N=190)

	Collective/ For-Profit	Collective/ Non-Profit	Commercial/ For-Profit	Commercial/ Non-Profit
Att. Toward NIL	.361***	.367***	.412***	.338***
Att. Toward Collectives	.244***	.276***	.293***	.235***
Age	-.055	-.071	-.010	.050

*** $p < .001$

Attitudes toward NIL were also correlated with perceptions of OPR (Table 5.2) across three of the four conditions, with correlations ranging from .163 to .180 ($p < .05$). Attitudes toward collectives were correlated with OPR across all conditions, with correlations ranging from .145 to .215. Age was found to not be correlated with perceptions of OPR. Again, these significant findings led to the controlling of attitudes toward NIL and attitudes toward collectives in later analyses.

Table 5.2*Correlations for Covariates and Perceptions of OPR across Conditions (N=190)*

	Collective/ For-Profit	Collective/ Non-Profit	Commercial/ For-Profit	Commercial/ Non-Profit
Att. Toward NIL	.140	.163*	.180*	.165*
Att. Toward Collectives	.145*	.177*	.195**	.215**
Age	-.006	-.023	-.011	-.008

** p < .01, * p < .05

For behaviors, attitudes toward NIL and attitudes toward collectives were rarely correlated with the measured fan behaviors, including future game attendance intention (Table 5.3), intention to listen/watch to games via media (Table 5.4), intention to track news of team via media (Table 5.5), intention to purchase team merchandise (Table 5.6), giving intention to school (Table 5.7), and giving intention to collective (Table 5.8). The only correlations appeared in giving intention to the school's NIL fund and official collective. Age also appeared significant for some behaviors and conditions; however, due to the correlation being fairly weak (< .2; Cronk, 2020), age was not included as a covariate moving forward. Even though significant correlations for attitudes toward NIL and collectives were not common, these variables were controlled for across the fan behavior analyses due to their theoretical significance.

Table 5.3*Correlations for Covariates and Future Game Attendance Intention across Conditions (N=190)*

	Collective/ For-Profit	Collective/ Non-Profit	Commercial/ For-Profit	Commercial/ Non-Profit
Att. Toward NIL	.021	-.025	.030	.017
Att. Toward Collectives	-.025	-.054	-.081	-.078
Age	-.211**	-.175*	-.136	-.102

** p < .01, * p < .05

Table 5.4

Correlations for Covariates and Intention to Listen/Watch Games via Media across Conditions (N=190)

	Collective/ For-Profit	Collective/ Non-Profit	Commercial/ For-Profit	Commercial/ Non-Profit
Att. Toward NIL	-.017	-.009	-.019	-.027
Att. Toward Collectives	-.066	-.067	-.064	-.052
Age	.171*	.170*	.153*	.153

* $p < .05$

Table 5.5

Correlations for Covariates and Intention to Track News of Team via Media across Conditions (N=190)

	Collective/ For-Profit	Collective/ Non-Profit	Commercial/ For-Profit	Commercial/ Non-Profit
Att. Toward NIL	.007	-.056	-.008	-.037
Att. Toward Collectives	-.047	-.012	-.056	-.083
Age	.155*	.159*	.130	.149*

* $p < .05$

Table 5.6

Correlations for Covariates and Future Team Merchandise Purchase Intention across Conditions (N=190)

	Collective/ For-Profit	Collective/ Non-Profit	Commercial/ For-Profit	Commercial/ Non-Profit
Att. Toward NIL	-.035	-.094	-.006	-.006
Att. Toward Collectives	.026	-.066	.013	-.003
Age	.087	.127	.094	.108

All correlations were not significant

Table 5.7

Correlations for Covariates and Future NIL Giving Intention (to school) across Conditions (N=190)

	Collective/ For-Profit	Collective/ Non-Profit	Commercial/ For-Profit	Commercial/ Non-Profit
Att. Toward NIL	.128	.132	.182*	.092
Att. Toward Collectives	.172*	.171*	.194**	.142
Age	-.077	-.096	-.092	-.065

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Table 5.8

Correlations for Covariates and Future NIL Giving Intention (to collective) across Conditions (N=190)

	Collective/ For-Profit	Collective/ Non-Profit	Commercial/ For-Profit	Commercial/ Non-Profit
Att. Toward NIL	.107	.141	.181*	.129
Att. Toward Collectives	.209**	.204**	.227**	.176*
Age	-.097	-.107	-.117	-.051

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Looking at additional demographic details, one-way ANOVAs found no significant differences among measurements of gender on attitudes toward the team, perception of OPR, and fan behaviors across all conditions (Table 5.9). For education level, there was one significant difference seen in the measurement of intention to watch or listen to future games within the condition where a collective deal was shown with a for-profit company (Table 5.10). A post hoc analysis (Tukey's HSD) explored the differences more closely but found only a nearing-significant difference ($p = .055$) between participants with an associate's degree ($M = 6.321$, $SD = 1.081$) and those with a Master's degree ($M = 6.787$, $SD = .686$). Specifically, those with a Master's degree reported a slightly higher intention to watch or listen to future games via the

media than those with an associate's degree after viewing a collective deal that featured a for-profit partnering company. Since the group difference was not significant, and it did not appear across other conditions or groups, education level was not included as a covariate moving forward. Ethnicity was not considered as a covariate due to the lack of diversity in the research sample.

Table 5.9

One-Way ANOVA Results for Gender Differences in Attitudes, OPR, and Behavioral Intentions

	df	F	η^2	p
Att. Toward NIL				
Collective/For-Profit	3, 189	1.605	.025	.190
Collective/Nonprofit	3, 189	2.636	.097	.051
Commercial/For-Profit	3, 189	2.054	.083	.108
Commercial/Nonprofit	3, 189	1.318	.063	.270
OPR				
Collective/For-Profit	3, 189	.669	.011	.572
Collective/Nonprofit	3, 189	1.735	.027	.161
Commercial/For-Profit	3, 189	.809	.013	.490
Commercial/Nonprofit	3, 189	.742	.012	.528
Game Attendance Intention				
Collective/For-Profit	3, 189	1.053	.017	.370
Collective/Nonprofit	3, 189	.999	.016	.395
Commercial/For-Profit	3, 189	.636	.010	.593
Commercial/Nonprofit	3, 189	1.012	.016	.388
Watching/Listening to Future Games				
Collective/For-Profit	3, 189	.300	.005	.825
Collective/Nonprofit	3, 189	.303	.005	.823
Commercial/For-Profit	3, 189	.252	.004	.860

Commercial/Nonprofit	3, 189	.277	.004	.842
Track News of Team				
Collective/For-Profit	3, 189	.299	.005	.826
Collective/Nonprofit	3, 189	.247	.004	.863
Commercial/For-Profit	3, 189	.278	.004	.842
Commercial/Nonprofit	3, 189	.619	.010	.604
Merchandise Purchase				
Collective/For-Profit	3, 189	1.502	.024	.216
Collective/Nonprofit	3, 189	1.233	.019	.299
Commercial/For-Profit	3, 189	1.779	.028	.153
Commercial/Nonprofit	3, 189	1.780	.028	.153
Giving to NIL Fund				
Collective/For-Profit	3, 189	.782	.012	.505
Collective/Nonprofit	3, 189	1.419	.022	.239
Commercial/For-Profit	3, 189	.697	.011	.555
Commercial/Nonprofit	3, 189	.420	.007	.739
Giving to NIL Collective				
Collective/For-Profit	3, 189	.944	.015	.421
Collective/Nonprofit	3, 189	1.570	.025	.198
Commercial/For-Profit	3, 189	.1135	.018	.336
Commercial/Nonprofit	3, 189	.863	.014	.461

** p < .01, * p < .05

Table 5.10

One-Way ANOVA Results for Education Level Differences in Attitudes, OPR, and Behavioral Intentions

	df	F	η^2	p
Att. Toward NIL				
Collective/For-Profit	6, 189	.704	.023	.647
Collective/Nonprofit	6, 189	.505	.016	.804
Commercial/For-Profit	6, 189	.497	.016	.810
Commercial/Nonprofit	6, 189	.818	.026	.557
OPR				
Collective/For-Profit	6, 189	.295	.010	.939
Collective/Nonprofit	6, 189	.912	.029	.488
Commercial/For-Profit	6, 189	.735	.024	.622
Commercial/Nonprofit	6, 189	.997	.032	.429
Game Attendance Intention				
Collective/For-Profit	6, 189	.321	.010	.926
Collective/Nonprofit	6, 189	.542	.017	.776
Commercial/For-Profit	6, 189	1.033	.033	.405
Commercial/Nonprofit	6, 189	1.121	.035	.352
Watching/Listening to Future Games				
Collective/For-Profit	6, 189	2.290	.070	.037*
Collective/Nonprofit	6, 189	1.314	.041	.253
Commercial/For-Profit	6, 189	1.560	.049	.161
Commercial/Nonprofit	6, 189	1.167	.037	.326
Track News of Team				
Collective/For-Profit	6, 189	1.752	.054	.111
Collective/Nonprofit	6, 189	1.178	.037	.320
Commercial/For-Profit	6, 189	1.473	.046	.190
Commercial/Nonprofit	6, 189	1.619	.050	.144

Merchandise Purchase				
Collective/For-Profit	6, 189	.479	.015	.823
Collective/Nonprofit	6, 189	1.471	.046	.190
Commercial/For-Profit	6, 189	.909	.029	.490
Commercial/Nonprofit	6, 189	1.101	.035	.363
Giving to NIL Fund				
Collective/For-Profit	6, 189	.435	.014	.855
Collective/Nonprofit	6, 189	.607	.020	.724
Commercial/For-Profit	6, 189	.449	.014	.845
Commercial/Nonprofit	6, 189	.912	.029	.488
Giving to NIL Collective				
Collective/For-Profit	6, 189	.397	.013	.880
Collective/Nonprofit	6, 189	.634	.020	.703
Commercial/For-Profit	6, 189	.330	.011	.921
Commercial/Nonprofit	6, 189	.913	.029	.487

* $p < .05$

One-way ANOVAs (Table 5.11) indicated a significant effect of household income on attitudes toward the team in the for-profit, collective condition ($F(11, 189) = 1.920, p = .040, \eta^2 = .106$). The post hoc Tukey test did not find significant pairwise differences, suggesting the effect may be driven by overall differences rather than specific group differences. A significant difference was also found in household income on attitudes toward the team in the non-profit, commercial condition ($F(11, 189) = 2.436, p = .023, \eta^2 = .115$). Tukey's HSD found that fans who reported a household income of \$90,000-\$99,000 reported a significantly lower attitude toward their team ($M = 4.969, SD = 1.346$) than fans who reported a household income of more

than \$150,000 ($M = 6.391$, $SD = .877$). All other groups were not significantly different.

Household income did not have a significant effect on OPR (Table 5.11).

A one-way ANOVA found some significant differences amongst household income and certain behaviors; however, the outcome variables where the significant results stemmed from focused on media consumption (watching and tracking team through media) rather than outcome variables that relied on substantial or clear purchases. For that reason, household income was not included as a covariate for behaviors as the differences were not theoretically valid.

Table 5.11

One-Way ANOVA Results for Household Income Differences in Attitudes, OPR, and Behavioral Intentions

	df	<i>F</i>	η^2	<i>p</i>
Att. Toward NIL				
Collective/For-Profit	11, 189	1.920	.106	.040*
Collective/Nonprofit	11, 189	1.768	.098	.063
Commercial/For-Profit	11, 189	1.803	.100	.056
Commercial/Nonprofit	11, 189	2.097	.11	.023*
OPR				
Collective/For-Profit	11, 189	.657	.039	.777
Collective/Nonprofit	11, 189	1.078	.062	.381
Commercial/For-Profit	11, 189	.636	.038	.797
Commercial/Nonprofit	11, 189	.818	.048	.622
Game Attendance Intention				
Collective/For-Profit	11, 189	.718	.042	.720
Collective/Nonprofit	11, 189	1.110	.064	.356
Commercial/For-Profit	11, 189	.828	.049	.612
Commercial/Nonprofit	11, 189	.874	.051	.567
Watching/Listening to Future Games				

Collective/For-Profit	11, 189	2.214	.120	.016*
Collective/Nonprofit	11, 189	2.084	.114	.024*
Commercial/For-Profit	11, 189	2.256	.122	.014*
Commercial/Nonprofit	11, 189	1.1630	.092	.094
Track News of Team				
Collective/For-Profit	11, 189	3.937	.196	<.001***
Collective/Nonprofit	11, 189	1.107	.064	.358
Commercial/For-Profit	11, 189	2.280	.124	.013*
Commercial/Nonprofit	11, 189	2.268	.123	.013*
Merchandise Purchase				
Collective/For-Profit	11, 189	1.282	.073	.238
Collective/Nonprofit	11, 189	.585	.035	.839
Commercial/For-Profit	11, 189	.759	.045	.680
Commercial/Nonprofit	11, 189	.584	.035	.841
Giving to NIL Fund				
Collective/For-Profit	11, 189	.252	.015	.993
Collective/Nonprofit	11, 189	.515	.031	.892
Commercial/For-Profit	11, 189	.593	.035	.833
Commercial/Nonprofit	11, 189	.568	.034	.853
Giving to NIL Collective				
Collective/For-Profit	11, 189	.277	.017	.989
Collective/Nonprofit	11, 189	.456	.027	.928
Commercial/For-Profit	11, 189	.517	.031	.890
Commercial/Nonprofit	11, 189	.579	.035	.845

*** $p < .001$, * $p < .05$

Hypothesis Testing and Research Questions Exploration

The study proposed two models regarding the nature of NIL deals and fan antecedents. The first model (Figure 1.1) explored how different types of NIL deals impacted team identification, OPR, attitudes, and behaviors. The second model (Figure 1.2) considered the impact of various fan antecedents on team identification and OPR. The following section explores each group of hypotheses and research questions.

First, analysis surrounding the nature of NIL deals is conducted with repeated measures ANOVAs. The hypothesis (H6) proposed that local nonprofits will lead to (a) higher OPR perceptions, (b) more positive attitudes toward the team, and (c) more supportive fan behavioral intentions than both non-local and for-profit partnerships. In addition, the first research question (RQ1) asked about the influence of NIL deal type (commercial vs collective) on OPR, attitudes, and behaviors.

Next, before testing the overall model, the direct paths proposed in hypotheses one through three were tested with mixed linear models. The paths proposed that a fan's perception of OPR will directly and positively influence their attitudes toward their favorite team (H1), attitudes toward their favorite team will directly and positively influence supportive behavioral intentions (2a-e), and team identification will directly and positively influence a fan's perception of OPR (H3).

After exploring the direct paths, the overall model proposed in Figure 1.1 is tested. Specifically, the moderation of team identification is considered in two hypotheses, which proposed that team identification would moderate the impact of NIL deals on attitudes toward the team (H4) and OPR (H5).

To end, this section explores the fan antecedents under study, including locality of team, gender, and alumni status (RQ2). In addition, the model proposed in Figure 1.2 is tested, which is based on the third research question (RQ3) that considered team identification as a mediator for fan antecedents and OPR.

The Nature of NIL Deals

Organization-Public Relationships. Hypothesis six proposed that local nonprofits would lead to higher OPR perceptions (H6a), more positive attitudes toward the team (H6b), and more supportive fan behavioral intentions (H6c) than national and for-profit partnerships. The first research question under study asked about the influence of commercial and collective deals. To evaluate this prediction and question, 2 x 2 x 2 mixed-design ANOVAs were conducted to examine the effect of locality (local vs national partnering organization), deal type (commercial vs. collective), and profit status (for-profit vs non-profit) on perceptions of OPR, attitudes toward the team, and fan behaviors. Deal type and profit status were the within-groups factors, while locality was a between-groups factor. For each test, attitude toward NIL and attitude toward collectives were used as covariates to control for their variability in the results.

The first mixed-design ANOVA explored the independent variables' (manipulations) effects on the participants' perception of OPR. Levene's Test for Equality of Error Variances was not significant, meaning that the assumption of homogeneity was met. The means and standard deviations across the conditions are presented in Table 5.12. There were no significant direct effects or interactions with the covariates (Table 5.13).

Table 5.12*Descriptive Statistics for Perception of OPR in Local and National Groups Across Conditions*

	Between-Groups Factor (Locality)					
	Local			National		
Condition	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
For-Profit / Collective	94	5.033	.823	96	4.874	1.001
Non-Profit / Collective	94	5.226	.849	96	5.076	1.001
For-Profit / Commercial	94	5.058	.871	96	4.909	1.009
Non-Profit / Commercial	94	5.235	.879	96	5.191	.926

Table 5.13*Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance Results for the Effects of NIL Deal Characteristics on Perception of OPR (with covariates)*

Source	df	F	η^2	p
Deal	1, 186	0.428	0.003	.488
Deal x Collective Att.	1, 186	3.713	.020	.056
Deal x NIL Att.	1, 186	0.307	.002	.580
Deal x Locality	1, 186	2.657	.014	.105
Profit	1, 186	3.080	.016	.081
Profit x Collective Att.	1, 186	0.903	.005	.343
Profit x NIL Att.	1, 186	0.399	.002	.528
Profit x Locality	1, 186	0.951	.005	.331
Deal x Profit	1, 186	1.097	.006	.296
Deal x Profit x Collective Att.	1, 186	0.095	.001	.758
Deal x Profit x NIL Att.	1, 186	0.869	.005	.352
Deal x Profit x Locality	1, 186	1.193	.006	.276
Locality	1, 186	.797	.004	.373
Collective Att.	1, 186	1.994	.011	.160
NIL Att.	1, 186	.664	.004	.416

Since neither attitudes toward NIL ($F(1,186) = .664, p = .416$) or attitudes toward collectives ($F(1,186) = 1.994, p = .160$) showed direct effects on OPR, an additional analysis was used to see if the controlling of covariates suppressed any effects (Table 5.14). The ANOVA without controlling for the covariates returned significant direct effects for deal type (Wilks' Lambda = .972, $F(1,188) = 5.495, p < .05$) and profit (Wilks' Lambda = .795, $F(1,188) = 48.507, p < .001$).

Regarding the direct effect of deal type, pairwise comparisons using the Bonferroni correction showed that commercial deals led to higher perceptions of OPR ($M = 5.098, SD = .064$) than collective deals ($M = 5.052, SD = 0.064$). Deal type's partial eta squared value showed a small effect size ($\eta^2 = .028$). This offers insight to the research question exploring the overall impact of deal type on OPR, finding evidence that fans perceive a stronger relationship with the deal is not organized by a collective.

In addition, pairwise comparisons showed that deals with nonprofit organizations led to higher perceptions of OPR ($M = 5.182, SD = .065$) than deals with for-profit companies ($M = 4.968, SD = 0.065$). Deal type's partial eta squared value showed a large effect size ($\eta^2 = .205$; Cohen, 1988). It is important to note, however, that these significant effects only came about after the removal of covariates, which means that attitudes toward NIL and attitudes toward collectives accounted for some of the variance in these relationships. For this reason, they are controlled for within the following analyses and considered in the model analysis later.

It is appropriate to say that these findings lend some support to the hypothesis (H6a) that proposed that local nonprofits will lead to higher perceptions of OPR, as profit status did show a significant effect; however, the influence of the covariates is important to note.

Table 5.14

Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance Results for Effects of NIL Deal Characteristics on Perception of OPR (without covariates)

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	ηp^2	<i>p</i>
Deal	1, 188	5.495	0.028	0.020*
Deal x Locality	1, 188	2.245	0.012	0.136
Profit	1, 188	48.507	0.205	< .001**
Profit x Locality	1, 188	0.852	0.005	0.357
Deal x Profit	1, 188	0.531	0.003	0.467
Deal x Profit x Locality	1, 188	1.184	0.006	0.278
Locality	1, 188	.973	0.005	0.325

** Significant at the $p < .001$ level, * Significant at the $p < 0.05$ level

Attitudes. To test the nature of NIL deals on attitudes toward the team, a 2 x 2 x 2 mixed-design ANOVA was also again conducted to consider the impact of locality and profit-status of the partnering organization, as well as the deal type (collective vs commercial). Attitude toward NIL and attitude toward collectives were used as covariates in the mixed-design ANOVAs. Attitudes toward NIL had a significant main effect ($F(1,186) = 22.618, p < .001, \eta p^2 = .108$). The means and standard deviations across the conditions are presented in Table 5.15.

Table 5.15

Descriptive Statistics for Attitude Toward Team in Local and National Groups Across Conditions

Condition	n	Local		n	National	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
For-Profit / Collective	94	5.726	1.224	96	5.289	1.523
Non-Profit / Collective	94	6.056	1.294	96	5.896	1.300
For-Profit / Commercial	94	5.636	1.136	96	5.169	1.451
Non-Profit / Commercial	94	6.168	1.106	96	5.974	1.115

Levene's Test for Equality of Error Variances was significant in two of the four dependent variable measurements ($p < .05$). Box (1953) proposed that ANOVA's are robust enough to not be impacted by variance issues when group sizes are similar. As the between-group sizes are similar ($n=94$, $n=96$), and Levene's test was not highly significant ($< .001$), the analysis moved forward with the reported ANOVA results. All results for the outcome of attitudes toward the team are included in Table 5.16.

A significant interaction (deal type x profit) was present (Wilks' Lambda = 0.967, $F(1,186) = 6.386$, $p < .05$). Partial eta squared showed a small to medium effect size ($\eta^2 = 0.033$; Cohen, 1988). To explore the interaction more closely, a plot was used (Figure 5.1). The plot showed that partnerships with for-profit companies, organized by collectives, led to more positive attitudes ($M = 5.508$, $SD = .094$) than partnerships with for-profit companies that are considered commercial deals (not organized by collectives) ($M = 5.402$, $SD = .087$). This shifted, however, for non-profit partnering organizations, as those organized by collectives ($M = 5.976$, $SD = .088$) measured lower for attitudes toward the team than commercial deals ($M = 6.071$, $SD = .076$).

This lends insight to the research question (RQ1) considering the impact of deal type. The significant interaction shows that fans perceived collective deals with for-profit organizations differently to those with non-profit organizations. When collectives organized deals with non-profit organizations, attitudes turned less favorable than those with for-profit organizations.

Table 5.16

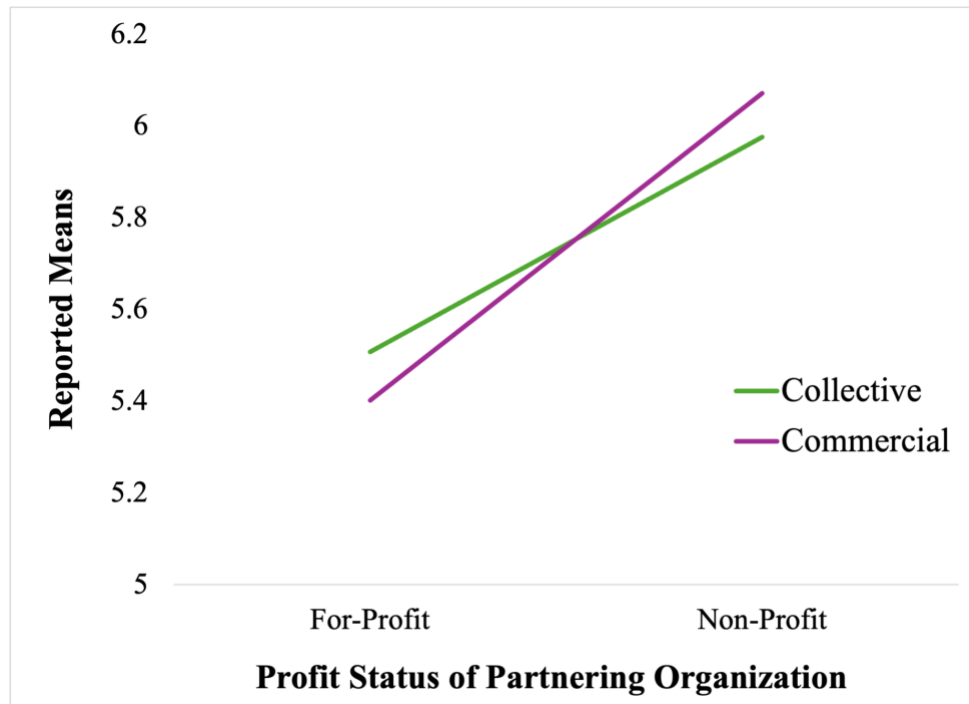
Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance Results for the Effects of NIL Deal Characteristics on Attitudes Toward Team

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	η^2	<i>p</i>
Deal	1,186	.428	.002	.514
Deal x NIL Att.	1,186	.155	.001	.694
Deal x Collective Att.	1,186	.033	.0002	.857
Deal x Locality	1,186	.144	.001	.705
Profit	1,186	10.314	.053	.002**
Profit x NIL Att.	1,186	1.303	.007	.255
Profit x Collective Att.	1,186	.094	.001	.759
Profit x Locality	1,186	3.207	.017	.075
Deal x Profit	1,186	6.386	.033	.012*
Deal x Profit x NIL Att.	1,186	.538	.003	.464
Deal x Profit x Collective Att.	1,186	.690	.004	.407
Deal x Profit x Locality	1,186	.008	.00005	.927
Locality	1,186	4.483	.024	.036*
NIL Att.	1,186	22.618	.108	<.001***
Collective Att.	1,186	.045	.0002	.833

*** Significant at the $p < 0.001$ level, ** Significant at the $p < 0.01$ level, * Significant at the $p < 0.05$ level

Figure 5.1

Plot for Significant Deal Type x Profit Status Interaction on Attitudes Toward Team



The main effect of profit status on attitudes toward the team was also significant (Wilks' Lambda = .947, $F(1,186) = 10.314$, $p < .01$). Partial eta squared showed a medium effect size ($\eta^2 = 0.053$; Cohen, 1988). Pairwise comparisons using the Bonferroni correction showed that attitudes toward the team after reading about non-profit partnerships ($M = 6.023$, $SD = .076$) were significantly more positive than attitudes toward the team after reading about for-profit partnerships ($M = 5.455$, $SD = .086$), with a mean difference of 0.568 ($p < .001$).

A mixed ANOVA was also conducted without the covariates to see if any significant paths appeared or changed. The direct effect of profit status changed (Wilks' Lambda = .774, $F(1,188) = 54.743$, $p < .001$) and the effect size appeared larger ($\eta^2 = 0.226$; Cohen, 1988). This is important to note as this could mean that the attitudes toward NIL and collectives reported by the participants are intertwined with the effect of profit status in some way. Across all

conditions, the correlation between attitudes toward NIL and attitudes toward the team were moderate (See Table 5.3) with a range of Pearson's r between 0.338 and 0.412 (Cronk, 2020). This could mean that attitudes toward NIL and collectives are potentially accounting for some of the shared variance in attitudes toward the team. In order to understand this further, attitudes toward NIL are considered in the overall model analysis.

The between-group factor, locality, also had a significant main effect on attitudes toward the team ($F(1, 186) = 4.483, p < .05$), with a partial eta squared value showing a small effect size ($\eta^2 = .024$). Pairwise comparisons using the Bonferroni correction showed that local deals led to more positive attitudes toward the team ($M = 5.891, SD = .102$) than national deals ($M = 5.587, SD = 0.101$).

With these findings, the hypothesis (H6b) proposing that local nonprofits would lead to more positive attitudes toward the team was partially supported as the main effects of locality and profit status were significant. In addition, the pairwise comparisons confirmed that partnerships with non-profit organizations led to more positive attitudes than for-profit companies and partnerships with local organizations led to more positive attitudes than national organizations. The interaction effect was not significant, meaning that the impact of the two factors were independent of the other.

Behaviors. To test H6c, which proposed that local nonprofits would lead to more supportive fan behaviors, a 2 x 2 x 2 mixed-design ANOVA was conducted. In total, six behavioral intentions were included in the study: game attendance, media consumption (watch/listen to games and tracking news of team), team merchandise purchase, and financial giving to the team's NIL fund and collective.

The means and standard deviations for future game attendance across the conditions are presented in Table 5.17. Levene's Test for Equality of Error Variances was not significant, meaning that the assumption of homogeneity was met. Attitude toward NIL ($F(1,186) = 1.046, p = 0.308$) and attitude toward collectives ($F(1,186) = 1.861, p = .174$) were included as covariates. Two individual interaction effects were found between deal types and attitudes toward NIL ($F(1,186) = 4.998, p < 0.05$) and between deal types and attitudes toward collectives ($F(1,186) = 5.935, p < 0.05$). These interactions open up a question on if these attitudes influence the relationship between deal type and outcome variables. Consideration for this is included in the model analysis later. The ANOVA results showed no significant main effects or interactions of the characteristics of NIL deals under study (locality and profit status of partnering organization and deal type) and future game attendance intention (Table 5.18).

Table 5.17

Descriptive Statistics for Future Game Attendance Intention in Local and National Groups Across Conditions

	Local			National		
Condition	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
For-Profit / Collective	94	6.011	1.463	96	5.823	1.576
Non-Profit / Collective	94	6.096	1.384	96	5.833	1.607
For-Profit / Commercial	94	6.117	1.319	96	5.854	1.589
Non-Profit / Commercial	94	6.064	1.494	96	5.948	1.572

Table 5.18

Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance Results for the Effects of NIL Deal Characteristics on Future Game Attendance Intention

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	ηp^2	<i>p</i>
Deal	1,186	.019	.0001	.890
Deal x Locality	1,186	.060	.0003	.807
Deal x NIL Att.	1,186	4.998	.026	.027*
Deal x Collective Att.	1,186	5.935	.031	.016*
Profit	1,186	1.530	.008	.218
Profit x Locality	1,186	.226	.001	.635
Profit x. NIL Att.	1,186	1.102	.006	.295
Profit x Collective Att.	1,186	.096	.001	.757
Deal x Profit	1,186	.544	.003	.462
Deal x Profit x Locality	1,186	1.905	.010	.169
Deal x Profit x NIL Att.	1,186	.088	.0005	.767
Deal x Profit x Collective Att.	1,186	.063	.0003	.803
Locality	1,186	1.177	.006	.279
NIL Att.	1,186	1.046	.006	.308
Collective Att.	1,186	1.861	.010	.174

* Significant at the $p < 0.05$ level

Regarding media consumption, two individual items were used. First, participants were asked about their future intention to watch or listen to games via media (TV, radio, etc.). The means and standard deviations for the measurement are presented in Table 5.19. Levene's Test for Equality of Error Variances was not significant, meaning that the assumption of homogeneity was met. Once again, attitude toward NIL ($F(1,186) = .257, p = 0.613$) and attitude toward collectives ($F(1,186) = 1.119, p = .291$) were included as covariates. The results showed no significant main effects or interactions regarding the characteristics of NIL deals under study and the intention to watch or listen to future games via media in the future (Table 5.20).

Table 5.19

Descriptive Statistics for Future Game Viewing/Listening in Local and National Groups Across Conditions

Condition	Local			National		
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
For-Profit / Collective	94	6.660	0.862	96	6.542	0.882
Non-Profit / Collective	94	6.691	0.843	96	6.552	0.881
For-Profit / Commercial	94	6.617	0.974	96	6.531	0.292
Non-Profit / Commercial	94	6.649	0.924	96	6.589	0.948

Table 5.20

Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance Results for the Effects of NIL Deal Characteristics on the Intention to Watch/Listen to Games via the Media

Source	df	F	η^2	p
Deal	1,186	.004	.00002	.950
Deal x Locality	1,186	.237	.001	.627
Deal x NIL Att.	1,186	.357	.002	.551
Deal x Collective Att.	1,186	.244	.001	.622
Profit	1,186	.022	.0001	.882
Profit x Locality	1,186	.218	.001	.641
Profit x. NIL Att.	1,186	.028	.0001	.868
Profit x Collective Att.	1,186	.055	.0003	.815
Deal x Profit	1,186	.009	.00005	.926
Deal x Profit x Locality	1,186	.004	.00001	.950
Deal x Profit x NIL Att.	1,186	.249	.001	.619
Deal x Profit x Collective Att.	1,186	.225	.001	.636
Locality	1,186	1.006	.005	.317
NIL Att.	1,186	.257	.001	.613
Collective Att.	1,186	1.119	.006	.291

Participants were also asked about future media consumption regarding the tracking of news about their team. The means and standard deviations for the measurement are presented in Table 5.21. Attitude toward NIL ($F(1,186) = .382, p = 0.537$) and attitude toward collectives ($F(1,186) = 1.706, p = .193$) were included as covariates. Levene's Test for Equality of Error Variances was significant for three of the four dependent variables; however, as argued before, ANOVAs are robust enough to not be impacted by variance issues when group sizes are similar so the analysis moved forward (Box, 1953). The results showed no significant main effects or interactions regarding the characteristics of NIL deals under study and intention to track news of their team via media (Table 5.22).

Table 5.21

Descriptive Statistics for Future Team Tracking in Local and National Groups Across Conditions

Condition	n	Local		National		
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	n	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
For-Profit / Collective	94	6.606	0.986	96	6.344	1.168
Non-Profit / Collective	94	6.638	0.866	96	6.427	1.064
For-Profit / Commercial	94	6.585	1.010	96	6.396	1.156
Non-Profit / Commercial	94	6.649	0.888	96	6.448	0.957

Table 5.22

Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance Results for the Effects of NIL Deal Characteristics on the Intention to Track News of their Team via the Media

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	ηp^2	<i>p</i>
Deal	1,186	.004	.00002	.952
Deal x Locality	1,186	.521	.003	.471
Deal x NIL Att.	1,186	.130	.001	.531
Deal x Collective Att.	1,186	.379	.002	.641
Profit	1,186	3.096	.016	.080
Profit x Locality	1,186	.060	.0003	.807
Profit x. NIL Att.	1,186	.393	.002	.531
Profit x Collective Att.	1,186	.218	.001	.641
Deal x Profit	1,186	.324	.002	.570
Deal x Profit x Locality	1,186	.183	.001	.670
Deal x Profit x NIL Att.	1,186	.006	.00003	.936
Deal x Profit x Collective Att.	1,186	.192	.001	.662
Locality	1,186	1.177	.006	.279
NIL Att.	1,186	1.046	.006	.308
Collective Att.	1,186	1.861	.010	.174

Participants were also asked about future team merchandise purchase intentions. The means and standard deviations for the measurement are presented in Table 5.23. Potential covariates of attitudes toward NIL ($F(1,186) = 0.329, p = 0.567$) and attitudes toward collectives ($F(1,186) = 0.084, p = 0.772$) were included. Levene's Test for Equality of Error Variances was not significant, meaning that the assumption of homogeneity was met. The results showed no significant main effects or interactions regarding the characteristics of NIL deals under study and future team merchandise purchase intention (Table 5.24).

Table 5.23

Descriptive Statistics for Future Team Merchandise Purchase in Local and National Groups Across Conditions

	Local			National		
Condition	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
For-Profit / Collective	94	6.063	1.355	96	5.927	1.259
Non-Profit / Collective	94	6.160	1.247	96	6.042	1.142
For-Profit / Commercial	94	6.138	1.232	96	5.969	1.225
Non-Profit / Commercial	94	6.096	1.376	96	6.063	1.212

Table 5.24

Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance Results for the Effects of NIL Deal Characteristics on the Intention to Purchase Team Merchandise

Source	df	F	η^2	p
Deal	1,186	1.990	.011	.160
Deal x Locality	1,186	.060	.0003	.807
Deal x NIL Att.	1,186	3.324	.018	.070
Deal x Collective Att.	1,186	.456	.002	.500
Profit	1,186	2.207	.012	.139
Profit x Locality	1,186	.575	.003	.449
Profit x. NIL Att.	1,186	.090	.0005	.765
Profit x Collective Att.	1,186	1.730	.009	.190
Deal x Profit	1,186	1.750	.003	.187
Deal x Profit x Locality	1,186	.795	.004	.374
Deal x Profit x NIL Att.	1,186	.001	.000003	.981
Deal x Profit x Collective Att.	1,186	.837	.004	.361
Locality	1,186	416	.002	.520
NIL Att.	1,186	.329	.002	.567
Collective Att.	1,186	.084	.0005	.772

Regarding financial giving, participants were asked about giving to the school (through the official NIL fund) and through the team's official NIL collective. The means and standard deviations for the measurement on giving to the school are presented in Table 5.25. Potential covariates of attitudes toward NIL ($F(1,186) = 0.126, p = 0.723$) and collectives ($F(1,186) = 0.2833, p = 0.094$) were again considered. Levene's Test for Equality of Error Variances was not significant, meaning that the assumption of homogeneity was met. Results showed a significant main effect of profit status on future donation intention to the school's official NIL fund (Wilks' Lambda = .974, $F(1,186) = 5.023, p < .05, \eta^2 = .026$). Pairwise comparisons using the Bonferroni correction showed that non-profit deals led to higher intention to donate to the team's school ($M = 3.580, SD = 0.149$) than for-profit deals ($M = 3.240, SD = 0.147$). All of the results of the repeated measures ANOVA are in Table 5.26.

Table 5.25

Descriptive Statistics for Future Donation Intention (School) in Local and National Groups Across Conditions

Condition	Local			National		
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
For-Profit / Collective	94	3.106	2.066	96	3.427	2.086
Non-Profit / Collective	94	3.394	2.206	96	3.844	2.089
For-Profit / Commercial	94	3.043	2.095	96	3.385	2.049
Non-Profit / Commercial	94	3.383	2.195	96	3.698	2.053

Table 5.26

Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance Results for the Effects of NIL Deal Characteristics on Future Donation Intention (School)

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	ηp^2	<i>p</i>
Deal	1,186	.158	.001	.692
Deal x Locality	1,186	.267	.001	.606
Deal x NIL Att.	1,186	.195	.001	.659
Deal x Collective Att.	1,186	.203	.001	.653
Profit	1,186	5.023	.026	.026*
Profit x Locality	1,186	.115	.001	.735
Profit x. NIL Att.	1,186	.875	.005	.351
Profit x Collective Att.	1,186	.042	.0002	.839
Deal x Profit	1,186	2.652	.014	.105
Deal x Profit x Locality	1,186	.557	.003	.457
Deal x Profit x NIL Att.	1,186	2.390	.013	.124
Deal x Profit x Collective Att.	1,186	.052	.0003	.820
Locality	1,186	1.912	.010	.168
NIL Att.	1,186	.126	.001	.723
Collective Att.	1,186	2.833	.015	.094

* Significant at the $p < 0.05$ level

The means and standard deviations for the measurement on giving to the team's official NIL collective are presented in Table 5.27. Potential covariates were again considered. Levene's Test for Equality of Error Variances was not significant, meaning that the assumption of homogeneity was met. All of the results of the repeated measures ANOVA are in Table 5.28. There was a significant direct effect of attitudes toward collectives on giving intention to the team's official collective ($F(1,186) = 5.181, p < 0.05, \eta p^2 = 0.027$). In addition, the results

showed a significant interaction of deal type and attitudes toward NIL on intention to give to the team's official NIL Collective ($F(1,186) = 4.107, p < 0.05, \eta^2 = 0.022$).

It is important to note that the main effect of profit status on giving to the team's official NIL collective was significant without the covariates included (Wilks' Lambda = .947, $F(1,188) = 10.544, p < 0.01$), but not significant with the covariates (Wilks' Lambda = .990, $F(1,186) = 1.963, p = 0.163$). This direct effect, without covariates, also had a medium effect size ($\eta^2 = 0.053$; Cohen, 1988). Pairwise comparisons using the Bonferroni correction showed that partnerships with non-profit organizations led to a higher likelihood of giving intention to the NIL collective ($M = 3.348, SD = .142$) than for-profit partnerships ($M = 3.128, SD = 0.146$). While the interaction between profit status and either covariate was not significant, it is clear that one or both covariates accounted for some of this effect and should be noted and considered.

Overall, regarding supportive behavior, findings only partially support the hypothesis (H6c) that local partnerships lead to more supportive fan behaviors, as profit status was only found to have a significant main effect on donation intention to a school's NIL fund. In addition, profit status had a significant main effect on donation intention to a collective when neither covariate was included in the analysis. Both of the pairwise comparisons found that partnerships with local organizations led to stronger giving intention than partnerships with national organizations.

Table 5.27

Descriptive Statistics for Future Donation Intention (Collective) in Local and National Groups Across Conditions

Condition	Local			National		
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD
For-Profit / Collective	94	2.989	2.013	96	3.312	2.109
Non-Profit / Collective	94	3.202	2.046	96	3.573	2.040
For-Profit / Commercial	94	3.032	2.097	96	3.177	2.031
Non-Profit / Commercial	94	3.202	2.030	96	3.417	2.066

Table 5.28

Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance Results for the Effects of NIL Deal Characteristics on Future Donation Intention (Collective) (with covariates)

Source	df	F	η^2	p
Deal	1, 186	1.487	0.008	0.224
Deal x Collective Att.	1, 186	2.510	0.013	0.115
Deal x NIL Att.*	1, 186	4.107	0.022	0.044
Deal x Locality	1, 186	3.342	0.018	0.069
Profit	1, 186	1.963	0.010	0.163
Profit x Collective Att.	1, 186	0.781	0.004	0.378
Profit x NIL Att.	1, 186	0.139	0.001	0.710
Profit x Locality	1, 186	0.139	0.001	0.710
Deal x Profit	1, 186	2.019	0.011	0.157
Deal x Profit x Collective Att.	1, 186	0.108	0.001	0.743
Deal x Profit x NIL Att.	1, 186	2.194	0.012	0.140
Deal x Profit x Locality	1, 186	0.012	0.00006	0.914
Locality	1, 186	1.226	0.007	0.270
Collective Att.*	1, 186	5.181	0.027	0.024
NIL Att.	1, 186	0.0002	0.0000008	0.990

* Significant at the $p < 0.05$

OPR, Team Identification, Attitudes, and Behaviors

Prior to testing the moderated mediation model, the individual paths were tested. Hypothesis one (H1) proposed that a fan's perception of OPR directly and positively influenced their attitudes toward their favorite team. A mixed linear model was conducted to examine whether perceptions of OPR predicted attitudes while accounting for repeated measures in participants. A variable for participant ID was included as a random effect to control for the repeated measures. Attitudes toward NIL and collectives were included as covariates. The model was estimated using restricted maximum likelihood (REML).

Results of the linear mixed model indicated that OPR significantly predicted attitudes toward the team ($F(1, 431.815) = 8.090, p < .01$), suggesting that participants' higher measurements of OPR were associated with more positive attitudes toward their favorite team ($b = 1.011$). The overall model resulted in a Marginal Pseudo- R^2 value of .409, which means that the fixed effects accounted for approximately 40.9% of the variance in attitudes toward the team. This result shows support for the proposed hypothesis (H1) that a fan's perception of OPR directly and positively influences their attitudes toward the team.

Looking specifically at team identification, its direct effect on attitudes toward the team and interaction with OPR was not significant (Table 5.29). To test H3, which proposed that team identification would have a direct and significant effect on OPR, an additional test was conducted with OPR as the outcome. Results found that team identification significantly predicted attitudes toward the team ($F(1, 192) = 87.024, p < .001, b = .236$), supporting H3 (Table 5.30). The model, which included attitudes toward NIL and collectives as covariates, resulted in a Marginal Pseudo- R^2 value of .060, which means that the fixed effects (team

identification, attitudes toward NIL, and attitudes toward collectives) accounted for approximately 6.0% of the variance in OPR.

Table 5.29

Estimates of Fixed Effects (OPR and Team Identification) on Attitudes Toward the Team

Parameter	<i>b</i>	SE	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI	
						LB	UB
OPR**	1.011	.355	431.815	2.844	.005	.312	1.709
Team ID	.070	.289	405.457	.242	.809	-.498	.637
OPR x Team ID	-.008	.058	426.514	-.141	.888	-.122	.106

** $p < .01$

Table 5.30

Estimates of Fixed Effects of Team Identification on OPR

Parameter	<i>b</i>	SE	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI	
						LB	UB
Team ID	.236	.064	192	3.703	<.001	.110	.362

** $p < .01$

A mixed linear model was also conducted to examine H2, which proposed that a fan's attitude toward the team would positively influence supportive fan behavioral intentions (Table 5.31). Fan behavioral intentions under study included game attendance ($F(1,666.583) = 18.428$, $p < .001$), game viewing/listening via the media ($F(1,669.2) = 11.953$, $p < .001$), tracking news of the team ($F(1,696.708) = 15.888$, $p < .001$), team merchandise purchase ($F(1,692.944) = 12.222$, $p < .001$), financial giving to a team's NIL fund ($F(1,681.091) = 19.176$, $p < .001$), and financial giving to a collective ($F(1,665.804) = 18.394$, $p < .001$). Results of the mixed linear model analysis found support for the hypothesis that proposed attitudes would significantly and positively predict all future game behaviors (H2).

Table 5.31

Estimates of Fixed Effects of Attitudes Toward the Team on Supportive Fan Behavioral Intentions

Parameter	Marginal Pseudo R ²	<i>b</i>	SE	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI	
							LB	UB
Game Attendance***	.011	.118	.027	666.583	4.293	<.001	.064	.172
Watch/Listen to	.009	.064	.018	689.200	3.457	<.001	.027	.100
Track Team***	.012	.085	.021	696.708	3.986	<.001	.043	.127
Purchase	.009	.090	.026	692.944	3.496	<.001	.040	.141
Donate to Team NIL***	.013	.180	.041	681.091	4.379	<.001	.099	.261
Donate to Collective***	.011	.160	.037	655.804	4.289	<.001	.087	.233

*** $p < .001$

Model Testing

While the individual paths and effects were considered above, the overall model (Figure 1.1) is considered with a custom Hayes (2022) PROCESS Model with 5,000 bootstrap samples, as there was no existing model that matched the one conceptualized for this study. In order to consider OPR (M_1) and team attitudes (M_2) as mediators, a b-matrix input was used (1,1,1,0,0,1), which allowed for the appropriate path analysis (Hayes, 2022). To consider team identification as a moderator for the relationships between the deal and OPR and the deal and attitudes toward the team, a w-matrix was used (1,1,0,0,0,0) for the necessary paths. Attitudes toward NIL and collectives were included as covariates to evaluate their influence on the model.

Collective, For-Profit Deals. Due to the mixed design of the study, multiple model analyses were calculated and compared in order to account for the repeated measures. First, PROCESS was used to consider the model in the condition where all participants saw a collective and for-profit deal. The model of predictors leading to OPR perception was significant

($F(5, 184) = 4.910, p = .0003, R^2 = .1177$); however, none of the individual predictors (locality, team identification, and attitudes toward NIL and collectives) had a significant effect on the perception of OPR ($p > .05$). Table 5.32 shares a summary of the path findings.

The model leading to attitudes toward the team was also significant ($F(6, 183) = 27.54, p < .0001, R^2 = .475$). Perception of OPR was a significant predictor of attitudes toward the team ($b = .795, 95\%CI[.624, .966], p < .0001$). In addition, attitudes toward NIL was a significant predictor of attitudes toward the team ($b = .322, 95\%CI[.182, .463], p < .0001$).

Table 5.32

Summary of Mediation Analysis for Collective, For-Profit Condition (OPR and Attitudes only)

Paths	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
OPR					
Locality -> OPR	-1.261	.811	-1.555	.121	[-2.861, .339]
Team Identification -> OPR	-.011	.214	-.052	.959	[-.411, .411]
Att. Toward NIL -> OPR	.072	.060	1.194	.234	[-.047, .191]
Att. Toward Collectives -> OPR	.055	.055	.989	.324	[-.054, .163]
Attitude Toward Team (Att.)					
Locality -> Att.	-1.766	.960	-1.840	.068	[-3.660, .128]
OPR -> Att.	.795	.087	9.167	<.0001*	[.624, .966]
Team Identification -> Att.	-.219	.252	-.868	.387	[-.715, .278]
Att. Toward NIL -> Att.	.322	.071	4.519	<.0001*	[.182, .463]
Att. Toward Collectives -> Att.	-.042	.065	-.639	.523	[-.170, .087]

* denotes significant paths

Future Game Attendance. The model with future game attendance intention was also significant ($F(3, 186) = 4.108, p < .01, R^2 = 0.062$). As expected, attitudes toward the team

significantly predicted the behavior intention ($b = 0.284$, 95%CI[.120,.447], $p < .001$). All path findings are shared in Table 5.33, with the results of the model seen in Figure 5.2.

The indirect effect of locality on future game attendance intention through attitudes toward the team was only significant at the 5.08 level of team identification ($b = -.156$, 95%CI[-0.3373,-0.0139]) (Table 5.34). The index of moderated mediation, however, was not significant (.0409, 95%CI [-.0231, .1202]).

Table 5.33

Summary of Mediation Analysis for Collective, For-Profit Condition (Future Game Attendance Intention)

Paths	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Att. -> Intention	.284	.083	3.421	.0008*	[.120, .447]
Att. Toward NIL -> Intention	-.028	.106	-.260	.795	[-.236, .181]
Att. Toward Collectives -> Intention	-.069	.093	-.740	.460	[-.252, .115]

* denotes significant paths

Table 5.34

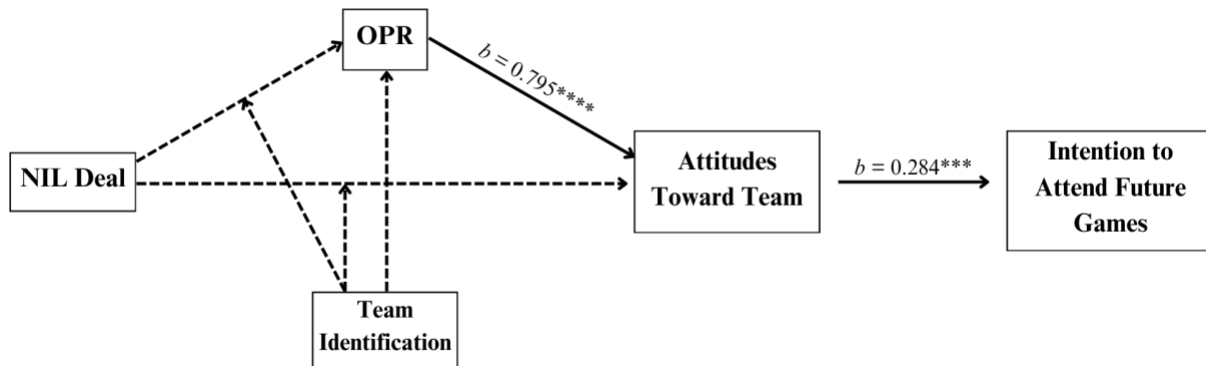
Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Collective, For-Profit Condition (Future Game Attendance Intention)

Paths	Team ID	Effect	BootSE	95% CI
Locality -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.156	.085	[-.342, -.016]*
	6.286	-.074	.056	[-.208, .006]
	6.857	-.035	.061	[-.182, .058]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.068	.049	[-.026, .169]
Locality -> OPR -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.077	.057	[-.210, .006]
	6.286	-.027	.038	[-.122, .028]
	6.857	-.004	.044	[-.109, .072]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.041	.036	[-.024, .117]

* denotes significant paths

Figure 5.2

Model Results for Collective, For-Profit Condition with Future Game Attendance as Outcome



*** $p < .001$, **** $p < .0001$

Watch/Listen Future Games via Media. Regarding predictors leading to listening and watching future games via some sort of media (TV, radio, social media, etc.), the overall model was significant ($F(3,163) = 4.017, p < .01, R^2 = .0608$). The only significant predictor was attitudes toward the team ($b = 0.157, 95\%CI[.063, .251], p < .01$) (Table 5.35). The results of the model are seen in Figure 5.3.

The tests for indirect effects are in Table 5.36. The effect of locality on the intention to watch or listen to future games through team attitudes was again only significant at the 5.08 level of team identification ($b = -.086, 95\%CI[-.185, -.014]$). The index of moderated mediation was not significant ($.038, 95\%CI[-.010, .102]$). The indirect effect of locality on the intention to watch or listen to future games through OPR and attitudes was not significant at any level of team identification and the moderated mediation index was also not significant ($.023, 95\%CI[-.012, .058]$).

Table 5.35

Summary of Mediation Analysis for Collective, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Watch/Listen to Games via Media)

Paths	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Watch/Listen to Games					
Att. -> Intention	.157	.048	3.01	.0012*	[.063, .251]
Att. Toward NIL -> Intention	-.024	.061	-.398	.691	[-.144, .096]
Att. Toward Collectives -> Intention	-.056	.053	-1.057	.292	[-.162, .049]

* denotes significant paths

Table 5.36

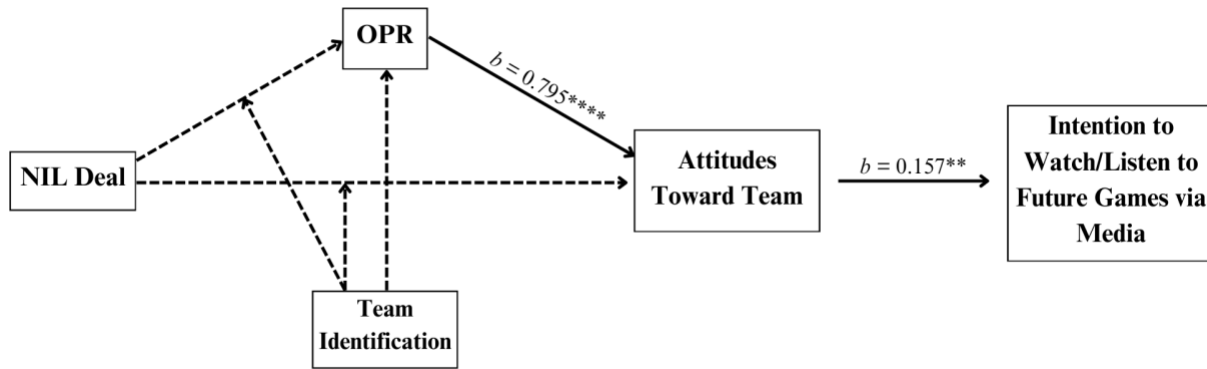
Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Collective, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Watch/Listen to Games via Media)

Paths	Team ID	Effect	BootSE	95% CI
Locality -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.086	.044	[-.185, -.014]*
	6.286	-.041	.026	[-.097, .005]
	6.857	-.019	.030	[-.081, .041]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.038	.029	[-.010, .102]
Locality -> OPR -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.042	.024	[-.093, .002]
	6.286	-.015	.017	[-.051, .019]
	6.857	-.002	.022	[-.044, .043]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.023	.018	[-.012, .058]

* denotes significant paths

Figure 5.3

Model Results for Collective, For-Profit Condition with Watching/Listening to Future Games as Outcome



** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, **** $p < .0001$

Track News of Team via Media. The overall model was significant ($F(3,186) = 4.017, p < .001, R^2 = .1032$). A summary of the path results are in Table 5.37. The only significant predictor was attitudes toward the team ($b = 0.262, 95\%CI[.147, .376], p < .0001$). The indirect effects are shown in Table 5.38. The indirect effect of locality on the future intention to track their favorite team via media through attitudes was only significant at the 5.08 level of team identification ($b = -.144, 95\%CI[-.329, -.022]$). The other indirect effects were not significant, including the moderated mediation index. The results of the model are shown in Figure 5.4.

Table 5.37

Summary of Mediation Analysis for Collective, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Track News of Team via Media)

Paths	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Track News of Team					
Att. -> Intention	.262	.058	4.516	<.0001*	[.147, .376]
Att. Toward NIL -> Intention	-.039	.074	-.529	.598	[-.185, .107]
Att. Toward Collectives -> Intention	-.066	.065	-1.013	.313	[-.194, .062]

* denotes significant paths

Table 5.38

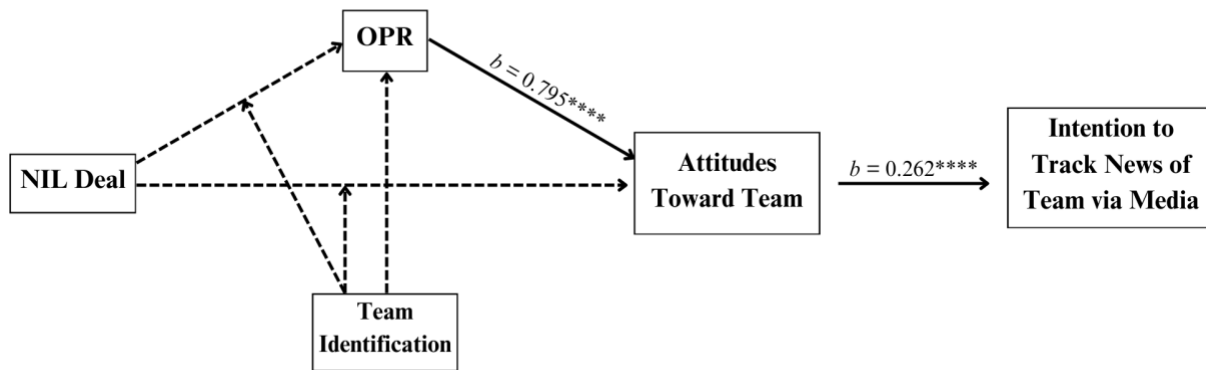
Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Collective, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Track News of Team via Media)

Paths	Team ID	Effect	BootSE	95% CI
Locality -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.144	.079	[-.329, -.022]*
	6.286	-.068	.046	[-.173, .006]
	6.857	-.032	.050	[-.143, .061]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.063	.049	[-.015, .174]
Locality -> OPR -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.071	.044	[-.167, .002]
	6.286	-.025	.030	[-.093, .030]
	6.857	-.004	.037	[-.082, .069]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.038	.030	[-.019, .101]

* denotes significant paths

Figure 5.4

Model Results for Collective, For-Profit Condition with Tracking News of Team as Outcome



**** $p < .0001$

Team Merchandise Purchase. The model predicting team merchandise purchase intention was significant ($F(3,186) = 4.987, p < .01, R^2 = .0744$). Summary of path findings are in Table 5.39. Significant predictors of the behavior included attitudes toward the team ($b = 0.263, 95\%CI[.123, .402], p < .0001$) and attitudes toward NIL ($b = -.179, 95\%CI[-.357, -.001], p$

< .05). While attitudes positively predicted future team merchandise purchase, attitudes toward NIL negatively predicted the intention. Results of the model are seen in Figure 5.5.

The indirect effect of locality on future team merchandise purchase through attitudes was significant at the 5.08 level of team identification ($b = -.144$, 95%CI[-.316,-.005]). All other indirect effects were not significant, including the moderated mediation index, and are shared in Table 5.40.

Table 5.39

Summary of Mediation Analysis for Collective, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Purchase Team Merchandise)

Paths	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Purchase Team Merchandise					
Att. -> Intention	.263	.071	3.718	.0003*	[.123, .402]
Att. Toward NIL -> Intention	-.179	.090	-1.981	.049*	[-.357, -.001]
Att. Toward Collectives -> Intention	.074	.079	.937	.350	[-.082, .231]

* denotes significant paths

Table 5.40

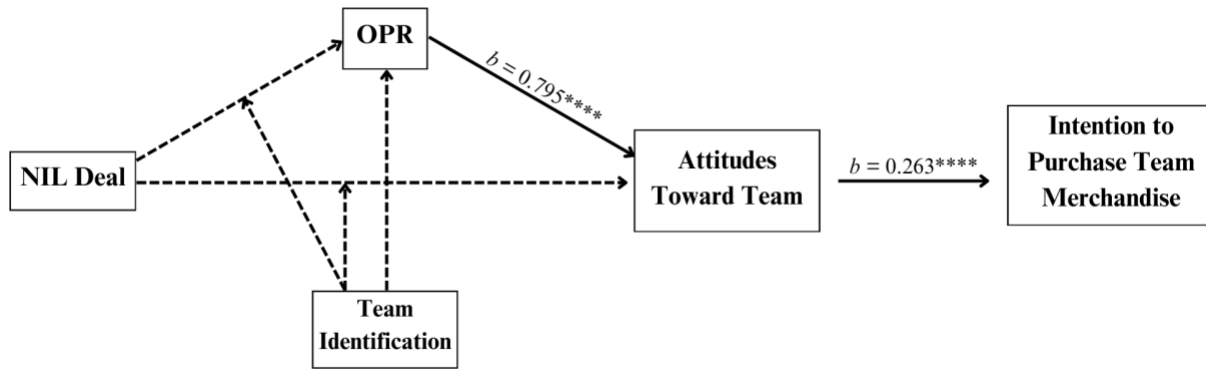
Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Collective, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Purchase Team Merchandise)

Paths	Team ID	Effect	BootSE	95% CI
Locality -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.144	.074	[-.316, -.022]*
	6.286	-.068	.046	[-.168, .009]
	6.857	-.032	.052	[-.142, .065]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.063	.047	[-.018, .168]
Locality -> OPR -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.071	.047	[-.175, .005]
	6.286	-.025	.031	[-.096, .028]
	6.857	-.004	.038	[-.086, .066]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.038	.032	[-.021, .108]

* denotes significant paths

Figure 5.5

Model Results for Collective, For-Profit Condition with Team Merchandise Purchase Intention as Outcome



**** $p < .0001$

Giving Intention to NIL Fund (School). The overall model predicting financial giving intention to the school's NIL fund was not significant ($F(3,186) = 2.134, p = .091, R^2 = .034$), with no significant predictors (Table 5.41). There were also no significant indirect effects, and the moderated mediation index was also not significant (Table 5.42).

Table 5.41

Summary of Mediation Analysis for Collective, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Give to School's NIL Fund)

Paths	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Giving to School's NIL Fund					
Att. -> Intention	.104	.115	.906	.366	[-.123, .331]
Att. Toward NIL -> Intention	-.001	.147	-.007	.994	[-.291, .288]
Att. Toward Collectives -> Intention	.206	.129	1.595	.112	[-.049, .460]

* denotes significant paths

Table 5.42

Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Collective, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Give to School's NIL Fund)

Paths	Team ID	Effect	BootSE	95% CI
Locality -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.057	.072	[-.221, .067]
	6.286	-.027	.038	[-.116, .032]
	6.857	-.013	.032	[-.094, .037]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.025	.037	[-.035, .109]
Locality -> OPR -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.028	.039	[-.125, .027]
	6.286	-.010	.021	[-.069, .015]
	6.857	-.001	.022	[-.057, .035]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.015	.022	[-.021, .069]

* denotes significant paths

Giving Intention to Official Collective. The model predicting financial giving to the team's official NIL collective was significant ($F(3,186) = 3.268, p < .05, R^2 = .0501$), with a significant predictor of attitudes toward collectives ($b = 0.328, 95\%CI[.078, .579], p < .05$). The path analyses are shared in Table 5.43. The indirect effects and moderation were not significant (Table 5.44).

Table 5.43

Summary of Mediation Analysis for Collective, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Give to a Team's Collective)

Paths	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Purchase Team Merchandise					
Att. -> Intention	.106	.113	.938	.349	[-.117, .330]
Att. Toward NIL -> Intention	-.124	.145	-.857	.392	[-.409, .161]
Att. Toward Collectives -> Intention	.328	.127	2.583	.011*	[.078, .579]

* denotes significant paths

Table 5.44

Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Collective, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Give to a Team's Collective)

Paths	Team ID	Effect	BootSE	95% CI
Locality -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.058	.069	[-.220, .065]
	6.286	-.028	.036	[-.116, .031]
	6.857	-.013	.031	[-.093, .035]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.026	.035	[-.033, .108]
Locality -> OPR -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.029	.038	[-.123, .025]
	6.286	-.010	.021	[-.069, .015]
	6.857	-.001	.022	[-.060, .034]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.015	.022	[-.021, .069]

* denotes significant paths

Collective, Non-Profit Deals. The next set of analyses looked at the condition where each participant read about an NIL deal that was organized by a collective and featured a partnership with a non-profit organization. Similar to the collective, for-profit analysis, the overall model with OPR as the outcome was significant ($F(5, 184) = 4.943, p = .0003, R^2 = .1184$); however, the individual predictors (locality, team identification, and attitudes toward NIL and collectives) did not have a significant effect on the perception of OPR ($p > .05$). Table 5.45 includes the summary of results for OPR and attitudes as outcomes.

The overall model predicting attitudes toward the team was also significant ($F(6, 183) = 19.105, p < .0001, R^2 = .3851$). There were two significant predictors on attitudes, including OPR ($b = 0.634, 95\%CI[.465, .804], p < .0001$) and attitudes toward NIL ($b = 0.280, 95\%CI[.138, .421], p < .001$).

Table 5.45*Summary of Mediation Analysis for Collective, Non-Profit Condition (OPR and Attitudes only)*

Paths	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
OPR					
Locality -> OPR	-1.093	.820	-1.333	.184	[-2.711, .525]
Team Identification -> OPR	.021	.217	.097	.923	[-.406, .448]
Att. Toward NIL -> OPR	.073	.061	1.202	.231	[-.047, .194]
Att. Toward Collectives -> OPR	.073	.056	1.312	.191	[-.037, .183]
Attitude Toward Team (Att.)					
Locality -> Att.	-.683	.962	-.710	.479	[-2.581, 1.215]
OPR -> Att.	.634	.086	7.371	<.0001*	[.465, .804]
Team Identification -> Att.	.004	.253	.015	.988	[-.495, .503]
Att. Toward NIL -> Att.	.280	.072	3.905	<.001*	[.138, .421]
Att. Toward Collectives -> Att.	-.001	.065	-.018	.986	[-.130, .128]

* denotes significant path

Future Game Attendance. The overall model predicting future game attendance was also significant ($F(3,186) = 16.638, p < .0001, R^2 = .2116$), with attitudes toward the team as a significant predictor ($b = 0.570, 95\%CI[.409, .730], p < .0001$). Table 5.46 offers the summary of path analysis for future game attendance intention. Figure 5.6 shares the model findings.

Table 5.47 reports the indirect effect path results. Neither of the indirect effects (Locality -> Attitudes -> Behavior and Locality -> OPR -> Attitudes -> Behavior) were significant at any level of team identification. In addition, the index moderated mediation showed no significant effect of team identification as a moderator.

Table 5.46

Summary of Mediation Analysis for Collective, Non-Profit Condition (Future Game Attendance Intention)

Paths	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Att. -> Intention	.570	.081	7.013	<.0001*	[.409, .730]
Att. Toward NIL -> Intention	-.150	.095	-1.569	.118	[-.338, .039]
Att. Toward Collectives -> Intention	-.090	.084	-1.067	.288	[-.256, .076]

* denotes significant paths

Table 5.47

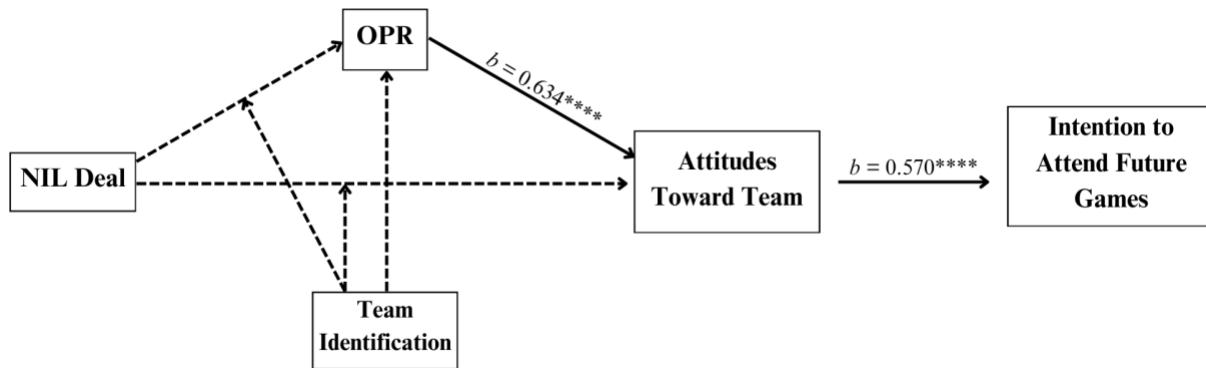
Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Collective, Non-Profit Condition (Future Game Attendance Intention)

Paths	Team ID	Effect	BootSE	95% CI
Locality -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.094	.120	[-.335, -.144]*
	6.286	-.024	.086	[-.201, .138]
	6.857	.009	.105	[-.211, .209]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.058	.082	[-.111, .220]
Locality -> OPR -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.109	.073	[-.260, .028]
	6.286	-.042	.048	[-.146, .047]
	6.857	-.010	.059	[-.137, .102]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.056	.051	[-.047, .158]

* denotes significant path

Figure 5.6

Model Results for Collective, Non-Profit Condition with Future Game Attendance as Outcome



**** $p < .0001$

Watch/Listen Future Games via Media. The overall model predicting the intention to watch or listen to games in the future was significant ($F(3,186) = 7.865, p < .001, R^2 = .1126$). Team attitudes were a significant predictor of this future behavior intention ($b = .233$, 95%CI[.135,.330], $p < .0001$). A summary of path findings are in Table 5.48, while indirect effect analyses are in Table 5.49. Overall indirect effects of the model were not significant, including the moderated mediation index for team identification. The final model is shown in Figure 5.7.

Table 5.48

Summary of Mediation Analysis for Collective, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Watch/Listen to Games via Media)

Paths	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Watch/Listen to Games					
Att. -> Intention	.233	.050	4.705	<.0001*	[.135, .330]
Att. Toward NIL -> Intention	-.030	.058	-.513	.609	[-.144, .085]
Att. Toward Collectives -> Intention	-.072	.051	-1.404	.162	[-.174, .029]

* denotes significant path

Table 5.49

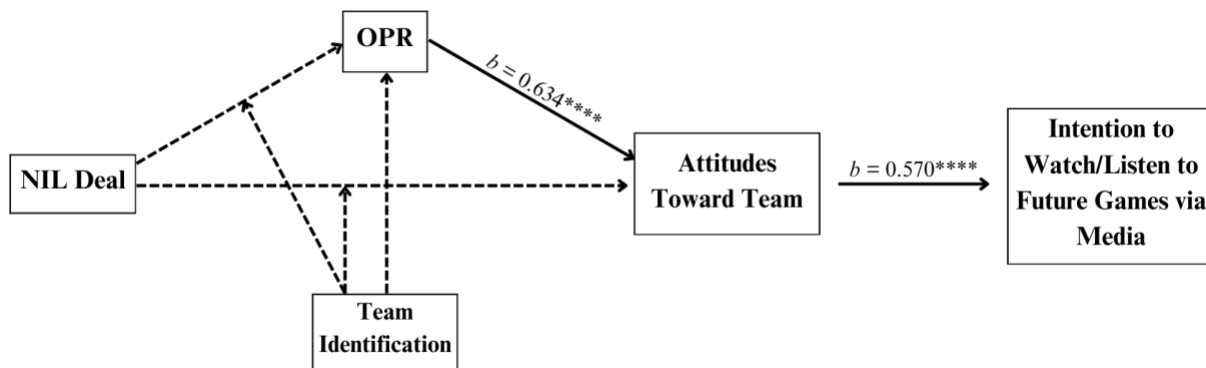
Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Collective, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Watch/Listen to Games via Media)

Paths	Team ID	Effect	BootSE	95% CI
Locality -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.038	.054	[-.157, .056]
	6.286	-.010	.036	[-.084, .059]
	6.857	.004	.044	[-.079, .095]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.024	.037	[-.041, .105]
Locality -> OPR -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.045	.032	[-.113, .014]
	6.286	-.017	.021	[-.061, .021]
	6.857	-.004	.025	[-.056, .046]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.023	.022	[-.021, .070]

* denotes significant path

Figure 5.7

Model Results for Collective, Non-Profit Condition with Watching/Listening to Future Games as Outcome



**** $p < .0001$

Track News of Team via Media. A summary of path analysis is reported in Table 5.50.

The model directly predicting future tracking of the team was significant ($F(3,186) = 11.513, p < .0001, R^2 = .157$), with attitudes toward the team significantly predicting the behavior intention ($b = 0.304, 95\%CI[.196, .411], p < .0001$) and attitudes toward collectives approaching

significance ($b = -.107$, 95%CI[-.219,.005], $p = .06$). The indirect effects and moderated mediation index (Table 5.51) were not significant. The model result is shared in Figure 5.8.

Table 5.50

Summary of Mediation Analysis for Collective, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Track News of Team via Media)

Paths	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Track News of Team					
Att. -> Intention	.304	.055	5.577	<.0001*	[.196, .411]
Att. Toward NIL -> Intention	-.061	.064	-.952	.342	[-.187, .065]
Att. Toward Collectives -> Intention	-.107	.057	-1.892	.060	[-.219, .005]

* denotes significant path

Table 5.51

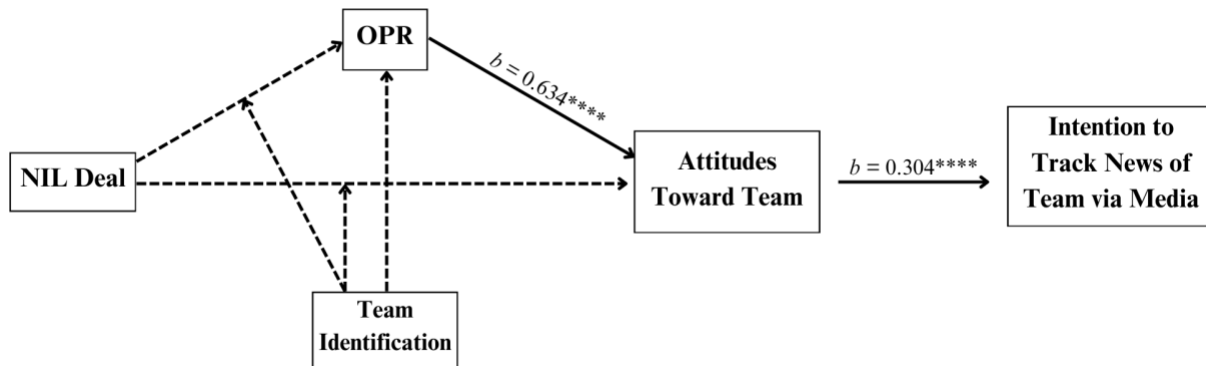
Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Collective, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Track News of Team via Media)

Paths	Team ID	Effect	BootSE	95% CI
Locality -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.050	.068	[-.192, .079]
	6.286	-.013	.046	[-.107, .079]
	6.857	.005	.056	[-.104, .119]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.031	.047	[-.057, .132]
Locality -> OPR -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.058	.039	[-.138, .017]
	6.286	-.022	.027	[-.083, .027]
	6.857	-.005	.033	[-.078, .057]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.030	.027	[-.026, .083]

* denotes significant path

Figure 5.8

Model Results for Collective, Non-Profit Condition with Tracking News of Team as Outcome



**** $p < .0001$

Team Merchandise Purchase. The model predicting future team merchandise purchase intention was significant ($F(3,186) = 4.687, p < .01, R^2 = .070$), with attitudes toward the team significantly predicting the behavior intention ($b = 0.246, 95\%CI[.107, .384], p < .001$). The summary of paths are reported in Table 5.52. The indirect effects and moderated mediation index were not significant for this model (Table 5.53). The final model result is shared in Figure 5.9.

Table 5.52

Summary of Mediation Analysis for Collective, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Purchase Team Merchandise)

Paths	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Purchase Team Merchandise					
Att. -> Intention	.246	.070	3.507	.0006*	[.107, .384]
Att. Toward NIL -> Intention	-.149	.082	-1.812	.072	[-.311, .013]
Att. Toward Collectives -> Intention	-.015	.073	-.206	.837	[-.159, .129]

* denotes significant path

Table 5.53

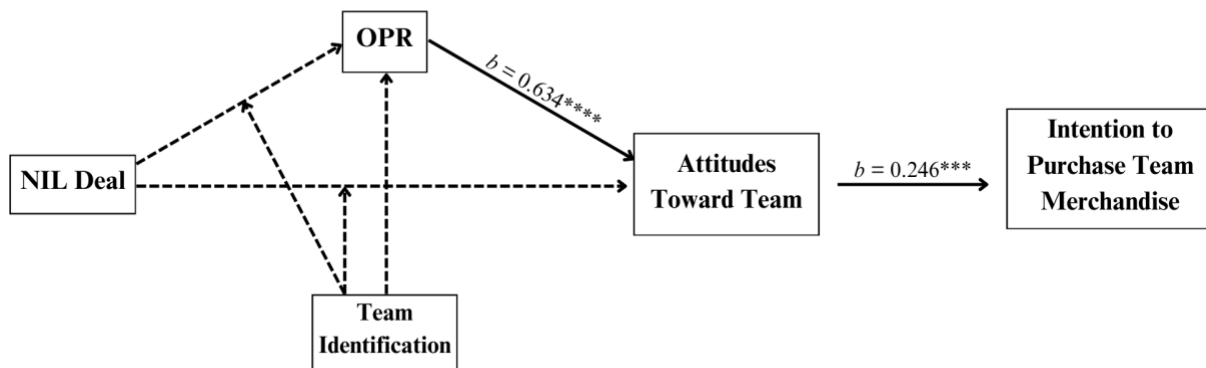
Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Collective, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Purchase Team Merchandise)

Paths	Team ID	Effect	BootSE	95% CI
Locality -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.041	.055	[-.152, -.071]*
	6.286	-.010	.040	[-.093, .066]
	6.857	.004	.048	[-.098, .097]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.025	.038	[-.055, .099]
Locality -> OPR -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.047	.036	[-.128, .011]
	6.286	-.018	.023	[-.073, .021]
	6.857	-.004	.027	[-.066, .045]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.024	.023	[-.022, .070]

* denotes significant path

Figure 5.9

Model Results for Collective, Non-Profit Condition with Team Merchandise Purchase Intention as Outcome



*** $p < .001$, **** $p < .0001$

Giving Intention to NIL Fund (School). The model predicting financial giving to the school's official NIL fund was not significant ($F(3,186) = 2.559, p = .057, R^2 = .0396$). There were also no significant predictors (Table 5.54). All other indirect effects were not significant (Table 5.55).

Table 5.54

Summary of Mediation Analysis for Collective, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Give to School's NIL Fund)

Paths	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Giving to School's NIL Fund					
Att. -> Intention	.178	.129	1.384	.168	[-.076, .431]
Att. Toward NIL -> Intention	-.005	.151	-.033	.974	[-.303, .293]
Att. Toward Collectives -> Intention	.198	.134	1.481	.140	[-.066, .461]

Table 5.55

Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Collective, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Give to School's NIL Fund)

Paths	Team ID	Effect	BootSE	95% CI
Locality -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.029	.047	[-.122, .074]
	6.286	-.008	.032	[-.075, .062]
	6.857	-.003	.040	[-.079, .088]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.018	.033	[-.054, .085]
Locality -> OPR -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.034	.037	[-.124, .021]
	6.286	-.013	.021	[-.067, .019]
	6.857	-.003	.023	[-.059, .041]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.018	.022	[-.021, .070]

Giving Intention to Official Collective. The model predicting future intention to give to the team's official NIL collective was significant ($F(3,186) = 3.897, p < .01, R^2 = .059$), with a significant predictor of attitudes toward collectives ($b = 0.251, 95\%CI[.003, .498], p < .05$) (Table 5.56). The indirect effects and moderation were not significant (Table 5.57).

Table 5.56

Summary of Mediation Analysis for Collective, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Give to a Team's Collective)

Paths	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Purchase Team Merchandise					
Att. -> Intention	.224	.121	1.856	.065	[-.014, .463]
Att. Toward NIL -> Intention	-.057	.142	-.400	.690	[-.336, .223]
Att. Toward Collectives -> Intention	.251	.126	1.997	.047*	[.003, .498]

* denotes significant path

Table 5.57

Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Collective, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Give to a Team's Collective)

Paths	Team ID	Effect	BootSE	95% CI
Locality -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.037	.053	[-.147, .072]
	6.286	-.010	.037	[-.085, .068]
	6.857	.004	.046	[-.091, .103]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.023	.037	[-.055, .100]
Locality -> OPR -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.043	.038	[-.135, .014]
	6.286	-.016	.023	[-.074, .021]
	6.857	-.004	.027	[-.067, .046]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.022	.025	[-.022, .028]

* denotes significant path

Commercial, For-Profit Deals. The next set of analyses looked at the condition where each participant viewed a commercial deal (no mention of a collective) with a for-profit partner. The overall model with OPR as an outcome was significant ($F(5, 184) = 5.711, p < .001, R^2 = .134$). Locality as a predictor was nearing significance ($b = -1.525, 95\%CI[-3.152, .103], p = .066$). A summary of the analysis for OPR and attitudes toward the team as outcomes is in Table 5.58. Other predictors, including team identification and attitudes toward NIL and collectives,

were not significant ($p > .05$). A significant conditional effect did appear with this model, as the effect of locality on OPR was significant at the 5.08 level of team identification ($b = -.3687$, 95%CI[-0.7301,-0.0073]).

The overall model leading to attitudes toward the team was significant ($F(6,183) = 31.245$, $p < .0001$, $R^2 = .506$). OPR was a significant predictor of attitudes ($b = .704$, 95%CI[.550,.858], $p < .0001$). Attitudes toward NIL were also a significant predictor of attitudes toward the team ($b = .335$, 95%CI[.206,.464], $p < .0001$).

Table 5.58

Summary of Mediation Analysis for Commercial, For-Profit Condition (OPR and Attitudes only)

Paths	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
OPR					
Locality -> OPR	-1.525	.825	-1.848	.066	[-3.152, .103]
Team Identification -> OPR	-.082	.218	-.377	.707	[-.512, .348]
Att. Toward NIL -> OPR	.080	.062	1.305	.194	[-.041, .202]
Att. Toward Collectives -> OPR	.083	.056	1.473	.142	[-.028, .193]
Attitude Toward Team (Att.)					
Locality -> Att.	-1.695	.883	-1.919	.057	[-3.438, .048]
OPR -> Att.	.704	.078	8.997	<.0001*	[.550, .858]
Team Identification -> Att.	-.162	.231	-.700	.485	[-.618, .294]
Att. Toward NIL -> Att.	.335	.066	5.111	<.0001*	[.206, .464]
Att. Toward Collectives -> Att.	-.035	.060	-.580	.563	[-.153, .083]

* denotes significant path

Future Game Attendance. The overall model to future game attendance intention was significant ($F(3,186) = 3.620$, $p < .05$, $R^2 = .055$), with significant individual predictors of attitudes toward the team ($b = .229$, 95%CI[.058,.400], $p < .01$) and attitudes toward collectives

($b = -.179$, 95%CI[-.356,-.001], $p < .05$). Table 5.59 reports the summary of path analyses for future game intention. The final model result is in Figure 5.10.

Neither of the indirect effects (Locality -> Attitudes -> Behavior and Locality -> OPR -> Attitudes -> Behavior) were significant at any level of team identification. In addition, the index moderated mediation showed no significant effect of team identification as a moderator (Table 5.60).

Table 5.59

Summary of Mediation Analysis for Commercial, For-Profit Condition (Future Game Attendance Intention)

Paths	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Att. -> Intention	.229	.087	2.643	.009*	[.058, .400]
Att. Toward NIL -> Intention	.075	.103	.726	.469	[-.129, .279]
Att. Toward Collectives -> Intention	-.179	.090	-1.987	.058*	[-.356, -.001]

* denotes significant path

Table 5.60

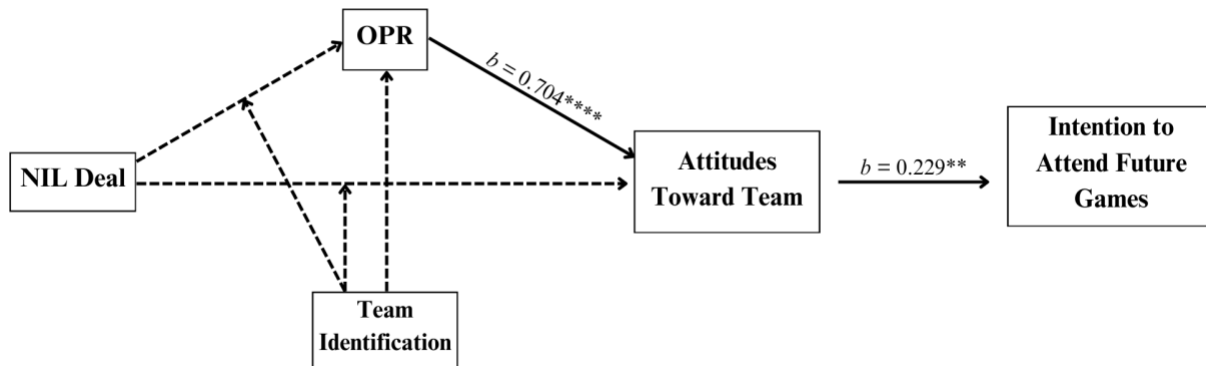
Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Commercial, For-Profit Condition (Future Game Attendance Intention)

Paths	Team ID	Effect	BootSE	95% CI
Locality -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.133	.085	[-.318, -.010]
	6.286	-.072	.054	[-.195, .006]
	6.857	-.044	.052	[-.176, .026]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.050	.042	[-.025, .143]
Locality -> OPR -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.059	.051	[-.184, .008]
	6.286	-.015	.029	[-.092, .023]
	6.857	.006	.032	[-.073, .064]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.037	.032	[-.011, .111]

* denotes significant path

Figure 5.10

Model Results for Commercial, For-Profit Condition with Future Game Attendance as Outcome



** $p < .01$, **** $p < .0001$

Watch/Listen Future Games via Media. The model predicting a fan's intention to watch or listen to future games was significant ($F(6,186) = 3.545, p < .05, R^2 = .0541$). Attitudes toward the team was again a significant predictor of the behavior intention ($b = .175$, 95%CI[.064,.286], $p < .01$). A summary of the path analyses are reported in Table 5.61, with the model results in Figure 5.11.

Indirect effects are reported in Table 5.62. A significant indirect effect appeared with this model, as the effect of locality on the behavior through attitudes was significant at the 5.08 ($b = -.101$, 95%CI[-0.207,-0.023]) and 6.286 levels of team identification ($b = -.055$, 95%CI[-0.116,-0.009]). As team identification continued to increase, however, the effect became insignificant. The moderated mediation index was not significant.

Table 5.61

Summary of Mediation Analysis for Commercial, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Watch/Listen to Games via Media)

Paths	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Watch/Listen to Games					
Att. -> Intention	.175	.056	3.104	.002*	[.064, .286]
Att. Toward NIL -> Intention	-.034	.067	-.514	.608	[-.167, .098]
Att. Toward Collectives -> Intention	-.061	.058	-1.041	.299	[-.176, .054]

* denotes significant paths

Table 5.62

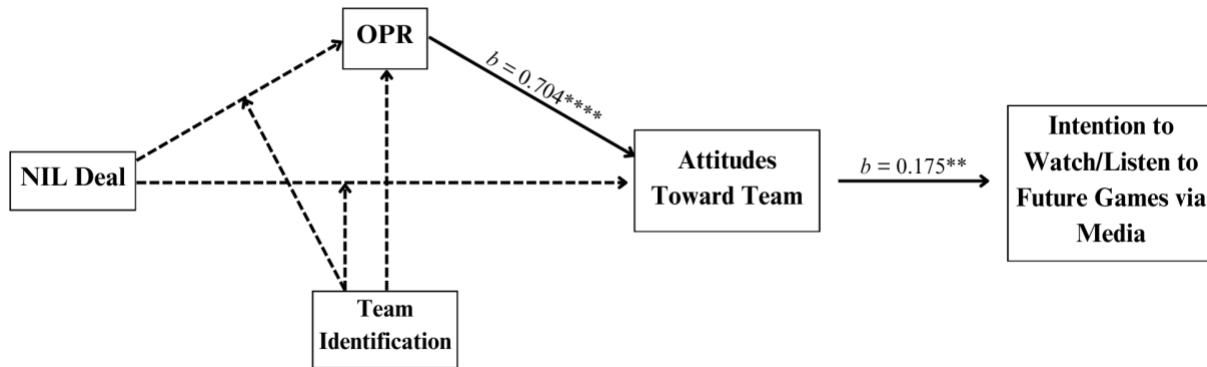
Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Commercial, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Watch/Listen to Games via Media)

Paths	Team ID	Effect	BootSE	95% CI
Locality -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.101	.048	[-.207, -.023]*
	6.286	-.055	.028	[-.116, -.009]*
	6.857	-.033	.030	[-.097, .024]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.038	.029	[-.010, .107]
Locality -> OPR -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.045	.025	[-.097, .002]
	6.286	-.012	.017	[-.047, .021]
	6.857	.004	.022	[-.040, .047]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.028	.019	[-.009, .065]

* denotes significant path

Figure 5.11

Model Results for Commercial, For-Profit Condition with Watching/Listening to Future Games as Outcome



$^{**}p < .01$, $^{****}p < .0001$

Track News of Team via Media. The model directly predicting future intention to track news of the team was significant ($F(6,186) = 5.059$, $p < .01$, $R^2 = .0754$), with only attitudes toward the team a significant predictor ($b = .240$, 95%CI[.115,.367], $p < .001$). The path analysis is reported in Table 5.63, with the final model reported in Figure 5.12.

There was a significant indirect effect of locality on the behavior through attitudes at the 5.08 ($b = -.139$, 95%CI[-0.277,-0.037]) and 6.286 levels of team identification ($b = -.076$, 95%CI[-0.157,-0.012]). All other indirect effects were insignificant, along with the moderated mediation index (Table 5.64).

Table 5.63

Summary of Mediation Analysis for Commercial, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Track News of Team via Media)

Paths	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Track News of Team					
Att. -> Intention	.240	.064	3.772	.0002*	[.115, .366]
Att. Toward NIL -> Intention	-.046	.076	-.607	.545	[-.196, .104]
Att. Toward Collectives -> Intention	-.070	.066	-1.058	.291	[-.200, .060]

* denotes significant path

Table 5.64

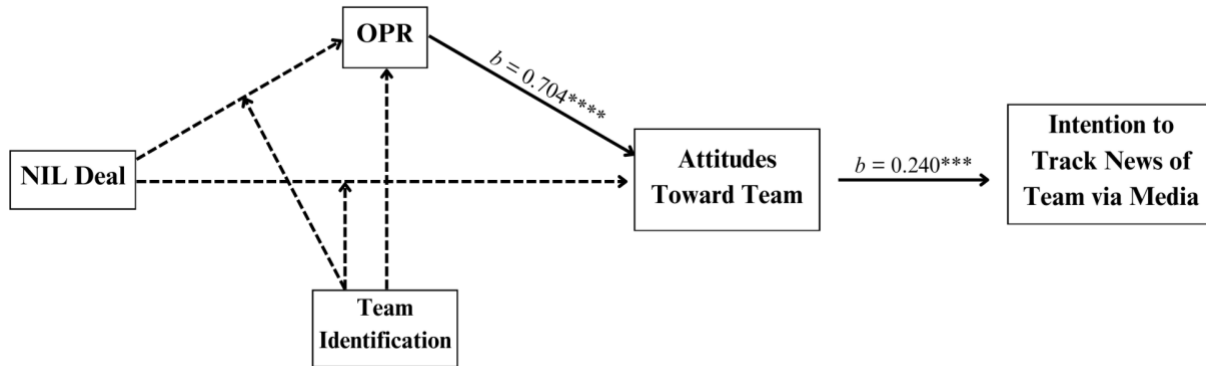
Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Commercial, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Track News of Team via Media)

Paths	Team ID	Effect	BootSE	95% CI
Locality -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.139	.062	[-.279, -.037]*
	6.286	-.076	.038	[-.158, -.012]*
	6.857	-.046	.042	[-.133, .032]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.053	.038	[-.013, .138]
Locality -> OPR -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.062	.036	[-.143, -.0004]
	6.286	-.016	.024	[-.067, .028]
	6.857	.006	.030	[-.054, .067]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.039	.026	[-.010, .096]

* denotes significant path

Figure 5.12

Model Results for Commercial, For-Profit Condition with Tracking News of Team as Outcome



*** $p < .001$, **** $p < .0001$

Team Merchandise Purchase. The model predicting future team merchandise purchase intention was significant ($F(3,186) = 8.925, p < .0001, R^2 = .126$), with attitudes toward the team significantly predicting the behavior intention ($b = .361, 95\%CI[.223, .499], p < .0001$) (Table 5.65). The final model is given in Figure 5.13.

There was a significant indirect effect of locality on future team merchandise purchase intention through attitudes at the 5.08 ($b = -.210, 95\%CI[-0.380, -0.061]$) and 6.286 levels of team identification ($b = -.114, 95\%CI[-0.224, -0.020]$). Other indirect effects and the moderated mediation index were not significant (Table 5.66).

Table 5.65

Summary of Mediation Analysis for Commercial, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Purchase Team Merchandise)

Paths	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Purchase Team Merchandise					
Att. -> Intention	.361	.070	5.164	<.0001*	[.223, .499]
Att. Toward NIL -> Intention	-.153	.083	-1.831	.069	[-.317, -.012]
Att. Toward Collectives -> Intention	.014	.073	.195	.846	[-.129, .157]

* denotes significant path

Table 5.66

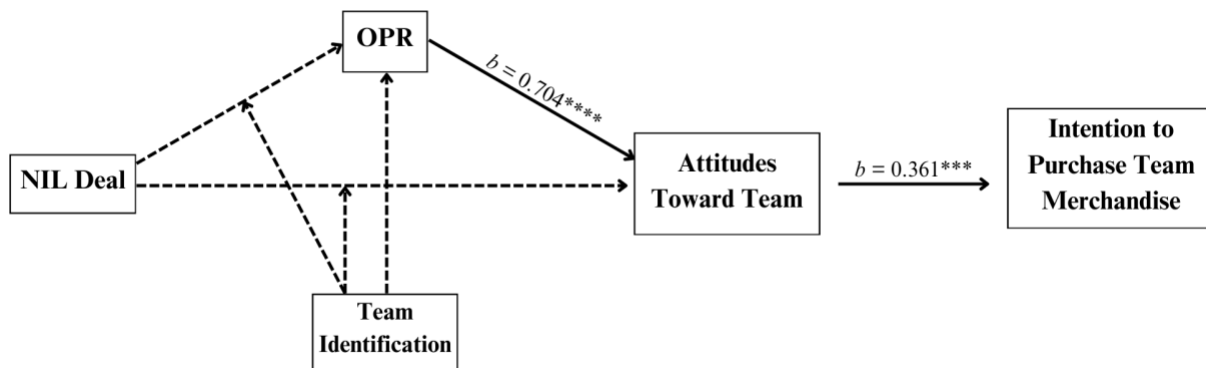
Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Commercial, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Purchase Team Merchandise)

Paths	Team ID	Effect	BootSE	95% CI
Locality -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.210	.081	[-.380, -.061]*
	6.286	-.114	.053	[-.224, -.020]*
	6.857	-.069	.062	[-.196, .044]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.079	.053	[-.021, .189]
Locality -> OPR -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.094	.056	[-.214, .002]
	6.286	-.024	.036	[-.101, .038]
	6.857	.009	.044	[-.084, .093]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.058	.039	[-.014, .140]

* denotes significant path

Figure 5.13

Model Results for Commercial, For-Profit Condition with Team Merchandise Purchase Intention as Outcome



*** $p < .001$, **** $p < .0001$

Giving Intention to NIL Fund (School). The model predicting future giving intention to the school's NIL fund was significant ($F(3,186) = 3.156, p < .05, R^2 = .048$), but none of the predictors under study showed a significant direct effect (Table 5.67). None of the other indirect effects were significant, including the moderation of team identification (Table 5.68).

Table 5.67

Summary of Mediation Analysis for Commercial, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Give to School's NIL Fund)

Paths	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Giving to School's NIL Fund					
Att. -> Intention	.133	.123	1.080	.282	[-.110, .376]
Att. Toward NIL -> Intention	.089	.147	.607	.545	[-.200, .378]
Att. Toward Collectives -> Intention	.170	.128	1.326	.187	[-.083, .421]

* denotes significant path

Table 5.68

Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Commercial, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Give to School's NIL Fund)

Paths	Team ID	Effect	BootSE	95% CI
Locality -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.077	.079	[-.251, .069]
	6.286	-.042	.046	[-.148, .033]
	6.857	-.025	.038	[-.120, .027]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.029	.036	[-.033, .113]
Locality -> OPR -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.035	.041	[-.138, .024]
	6.286	-.009	.021	[-.068, .015]
	6.857	.003	.023	[-.056, .041]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.021	.026	[-.022, .082]

* denotes significant path

Giving Intention to Official Collective. The model predicting financial giving to the team's official NIL collective was significant ($F(3,186) = 4.050, p < .01, R^2 = .061$), with a significant predictor of attitudes toward collectives ($b = 0.249, 95\%CI[.0003, .498], p < .05$) (Table 5.69). The indirect effects and moderation were not significant (Table 5.70).

Table 5.69

Summary of Mediation Analysis for Commercial, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Give to a Team's Collective)

Paths	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Purchase Team Merchandise					
Att. -> Intention	.150	.122	1.233	.219	[-.090, .390]
Att. Toward NIL -> Intention	.020	.145	.140	.889	[-.265, .306]
Att. Toward Collectives -> Intention	.249	.126	1.975	.0497*	[.0003, .498]

* denotes significant path

Table 5.70

Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Commercial, For-Profit Condition (Intention to Give to a Team's Collective)

Paths	Team ID	Effect	BootSE	95% CI
Locality -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.087	.076	[-.252, .051]
	6.286	-.047	.044	[-.145, .025]
	6.857	-.029	.037	[-.118, .029]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.033	.036	[-.027, .116]
Locality -> OPR -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.039	.040	[-.135, .018]
	6.286	-.010	.021	[-.067, .017]
	6.857	.004	.023	[-.056, .044]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.024	.025	[-.017, .083]

* denotes significant path

Commercial, Non-Profit Deals. The next set of analyses looked at the condition where each participant viewed a commercial deal (no mention of a collective) with a non-profit partnering organization. Table 5.71 offers the summary of path analyses for the outcomes of OPR and attitudes toward the team. The overall model with OPR as an outcome was significant ($F(5,184) = 5.106, p = .0002, R^2 = .122$), with a significant individual predictor of attitudes toward collectives ($b = .109, 95\%CI[.003, .216], p < .05$).

The overall model to attitudes was significant ($F(6,183) = 18.494, p < .0001, R^2 = .378$), with significant individual predictors of OPR ($b = .582, 95\%CI[.430, .733], p < .0001$) and attitudes toward NIL ($b = .253, 95\%CI[.132, .375], p = .0001$).

Table 5.71

Summary of Mediation Analysis for Commercial, Non-Profit Condition (OPR and Attitudes only)

Paths	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
OPR					
Locality -> OPR	-.558	.793	-.704	.483	[-2.123, 1.007]
Team Identification -> OPR	.122	.209	.584	.560	[-.291, .536]
Att. Toward NIL -> OPR	.045	.059	.762	.447	[-.072, .162]
Att. Toward Collectives -> OPR	.109	.054	2.030	.044*	[.003, .216]
Attitude Toward Team (Att.)					
Locality -> Att.	-.791	.827	-.956	.340	[-2.423, .841]
OPR -> Att.	.582	.077	7.572	<.0001*	[.430, .733]
Team Identification -> Att.	-.027	.218	-.125	.901	[-.458, .404]
Att. Toward NIL -> Att.	.253	.062	4.107	.0001*	[.132, .375]
Att. Toward Collectives -> Att.	-.055	.057	-.970	.334	[-.167, .057]

* denotes significant path

Future Game Attendance. Regarding future game attendance as the outcome (Table 5.72), the model was again significant ($F(3,186) = 4.897, p < .01, R^2 = .073$), with a significant individual predictor of attitudes toward the team ($b = .355, 95\%CI[.151, .558], p = .0007$). The final model result is shown in Figure 5.14.

Neither of the indirect effects (Locality -> Attitudes -> Behavior and Locality -> OPR -> Attitudes -> Behavior) were significant at any level of team identification. In addition, the index

moderated mediation showed no significant effect of team identification as a moderator (Table 5.73).

Table 5.72

Summary of Mediation Analysis for Commercial, Non-Profit Condition (Future Game Attendance Intention)

Paths	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Att. -> Intention	.355	.103	3.431	.0007*	[.151, .558]
Att. Toward NIL -> Intention	.043	.105	.405	.686	[-.165, .250]
Att. Toward Collectives -> Intention	-.161	.093	-1.731	.085	[-.345, .023]

* denotes significant path

Table 5.73

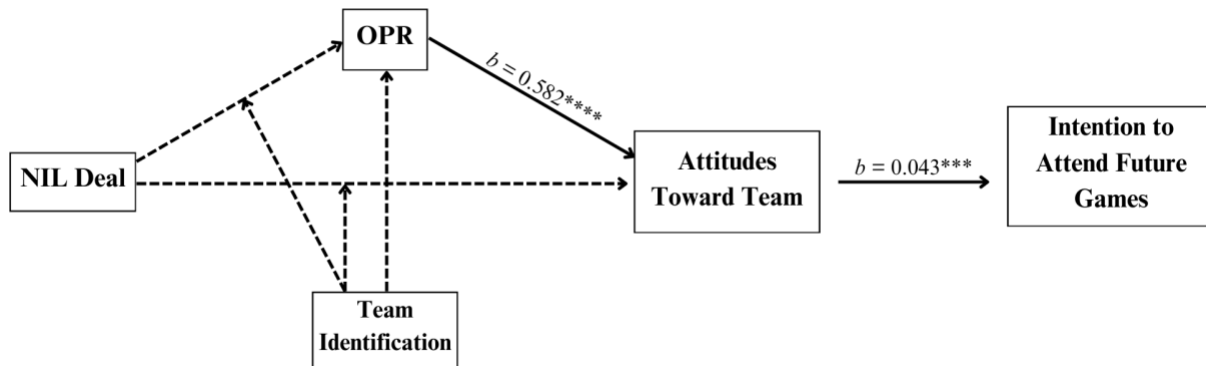
Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Commercial, Non-Profit Condition (Future Game Attendance Intention)

Paths	Team ID	Effect	BootSE	95% CI
Locality -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.098	.081	[-.284, .037]
	6.286	-.054	.056	[-.182, .036]
	6.857	-.034	.066	[-.184, .083]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.036	.053	[-.065, .144]
Locality -> OPR -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.025	.041	[-.114, .056]
	6.286	-.004	.029	[-.065, .053]
	6.857	.006	.037	[-.071, .081]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.018	.031	[-.046, .081]

* denotes significant path

Figure 5.14

Model Results for Commercial, Non-Profit Condition with Future Game Attendance as Outcome



*** $p < .001$, **** $p < .0001$

Watch/Listen Future Games via Media. The overall model leading to the intention to watch or listen to games via media in the future was significant ($F(3,186) = 12.292$, $p < .0001$, $R^2 = .166$), with a significant predictor of attitudes toward the team ($b = .366$, 95%CI[.246,.486], $p < .0001$) (Table 5.74). There were no significant indirect effects, and the index of moderated mediation was also not significant (Table 5.75). The final model is in Figure 5.15.

Table 5.74

Summary of Mediation Analysis for Commercial, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Watch/Listen to Games via Media)

Paths	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Watch/Listen to Games					
Att. -> Intention	.366	.061	6.020	<.0001*	[.246, .486]
Att. Toward NIL -> Intention	-.083	.062	-1.346	.180	[-.205, .039]
Att. Toward Collectives -> Intention	-.042	.055	-.762	.447	[-.150, .066]

* denotes significant path

Table 5.75

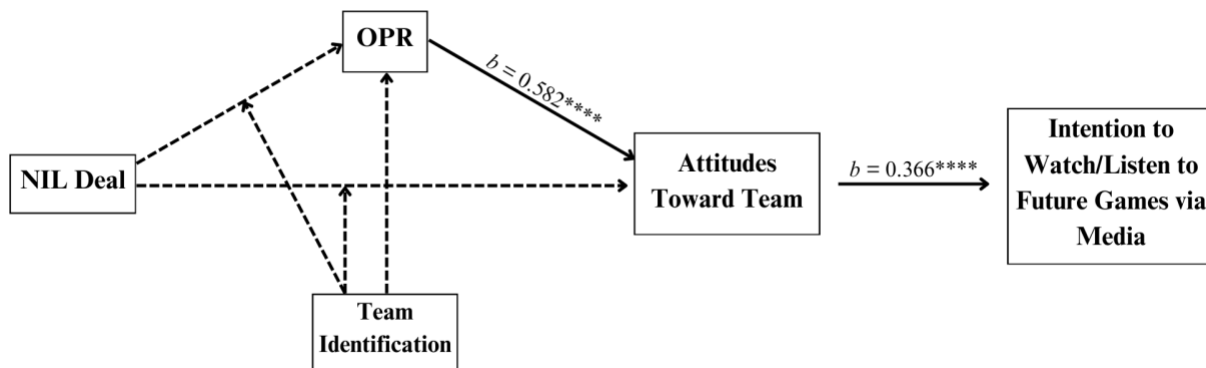
Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Commercial, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Watch/Listen to Games via Media)

Paths	Team ID	Effect	BootSE	95% CI
Locality -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.101	.077	[-.271, .038]
	6.286	-.056	.053	[-.168, .040]
	6.857	-.035	.065	[-.168, .088]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.037	.054	[-.064, .152]
Locality -> OPR -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.026	.040	[-.100, .059]
	6.286	-.004	.028	[-.062, .053]
	6.857	.006	.035	[-.069, .075]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.018	.029	[-.046, .070]

* denotes significant path

Figure 5.15

Model Results for Commercial, Non-Profit Condition with Watching/Listening to Future Games as Outcome



**** $p < .0001$

Track News of Team via Media. The model predicting intention to track the team via media was significant ($F(3,186) = 12.015, p < .0001, R^2 = .162$), with a significant predictor of attitudes toward the team ($b = .360, 95\%CI[.239, .481], p < .0001$) (Table 5.76). There were no

significant indirect effects, and the index of moderated mediation was also not significant (Table 5.77). The final model is reported in Figure 5.16.

Table 5.76

Summary of Mediation Analysis for Commercial, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Track News of Team via Media)

Paths	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Track News of Team					
Att. -> Intention	.360	.061	5.864	<.0001*	[.239, .481]
Att. Toward NIL -> Intention	-.069	.063	-1.110	.269	[-.193, .054]
Att. Toward Collectives -> Intention	-.068	.055	-1.234	.219	[-.177, .041]

* denotes significant path

Table 5.77

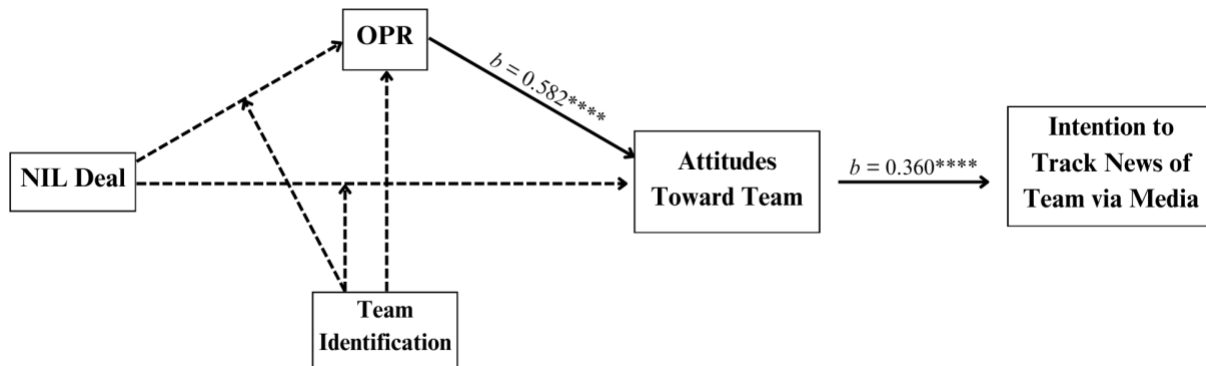
Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Commercial, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Track News of Team via Media)

Paths	Team ID	Effect	BootSE	95% CI
Locality -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.099	.072	[-.246, .042]
	6.286	-.055	.050	[-.161, .042]
	6.857	-.034	.063	[-.170, .085]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.037	.052	[-.070, .141]
Locality -> OPR -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.026	.039	[-.098, .062]
	6.286	-.004	.028	[-.060, .051]
	6.857	.006	.036	[-.069, .072]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.018	.029	[-.050, .068]

* denotes significant path

Figure 5.16

Model Results for Commercial, Non-Profit Condition with Tracking News of Team as Outcome



**** $p < .0001$

Team Merchandise Purchase. The model predicting future team merchandise purchase intention was significant ($F(3,186) = 5.312, p < .01, R^2 = .0789$), with a significant predictor of attitudes toward the team ($b = .347, 95\%CI[.176, .519], p < .001$) (Table 5.78). There were no significant indirect effects, and the index of moderated mediation was also not significant (Table 5.79). The final model is reported in Figure 5.17.

Table 5.78

Summary of Mediation Analysis for Commercial, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Purchase Team Merchandise)

Paths	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Purchase Team Merchandise					
Att. -> Intention	.347	.087	3.991	.0001*	[.176, .519]
Att. Toward NIL -> Intention	-.096	.089	-1.079	.282	[-.270, .079]
Att. Toward Collectives -> Intention	-.002	.078	-.023	.982	[-.156, .153]

* denotes significant path

Table 5.79

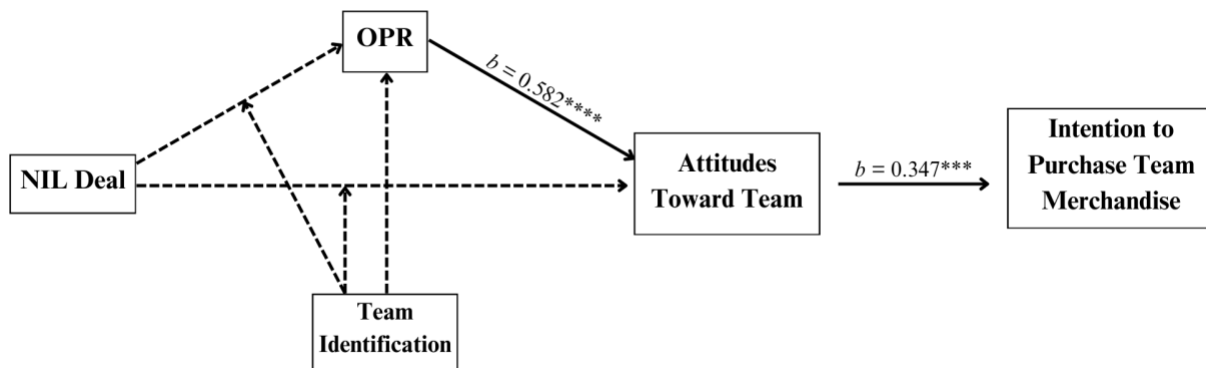
Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Commercial, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Purchase Team Merchandise)

Paths	Team ID	Effect	BootSE	95% CI
Locality -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.025	.040	[-.104, .055]
	6.286	-.004	.028	[-.063, .048]
	6.857	.006	.035	[-.070, .073]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.035	.050	[-.058, .144]
Locality -> OPR -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.025	.040	[-.104, .055]
	6.286	-.004	.028	[-.063, .048]
	6.857	.006	.035	[-.070, .073]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.017	.029	[-.046, .071]

* denotes significant path

Figure 5.17

Model Results for Commercial, Non-Profit Condition with Team Merchandise Purchase Intention as Outcome



*** $p < .001$, **** $p < .0001$

Giving Intention to NIL Fund (School). The model predicting future giving intention to the school's NIL fund was not significant ($F(3,186) = 2.458, p = .064, R^2 = .0381$). None of the predictors (attitudes toward the team, NIL, or collectives) were directly significant (Table 5.80). None of the indirect effects or moderation mediation index were significant (Table 5.81).

Table 5.80

Summary of Mediation Analysis for Commercial, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Give to School's NIL Fund)

Paths	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Giving to School's NIL Fund					
Att. -> Intention	.273	.146	1.865	.064	[-.016, .561]
Att. Toward NIL -> Intention	-.077	.149	-.517	.606	[-.370, .217]
Att. Toward Collectives -> Intention	.194	.132	1.476	.142	[-.065, .454]

Table 5.81

Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Commercial, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Give to School's NIL Fund)

Paths	Team ID	Effect	BootSE	95% CI
Locality -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.075	.070	[-.236, .037]
	6.286	-.042	.049	[-.166, .026]
	6.857	-.026	.056	[-.169, .056]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.028	.043	[-.062, .117]
Locality -> OPR -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.019	.036	[-.106, .047]
	6.286	-.003	.024	[-.063, .040]
	6.857	.005	.030	[-.066, .064]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.014	.026	[-.041, .068]

Giving Intention to Official Collective. The model predicting financial giving intention to the team's official NIL collective was significant ($F(3,186) = 3.243, p < .05, R^2 = .050$). None of the predictors under study were significant; however, attitudes toward the team neared significance ($b = .265, 95\%CI[-.010, .541], p = .059$) (Table 5.82). The indirect effects and moderation were not significant (Table 5.83).

Table 5.82

Summary of Mediation Analysis for Commercial, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Give to a Team's Collective)

Paths	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Purchase Team Merchandise					
Att. -> Intention	.265	.140	1.899	.059	[-.010, .541]
Att. Toward NIL -> Intention	-.041	.142	-.287	.775	[-.322, .240]
Att. Toward Collectives -> Intention	.211	.126	1.677	.095	[-.037, .460]

* denotes significant paths

Table 5.83

Summary of Indirect Effects and Moderated Mediation Index for Commercial, Non-Profit Condition (Intention to Give to a Team's Collective)

Paths	Team ID	Effect	BootSE	95% CI
Locality -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.073	.070	[-.234, .037]
	6.286	-.041	.048	[-.162, .024]
	6.857	-.025	.055	[-.164, .057]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.027	.044	[-.062, .123]
Locality -> OPR -> Att. -> Intention	5.08	-.019	.035	[-.098, .048]
	6.286	-.003	.024	[-.059, .040]
	6.857	.005	.030	[-.063, .063]
Index of Moderated Mediation	-	.013	.025	[-.041, .065]

* denotes significant path

Overview of Model Testing. Across all conditions, OPR directly predicted attitudes toward the team. The predictors, including OPR, locality, team identification, and attitudes toward NIL and collectives, accounted for a range of 37.8% to 50.6% of the variance in attitudes toward the team. Across each condition, OPR was a significant direct predictor of attitudes toward the team, with unstandardized (*b*) coefficients ranging from .582 to .795. Attitudes toward NIL was also a significant predictor of attitudes, with *b* coefficients ranging from .253 to

.335. Along with the results of the mixed linear model, these findings support H1, which proposed that OPR would directly and positively predict attitudes toward the team.

Across all conditions, nearly all of the models predicting behavior from attitudes toward the team were significant. Similar to the results of the mixed linear model, the R^2 values were fairly low across all models. The significant models included game attendance intention ($R^2 = 5.5\% - 21.16\%$), watching and listening to future games via media intention ($R^2 = 5.4\% - 16.6\%$), tracking news of favorite team via media intention ($R^2 = 7.5\% - 16.2\%$), merchandise purchase intention ($R^2 = 7.0\% - 16.2\%$), and giving intention to the team's official NIL collective ($R^2 = 5.0\% - 6.1\%$).

Attitudes toward the team was also a significant, direct predictor of most behaviors, except for giving intention to the team's official NIL collective. The b coefficient for the direct effect of attitudes toward the team on behaviors were all positive: game attendance intention (.043 - .570), watching and listening to future games via media intention (.157 - .366), tracking news of favorite team via media intention (.240 - .360), and merchandise purchase intention (.246 - .361). For collective giving intention, attitudes toward collectives was the only significant predictor, with b coefficients ranging from .249 - .328, except for the commercial, non-profit condition which did not have any significant direct predictors. This also offered some support for the hypothesis (H2) that proposed attitudes toward the team would significantly predict supportive fan behaviors.

For H4, which proposed that team identification would serve as a moderator for the impact of NIL deals on attitudes toward the team, and H5, which proposed team identification would serve as a moderator for the impact of NIL deals on OPR, the model analyses did not find

support for either hypotheses. The moderated mediation index in every computation was not significant, so H4 was not supported.

Across some behaviors, team identification had a significant effect on the indirect effect of locality on the behavior intention through attitudes toward the team at some levels, including future game attendance, both media consumption behavioral intentions (watching/listening to future games, and tracking news of the team), and merchandise purchase intention. In the collective, for-profit condition, team identification was only significant at the 5.08 level for future game attendance intention ($b = -.156$), watching/listening to future games intention ($b = -.086$), tracking news of the team ($b = -.144$), and future merchandise purchase intention ($b = -.144$). For the commercial, for-profit condition, team identification was significant at the 5.08 and 6.286 level of team identification for watching/listening to future games intention ($b = -.101$, $-.055$), tracking news of the team ($b = -.139$, $-.076$), and future merchandise purchase intention ($b = -.210$, $-.114$).

Overall, these findings could mean that the indirect effect of locality on behavioral intentions via attitudes toward the team weakens as a fan's team identification increases. The finding potentially suggests that the locality of a deal (whether it is a local or national deal) indirectly influences some behavioral intentions through attitudes, but only for certain levels of team identification. Specifically, the indirect effect weakens as team identification increases, indicating that highly identified fans are potentially less influenced by the locality of a deal when forming behavioral intentions.

Regarding the proposed influence of team identification on the influence of NIL deals on OPR (H5), the moderation effect was not significant. In the commercial, for-profit condition, a

significant conditional effect appeared as the effect of locality on OPR was significant at the 5.08 level of team identification ($b = -.3687$). This means that at lower levels of team identification, OPR decreased when locality moved from locally-based to nationally-based deals; however, the effect became not significant as team identification increased, meaning highly-identified fans were less likely to be influenced by the locality of the deal. This does not result in support for H5, but it does open up the idea that NIL deals have a stronger impact on lower-identified fans.

Fan Antecedents

To explore RQ2, which asked about the relationship between various fan attachment points (locality to team, gender, and alumni status) and a fan's team identification and perception of OPR, independent-samples t-tests were first conducted to explore for significant differences. Participants were asked two dichotomous questions regarding their locality to the team, including whether or not they lived in the same town and then same state as their team. The independent-samples t-test to explore if living in the same town as a fan's favorite team led to a difference in team identification was not significant ($t(188) = .118, p = .906$). The independent-samples t-test to explore if living in the same state as a fan's favorite team led to a difference in team identification was also not significant ($t(188) = -.612, p = .541$).

Next, the same tests were used to see if locality had a significant difference on a fan's perception of OPR. The OPR measurement included prior to stimuli observation was used. Living in the same town did not have a significant impact on OPR ($t(188) = .091, p = .928$). Living in the same state also did not have a significant impact on OPR ($t(188) = -.249, p = .804$).

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to see if gender had a significant difference on team identification and the perception of OPR. The test for team identification was not

significant ($t(180) = 1.154, p = .250$). The test for OPR was also not significant ($t(180) = .492, p = .623$).

Regarding alumni status, independent-samples t-tests were conducted to check for any significant differences. The test for team identification was not significant ($t(188) = 1.266, p = .207$). The test for OPR was not significant ($t(162.8) = -.619, p = .537$). Overall, these tests showed that none of the fan antecedents led to significant differences of the composite team identification and OPR scales.

Before testing the mediation model, simple and multiple linear regression was used to explore the individual paths further. While the independent samples t-tests gave insight to the significant differences in means, multiple linear regression allowed for a closer look at the predictive nature of the proposed variables. First, a multiple linear regression was calculated to evaluate if locality, gender, and alumni status predicted team identification. The regression equation was not significant ($F(4,177) = 1.141, p = .344$) with an R^2 of .025. Simple linear regressions, evaluating each antecedent, were also not significant. Whether or not a participant lived in the same town ($F(1,188) = .014, p = .906, R^2 = .00007$) or state ($F(1,188) = .375, p = .541, R^2 = .002$) as their favorite team, their gender ($F(1,180) = 1.331, p = .250, R^2 = .007$) and alumni status ($F(1,188) = 1.604, p = .207, R^2 = .008$) were not significant predictors of team identification.

In addition, a multiple linear regression was calculated to evaluate if the proposed fan antecedents predicted the perception of relationship quality. The multiple regression equation was not significant ($F(4, 177) = .141, p = .967$) with an R^2 of .003. The simple linear regressions were also not significant. Whether or not a participant lived in the same town ($F(1,188) = .008, p = .928, R^2 = .00004$) or state ($F(1,188) = .062, p = .804, R^2 = .0003$) as their favorite team, their

gender ($F(1,180) = .242, p = .623, R^2 = .001$), and alumni status ($F(1,188) = .398, p = .529, R^2 = .046$) were not significant predictors of relationship quality.

A simple linear regression was calculated predicting a fan's perceived relationship quality based on their team identification. A significant regression equation was found ($F(1, 188) = 16.799, p < .001$), with team identification accounting for 8.2% of the variance in perceived relationship quality ($R^2 = .082$). The findings suggest that for each one-unit increase in team identification, perceived organization relationship quality increased by 0.235 units.

Hayes (2022) PROCESS Model four was used to test team identification as a mediator of the relationship between fan antecedents and OPR, with 5,000 bootstrap samples. For the model considering state locality (Figure 5.18), the overall model was not significant ($F(1, 188) = .062, p = .804, R^2 = .0003$), suggesting that living in the same state and team identification do not explain a significant proportion of variance in perceived relationship quality (OPR). All paths regarding state locality are reported in Table 5.84. The indirect effect of living within the same state as your team on OPR via team identification ($b = .021, SE = .036$) was not significant (95%CI[-.050, .095]). For the model considering town locality (Figure 5.18), the overall model was also not significant ($F(1, 188) = .008, R^2 < .0001, p = .928$). All direct paths regarding town locality are reported in Table 5.85. Again, the indirect effect of living within the same town as your team on OPR via team identification ($b = -.004$) was not significant (95%CI[-.064, .071]).

Table 5.84*Summary of Mediation Analysis for the Effect of State Locality on Team Identification and OPR*

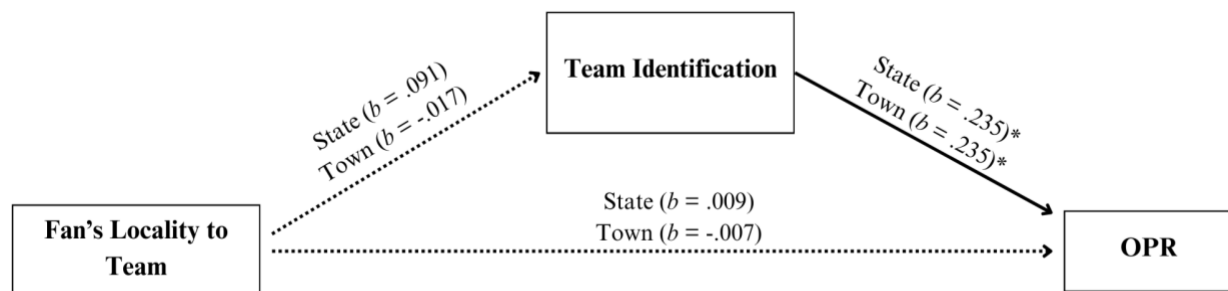
Paths	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Team Identification (TeamID)					
State Locality -> TeamID	.091	.148	.612	.541	[-.201, .382]
OPR					
State Locality -> OPR	.009	.117	.077	.938	[-.223, .240]
TeamID -> OPR	.235	.058	4.080	.0001*	[.122, .349]

* denotes significant paths

Table 5.85*Summary of Mediation Analysis for the Effect of Town Locality on Team Identification and OPR*

Paths	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Team Identification (TeamID)					
Town Locality -> TeamID	-.017	.243	-.118	.906	[-.300, .266]
OPR					
Town Locality -> OPR	-.007	.113	-.059	.952	[-.230, .217]
TeamID -> OPR	.235	.058	4.087	.0001*	[.122, .349]

* denotes significant paths

Figure 5.18*Mediation Analysis of the Effect of a Fan's Locality to their Team on OPR Through Team Identification*

* denotes significant path

For the mediation model considering alumni status (Figure 5.19), the overall model was not significant ($F(1, 188) = .398, p = .529, R^2 = .002$), suggesting that alumni status and team

identification do not explain a significant portion of variance in perceived relationship quality (OPR). The indirect effect of alumni status on OPR via team identification was not significant ($b = -.043$, 95%CI[-.114, .026]). Results for all direct paths are included in Table 5.86.

Table 5.86

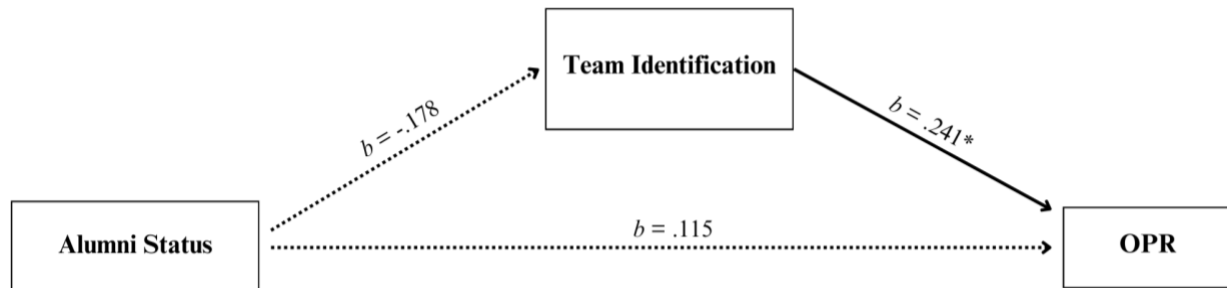
Summary of Mediation Analysis for the Effect of Alumni Status on Team Identification and OPR

Paths	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Team Identification (TeamID)					
Alumni Status -> TeamID	-.178	.140	-1.266	.207	[-.455, .099]
OPR					
Alumni Status -> OPR	.115	.112	1.040	.300	[-.104, .336]
TeamID -> OPR	.241	.058	4.178	<.0001*	[.127, .355]

* denotes significant paths

Figure 5.19

Mediation Analysis of the Effect of a Fan's Alumni Status on OPR Through Team Identification



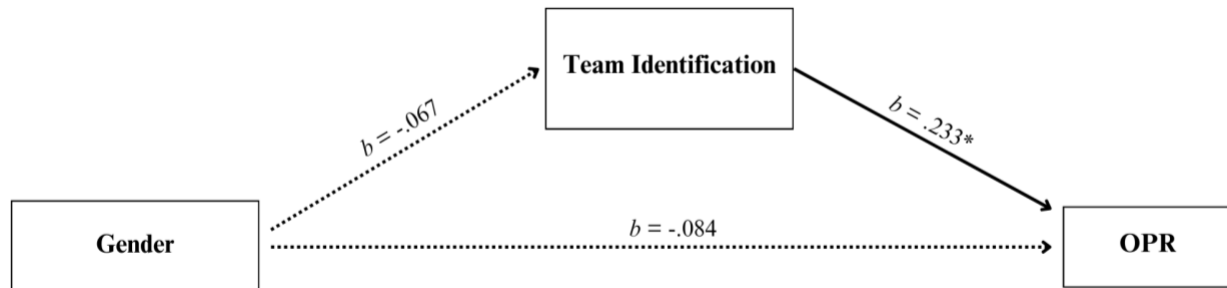
* denotes significant paths

For the mediation model with gender (Figure 5.20), the overall model was not significant ($F(1, 188) = 1.158$, $p = .283$, $R^2 = .006$), meaning that gender and team identification do not explain a significant portion of variance in perceived relationship quality). The indirect effect of gender on OPR via team identification was not significant ($b = -.016$, 95% CI [-.095, .030]). Results for all direct paths are reported in Table 5.87.

Table 5.87*Summary of Mediation Analysis for the Effect of Gender on Team Identification and OPR*

Paths	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Team Identification (TeamID)					
Gender -> TeamID	-.067	.113	-.596	.552	[-.290, .155]
OPR					
Gender -> OPR	-.084	.089	-.943	.347	[-.259, .092]
TeamID -> OPR	.233	.058	4.053	<.001*	[.120, .347]

* denotes significant paths

Figure 5.20*Mediation Analysis of the Effect of a Fan's Gender on OPR Through Team Identification*

* denotes significant paths

In each model, the direct effect of team identification on perceived relationship quality remained significant (unstandardized coefficients ranged from .233 to .241 ($p < .001$), indicating that team identification had a direct and positive association with perceived relationship quality. Unlike the post-stimuli measurements of OPR, these findings show that team identification had a significant direct effect on the pre-test measurement of OPR, which offers some support to H3 which proposed that team identification would have a significant and positive effect on OPR.

Overall, these results show that the fan antecedents under study did not predict either team identification or perceived relationship quality (RQ2). In addition, the mediation of team identification was not significant for the path between the antecedents and perceived relationship quality (RQ3).

Additional Tests

Order Effects

A one-way ANOVA tested for potential order effects on fans' measures of the outcome variables (attitudes, OPR, and behavioral intentions). There were a total of 24 possible orders of stimuli. The findings were not significant for all measurements across post-stimuli conditions for OPR and behaviors. The ANOVA for a post-stimuli test of attitudes toward the team revealed a significant main effect of order ($F(23, 189) = 1.260, p = .028$) *only* in the measurement after seeing the condition that included a commercial deal with a for-profit partnering organization. Tukey's HSD post hoc comparison located a significant difference between two specific orders ($p = .037$). The only different messages were the first and last seen, contradicting only in deal type. Both orders saw the commercial deal with a for-profit partnering organization third amongst the stimuli. The only key difference is that one order (the one who saw a collective deal first) did not see a commercial deal until this measurement. This significant finding suggests that the order who saw two collective deals first ($M = 6.278, sd = .833$) reported higher attitudes than those who saw a collective and commercial deal before measurement ($M = 3.750, sd = 1.943$). While this suggests a small primacy effect, wherein one group only saw collective deals before the measurement, all other comparisons were not significant, indicating that order effects were not systematic across conditions or other order possibilities and did not raise concerns for moving forward.

A chi-square test of independence was conducted to check if there were significant differences in the between-groups factor (locality) and the 24 orders. No significant differences were found ($\chi^2(23) = 31.606, p = .109$)

Demographic Differences Across Groups

In order to show that the between-groups factor (locality) was independent of demographic variables, chi-square tests of independence were used. No significant difference was seen for gender ($\chi^2(4) = 3.364, p = .339$), ethnicity ($\chi^2(6) = 9.528, p = .146$), degree in school ($\chi^2(6) = 7.356, p = .289$), and household income ($\chi^2(11) = 9.732, p = .555$).

Chapter 6: Discussion

The overall goal of this study was to take a look at how different types of NIL deals impacted fan attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors. In doing this, the findings also confirmed previous research that connected OPR, attitudes, and behavioral intentions. A secondary goal of the study was to explore potential fan antecedents and their relationship with team identification and OPR. With both models, the findings of this study align with Relationship Management Theory (Ledingham, 2003; 2010), which proposed a focus on relationships in public relations, especially in varying industries and contexts. Specifically, the findings answer a call for further investigations of public relations theories in sports-related research (L'Etang, 2006; Waters, 2017). Regarding the proposed hypotheses, the results are as followed:

H1: Fans' perception of OPR will directly and positively influence their attitudes toward their favorite team. [Supported]

H2: Fans' attitude toward their favorite team will directly and positively influence supportive behavioral intentions, including (a) game attendance, (b, c) media consumption, (d) merchandise purchase, (e) financial giving to a team, and (f) financial giving to a collective. [Supported]

H3: Team identification will directly and positively influence fans' perception of OPR. [Supported]

H4: Team identification will moderate the impact of an NIL deal on attitudes toward a team, such that the positive effect of NIL deals on attitudes toward the team is stronger for individuals with higher levels of team identification. [Not Supported]

H5: Team identification will moderate the impact of NIL deals on OPR, such that the positive effect of NIL deals on OPR will be stronger for individuals with higher levels of team identification. [Not Supported]

H6: NIL partnerships with local nonprofits will lead to (a) higher OPR perceptions, (b) more positive attitudes toward the team, and (c) more supportive fan behavioral intentions than both non-local and for-profit partnerships. [Partially Supported]

Influence of Fan Antecedents

This study considered fan antecedents that have appeared in previous research, including gender, alumni status, and fan locality to the team. These antecedents, specifically gender and fan locality, have previously been explored in the context of collegiate sports and been found mostly not significant (Kim & Gower, 2023; Lianopoulous et al., 2020; Schellenberg & Gaudreau, 2023; Yoshida et al., 2015). It was the goal of this study to consider these antecedents in a college football setting.

The findings found no significant differences in the means of OPR and team identification in relation to the fan antecedents. It is important to note; however, that these findings were taken from the pre-test measurements of the experiment, meaning that the statistical power was low with a sample size of 190. A larger survey-based study with a more diverse sample would be ideal for testing these antecedents, along with others, more robustly.

Theoretical Implications

These findings follow previous research in the professional sports context where locality and gender were not significant indicators of team identification (Kim & Gower, 2023; Lianopoulous et al., 2020; Schellenberg & Gaudreau, 2023; Yoshida et al., 2015) or OPR (Kim & Gower, 2023). While Towery (2023) found qualitatively that fans of college teams lived in the

same state as their team, this did not transcend with the current sample. Regarding gender, this study contradicts previous findings that found significant differences in men and women's level of team identification (Judson & Carpenter, 2005; Kwon & Armstrong, 2002).

Previous research had not previously considered alumni-status in relation to team identification within college athletics, although a school's alumni population has been utilized to consider the longitudinal development of team identification (Katz & Heere, 2016) and future giving intention (Borden et al., 2014). While the representation of alumni (45.8%) and non-alumni (54.4%) was fairly balanced, none of the tests found significant differences between the groups.

Overall, these findings, even when not significant, furthers previous research that have considered the antecedents to fan and team identification. These not significant findings offer insight to the theoretical connection between fan antecedents and team identification and perceived relationship quality. Specifically, it allows the extension of these findings into college sports, which had not been evaluated previously. In addition, these open an avenue of questioning that the characteristics that lead to fan identification are nuanced and varied, meaning that what causes a fan to be a fan can vary widely and might be hard or impossible to measure reliably. These specific antecedents should be considered in a large-scale survey format to ensure appropriate statistical power.

Practical Implications

These findings suggest that the fan antecedents under study (gender, alumni status, and locality to the team) might not be influential in impacting team identification or perception of OPR. While future research should and will continue to consider these fan antecedents, practitioners should reach past demographics and focus on a wider range of psychographic and

behavioral segmentation of publics. Regarding locality, specifically, professionals working within a college sports setting should consider the wider fan base located outside of the city limits when developing campaigns that focus on relationship building. This could be accomplished through engaging social media fan communities, physical fan meet-ups outside of the town or state, and more interactive online experiences for fans. In addition, dedicated fans can also live outside of the alumni community, so professionals should not focus solely on the group for highly identified fans.

Nature of NIL Deals

The findings of this study gave insight to which types of NIL deals might result in more positive outcomes for college teams and universities. First, a hypothesis was proposed that local nonprofits would lead to higher OPR perceptions (H6a), more positive attitudes toward the team (H6b), and more supportive fan behavioral intentions than both non-local and for-profit partnerships (H6c). The hypotheses were partially supported as only some aspects of the NIL deals resulted in significant differences.

Regarding OPR perceptions (H6a), a direct effect was found for profit status. Specifically, deals with non-profit organizations led to higher perceptions of OPR than deals with for-profit companies. While locality did not directly affect OPR, some support for the hypothesis was found with the significant effect of profit status. It is important to note, however, that this effect only appeared after removing potential covariates of attitudes toward NIL and collectives.

For attitudes toward the team, both profit status and locality had direct effects. Specifically, the finding proposes that NIL deals with local business and non-profit organizations led to more positive attitudes toward the team. While the interaction of the two deal

characteristics were not significant, meaning full support for H6b could not be provided, the findings still show the individual impacts of profit status and locality.

For the influence of NIL deals on behaviors (H6c), a few direct effects were found within giving behaviors. Specifically, profit status had a direct effect on giving to the school's NIL fund. NIL deals with non-profit organizations led to higher intentions of giving to a school's NIL fund than for-profit companies. All other behavioral intentions were not significant.

For intentions to give to a school's official NIL collective, attitudes toward collectives, one of the covariates, had a significant direct effect on giving intention, while the interaction between deal type and attitudes toward NIL were significant. Looking closer at these relationships with the model analyses, attitudes toward collectives appeared to be a significant predictor of giving intention to a school's official collective, except for the condition that included a commercial deal with a non-profit partnering organization.

A research question was also posed to consider how NIL deal type (commercial or collective) impacted the outcome variables (RQ1). A significant direct effect of deal type on perceptions of OPR was found, wherein commercial deals led to higher perceptions of OPR than collective deals. There was also a significant interaction effect of deal type and profit status on attitudes toward the team. A closer look found that deals with for-profit companies organized by collectives led to more positive attitudes toward the team than other deals; however, when considering deals with non-profit organizations, participants had more positive attitudes toward commercial deals than those organized by collectives.

Theoretical Implications

Theoretically, these findings confirm and extend fan and consumer research into the context of Name, Image, and Likeness in college sports for the first time. The findings where

locality of the partnering organization predicted attitudes toward the team supports previous sponsorship literature (Cork, 2017; Woisetschläger et al., 2010). In addition, CSR literature supports the direct influence of profit status on attitudes (Rim et al., 2016; Lii & Lee, 2012). This study extends previous literature into the college sports context and applies these relationships to NIL deals.

These specific findings extend social exchange theory, which focuses on the exchange of benefits (Blau, 1964; Goffman, 1959). By including the perception of community involvement within the OPR measurement, the significant findings surrounding NIL deals and OPR can partially be attributed to fans' perception of how much a team invests in the community they reside. This could mean that fans see an exchange of benefit when teams participate in partnerships with local businesses and non-profit organizations.

In considering these findings for future theory building, preconceived perceptions of NIL and collectives were key to some behaviors. Future consideration of NIL and sponsorships within college sports must consider these elements in models, as well as consider what other aspects of NIL deals might influence perceptions and attitudes.

Practical Implications

These findings offer several implications for professionals working with college football teams. Fans have more positive reactions to partnerships with non-profit organizations, in comparison to for-profit companies. In addition, deals with local companies led to more positive attitudes toward the team than deals with national companies. Professionals within college athletics should consider these findings when managing potential NIL partnerships for teams by fostering relationships between athletes and these organizations. In addition, entities in charge of

licensing for universities should prioritize these types of deals for athletes and teams when aiming to connect to their fan base.

Additionally, commercial deals led to higher perceptions of OPR than deals organized by collectives. Again, this shows that fans hold lower perceptions of collectives and potentially view deals without collective participation more favorably. A significant interaction was also found, wherein profit status and deal type were influenced by the other. These findings lead to interesting implications in that fans perceive commercial and collective deals differently.

Professionals must consider how they can education fans on NIL and collectives, increasing transparency and hopefully improving overall perceptions of them. To do this, athletic departments should focus on educating their fan community about NIL and its benefits for athletes, teams, and schools. Developing educational campaigns that prioritize changing perceptions and opinions of NIL and collectives, rather than instigating giving, may benefit athletic departments in the long-term.

Conceptualized Model

A model was proposed (Figure 3.1) to develop a path from NIL deals to behaviors, through OPR and attitudes. Team identification was also considered as a moderator. The model testing supported previous research that found that perceptions of OPR positively influenced attitudes (Bruning, 2002; Ki & Hon, 2007b; Kim & Chan-Olmsted, 2005; Kim et al., 2011; Yang, 2007; Yang & Grunig, 2005). In addition, a fan's attitude toward their favorite team directly and positively influenced the supportive fan behavioral intentions under study, which supports additional previous research connecting attitudes to behaviors (Kang & Yang, 2010; Ki & Hon, 2007b; Kim et al., 2011; Wright & Bocarnea, 2007). This specific finding did not translate to the overall model analysis with Hayes PROCESS, as several not significant findings

were found for giving intentions. The additional model paths, then, were accounting for some of that variance seen in the significant mixed linear models. For almost all of the conditions, attitudes toward collectives were a direct predictor of giving to collectives. Additional opinions surrounding collectives, NIL, or giving that were not included in the study might be influencing these intentions.

Theoretical Implications

While some paths within the model were significant across conditions (Figure 6.1), PROCESS failed to show support for the entire model. In addition, due to limitations of the analysis because of within-groups elements, it was not possible to consider the factors of profit status and deal type within one model. The moderation of team identification is evaluated in detail below. Considering the model without team identification, direct paths were found from OPR to attitudes and attitudes to behaviors, which supports Kim and Gower's (2023) model.

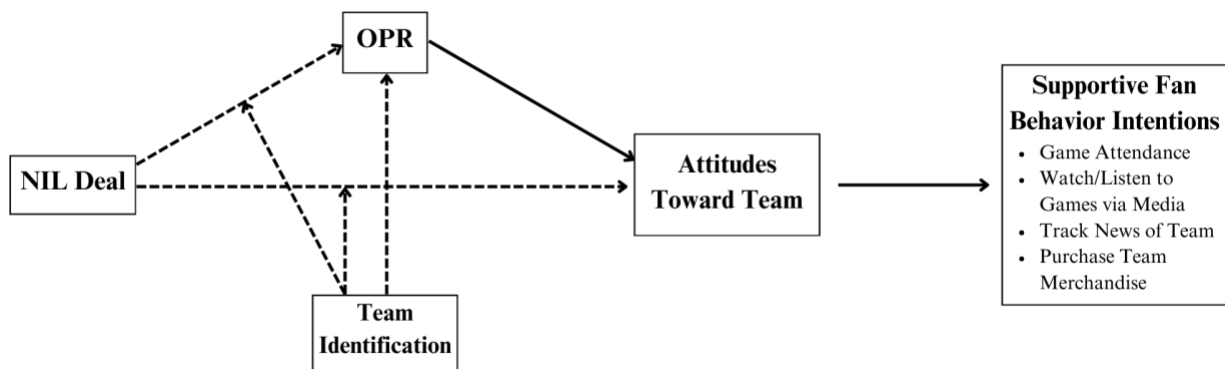
These findings also align with Relationship-Marketing Theory (Morgan & Hunt, 1994), which focuses on customers rather than publics. Specifically, the path connecting OPR to attitudes and attitudes to behaviors supports the proposition that focusing on relationships can benefit an organization (Berry, 1983). The results related to behavioral intentions, especially, extend this theory into college sports and NIL by offering insight to how deals influence the intentions under study.

Additional consideration is needed for the elements of the model. From the findings of this study, more exploration must be made for attitudes toward NIL and attitudes toward collectives. The most notable finding is that attitudes toward collectives had a significant direct effect on giving intention to a collective in three of the four conditions, highlighting the importance of a fan's overall perception of collectives. It is also clear that variables outside of

those under study might come into play when considering giving intentions, as giving to the team's own fund did not have any significant predictors in the overall model analysis.

Figure 6.1

Significant Paths from Conceptualized Model Linking OPR, Team Identification, Attitudes, and Behavioral Intentions



Significant paths designated with solid lines

Practical Implications

The significant paths of the model do offer insights for professionals and college teams. Perceptions of relationship quality are still significant contributors to attitudes and behaviors, so professionals should still consider ways to incorporate relationship-building strategies in their NIL campaigns. Through a meta-analysis, Zhan and Zhao (2023) showed that openness in communication and engagement behaviors of publics can affect OPR. “Therefore, cultivating relationships among the organization and publics requires organizations to be transparent and willing to disclose organization-related information” (Zhan & Zhao, 2023, p. 102). This finding aligns especially with the significant findings where attitudes toward NIL and collectives, the covariates, had impacts on the outcomes. Transparency within NIL has been a key issue emphasized by journalists (Hall, 2025), coaches (Sandle, 2025), and the NCAA (Vannini, 2024). Schools and athletic departments may find that being open with their fans surrounding NIL deals and earnings might lead to more positive attitudes surrounding it.

The findings on giving intentions, specifically, offer vital implications to professionals, especially regarding collectives. It is clear that a fan's overall attitude toward collectives can influence their potential to give to a team's collective. Professionals must consider educational campaigns and increased transparency on the part of the collective to further raise awareness and understanding of how collectives work with athletes and teams.

Team Identification and OPR

To further explore the impact of team identification, this study considered the concept in a different way to Kim and Gower (2023), who viewed it as a concept opposite of OPR. Instead, this study explored the potential moderating impact of team identification on attitudes (H4) and OPR (H5). While the results did not find support for these hypotheses, there was some evidence that team identification influenced the indirect effects of locality of a deal on OPR and attitudes on behaviors; however, this relationship was only significant at lower levels. This could mean that fans who report higher levels of team identification, also considered highly identified fans, are less likely to be influenced by the locality of a deal. In addition, as team identifications' effect was negative, the result suggested that as team identification increases, certain behavioral intentions might be reduced in some conditions.

Theoretical Implications

These findings gave some support for previous research that found highly identified fans show different attitudinal and behavioral reactions than lowly identified fans (Ahn et al., 2010; Madrigal & Chen, 2008); however, as the moderation mediation index was not significant, the moderating effect of team identification could not be supported. This could mean that team identification does not have as strong of influence on attitudes and behaviors as previously considered, especially in the current context of NIL deals. In addition, it could mean that team

identification does not necessarily serve as a moderator to the relationships under study and, rather, could serve as an independent predictor.

It is important to note that the sample consisted of mostly highly-identified fans. The SSIS scale has previously been transformed into a categorical variable (high, moderate, and low) for the sake of comparing groups (Ahn et al., 2012; Wann et al., 2001); however, it was decided to utilize the composite scale in this analysis to better capture its influence. In part, this decision was also due to the limited variety in the sample. After creating three groups based on the mean scores of the team identification scale (Ahn et al., 2012), it was found that the majority of participants ($n=160$) fell in the highly-identified group ($M = 5.1 - 7$). This was more than those who fell under the moderately-identified group ($n=28$, $M = 3 - 5$) and lowly-identified group ($n=2$, $M = 1 - 2.9$). The distribution was skewed for highly-identified fans, which might have inhibited the ability to detect its moderating effect.

Practical Implications

Since any significant findings appeared when team identification was lower, practitioners should consider that fans with lower identification ties to a team might be more influenced by campaigns and NIL deals than highly-identified fans. On the other hand, highly-identified fans might react to NIL deals regardless of their characteristics (at least of those under study) due to their ties to the team. Professionals could find that fans who identify strongly with their team, might react purely because of their team's participation, while those who are not strongly identified with the team will be affected by additional characteristics of the deal.

Further Implications

Outside of the main areas of findings, additional implications are considered that relate to the overall impact of NIL and the OPR measurement for fans.

Impact of NIL on University-Town Relationships

As NIL deals had an influence on a fan's perception of OPR, it is important to consider the impact of NIL as a community-building tool. Even though a control group was not used, the findings still give some support that using NIL strategically could help improve a team's relationship with their fan base.

Koerber and Zabara (2017) proposed that building a strong relationship with a community can mitigate the negative response after a crisis. Athletics are often viewed as the "front porch" of a university, meaning that it's one of the first things that is noticed about a university (Pratt, 2013). It is important to consider, then that NIL deals could be used to "clean up" the front porch of the university. Potentially, universities could even utilize NIL to build goodwill and create a buffer that protects the team in the face of a crisis or even a single loss or losing season.

Attitudes Toward NIL and Collectives

In some findings, the covariates included in the study either had a direct effect on some outcomes or suppressed the influence of key variables under study. It is important, then, to consider how a fan's preconceived attitude toward NIL as a whole and collectives might influence their reaction to NIL deals. In analyzing the federal hearing surrounding NIL, Harry (2024) identified differences amongst those in Congress, individuals who aimed to maintain the status quo of college sports ("maintainers"), and those who wanted to push back against any type of limitations or restrictions of NIL ("disrupters"). In the context of the findings in this study, it is clear that fans could potentially be falling into the "maintainer" or "disrupter" category, either pushing for changes or wishing for the status quo.

OPR Measurement for Fans

Within this study, OPR was measured through a cumulative scale that combined the subscales of trust, relational satisfaction, control mutuality, and community involvement into a single score. This choice is similar to previous research in the area (Kim & Gower, 2023; Kim et al., 2011); however, additional aspects of the measurement led to its cumulative use. While the overall scale and subsequent subscales reached appropriate reliability levels (Table 4.1), a post-analysis factor loading raised questions. In addition, feedback from participants raised questions about the measurement, including confusion surrounding relevancy.

Table 4.2 offered the item factor loadings at the pre-stimuli observation measurement of OPR. While the first use of the scale resulted in four factors, one item of control mutuality loaded closer with the satisfaction subscale. A closer look at the Chronbach's alpha reliability score of the subscale found that excluding the item would only raise α from .714 to .746 so the item was kept in the overall analysis.

The additional uses of the scale (post-stimuli) resulted in only three factors (Table 4.3). In addition, some items changed factors throughout conditions, highlighting their instability in the measurement. While the proposed scale recommended the use of reverse-coded items (Huang, 2001), these should be used carefully as it is clear they did not always load correctly. While Chronbach's alpha was appropriate across use of the scale, its subscales were not utilized for this study due to the instability in factor loadings across conditions.

Control mutuality appeared to be the cause of most issues. This could mean that fans perceive the power balance and decision-making process of their teams differently than an organization-public relationship. Also, in the factor loadings for the OPR measurements post-stimuli, two items did not load correctly for only two conditions which were both collective

deals. It should be noted that some confusion might have been raised here as fans were perceiving the collective in addition to the team in their answers. On one of the social media forums, a user replied publicly writing that the questions surrounding decision making were a “bit confusing.” This again raises questions of the OPR measurement being applicable to a sports context and further consideration is needed.

Since control mutuality was the source of most issues, its presence in the OPR measurement must be reconsidered. The power balance of the relationship between a team and fan should be conceptualized differently to the relationship between an organization and a public. The expectations surrounding decision-making could be fundamentally different, so further consideration of this relationship element is warranted.

Limitations

Methodology and Design

While experiments offer several advantages, the method is not without limitations. First, to ensure the proper measuring of the independent variables under study, messages were created to make sure manipulations were clear and controlled. This can lead to a research environment that feels artificial (Wimmer & Dominick, 2012). To combat this, focusing the study on a specific team and only recruiting those fans could give a more realistic experience within the experiment.

Aspects of the experiment design also limited its success. Due to the within-groups aspect of the design, each participant saw four stimuli. The average time spent on the experiment was approximately 30 minutes, which is a fairly time-intensive task for participants without direct compensation. In addition, since the participants were measured four times across four conditions, with two within-groups factors, they could have begun to notice some of the

manipulations under study which might have influenced the results. This is one understandable weakness of within-groups designs; however, the ability to note individual differences across participants was beneficial.

Manipulations

The stimuli used were developed as social media announcements from a general college football page. This choice could have affected overall perception, especially if participants perceived the posts from a specific platform and had preconceived attitudes that were not measured.

These manipulations were also incredibly short and did not include much information about the NIL deal or partnering organization. Additional information or context might have resulted in different responses. Also, the participants were asked to consider the deal with their “favorite college football team.” Focusing the sample on a specific team and creating stimuli that focuses on actual deals with the team would have resulted in rich data of a real-world deal.

Research Sample

The size of the sample led to the potential for under-powered analysis. Original a priori estimates suggested a total of 282 participants to detect a small to medium effect size (0.35) at a power of .9. Due to a low completion rate (< 30%), a smaller sample size was targeted. G*Power suggested a total of 204 participants to detect a small to medium effect size (0.35) at a power of .8, and a total of 172 participants to detect a medium effect size (0.45) at a power of .9 (Cohen, 1988; Faul et al., 2007; Mayr et al., 2007). While the sample size of 190 fits between these estimates, it is important to note that findings with small effect sizes or approaching the limit of .05 significance might not actually be significant due to the decreased power.

One specific set of findings must be considered with a larger sample. The mediation model with fan antecedents should be considered with a survey that includes a more diverse sample. It was included in this study as a secondary goal to explore some antecedents that had only been used in a professional sports setting. Since the findings were not significant, other antecedents should be added and considered together in a larger survey study.

In addition, the diversity and variance of the sample limited the findings. First, these findings can only be applied to the college football context. Specifically, most of the sample identified DI schools within the Power 4, so findings are limited in the context of other divisions (DII and DIII) or conferences. The sample was also primarily white (80.5%) men (65.8%), so additional research should attempt to gain a more diverse sample.

In addition to demographics, the team identification variance of the sample was low, meaning that most participants leaned higher in team identification. This could be a result of the sample recruitment method. Social media outreach often focused on college football-related pages and forums, where highly identified fans often spend their time. In addition, participants were asked to only participate if they identified as a college football fan, no matter the level. Some lowly-identified fans might not have felt that they fit the parameters. Additional research should attempt to recruit a wider range of participants who vary in their levels of team identification to better understand the influence of the variable. This could be done by conducting a study with one team and focusing more regionally in the recruitment.

Future Research Opportunities

In addition to the opportunities mentioned within the limitations section, this dissertation opens up some key research programs based on the findings, including a closer look at the

impact of NIL, the factors that influence giving to a team, and a shift from OPR to team-fan relationships (TFR).

NIL Changes

As the NIL space in college sports continues to shift, fan perceptions may also continue to shift. One key consideration is the overall perceptions of NIL and collectives might continue to shift, impacting fan response to NIL campaigns and deals. As revenue sharing starts in the 2025 football season (Berkowitz, 2024), its impact is already being seen as schools hire general managers to help manage this new era (Draper, 2025) and even re-classify athletic divisions (Ubben, 2025).

As the enforcement of NIL and revenue sharing gains more focus (Berkowitz, 2025), universities and schools will and should consider its overall influence on their reputation and image. Scrutiny has already begun as schools adapt to new roster limits put into place by the NCAA. Olympic sports are especially at risk to lose scholarship spots (Dellenger, 2025). As the space continues to shift and policies change, it can be expected that fan perceptions might also change. Future research must continue to study the ways in which NIL is impacting the reputation and image of not only a university and team, but also the athlete.

Considering town-gown relationships specifically, Gavazzi's (2019) fourth commandment of town-gown relationships proposes: "Thou shall seek win-win outcomes wherever and whenever possible in campus-community interactions" (p. 15). This aligns well with the OPR research into relationships types (Hon & Grunig, 1999; Hung, 2005), and it further validates the continued usage of community investment within an OPR measurement. As Burke (1999) proposed, a company's license to operate is often in the hands of the community members.

Giving Intentions

The findings related to giving intentions opened up several unanswered questions and should be considered more closely. A participant's overall attitude toward collectives influenced their giving intentions to a collective, meaning that a fan's understanding and perception of collectives will impact the bottom line for a school or team. Further consideration is needed of the unique variables that might affect a fan's financial giving behavior.

Currently, if the House proposal is accepted, schools can opt-in to share up to \$20.5 million in revenue with athletes through compensation (Henderson, 2025). In addition to this, schools will be looking for opportunities for "above-the-cap payments" where they organize NIL deals and partnerships for teams and athletes to offer more incentive (Henderson, 2025). This race to compensate will result in athletic departments and universities depending more and more on not just donations but also local business partnerships for their athletes. Future research must continue to investigate how universities and athletic departments can foster stronger relationships with their fans and local business communities to develop partnerships. Specifically, this experiment could be narrowed to focus only on giving intention and use real-world examples and cases.

OPR to TFR Scale

As mentioned previously, the organization-public relationship (OPR) scale used in this study fell short of its intended multi-dimensionality, as some items did not load into their expected subscales. It is clear, then, that the OPR scale should be reconsidered in the sport context. The development of a team-fan relationship (TFR) scale would not only extend the relationship management paradigm (Ledingham, 2010), but also offer more theoretical foundation to strategic communication in sports.

The next step of research could feature a qualitative investigation, either through in-depth interviews or focus groups, into a fan's expectations and perceptions of their relationship with a team. This would uncover the potential dimensions necessary for a TFR scale. For instance, fans might prioritize aspects such as reciprocity (Kim, 2008) or social connectedness of the fandom (Gantz, 2012) in their perception of the relationship. In addition, OPR subscales like control mutuality might need to be measured differently in a sports context, which can be explored more in the qualitative investigation. From there, a multi-dimensional scale can be proposed and tested.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Since 2021, college athletics has faced a windstorm of changes as the Name, Image, and Likeness rule change allowed athletes the right to publicity. While it might have started as a seemingly simple opportunity for athletes to make money through sponsorships and endorsements, it has completely turned the college sports world on its head as its implications have led to changes with the transfer portal (Mandel, 2024b), re-opened the conversation surrounding athletes as employees (McCann, 2025), and resulted in a future where athletic departments will share revenue with athletes (Williams, 2024).

As universities and athletic departments navigate these changes, they are also managing their reputation and image as fans grapple with the implications on their favorite teams. This study is one of the first to explore fan reactions to NIL deals and partnerships. Through an experiment, which was the most appropriate method when exploring causal relationships between variables (Thorson et al., 2012), the study measured fan perceptions of NIL deals through measurements of attitudes, perception of OPR, and behavioral intentions. In addition, a model was proposed that considered the relationship of these variables along with team identification, expanding on previous research that brought together OPR and team identification into the same model (Kim & Gower, 2023).

A secondary goal of the research was to explore some key fan antecedent measures that had not been studied in the college sports context. Specifically, a model was proposed that looked at the influence of gender, alumni status, and locality to the team on OPR and team identification. In addition, the model explored team identification's potential as a mediator.

This study succeeded in these two goals and advanced the understanding of how these variables interact and how NIL influences them. While the fan antecedents under study were not

significant, further exploration is warranted due to low sample size. In addition, it opens the question, “What drives team identification of a college team if not alumni-status or locality?” These relationships deserve more examination to build stronger theoretical frameworks of fanship and team identification in college sports.

In addition to identifying that specific deal characteristics, such as the profit-status and locality of the partnering organization, can influence fan reactions, the experiment was the first study to explore how NIL deal type can influence perceptions. Specifically, the findings uncovered some differences in responses to deals coordinated by collectives. Fans’ overall attitude toward collectives also had an impact on giving, showing that some fans hold preconceived opinions or beliefs about collectives that are impacting their giving intention. This offers key insight for the practice as they navigate strategic communication surrounding giving to a school’s NIL fund and collective.

The nature of team identification related to NIL was also explored. While the proposed moderation and mediation paths were not significant, and further exploration is needed to better understand the variable’s impact on OPR and attitudes, findings did suggest that the NIL deals and partnerships under study have a greater impact on those who are not highly-identified fans. This could mean that fans who are highly identified are influenced by other elements or will support their team regardless of the deal characteristics. These findings help to focus future research in the relationship between team identification and OPR within the NIL and college sports context.

Theoretically, the results of this study uncover that fan perceptions and reactions to NIL deals are influenced by a complex combination of predictors. In addition to the aspects of the deal, fans’ preconceived attitudes to NIL and collectives served as covariates to some

relationships. As team identification was not a significant moderator, it then opens the question of how team identification is related to the outcomes.

In addition, further consideration of OPR within a sports context is necessary. The measure used in this study followed previous research within public relations; however, it is clear from the factor loading that some dimensions were not as strong. Specifically, the findings surrounding control mutuality show that fans might perceive the power balance between themselves and a team differently to how the OPR measure was initially created.

The practical implications offer insights for professionals in university settings that work within college athletic departments and offices. Professionals within the NIL space can find guidance on the influence of some NIL deal characteristics, as well as how the perception of the relationship between the team and fan impacts the fan's attitudes and behaviors. The following practical takeaways have been proposed with this study:

- NIL deals with local businesses should be prioritized to build stronger relationships with the local community.
- NIL deals with non-profit organizations can lead to positive reactions and should be included as departments develop and foster partnerships for athletes and teams.
- Education campaigns should be included in NIL promotion, as fans are influenced by their overall attitudes toward NIL as an issue and collectives. Departments and universities should work to educate their fans and be transparent in the NIL process of their athletes.
- For collectives, a focus on openness and transparency is especially important as fans might react differently to deals coordinated by collectives. Highlighting the benefits of a deal for an athlete, team, or community might help with this varied perception.

- Fans that are not highly identified with the team may be more susceptible to some NIL deal characteristics and relationship-building strategies. Professionals may find benefits in targeting campaigns to fans that are less identified, as highly identified fans will support the team regardless.

The findings of this research serve as a stepping stone to several potential research streams and introduce key questions into the relationships found. In addition to key theoretical implications regarding team identification and OPR, as well as consumer attitudes and behaviors, the study offers several recommendations for professionals within the college sports space. In addition, universities can find guidance in these findings as they manage their relationship with fans and community members. This study, and the research programs that it inspires, will contribute to the public relations and sports communication literature by advancing the academic understanding of the sport brand ecosystem and offering practical takeaways to develop stronger and more engaged relationships between fans, teams, and universities.

References

- 1Oklahoma. (n.d.). *Boomer+*. <https://www.1oklahoma.com/blank>
- Abeza, G., O'Reilly, N., & Reid, I. (2013). Relationship Marketing and Social Media in Sport. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 6(2), 120–142.
<https://doi.org/10.1123/ijsc.6.2.120>
- Abeza, G., O'Reilly, N., & Seguin, B. (2019). Social Media in Relationship Marketing: The Perspective of Professional Sport Managers in the MLB, NBA, NFL, and NHL. *Communication & Sport*, 7(1), 80–109. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167479517740343>
- Abeza, G., O'Reilly, N., Seguin, B., & Nzindukiyimana, O. (2017). Social Media as a Relationship Marketing Tool in Professional Sport: A Netnographical Exploration. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 10(3), 325–358.
<https://doi.org/10.1123/ijsc.2017-0041>
- Ahn, J., Shamim, A., & Park, J. (2021). Impacts of cruise industry corporate social responsibility reputation on customers' loyalty: Mediating role of trust and identification. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 92, 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102706>
- Ahn, T., Suh, Y.I., Lee, J.K., & Pedersen, P.M. (2012). 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. *Journal of Sport Management*, 27, 11–23.
- Ahuja, V., & Alavi, S. (2018). Using Facebook as a digital tool for developing trust amongst consumers using netnography and social media analytics: A study of jet airways. *Journal of Relationship Marketing*, 17(3), 171-187.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/15332667.2018.1440145>

- Ajzen, I., & Cote, N.G. (2011). Attitudes and the prediction of behavior. In R. Prislin & W.D. Crano (Eds.), *Attitudes and attitude change*. Taylor & Francis.
- Akabas, L., & Novy-Williams, E. (2024, January 23). Athletic department donations up despite rise of NIL collectives. Sportico. <https://www.sportico.com/leagues/college-sports/2024/college-sports-donations-nil-money-1234763721/>
- Auerbach, N. (2024, February 23). Federal judge blocks NCAA from enforcing NIL rules. *The Athletic*. <https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/5295907/2024/02/23/tennessee-ncaa-nil-lawsuit-injunction/>
- Berg, B.K., Hutchinson, M., Wells, J.E., Walsh, D.W., Simmond, A., & Havard, C.T. (2023). The policy discourse of name, image, and likeness in college athletics. *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics*, 16, 462–485.
- Berkowitz, S. (2024, May 25). *NCAA lawsuit settlement agreement allowing revenue sharing with athletes faces unresolved questions*. USA Today. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/college/2024/05/25/ncaa-lawsuit-settlement-revenue-sharing-legal-questions/73843373007/>
- Berkowitz, S. (2025, March 12). *Conferences planning creation of enforcement entity to oversee revenue sharing with college athletes*. USA Today. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/college/2025/03/12/college-conferences-ncaa-revenue-sharing-oversight-enforcement-regulation/82316880007/>
- Berry, L.L. (1983). Relationship marketing. In L. Berry, G. L. Shostack, and G.D. Upah (Eds.), *Emerging Perspectives on Services Marketing* (pp. 25-28). American Marketing Association.

- Bianchi, E., Bruno, J.M., & Sarabia-Sanchez, F.J. (2018). The impact of perceived CSR on corporate reputation and purchase intention. *European Journal of Management and Business Economics*, 28(3), 206–221. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EJMBE-12-2017-0068>
- Bizman, A., & Yinon, Y. (2002). Engaging in Distancing Tactics Among Sport Fans: Effects on Self-Esteem and Emotional Responses. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 142(3), 381–392. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224540209603906>
- Blackwell, M., Cobb, S., & Weinberg, D. (2002). The economic impact of educational institutions: Issues and methodology. *Economic Development Quarterly*, 16(1), 88–95. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891242402016001009>
- Blau, P.M. (1964). *Exchange and power in social life*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Bogina, A., & Gordon, B. (2022). Investigating Student-Donor Memberships Within Collegiate Athletics. *Journal of Amateur Sport*, 7(2). <https://doi.org/10.17161/jas.v7i2.15231>
- Borden, V.M.H., Shaker, G.G., & Kienker, B.L. (2014). The impact of alumni status on institutional giving by faculty and staff. *Research in Higher Education*, 55(2), 196–217. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-013-9318-3>
- Box, G.E.P. (1953). Non-normality and tests on variances. *Biometrika*, 40(3/4), 318–335. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2333350>
- Broom, G.M., Casey, S., & Ritchey, J. (1997). Toward a concept and theory of organization-public relationships. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 9(2), 83–98. https://doi.org/10.1207/s1532754xjpr0902_01
- Broom, G.M., Casey, S., & Ritchey, J. (2000). Concept and theory of organization-public relationships. In J.A. Ledingham & S. D. Bruning (Eds.), *Public relations as relationship*

- management: A relational approach to the study and practice of public relations* (pp. 13-21). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Bruning, S.D. (2000). Examining the role that personal, professional, and community relationships play in respondent relationship recognition and intended behavior. *Communication Quarterly*, 48(4), 437–448. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01463370009385608>
- Bruning, S.D. (2002). Relationship building as a retention strategy: Linking relationship attitudes and satisfaction evaluations to behavioral outcomes. *Public Relations Review*, 28(1), 39–48. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0363-8111\(02\)00109-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0363-8111(02)00109-1)
- Bruning, S.D., & Hatfield, M. (2002). Linking organization-public relations attitudes and satisfaction outcomes: Communication strategies to build relationships and enhance satisfaction. *Journal of Promotion Management*, 8(2), 3–19. https://doi.org/10.1300/J057v08n02_02
- Bruning, S.D., & Ledingham, J.A. (1998). Organization-public relationships and consumer satisfaction: The role of relationships in the satisfaction mix. *Communication Research Reports*, 15(2), 198–208. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08824099809362114>
- Bruning, S.D., & Ledingham, J.A. (1999). Relationships between organizations and publics: Development of a multi-dimensional organization-public relationship scale. *Public Relations Review*, 25(2), 157–170. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0363-8111\(99\)80160-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0363-8111(99)80160-X)
- Bruning, S.D., & Ledingham, J.A. (2000). Perceptions of relationships and evaluations of satisfaction: An exploration of interaction. *Public Relations Review*, 26(1), 85–95. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0363-8111\(00\)00032-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0363-8111(00)00032-1)

- Bruning, S.D., & Ralston, M. (2000). The role of relationships in public relations: Examining the influence of key public member relational attitudes on behavioral intent. *Communication Research Reports*, 17(4), 426–435. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08824090009388791>
- Bruning, S.D., McGrew, S., & Cooper, M. (2006). Town–gown relationships: Exploring university–community engagement from the perspective of community members. *Public Relations Review*, 32(2), 125–130. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2006.02.005>
- Burke, E.M. (1999). *Corporate community relations: The principle of the neighbor of choice*. Quorum Books.
- Burnett, K. (1992). *Relationship fundraising: A donor-based approach to the business of raising money*. White Lion Press.
- Byers, W., & Hammer, C. (1995). *Unsportsmanlike conduct: Exploiting college athletes*. University of Michigan Press.
- Carp, S. (2020, December 11). *SEC leaving CBS for ESPN in US \$3bn deal from 2024*. Sports Pro Media. <https://www.sportspro.com/broadcast-ott/media-rights/sec-espn-abc-football-tv-rights-cbs/>
- Çelebi, E. (2021). The effect of organization-public relations on sports fan loyalty. *Journal of Human Sciences*, 18(1), 94–103. <https://doi.org/10.14687/jhs.v18i1.6080>
- Chih-Hung Wang, M., Jain, M., Ming-Sung Cheng, J., & Kyaw-Myo Aung, G. (2012). The purchasing impact of fan identification and sports sponsorship. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 30(5), 553–566. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02634501211251052>
- Christovich, A. (2024, October 28). *NIL director is the trendy new job in college sports. but the role is chaos*. Front Office Sports. <https://frontofficesports.com/the-nil-director-is-the-trendy-new-job-in-college-sports-but-the-role-is-chaos/>

- Cialdini, R.B., Borden, R.J., Thorne, A., Walker, M.R., Freeman, S., & Sloan, L.R. (1976). Basking in reflected glory: Three (football) field studies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 34(3), 366–375. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.34.3.366>
- Clark, M.S., & Mills, J.R. (2012). A theory of communal (and exchange) relationships. In P.A.M. Van Lange, A.W. Kruglanski, & E.T. Higgins (Eds.), *Handbook of theories of social psychology* (pp. 232–250). Sage Publications Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446249222.n38>
- Clarke, L. (2021, October 27). The NCAA coined the term ‘student-athlete’ in the 1950s. Its time might be up. *The Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/2021/10/27/ncaa-student-athlete-1950s/>
- Clarke, E., Geurin, A.N., & Burch, L.M. (2024). Team identification, motives, and behaviour: A comparative analysis of fans of men’s and women’s sport. *Managing Sport and Leisure*, 29(3), 445–468. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23750472.2022.2049455>
- Cocco, A.R., & Moorman, A.M. (2022). Untapped potential: An examination of name, image, and likeness earnings estimates for community college athletes. *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics*, 15, 256–271. <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/jiia/vol15/iss1/29/>
- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences* (2nd ed.). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- Coleman, R. (2018). *Designing experiments for the social sciences: How to plan, create, and execute research using experiments*. SAGE Publications.
- Cook, J.R., & Nation, M. (2016). Community engagement: Universities’ roles in building communities and strengthening democracy. *Community Development*, 47(5), 718–731. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15575330.2016.1226912>

- Coombs, W.T., & Holladay, S.J. (2011). *Managing corporate social responsibility: A communication approach*. Wiley.
- Cork, B.C. (2017). *An investigation of sport sponsorship antecedents and outcomes through levels of sponsor prominence*. [Doctoral dissertation, University of Arkansas]. ScholarWorks. <https://scholarworks.uark.edu/etd/2465>
- Corr, C., Weiner, J., & Stokowski, S. (2023). “We do everything on our own”: FBS athletes’ perceptions of NIL value and support. *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics*, 16, 334–351. <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/jiia/vol16/iss1/4/>
- Cronk, B.C. (2020). *How to use SPSS: A step-by-step guide to analysis and interpretation*. Routledge.
- Crowley, J.N. (2006). *In the arena: The NCAA’s first century*. The NCAA.
- Cutlip, S.M., Center, A.H., Broom, G.M. (1994). *Effective public relations*. Prentice-Hall.
- Czekanski, W.A., & Siegrist, A. (2024). The making of modern-day NIL laws: The past, present, and future of amateurism and commercialization in college sport. *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics*, 17(1), 1-24. <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/jiia/vol17/iss1/1>
- Dairy Alliance. (October 21, 2024). *Ole Miss QB Jaxson Dart joins The Dairy Alliance to promote dairy milk as the top sports beverage* [Press Release]. <https://thedairyalliance.com/newsroom/ole-miss-qb-jaxson-dart-joins-the-dairy-alliance-to-promote-dairy-milk-as-the-top-sports-beverage>
- Dellenger, R. (2023, February 24). *NCAA issues first NIL ruling, with Cavinder twins at the center of it*. Sports Illustrated. <https://www.si.com/college/2023/02/24/cavinder-twins-miami-womens-basketball-infractions-nil-ncaa>

- Dellenger, R. (2025, January 30). *'Creating havoc everywhere' — House-NCAA settlement causing crunch for Olympic sports as roster limits come into focus*. Yahoo Sports.
<https://sports.yahoo.com/creating-havoc-everywhere--house-ncaa-settlement-causing-crunch-for-olympic-sports-as-roster-limits-come-into-focus-234825869.html>
- Dinich, H. (2024, June 6). *NCAA ok's on-field sponsor logos for regular-season football games*. ESPN. https://www.espn.com/college-football/story/_/id/40293854/ncaa-ok-field-sponsor-logos-regular-season-football-games
- Draper, K. (2025, January 9). *Why general manager is the hottest job in college sports*. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/09/business/college-sports-general-managers.html>
- Ehling, W.P. (1975). PR administration, management science, and purposive systems. *Public Relations Review*, 1(2), 15–43. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0363-8111\(75\)80022-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0363-8111(75)80022-1)
- Ehrlich, M. (2023, December 29). *Division III basketball player shows what's possible in NIL*. NIL Daily - Sports Illustrated. <https://www.si.com/fannation/name-image-likeness/news/division-iii-basketball-player-shows-whats-possible-in-nil-michael9>
- Emerson, S. (2024, March 7). *Donor fatigue: Some college football fans wonder why they have to pay for players*. *The Athletic*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/5321481/2024/03/07/college-football-donors-nil-fans/>
- Evans, D. (2023). *Complete list of highest-paid state employees: College coaches dominate top earning public sector workers*. The Sports Daily.
<https://thesportsdaily.com/news/complete-list-of-the-highest-paid-state-employees-college-coaches-dominate-top-earning-public-sector-workers/>

- Fan, M., Billings, A., Zhu, X., & Yu, P. (2020). Twitter-Based BIRGing: Big Data Analysis of English National Team Fans During the 2018 FIFA World Cup. *Communication & Sport*, 8(3), 317–345. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167479519834348>
- Faul, F., Erdfelder, E., Lang, A.G., & Buchner, A. (2007). G*Power 3: A flexible statistical power analysis program for the social, behavioral, and biomedical sciences. *Behavior Research Methods*, 39, 175-191.
- Ferguson, M.A. (1984, August). *Building theory in public relations: Interorganizational relationships*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Gainesville, FL.
- Ferguson, M.A. (2018). Building theory in public relations: Interorganizational relationships as a public relations paradigm. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 30(4), 164–178. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1062726X.2018.1514810>
- Ferris, R. (2019, February 21). *Duke player Zion Williamson injured when Nike shoe blows apart during game*. CNBC. <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/02/21/duke-player-zion-williamson-injured-when-nike-shoe-blows-apart-in-game.html>
- FieldLevel. (2021, September 8). Breaking down Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL). <https://recruiting.fieldlevel.com/2021/09/breaking-down-name-image-and-likeness-nil/#:~:text=What%20is%20Name%2C%20Image%2C%20and,range%20of%20opportunities%20for%20themselves>
- Finch, D.J., Abeza, G., O'Reilly, N., Nadeau, J., Levallet, N., Legg, D., & Foster, B. (2022). Season ticket holder segmentation in professional sports: An application of the sports relationship marketing model. *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, 23(1), 110–131. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSMS-08-2020-0150>

- Fink, J.S., Trail, G.T., & Anderson, D.F. (2002). Environmental factors associated with spectator attendance and sport consumption behavior: Gender and team differences. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 11(1), 8–19.
- Fridley, A., Springer, D., Stokowski, S., & Anderson, A. (2023). Athlete-student-influencer: How the introduction of Name, Image, and Likeness in intercollegiate athletics further complicates applications of role theory. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 41(1), 90-98.
<https://journals-humankinetics-com.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/view/journals/ssj/41/1/article-p90.xml>
- Fullerton, S., Wade, R., Dick, R., & McCall, M. (2023). The perceived impact of the new rules regarding Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) in intercollegiate sports. *Association of Marketing Theory and Practice Proceedings, USA*, 43.
https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/amtp-proceedings_2023/43
- Gantz, W. (2013). Reflections on communication and sport: On fanship and social relationships. *Communication & Sport*, 1(1–2), 176–187. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167479512467446>
- Gavazzi, S.M. (2015). Engaged institutions, responsiveness, and town-gown relationships: Why deep culture change must emphasize the gathering of community feedback. *Planning for Higher Education Journal*, 43(4), 1–10. <https://www.scup.org/resource/engaged-institutions-responsiveness-and-town-gown-relationships/>
- Gavazzi, S.M. (2016). *The optimal town-gown marriage: Taking campus-community outreach and engagement to the next level*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.
- Gavazzi, S. (2019). Campus and community leadership in the spotlight: How university presidents and city managers view town/gown relationships. *Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship*, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.54656/SWZZ3587>

- Gavazzi, S.M., Fox, M., & Martin, J. (2014). Understanding campus and community relationships through marriage and family metaphors: A town-gown typology. *Innovative Higher Education*, 39(5), 361–374. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10755-014-9288-1>
- Georgia Dogs. (2023, April 13). *Georgia Athletics creates in-house NIL department, expands partnership with Altius*. <https://georgiadogs.com/news/2023/4/13/general-georgia-athletics-creates-in-house-nil-department-expands-partnership-with-altius>
- Giles, H., & Stohl, M. (2016). Sport and intergroup communication: Fans, rivalries, communities, and nations. In A. C. Billings (Ed.), *Defining Sport Communication* (pp. 150–164). Routledge.
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Anchor Books.
- Golden, J. (2024, January 4). *NCAA and ESPN ink 8-year, \$920 million media rights deal*. CNBC. <https://www.cnbc.com/2024/01/04/ncaa-and-espn-ink-8-year-920-million-media-rights-deal.html>
- Grabe, M.E., & Westley, B.H. (2003). The controlled experiment. In G. H. Stempel, III, D. H. Weaver, & G. C. Wilhoit (Eds.), *Mass communication research and theory* (pp. 267–298). Allyn and Bacon.
- Grönroos, C. (2004). The relationship marketing process: communication, interaction, dialogue, value. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 19(2), 99–113. <https://doi.org/10.1108/08858620410523981>
- Grunig, J.E. (1993). Image and substance: From symbolic to behavioral relationships. *Public Relations Review*, 19(2), 121–139. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0363-8111\(93\)90003-U](https://doi.org/10.1016/0363-8111(93)90003-U)

- Grunig, L.A., Grunig, J.E., & Ehling, W.P. (1992). What is an effective organization? In J.E. Grunig (Ed.), *Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management*, pp. 65-90. Routledge.
- Grunig, J.E., & Huang, Y. (2000). From organizational effectiveness to relationship indicators: Antecedents of relationships, public relations strategies, and relationship outcomes. In J.A. Ledingham & S.D. Bruning (Eds.), *Public relations as relationship management: A relational approach to the study and practice of public relations*(pp. 23 - 54). Taylor & Francis.
- Grunig, J.E., Hunt, T. (1984). *Managing public relations*. UHolt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Gulavani, S.S., Henry, T.E., Floyd, C., Du, J., Pifer, N.D., & Su, Y. (2023). *Putting athletes first: An empirical examination of the hedonic well-being of college student-athletes in response to NIL*, 16(1), 266-289. <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/jiaa/vol16/iss1/17>
- Gutierrez, M., & Fenno, N. (2019, September 30). California will allow college athletes to profit from endorsements under bill signed by Newsom. *Los Angeles Times*.
<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2019-09-30/college-athlete-endorsement-deals-ncaa-california-law>
- Hall, M.R. (2002). Building on relationships: A fundraising approach for community colleges. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 26(1), 47–60.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/106689202753365007>
- Hall, M.R. (2006). Corporate philanthropy and corporate community relations: Measuring relationship-building results. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 18(1), 1–21.
https://doi.org/10.1207/s1532754xjpr1801_1

Hall, W. (2025, April 3). Opinion | Wally Hall: NIL's lack of transparency still troubling.

Arkansas Democrat Gazette. <https://www.arkansasonline.com/news/2025/apr/03/nils-lack-of-transparency-still-troubling/>

Harasta, J. (2022). Town & gown - University and community leaders' perceptions on mutually beneficial relationships: An urban American university case study. *Athens Journal of Mass Media and Communications*, 8(3), 161–178. <https://doi.org/10.30958/ajmmc.8-3-2>

Harrison, V.S. (2018). Understanding the donor experience: Applying stewardship theory to higher education donors. *Public Relations Review*, 44(4), 533–548. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2018.07.001>

Harry, M. (2020, July 29). Abolish the Term “Student-Athlete.” *Diverse Education*. <https://www.diverseeducation.com/sports/article/15107434/abolish-the-term-student-athlete>

Harry, M. (2024). “You don’t want us to solve this”: Agenda setting in the federal hearings on Name, Image, and Likeness. *Communication & Sport*, 21674795241265008. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21674795241265008>

Hart, J. (2024, June 25). *Is NIL a good thing or a bad thing? Sports industry expert weighs in.* Temple Now. <https://news.temple.edu/news/2024-06-10/nil-good-thing-or-bad-thing-sports-industry-expert-weighs#:~:text=TK%3A%20To%20answer%20this%20question,for%20their%20products%20and%20services.>

Hawkins-Jedlicka, C., Scovel, S., & Jedlicka, S.R. (2023). Sign me MABI? Women athletes' brand images in the NIL era. *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics*, 16(1), 83–107. <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/jiia/vol16/iss1/20>

- Hayes, A.F. (2022). *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach*. Guilford Press.
- Hecht, M.L. (1978). The conceptualization and measurement of interpersonal communication satisfaction. *Human Communication Research*, 4(3), 253–264.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.1978.tb00614.x>
- Heere, B. (2016). Team identity theory. In G. Cunningham, J. Fink, & A. Doherty (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of theory in sport management* (pp. 213–222). Taylor & Francis.
- Heere, B., & Dickson, G. (2008). Measuring Attitudinal Loyalty: Separating the Terms of Affective Commitment and Attitudinal Loyalty. *Journal of Sport Management*, 22(2), 227–239. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.22.2.227>
- Heere, B., & James, J.D. (2007). Stepping outside the lines: Developing a multi-dimensional team identity scale based on Social Identity Theory. *Sport Management Review*, 10(1), 65–91. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1441-3523\(07\)70004-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1441-3523(07)70004-9)
- Heere, B., James, J., Yoshida, M., & Scremin, G. (2011). The Effect of Associated Group Identities on Team Identity. *Journal of Sport Management*, 25(6), 606–621.
<https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.25.6.606>
- Henderson, E. (2024a, October 2). *NC State athletes donate NIL funds to Helene storm relief*. Sports Illustrated. <https://www.si.com/fannation/name-image-likeness/nil-news/nc-state-athletes-donate-nil-funds-to-helene-storm-relief>
- Henderson, E. (2024b, October 20). *Washington launches innovative Dawg's Unleashed NIL marketing unit*. Sports Illustrated. <https://www.si.com/fannation/name-image-likeness/nil-news/washington-launches-innovative-dawg-s-unleashed-nil-marketing-unit>

- Henderson, E. (2025, March 28). *Smaller schools can stay competitive by turning nil merch into rev share dollars*. Sports Illustrated. <https://www.si.com/fannation/name-image-likeness/nil-news/smaller-schools-can-stay-competitive-by-turning-nil-merch-into-rev-share-dollars>
- Hendrick, S.S. (1988). A generic measure of relationship satisfaction. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 50(1), 93. <https://doi.org/10.2307/352430>
- Hennig-Thurau, T. and Klee, A. (1997). The impact of customer satisfaction and relationship quality on customer retention: A critical reassessment and model development. *Psychology & Marketing*, 14(8). 737-764. [https://doi.org/10.1002/\(SICI\)1520-6793\(199712\)14:8%3C737::AID-MAR2%3E3.0.CO;2-F](https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1520-6793(199712)14:8%3C737::AID-MAR2%3E3.0.CO;2-F)
- Hirko, S., & Sweitzer, K. (2015). The business model of intercollegiate sports: The haves and have-nots. In E. Comeaux (Ed.), *Introduction to intercollegiate athletics* (pp. 147-162). Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Hon, L.C., & Grunig, J.E. (1999). Guidelines for measuring relationships in public relations. *Institute for public relations*. https://www.instituteforpr.org/wp-content/uploads/Guidelines_Measuring_Relationships.pdf
- Hong, S.Y., & Yang, S.U. (2011a). Perceptions of Relationships and Evaluations of Satisfaction: An Exploration of Interaction. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 23(2), 191–217. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1062726X.2011.555646>
- Hong, S.Y., & Yang, S.U. (2011b). Public Engagement in Supportive Communication Behaviors toward an Organization: Effects of Relational Satisfaction and Organizational Reputation in Public Relations Management. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 23(2), 191–217. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1062726x.2011.555646>

- Hosick, M.B. (2021, June 30). *NCAA adopts interim name, image and likeness policy* [Press Release]. <https://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/media-center/news/ncaa-adopts-interim-name-image-and-likeness-policy>
- Huang, Y.H. (2001). OPRA: A cross-cultural, multiple-item scale for measuring organization-public relationships. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 13(1), 61–90.
https://doi.org/10.1207/S1532754XJPRR1301_4
- Huang, Y.H. C., & Zhang, Y. (2013). Revisiting organization–public relations research over the past decade: Theoretical concepts, measures, methodologies and challenges. *Public Relations Review*, 39(1), 85–87. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2012.10.001>
- Hung, C.F. (2005). Exploring types of organization–public relationships and their implications for relationship management in public relations. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 17(4), 393–426. https://doi.org/10.1207/s1532754xjpr1704_4
- The Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States (IAAUS). (1906). *Proceedings of the first annual meeting*.
- Irwin, R.L., Sutton, W.A., McCarthy, L.M. (2008). *Sport promotion and sales management*. Human Kinetics.
- James, J.D., Delia, E.B., & Wann, D.L.L. (2019). “No” Is Not “Low”: Improving the Assessment of Sport Team Identification. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 28(1), 34–45.
<https://doi.org/10.32731/smq.281.032019.03>
- Johnson, D. (2023, May). A field of dreams: How NIL changed the game for student athletes. *Journal of Financial Planning*.
<https://www.financialplanningassociation.org/learning/publications/journal/MAY23-field-dreams-how-nil-changed-game-student-athletes->

[OPEN#:~:text=O%27Bannon%20claimed%20both%20organizations,other%20players%20should%20be%20compensated.](#)

Jolly, R., & L, M. (2013). Celebrity endorsement as an effective tool for destination marketing among occupation groups in Bangalore. *Atna Journal of Tourism Studies*, 8(2), 55-74.

<https://doi.org/10.12727/ajts.10.4>

Judson, K. M., & Carpenter, P. (2005). Assessing a university community's identification to sport in a changing climate. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 14(4), 217–226.

Kang, M., & Yang, S.U. (2010). Mediation effects of organization–public relationship outcomes on public intentions for organizational supports. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 22(4), 477–494. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10627261003601614>

Katz, M., & Heere, B. (2016). New team, new fans: A longitudinal examination of team identification as a driver of university identification. *Journal of Sport Management*, 30(2), 135–148. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.2014-0258>

Keller, B. (2021, August 18). *NIL for Division II and Division III institutions*. Opendorse.

<https://biz.opendorse.com/blog/nil-for-division-ii-and-division-iii-institutions-2/#:~:text=Professional%20athletes%20and%20the%20general,off%20their%20creativity%20and%20marketability>.

Kennedy, A. (2024, September 7). *What are the biggest college football stadiums?* ESPN.

https://www.espn.com/college-football/story/_/id/39241345/what-biggest-college-football-stadiums

Kian, E.M., & Zimmerman, M. (2023). Social media scholarship in sport studies and college athletes' Name, Image, and Likeness opportunities. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 16(3), 321–327. <https://doi.org/10.1123/ijsc.2023-0136>

- Ki, E., & Brown, K.A. (2013). The effects of crisis response strategies on relationship quality outcomes. *International Journal of Business Communication*, 50(4), 403–420.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0021943613497056>
- Ki, E., & Hon, L.C. (2007a). Reliability and validity of organization-public relationship measurement and linkages among relationship indicators in a membership organization. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 84(3), 419-438.
- Ki, E., & Hon, L.C. (2007b). Testing the linkages among the organization–public relationship and attitude and behavioral intentions. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 19(1), 23.
- Ki, E., & Shin, J. (2015). The status of organization–public relationship research through an analysis of published articles between 1985 and 2013. In E. Ki, J.N. Kim, & J.A. Ledingham (Eds.), *Public relations as relationship management* (pp. 28–45). Routledge
- Kirkwood, M., Yap, S.F., & Xu, Y. (2019). An Exploration of Sport Fandom in Online Communities. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 12(1), 55–78.
<https://doi.org/10.1123/ijsc.2018-0133>
- Kim, J. (2017). Elaborating the halo effect of SCCT: How and why performance history affects crisis responsibility and organizational reputation. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 29(6), 277-294. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1062726X.2017.1405812>
- Kim, Y. (2001). Searching for the organization-public relationship: A valid and reliable instrument. *J&MC Quarterly*, 78, 799–815.
- Kim, Y.K. (2008). *Relationship framework in sport management: How relationship quality affects sport consumption behaviors* (Publication No. 3334481) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Florida]. Proquest.

- Kim, J., & Chan-Olmsted, S.M. (2005). Comparative effects of organization-public relationships and product-related attributes on brand attitude. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 11(3), 145–170. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1352726042000317214>
- Kim, M., & Cho, M. (2019). Examining the role of sense of community: Linking local government public relationships and community-building. *Public Relations Review*, 45(2), 297–306. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2019.02.002>
- Kim, E., & Gower, K.K. (2023). Who goes to the game? A model of organization-public relationships and team identification with attitudes and behavioral intentions. *Journal of Global Sport Management*, 8(4), 716–738. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24704067.2021.1888208>
- Kim, Y.K., & Trail, G. (2011). A Conceptual Framework for Understanding Relationships Between Sport Consumers and Sport Organizations: A Relationship Quality Approach. *Journal of Sport Management*, 25(1), 57–69. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.25.1.57>
- Kim, M., & Walker, M. (2013). The influence of professional athlete philanthropy on donation intentions. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 13(5), 579–601. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2013.837942>
- Kim, Y.K., Ko, Y.J., & James, J. (2011). The impact of relationship quality on attitude toward a sponsor. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing*, 26(8), 566–576. <https://doi.org/10.1108/08858621111179840>
- Kishner, I.A., Etna, D.A., & Blass, J. (2023, September 6). *Why federal regulation is necessary to level the NIL playing field*. Sportico. <https://www.sportico.com/leagues/college-sports/2023/why-nil-needs-federal-legislation-ncaa-1234735926/>

Kleinman, D. (2019, September 13). *The most valuable college apparel deals: UCLA leads as gear companies' new mindset thwarts rivals*. Forbes.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/danielkleinman/2019/09/13/ucla-most-valuable-college-apparel-deals/>

Koerber, D., & Zabara, N. (2017). Preventing damage: The psychology of crisis communication buffers in organized sports. *Public Relations Review*, 43(1), 193–200.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2016.12.002>

Ko, Y.J., Chang, Y., Park, C., & Herbst, F. (2017). Determinants of consumer attitude toward corporate sponsors: A comparison between a profit and nonprofit sport event sponsorship. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 16(2), 176–186.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.1622>

Kudialis, C. (2024, September 18). *NIL athletes are thriving. But how do colleges and*

universities benefit? Volt. [https://voldedu.com/marketing-branding/nil-athletes-are-](https://voldedu.com/marketing-branding/nil-athletes-are-thriving-but-how-do-colleges-and-universities-benefit/#:~:text=athletes%20are%20thriving,-.But%20how%20do%20colleges%20and%20universities%20benefit%3F,and%20may%20even%20elevate%20enrollment.&text=For%20years%2C%20two%20archetypes%20were,the%20experiences%20of%20college%20athletes.)

[thriving-but-how-do-colleges-and-universities-](https://voldedu.com/marketing-branding/nil-athletes-are-thriving-but-how-do-colleges-and-universities-benefit/#:~:text=athletes%20are%20thriving,-.But%20how%20do%20colleges%20and%20universities%20benefit%3F,and%20may%20even%20elevate%20enrollment.&text=For%20years%2C%20two%20archetypes%20were,the%20experiences%20of%20college%20athletes.)

[benefit/#:~:text=athletes%20are%20thriving,-](https://voldedu.com/marketing-branding/nil-athletes-are-thriving-but-how-do-colleges-and-universities-benefit/#:~:text=athletes%20are%20thriving,-.But%20how%20do%20colleges%20and%20universities%20benefit%3F,and%20may%20even%20elevate%20enrollment.&text=For%20years%2C%20two%20archetypes%20were,the%20experiences%20of%20college%20athletes.)

[.But%20how%20do%20colleges%20and%20universities%20benefit%3F,and%20may%20](https://voldedu.com/marketing-branding/nil-athletes-are-thriving-but-how-do-colleges-and-universities-benefit/#:~:text=athletes%20are%20thriving,-.But%20how%20do%20colleges%20and%20universities%20benefit%3F,and%20may%20even%20elevate%20enrollment.&text=For%20years%2C%20two%20archetypes%20were,the%20experiences%20of%20college%20athletes.)

[0even%20elevate%20enrollment.&text=For%20years%2C%20two%20archetypes%20w](https://voldedu.com/marketing-branding/nil-athletes-are-thriving-but-how-do-colleges-and-universities-benefit/#:~:text=athletes%20are%20thriving,-.But%20how%20do%20colleges%20and%20universities%20benefit%3F,and%20may%20even%20elevate%20enrollment.&text=For%20years%2C%20two%20archetypes%20were,the%20experiences%20of%20college%20athletes.)

[ere,the%20experiences%20of%20college%20athletes.](https://voldedu.com/marketing-branding/nil-athletes-are-thriving-but-how-do-colleges-and-universities-benefit/#:~:text=athletes%20are%20thriving,-.But%20how%20do%20colleges%20and%20universities%20benefit%3F,and%20may%20even%20elevate%20enrollment.&text=For%20years%2C%20two%20archetypes%20were,the%20experiences%20of%20college%20athletes.)

Kunkel, T., Baker, B.J., Baker, T.A., & Doyle, J.P. (2021). There is no nil in NIL: Examining the social media value of student-athletes' names, images, and likeness. *Sport Management Review*, 24(5), 839–861. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14413523.2021.1880154>

Kwon, H.H., & Armstrong, K.L. (2002). Factors influencing impulse buying of sport team licensed merchandise. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 11(3), 151.

- Kwon, H.H., & Trail, G.T. (2003). A reexamination of the construct and concurrent validity of the psychological commitment to team scale. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 12(2), 88–93.
- Ledingham, J.A. (2003). Explicating relationship management as a general theory of public relations. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 15(2), 181–198.
https://doi.org/10.1207/S1532754XJPRR1502_4
- Ledingham, J.A. (2010). Relationship management: A general theory of public relations. In C.H. Botan & V. Hazleton (Eds.), *Public Relations Theory II* (pp. 412–425). Taylor & Francis.
- Ledingham, J.A., & Bruning, S.D. (1998). Relationship management in public relations: Dimensions of an organization-public relationship. *Public Relations Review*, 24(1), 55–65. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0363-8111\(98\)80020-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0363-8111(98)80020-9)
- Ledingham, J.A., & Bruning, S.D. (2001). Managing community relationships to maximize mutual benefit: Doing well by doing good. In R. L. Heath & G. Vasquez (Eds.), *Handbook of public relations* (pp. 527–534). Sage.
- Learfield. (n.d.). *Learfield NIL*. <https://www.learfield.com/nil/>
- Lee, D., Trail, G.T., Lee, C., & Schoenstedt, L.J. (2013). Exploring factors that affect purchase intention of athletic team merchandise. *Journal of Research*, 8(1), 40–48.
- L’Etang, J. (2006). Public relations and sport in promotional culture. *Public Relations Review*, 32, 386–394. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2006.09.006>
- Lewis, G. (1970). The beginning of organized collegiate sport. *American Quarterly*, 22(2), 222–229. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2711645>
- Lianopoulos, Y., Theodorakis, N.D., Tsigilis, N., Gardikiotis, A., & Koustelios, A. (2020). Elevating self-esteem through sport team identification: A study about local and distant

- sport fans. *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, 21(4), 695–718.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSMS-10-2019-0115>
- Libit, D., & Novy-Williams, E. (2024, February 1). *NCAA took in record revenue in 2023 on investment jump*. Sportico. <https://www.sportico.com/leagues/college-sports/2024/ncaa-revenue-2023-financials-1234765147/>
- Lii, Y.S., & Lee, M. (2012). Doing Right Leads to Doing Well: When the Type of CSR and Reputation Interact to Affect Consumer Evaluations of the Firm. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 105(1), 69–81. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-011-0948-0>
- Lim, J.S., & Jiang, H. (2021). Linking authenticity in CSR communication to organization-public relationship outcomes: Integrating theories of impression management and relationship management. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 33(6), 464-486.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1062726X.2022.2048953>
- Lock, D., Funk, D.C., Doyle, J.P., & McDonald, H. (2014). Examining the longitudinal structure, stability, and dimensional interrelationships of team identification. *Journal of Sport Management*, 28(2), 119–135. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.2012-0191>
- Lockard, S. (2024, April 27). *The Fair Pay to Play Act and how California led the way to college athlete pay reform and the development of NIL*. USC Gould's Business Law Digest.
<https://lawforbusiness.usc.edu/the-fair-pay-to-play-act-and-how-california-led-the-way-to-college-athlete-pay-reform-and-the-development-of-nil/>
- Madrigal, R. (2001). Social identity effects in a belief-attitude-intentions hierarchy: Implications for corporate sponsorship. *Psychology and Marketing*, 18(2), 145–165.
[https://doi.org/10.1002/1520-6793\(200102\)18:2<145::AID-MAR1003>3.0.CO;2-T](https://doi.org/10.1002/1520-6793(200102)18:2<145::AID-MAR1003>3.0.CO;2-T)

- Madrigal, R., & Chen, J. (2008). Moderating and mediating effects of team identification in regard to causal attributions and summary judgments following a game outcome. *Journal of Sport Management*, 22(6), 717–733. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.22.6.717>
- Mahony, D.F., Madrigal, R., & Howard, D. (2000). Using the Psychological Commitment to Team (PCT) scale to segment sport consumers based on loyalty. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 9(1), 15–25.
- Mayr, S., Erdfelder, E., Buchner, A. & Faul, F. (2007). A short tutorial of GPower. *Tutorials in Quantitative Methods for Psychology*, 3, 51-59. <https://doi.org/10.20982/tqmp.03.2.p051>
- McCann, M. (2025, January 13). *Fight to recognize college athletes as employees lives on*. Sportico. <https://www.sportico.com/law/analysis/2025/college-athlete-employee-legal-fight-1234823597/#>
- McCarter & English. (2023, November 9). *Recent congressional hearings signal major NIL changes are coming*. <https://www.mccarter.com/insights/recent-congressional-hearings-signal-major-nil-changes-are-coming/>
- Mandel, S. (2024a, February 24). NCAA recruiting pay-for-play is here, and the only surprise is how fast it happened. *The Athletic*. <https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/5296175/2024/02/23/ncaa-nil-paying-recruits-tennessee-injunction/>
- Mandel, S. (2024b). NCAA agrees to end transfer rules permanently; athletes who lost eligibility will have year restored. *The Athletic*. <https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/5530608/2024/05/30/ncaa-transfer-rules-banned-permanently/>

- Melnick, M.J., & Wann, D.L., (2004). Sports fandom influences, interests, and behaviours among Norwegian university students. *International Sports Journal*, 8, 1–13.
- Melnick M.J., & Wann, D.L. (2011). An examination of sport fandom in Australia: Socialization, team identification, and fan behaviour. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 46, 456-470.
- Men, L.N., Yue, C.A., & Liu, Y. (2020). ‘Vision, passion, and care’: The impact of charismatic executive leadership communication on employee trust and support for organizational change. *Public Relations Review*, 46(3). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2020.101927>
- Meyer, J.P., & Allen, N.J. (1984). Testing the “side-bet theory” of organizational commitment: Some methodological considerations. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 69(3), 372–378. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.69.3.372>
- Mohammed, R. (2014). Organization-public relationships practices in university setting. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 155, 484–489. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.10.326>
- Moore, J., & Tapia, M. (2024). Evaluation. In J. Moore (Ed.), *Public relations: Principles, origins, and practice*, pp. 211-226. Cognella, Inc.
- Morgan, R.M., & Hunt, S.D. (1994). The Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 58(3), 20–38. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1252308>
- Murphy, D. (2023, February 24). *NCAA sanctions Miami women’s hoops for NIL-related infraction*. ESPN. https://www.espn.com/womens-college-basketball/story/_/id/35727606/ncaa-sanctions-miami-women-hoop-nil-related-infraction
- Nakos, P. (2022, July 6). *What are NIL collectives and how do they operate?* On3. <https://www.on3.com/nl/news/what-are-nil-collectives-and-how-do-they-operate/>

- Namisango, F., & Kang, K. (2019). Organization-public relationships on social media: The role of relationship strength, cohesion and symmetry. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 101, 22–29. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2019.06.014>
- NCAA. (2013, November 27). *Role of boosters*. <https://www.ncaa.org/sports/2013/11/27/role-of-boosters.aspx>
- NCAA. (2019, October 29). *Board of Governors starts process to enhance name, image and likeness opportunities*. <https://www.ncaa.org/news/2019/10/29/board-of-governors-starts-process-to-enhance-name-image-and-likeness-opportunities.aspx>
- NCAA. (2021a, February 16). *Overview*. <https://www.ncaa.org/sports/2021/2/16/overview.aspx>
- NCAA. (2021b, June 28). *Mission and priorities*. <https://www.ncaa.org/sports/2021/6/28/mission-and-priorities.aspx>
- NCAA. (2021c, May 4). *History*. <https://www.ncaa.org/sports/2021/5/4/history.aspx>
- NCAA. (2024, August 9). *2024-2025 NCAA Division I Manual*. <https://www.ncaapublications.com/productdownloads/D125.pdf>
- National Collegiate Athletic Association v. Alston, 141 S. Ct. 2141, 594 U.S. 69, 210 L. Ed. 2d 314 (2021).
- National Collegiate Athletic Association v. Alston, 141 S. Ct. 2141, 594 U.S. 69, 210 L. Ed. 2d 314 (2021) (Kavanaugh J. concurring opinion).
- O'Bannon v. National Collegiate Athletic Association, 802 F.3d 1049 (9th Cir. 2015).
- Ohanian, R. (1990). Construction and validation of a scale to measure celebrity endorsers' perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. *Journal of Advertising*, 19(3), 39-52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.1990.10673191>

- The Ohio State University. (2024, January 23). *Ohio State reports record athletics revenue in FY 2023*. Ohio State News. <https://news.osu.edu/ohio-state-reports-record-athletics-revenue-in-fy-2023/>
- O’Keefe, D.J. (2003). Message properties, mediating states, and manipulation checks: Claims, evidence, and data analysis in experimental persuasive message effects research. *Communication Theory*, 13(3), 251-274. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2019.06.014>
- O’Neil, J. (2007). The link between strong public relationships and donor support. *Public Relations Review*, 33(1), 99–102. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2006.11.021>
- On3. (2024, October 26). *On3 NIL valuations*. <https://www.on3.com/nil/rankings/player/nil-100/>
- Opendorse. (n.d.). *Built by athletes. For athletes*. <https://opendorse.com/about/>
- Opendorse. (2024). *NIL at three: The annual Opendorse report*. <https://biz.opendorse.com/blog/nil-3-opendorse-report/>
- Oriard, M. (2012). NCAA academic reform: History, context and challenges. *Journal of Intercollegiate Sport*, 5(1), 4–18. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jis.5.1.4>
- Palmieri, C. (2021). The billion dollar industry that has never paid its money-makers: The NCAA’s attempt at compensation through names, images, and likeness. *Touro Law Review*, 37(3), 1605–1641. <https://digitalcommons.tourolaw.edu/lawreview/vol37/iss3/15>
- Parks, J. (2024, July 1). *Ranking college sports programs by revenue: Big Ten, SEC in the lead*. Sports Illustrated. <https://www.si.com/fannation/college/cfb-hq/rankings/college-football-rankings-revenue-teams>
- Parry, K.D., Jones, I., & Wann, D.L. (2014). An examination of sport fandom in the United Kingdom: A comparative analysis of fan behaviours, socialization processes, and team identification. *Journal of Sport Behaviour*, 37, 251-267.

- Pepe, S. (2024, October 24). Landmark House v. NCAA case reaches agreement; payouts to average \$135k. *The Tiger*. <https://thetigercu.com/22562/sports/landmark-house-v-ncaa-case-reaches-agreement-payouts-to-average-135k/>
- Peterson, R. (2023, December 1). Peterson: A look inside Iowa State's We Will Collective and the transfer portal season. *Des Moines Register*.
<https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/sports/college/iowa-state/cyclone-insider/2023/12/01/iowa-state-football-we-will-collective-transfer-portal-nil-big-12-cyclones-ncaa/71726336007/>
- Pratt, A. N. (2013). Integrated impression management in athletics: A qualitative study of how NCAA Division I athletics directors understand public relations. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 6(1), 42–65. <https://doi.org/10.1123/ijsc.6.1.42>
- Prayag, G., Mills, H., Lee, C., & Soscia, I. (2020). Team identification, discrete emotions, satisfaction, and event attachment: A social identity perspective. *Journal of Business Research*, 112, 373–384. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.11.062>
- PRSA. (n.d.). *About Public Relations*. <https://www.prsa.org/about/all-about-pr>
- Pugliese, E., Bonaiuto, M., Livi, S., Theodorou, A., & Van Knippenberg, D. (2024). Team identification more than organizational identification predicts counterproductive work behavior and organizational citizenship behavior and mediates influences of communication climate and perceived external prestige. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 54(2), 116–125. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.13017>
- Rauf, M., Karjaluoto, H., & Leppäniemi, M. (2024). The impact of rewarded social media engagement, customer satisfaction, commitment, loyalty and loyalty programmes in the

- sports industry. *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing*, 24(3-4), 262-289. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJSMM.2024.138988>
- Rim, H., Yang, S.U., & Lee, J. (2016). Strategic partnerships with nonprofits in corporate social responsibility (CSR): The mediating role of perceived altruism and organizational identification. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(9), 3213–3219.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.02.035>
- Romano Law. (2021, August 3). *How do the NCAA name, image, and likeness rules affect key stakeholders?* <https://www.romanolaw.com/how-do-the-ncaa-name-image-and-likeness-rules-affect-key-stakeholders/>
- Rosenblatt, K. (2024, July 17). EA Sports: It's in the (college) game, again. *NBC News*.
<https://www.nbcnews.com/pop-culture/pop-culture-news/college-football-25-ea-sports-video-game-nil-rcna162115#>
- Rubin, A. (2024, September 9). *Colleges use NIL rules as a top student athlete recruiting tool*. Axios. <https://www.axios.com/2024/09/09/nil-lsu-money-game-series-event>
- Sack, A.L., & Staurowsky, E.J. (1998). *College athletes for hire: The evolution and legacy of the NCAA's amateur myth*. Praeger.
- Salari, M., & Mazyari, M. (2020). Social media and sport consumption: The effect of team identification on attitude and behavioral intention. *PODIUM Sport, Leisure and Tourism Review*, 9(2), 199–213. <https://doi.org/10.5585/podium.v9i2.13838>
- Sandle, J. (2025, March 26). *Legendary coach Jim Larranaga calls for 'transparency' with NIL*. Sports Illustrated. <https://www.si.com/college/miami/basketball/legendary-coach-jim-larranaga-calls-for-transparency-with-nil->

- Sargeant, A. (2001). Relationship fundraising: How to keep donors loyal. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, 12(2), 177–192. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.12204>
- Schellenberg, B.J.I., & Gaudreau, P. (2023). Does it matter if sport fans “Root for the home team?” A test of the team identification–social psychological health model. *Journal of Sport Management*, 37(3), 217–225. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.2022-0029>
- Sergent, J. (2023, August 22). Conference realignment will leave Pac-12 in pieces. See the decades of shifting alliances. *USA Today*.
<https://www.usatoday.com/story/graphics/2023/08/22/conference-realignment-pac-12-football-2024/70570287007/>
- Shapiro, S.L., & Ridinger, L.L. (2011). An analysis of donor involvement, gender, and giving in college athletics. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 20(1), 22–32.
https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/hms_fac_pubs/21
- Shea, B. (2022, December 13). Where college football bowl names come from: Mayonnaise, mowers and more. *The Athletic*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/3994753/2022/12/13/college-football-bowl-game-names-history-origin/>
- Smith, R.K. (1987). The National Collegiate Athletic Association’s death penalty: How educators punish themselves and others. *Indiana Law Journal*, 62(4), 985–1059.
<https://www.repository.law.indiana.edu/ilj/vol62/iss4/2>
- Smith, R.K. (2000). A brief history of the National Collegiate Athletic Association’s role in regulating intercollegiate athletics. *Marquette Sports Law Review*, 11(1), 9–22.
<https://scholarship.law.marquette.edu/sportslaw/vol11/iss1/5>

- Smith, R.A. (2011). *Pay for play: A history of big-time college athletic reform*. University of Illinois Press.
- Smith, J. (2016). *The job is football: The myth of the student-athlete*. Organization of American Historians. <https://www.oah.org/tah/august-3/the-job-is-football-the-myth-of-the-student-athlete/>
- Sports Illustrated. (2017, Oct. 2). *How Adidas, Nike and Under Armour have divvied up major college basketball*. <https://www.si.com/college/2017/10/02/adidas-nike-under-armour-contracts-schools-conferences>
- Stadler, E., & Naraine, M.L. (2020). Place your bets: An exploratory study of sports-gambling operators' use of Twitter for relationship marketing. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 13(2), 157–180.
- Staples, A., & Emerson, S. (2022, August 18). SEC vs. Big Ten enters a new chapter as TV deals collide with more than theme songs at stake. *The Athletic*. <https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/3520031/2022/08/18/sec-big-ten-conference-media-deals/>
- Starck, K., & Kruckeberg, D. (2001). Public relations and community: A reconstructed theory revisited. In R. L. Heath & G. Vasquez (Eds.), *Handbook of public relations* (pp. 51-59). Sage.
- Staurowsky, E.J., & Sack, A.L. (2005). Reconsidering the use of the term student-athlete in academic research. *Journal of Sport Management*, 19(2), 103–116. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.19.2.103>

- Stensland, P.J., Taniyev, O., Scola, Z., Ishaq, F.J., Wilkerson, Z., & Gordon, B.S. (2019). The ties that bind: Examining Division I athletics as a social anchor. *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics*, 12, 287–313.
- Stoldt, G.C., Dittmore, S.W., Ross, M., Bravold, S.E. (2021). *Sport public relations*. Human Kinetics.
- Suh, Y.I., & Pedersen, P.M. (2010). Participants' service quality perceptions of fantasy sports websites: The relationship between service quality, customer satisfaction, attitude, and actual usage. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 19(2), 78-87.
- Tajfel, H. (1974). Social identity and intergroup behaviour. *Social Science Information*, 13(2), 65–93. <https://doi.org/10.1177/053901847401300204>
- Tajfel, H. and Turner, J.C. (1986) The Social Identity Theory of intergroup behavior. In: S. Worchel, & W. G. Austin (Eds.), *Psychology of Intergroup Relation* (pp. 7-24). Hall Publishers.
- Teamworks. (n.d.). *Influencer: Unleash your influencers*. <https://teamworks.com/influencer/>
- The 15 Club [@The15Club_nil]. (2024, August 29). *Hilton for the stay! #HiltonLexington #HiltonLexingtonDowntown #BBN* [Video attached] [Post]. X. https://x.com/The15Club_nil/status/1829187970957549820
- Theodorakis, N.D., Al-Emadi, A., Wann, D., Yannis, L., & Foudouki, A. (2017). An examination of levels of fandom, team identification, socialization processes, and fan behaviors in Qatar. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 40(1), 1–19.
- Theodorakis, N.D., & Wann, D.L. (2008). An examination of sport fandom in Greece: influences, interests and behaviours. *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing*, 4, 356-374.

- Thomas, W.N., & Omojunikanbi, N.C. (2023). Public relations practice and community relations: The implications and challenges. *International Journal of Advancement in Education, Management, Science and Technology*, 6(2), 49–61.
<https://www.globalacademicstar.com/download/article/public-relations-practice-and-community-relations-the-implications-and-challenges.pdf>
- Thorson, E., Wicks, R., & Leshner, G. (2012). Experimental methodology in journalism and mass communication research. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 89(1), 112–124. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077699011430066>
- Tsiotsou, R. (1998). Motivations for donation to athletic programs. *The Cyber Journal of Sport Marketing*, 2(2). www.ausport.gov.au/fulltext/1998/cjsm/v2n2/tsiotsou22.htm
- Towery, N.A. (2023). A sense of belonging: A qualitative investigation into the origination of collegiate sport fanship and fandom. *Communication & Sport*, 216747952311716.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/21674795231171604>
- Trail, G.T., Fink, J.S., & Anderson, D.F. (2003). Sport spectator consumption behavior. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 12(1), 8–17.
- Troutman Pepper. (2024, September 26). *State and federal legislation tracker*.
<https://www.troutman.com/state-and-federal-nil-legislation-tracker.html>
- Ubben, D. (2024, January 31). Tennessee, Virginia AGs file lawsuit against NCAA over restrictions on NIL recruiting. *The Athletic*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/5241006/2024/01/31/tennessee-virginia-ncaa-nil-lawsuit/>

- Ubben, D. (2025, March 25). Saint Francis announces plans to reclassify from DI to DIII 1 week after NCAA Tournament loss. *The Athletic*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6229794/2025/03/25/saint-francis-division-move-ncaa/>
- Uhl-Bien, M., & Maslyn, J.M. (2003). Reciprocity in manager-subordinate relationships: Components, configurations, and outcomes. *Journal of Management*, 29, 511-532.
- Um, N.H., & Jang, A. (2020). Impact of celebrity endorsement type on consumers' brand and advertisement perception and purchase intention. *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal*, 48(4), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.8913>
- Vannini, C. (2024, September 24). NCAA launches NIL deal transparency platform in push to publicize market information. *The Athletic*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/5668716/2024/08/01/ncaa-nil-assist-platform-contract-information/>
- Verčič, D., & Grunig, J.E. (2000). The origins of public relations theory in economics and strategic management. In D. Moss, D. Verčič, & G. Warnaby (Eds.), *Perspectives on public relations research* (pp. 9–58). Routledge.
- Vlachos, P.A., Tsamakos, A., Vrechopoulos, A.P., & Avramidis, P.K. (2009). Corporate social responsibility: Attributes, loyalty, and the mediating role of trust. *Journal of Academy of Marketing Science*, 37(2), 170-180. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-008-0117-x>
- Wakefield, K.L. (1995). The pervasive effects of social influence on sporting event attendance. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, 19(4), 335–351.
- Wann, D.L. (2006a). The causes and consequences of sport team identification. In A.A. Raney & J. Bryant (Eds.), *Handbook of sports and media* (pp. 331-352). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- Wann, D.L. (2006b). Understanding the positive social psychological benefits of sport team identification: The team identification-social psychological health model. *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 10(4), 272–296.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2699.10.4.272>
- Wann, D.L., & Branscombe, N.R. (1990). Die-Hard and Fair-Weather Fans: Effects of Identification on BIRGing and CORFing Tendencies. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 14(2), 103–117. <https://doi.org/10.1177/019372359001400203>
- Wann, D.L., & Branscombe, N.R. (1993). Sports fans: Measuring degree of identification with their team. *International Journal of Sport Psychology*, 24, 1–17.
- Wann, D.L., & Robinson, T.N. (2002). The Relationship Between Sport Team Identification and Integration into and Perceptions of a University. *International Sports Journal*, 6, 36–44.
- Wann, D.L., & Schrader, M.P. (1996). An analysis of the stability of sport team identification. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 82(1), 322. <https://doi.org/10.2466/pms.1996.82.1.322>
- Wann, D.L., Melnick, M.J., Russell, G.W., & Pease, D.G. (2001). *Sport fans: The psychology and social impact of spectators*. Routledge.
- Wann, D.L., Tucker, K.B., & Schrader, M.P. (1996). An Exploratory Examination of the Factors Influencing the Origination, Continuation, and Cessation of Identification with Sports Teams. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 82(3), 995–1001.
<https://doi.org/10.2466/pms.1996.82.3.995>
- Wanzer, C.V., Pfender, E.J., Travis, N.P., & Bleakley, A. (2024). Mapping the field: A content analysis of marketable NCAA athletes' social media self-presentation. *Communication & Sport*, 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21674795241232404>

- Waters, R.D. (2008). Applying relationship management theory to the fundraising process for individual donors. *Journal of Communication Management*, 12(1), 73–87.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/13632540810854244>
- Waters, R.D. (2011). Increasing fundraising efficiency through evaluation: Applying communication theory to the nonprofit organization— Donor relationship. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 40(3), 458–475. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764009354322>
- Waters, R.D. (2017). Applying public relations theory to increase the understanding of sport communication. In P.M. Pedersen (Ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Sport Communication* (pp. 66 - 74). Taylor & Francis.
- Welbourne, B. (2024, March 20). *UA's Impact on State Economy Approached Record Despite Pandemic*. UA News Center. <https://news.ua.edu/2024/03/uas-impact-on-state-economy-approached-record-despite-pandemic/>
- Williams, J. (2024, October 7). House v. NCAA settlement granted preliminary approval, bringing new financial model closer. *The New York Times*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/5826004/2024/10/07/house-ncaa-settlement-approval-claudia-wilken/>
- Wilson, L.J. (2001). Relationships within communities: Public relations for the new century. In R.L. Heath & G. Vasquez (Eds.), *Handbook of public relations* (pp. 521-526). Sage.
- Wimmer, R., & Dominick, J. (2014). *Mass media research: An introduction*. Cengage Learning.
- Woisetschläger, D.M., Eiting, A., Haselhoff, V.J., & Michaelis, M. (2010). Determinants and consequences of sponsorship fit: A study of fan perceptions. *Journal of Sponsorship*, 3(2).

- Wright, M.D. (2024a, January 11). NIL-related recruiting violation occurred in Florida State football program. *NCAA*. <https://www.ncaa.org/news/2024/1/11/media-center-nil-related-recruiting-violation-occurred-in-florida-state-football-program.aspx>
- Wright, M.D. (2024b, August 1). NIL services platform, NCAA NIL Assist, to launch Thursday. *NCAA*. <https://www.ncaa.org/news/2024/8/1/media-center-nil-services-platform-ncaa-nil-assist-to-launch-thursday.aspx#:~:text=Beginning%20Thursday%2C%20the%20NCAA%20and,seek%20potential%20student%2d%20Athlete%20clients.>
- Wright, M.H., & Bocarnea, M.C. (2007). Contributions of unrestricted funds: The donor organization—public relationship and alumni attitudes and behaviors. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, 18(2), 215–235. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.182>
- Wu, P.C.S., & Wang, Y. (2011). The influences of electronic word-of-mouth message appeal and message source credibility on brand attitude. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 23(4), 448-472. <http://doi.org/10.1108/13555851111165020>
- Yang, S.U. (2007). An Integrated Model for Organization—Public Relational Outcomes, Organizational Reputation, and Their Antecedents. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 19(2), 91–121. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10627260701290612>
- Yang, S.U., & Grunig, J.E. (2005). Decomposing organisational reputation: The effects of organisation-public relationship outcomes on cognitive representations of organisations and evaluations of organisational performance. *Journal of Communication Management*, 9(4), 305–325. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13632540510621623>
- Yoshida, M., Heere, B., & Gordon, B. (2015). Predicting Behavioral Loyalty through Community: Why Other Fans Are More Important Than Our Own Intentions, Our

Satisfaction, and the Team Itself. *Journal of Sport Management*, 29(3), 318–333.

<https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.2013-0306>

Yost, M. (2008, January 7). *A bastion of fair play? Not sports*. Sports Business Journal.

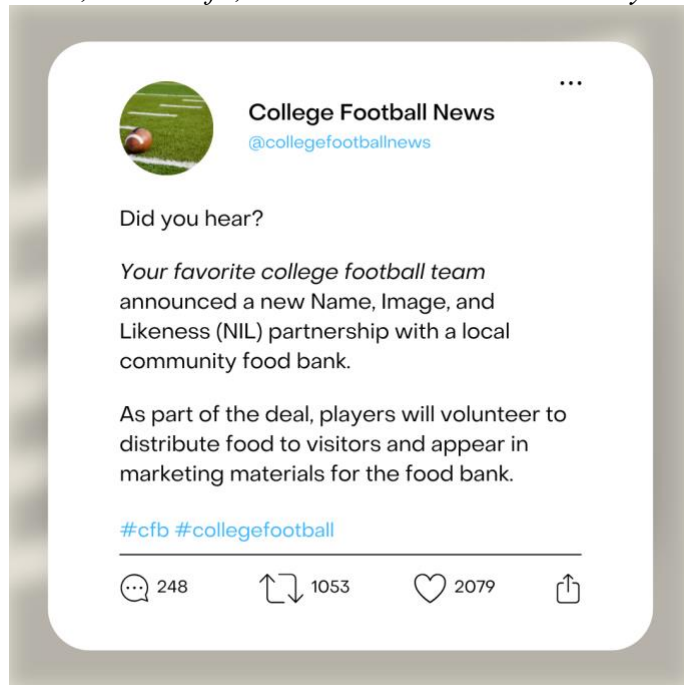
<https://www.sportsbusinessjournal.com/Journal/Issues/2008/01/07/Opinion/Abastion-Of-Fair-Play-Not-Sports.aspx>

Zhan, M.M., & Zhao, X. (2023). Fostering organization-public relationships through openness and engagement: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 35(20), 86-112). <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.ou.edu/10.1080/1062726X.2022.2160335>

Appendix A: Stimuli

Local Deals

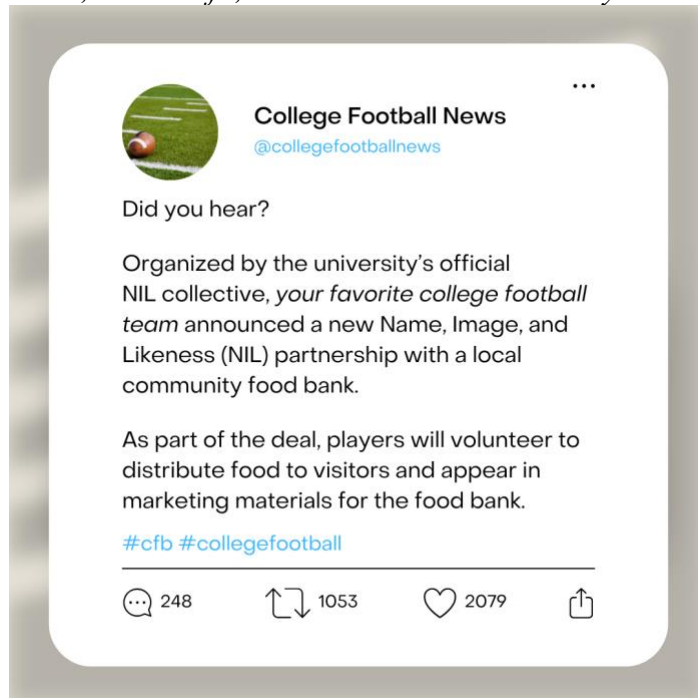
Local, Non-Profit, Commercial Deal: Community Food Bank



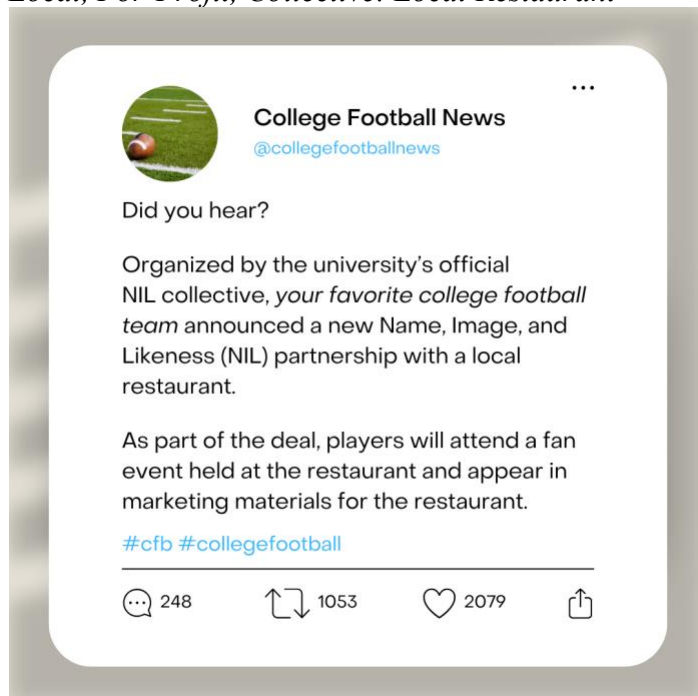
Local, For-Profit, Commercial Deal: Local Restaurant



Local, Non-Profit, Collective Deal: Community Food Bank

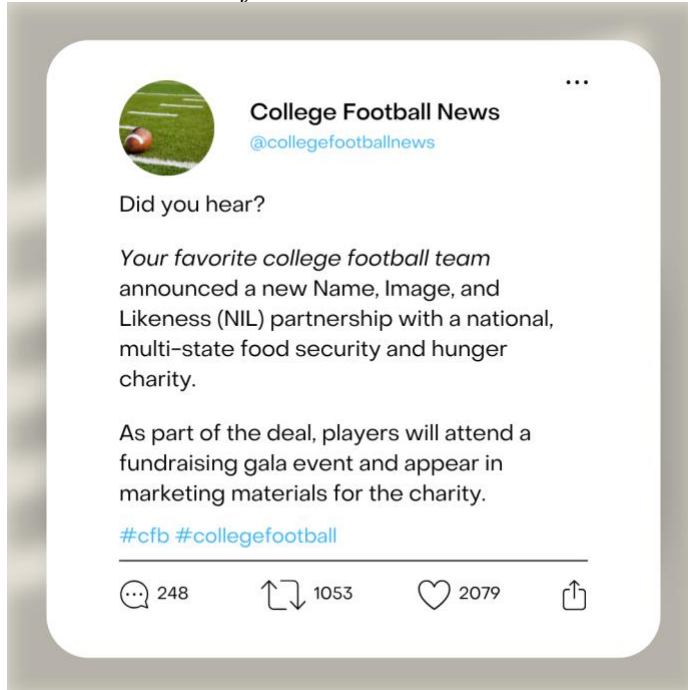


Local, For-Profit, Collective: Local Restaurant

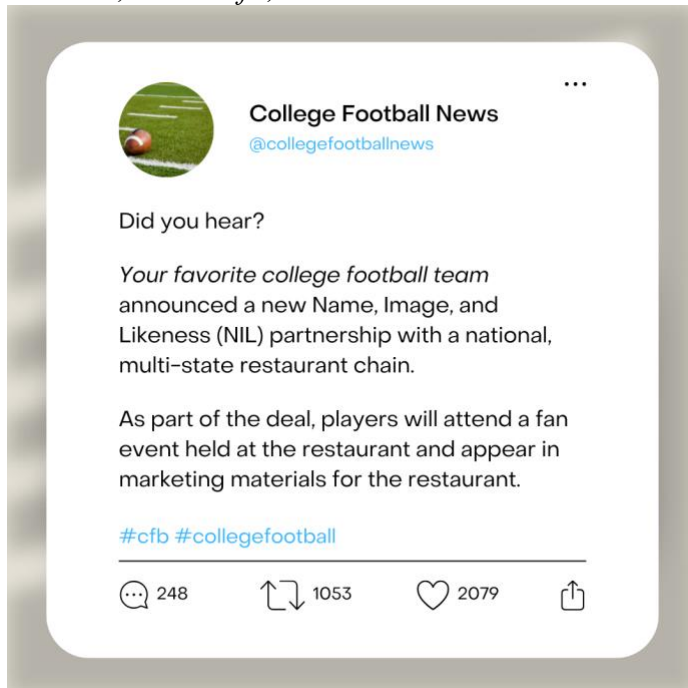


National Deals

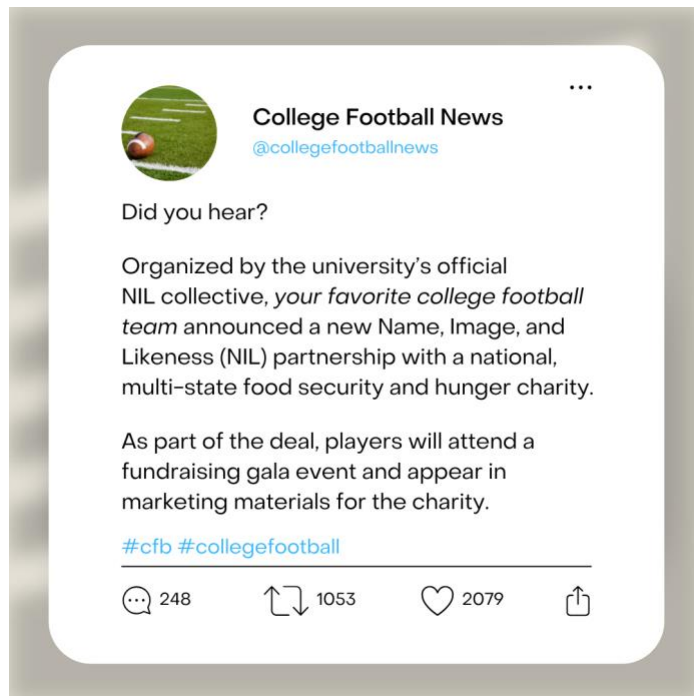
National, Non-Profit, Commercial Deal: National Food Security and Hunger Charity



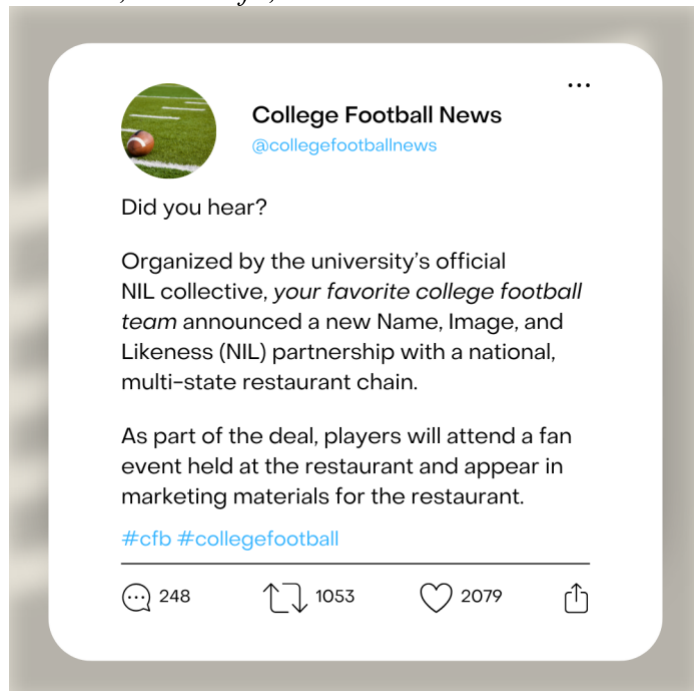
National, For-Profit, Commercial Deal: National Restaurant Chain



National, Non-Profit, Collective Deal: National Food Security and Hunger Charity



National, For-Profit, Collective Deal: National Restaurant Chain



Appendix B: Internal Review Board Approval Letter



Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Approval of Initial Submission – Exempt from IRB Review – AP01

Date: February 13, 2025

IRB#: 18180

Principal Investigator: Elizabeth S Cox

Approval Date: 02/12/2025

Exempt Category: Category 2

Study Title: Building Bonds Through Name, Image, And Likeness: Organization-Public Relationships In The New Era Of College Sports

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), I have reviewed the above-referenced research study and determined that it meets the criteria for exemption from IRB review. To view the documents approved for this submission, open this study from the *My Studies* option, go to *Submission History*, go to *Completed Submissions* tab and then click the *Details* icon.

As principal investigator of this research study, you are responsible to:

- Conduct the research study in a manner consistent with the requirements of the IRB and federal regulations 45 CFR 46.
- Request approval from the IRB prior to implementing any/all modifications as changes could affect the exempt status determination.
- Maintain accurate and complete study records for evaluation by the HRPP Quality Improvement Program and, if applicable, inspection by regulatory agencies and/or the study sponsor.
- Notify the IRB at the completion of the project.

If you have questions about this notification or using IRIS, contact the IRB @ 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

Cordially,

Lara Mayeux, Ph.D.
 Chair, Institutional Review Board