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Executive Summary

In this study, we explore the phenomenon of brand dilution among intercollegiate athletic properties. A cursory review of local high school athletic nicknames, mascots, and logos shows that schools adopt the symbol of a collegiate team as their own, adding it to wall murals, player equipment, team uniforms, and merchandise. In some cases, this logo usage occurs only after a high school has received permission from the university; in other cases, the replication is unauthorized. Trademark owners must be mindful that allowing a protected logo to be used by third parties may cause the owner's brand to eventually blend with replicators, thereby limiting the ability of consumers to recognize the brand as distinct (i.e., brand dilution). In extreme cases, the property's ownership of a trademark can be legally cancelled by the government.

Broadly, we provide a thorough discussion on the concept of brand dilution and its application to sport. More specifically, in this study, we give an account of the strategies employed by trademark specialists to protect (and in some cases, enhance) the equity of their brands. To identify these strategies, we employed a qualitative questionnaire, which was completed by 13 brand managers representing institutions from the Atlantic Coast Conference, Big 12 Conference, Big Ten Conference, Mid-American Conference, Missouri Valley Conference, Pac-12 Conference, and the Southeastern Conference.

Two trademark-enforcement strategies were identified from administrators' comments: prohibitive and cooperative. Several additional salient trends emerged from the results. Most administrators afforded little consideration for the high schools that used their logo, instead expressing serious concerns about the dilution of their mark. A number of participants estimated that logo replication was common: when asked to predict the incidence of logo replication by third parties, six of the brand managers estimated that their respective marks were being used by

more than 10 high schools. Furthermore, a majority of respondents noted that logo replications often occur without authorization, as they had received less than five requests from high school athletic programs regarding logo usage. These results suggest that those in charge of licensing and logo management are primarily focused on the vitality of their mark and its viability with their institution.

While the issue of brand dilution has appeared somewhat within the law academy under the auspices of trademark dilution (cf. Desai & Rierson, 2007), it has received less scholarly attention in the sport management literature. Additionally, although scholars have detailed the legal aspects of trademark infringement, little research has been conducted on the trademark enforcement policies and procedures of collegiate licensers, professional sport teams, and corporations. Those individuals charged with the task of protecting their universities' brands and trademarks could benefit from a better understanding of the potential advantages and disadvantages of various enforcement policies.

Abstract

The practice of an interscholastic athletic department reproducing the logo of a collegiate team for its own use is becoming increasingly visible. Qualitative questionnaire responses from collegiate brand managers suggest that licensing departments differ in their perceptions of the outcomes associated with allowing logo replication in high school athletic departments. Perceived consequences of two enforcement strategies—prohibitive and cooperative—are highlighted, as are implications and directions for future research.

Brand management in top-tier college athletics:

Examining and explaining mark-usage policies

Over the past decade, trademark disputes between owners (e.g., collegiate athletic departments, professional sport teams, corporations) and third-party duplicators (e.g., high school sport programs) have become increasingly common. As national audiences continue to grow among interscholastic sports like football and basketball, collegiate athletic departments are becoming more vigilant in enforcing their trademark policies. For example, institutions such as Florida State University, the University of Florida, and the University of Texas have adopted rigid policies that strictly prohibit third parties from using their logos (Himmelsbach, 2010). To enforce this policy, an offending school is sent a cease-and-desist letter, which includes the threat of legal action if the high school fails to discontinue use of the university's logo. Other schools such as the Georgia Institute of Technology and Kansas State University have reached agreements with high school athletic departments that allow the high school teams to use the logo only after signing a usage agreement. Often, a nominal fee (sometimes as little as $1) is assessed to the high school as part of a legal requirement to establish a formal licensing agreement (Halley, 2010). Other agreements include Jeannette (Pennsylvania) High School using the Jayhawk logo with the permission of the University of Kansas in a "non-commercial way" (Meyer & Sanserino, 2013, para. 9) and Chrysler requiring Lake Mary (Florida) High School to add a sign that read "Proud Partner of Chrysler" before the school could continue using the car manufacturer's Dodge Ram logo (Bergeron, 2010).

A number of reasons might explain these differing enforcement strategies. For example, universities that allow logo duplication by high school athletic departments can ensure their marks are being used appropriately, avoid litigation and subsequent public scrutiny, and foster relationships with future college applicants. Support for more rigid restrictions of logo usage is often based on legal issues concerning brand dilution and naked licensing. Trademark owners must be mindful that allowing a protected logo to be used by third parties may cause the owner's brand to eventually blend with replicators, thereby limiting the ability of consumers to recognize the brand as distinct. This phenomenon is referred to as *brand dilution*. Although the issue of brand dilution has appeared somewhat within the law academy under the auspices of trademark dilution (cf. Desai & Rierson, 2007), it has received less scholarly attention in the sport management literature. A similar risk of permitting third parties to reproduce a registered trademark as their own is *naked licensing*, the term used to describe a situation in which a trademark owner licenses a trademark to an unaffiliated party without providing usage guidelines. In the cases of both brand dilution and naked licensing, the property's ownership of a trademark can be legally cancelled by the government.

While there has yet to be a documented instance of a college losing legal ownership of its trademark because of brand dilution or naked licensing, administrators may nevertheless be at risk by failing to enforce trademark usage policies. Outside of the sport context, trademarks have been legally cancelled after others have argued the trademark owner had not sufficiently protected its property. For example, in *King-Seeley Thermos Co. v. Aladdin Industries* (1963), the manufacturer of Thermos insulated containers lost its case to protect "Thermos" when the court found that King-Seeley failed to "prevent the public from appropriating the mark as signifying the 'thing' itself and not the 'source of the thing'" (In, 2002, p. 160). Recently, legal scholars have advocated for interscholastic athletic departments to reject university cease-and-desist orders and instead challenge the university's trademark claims in court, thereby suggesting that in order for universities to successfully protect their marks, they must be able to demonstrate a clear and consistent pattern of enforcement (cf. Newsom, 2011).

Although scholars have detailed the legal aspects of trademark infringement, little research has been conducted on the trademark enforcement policies and procedures of collegiate licensers, professional sport teams, and corporations. Those individuals charged with the task of protecting their universities' brands and trademarks could benefit from a better understanding of the potential advantages and disadvantages of various enforcement policies. Therefore, the purposes of this exploratory study are to: (1) determine the extent to which athletic departments are engaged in trademark enforcement; (2) categorize the different trademark enforcement policies existing among collegiate athletic departments; and (3) identify the salient arguments supporting and opposing the respective policies.

Literature Review

Branding

Attention to brand management and brand equity has been extensive in the marketing literature (cf. Hoeffler & Keller, 2003). Kotler (2000) defined a brand as "the name, associated with one or more items in the product line, which is used to identify the source of character of the item(s)" (p. 396). Additionally, a property's brand is intended to differentiate the organization from competitors. As Keller (2003) summarized, the brand serves a number of unique roles to both the consumer and the property. To the consumer, the brand provides a link to the source of a product. Through this link, the consumer can attribute to the property responsibility for the product's quality. Additionally, when the brand is representative of a well-known and reputed property, consumer risk is reduced (due to alleviated uncertainty about the quality of the product; Rego, Billett, & Morgan, 2009). A brand fills several roles for a property:

it is a “means of identification to simplify handling or tracing, means of legally protecting unique features, signal of quality level to satisfied customers, means of endowing products with unique associations, source of competitive advantage, [and] source of financial returns” (Keller, 2003, p. 8).

Further, a parent (or master) brand may be represented by a network of smaller brands (or subbrands). Such brand extensions (e.g., Diet Coke, Coke Zero) allow for a master brand (e.g., Coca-Cola) to expand its product line and brand recognition, but extensions also run the risk of potential damages to the parent brand (e.g., dilution or negative associations from the extension) (Papadimitriou, Apostolopoulou, & Loukas, 2004). Previous research on sport brand architecture provides a useful analogue to the focal case examined in this article. Theoretically, the university brand could be considered the master brand, while a high school replicator (authorized or unauthorized) would serve as a subbrand. In this relationship, consumers would ascribe certain values to the subbrand based on its affiliation with the master brand (Kunkel, Funk, & Hill, 2013). Additionally, the strong performance of a subbrand could reflect positively on the master brand (Koenigstorfer, Groeppel-Klein, & Kunkel, 2010).

In recognition of the positive outcomes associated with building a strong brand, scholars have devoted considerable attention to understanding how consumers form sustained connections with brands. Keller (1993) developed a conceptual model of brand equity, which he defined as, “the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand” (p. 2). He divided brand equity into two primary dimensions: awareness (i.e., recall, recognition) and image (i.e., the type, favourability, strength, and uniqueness of brand awareness). In more recent work, Keller (2003) provided a stepwise approach to illustrate how brand equity is maximized by properties: from brand identity, to brand meaning, to brand responses, to brand relationships. Each step represents a different level of psychological bond between the consumer and the brand. For example, at the initial brand identity stage, consumers have a broad awareness of the brand; at the optimal stage of brand equity (i.e., brand relationship), consumers become intensely loyal to the brand. As Keller noted, each step must be realized in order for a brand relationship to ultimately be formed.

In the sport marketing literature, recent research on brand equity has centered on spectator sport (Biscaia, Correia, Ross, Rosado, & Maroco, 2013; Ross, 2006, 2008; Ross & Walsh, 2011; Watkins, 2014), co-branding and sponsorship (Frederick & Patil, 2009; Tsiotsou, Alexandris, & Cornwell, 2014; Henseler, Wilson, & Westberg, 2011), logo design (Payne, Hyman, Niculescu, & Huhmann, 2013), and rebranding (Alessandri, 2007; Easter, Leoni, & Wiles, 2008). Other work has explored specific cases of branding in intercollegiate athletics, including at Robert Morris University (Clark, Apostolopoulou, Branvold, & Synowka, 2009) and Penn State University (Proffitt & Corrigan, 2012). Moreover, associations between events and sponsor's brands have been examined. Indeed, some associations of the sponsors' brand did transfer to the image of the event (Henseler, Wilson, & de Vreede, 2009). This suggests that associations between brands can be transferred, potentially in the case of parent brands and their authorized or unauthorized extensions (i.e., college parent logos and high schools that use their logo). While a wealth of research has explored strategies for improving brand equity, it is also imperative that marketers consider tactics for managing a strong brand.

Logo Development and Utility

Given their ubiquity, sport logos are a uniquely powerful means of branding. In many ways, consumer-based brand equity is especially pertinent when discussing the importance of organizational logos in sport. Keller (1993) noted that the consumer must become familiar with the brand and attach a strong, positive image to it in order to achieve said brand equity. In sport, researchers have argued one of the most defining components of a brand is the team logo (Bishop, 2001). As such, a distinct and unique logo serves to facilitate a brand association. Further, Keller emphasized the need for brand awareness and a unique brand image (i.e., a distinct logo) to build brand equity with consumers. The unique brand image component is a salient feature of Keller's benefit classification of brand associations. Additionally, logos have been viewed as a facet of creating brand associations in the sport context (Gladden & Funk, 2002). In describing Keller's benefit category, Gladden and Funk (2002) posited,

> A sport consumer may purchase a baseball hat possessing a particular team's logo as a means of signifying their identification with that team. The ability of the team to provide a basis for identification represents a benefit offered by a particular team. (p. 57)

Gladden and Funk's application of identification between consumer and team is relevant to brand equity due to the ability of identification to align the consumer with the organization. Moreover, the focus and importance of a *unique* brand image aid in the ability of a consumer to identify with a specific brand or, specific to this research, a specific team.

Identification in the sport context has been the focus of a plethora of academic research. Specific foci have included team identification (Heere & James, 2007b; Wann & Branscombe, 1993), organizational identification (Mael & Ashforth, 1992), and sport employee identification (Oja, Bass, & Gordon, in press). A prime benefit of identification is the ability to build loyalty, or in the case of sport, the ability to build loyalty with a team's fans (Heere & James, 2007a). The strengthening of the bond between consumer and organization serves to create familiarity between the two groups. Gladden and Funk (2002) highlighted the desire of consumers to purchase items with a team's particular logo, thus further necessitating the need for distinctive or unique logos in order for organizations to enjoy the benefits of identification. Indeed, past research on identification has focused on the distinctiveness of the association. Wann and Branscombe's (1993) measure instructed the participant to name a specific team, and included an item that specifically asked about displaying a logo or insignia. Further, Mael and Ashforth (1992) and Oja et al. (in press) both utilized the concept of distinctiveness within the configuration of their measures. Thus, a distinctive logo (i.e., brand) tends to be helpful for a fan to build an association with a team.

The loss of distinctiveness or confusion of the logo is expected to result in the loss of identification. Therefore, identification affects brand associations. In turn, the loss of attachment to a team is likely to hurt brand associations and equity. Success also appears to be rooted in identification. Cialdini, Borden, Thorne, Walker, Freeman, and Sloan's (1976) seminal work on basking in reflected glory (i.e., BIRGing) introduced the idea that fans of sport tend to promote their affiliation with teams that are successful. Additionally, Bishop (2001) explained that wearing the apparel of a successful team is more meaningful than wearing the logo of a less successful team: "The logo has come to signify our love of success…" (p. 24). Successful teams are likely to realize the ability to create powerful brand associations, as their logo will be highly sought after, thus improving brand equity (Gladden & Funk, 2002). Based on this premise, successful teams may be the target of unauthorized logo reproduction by other organizations seeking to align themselves with the successful team's brand equity and commandeer the residual positive effects of identification and success. Further, Gladden and Funk (2002) provided myriad of brand associations that are specific to sport. Additionally, fans might also feel connected to sport organizations via star players, nostalgia, traditions, emotional reactions, head coaches, knowledge of teams, peer group acceptance, and pride from the team's community involvement (Gladden & Funk, 2012). However, a distinct logo, identification, success of team are the most relevant to the current study as all three encompass a specific association with a sport team's logo.

The weakening of a brand or brand association can negatively affect the parent organization's brand equity. As previously noted, the deterioration of a distinctive logo can lead to a decrease in identification (Gladden & Funk, 2002), and subsequently, to weakened brand identity (Keller, 2003). Thus, the ability of a sport organization to maintain loyalty among their consumers could be compromised (Heere & James, 2007a). Accordingly, it is of the utmost importance for sport organizations to utilize distinctive logos to facilitate and maintain the benefits (e.g., loyalty, support, revenues) of brand identification of their fans and consumers. To protect one's logo, organizations have been encouraged to design creative and distinctive logos, use their brands as much as possible to allow patrons to become more aware of the mark, monitor for infringement and notify offenders, and register the brand with a governmental agency (Kellison, Bass, & James, 2012). Additionally, Zaichkowsky (2006) advised organizations educate their fans and consumers of their products in order to prevent and discourage the misuse of their logos.

In addition to understanding the strategies for managing a strong brand, it is also important for marketers to recognize the challenges that can accompany having a highly visible brand. In this study, we explore the challenge of brand dilution, which occurs, in part, because of a weakening of brand identity. According to Keller (2003), brand identity is based partially on the salience of brand awareness among consumers. As discussed below, as a brand erodes, consumers lose awareness of the brand, unknowingly referring to the generic product by the brand that, at one time, was recognized as a leading producer of the generic product.

Brand Dilution

Brand dilution can occur when consumers become confused as to the source—and by extension, meaning—of a brand or logo (Simonson, 1993). Historically, it has been operationalized as either tarnishment (i.e., the weakening of the original brand by another brand) or blurring (i.e., the weakening of a brand's identity and uniqueness) (Pullig, Simmons, & Netemeyer, 2006). Additionally, dilution results in one of two outcomes: misidentification (viz., of a partially eroded brand) or genericide (viz., of a fully eroded brand) (Kellison et al., 2012). Misidentification occurs when one brand is confused for another (e.g., calling a Discraft flying disc a "frisbee"; a copy of the University of Miami's split-U mark being ascribed to a high school replicator), and genericide describes when the brand name becomes the accepted expression for a generic product (e.g., "trampoline" is now the generic term for what was once known as a "rebound-tumbler"). As brand dilution intensifies, the consumer's awareness of the brand declines. However, the consumer's knowledge of the product itself is expected to grow as brand-as-generic references increase. At the highest point of brand-as-generic usage, the distance between brand knowledge and product knowledge is maximized, thereby demonstrating how a consumer's association of the brand to a product deteriorates.

Based on the definition of brand dilution, a consumer's awareness of the brand must decline (otherwise, no dilution has occurred). To illustrate the theoretical relationship between a consumer's awareness of the difference between a brand and a product, consider the example of the Trampoline® rebound-tumbler. As the apparatus gains popularity as a "trampoline" (as opposed to a "Trampoline-brand rebound-tumbler"), awareness of the Trampoline brand (that is, the source of the product, and not the product itself) may decline. However, product knowledge of the "trampoline" is indeed expected to increase. As brand-as-generic (e.g., "Let's play on the trampoline") incidents increase, brand knowledge (e.g., of the Trampoline brand) may decrease as product knowledge (e.g., of the trampoline) increases. In initial brand-as-generic references, the brand would be considered partially diluted, resulting in more frequent misidentification. As brand-as-generic references become commonplace, the brand is fully diluted, leading to genericide. While examples of misidentification and genericide are generally identifiable, identifying the exact moment in time when a brand becomes partially or fully diluted is challenging for both researchers and legal analysts (Magid, Cox, & Cox, 2006).

Walsh and Ross (2010) found that dilution might occur when sport consumers are faced with a brand extension that has inconsistent attributes, and that one's level of team identification impacts dilution effects when brand extensions are involved. Explicitly, those with high team identification levels were less affected by dilution than those with moderate or lower identification levels. This occurrence held true when comparing moderate levels to lower levels of identification to dilution effects as well. Similarly, Ferraro, Kirmani, and Matherly (2013) found that a high level of consumer connection to a brand prevented brand dilution when faced with conspicuous usage by other consumers. Dilution is a serious consequence of logo infringement due to its ability to harm brand equity (Pullig et al., 2006).

Sport organizations must also be wary of a form of logo dilution that is connected to the relationships between the owner of the logo and the users of the logo, approval notwithstanding. These relationships are known as spillover effects, and they are another consequence of brand associations. As discussed by Simonin and Ruth (1998) and Votolato and Unnava (2006), spillover effects are the repercussions that occur when consumers apply attributes of one brand to another brand. These attributions may be positive or negative. A majority of the research conducted on spillover effects pertains to brand associations that are agreed upon by both parties.

However, brands are not immune from spillover effects in the absence of a formal agreement between the two parties (e.g., Olympic sponsors and a host city) (Xing et al., 2008).

Few sport-related studies have focused on the spillover effects that occur from unauthorized logo usage. Simonin and Ruth (1998) found that spillover effects differ based on the familiarity of the brand: a less familiar brand is likely to experience greater spillover effects when compared to a stronger brand, while organizations that both have highly familiar brands will realize equal spillover effects. These findings suggest that a relatively unknown brand has much to gain by latching onto a well-known brand. In the context of the current study, high schools (i.e., relatively unknown brand) have much to gain by aligning themselves with a large university (i.e., highly familiar brand), but the question remains whether universities view such a partnership as advantageous.

Where some studies have shown that a more familiar or parent brand will not experience negative spillover effects when associated with a smaller or weaker brand (e.g., Washburn et al., 2000), others have found negative spillover effects in such cases (e.g., Loken & John, 1993; Till & Shimp, 1998; Votolato & Unnava, 2006). In a sport context, Dalakas and Levin (2005) found that negative perceptions toward a NASCAR driver could spill over to the sponsor, but that highly identified fans would still support a sponsor even in the midst of negative press. Based on this study, sponsors may exploit fans' strong identification with the team brand to insulate themselves from a scandal by way of a spillover effect (Parker & Fink, 2010).

In this exploratory study, we apply the concepts of brand dilution and spillover to the collegiate athletic logo. As an essential component of its university's identity system, an athletic logo represents one of the most recognizable symbols of its athletics programs and the wider university community. Given the popularity of many universities in their towns, cities, states, and regions, it is not rare to see their athletic symbols—or close variants thereof—replicated in area business logos and advertisements. Such unsolicited usage can present problems for brand managers because it might imply that a team or university endorses a product or service, consequently diminishing the value of formal sponsorships. Another common case, and the focus of this study, is when collegiate logos are adopted by interscholastic athletic teams. While it is less likely that individuals who connect a high school logo to a university assume there is some affiliation between the two, colleges are nevertheless developing and enforcing brand usage policies with increasing incidence, as noted in a recent *New York Times* report:

> Universities steadfastly protect their trademarked logos, which appear on everything from oven mitts to underwear, and their reach is increasingly stretching toward high schools. If a school's logo can be confused with a university's, or if it is capable of diluting its value, the universities often demand changes. (Himmelsbach, 2010, para. 4)

Many organizations have instituted brand usage policies in recognition of both the legal and strategic challenges that accompany brand dilution; these issues are discussed further in the following section.

Warning Signs

Folsom and Teply (1980) identified several factors leading to the dilution of a brand. First, the property may improperly reference the brand in its own advertising literature. Second, the generic term for the product may be complicated or linguistically unappealing. When a generic term is technical or difficult to pronounce, the consumer may instead rely on the brand-as-generic, such is often the case with acetylsalicylic acid (i.e., aspirin), extruded polystyrene insulation (i.e., styrofoam), and air cellular cushioning material (i.e., bubble wrap). Additionally, consumers may use a synecdochic formulation to avoid using a seemingly redundant or unnecessary description (e.g., Nikes vs. Nike shoes; Mac vs. Apple Macintosh computer). The use of the brand-as-generic in everyday vernacular poses perhaps the most significant challenge for the property, as the property is limited in its control of individual linguistic preferences.

At the surface, a brand with a considerable market share holds many advantages over a lesser-known brand of the same product, especially when the well-known brand's name is used to describe the product. For the well-known, historic brand with a dominant market share and considerable awareness among consumers, the attraction to such a position is easily understood. However, even these brands must consider the negative implications of their place at the top. While clearly a symbol of the brand's dominance in the market, unless carefully controlled, this link can negatively impact the brand under certain circumstances.

More central to cases of college logo protections, brand managers are becoming increasingly proactive in their strategies to avoid misidentification. For instance, in August 2014, the Toronto Blue Jays filed a complaint with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, arguing that Creighton University's new athletics logo too closely resembled that of the pro baseball team (Payne, 2014). In other cases, the property may lack the resources or foresight to monitor the improper use of its trademark by others. The lack of oversight by the property to protect its brand may prove to be a contributor to the legal cancellation of the trademark:

> In the context of trademark infringement cases, a party seeking to escape liability by claiming that the mark has become generic must show that to the relevant public, the mark in question signifies the category of goods rather than the source of the goods. …Recently, one court was willing to accept direct evidence in the form of purchaser testimony, consumer surveys, and listings in dictionaries, trade journals, newspapers, and other publications. (In, 2002, pp. 165–166)

Therefore, not only must the property control its brand use in order to prevent misidentification, but also, failure to do so may ultimately be used as evidence against the property during trademark infringement litigation. The damaging consequences of failing to monitor one's brand is likely an impetus to the growing number of university athletic programs in the news for enforcing zero-tolerance usage policies against high school teams (Himmelsbach, 2010).

A number of properties face challenges when protecting the sustainability of their brands. Despite the significant implications of brand dilution and genericide, scholarly attention on the subject has been limited. In fact, the research cited thus far has been largely descriptive accounts of how properties have been impacted by trademark legislation. Additionally, scholarly attention to the concepts of misidentification and genericide have focused largely on brand and product *names* rather than visual symbols. Finally, little has been done to explore the perceptions of brand managers in sport. In response to the lack of previous empirical research on the subject, we explore the myriad approaches taken by collegiate athletic departments to combat brand dilution below.

Method

In light of the absence of previous research on the topic, the current study was framed as an exploration into the brand management strategies of universities seeking to minimize the effects of brand dilution. As Gratton and Jones (2004) noted, exploratory research:

> …takes place when there is little or no prior knowledge of phenomenon. Thus, there is need for an initial exploration before more specific research can be undertaken. This type of research looks for clue about the phenomenon, attempts to gain some familiarity with the appropriate concepts and looks for patterns or idea emerging from the data without any preconceived idea or explanation. (p. 6)

An online questionnaire was developed to examine both the frequency and nature of trademark disputes at institutions that have been forced to consider their policies and procedures. The decision to use a questionnaire for data collection was based on the accessibility of participants, many of whom had limited availability to participate in the study. Additionally, an online medium was preferred because of its low cost of administering and minimal environmental impact. Survey construction was considerate of Dillman, Smyth, and Christian's (2008) web survey construction principles; when applied, these principles exploit the benefits of online questionnaires while offering techniques to reduce the possibility of nonresponse and measurement error.

The instrument included a series of guided, open-ended questions (see Appendix) intended to provide participants the opportunity to explain trademark enforcement policies and their respective institutions' rationales for their policies. Additionally, while quantitative information was collected for descriptive purposes, we employed a qualitative approach to examine and explain the primary brand management strategies of college athletic departments (Lock & Filo, 2012; Kunkel, Doyle, & Funk, 2014).

The empirical material was transcribed and stored using NVivo 10 qualitative data analysis software (QSR International, 2012). The first and second authors analysed responses using an open (i.e., line-by-line categorization into phenomena), axial (i.e., connections formed between first-stage categories), and selective (i.e., core categories finalized) coding sequence (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). To ensure coding reliability, the researchers were instructed to review sources of inter-coder disagreement or intra-coder uncertainty with the entire research team; if the discrepancy could not be resolved, it would ultimately be removed from analysis. Applicable qualitative responses are presented largely verbatim, which allows readers to "experience the participants' actual language, dialect, and personal meanings" (Johnson & Christensen, 2008, p. 277). This analytical approach is appropriate based on the exploratory nature of this study, as researchers and practitioners alike can identify applicable trends as they are presented in the next section.

To identify potential participants for the study, we conducted an online news search for press mentions of universities involved in trademark issues with high schools athletic departments. Press mentions were collected using Google Alerts, an automated content-change-detection and notification service that scours news, weblogs, video, and other Internet sources for matches with user-defined search terms. Twenty-three academic institutions (or organizations representing those institutions; e.g., Collegiate Licensing Company; CLC) were identified from the web query, and each was contacted based on their involvement in trademark disputes in hopes of acquiring the policies and opinions of administrators who had recently been forced to consider how to properly enforce their institutions' trademarks. The participants' expertise in brand enforcement policy contributed to the credibility of the qualitative study (Milne & Oberle, 2005). Additionally, methods triangulation was employed in an effort to provide evidence of the study's internal trustworthiness. Methods triangulation is a preferred approach to verifying the accuracy of participant testimony (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). By comparing the participants' responses with online and print media, we were able to confirm the timely and truthful nature of the brand enforcement descriptions. Finally, the results of the study were shared with participants via a technical report, and participants were solicited to provide feedback on their specific testimony and the general themes generated from qualitative analysis. No revisions were requested.

Results

Descriptive Results

Of the 23 institutions contacted, 13 administrators agreed to participate in the survey, one declined, and nine did not respond to our requests. In light of concerns regarding the transferability of the results, we examined the nine non-responding institutions to identify potential differences with the participating institutions. Comparisons based on size and athletic conference membership revealed no major discernible differences. Additionally, based on comparisons of respondent and nonrespondent enforcement policies known *a priori*, the potential effect of nonresponse bias was deemed marginal (Jordan, Walker, Kent, & Inoue, 2011).

Participants were employed by the university athletic department or a dedicated licensing unit outside of the athletic department. These departments included Athletics, Licensing, Business and Finance, Marketing and Communications, and Administrative Services. The sampled institutions ranged from traditionally prestigious athletic programs to smaller Football Championship Subdivision institutions. Despite the variance in size and prestige, all departments were, at a minimum, highly visible in their local communities, and several enjoyed a strong national reputation.

Participants represented institutions from the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC), Big 12 Conference, Big Ten Conference, Mid-American Conference, Missouri Valley Conference, Pac-12 Conference, and the Southeastern Conference (SEC). All administrators had been involved in trademark enforcement for at least three years, and 10 had been involved for at least 10 years. Given their positions on the “front line” of brand management, these professionals had first-hand experience creating trademark usage policies (or choosing to refrain from such policies), monitoring third-party usage, and enforcing rules. This insight enhanced the credibility of the qualitative description presented below (Milne & Oberle, 2005).

Usage and Monitoring

The results of the survey provided several salient trends. In particular, most administrators surveyed expressed concerns about the dilution (i.e., weakening) of their mark while giving minimal consideration for the high schools that used their logo. When asked to predict the incidence of logo replication by third parties, six of the participants estimated that their logo was being used by more than 10 high schools. Additionally, a majority of respondents indicated that they had received less than five requests from high school athletic programs regarding logo usage. These estimates suggest that collegiate brand managers recognize the probability that their logos are being replicated by unauthorized third parties. In the sections below, we outline two unique strategies taken in response to such unauthorized replication and the implications of each.

Regardless of the policies utilized, university administrators overseeing trademark issues were responsible for identifying unauthorized usage. All respondents were asked what methods they used to identify such cases, and the results indicate that brand managers have limited support when monitoring brand usage. The most popular response was alumni and fans; as one manager in a business and finance department noted, “All of our cases have been brought to our attention by alumni who live in the areas where our logos have been identified. Our alumni are loyal to our logo and aware of how unique and special it is.” Given the lack of in-house resources typical across most trademark enforcement offices, many administrators highlighted the benefit of outsourcing those responsibilities to an external licensing agency (such as CLC) or through their legal counsel. Other methods of monitoring included “occasional searches on the internet” (e.g., MASCOTdb.com), high school self-reports, and notifications from sponsors.

Policies and Rationales

Brand management strategies for addressing issues of logo usage were classified into two policy categories: *prohibitive* and *cooperative*. Prohibitive, or zero-tolerance, policies strictly forbid other organizations from using images associated with the institution. Under this policy, high schools requesting permission to use a college athletic logo are denied, while violators are contacted and ordered to discontinue unauthorized use. Cooperative policies, on the other hand, allow high schools to reproduce a college logo under conditions that can vary widely by institution. When asked to comment on the permanence of their policies, nearly all agreed that their respective policies were unlikely to change significantly in the next decade. These categories and their underlying justifications are discussed in further depth below.

Prohibitive.

Brand dilution. Ten respondents reported that their institutions used prohibitive policies. In response to a survey item asking participants why their universities took a hard line against third-party logo usage, most administrators specifically mentioned "dilution" or described its premise. As discussed previously, when a brand (e.g., name, logo, wordmark) begins losing an association to its property, the possibility of brand dilution grows. In turn, the association or pull of the logo is weakened (i.e., diluted), which was the greatest concern of the participants. As the director of one university's trademarks and licensing department discussed, a logo shared between a property and a third party can not only devalue the original brand, but also its meaningfulness:

> The University has invested a lot of time, money and energy into its brand. We are a leader academically and athletically, identifying ourselves with the [logo]. If we allow other entities outside of University's interests to use our brand, the [logo] no longer stands for the Academic and Athletic excellence [the University] has built. Those other

> programs are now able to capitalize on our brand and in some cases tarnish the brand if they don't stand and work for the same things.

A similar argument appeared in another administrator's remarks, who likened her university's logo to that of a corporation: "Our logo represents our name, allowing it to be used for another purpose simply dilutes its meaning. …The same reasons any other corporate logo would not be used for another purpose." It is reasonable to conclude from this testimony that as a university's logo was shared with others, third-party adopters would begin adding their own meaning to the image, thereby eroding the connection to the original brand. Further, as the brand begins to be used by multiple organizations, the brand is likely to become diluted thus weakening the connection to the parent brand.

Loss of control. A key assumption in the argument that brand-usage agreements could lead to brand dilution is that a property could not effectively monitor how third parties were using its logo. Even if a formal agreement was made, university administrators were ill equipped to conduct reviews of all authorized logo duplicators. As argued by the Trademark Licensing Director of a Big Ten university's communications office, it is "almost impossible to control how [a] logo is used by [a] school, the community, and by businesses within the community—especially in smaller cities or towns where there is just one high school." Based on this statement, administrators anticipate that if their institution allowed logo duplication, they would be expected to maintain some level of oversight over the authorized third parties. Additionally, this oversight would extend beyond the high schools themselves to local sponsors and businesses. As discussed previously, failing to monitor how others used a licensed logo could be considered naked licensing, ultimately leading to the legal cancellation of a trademark.

Administrators at universities with prohibitive policies expressed concern that sharing logos with high school teams could present other legal challenges as well. For instance, fans that recognized a high school athletic logo as originating from a well-known university might assume some form of affiliation or unintended brand association (cf. Keller, 2003). Several administrators argued that, as a result of a perceived affiliation, "liability issues" could result. While not identifying any specific examples, these administrators thought it best to avoid any potential problems. Other respondents echoed the recommendation that any logo-use agreement be approached with caution. An Associate Athletic Director at a prohibitive institution argued that a perceived connection between a university and a high school could result in an NCAA violation: "My concern has been with the NCAA bylaws and possible recruiting [advantages] that might be perceived." In essence, administrators were worried the association between their brand and the high school would not be positive or would impact the distinctiveness of the mark, subsequently affecting the brand equity the university had worked diligently to promote and protect. Brand dilution was also cited as justification for prohibitive policies. Like the other brand managers, this administrator thought the potential costs associated with a logo-usage agreement far outweighed any benefits.

Fighting unauthorized usage. Once an unauthorized logo duplicator has been identified using any of the aforementioned means, institutions with prohibitive policies must prepare for the negative public reaction that sometimes follows their cease-and-desist letter. As chronicled is the local and national press (e.g., Chirinos, 2010; Himmelsbach, 2010; Wagner, 2010), many high school offenders have been using a copied logo for a long period of time, and most are unaware of the infraction. Nevertheless, university zero-tolerance policies mean that offending schools would have to discontinue use of the logo on everything from stationery and t-shirts to helmets, uniforms, and wall art. Recognizing the budgetary constraints a high school would face from replacing equipment, many trademark enforcement administrators discussed their willingness to have flexible phase-out timelines. One Licensing Director acknowledged the importance of approaching high school violators with compassion:

> We send a letter from the University rather than a legal-sounding [cease-and-desist] letter from our licensing agent…. We point out why it's an issue, why we need to protect our marks, and allow school time to phase out use of the logo.

Other administrators repeated the need for empathy: "…We work to give them a time frame in which to transition from the infringing logo to a new mutually agreeable design." Particularly in cases where policy enforcement may encumber high school athletic departments, university administrators can expect a fair deal of negative publicity, particularly in the high schools' hometowns. Based on the fact most universities represented in this study have adopted prohibitive policies, this poor press is a necessary cost to protecting their brands.

Cooperative. A second option to brand management is the cooperative policy, in which logo owners enter into a formal agreement to permit another organization to use their logos. The formality of the cooperative policy (indicated by, e.g., a written contract, a usage fee) is important, as it creates a distinction from institutions with no policy (e.g., naked licensing). Of the institutions represented in this study, three had cooperative policies. When asked why administrators viewed such policies as beneficial to the university, several reasons emerged. These benefits included increased revenues from royalties (although not all institutions with cooperative policies required royalties) and reinforcing brand value. The most prominent benefit of cooperative policies, however, was increased awareness and exposure for the university.

Raising brand awareness. As several brand managers contended, forming partnerships with high schools could be used to foster relationships with potential future students. This concept is reflected in the response of the licensing manager of an ACC school, who also remarked on the sheer magnitude of unauthorized logo duplication that prompted the policy:

> The…logo is original artwork created…specifically for [our school]. Many schools liked the mark and started using it without authorization. Instead of policing the over 100 schools that are using the marks, we decided to license the mark. Schools are the pipeline into college. We are not interested in creating a negative relationship with schools that could potentially send students to [our university]. We hope they form a connection to the mark in school and continue through college.

Other brand managers provided additional support for the position that a cooperative policy was a sound strategy for recruiting future students. For example, one administrator said: "Students form a connection to the mark at an early age, and hopefully it carries over into college." This argument indicates brand managers recognize that athletics logos represent both sport teams and the university at large (Clark et al., 2009). Further, scholars have posited brand awareness is achieved through repeated exposures to impress "the advertised name upon the consumers' consciousness and make them feel comfortable with the brand" (Bogart, 1986, p. 208). By allowing high school students across the country to be exposed to a university's brand and identify with the mark, administrators may increase the positive associations and equity with the university brand (Keller, 2003).

Avoiding negative publicity. Despite the benefits listed above, the majority of institutions with cooperative policies contended that the primary reason for permitting others to use their logo was to avoid litigation (e.g., sending cease-and-desist notices) and the subsequent public scrutiny described by prohibitive universities. For the trademark administrator of an SEC institution, the decision to adopt a cooperative policy came only after their original strategy brought negative attention to the university: “We tried not approving [in-state] schools and it was bad PR so we changed to the current approval process. So far it’s worked and we’ve gotten some good press out of it.” In this case, the institution was able to generate positive media based on its new policy.

Other universities viewed cooperative policies not as an opportunity, but simply as the strategy likely to generate the least controversy. As one manager of a prohibitive institution contended, “The only reason some universities have chosen to give permission is because they have been overrun by the problem. I would be surprised if any of them would have allowed it if given the choice upfront.” While an institution might prefer not to license its logo to a high school athletic department, adopting a restrictive policy may not be worth the accompanying criticism, as noted in the following statement from the trademark licensing director of a Big 12 institution:

> I’m not sure there are many [benefits to a permissive policy]. At the end of the day, you either have to work with someone who is using your logo, or fight with them. In the case of “The Big State University” fighting with a high school, we don’t happen to think that it is in our best interests to be combative. Our goal in getting them licensed was mostly to have an agreement in place, yet not be sending [cease-and-desist] letters in order to do it.

It appears that among the institutions representing cooperative policies, there is little consensus about whether such policies provide benefits beyond the avoidance of public scrutiny, thereby illustrating just how important public perception is to these administrators. As previously noted, Jeannette (Pennsylvania) High School and the University of Kansas (Meyer & Sanserino, 2013) and Lake Mary (Florida) High School and Chrysler (Bergeron, 2010) are examples of high schools entering into cooperative agreements.

Policy Implications

In addition to rationalizing their institutions' brand usage policies, administrators were asked to speak more broadly on the issue of brand dilution and logo usage enforcement. While almost all brand managers acknowledged the threat of brand dilution and the need to monitor unauthorized logo usage, a trademark licensing director from the Big Ten noted that such issues were of low institutional priority at the university: "The issue of high school usage and the perceived concerns are highly overrated and do not concern us in the overall scheme of things. There are many pressing issues that carry much more priority in our program." Given the low incidence of naked licensing cases in college sport and the lack of institutional resources discussed previously, it should come as no surprise that brand dilution is not a major concern for some universities. Despite the argument that high school usage is not a pressing issue, nearly all respondents in this study contended that having some type of formal policy in place was necessary to combat the consequences of brand dilution, including misidentification and genericide (e.g., through naked licensing). Additionally, while administrators acknowledged that monitoring brand usage was their ultimate responsibility, some also encouraged high school administrators to share the responsibility. As one brand manager explained, in addition to high school administrators avoiding their own legal issues, unauthorized logo reproduction raised questions of personal and intuitional integrity: "Using the university (or any other) logo…as [a high school's] own is teaching kids…that it's ok to steal intellectual property of others. It's not ok to alter it; it's not ok to use it." This viewpoint reinforces the paradox of brand dilution: while the property (e.g., university) is ultimately responsible for protecting its brand, the issue only arises after an unauthorized third party (e.g., high school athletic department) lacks due diligence and breaks the law in the first place.

Discussion

A property's brand is especially meaningful to consumers and to the property itself. To the consumer, the brand links a product to the producer, which, if the producer is well respected, can provide the consumer with a peace of mind that the product is of high quality. Additionally, Keller (2003) explained how brands provide a form of identification and unique associations with the product and thus the consumer. Further, in the realm of sport the brand allows one to identify with the parent organization (Gladden & Funk, 2002) and potentially enjoy positive experiences when the sport organization is successful such as BIRGing (Cialdini et al., 1976). To the property, the brand represents the opportunity to establish a competitive advantage over competitors. However, when the connection between a brand and the property becomes confused, the aforementioned benefits are unrealized. The results of this study indicate that some universities are recognizing the potential threat of brand dilution and are responding through the development of enforcement policies aimed at protecting their athletic logos. In the sections below, we outline the implications of this study and present recommendations for future research in this area.

Theoretical Implications

As discussed previously, the consequences of brand dilution, misidentification or genericide, are likely to reduce brand equity. As Keller (2003) explained, a brand serves as a link between consumer and product. If the link becomes confusing (i.e., misidentification) or completely vanished (i.e., genericide) the ability of the organization to connect with its consumers becomes marginalized. Based on the testimony collected in this study, institutions choosing between a prohibitive or cooperative brand usage policy must consider the degree to which a replicated logo would create confusion among consumers. Thus university licensing personnel must examine the consequences associated with potential brand dilution and weigh them against the potential benefits of increased brand awareness.

This study also illustrates the potential of brand dilution in its two forms (i.e., tarnishment and blurring). Of the two, blurring has been the primary concern of university administrators (Himmeslbach, 2010). In the case of blurring, a brand’s distinguishing facets are weakened through the deterioration of brand identity (Schechter, 1970) and brand uniqueness (Simonson, 1993). In the context of the current study, if a well-known university has a unique logo but grants a third party access to the logo, a consumer’s view of the uniqueness or novelty of the logo could be compromised, thus negatively affecting the university’s brand equity. While less apparent in administrators’ stated concerns, tarnishment may also be a threat. For example, if a high school team that shares its logo with a popular university is embroiled in controversy, media reports that broadcast the high school’s logo could lead to a portion of that controversy to be ascribed to the university.

Brand equity is dependent upon the consumer’s knowledge and understanding of the brand; consequently, dilution has the potential to limit or harm brand equity (Pullig et al., 2006). Hence the salience of understanding the benefits and rewards of allowing high schools to use one’s logo is paramount. University licensing personnel are faced with two dilemmas. First, they must decide between the consequences of completely controlling their logo verses the resulting negative public relation backlash. Additionally, the consequences of brand dilution and brand awareness must be examined. This exploratory study sheds puts forth these dilemmas as salient and relevant decisions that should be of great concern to those associated with brand management in college athletics.

Further, the present study expands our understanding of brand dilution in sport to consider the possibility that multiple teams sharing a particular logo would dilute the property brand. For institutions with a prohibitive usage policy, the impact of third-party replication on brand equity is a clear concern. Whether such replication actually impacts brand equity remains unclear and presents an obvious direction for future research, as discussed further in a later section.

Practical Implications

Although historically rare, the instances of universities enforcing trademark usage policies have increased with the recent growth in interest of interscholastic athletics. This increased interest is evident in high school games regularly broadcasted on popular channels like ESPN and FOX Sports. Accordingly, the consequences of failing to properly enforce trademark policies (whether the policy is of zero tolerance or more flexible allowance) should not be understated. For example, though they were once legally protected brand names, product names such as aspirin and trampoline are no longer the property of a single company. In recognition of the threat of brand dilution and naked licensing, some properties and their legal agencies are showing increasing vigilance of their protected marks (e.g., the “I ♥ NY®” mark; Newman, 2013). Enforcing a zero-tolerance policy against high schools reproducing a university logo suggests that some collegiate athletic departments believe that relaxing such a policy could ultimately lead to the loss of trademark ownership. Athletic departments that permit logo reproduction (by reaching legal agreements with a high school) may recognize the potential for benefit while acknowledging the importance of monitoring usage to avoid the threat of naked licensing.

For marketers, the desire to grow a brand must be tempered with the responsibility to protect their marks. For example, when developing a mascot or brand for the first time, managers would benefit by selecting unique and specific images that would be impractical for others to adopt (e.g., Montgomery Biscuits, Las Vegas 51s, Akron RubberDucks, Wichita State Shockers, Saint Louis Billikens). Once a brand has been established, marketers must develop protocols for issuing licenses and establish specific usage guidelines. Many universities and athletic teams have begun disseminating style guides and identity kits to illustrate the proper use of their marks. These guidelines not only inform licensees and partners, but also internal administrators, about how marketing and promotional materials should be prepared.

Brand management becomes more challenging when organizations permit a third party to adopt a university mark as its own. As several university representatives discussed, institutions must be cognizant of how a perceived affiliation with a high school replicator could harm the university (e.g., if the high school is implicated in a controversy; NCAA violations). As such, isolationist strategy (i.e., preventing any other entity from using one's logo) might be attractive, and additionally the alternative might also contribute to brand dilution; without a clear distinction between the university and a high school replicator, high school fans may begin associating the "borrowed" mark with the high school. Furthermore, from a legal standpoint, a weak connection between the university and a high school replicator may be viewed as a case of naked licensing.

Specifically to sport, Mikhailitchenko, Tootelian, and Mikhailitchenko (2012) found that the appearance of multiple sponsor logos on hockey jerseys negatively affected the attitude of consumers. This finding suggests that logos can be diluted via excess associations with other organizations. Therefore, a high school team could erode a university's brand by surrounding it with logos of the high school's own sponsors. Such dilution could occur regardless of whether the high school has formal permission to replicate a university logo, as previous research has shown that formal affiliation is not a requirement for spillover effects (Xing et al., 2008). That is, many high schools are beneficiaries of such developments when they use a popular university's logo by aligning themselves with the prestige of the university.

Brand managers interviewed for this study largely agreed that third-party replication of their logo is a serious issue that requires some form of response from the university. Where institutions disagree is what type of response is warranted. Prohibitive policies suggest that properties are concerned with the threat of brand dilution and that the expected benefit of a partnership with high school athletic departments is low. Additionally, prohibitive policies are most appropriate when brand managers lack the institutional resources necessary for effectively monitoring partnerships. Whereas institutions with cooperative policies must reduce the likelihood of naked licensing by developing explicit usage guidelines and constantly monitoring third-party use of their marks, a zero-tolerance policy simply eliminates the need for these procedures.

The fact that an institution still chooses to adopt cooperative policies suggests that some brand managers are less risk-averse and believe the benefit of high-school usage outweighs the added costs associated with additional monitoring. Based on the testimony provided in this study, it appears the primary reason some programs favour a cooperative policy is because of the desire to avoid the negative press that often accompanies cease-and-desist orders. As brand managers discussed, when high schools are told that they have to discontinue usage of a university mark, the local press is often sympathetic to the high school, which would sometimes have to replace floor painting and wall murals, player equipment, fan apparel, and team uniforms.

Regardless of whether universities adopt a prohibitive or cooperative policy, brand managers currently have little support when it comes to monitoring brand usage. As evidenced by the wide array of techniques used by brand managers, there are few cohesive tools available to identify unauthorized logo copiers. In most cases, administrators must rely on a bit of luck to locate violators, as the most prominent monitoring sources are alumni and fans, sponsors, high schools, and random online searches. External licensing agencies provide a more systematic approach to usage monitoring, but it appears that brand managers would benefit from a more streamlined method to survey brand usage. Collaboration among administrators across institutions and athletic conferences may prove useful in establishing standardized procedures for brand protection, which might include cooperative monitoring, information sharing, educational roundtables, and sponsored workshops for high school administrators.

Regardless of their strategies for trademark enforcement, institutions can work to mitigate the potential for brand dilution by continuing to build their own fans' identification. Past research has shown that highly identified fans may not feel the effects of dilution (Walsh & Ross, 2010). Furthermore, consumers who know the brand well (i.e., highly identified fans) are less likely to contribute to brand dilution (Washburn, Till, & Priluck, 2000). Of course, while a logo may be highly recognizable to fans of the property institution, it remains unclear whether fans of a high school that has replicated the logo would recognize it as being, in fact, a copy of another institution.

It is also worth noting that the universities represented in this study have adopted formal usage policies, the majority of athletic institutions do not have policies for brand monitoring and protection. While much of this unpreparedness may be attributed to the lack of institutional support discussed above, it is also likely that the threat of brand dilution has not been widely recognized. As discussed below, researchers should aim to expand knowledge on brand dilution by examining the degree to which an institution's brand equity is impacted (positively or negatively) based on the adoption of its logo by third parties.

Directions for Future Research

There are several directions to take in future research, some of which have been prompted by limitations in the current study. First, the sample of interest should be extended beyond large, prominent programs. Although the institutions selected for inclusion in this study were selected because of their involvement in disputes, it is also possible that smaller, regional colleges also face the challenges of unauthorized brand usage. Therefore, additional work is needed to identify (1) the prominence of brand usage policies across college athletics and (2) the rationale—if any—of institutions with no formal usage policy.

Further, the fact that many large academic institutions employ some form of brand usage policy provides evidence that brand dilution is viewed as a threat. Still, the magnitude of this threat remains unknown. For instance, do fans of high school teams using the logo of a university recognize the logo as their own? If so, the case can be made that the university's brand equity may be reduced. While clearly not the top priority of brand managers now, the increasing visibility of high school athletics and the constant goal of growing one's brand may necessitate more attention on the ways to combat brand dilution.

On the other hand, brand managers and researchers might also consider the degree to which a cooperative policy can influence university brand equity. That is, does the university enjoy stronger brand equity from the students, parents, and boosters of a high school that has adopted the university's mascot? Further study is important not only to practitioners charged with the task of combatting unauthorized trademark usage, but also to scholars engaged in the study of brand management in sport.

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Appendix: Survey items

- Demographic items (job title; department employed; tenure)
- Are you aware of any high schools using your university logo (in any form) as its own?
- In your estimation, how many high schools are utilizing your logo (both authorized and unauthorized)?
- On average, how many requests do you receive each year by high schools seeking to use your logo?
- Using your best guess, how many high school athletic programs in the United States use your logo *without* authorization?
- Briefly describe your policy for forming agreements or negotiating with high schools that request the use of your logo.
- If you have permitted a high school to replicate your institution's athletic logo, what were the terms of the agreement (e.g., fees, usage restrictions, contract length)?
- Within the next 10 years, how do you see your licensing relationship with high schools changing or evolving?
- What, if any, procedures do you have in place for identifying and/or monitoring unauthorized trademark usage?
- What *benefits*, if any, do you believe your institution can receive by licensing its logo to high school athletic programs?
- What *drawbacks*, if any, do you believe your institution can receive by licensing its logo to high school athletic programs?
- Space for additional comments provided