

Understanding the sports organizational reputation

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Preface

In just the past few years, a growing body of academic and practitioner literature has emerged concerning "reputation management" (Hutton 2001). Maintaining stable management over the long term by aligning team objectives with stakeholders is an important element in sports team management (Sakurai 2005). It is said that rather than being based on fact, decisions made by stakeholders are based on instinct (Fombrun 2003), and this instinctive behavior is guided by product image and reputation established through corporate behavior (Fombrun 1996). The term reputation can be used to imply popularity or rumor however when used as a management index, not only does it imply rumor or heresy, but also contains evaluative elements concerning corporate activities.

Sports teams are run and serve as a symbol of the local community based on the support of its stakeholders. Reputation can be used as an important index to measure how stakeholders perceive and support the team. However, to date, little research has been done in the area of the reputation of sporting teams and sporting organizations and as a result, there is still no complete working definition or scale to measure reputation. This study aims to identify the theoretical background of sporting team reputation and determine whether existing scales for measuring reputation can be applied to sporting organizations.

Method

1) Reputation measurement scale

In this study, we used the corporate reputation scale created by Fombrun (1999) as a scale to measure reputation. This scale is comprised of the following six elements; emotional appeal, products and services, vision and leadership, workplace environment, social and environmental responsibility and financial performance.

2) Data collection

In order to create a scale to measure the reputation of sporting organizations, we conducted 5 questionnaire surveys targeting sporting organizations.

1. Survey for a newly formed professional basketball team in the JBL (Japan Basketball League) in Japan

Date survey was conducted: August 2011

Number of samples: 302 (97%)

2. Survey for a professional basketball team in the bj League

Date survey was conducted: November 2011

Number of samples: 417 (100%)

3. Survey for an independent baseball league (survey 1)

Date survey was conducted: August 2011

Number of samples: 75 (96%)

4. Survey for an independent baseball league (survey 2)

Date survey was conducted: August 2011

Number of samples: 137 (99%)

5. Survey for local residents living in the vicinity of a sports university

Date survey was conducted: February 2012

Number of samples: 234

Based on the data from the five questionnaire surveys collected from various sports teams and sporting organizations, we used a confirmation factor analysis model to analyze the viability of the six elements.

Results

Results of a confirmation factor analysis conducted using a factor analysis model for each of the five sports teams and sporting organizations revealed that each of the six elements were a viable measure to a certain degree. This indicates that the concept behind corporate reputation for business organizations can also be applied to sporting organizations and confirms that the measurement scale created by Fombrun (1999) can also be reliably applied to sporting organizations. It is necessary however in the future to identify reasons as to why some of the elements were not entirely suitable in gauging the reputation of sporting organizations and to identify factors which may help to strengthen the reputation of sports teams and sporting organizations.

References

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